



Monday Morning Report

July 8, 2019

INTERNAL

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is set for Wednesday, September 18, 2:00 pm at the Council offices in **San Marcos**, 304 N CM Allen Parkway. Please RSVP to council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

'US national transportation policy is a rudderless ship sailing off into oblivion... limping along without an overarching purpose or destination in mind.' That's the conclusion of **Washington DC**-based Transportation for America, an alliance of business leaders and elected officials united to focus US investment in smart, homegrown, locally-driven transportation solutions. They cite six federal policies embedded in current transportation programs that are problematic, encouraging more driving but unsuited to actual modern needs. [Opinion](#).

Former Delta Airlines CEO Richard Anderson has nearly eliminated operating losses since he took over AMTRAK in 2017 but he's also eliminated hot meals and a lot of employees, and that's inspired a move to eliminate him. Anderson is trying to alter long distance routes to concentrate on shorter, corridor-oriented routes like that between **New York** and **Boston**, which he says is now profitable. His new approach could have implications for **Austin-San Antonio** rail service. [Story](#).

Only two American cities (**New York** and **Chicago**) made a list of the "*The World's 15 Best Cities for Public Transportation*," compiled by an academic researcher but based largely on a 2018 McKinsey and Company statistical analysis that studied a number of factors including the most important, customer satisfaction. **Singapore**, by the way, came out on top. [Story](#).

The US fared better when researchers analyzed global cities for their success at deploying 'smart mobility' features, those using enhanced technology to better move people and goods. **San Francisco**, **Boston**, and **Chicago** all placed in the Top 10 in a survey by FleetEurope, an international fleet management publication. **Boston** was recognized for digital kiosks informing residents of transit options and networked traffic signals; **Chicago** for the Array of Things project aiming to create 'the most data-driven government in the world;' **San Francisco** for using sensors to connect motorists to parking spaces. [Story](#).

As American transportation thought-leaders scramble to envision Interstate 2.0, the **Washington Post** ran a piece over the weekend about the original inspiration for the Interstate Highway System, a 1919 trip by a last-minute observer from the Tank Corps - Dwight D. Eisenhower - overland from **Washington DC** to **San Francisco**. It took two months. [Story](#).

Gov. Gregg Abbott has appointed Robert 'Bobby' Jenkins as the Presiding Officer of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, a local political subdivision of the state formed by **Travis** and **Williamson Counties** to develop transportation infrastructure projects. Jenkins has led many **Austin** civic organizations and is currently the president of ABC Home and Commercial Services. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Fresh off a successful re-election campaign, **San Antonio** mayor Ron Nirenberg has reorganized city council committees by abolishing one and changing the membership on others. Gone is the Arts, Culture, and Heritage Committee, which dealt primarily of late with the Tricentennial Celebration, replaced by a new Governance Committee. Part of the new structure combines arts with planning, 'making sure that we grow with grace.' [Details](#).

Whether there should be a citizenship question on the 2020 Census appeared to be settled last week after a Supreme Court ruling against it, but President Trump said the administration was still trying to include the question even as the questionnaires were on their way to the printer. Now the question - vital to minority-heavy populations like **Austin-San Antonio** - is open to a new federal judge's inquiries in Maryland. [Details](#).

In an interesting opinion piece last week, the co-chair of the **San Antonio** Hispanic Chamber of Commerce International Business committee argues that regional economic development efforts can be harmed by protectionist trade policies and tariffs and urges more - not less - international supply-chain integration. [Opinion](#).

Austin-based Go! Retail Group has opened a 250,000 sq.-ft. distribution center in **New Braunfels** and is currently seeking 65-70 full time employees to process orders for the company's calendars, games and toys. [Details](#).

Amidst a conflict between Gov. Gregg Abbott and **Austin** over a recently passed ordinance that allows camping in public, the **Texas Tribune** has examined homelessness across Texas and found striking differences in the populations of **Dallas** and **Houston**. Affordability of housing is in issue faced by many growing cities, but has Houston cracked the homelessness part of the code? [Story](#).

It was just a year ago that we reported on truck driver shortages and huge sign-up bonuses for drivers. That world has changed dramatically, with loads on the spot market reduced by 50% year-over-year, drivers threatened with bankruptcy, and freight-rate expectations sinking to 2016 levels, according to **New York**-based Morgan Stanley. [Details](#).

Think Twice Before Abandoning That E-Scooter: The convenience of those ubiquitous e-scooters is causing a major inconvenience to blind and mobility-impaired folks plying sidewalks in **San Antonio**. Increased injuries and wheelchairs struggling to avoid the devices have renewed calls for more regulation. [Story](#).

Efforts to "Keep **Austin** Weird" appear to be working: the Discoverer Blog listed the "*Quirkiest Cities In The U.S.*" and the Texas Capital came out at Number One, reliably joined by such stalwarts as **Portland**, **Santa Fe**, **New Orleans**, and **San Francisco**. A resident bat colony appears to have trumped all competitors. [Details](#).

Thought of the Week

"The person who makes a success of living is the one who sees his goal steadily and aims for it unswervingly."

- Cecil B. DeMille

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