



Monday Morning Report

December 11, 2023

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled for December 20 at 2:00 pm, via Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Texas will receive \$2.5 billion out of \$8.2 billion in federal passenger rail development funding announced last week, with \$500,000 each going to **Dallas-Ft. Worth-to-Houston** high speed and conventional rail projects, a **Ft. Worth-Dallas** connection, **Houston-to-San Antonio** conventional rail, and a **Dallas/Ft. Worth-to-Meridian**, MS interstate project. TxDOT's application for a **San Antonio-to-Dallas** (including **Austin**) route - the most populous, congested, and trade-heavy corridor in the state - was completely shut out of the planning grant awards, with no explanation yet as to why. [Story](#). [More](#). [Local Reaction](#).

Community Impact reports on the 20-year development history of **Austin's** primary toll roads and outlines possible plans for more tolled roadways by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA), possibly including tolled lanes on south MoPac and an extension of US 290 east of State Highway 130. No plans yet, the paper reports, for using CTRMA surplus revenues to finance transit or rail projects. [Story](#).

Travis County commissioner (and **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee-member) Brigid Shea, attending the COP28 global climate meetings in **Dubai** in her role as board chair for the United Nations group's US Local Governments for Sustainability, is reporting back to constituents via **YouTube** on best practices learned from participants about emissions reductions, climate-driven migrations, and water issues. [Story](#). [Video](#).

"Safety does not seem to be the priority when it comes to Tesla," said Jennifer Homendy, chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, calling for restrictions on the **Austin**-based company's Autopilot assisted-driving software program after investigations into at least eight fatal or serious crashes, the **Washington Post** reports. [Story](#).

US pedestrian deaths began increasing about a decade ago after declining for the previous 30 years, particularly for incidents at night - something no other wealthy country is experiencing. The **New York Times** reports that the reasons seem to be cell phones, more on-screen technology, and - surprisingly, automatic transmissions. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Is the bloom off of the high-tech rose in **Austin**? The technology newsletter **TechCrunch** seems to think so, reporting almost-gleefully last week that the city's reputation as the Silicon Hills replacement for Silicon Valley is fading due to high housing costs, slowing venture capital funding, and brutal summer heat. But mostly, they cite industry-wide layoff trends and some 'just plain failed' companies. [Story](#).

The **Austin** city council voted 9-2 last week to approve a major change in local zoning rules, allowing up to three housing units to be built per lot, arguing that the change will increase the supply of housing and slow an exploding increase in costs. Critics say the new rules threaten the character of local neighborhoods. [Story](#).

Nearly 4000 automobile dealers in 50 states sent a letter to President Biden last week urging the administration to slow proposed emissions regulations designed to spur growth in the electric vehicles (EV's) marketplace, **Axios** reports. 'The supply of unsold EVs is surging, as they are not selling nearly as fast as they are arriving at our dealerships...This attempted EV mandate is unrealistic based upon customer demand...' the dealers say. [Story](#).

Today, the **Express-News** recaps 20 major construction projects currently underway in **San Antonio**, including eight downtown and eleven that should be complete within the next five years. They are all organized into a handy chart by expected timeline for development. [Story](#).

Former city councilman, former president of the **San Antonio** Chamber of Commerce, and former chairman of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council, Richard Perez, has been named as president of the **San Antonio** Medical Foundation, effective January 1, 2024. He replaces long-time civic leader Jim Reed. [Story](#).

Hollywood Park, a 3100-person **Bexar County** suburb of **San Antonio** - which had voted to ban short-term housing rentals over traffic and noise issues - has been sued in federal court by local homeowners seeking an injunction to overturn the ban's "inescapably Orwellian" elements. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"To grow, we must travel in the direction of our fears."

- John Berryman

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