



Monday Morning Report

April 22, 2019

INTERNAL

Many thanks to all who participated in our Strategic Planning Workshop last week in **San Marcos** and particular thanks to our sponsor, **San Antonio**-based Raba-Kistner Consulting Engineers. We'll be rolling out the complete results over the next few weeks but thought we'd update you this week with co-founder and former mayor of **San Antonio** Henry Cisneros' suggestions for areas of activity for the Corridor Council over the next five years:

- Surface transportation improvements to Interstate 35 between Austin-San Antonio
- Advanced Rapid Transit on Interstate 35
- Connections between the Austin and San Antonio International Airports
- Power Generation Improvements for Central and South Texas
- Securing Long Term Water Supplies and Conservation in the Austin-San Antonio Corridor
- Professional Sports Franchises
- Better Integration with the University of Texas System Anchor Institutions in Austin and San Antonio
- Military-Related Enterprises Linked to Army Futures Command and San Antonio Military Industries
- Enhanced Tourism Cooperation to Build Additional Day Stays between Austin and San Antonio.

More results from the Five-Year Strategy Planning Workshop will be forthcoming next week.

INFRASTRUCTURE

As both **Austin** and **San Antonio** contemplate massive new investments in high capacity transit corridors (and seek voter approval through Project Connect and ConnectSA), qualifying for federal transit funding will become essential to their overall financing success. The criteria for federal transit funding include economic development potential, congestion relief, mobility improvements, land use, and cost-effectiveness. Ratings criteria were quantified and updated in 2016 by the Federal Transit Administration and for a deeper dive into how they work, click [here](#).

Tomorrow in **Washington DC** the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the Trump administration's move to place a citizenship question on the upcoming 2020 Census, something critics believe will inhibit minority participation in the census process and ultimately cost some states millions in population-based funding. At issue is whether the decision to add a citizenship question is a violation of the Voting Rights Act, and the answer is far from clear. [Story](#).

That proposed sales tax increase to offset property taxes, proposed last week by Gov. Abbott, Lt. Gov. Patrick, and Texas House Speaker Bonnen, would appear to face an uphill battle in the partisan atmosphere of the Legislature in **Austin**. If all 83 House Republicans approve, the measure still needs 17 Democrats to pass; in the Senate, the bill would require at least two Democrats even if all 19 Republican senators approve. [Story](#).

Yet another group of regional mayors are weighing in against the legislative effort to cap property taxes, this time with new opinion editorials citing the real-life consequences of cutting revenue to fast-growing cities in the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor. **Austin** mayor Steve Adler and **Round Rock** mayor Craig

Morgan - joined by the mayors of **Bastrop**, **Georgetown**, and **Pflugerville** - signed an opposition piece [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Uproar in **Washington**: As a service to members interested in Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller's 'Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election,' we have provided a link to an indexed, searchable version of the documents [here](#).

A new analysis of national data reports that **Austin** ranks second in the nation for having the most female-owned startup companies. Seek Business Capital - a consulting group - found that 32.7 percent of **Austin** startups, 1,433 to be precise, are owned by women. The **St. Louis, Missouri-Illinois** metro area ranked first. The only other ranked city in Texas was **Houston**, at 17th. Details [here](#).

A report mandated by Congress from independent economists for the International Trade Commission has concluded that the new US-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA) will have only a minimal impact on the national economy, most of the gains provided by simply settling trade rule uncertainties sparked by negotiations over the treaty. The experts predicted an increase in Gross Domestic Product of 0.35%, about \$68.5 billion. [Details](#).

Bexar County gained 27,208 new residents between July 2017 and July 2018, ranking ninth among US counties recording the largest raw numerical population increases. For more details on population growth in **San Antonio-New Braunfels** visit [here](#).

Writing in this morning's **Rivard Report**, editor Bob Rivard argues that **San Antonio**'s system for electing its mayors is badly broken and requires immediate reforms. He suggests shifting municipal elections to November, expanding terms to four years, and employing better use of technology in the elections process. [Opinion](#).

Thought of the Week

"Prosperity depends more on wanting what you have than having what you want."

- Geoffrey F. Abert

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