



Monday Morning Report *Memorial Day Edition*

May 26, 2020

INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council met by Zoom teleconference last week (5/20) for a presentation on the potential of a joint designation for the region by the US Census Bureau as either a Metropolitan Statistical Area or a Combined Statistical Area by **Washington DC** scholar Dr. Tracy Hadden Loh. Also, on the agenda: updates to Council projects, a 'contact-tracing' initiative, Sunset Review of Lone Star Rail, Tesla's potential move to the region, and COVID-19 traffic impacts. For questions, email council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Total confirmed cases worldwide as of 12:00 noon yesterday (5/25) were 5,460,747; global deaths had reached 344,503. US reported cases stood at 1,653,904 with 97,948 deaths. In Texas, reported cases were at 55,348 with 1,519 deaths (5/24 stats at 3:30 pm). **Bexar County:** 2,418 cases, 66 deaths; **Comal County:** 82 cases, 6 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 122 cases; 0 deaths; **Hays County:** 270 cases, 3 deaths; **Travis County:** 2,788 cases, 83 deaths; **Williamson County:** 541 cases, 21 deaths. ([TDHHS](#))

INFRASTRUCTURE

In an opinion-piece published over the weekend (5/24), Henry Cisneros calls for more cooperation between **Austin** and **San Antonio** on airport coordination, transportation, international marketing of the region, and recruiting sports franchises, saying the region's economy post-pandemic will 'lead the nation and be sustained for decades.' As a former mayor of **San Antonio**, Cisneros co-founded the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council. [Opinion](#).

Elon Musk's Boring Company has completed the second of two tunnels beneath the **Las Vegas** Convention Center, perhaps marking a milestone in sub-surface transportation modes, though, at 4500-feet, it's actually less than a mile long. The project would whisk customers from one end of the massive building to the other in three-person Tesla pods. Musk had said he planned to 'revolutionize' the task of tunnel-boring, but some public transit advocates believe there's not much new here. [Story](#).

There may be yet another '*Infrastructure Week*' coming our way from **Washington**, according to **CNN**. The network reports that senior Republican leadership in the Senate now believe the time is right for a massive infrastructure spending bill to pave the way out of a pandemic-related economic slump. Senator Lindsey Graham said, 'it's a once in a lifetime opportunity to give a face lift to the nation,' but Senate leader Mitch McConnell, maybe not so much - yet. [Story](#). More [here](#) from **Forbes**.

That collapse of two dams near **Sanford**, Mich. last week is a reminder that what happened locally with two Guadalupe River system dams near **New Braunfels** is just part of a larger national problem: 94,000 US dams are currently rated 'D' for safety by engineering groups. But now, experts are warning that aging dams are being threatened by increasingly erratic climate changes that intensify rainstorm flooding. [Story](#). [More](#).

Useful Information: **Austin** has a new blog that analyzes traffic volumes, fatalities, accidents, and specific intersection-data impacted by/or recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. The data is being collected by Charlie Rogers, a traffic engineer with our friends at DKS Associates. One early observation is that weekend traffic is recovering faster than weekday traffic. Available [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Reports that Tesla is considering building an electric cyber truck-manufacturing facility in **Austin** has prompted **San Antonio** economic development interests to weigh-in with their city's existing assets in cyber-security, auto-manufacturing, and workforce training. (Since manufacturing supply-chains typically extend hundreds of miles anyway, why not a Goldilocks Solution that fits 'just right' between the two cities?) [Story](#).

Political Issues surrounding the choice between continued pandemic quarantines or reopening US state economies became even more complex last week with a report from **Pittsburgh's** Carnegie Mellon University that roughly half of 200 million Twitter accounts discussing COVID-19 responses were fake bots demanding immediate 'opening up' of the economy. Whether the bots were foreign or domestic was unclear. [Story](#).

Australian researchers have achieved a world record internet speed of 44.2 terabits per second using a 'micro-comb' optical chip containing hundreds of infrared lasers to transfer data across existing communications infrastructure in **Melbourne**, nearly one million times faster than average transfer times. Such speeds would allow the transfer of 1000 high-resolution movies in one second. (Or an hour-and-a-half, *with* commercials.) [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"The willingness of America's veterans to sacrifice for our country has earned them our lasting gratitude."

— Jeff Miller

This newsletter is available to our members. If you wish to unsubscribe, please send an email request to council@thecorridor.org.
