



## Monday Morning Report

February 4, 2019

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### INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled to meet March 20, 2019 at 2:00 pm, in **San Marcos**. For questions or comments, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Brightline, the real estate/train company currently operating the new passenger service between **Miami** and **Fort Lauderdale**, has its eyes on the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** as one of its potential development routes. Through a recently-formed partnership with the London-based Virgin Trains USA, Brightline is seeking to raise just under a billion dollars with an initial public offering to expand across the US. [Story](#).

Don't expect one for Christmas next year (or even the year after that) but Boeing is testing and promoting its latest entrant into the flying taxi fleet, an electric-powered flying car with a range of 50 miles - designed to whisk passengers over congested city streets. **Dallas** and **Los Angeles** are said to be the launch cities for an air-ridesharing service slated to begin commercial service by 2023. [Story](#).

Google's self-driving car unit, Waymo, announced last month that it would build a plant in Michigan to retrofit **Detroit**-manufactured vehicles for use in its own autonomous ridesharing fleet and - perhaps - for the retail market. The company already has a small research presence in **Novi**, Michigan. [Details](#).

TxDOT is creating a Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) Task Force to foster development of the latest technology projects, investments, and initiatives statewide. The announcement says the agency will host CAV-related forums and workshops, build upon the Smart Mobility Texas coalition of automakers, and work with academic institutions in **College Station**, **Austin**, and **San Antonio**. See story [here](#).

China is planning the mother of all infrastructure projects centered around the village of **Khorgos**, a remote spot 1550 miles from anywhere (literally) within the so-called 'Eurasian Pole of Inaccessibility' near Kazakhstan. The idea is to make the town of less than 1000 people an international finance and logistical free trade hub (think **Dubai**) linked by trains, planes, automobiles, and ships, an effort that, they say, may require a generation and more than \$1 trillion. [Story](#).

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

High tech firm Google, which already employs hundreds of people in downtown **Austin**, will lease an entire building in when its completed, an additional 723,000 sq. ft. to its existing office leases. [Details](#).

After four years of resisting contract re-negotiations with the city of **San Antonio**, an attorney for the firefighters' union announced that their membership was ready to start talks on a new labor agreement last week. The announcement cited management changes among city staff and a 'conciliatory' letter from an incumbent city council member as among the reasons for revived interest in a new contract. [Story](#).

It's Official: Erik Walsh will step into the city manager's job in **San Antonio** March 1, following his selection and contract approval by the city council last week (1/31). Walsh, who had been a long time assistant city manager, assumes leadership of 12,000 employees in the nation's seventh largest city.

[Details.](#)

Former **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council chairman Mike Novak, currently Executive Director of the Texas Facilities Commission in **Austin**, is profiled in last week's **Texas Government Insider**. Novak, a former **Bexar County** commissioner, reveals a secret skill: 'I smoke a mean Texas brisket.' Who knew?

[Details.](#)

If you enjoy blowing past those 80-mph speed limit signs on State Highway 130, you'll be interested in a story out of **Berlin**, Germany, where no speed limits on the autobahns are something of a national religion. Despite studies demonstrating that limits could save hundreds of lives and millions of dollars annually, Germans have a 'pry my dead fingers from the steering wheel' attitude toward speed limits and repeatedly say "*nein*." [Story.](#)

## Thought of the Week

*"Where so many hours have been spent in convincing myself that I am right, is there not some reason to fear that I may be wrong?"*

- Jane Austen

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