



## Monday Morning Report

June 20, 2022

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### INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is set for Wednesday, July 20 at 2 PM by videoconference. To add an item to the agenda, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global cases this morning are at 538.9 million with 6,318,889 million deaths. US cases are at 86.2 million, with 1,013,410 deaths (6/20/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Yesterday, Texas reported 5,727,542 confirmed cases with 86,971 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 489,717 cases with 6,160 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 27,085 cases, still with 399 deaths; **Comal County**: 22,890 cases, still with 552 deaths; **Hays County**: 54,417 cases still with 433 deaths; **Travis County**: 216,885 cases with 1,742 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 114,742 cases, still with 880 deaths (6/19/22). ([TDHHS](#)). *Current regional hospitalization-rate data is found [here](#).*

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Nearly 400 crashes occurring in just ten months involved cars using advanced driver-assistance technologies, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced last week, days after saying they would investigate the safety record of Tesla automobiles. The **New York Times** reported that Teslas were involved in 273 of those accidents, five of which had fatalities. [Story. Report.](#)

In the ten days since Texas Central Railway's president, Carlos Aguilar, unceremoniously resigned from the **Dallas-to-Houston** bullet train project there has still been no official reaction from the company's leaders - if there are still any left. No one is answering the company telephone and the website has not been updated in months. But critics of the project have had plenty to say, mostly crowing that the effort is dead. [Story. More.](#)

**San Antonio's** VIA Metropolitan Transit says some 77,000 trips have been booked in the last year using a handy smartphone app that allows users to pay for both bus rides and a rent-a-bike at each end of a journey, according to **Government Technology**, enabling ticketing across multiple modes with the touch of a single button. [Story.](#)

More on VIA: **San Antonio's** Metropolitan Transit Agency was also in the news last week for president and CEO Jeff Arndt's confident comments to a 'State of Transit' luncheon about a rapid bus route from the airport to downtown. Arndt said construction on the \$320 million North-South project would likely begin in 2025 and be completed and operational by 2027 - five years ahead of earlier schedules - thanks to federal funds. [Story.](#)

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The US economy rebounded from the COVID-19 pandemic more rapidly than almost anyone predicted, but some metros recovered faster than others. Between February and April of 2020, the country shed 22 million jobs - 15% of total employment, reports The Brookings Institute. Their Metro Recovery Index has been tracking the pace of the rebound for top metro areas, including **Austin** and **San Antonio**, and the latest numbers are available [here](#).

**Austin's** red-hot housing market is beginning to normalize, says a Texas A&M real estate specialist, with inventories ticking up and the pace of median home-price increases flattening out. [Story](#).

Plans by **Austin** city leaders to convert a motel into housing for older homeless people may be unraveled by **Williamson County**, which filed a lawsuit last week to prevent the city from using the Candlewood Suites, in a Northwest part of **Austin** that is in **Williamson County**, for that purpose. [Story](#).

**New Braunfels** Utilities is seeking a vendor for a procurement and contract management system, web-based and user-friendly, to help them streamline the procurement process, automate repetitive tasks, enhance transparency, and increase the overall efficiency of their operations. There's a virtual question-and-answer session scheduled for June 28, 10:00 am. [Details](#) (left-hand column, sixth item).

Trouble At Starbase: The **Washington Post** reports that Elon Musk's SpaceX company has fired workers critical of the company or its leader on Twitter and other public forums, but most particularly those involved in collecting signatures on a group letter calling Musk's behavior 'a frequent source of distraction and embarrassment.' [Story](#).

More Elon Musk Watch: **Bloomberg News** reports that another Musk venture, The Boring Company, is feuding with **Bastrop** officials over multiple complaints that include mobile homes built for workers without authorized sewage facilities, failure to secure air or stormwater permits, and construction without approval of a driveway. No wonder he wants to go to Mars. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"Maybe the art of life is to convert tough times to great experiences."*

- Joan Marques

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