



Monday Morning Report

July 22, 2019

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled 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

A national transportation construction coalition in **Washington** points out that federal public investment in all forms of infrastructure has been cut in half over the past 60 years (from about 3% of Gross Domestic Product) to about 1.5%). When the FAST Act transportation funding measure expires next year, the annual shortfall between revenues and anticipated demand will reach \$18 billion, they say. They want Congress to act now. [Opinion](#).

Leander has stepped back from a threat to leave **Austin**-area transit provider Capital Metro, but their mayor is still pursuing a negotiated settlement that would reduce the \$5 million the city pays into the agency annually. But the near-death experience leaves new chief executive Randy Clarke with a significant challenge: find ways to increase transit services to the northwest suburb or change state laws to allow more flexibility in setting participation rates. [Details](#).

In other Capital Metro news, Todd Hemingson - a long time executive and often a public face for the **Austin** agency - has announced his departure for parts unknown and a job posting for his successor, apparently, has already appeared on the transit provider's website, [here](#).

A legal scholar from **Detroit** (Detroit!) says that 'automobile supremacy' is so deeply embedded in national, state, and local laws that automobile ownership is virtually a legal mandate - and that this situation must change before meaningful progress can be made on alternative modes, climate change, and enhanced public safety. As an example, he cites local ordinances requiring parking spaces for new construction, which he maintains results in an estimated 30 parking spaces per person in **Houston**, at \$50,000 apiece. [Opinion](#).

Despite massive investments and high hopes, several large auto manufacturers and technology groups have decided that making self-driving vehicles to be deployed at mass scale is going to be harder than they thought and may, in fact, be decades away. [Story](#).

An autonomous bus experiment in **Vienna** has been suspended after a woman wearing headphones and staring at a cellphone walked into a vehicle owned by French startup Navya, which is operating similar tests in dozens of cities. It's another setback for self-driving technologies, following somewhat similar events for Uber and Tesla vehicles. [Story](#). More on [Navya](#).

Repairs to the string of six lakes and dams managed by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), such as the one that collapsed and 'de-watered' Lake Dunlap earlier this year near **New Braunfels**, may cost as much as \$200 million, GBRA board members have been told. The dams and related spill gates

were built in the 1920's and early 1930's and are now at the end of their useful life, according to GBRA. [Details.](#)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Some **San Antonio** economic development officials are hinting that big news may be coming about a possible \$400 million investment by Toyota in local and nearby manufacturing facilities. The city of **Cibolo** and **Guadalupe County** have possible incentive packages on their upcoming agendas related to major Toyota supplier AW Texas, Inc, which the **Rivard Report** says could add up to 1000 local jobs if Toyota commits to a San Antonio expansion plan. [Details.](#)

An editorial in yesterday's **New York Times** argues that state and local taxes are worsening the national problem of economic inequality by proportionately taxing lower incomes at higher rates than wealthy incomes, citing a 2018 study by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy that maintains Texas is in the top 10 of states with 'regressive' tax policies. [Opinion.](#)

Pflugerville is planning to relocate their city hall, built in 1991, to a new downtown location at an estimated cost of \$50 million. A recent needs assessment study showed the fast-growing city is currently 20,000 square feet short of office space for city staff. [Details.](#)

Austin resident Robert Bryce has an op-Ed in the current Wall Street Journal entitled 'A Reality Check on Wind and Solar Power' that argues - despite the hype- that alternative energy sources produce merely a fraction of traditional sources - and always will. [Opinion.](#)

Thought of the Week

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

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