



## Monday Morning Report

March 17, 2025

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### INTERNAL

The next meeting of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council Executive Committee is *this* Wednesday, March 19 at 2:00 PM by Zoom. ***Draft Agenda***. Plus AI's Earl Adams will speak about "Self-Driving Trucks: Current Industry Status and Deployment Timeline For Texas." For more information, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

Question Two: We've been asking Grok AI's "truth-seeking' artificial intelligence-driven software about **Austin-San Antonio** mobility issues and solutions. This week: *Build a model proving that passenger rail is more cost-effective over time than highways, then apply that model to connecting the Texas Triangle cities.* ***AI Response***.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Texas is running out of water and, by one estimate, the state's municipal supply will not meet demand by 2030 if severe drought conditions continue and new solutions are not implemented (***here***), the ***Texas Tribune*** reports. **San Antonio** enters 'excessive drought'; Canyon Lake at lowest level ever; Medina nearly empty. ***Story***.

Drought and high winds have led to 33 wildfires affecting more than 40,000-acres in Texas as of yesterday, the worst burning 8600-acres near **Fredericksburg** and sending smoke in to **Austin**, ***KSTX*** reports. ***Story. Map***.

"Because the oceans cover more than two-thirds of the planet, global sea-level rise is an important yardstick for the Earth's overall climate," says a NASA researcher, and oceans reached their highest levels in three decades last year, at a 35% rate higher than expected - according to an analysis published last week. ***Story. Analysis***.

**Austin's** Urban Transportation Commission continues critiquing TxDOT's plans for a rebuild of IH-35 through downtown, this time with a resolution (later slightly amended) focused on expansion of proposed 8-lane, 45-mile-per-hour frontage roads that appeared to conflict with potential 'cap and stitch' plans. ***Story. Draft Resolution***.

European cities are dramatically scaling back on their relationship with cars, the **Washington Post** reports, removing parking spaces, charging fees to most-polluting models, and making

neighborhoods off-limits to vehicles. 340 cities and towns in Europe have implemented some kind of restriction on personal cars. [Story](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The usually conservative economic historian Niall Ferguson - a Trump re-election supporter - wrote a particularly scary analysis of the president's trade and geopolitical policies last week in *The Free Press* entitled 'A User's Guide For Wrecking The Global Financial System,' which compares current tariff and weak-dollar strategies to post WWI Britain, identifying 17 separate redlights blinking right now for the US economy. [Opinion](#).

New Census Data Analysis: Four of the top ten fastest-growing US counties for population growth from July 2023 to July 2024 are in Texas, and at least one is in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor**, **Caldwell County**, the *Texas Tribune* reports [here](#). And Greater **Austin** edged **Portland** out of the Top 25 US metro areas in growth. [Story](#). [More](#).

Spirit Airlines has added non-stop flights from **San Antonio** International Airport to **Nashville**, **Detroit**, and resumed an earlier service to **Baltimore**, the *Express-News* reports. [Details](#).

Breaking the cycle of poverty will require recognizing that workforce development and transportation are interconnected and that both require more local investment, write Goodwill **San Antonio** president Carlos Contreras and VIA Metropolitan Transit president Jon Gary Herrera in an *Express-News* op-ed. [Opinion](#).

Southwest Research Institute in **San Antonio** has developed a hydrogen-powered engine suitable for zero-emissions, 18-wheeler big-rig trucks, but the market for widespread deployment may be hampered by a lack of hydrogen refueling facilities statewide in the near term, officials announced last week. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

"When you can't control what's happening, challenge yourself to control the way you respond to it. That's where your power is."

- Lisa Nichols

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