



Monday Morning Report

April 15, 2019

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Five-Year Strategy Planning Workshop takes place this week in **San Marcos** on Wednesday with Jeff Hahn of Hahn Public facilitating our discussions. The limited-seating event is sold out at this point, but we will widely distribute the results over coming weeks.

Thanks once again to Gary Raba of Raba-Kistner Consulting Engineers of **San Antonio** for sponsoring the Five-Year Strategy Planning Workshop. We appreciate their support and civic leadership.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Not unlike Interstate 35 between **Austin** and **San Antonio**, the **Brooklyn-Queens** Expressway entering **New York** city is notorious for dangerous and frustrating traffic congestion, deteriorating and outdated bridges and ramps, and - to put it bluntly - overall ugliness. Known locally as 'the BQE,' the 1940's era roadway - long a symbol of political gridlock and infrastructural decay - may be getting a dramatic re-routing and face-lift financed in part by a local congestion-pricing pact approved recently. The designs alone are worth seeing [here](#).

The Texas Senate in **Austin** may vote as early as this week on Senate Bill 2, the 'revenue cap' proposed on property taxes, even if it requires the 'nuclear option' of changing Senate rules, as Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has threatened. Mayor Jane Hughson of **San Marcos**, in an op-ed last week, warned that the caps "limit what cities can spend on police, firefighters, roads, economic development, and other quality of life needs," thus threatening the so-called 'Texas Miracle.' [Opinion](#). Letter to every State Legislator by Corridor Council [here](#).

TxDOT is developing a '*Texas-Mexico Border Transportation Master Plan*,' that will examine all 28 ports-of-entry from **Juarez** to **Brownsville**. The study will involve a series of stakeholder meetings and coordination with state, Mexican, and federal agencies to determine infrastructure and other improvements required to facilitate trade and passenger movements across the border. [Just FYI](#): trade between the US, Mexico, and Canada topped \$1.3 trillion last year. [Study Description](#).

Ride-sharing company Uber's Initial Public Offering hit the street last week, prompting a raft of stories and opinions about the company's business prospects and research projects into self-driving vehicles, flying taxis, and other exotic ambitions. [Wired](#) examined the company's finances ([here](#)), [Slate](#) revealed that 25% of Uber's business occurs in just five cities ([here](#)), and [Quartz](#) examined its competitive landscape ([here](#)). See the full public offering document [here](#).

Six thousand people moved to **New Braunfels** last year, according to Mayor Barron Casteel, but the local newspaper - the wonderfully-named [Herald-Zeitung](#) - says the city is keeping up with a seemingly 'insatiable' appetite for mobility with new roads and sidewalks, lots of state and local money, and a growing interest in public-private partnerships. [Story](#).

Senate Bill 962, which extends the deadline for the Prop 1 transportation funding stream to 2034 and establishes calculation mechanisms for the Economic Stabilization (Rainy Day) Fund, unanimously passed the Senate in **Austin** last week. [Details](#). Corridor Council letter to legislators [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

The Trump administration threatened last week to send thousands of undocumented immigrants and asylum-seekers from overcrowded border towns into US sanctuary cities, among them **San Antonio**, **Austin**, and **San Francisco**. It could be just the beginning: add global climate change to the list of reasons immigrants are flooding into the US. The **New York Times**, citing a World Bank study, reports that as many as 1.4 million Central Americans could flee weather change for northern climes in the next few years. [Story](#).

San Antonio is 'stronger than ever,' pronounced mayor Ron Nirenberg in his second annual 'State of the City' address last week. He touted crime rates at their lowest point in 30 years, a doubling of the city's street maintenance budget, and praised his fellow citizens as 'Team SA.' "We're not flashy or loud," he said, "But quietly focused on real results." [Story](#).

Austin and **Houston** were ranked among the Top 10 most disaster-prone metro areas in the US, according to real estate brokerage firm Redfin, which used federal data on events such as hurricanes, floods, and fires to make the determination. **Austin** ranked higher for fires, **Houston** for floods. **San Antonio** ranked 34th in the US for disaster exposure, mostly due to hurricanes. [Story](#).

Oh, no, not again. Something to think about while creeping along on MoPac or Interstate 35: **Austin** has just been named - for the third year in a row - as the *Best Place To Live In America* by the **New York**-based **US News And World Report**. 34th place on the list went to **San Antonio**. Our 'Credibility Meter' broke when **Beaumont** made it to 108th. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"I cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

- Abraham Lincoln

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