



## Monday Morning Report

March 18, 2024

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### INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee meets *this* Wednesday, March 20, at 2:00 pm via Zoom. Dr. Soe Myint, of Texas State University, will discuss his proposed geospatial mapping project focused on climate & water resources in the Corridor, in addition to other agenda items. [Draft Agenda](#).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Five of the nation's top ten counties for fatal large truck crashes are in Texas, according to studies based upon statistical data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration from 2017-2021 - but none of the most dangerous counties are in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor**. West Texas oilfield counties (**Reeves, Howard, Midland, and Erath**) dominated the list. **Fayette County**, between **Austin** and **Houston**, ranked fifth. [Story](#).

The **Dallas-Ft. Worth** metroplex population surpassed 8.1 million people during 2023, according to new Census Bureau data released last week, joining **Houston** (7.5 million) as the two fastest-growing US metros. **Austin** ranked 7th nationally, adding 50,000 people; **San Antonio** ranked 9th, with 48,000 new residents. [Story](#).

Both **San Antonio** and **Austin** received grants announced last week from the federal 'Reconnecting Communities' highway program: \$105 million for a 'Cap and Stitch' project on IH-35 in Austin; \$3 million in **San Antonio** for a planning grant to connect the East Side of IH-37 to downtown. [AUS details](#). [SAT details](#).

Although it won't be finished until 2028 and more lane closures will occur this week, TxDOT reports that some phases of that \$1.4 billion Loop 1604 project in **San Antonio** are more than halfway complete and, overall, on-schedule and on-budget. Update [here](#).

Waymo says it will put driverless Jaguar taxi's onto the streets in a 43-square-mile swath of **Austin**, though initially only for its own employees in test runs ([here](#)). But mayor Kirk Watson had some thoughts of his own on that deployment at South By Southwest last week, and some further words on opposition to light rail. [Story](#).

**San Antonio** VIA's Silver Line east-west Bus Rapid Transit project made the shortlist of projects the Biden administration hopes to fund during the 2025 fiscal year. The federal government has already committed funding to the agency's north-south Bus Rapid Transit line from the airport to downtown, launching in 2027. [Story](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Hearst Media, owner of the **San Antonio Express-News**, is continuing expansion into the **Austin** media market via the acquisition last week of **Austin Monthly** and **Austin Home** - just one month after the *Express-News* launched its online newsletter **Austin Daily**. More details [here](#).

**HGTV**, a home improvement- and real estate-focused television channel owned by *Warner Discovery*, named three **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** cities along IH-35 as among some of the '30-Best Up-And-Coming Small Towns' in America. **Kyle, Georgetown, and New Braunfels** made the list. [Details](#).

We've cited before problems in the re-insurance business - companies that re-insure retail insurance companies selling property and weather-related liability policies - and now veteran industry-specialist Mary Williams Walsh is warning on **News Items** about potential issues in the offshore *life* re-insurance business. Be warned. [Opinion](#).

Based upon a low unemployment rate, outstanding schools, and a low crime rate, **USA Today** named **New Braunfels** as the third "Best City In Texas To Live In," topped only by **Tyler** (1) and **Laredo** (2). "New Braunfels may be the most entertaining city in our Top Five," the paper said. With all due respect, **Tyler**?? Details [here](#).

## Thought of the Week

"People are like tea bags—you can't tell how strong they are until you put them in hot water."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

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