



Monday Morning Report

July 6, 2021

Independence Day Edition

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee is scheduled to meet July 21 at 2pm by videoconference. If you would like to add to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: There are 184,255,154 confirmed worldwide cases today, with 3,986,720 deaths thus far. US cases reached 33,923,804, with 605,567 deaths (7/6). (**Johns Hopkins**) Yesterday, Texas was reporting 2,550,615 confirmed cases with 51,349 fatalities, including in **Bexar County**: 186,523 cases with 3,634 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 11,783 cases, still with 222 deaths; **Comal County**: 6,104 cases with 306 deaths; **Hays County**: 19,136 cases with 226 deaths; **Travis County**: 84,842 cases with 1,041 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 39,973 cases and still 483 deaths (7/5/21). (**TDHHS**).

INFRASTRUCTURE

A business columnist for the **Washington Post** argues that rather than quibbling about which taxes to raise in order to finance Biden's infrastructure plan, the government should just borrow now via 10-to-50-year bonds at historically all-time low interest rates. He says it's a better way to fund the government's priorities and a great deal for taxpayers. **Opinion**.

The Amtrak portion of Biden's now-bipartisan infrastructure plan proposes at least \$65 billion in new funding for service expansions but may be the plan's Achilles heel, according to influential economist Steve Rattner in the **New York Times**: extending unprofitable long-distance service to 48 states for political purposes (picking up Senate & House votes) is bad business, he writes, and will undermine public confidence in the plan. **Opinion**.

Why We Can't Have Nice Things: The US is the sixth most-expensive place in the world to build roads and rail projects, says **Vox**. Citing examples from **New York, Chicago, and Washington**, the news website says costs have skyrocketed over the last 50 years, due largely to institutional delays - not materials or labor. **Story. Report**.

After decades of planning and controversy, the \$600 million-plus Oak Hill Parkway Project in South **Austin** began construction this week to add lanes and construct a flyover between US 290 and State Highway 71. **Travis, Blanco, and Hays Counties** will all benefit from the project, said TxDOT officials. **TxDOT Link**. Not everyone nearby is happy about the project. **Save Oak Hill Group Link**.

A 'flying car' has completed a 35-minute test flight in Slovakia between **Nitra** and **Bratislava**, but it's not the kind you're thinking of, probably. This really is a four-wheeled highway car that converts into an airplane in under three minutes, powered by a BMW 160-horsepower engine at speeds to 120 mph. Video, too. **Story**.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

A sophisticated \$150 million microchip-making tool - 'the most complicated machine ever made by humans' - has moved to center stage in the technology cold war that has broken out between the US and China. This story, datelined out of **San Francisco**, illustrates how inter-woven the global supply chain can be and why total technology independence is an unattainable myth. Worth reading. [Story](#).

As nations scramble to find the materials needed for batteries to fuel new fleets of electric vehicles, a **Vancouver** company says all the necessary ingredients can be found resting on the ocean floor. Polymetallic nodules, metal-rich rocks containing nickel, copper, and cobalt could be mined commercially, the company says. [Story](#).

'Boomerang-workers,' those who have returned to their own or a spouse's home to work during the pandemic, are becoming a 'thing,' says **Axios**. Tulsa is even offering a \$10,000 bounty for those fleeing big-city centers like **New York** and **San Francisco**, the news service reports. [Story](#).

Conde Nast's **Traveler** newsletter republished a '17 *Best Things to Do In Austin*' list last week, with a few surprising suggestions for longtime residents. A mural at Jo's Coffee makes that intersection on South Congress the most famous in the city. Who knew? There's also a companion-piece Best Restaurants list that ignored the obvious, **Bee Caves'** Rosie's Tamale House. [Things. Restaurants](#).

[Bad For Coastal Tourism](#): 55 out of 61 Texas beaches tested had at least one day in 2020 of water unsafe for swimming because of fecal bacteria contamination, which can cause health issues, according to a report by the advocacy group Environment Texas Research and Policy Center. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"In the face of impossible odds, people who love their country can change it."

- Barack Obama

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