



Monday Morning Report

January 6, 2020

INTERNAL

At a December 18 meeting in **San Marcos**, the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee heard a presentation on how cities, counties, and metropolitan planning organizations should be preparing for new mobility options such as connected and autonomous vehicles, received updates on Council projects including a tree-planting project along Interstate 35 between **Austin** and **San Antonio**, and tentatively approved budgets and planning goals for 2020. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, 2020, in **San Marcos**. For further information, email council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Gov. Greg Abbott reignited his war of words with officials in **Austin** over the weekend, linking a fatal stabbing near downtown on Friday ((1/3) to the city's homelessness policies. It's the latest round in a sparring match that culminated late last year with the governor ordering TxDOT employees to clear homeless camps under local freeways. Mayor Steve Adler responded that mental health issues were the problem, not homelessness. [Details](#).

It's That Time of Year: News outlets are interviewing city and county political leaders about their plans for 2020. In **San Antonio**, the **Rivard Report** heard from mayor Ron Nirenberg and **Bexar County** judge Nelson Wolff (among others) that transportation looms large in the coming year, particularly improved transit funding ([here](#)). The **Austin Monitor** finds **Travis County** judge Sarah Eckhardt concerned about the impacts of a state-imposed tax cap; **Austin** mayor Steve Adler focused on affordability, homelessness, and mobility ([here](#)).

The Lincoln Institute for Land Policy in **Cambridge**, MA, has created a series of planning tools for public policy makers engaged in city and county governance. They've recently released an episode focused upon 'scenario planning,' a methodology increasingly touted by planners confronting uncertainties related to autonomous vehicles. For a brief description and links to other planning topics, go [here](#).

Six years after adding its first direct international flight service to **London**, the **Austin** Bergstrom Airport continued to announce added international flights during 2019, including new flights to **Amsterdam**, **Paris**, and **Frankfurt**. New leadership at the San Antonio International Airport says they're also working to secure flights to **London** and **Frankfurt**. A year-end summary of both airports' international activity [here](#).

Year-end numbers from the Census Bureau indicate that Texas population growth continued to outpace US national growth, adding 367,000 new residents from mid-2018 to mid-2019 and taking the state's population to just under 29 million people. Texas is now the second most-populous state behind California's 40 million. [Details](#).

Researchers at Cornell University in **Ithaca**, NY say that a combination of connected autonomous vehicles and smart intersections could more than double the through-put capacity of intersections, thus reducing congestion and air pollution while increasing public safety. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

General John M. Murray will be headlining a breakfast presentation *this* week (1/8) on the US Army Futures Command (AFC) sponsored by the **Texas Tribune** at the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas. Headquartered in **Austin**, the AFC was established in 2018 and employs more than 24,000 people in 25 states and 15 countries. If you can't attend the event in Austin, you can watch online. [Details](#).

The massive event formerly known as the Consumer Electronics Show begins this week (1/7) in **Las Vegas**, an annual show-and-tell for technology companies to display their new wares. Preview articles are claiming that new innovations in facial identification, self-driving vehicles, and 'smart home' devices will be on display. [Story](#).

The Trump administration's trade war-related compensation payments to agribusiness interests topped \$28 billion during 2019, surpassing the total for the Obama administration's controversial bailout for automakers in the financial crisis of 2008 - but no one seems to be complaining, according to **National Public Radio**. At least one former **Washington** official questions whether the payments - not approved by Congress - are legal. [Story](#).

The **Lockhart** Chamber of Commerce has a new president, Kaley Frye, formerly an executive for the Northwest **Houston** Chamber of Commerce in unincorporated **Harris County**. Frye says her experience with growing small to mid-sized businesses will remain her focus. [Details](#).

USA Today says this morning that investors wanting to take advantage of the developing electric and self-driving vehicle industries should focus on the sectors supplying parts to the related auto-manufacturers, particularly chipmakers and metals. They cite various studies indicating that the electric vehicle manufacturers may be a riskier bet than the underlying supply infrastructure required, such as lithium (required in high-performance batteries). [More](#).

Thought of the Week

"To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often."

- Winston Churchill

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