



Monday Morning Report

August 3, 2026

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, August 19th at 2 PM. For more information or to add an item to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The downtown **Austin** Union Pacific train derailment last April was due to a mid-train locomotive failure that the company ignored - according to a federal accident analysis - allowing potential hazmat exposure to surrounding areas, the **American-Statesman** reports. Union Pacific had previously said no hazmat was involved. [Details](#).

With multi-year federal transportation funding stalled in the US Senate and unlikely to emerge before current funding expires September 30, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy just outlined the Trump administration's reauthorization priorities, **SmartCities** reports: expand interstate highways, eliminate public transit funding, and cut programs for safety, bikes, pedestrians, and electric vehicle charging stations. [Story](#). [Duffy Proposal](#).

The Trump administration is also refusing to spend funding already allocated to public transit projects, including *not approving a single new agreement* for Capital Investment Grants, vital to rail efforts such as **Austin's** Project Connect, the **New York Times** reports. The consequences are 'acute:' delays compound construction costs already outpacing inflation, and without federal funding certainty, it's harder for communities to pursue bonds. [Story](#). [More](#).

Given a city budget gap of \$158 million, mayor Gina Ortiz Jones has called for a second public vote on that new **San Antonio** Spurs basketball arena voters approved last year. Jones says voters didn't realize the city's \$488 million commitment budget impacts, nor that they are also paying for **Bexar County's** \$311 million contribution: 'Since they pay twice, city voters deserve to vote twice.' [Story](#). [Video](#).

From **Texas Public Radio's** interview last week with Texas Rail Advocates president Peter LeCody about new **Austin-San Antonio** passenger rail studies by TxDOT and **Travis County**: "Well, they're telling us that you're either going to be stuck in traffic for the rest of your life, or we're going to have to find some solutions other than building more roads and expanding our highways." [Interview](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Frost Bank chief executive officer Phil Green warned analysts last week that the intensely competitive Texas loan market is creating "a race to the bottom" lending environment, heightening risk if there's an economic downturn, **BankingDive** reports. Loan structure, not interest rates, becomes a hazardous competitive edge. [Story](#).

With thousands of **Spokane**, WA residents receiving evacuation orders over the weekend due to wildfires ("*LEAVE NOW: It May Be Your Last Chance!*"), it seemed a good time to remind **MMR** readers that **Austin** ranks 5th in the nation for the highest measure of wildfire real estate risk (94,000 homes), **San Antonio** is 7th (78,000 homes); **Spokane** wasn't ranked. Go [here](#) to learn more about Corridor Council efforts in wildfire resiliency. [Story](#).

Resident historian Michael Barnes at the **Austin American-Statesman** published a nice piece last month tracing the origins of Interstate 35 back to pre-history days as an Indian trading route among the springs around **San Marcos** and **New Braunfels**, up through the **Austin** and **San Antonio** construction projects underway now. [Here](#).

Visionary architectural pioneer Pliny Fisk III, co-founder of the University of Texas at **Austin**-related Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems, died last week at age 82. [Texas Architect Profile](#). [Obit](#).

In yet another study of dubious merit, **WalletHub** finds that the 'happiest' of 182 US cities is **Fremont**, CA; the 'unhappiest' is **Detroit**, MI, with **Austin** ranked at a dour 39th and **San Antonio** a miserable 154th. The only Texas city in the *Top Happy 20* was the **Dallas** suburb of **Plano**, the **New York Times** reports. [Story](#). [Study](#). [Why Plano?](#)

Thought of the Week

"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past."

– Thomas Jefferson (in a letter to John Adams)

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