



Monday Morning Report

August 28, 2023

INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council will meet Wednesday, September 20 at 2:00 pm by Zoom. If you would like to add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

It's been a long time coming, but now it's here: TxDOT announced last week that it had cleared the last administrative hurdles for a \$4.5 billion rebuild of IH-35 through downtown **Austin**, publishing its record of decision and final environmental documents. The 10-year construction schedule begins in mid-2024. [Details](#).

In a story datelined out of **Austin**, the **Associated Press** reports that the deadly triple-digit heat wave pummeling the nation's infrastructure is buckling roads, straining water systems, slowing down trains, and threatening the Texas power grid. Costs for heat-related US road maintenance and replacement could reach \$26 billion by 2040, the **AP** reports, with Texas, California, and Illinois being the hardest-hit states. [Story](#).

The **New Braunfels** city council continued studying viable local transit options at a special meeting last week, hearing a series of options that include fixed-route bus services, micro-transit, van- and car-pooling, emergency rides, ridesharing, and commuter buses. An online local public survey favored fixed-route buses. [Details](#).

In the six months since that devastating derailment and chemical fire in **East Palestine, OH**, **Vice** reports that there have been dozens of other major US freight train accidents, including at least 15 involving hazardous materials. Longer trains and 'precision-scheduling' are cited as reasons; federal reforms are overdue. [Story](#). [More](#).

California's high-speed rail project, scaled back from the original **Los Angeles-to-San Francisco** vision to a 170-mile Central Valley starter-segment between **Merced** and **Bakersfield**, is beginning to screen vendors to provide trains and maintenance for ten electric train-sets capable of operating at 242 miles-per-hour by 2028. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Electric vehicles and solar panels rely on minerals and processes controlled by China, America's main economic competitor. Despite efforts to generate homegrown sources, a restrictive US regulatory environment slows development of mining/refining, the **Washington Post** says, prolonging Chinese dominance. [Opinion](#).

Austin-based Tesla has leased one million square-feet of space in **Kyle**, adding to the already significant economic impact the electric vehicle-manufacturer is having there. In the last two years, five Tesla suppliers and affiliated businesses - including manufacturing, logistics and technology development companies - moved to the 'Pie Capital of Texas,' according to the mayor. [Story](#).
[More](#). [Still More](#).

A private rancher from **Houston** is proposing a dam and recreational lake on the South Llano River that could impact **Austin**'s water supply, the ***Austin Monitor*** reports. **Llano** and **Edwards Counties** residents are opposing a related permit, currently pending before the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. [Details](#).

Long-time president of the **San Antonio** Medical Foundation, Jim Reed, has announced his pending retirement after a quarter-century at the forefront of Alamo City civic leadership. His achievements and accolades are many, including as a Corridor Council supporter, so the MMR will just add, 'Well done, Jim, a job well done.' [Story](#).

We're staying out of this, but ***Travel and Leisure*** magazine, citing empirical studies conducted by Real Estate Witch.com, ranks **Austin** as the Number One US city for tacos. **San Jose**, **Las Vegas**, **San Antonio** and **San Diego** rounded out the top five. We report, you decide. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Happiness is a direction, not a place."

- Sydney J. Harris

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