



## Monday Morning Report

October 19, 2020

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### INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** Council's Executive Committee is *this* Wednesday, October 21, at 2:00 pm via a Zoom video conference call. The agenda will be forthcoming. For more information, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** Worldwide cases reached close to 40 million with 1,111,714 deaths as of noon yesterday (10/18) and the United States had 8,127,522 confirmed cases with just shy of 220,000 fatalities. ([Johns Hopkins](#)) As of Saturday (10/17), Texas was reporting over 820,000 total confirmed cases with 16,984 deaths, including **Bexar County:** 49,297 cases with 1,379 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 3,784 cases with 79 deaths; **Comal County:** 2,822 cases with 105 deaths; **Hays County:** 6,155 cases with 70 deaths; **Travis County:** 30,797 cases with 438 deaths; **Williamson County:** 9,137 cases with 150 deaths. ([TDHHS](#))

**COVID-19 Data Update Correction:** Due to a transcription error, last week's number of cases reported for **Williamson County** was incorrect. As near as we can determine from state data, the proper number should have been 8,917. (Thanks to **Buda** city council member Lee Urbanovsky for pointing this out.)

**COVID-19 US Hospitalizations Update:** After several months of relative consistency, hospitalization rates over the last ten days have begun to trend in the wrong direction in the **Dallas** and **El Paso** areas, although no areas of the state are as of yet reporting capacity shortages in beds or intensive care units. [Details.](#)

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

A US Supreme Court decision to end the 2020 Census Bureau count early will "create one of the most flawed censuses in history," says the incoming president of the American Statistical Association, causing problems for 2021 legislative redistricting and the allocation of trillions of dollars in federal infrastructure and social services funding. Previously identified risk factors "are on Earth," he says, "Now we are on Mars." [Story.](#)

The Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in **San Antonio** is moving forward with a sub-regional study of Interstate 35, advancing an earlier 'Alamo-Capital Corridor' study conducted with TxDOT and the **Austin**-area Metropolitan Planning Organization. The latest efforts eyes improvements in **Bexar, Comal,** and **Guadalupe Counties.** (left-hand column, [here](#)).

Toll rates on the southern stretch of State Highway 130 between **Seguin** and **Austin** will increase next month (11/11) for the first time in four years; the size of the increase will depend upon the size of the vehicle (read 18-wheelers) and whether or not the vehicle has a TxTag. Either way, the increased cost is less than a dollar. [Details.](#)

TxDOT is reportedly considering re-routing an expansion from four-to-twelve lanes on US 183 in **Austin** between State Highway 130 and highway 71. The reason: avoiding the oldest Black-owned farm in **Travis County**, founded in 1839 by Daniel Alexander, an early racehorse breeder and trainer. [Story.](#)

Daily Amtrak Texas Eagle passenger rail service between **San Antonio** and **Chicago** ended last week (10/11), a victim of COVID-19 ridership declines, budget issues, and changing times. Smaller trains will now operate only three days a week on the 1,305-mile, 31-hour (when lucky) trip, which originated back in 1948. [Story](#).

Texas is the most intriguing state in the nation during the upcoming Nov. 3 election, says a long-time **Washington Post** columnist once based in **Austin**. Reason: trending demographics ([here](#)). And related, another veteran observer examines polling in competitive state districts and concludes that a majority in the 2021 Legislative Session is up for grabs, with big implications for committee chairmanships and the Speaker's race. ([here](#)).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

**Austin's** Bergstrom International made a list of the top five US airports with the best food, according to travel blog **The Discoverer**, joining a list that included **New York, Los Angeles, Phoenix,** and **Portland**. See it [here](#).

Texas State University in **San Marcos** made news last week, first by hiring former **El Paso** Congressman (and former US Senate and presidential candidate) Beto O'Rourke to teach political science next year ([here](#)); and by cancelling racial diversity training after an Executive Order threatened their federal funding ([here](#)).

Political and economic relationships among the US, Mexico, and Canada are also on the ballot next month (11/3), and the **Washington Post** over the weekend surveyed the potential outcomes of a victory for either Trump or Biden [here](#). And the looming water war between the US and Mexico drew the attention of the **New York Times** in a lengthy story out of **Boquilla**, Mex. that highlighted the effects on **Hidalgo County** in Texas. [Story](#).

Forget about those reports that **Austin** is growing by 100 people per day; the actual number of new residents is a whopping 168 per day, according to a new chamber of commerce report covered by **Austonia** newsletter. [Details](#).

Home sales in areas vulnerable to flooding due to global warming sea rises have been falling in Florida since 2013, but now home *prices* are also falling, which could have some implications for Texas coastal properties and statewide migration patterns. **Bal Harbor**, Florida, shows why. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"A professional is a man who can do his best at a time when he doesn't particularly feel like it."*

— Alistair Cooke

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