



## Monday Morning Report

April 25, 2022

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### INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council met Wednesday of last week (4/20) for presentations on a Latino businesses study underway at Texas State University and a new Central Texas Transportation Alliance spearheaded by the Greater **San Marcos** Partnership. Other discussion topics included an update on TxDOT's I-10 Study, the Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance, and Amtrak's expansion plans, potentially involving **Austin** and **San Antonio**. For details or an agenda, email [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global confirmed cases have reached 509.5 million, with 6,218,431 deaths. US cases reached 80,988,514 this morning, with 991,280 deaths. (4/25/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). As of yesterday, Texas reported 5,537,099 confirmed cases with 86,482 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 472,297 cases with 6,120 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 26,333 cases, still with 398 deaths; **Comal County**: 22,102 cases, with 548 deaths; **Hays County**: 52,205 cases still with 430 deaths; **Travis County**: 204,810 cases with 1,731 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 109,681 cases with 875 deaths (4/24/22). ([TDHHS](#)). Current regional hospitalization-rate data is found [here](#).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

TxDOT's chief engineer is warning that construction material shortages and inflation, combined with supply chain issues, are causing price increases and delays for some of the 15,000, \$156 billion worth of projects it has currently underway. The equivalent of a 'Break Glass' memo went out last week, listing a series of steps engineers at the district level should take in responding to the situation. [Story](#).

Often cited as a potential role-model for **Austin** and **San Antonio**, the city of **Portland** has invested heavily in light rail and other transit projects in an effort to reduce the tailpipe emissions that contribute to global warming. Despite that effort, the **New York Times** reports that the number of cars and trucks on local roads has only increased. Now, the state of Oregon wants to build more local highways instead to cut congestion. [Story](#).

Opponents of highway expansion projects in five of the state's largest cities descended on **Austin** last week for the monthly meeting of the Texas Transportation Commission. Projects in **Austin**, **El Paso**, **Dallas** and **Houston** drew a lot of fire over environmental concerns, safety risks, and neighborhood disruptions. [Story](#).

Privately financed passenger rail operator Brightline Holdings, which currently runs a rail service between **Miami** and **West Palm Beach**, is moving forward on a high-speed rail connection from **Los Angeles** to **Las Vegas**, apparently with the backing of California's state treasurer - who had previously criticized the state's other high-speed rail project between **Los Angeles** and **San Francisco**. A survey report from [Bloomberg News](#) is [here](#).

The United Kingdom has taken the first step toward revising the nation's Highway Code to permit self-driving cars on British roads. Officials expect a finalized Code - which initially involves slow-moving vehicles in specific lanes - to be available prior to widespread autonomous vehicle deployment by 2025. [Story](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

**Austin** Smart City Alliance and **San Antonio** officials host a *Smart Cities Summit* this week (4/28-29) at Port **San Antonio's** new Tech Port Center that features research and technology demonstrations from industry leaders designed 'to help bridge the digital divide in cities and advance technology.' [Details](#).

The **Austin** Chamber of Commerce is hosting a **Washington DC** advocacy trip June 21-23, the first such advocacy journey after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. [Details](#).

Frost Tower developer Weston Urban will be adding another high-rise building to downtown **San Antonio's** skyline, a 34-story, nearly 700,000-square foot apartment building with ground-floor retail at 305 Soledad Street with an expected completion in 2024. [Story](#).

Data gleaned from a post-census analysis suggests that the US 2020 Census Bureau count under-represented one-in-20 Latinos, thus a national under-count of nearly 3.3 million Hispanics - equivalent to the entire population of Utah. The under-count can impact federal funding distribution and both state & federal redistricting. [Opinion](#).

The prolific, respected energy science writer Vaclav Smil tells the **New York Times** that global climate activists need to learn more about economics and suggests that international climate goals are unrealistic and unachievable. "The most important thing to understand is the scale" of the intervention required, he says. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"All growth is a leap in the dark, a spontaneous unpremeditated act without benefit of experience."*

- Henry Miller

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