



Monday Morning Report

June 26, 2023

INTERNAL

US Representative Joaquin Castro joined last week's Executive Committee meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council to update members on efforts to develop enhanced Amtrak service in the Corridor and movement toward revising the 'perimeter rule' to allow flights from **San Antonio** into **Washington** Reagan National Airport. Members also heard reports on Toyota's new 1000-kilometer range electric vehicles, emergency planning for major rail accidents, new University of Texas studies on AUS-SAT passenger rail, legislative outcomes, and more. For information, email council@thecorridor.org. [Agenda](#).

Join TxDOT and local transportation officials *this* Friday in **San Antonio** (6/30) at 10:00 am for the ribbon-cutting ceremony opening Phase II of the US 281 North Expansion. Information and RSVP to jennifer.serold@txdot.gov.

The final meeting of the Steering Committee for TxDOT's I-10 Texas Corridor Study (Corridor Council staff serves on the oversight committee) is Thursday, July 13, 9-11:00 am. The Committee will review the I-10 Texas Corridor Study Implementation Plan. [Details](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

The worldwide re-insurance industry - basically, the companies that insure insurance companies - has turned against the fossil fuel energy sector. Tracking an increase in weather-related natural disasters eventually linked to climate change, the United Nations-initiated Net-Zero Insurance Alliance is phasing out coverage for high-carbon businesses like coal, oil and gas, and transportation. Twenty-three (red) state attorneys general are suing. [Story](#).

The **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** is both bisected and crisscrossed with a network of railroad lines carrying hazardous chemicals daily through populated areas. Harrowing testimony last week before the National Transportation Safety Board regarding the February derailment and fire in **East Palestine**, Ohio highlighted just how quickly a mishap can turn into a major catastrophe. Officials had just 13 minutes to make decisions. [Story](#).

Transit officials nationwide are coming to grips with the fact that they can no longer rely on the typical suburbs-to-downtown-office commuter as at-home work continues to disrupt ridership and real estate - with no place more affected than **San Francisco**. Empty streets, empty retail stores and open drug use are changing city-scapes and economic realities for many urban centers, the **New York Times** reports. [Story](#).

Also, related to pandemic-driven commute changes (*above*), **San Francisco**, **New York**, **Washington**, and **Los Angeles** lost more remote workers than they gained new residents, while, by contrast, **Austin**, **San Antonio**, **Denver**, **Dallas**, and **Nashville** attracted a net influx of people working from home, the **Times** reports. [Story](#). [More](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

It's Official: The US Census Bureau confirmed last week that Texas is now a majority minority state, with Hispanic Texans making up 40.2% of the population, just topping non-Hispanic white Texans at 39.8%. It is now official, but Latinos have actually made up the largest share of the state's population since at least July of 2022. [Details](#).

The **San Antonio Report** says the city's *Ready To Work* initiative is facing a critical test in the next six months as 1400 participants complete training or certifications and enter the job market. Launched with \$200 million in city funding, the program has drawn questions from city council skeptics after reducing target goals. [Story](#).

The auto industry's adoption of **Austin**-based Tesla's electric vehicle charging standards is a potential 'Trojan Horse,' **Axios** reports, sparking speculation that the company might one day control EV ecosystem parts such as batteries and self-driving technologies - leading to Intel-like stickers (*Elon Inside?*). [Scary Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Nothing would be done at all if you waited until you could do it so well that no one could find fault with it."

- Cardinal Newman

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