



## Monday Morning Report

May 3, 2021

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### INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is scheduled to meet by video conference May 19<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. For details, email [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** There are 152,946,524 worldwide cases confirmed as of this morning, with 3,204,301 total global deaths. US deaths are at 577,046 with 32,422,234 confirmed cases (5/3/21). ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Texas was reporting 2,473,679 confirmed cases yesterday, with 49,303 deaths, including in **Bexar County:** 180,026 cases with 3,485 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 10,920 cases with 210 deaths; **Comal County:** 5,482 cases with 295 deaths; **Hays County:** 18,354 cases with 206 deaths; **Travis County:** 82,402 cases with 997 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 38,799 cases still with 463 deaths (5/2/21). ([TDHHS](#)).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

The American Rescue Plan Act that passed in March provides \$360 billion in federal relief payments allocated to state, tribal, territorial, city, and county governments. **Blueprint 2025** has created maps showing the distribution of those funds, how the funds were distributed per capita, and indicates where top strategic infrastructure projects are in correlation with the funds. See the maps [here](#).

Proponents of that high-speed California rail line between **Los Angeles** and **San Francisco** believe the Biden administration's \$2.2 trillion infrastructure plan has breathed new life into the over-due, over-budget, and much pared-down project; opponents say it's a case of wishful thinking and just more money down the drain. [Story](#).

**Legislative Update:** House Bill 2221 (the Electric Transportation Act), establishing a statewide framework for charging-stations and imposing a \$100 highway-use fee for electric vehicles ([details](#)) and House Bill 391, allowing more state workers to telecommute, have advanced to the Calendars Committee. A substituted-version of House Bill 3467 - new terms and toll-price protocols for State Highway 130 - was reported out favorably last week from the Transportation Committee ([details](#)).

Tech giant Baidu rolled out its new, autonomous taxis in **Beijing** yesterday, becoming the first commercialized ride-hailing service in China. The 10-vehicle fleet, with a safety officer riding in the back seat but with no driver, is operating within a 1.2 square-mile park destined to become site of the 2022 Winter Olympics. [Story](#).

In order to effectively combat climate change in any meaningful way electric vehicles have to become cheaper, with more mass appeal than the current emphasis on luxury models, according to researchers at the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California, **Davis**. Of 11 new models introduced in the US in the last two years, eight are luxury models. [Story](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Election Wrap-Up: **San Antonio** voters re-elected mayor Ron Nirenberg to a third term and turned down a repeal of the police union's collective bargaining rights ([details](#)). Five city council races are headed into runoff elections, including three incumbents ([details](#)). In **Austin**, voters backed restoring a ban on camping in public spaces and rejected a 'strong mayor' city charter change ([details](#)). Harry Bowers and Lawrence Spradley were elected to the city council and all proposed charter amendments in **New Braunfels** gained approval. [Story](#).

Berkshire Hathaway's 'oracle of Omaha,' Warren Buffett, is warning that too many new trading applications like Robinhood have added a dangerous 'casino' effect to the stock market. "The gambling impulse is very strong in people worldwide," Buffett said. "And it creates its own reality for a while — and nobody tells you when the clock's going to strike 12 and it all turns to pumpkins and mice." [Story](#).

Elon Musk Watch: Not everyone is happy about the Rocket Man's plans for the small South Texas town of **Boca Chica** (soon to be renamed **Starbase**, Texas), it appears. The **San Antonio Express-News** reports that the natives are restless, unsettled by the sudden changes wrought by SpaceX, which is buying up the town. [Story](#).

The folks who determine what 'average' weather is are about to change what passes for normal in rain and temperature calculations. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration typically uses data taken from a 30-year running average (1981-2010), but later this month NOAA will drop the '80's data and recalculate using the most recent decade. Expect hotter and drier, but with more frequent intense storms. [Story](#).

**Hondo**, a small ranching and agricultural town south of **San Antonio**, made national news last week by receiving a blow from the largest hailstone (six-and-a-half inches across) ever recorded in Texas. Before you ask, the current world's record is an eight-inch hailstone that fell on **Vivian**, S.D. in 2010. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"Everything is funny, as long as it's happening to somebody else."*

- Will Rogers

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