



Monday Morning Report

October 16, 2023

INTERNAL

There will be no Executive Committee meeting this week. The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday, November 15, at 2:00 pm by Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

Figures revealed last week at the Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance (TxETRA) policy group meeting indicate that year-over-year electric vehicle registrations are up by 46% in **San Antonio**, 40% in **Austin**, and up 50% for Texas statewide. [Details. More.](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Regional discussions continue to swirl around a potential commuter rail connection between **Austin, San Antonio**, and the communities in-between - most recently surveyed in last week's **Austin Business Journal** article revealing ongoing talks among Amtrak, **Travis, Bexar**, and **Hays County** officials. Various economic development specialists describe the prospect of enhanced daily passenger rail as 'transformative.' [Story. More.](#)

Opponents of the IH-35 Capital Express Project in **Austin** hope to stage the largest anti-highway protest in Texas history next month, they say. Organizers for Rethink35, a group fighting the expansion effort, are hoping 2000 people and political heavy-hitters from all levels of government will attend their rally on Nov. 5. [Details. More.](#)

\$25 billion in **Austin** mobility projects including Interstate 35 expansions, light rail construction, and Bergstrom International Airport improvements will generate transportation sector workforce demands requiring 10,000 new workers per year over the next 17-years, according to a CivicSol consulting group report released last week at a 'Moving Forward' summit sponsored by Workforce Solutions Capital Area. [Story.](#)

Houston Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia, writing that extreme heat is the leading cause of US weather-related fatalities, has some policy recommendations regarding climate change: name heat a major federal disaster category; appoint heat czars as in **Miami** and **Phoenix**; improve workforce protections; and more. [Opinion.](#)

With artificial intelligence tools proliferating in transportation planning circles now, **Route Fifty** turned to two tech experts for advice on how public sector officials should approach the emerging technology: regulate carefully; clear lines of responsibility; beware cyber-attacks; limit data-sharing; expect a slow roll-out. [Story.](#)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The **Washington Post** says **Austin** is facing a Texas-sized challenge as a new 66-story building known as 'Sixth and Guadalupe' opens later this year - with no occupants, thus far. Tech giant Meta has scrapped plans to occupy up to 19 floors of office space and the **Post** contends the abandoned pre-lease deal poses a problem symbolic of a nation-wide glut. Six million sq. ft. of new office space is set to open in the next few years in the city. [Story](#). [More on Texas Real Estate](#).

Land banks - generally used as vehicles to acquire underutilized real estate such as vacant lots and abandoned homes with property tax liens - can be used to develop affordable housing units, and **San Antonio** city council member Teri Castillo is suggesting the city create a land bank program to solve a local affordability crisis. [Story](#).

Global construction manufacturer JCB, based in the United Kingdom, will build a 720,000 sq. ft. facility next year on 400-acres on **San Antonio's** Southside near the existing Toyota plant. 1500 new jobs will be created. [Story](#).

National brand TopGolf, a golf driving range game with electronically tracked balls and automatically scored drives, is coming to **New Braunfels** and **Comal County** with an \$18 million facility scheduled to open by December 2024, [KSAT News](#) in **San Antonio** reports. [Story](#).

Texas Government Insider profiled a **Dripping Springs** 25-year public sector veteran, city administrator Michelle Fischer last week, a Texas State University in **San Marcos** graduate who likes to make silly Christmas cards with her family - often while dressed in costumes. Who knew? See more [here](#). (left-hand column)

Thought of the Week

"I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I intended to be."

- Douglas Adams

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