



Monday Morning Report

April 19, 2021

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet this Wednesday, April 21st at 2 PM by video conference. If you would like to add to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org. **Draft Agenda.**

COVID-19 UPDATE: The virus has now killed more 3 million people worldwide. Confirmed global cases yesterday were at 140,993,855 with 3,014,575 total global deaths. US deaths were at 567,092 with 31,650,993 cases - more than twice any other reporting country. (4/18/21). (**Johns Hopkins**). Texas, as of Sunday (4/18), was reporting 2,439,892 confirmed cases, with 48,611 deaths, including in **Bexar County:** 176,700 cases with 3,422 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 10,713 cases and still 208 deaths; **Comal County:** 5,273 cases with 291 deaths; **Hays County:** 17,760 cases with 205 deaths; **Travis County:** 81,138 cases with 976 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 38,033 cases with 461 deaths (**TDHHS**).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Former **New York City** transportation commissioner Polly Trottenberg was confirmed last week as Deputy Director of the US Department of Transportation - a position some describe as the most powerful transportation-related job in the federal government - further demonstrating the Biden administration's shift toward an emphasis on public transit over traditional highway infrastructure. **Story. More.**

Texas infrastructure got a "C" grade from the White House in **Washington** last week, which released a laundry list of the state's needed-upgrades for highways, bridges and public transit, all part of the administration's push for the \$2-plus trillion American Jobs Plan. It notes that the Lone Star state has suffered from 67 extreme weather events over the last decade, costing up to \$200 billion in damages. Interesting reading **here. More.**

Opponents of the Biden administration's infrastructure plan are already sending warning signals about proposed nationwide rail projects claiming to be 'shovel-ready,' as an Iowa senator highlights to the **Washington Examiner** a **Honolulu** light rail system she claims is years overdue and millions of dollars over-budget. **Story.**

The TxDOT program manager for the IH-35 Capital Expressway project through downtown briefed an **Austin** Chamber of Commerce transportation committee last week on the current status of the public involvement and alternatives analysis process - including an economic impacts analysis and a homeless persons strategy. For project timeline and details, go **here.**

The **New Braunfels** Regional Airport received designation as a national airport - one of 11 such in Texas and only 92 nationwide - within the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems from the Federal Aviation Agency. **Details.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Sign of The Times? **New York**-based Citigroup banking will shed consumer banking operations in Asia to focus on a potentially more-fertile regional market: the rising number of wealthy entrepreneurs. The banking giant's **Singapore** and **Hong Kong** offices will recruit 3300 new private bankers' technical staffers. [Details](#).

Austin's white-hot housing market continues to draw national attention: **Bloomberg** reports that a minimum-wage worker would have to put in a 125-hour week to afford a one-bedroom apartment as **Silicon Valley** techies swarm the city ([here](#)); locally, **Austonia** says March delivered the highest median-price house-cost rise in history ([here](#)); and potential buyers in **New Braunfels** and **Comal County** are also feeling the pinch ([here](#)).

Today marks the first day of early voting for the May 1 **San Antonio** municipal elections and the local newspaper took the opportunity for a deep, deep dive into sitting mayor Ron Nirenberg's leadership style, policies, and re-election prospects. Featured are comments by **Bexar County** judge Nelson Wolff and former mayor Henry Cisneros. [Story](#).

With two impressive new-jobs creation and training programs underway, **San Antonio** is juggling a city-backed \$75-million fund that has 'had some hiccups' and a \$154 million bond program approved by voters (not to mention a separate \$38 private-sector initiative recently launched by the **San Antonio** Economic Development Foundation). In an essay, local writer Rick Casey says it's time to call in the nuns. He'll explain. [Opinion](#).

Elon Musk Watch: Texas' own 'Rocket Man' has won another giant government contract, \$2.89 billion this time for his SpaceX aerospace company to send humans back to the moon for the first time in nearly 50 years as part of the NASA Artemis project. [Story](#). [Local Details](#).

Thought of the Week

"We cannot change anything until we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses."

- Carl Jung

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