



Monday Morning Report

November 9, 2020

INTERNAL

At the next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee (Wednesday, November 18, at 2:00 pm) members will consider participation in the statewide Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance, or TxETRA. For more information on TxETRA's goals, members, and mission, visit [here](#). Materials related to the Council's potential participation can be found [here](#). For more information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: The pandemic has now reached a phase described this morning by one public health official as 'terrifying,' with over 50 million cases worldwide and 1,258,109 deaths (11/9). The United States has confirmed cases approaching 10 million with 237,584 fatalities. ([Johns Hopkins](#)) Texas is reporting nearly one million total confirmed cases (956,234) with 18,743 deaths, including **Bexar County:** 54,572 cases with 1,429 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 3,919 cases with 83 deaths; **Comal County:** 2,928 cases with 107 deaths; **Hays County:** 6,331 cases with 76 deaths; **Travis County:** 33,016 cases with 455 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 9,848 cases with 159 deaths. ([TDHHS](#))

COVID-19 Vaccine Development: The drug maker Pfizer announced this morning that a vaccine developed in partnership with a biotech company in **Mainz**, Germany, has proven to be 90% effective in preventing the coronavirus infection. Company executives said they expected to produce enough doses to vaccinate 15-20 million people by the end of the year. [Story](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Just one day after being re-elected to a seventh term, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell signaled an openness to passing a \$1 trillion-plus infrastructure spending bill during the upcoming lame duck session of Congress. While some in **Washington** predicted that both sides of the partisan aisle would more likely wait for the outcome of January runoffs that could flip control of the Senate, McConnell said it was a 'possibility' that he would also accede to Democratic demands for new aid to state and local governments. [Story](#). [More](#).

'Let's build the cities we want to see in 100 years.' [The Verge](#) argues that a standard bundle of new stimulus infrastructure spending from **Washington** is no longer enough and that the US needs an infrastructure revolution - soon. Rather than judging plans by price tags or highway miles built, would better metrics be how much is global warming diluted? Or measuring public health effects? Or addressing economic inequalities? [Opinion](#).

Big new local transit funding ballot propositions passed easily in **San Antonio** and **Austin** last week (11/3), and both cities now move from transformational visions to implementation plans. In the Alamo City, workforce development efforts are in play first, then new funding for VIA Metropolitan Transit ([here](#)); Capital Metro and **Austin** will focus initially on governance issues for \$7 billion Project Connect ([here](#)).

Urban versus suburban frictions on the **Austin**-area Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization - the group that sets regional transportation policy and doles out millions in federal dollars - are bubbling over

into efforts at re-structuring the agency's board, something that most members want but can't seem to agree on how to do. Major players in the discussion will change in January, so it's 'stand back & stand by' for now. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Cancellation of the iconic *South By Southwest* music, film, and technology conference in **Austin** is the subject of a new documentary now airing on **The Atlantic's** website with an accompanying article from last spring analyzing the effects on filmmakers. Although everyone involved agreed that cancelling was the right thing to do, one filmmaker admits that the sense of loss was 'devastating.' [Video](#).

Round Rock-based Dell Technologies and the **Washington Post** jointly sponsor a webinar *tomorrow*, Tuesday, November 10, on "*The Future Of Work*," with a panel of experts discussing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and how remote, freelance, and temporary work options are changing traditional business culture. [Details](#).

San Antonio is getting a new 1.5-acre culture park downtown that will house an art gallery, a speakeasy-style bar, a BMX bike track, an indoor skate park, a retail shop, and a rooftop movie theater and concert venue - all built as a tribute to 'young creative types' who helped revive the 176-year old brewery company Pabst's nearly defunct brand. [Story](#).

Newly-elected female commissioners took center stage in **Travis** and **Bexar County** commissioners courts following last week's elections: Democrat Ann Howard will replace retiring Republican Gerald Daugherty, joining two women already seated on the **Travis County** court; and Republican Trish DeBerry will join Democrat Rebecca Clay-Flores as the first women in two decades on the **Bexar County** court. Details: [AUS](#). [SAT](#).

Lew White will continue as mayor of **Lockhart** and **Caldwell County** will get a new sheriff following last week's (11/3) elections. More election results for **Caldwell County** and **Martindale** can be found [here](#).

Phony local news sites with a marked political agenda are targeting **San Antonio** and other Texas cities, including **Austin**, as part of a network of more than 1300 such sites nationwide operated by Metric Media, a front for various conservative groups. The sites generally have city or regional names in their titles and attack or promote favored political figures or ideas. Steer clear, say media experts. [Story](#). [More](#).

Thought of the Week

"Politics is an inexact science."

— Otto von Bismarck

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