



Monday Morning Report

August 9, 2021

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee is scheduled to meet Wednesday, August 18 at 2pm by videoconference. If you would like to add to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: As of this morning there are just over 200 million global confirmed cases, with 4,297,830 deaths. US cases are at 35,765,233, with 616,829 deaths (8/9/21). Over 4.4 billion vaccine doses have been now administered globally. (*Johns Hopkins*) Yesterday, Texas reported 2,728,670 cases with 52,463 deaths, including **Bexar County**: 203,963 cases with 3,710 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 13,102 cases, with 230 deaths; **Comal County**: 7,430 cases with 326 deaths; **Hays County**: 21,547 cases with 234 deaths; **Travis County**: 92,361 cases with 1,064 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 44,994 cases with 499 deaths (8/8/21). (*TDHHS*).

INFRASTRUCTURE

The United Nations released a profoundly disturbing report this morning on global climate change, warning that some devastating impacts of a warming earth are now inevitable and predicting at least 30 years of increasingly extreme weather events that will cost thousands of lives, according to the *New York Times*. The report is the consolidated effort of hundreds of scientists convened by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Story*.

Unlikely allies Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Raphael Warnock (D-GA) have teamed to successfully add an amendment to the infrastructure funding bill being debated in the Senate that would create a new Interstate-14 from **Odessa** through four states to end in **Augusta**, GA. Interstate-14 currently connects **Belton** to **Fort Hood**, a mere 25-miles. *Story*.

Philadelphia ranked first and **San Antonio** ninth out of 20 US metropolitan areas studied for their readiness to respond to post-pandemic traffic upticks, according to an odd report issued by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation and analysts at Roadbotics. The study methodology included artificial intelligence analysis of cellphone videos of local streets. *Story. Report*.

High speed rail and a hyperloop system are both being advanced to the second stage of an environmental process looking at future connections between **Dallas** and **Fort Worth**, according to recommendations made by the area's Regional Transportation Council for the I-30 Corridor. The next phase of the study will include a final technology decision, preliminary engineering, and cost projections. *Story* (right-hand column).

President Biden signed two executive orders last week in **Washington** designed to drive gas-powered cars into the extinction ditch: one set a national goal that 50% of new vehicles sold in the US by 2030 be electric, and another that begins a return to tougher, more strict tailpipe restrictions on air pollution from autos. *Story*.

Are Tunnels Our Transportation Future? Blogger Austin Vernon suggests that tunnels could be a key to freight and passenger movement in the future, but before getting there he presents a lot of data on railroads vs. freight truck physics and tunneling projects in **New York** and **Las Vegas**. Included are a lot of details on The Boring Company's tunnel technology. Strictly for wonks, but interesting. [Opinion](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

New Braunfels has given preliminary zoning approvals to a new 105-acre development of 550 houses east of Highway 46 on FM 758, about a half-mile from the **New Braunfels** Regional Airport - but not without hearing about some local traffic concerns. [Details](#).

That 'Great Springs Project' - a 100-mile network of trails connecting larger springs throughout the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** - continues to get a lot of favorable press coverage but the practical consideration of how-to-pay-for-it remains elusive. A final projected cost won't be available until later this year. Meanwhile, the region's population continues to explode, particularly in **San Marcos** and **New Braunfels**. An update on the effort [here](#).

The US Commerce Department in **Washington** is now accepting applications for \$268 million in funding from the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program, which hopes to expand broadband access and connectivity to various historically under-served institutions, such as black colleges or universities. Learn more [here](#).

Elon Musk Watch: Rocket Man gave a two-hour video tour of his, well, rocket base in **South Texas** last week, including some previously undisclosed details of design issues and his focus on cost-per-ton-per-of-orbital thrust, which he says is essential to humans becoming a 'multi-planet species.' [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results."

- Willie Nelson

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