



Monday Morning Report

October 12, 2020

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** Council's Executive Committee will meet by Zoom video conference Wednesday, October 21, at 2:00 pm. To add an item to the agenda or for additional information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: As of this morning (10/12), worldwide cases have reached 37.5 million with 1,077,718 deaths. The US has 7,624,270 confirmed cases with 214,778 fatalities. ([Johns Hopkins](#)) The state of Texas is reporting 792,478 total confirmed cases with 16,557 deaths, including **Bexar County:** 48,678 cases with 1,360 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 3,729 cases with 79 deaths; **Comal County:** 2,777 cases with 103 deaths; **Hays County:** 6,037 cases with 69 deaths; **Travis County:** 30,199 cases with 433 deaths; **Williamson County:** 8,385 cases with 146 deaths. ([TDHHS](#))

COVID-19 US Hospitalizations Update: Analyst Bill King reports that fatality rates for those infected with the coronavirus are declining (now about 2% of all cases) but that US hospitalization rates increased over the last two weeks, though still remaining below the peak period in July. Hospital capacity still seems adequate in most states. [Details](#).

COVID-19 And Schools: Contrary to fears raised this summer, schools do not appear to be super-spreaders of COVID-19, at least according to an economist from Brown University in **Providence, RI**, writing in [The Atlantic](#). In Texas, during the week of 9/27, the infection rate was 0.14% of about one million students. Those photos of crowded hallways apparently don't count, she says. [Story](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

The International Monetary Fund said from **Washington** last week that member governments should take advantage of global low interest rates to invest in infrastructure - including health care - to spur recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and fund a shift toward greener energy. Such investments would lead to a more than two-to-one payback within two years, the agency said. [Story](#).

With a nod to a recent one-year extension of the FAST Act, US Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao - now in her fourth year in the post - says the nation still needs a long term transportation funding plan but that negotiators 'ran out of time' to achieve that before the previous bill would have expired. She also used a national speaking slot to criticize a **New York** pandemic quarantine that had affected interstate truckers. [Details](#).

Readers of yesterday's Sunday **New York Times** may have been surprised to see a prominently displayed pitch for **Austin's** Project Connect in the paper's online version, sponsored by Capital Metro. The content and graphics package tout 'major features' of the plan as a new rail system, a transit tunnel beneath downtown, expanded bus service with an all-electric fleet, and nine new park and rides, all for a 4% tax increase; video included. [Details](#).

In a whiplash-inducing turnaround last week, Gov. Greg Abbott went from endorsing that Texas Central Railway **Dallas-Houston** bullet train project in a letter to Japan's prime minister to - days later -

announcing he was 're-evaluating' his position after being 'under-informed' about the effort by its supporters. Color us confused. [Story](#).

Citing new United Kingdom guidelines for journalists writing about car crashes, a *Forbes Magazine* writer says the media should more accurately report 'agency' for auto accidents (meaning 'who or what caused it?'), particularly if aspects of autonomous technology are involved. Unbiased reporting leads to safer streets, he claims. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

San Antonio-New Braunfels home prices increased at twice the rate of local wages over the last five years (2014-19) according to a new report - placing it 34th in rankings of top US cities - with home prices rising by 32.2% over the period, compared to 16.1% for wages. 25th-ranked **Austin** saw home prices rise 2.5% faster than wages over the same time period. [Story](#).

Although the publication he founded does not endorse ballot positions, the always thought-provoking Bob Rivard's essay in The *San Antonio Report* over the weekend left little doubt about where he stands on Nov. 3rd election propositions facing the city's voters: invest now for a more prosperous future. [Opinion](#).

A webinar last week (10/7) from Here Technologies styled "*Art of Location: Large Scale Disaster Prevention and Mitigation*" suggests that GPS location positioning and mapping, linked to scenario planning, complementary response tools across jurisdictions, and virtual simulations can all improve public sector performance during emergencies. Take a look at the presentations [here](#), if interested. [Key Results](#).

New residents continue to pour into the **Austin-Round Rock** area, with the largest numbers usually coming from other cities in Texas. But over the last five years, the origins of those migrants have shifted, with more coming from **Los Angeles** and **New York**; other major contributors include **San Antonio**, **Houston**, and **Dallas**, according to a great new report from the **Austin** chamber of commerce. [Details](#).

Thought of the Week

"The two most powerful warriors are patience and time."

— Leo Tolstoy

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