



Monday Morning Report

May 13, 2019

INTERNAL

The Executive Committee meets *this* Wednesday, May 15, at 2:00 pm in **San Marcos** for a called meeting to discuss, refine and adopt the results of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's April 2019 vision and strategy workshop. The meeting will be held at the Council offices at 304 North CM Allen Parkway. Draft agenda [here](#). Please RSVP to council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

TxDOT unveiled the latest version of their IH-35 remake through central **Austin** last week and the plan includes depressed lanes through most of downtown but without the cap of parks and potential development real estate some have requested. TxDOT says that can be added later. The project's estimated cost is estimated at about \$8 billion and the local metropolitan planning organization pledged \$400 million in a bid to give it a head start. [Story](#). TxDOT's presentation to local planners can be seen [here](#). Environmentalists' objections [here](#).

The world's fastest bullet train has begun tests between **Sendai** and **Aomori** in northeastern Japan, expected to achieve cruising speeds at least 40 kph faster than current 320 kph operating systems, or 224 miles per hour. The latest generation **shinkansen** Alfa-X train is longer, with higher passenger capacity loads, than the trains now envisioned for the **Houston-Dallas** high speed rail project and is projected to be in commercial service by 2030. [Story](#).

Some of the biggest names in automotive technology and data sciences are creating the Urban Computing Foundation to offer open source tools to help cities combat congestion, crime, and other urban problems. **San Francisco**-based Linux Foundation (with 1000 members including automakers Ford, Honda, and Subaru, and chip-makers Intel and NVIDIA) joins forces with Uber, Facebook, Google, and IBM on the effort. [Details](#).

One of the largest infrastructure projects in the US - a \$13 billion tunnel connecting **New York** and New Jersey - got a significant boost earlier this month when the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Pete DeFazio (D-**Eugene**), proposed that Congress grant an environmental approval stalled by the Trump administration. It's a bold move that could impact other projects nationwide. [Story](#).

In the run-up to Uber's Initial Public Offering last week - and with rideshare drivers striking in many cities - JPMorgan Chase generated a study on where Uber and Lyft drivers make the most money in the US and the differences are stark: rideshare drivers in **New York** and **San Francisco** make more than twice as much per month (about \$1500) as drivers in **Austin** and **Dallas** (less than \$600). [Details](#).

General Motors' self-driving automobile unit, Cruise, has raised an additional \$1.15 billion from existing investors (which include Honda), raising its value to \$19 billion. An official said, "Developing and deploying self-driving vehicles at a massive scale is the engineering challenge of our generation." The company will also expand to **Seattle**, hiring 200 engineers there. [Story](#).

A study of **Austin** e-scooter riders released last week at a Center for Disease Control meeting in **Atlanta** revealed that - during a three-month period in 2018 - 935,000 e-scooter trips resulted in 20 injuries per 100,000 trips with 45% of the incidents involving head injuries. Their advice is obvious: 'wear a helmet.' [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Millionaire millennials are getting rich in high tech startups like Lyft and Uber in high-tax California, then moving to low-tax Florida or Texas and, in particular, **Austin**, according to a **New York Times** report last week. There are so many of them, they even have their own email list called 'Camp Austin.' [Story](#).

Bexar County's election results show an interesting divergence in last week's mayoral election in **San Antonio**: current mayor Ron Nirenberg performed best in the city's urban core within Loop 410, but challenger Greg Brockhouse did better among suburban precincts with higher turnout. Details [here](#).

One of the state's savviest political strategists, **Austin's** Jack Martin, is being honored with a SABRE Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement in the world of public relations. Martin built his Public Strategies consulting firm from a single client, Southwest Airlines, into a nationally prominent company that propelled him into acquisitions that led to the leadership of globally powerful PR giant Hill & Knowlton. Hats off. [Details](#).

A new study says immigrants contribute billions of dollars to the **San Antonio** economy, fueling social security and Medicare programs, and disproportionately fill science, engineering, and technology jobs. Still, about a quarter of the foreign-born population of the city works in the construction industry. [Story](#).

An iconic downtown **San Antonio** office building, home of the local **Express-News** newspaper, is on the market for the first time since 1929. Owners say market realities in the news business and the resurgence of downtown properties around the Alamo make this an optimum time for a potential sale. No expected price was listed, but anyone who has ascended into the storied 'Bat Tower' for an editorial conference assumes it won't go cheap. [Details](#).

Thought of the Week

*"When you have eliminated the impossible, that which remains,
however improbable, must be the truth."*

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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