



Monday Morning Report *Presidents Day Edition*

February 18, 2020

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet *this* 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

Austin got a look last week at a peer review study of the proposed Capital Metro Project Connect initiative conducted by experts from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). The effort studied projected ridership, capital cost estimates, and operating and maintenance estimates. Professional reviewers concluded the agency's methodology met industry standards, and commended transparency and public outreach for the plan. [Review](#).

More details emerged last week about the surge in voter registration along IH-35 between **Laredo** and **Dallas**, which has registered more new voters than the rest of the state combined. **Texas Monthly** concludes that nowhere in Texas has had more population growth than the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor**, predicting a least dozen Texas House seats statewide could flip based on changing voter demographics. [Story](#).

After a long period of decline, bus ridership in **San Antonio** along some routes is up sharply, according to figures from the last four months of 2019. More buses providing higher frequencies of trips seems to have been the magic combination, good news for the agency as it moves toward a public vote later this year to provide expanded services. [Details](#).

Feedback from the public is due this week (Feb. 21) on a proposed bill being drafted in **Washington** to regulate driverless and connected vehicles. The measure, by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, will try to oversee cybersecurity, inoperative controls, and crash data among other elements of the autonomous vehicle industry. [Story](#).

The **New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung** is running the second part of their transportation series, this one focused on issues related to people with mobility or other impairments which prevent driving. The story notes that the city is conducting a public transit plan in conjunction with the **San Antonio**-based Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. [Story](#).

Seemingly as inevitable as death and taxes, more cost increases have been announced for that high-speed rail project envisioned (eventually, by 2033) to connect **Los Angeles** and **San Francisco**. Recently released cost estimates pushed to total project cost up past \$80 billion, up \$3 billion since just last year. [Details](#).

In other high speed rail news (above) closer to home, that **Dallas--Houston** rail project promoted by Texas Central Railway faces a new public relations hurdle this week as US Rep. Kevin Brady (R-**The Woodlands**) hosts a 'stop the train' event in **Navasota** in conjunction with the group Texans Against

High Speed Rail. The Federal Railroad Administration is supposed to release proposed special safety rules for the train later this month. [Story](#).

Registration for the **Los Angeles** ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) 2020 World Congress: 'The New Age of Mobility' is open now for the October 4-8 event, which more than 10,000 global transportation professionals are expected to attend. Details [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Former **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee-member Rusty Brockman will run unopposed for the mayor's slot in **New Braunfels**. He and two other city council candidates drew no opposition as the filing deadline passed last week for the May 2 local elections. [Details](#).

San Marcos and **Martindale** have concluded an intercity agreement that trades some jurisdictional areas and taxing authorities to allow a proposed rail/highway hub operation to be built in **Caldwell County**. The 800-acre facility, dubbed the San Marcos Air Rail and Truck (SMART) Terminal, is designed as a logistics hub providing a rare rail-served industrial park for Central Texas. Corridor Councilmember CBRE (Real Estate) in **Austin** helped to package the deal. [Story](#).

NAFTA Super Supporter Dennis Nixon of **Laredo** is arguing that the new USMCA (US-Mexico-Canada Agreement) should be implemented immediately, but stresses that border and customs infrastructure will have to be improved to make the new trade deal beneficial for all parties. He cites some important statistics on US-Mexico trade. [Opinion](#).

Rising sea levels will force major population relocation trends over the next few years, according to a just-released study, and the cities that should brace for impact include **Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, and Denver**, say researchers. The study used machine-learning analysis to predict project migrations from low-lying areas. **Austin** was flagged as the top destination for migrants from the southeast coast of the US. [Story](#).

New rules being proposed by the Texas State Comptroller could change the way sales taxes are collected for online transactions. The rules suggest point-of-delivery as opposed to point-of-sale for collecting the taxes, and testimony shows tax revenues to **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** Communities such as **San Marcos** and **Round Rock** could see multi-million-dollar impacts. [Story](#).

A federal judge ruled last week that a proposed pipeline from **West Texas** to the **Gulf Coast** - tunneling through the **Hill Country** - can go forward. The project is opposed by **Austin, Travis** and **Hays Counties**, and dozens of other jurisdictions. Pipeline officials told **Caldwell County** residents they hoped to start construction within months, but more court moves may be on the horizon. [Story](#).

If you missed last month's public event with General John Murray, the commanding officer for the Army Futures Command in **Austin**, the McCombs School at the University of Texas and the **Texas Tribune** have posted a video of the event online [here](#).

Be Aware: According to the **Express-News**, flights out of **San Antonio** International Airport are being affected by problems with Boeing's 737 Max aircraft since the federal government suspended 737 service last year due to safety concerns. Flights by American and Southwest Airlines to **Fort Lauderdale, Philadelphia, Dallas**, and other cities are impacted. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"The reward of a thing well done is to have done it."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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