



Monday Morning Report *MLK Holiday Edition*

January 21, 2020

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, February 19, 2:00 pm at the Corridor Council offices, 304 North C.M. Allen Parkway, in **San Marcos**. To RSVP or add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In dueling interviews last week on local television Fox 7, **Austin** mayor Steve Adler and the **Travis County** Taxpayers Union's Roger Falk debated the merits of the proposed Project Connect light rail initiatives likely to go before voters this November. Falk said the likely \$10 billion price tag for the projects would add \$167-per-billion dollars to homeowners' tax bills. Adler stressed that voters he talked to wanted to 'go big' against congestion. [Adler](#). [Falk](#).

Public transit projects are sprouting up all across the US, and industry trade magazine **Progressive Railroading** asked seven leading public sector figures from **Boston**, **San Francisco**, **Los Angeles** and elsewhere to prognosticate on the 2020 outlook for funding, election prospects, challenges, and opportunities this year for their respective agencies. [Transit Outlook 2020](#).

San Antonio's population growth will create a city of 3.4 million by 2050 - a 94% increase by one estimate - but recent presentations in the Alamo City indicate that the nearby communities in **Comal**, **Hays**, and **Kendall Counties** will grow even faster. But even 15,000 new housing starts this year, more than the previous two years, will be able to keep up with demand, say local realtors. More on our continuing coverage of population projections [here](#).

The high cost of local regulation in the e-scooter market became apparent with the withdrawal at year-end of Lime in **San Antonio**. More coverage of the remaining two franchisees reveals that e-scooter companies can expect to pay \$30,000 in per-vehicle fees, \$75,000 in parking costs, and \$424,000 in revenue sharing - even as demand for the scooters appears to be dwindling. [Story](#).

As both **Austin** and **San Antonio** struggle to form long term transportation mobility plans (**Austin** moving toward light rail, **San Antonio** towards enhanced bus rapid transit), it is worth taking note of declining public transit numbers nationwide, alleviated primarily by recent upticks in ridership in just two US cities: **New York** and **Washington DC**. What the numbers seem to show is that increased frequency plus increased service can lead to more riders. [Story](#).

A proposed seven-mile, \$125 million toll road northeast of **San Antonio** has been nixed by both **Guadalupe County** and the city of **Cibolo**. Originally envisioned as a congestion-reliever for IH-35 between FM 1103 and IH-10 for traffic headed south into **San Antonio**, local officials alleged the developer failed to meet terms of an initial agreement. Lawsuits to follow. [Story](#).

A White House-designated 'Infrastructure Week' seems to get swallowed up more frequently than cargo ships in the Bermuda Triangle but the *8th Annual Infrastructure Week Conference* in **Washington** is

reliably expected to reappear this year from May 11-18 and you can get more information and register to attend [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Toyota's recent announcements about shifting Tacoma-model production from **San Antonio** to Mexico, to make way for their more expensive line of Sequoia products, highlights just how big a deal Toyota is to local manufacturing: 3200 existing jobs at their **San Antonio** facility and 4000 other related jobs in their equipment supply chain. The **Rivard Report** opines on what it means to long term regional economic development [here](#).

A recent move by Texas governor Greg Abbott to opt out of federal resettlement programs for immigrants has sparked new interest by the national media in the role of immigrants in the Lone Star State. That spotlight focused this morning on **Amarillo**, which once had more immigrants than any other city in Texas, according to the **New York Times**. Local reaction to immigrants is a mixed bag, but eventual acceptance seems to be the theme. [Story](#).

Austin's metro housing market continues to astound local real estate interests: the local metro housing market grew by \$141 billion, or 126%, over the past decade, more than doubling in total value from \$111 billion in 2010 to \$252 billion last year. According to real estate site Zillow the growth in value came largely from new housing construction, not appreciation. [Details](#).

Texas stands to gain more than \$4 billion from a \$16 billion federal program designed to help states respond to rising seas, floods, and newly intense weather systems. But in a 306-page application for the funds produced by the General Land Office in **Austin**, the words 'climate change' or 'global warming' never appear. The reason seems to be more about politics than reality. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

- Dr. Martin Luther King

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