



## Monday Morning Report

April 18, 2022

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### INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee meets *this* Wednesday, April 20 at 2 PM by videoconference. [Draft Agenda](#).

COVID-19 UPDATE: For the first time, global confirmed cases this morning topped half a billion at 504,598,742, with 6,198,694 deaths. US cases reached 80,632,301 million with 988,618 deaths. (4/18/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). As of last Friday, Texas was reporting 5,522,584 confirmed cases with 86,327 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 470,842 cases with 6,111 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 26,294 cases, still with 398 deaths; **Comal County**: 22,048 cases, with 547 deaths; **Hays County**: 52,065 cases still with 430 deaths; **Travis County**: 203,917 cases with 1,724 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 109,130 cases with 871 deaths (4/14/22). ([TDHHS](#)). *Current regional hospitalization-rate data is found [here](#).*

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Cross-border truck traffic snarled by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's order for increased vehicle inspections began to clear over the weekend after the order was lifted under intense pressure, but the costs in spoiled produce and supply chain delays continue to accumulate. The **Washington Post** claimed Gov. Abbott had declared a 'war on international commerce' ([here](#)) but the **Dallas Morning News** said the governor could benefit politically ([here](#)).

Capital Metro president Randy Clarke will step back as executive director at the **Austin** Transit Partnership - an entity created to implement the \$7 billion Project Connect light rail effort - and move into a role as an ex-officio board member. A search is underway for a new executive director for the Partnership. [Story](#).

The future of **Austin** transportation is not roads, opines the newsletter **Austonia**, in a survey of the city's transportation officials commenting on traffic and pedestrian safety, micromobility trends, and the shift toward greener mobility alternatives. The goal is to get 50% of commuters out of their cars. [Story](#).

It won't happen overnight, but one **Boston** consulting group predicts that widespread deployment of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure could spell the end for 80% of the more than 100,000 US retail gas stations by 2035. Good news: vast underground storage tanks will no longer be necessary. Bad news: conversion from gas to electric chargers can be expensive. [Story](#).

US port congestion has shifted from the West Coast to the East Coast ('the next hot spot for terribly high congestion'), reports supply-chain newsletter **Lodestar**, causing a pivot to ports along the Gulf of Mexico by many importers. "**Houston** docks are getting swamped with containers," one freight forwarder said. [Story](#).

**New Braunfels** approved agreements last week with Union Pacific Rail to purchase the railroad's 3.62-acre downtown rail yard for \$2.18 million and fund relocation of their offices and other facilities to Union Pacific-owned land elsewhere in **Comal County** at Corbyn Yard. [Details](#) (third item, left hand column).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

**San Antonio** had three people on '2022's *Forbes* Billionaire List:' Red McCombs, real estate developer Christopher 'Kit' Goldsbury, and medical device entrepreneur James Leininger ([here](#)). In **Austin**, the list includes Michael Dell, venture capitalist Robert Smith, Tito's vodka czar Bert Beveridge, tech investor Thai Lee and, of course, Elon Musk - rated second richest behind Amazon's Jeff Bezos ([here](#)).

One more boost to the burgeoning auto-manufacturing industry sector in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor**: DeLorean, maker of the gull-winged star of the '*Back to The Future*' film series, was granted over \$500,000 by **San Antonio** to build a local manufacturing facility; 450 jobs and \$18 million in investment are expected. [Story](#).

Twitter-founder Jack Dorsey's start-up Block and Blockstream's Adam Back announced at a conference in **Miami** last week that they will team with **Austin's** Tesla to build a massive new project using solar power to mine bitcoin in West Texas ("You get this perfect overlap with both sun quality and wind speed," an expert said.) [Story](#).

The Great Springs Project released its Master Plan last week to create a 100-mile trails-and-parks corridor connecting **Austin** and **San Antonio** (with large footprints in **New Braunfels** and **San Marcos**). The effort calls for conserving and protecting from development 50,000-acres surrounding natural springs. [Story](#). [The Plan](#).

A **Burlington**, VT-based company is selling electric-powered, vertical-take-off-and-landing planes (essentially, a 'flying battery') to Amazon, the US Postal Service, and the Pentagon for use as cargo-carrying drones, the **New York Times** reports. When government regulation meets new technologies, expect delays. [Story](#).

Texas - with its large technology and defense industry sectors - is at particular risk from a global shortage of computer microchips, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo told a Congressional committee in **Washington** last week. She testified on the Biden administration's \$50 billion program to expand supplies. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"At any given moment, you have the power to say: this is not how the story is going to end."*

- Christine Mason Miller

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