



Monday Morning Report

July 6, 2020

INTERNAL

COVID-19 UPDATE: Total global confirmed cases now total more than 11 million, with about 3 million of those cases in the US. Global deaths have surpassed 530,000 with 130,000 fatalities in the US as of 12:00 noon yesterday (7/5) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Texas reported cases stood at 191,000, with 2,608 estimated deaths as of 3:15 pm (7/4). **Bexar County:** 14,212 reported cases, with 117 fatalities; **Comal County:** 690 cases, and 9 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 849 cases, with 3 deaths; **Hays County:** 3,067 with 7 deaths; **Travis County:** 11,009 cases, with 134 deaths; **Williamson County:** 2,469 cases, with 42 deaths. ([TDHHS](#))

Note: **Bexar County** cases have increased more than four-fold in the past 30 days; **Travis County** cases have more than tripled.

COVID-19 DATA ISSUES: Johns Hopkins University in **Baltimore**, a key source for the **Monday Morning Report** global and national figures on the coronavirus pandemic, said recently that some of their data is 'consistently inconsistent,' and reported in more detail on their collection methodology [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Toll road operators nationwide are reporting revenues down by \$9 billion since the coronavirus pandemic began, largely due to stay-at-home orders and employers shifting to telework. [Why it matters:](#) toll revenues fund roadway expansions with new local projects and, in many places, finance transit (buses and rail lines). An **Austin**-area toll operator has slashed expenses and added new promotions to encourage traffic. [National. Regional.](#)

Last month's **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** Council Executive Committee meeting (6/17) featured a presentation/discussion of reduced traffic congestion due to stay-at-home orders and how those beneficial impacts might be preserved post-pandemic. **Travis County** commissioned a staff study on the issue with results due *tomorrow* (7/7). Meanwhile, **Austin** is cited in a **New York Times** survey of similar efforts globally [here](#).

A **Manhattan** Institute editor warns that mass transit operations and cities could grind to a halt without federal aid and points out that subway systems and bus lines have helped urban areas recover from earlier economic declines, such as the aftermath of World War II, using **Boston**, **Chicago**, and **New York** as examples. [Opinion.](#)

Nearly twice as many US properties may be at risk for flood damage than previously thought, according to a new effort to map the dangers of rising sea levels and more intense storms related to global warming. [The new data](#) set includes rainfall and flooding along smaller creeks not mapped by the federal government and estimates 14.6 million properties are at risk - far more than the 8.7 million indicated by government maps. **Fort Lauderdale**, **Buffalo**, and **Chattanooga** are cited, but an interactive website allows checking individual addresses [here](#).

Virgin Trains USA just arranged a long-term lease of existing rights-of-way in the 170-mile Interstate 15 highway corridor in California for a \$4.8 billion high speed rail project connecting the **Victor Valley** region to **Las Vegas**. The deal was cut last week with the California Department of Transportation and calls for the train to be constructed in the median. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The 54th Annual Texas Legislative Conference in **New Braunfels**, originally set for March of this year, has been moved to September 3-4, 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and will - for the first time - be conducted largely online. There will be a sit-down dinner Sept. 3, however, to honor the Texan Of the Year, Apollo astronaut Charles Duke. [Details](#).

Austin has already canceled the popular Austin City Limits Music Festival, scheduled to have begun this October, over fears of increasing spread of the coronavirus. And now the **Rivard Report** is suggesting that **San Antonio** should do the same for Fiesta week, currently re-scheduled to Nov. 5-15, saying it's an 'Unhealthy Idea.' [Opinion](#).

Nikola, the hottest stock in the automotive sector at the moment, is now taking orders for its Badger electric or hydrogen fuel-cell trucks for a \$5000 deposit and the company's founder says the byproduct of the vehicle's fuel-cell power package will be clean enough to drink. [Details](#).

Another day, another failing dam: this time, it's Cape's Dam in **San Marcos**, first built in 1867, breached in 2013, and damaged again by flooding in 2015. City staff are studying options to repair, remove, or replace the structure. [Details](#). (left hand column, last item)

Thought of the Week

"I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom."

— Bob Dylan

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