



Monday Morning Report

July 16, 2018

INTERNAL

Join us *this* Wednesday, July 18, 2:00 pm for the next meeting of the Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council at our offices, 304 C.M. Allen Parkway, in **San Marcos**. Please RSVP to council@thecorridor.org. Our guest will be new Council Chairman John Thomaides, mayor of **San Marcos**. A draft agenda is available [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

The federal government last month (6/14) released their list of over 600 Texas Qualified Opportunity Zone designations, including scores in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor**. The purpose of the program is to spur investment into lower-income communities via a tax break on capital gains that are then reinvested into Qualified Opportunity Funds for infrastructure, commercial developments, housing, and other ventures. Read about the program on the Capital Area Council of Governments website [here](#).

In an announcement out of **Washington**, the US Army has announced that **Austin** will be the site of the military's new Futures Command Headquarters, beating out 150 other metropolitan areas for the mission. The technology-oriented command will focus on six modernization priorities including next-generation combat vehicles, future vertical lift platforms, air and missile defense systems, and 'soldier lethality.' The Futures Command HQ will employ about 500 people, officials said. [Story](#).

North Texas officials are taking new hyper-loop technology seriously, including an initial plan to connect **Dallas** and **Fort Worth** with a subterranean passenger pod system, later to be expanded to **Austin** and **San Antonio**. Officials have visited two test sites and added the option to an ongoing environmental review of high speed rail between **Oklahoma City** and **Laredo**. Both the **Dallas** and **Fort Worth** mayors visited **London** and **Paris** last month to examine the French high speed rail system. [Story](#).

With prospective hyper-loop projects now also already underway in **Los Angeles** and **Chicago**, and despite the fact that the technology remains untested, government policy makers now have to turn to the question of who actually owns the subterranean land beneath cities? *The Guardian* takes an international look at the legal situation and questions how to service both the private and the public interests involved, [here](#).

Speaking of hyper-loop projects, Elon Musk's Boring Company last week unveiled photos of its proposed tunneling apparatus to be used in the O'Hare International Airport to downtown **Chicago** and the release indicates some elements of the company's process. A gantry system resembling an oblong cage will trail the drilling machinery with conveyor belts, propulsion systems, and equipment used to reinforce tunnel walls. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Southwest Airlines began two new flights from **San Antonio** International Airport last week to **Fort Lauderdale**, Florida and **Oakland**, California. Fourteen new routes have been announced in 2018 from the airport, which had handled nearly 841,000 passengers through last May. [Details.](#)

Economists from the **London** School of Economics and Princeton University gave a preview last week of what the Trump administration's new tariff policy may mean for the average US consumer: about \$60 on average per year. Costs vary according to income and buying habits of course, but the **Dallas Morning News** summed up what it means for Texas consumers: 'there's nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.' [Story.](#)

For the first time in recorded history, according to **The Atlantic**, the number of job openings in the US is higher than the number of people looking for a job. With a current unemployment rate hovering around 4%, the magazine uses the local situation in **Des Moines** to look at the impacts of full employment on the US economy. Hint: higher wages, more bonuses, more vacation days, and ultimately higher costs. [Story.](#)

Thought of the Week

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

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