



## Monday Morning Report

November 25, 2019

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### INTERNAL

The offices of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council will be closed this Thursday and Friday. We wish you a very happy Thanksgiving!

The Executive Committee is scheduled to meet Wednesday, December 18, 2:00 pm at the Council offices in **San Marcos** (304 North C.M. Allen Parkway). For questions or to add items to the agenda, email [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

**San Antonio** does not have to choose between improved transit or aquifer protection, says mayor Ron Nirenberg in an opinion editorial published over the weekend. He and **Bexar County** Judge Nelson Wolff have proposed shifting 1/8-cent in sales tax revenue currently dedicated to preserving watershed and greenspace to VIA's ConnectSA initiative for improved, advanced transit programs. [Opinion](#). But action by other agencies may be required, say other voices. [Commentary](#).

Some of the biggest names in aviation gathered in **Dallas** last week for a summit on the future of personal flight technologies (air taxis, sophisticated drones, and other electric-powered aircraft). Part rally, part investor pitch session, the event featured cool gadgetry and a 25,000 jump from an airplane - without a parachute. Optimism was in the air (sorry) as well as recognition of obstacles: developing better batteries, regulatory issues, and public skepticism. [Story](#).

Curbing transportation vehicle emissions, which account for about a quarter of greenhouse gases worldwide, have forced cities to reexamine their relationship with cars. Some imposed congestion fees (**New York, London**), some tried license plate regimes (**Mexico City, Beijing**), and others proposed far-off bans on carbon-burning engines. The **New York Times** surveys global efforts to limit automobile pollution [here](#).

Self-driving cars still have a long way to go before becoming widely available, says an executive of a major Chinese auto manufacturer in **Hong Kong**. He predicts autonomous vehicles will be allowed on certain corridors, campuses, or buildings, but may not be available on all roads for decades. Hurdles include regulatory restrictions, people's mobility habits, and technology that is still evolving. [Interview](#).

Australia has launched a national campaign to 'kill congestion' via a three-phase program to Remode, Reprice, and Reshape the country's transportation culture. Choked highways in **Sydney** and **Melbourne** have led the conservative government to attack the 'induced demand' aspect of new highways. [Info-graphic](#).

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

A profile of **San Antonio** cyber-security entrepreneur John Dickson by **Express-News** business columnist Greg Jefferson morphs into a meditation on the economic development relationship between **Austin** and

**San Antonio**, particularly issues arising from the recent recruitment of the Army Futures Command center. The agency landed in **Austin**, but **San Antonio** benefits as well. [Here's how](#).

**London** transportation officials announced they will not renew Uber's operating license - which expires today at noon - raising questions about the ride sharing application's ability to continue operations in its most lucrative European market. The company's business model has long raised issues for regulators and traditional black cab drivers, but the real threat is whether other European cities follow suit. [Details](#).

Conflicting reports about a massive ransomware attack on Mexico's state-run petroleum company Pemex, a top supplier of crude oil to US refineries, has reportedly forced the shutdown of all computers at the company's headquarters in **Mexico City**. The attack has also prompted a larger debate about the competence of Mexican president Andres Manuel Lopez-Obrador's administration. [Story](#).

Predicting the weather is a \$7 billion industry and the **Washington Post** reports that private sector companies are headed towards a collision with the Federal government over technology, funding, and access to data. Everything from de-icing planes to planning for rising tides and forest fires could be impacted. [Story](#). Other challenges also loom: global deployment of a 5G cellular network pose a threat to data accuracy from existing satellites. [Details](#).

A state district judge issued an order last week that temporarily stops **San Antonio's** paid sick leave ordinance from taking effect next month. Business groups sued to halt the program, arguing that it violates state law, and the judge says it will take more time to determine if the program is legal. [Details](#).

A record 8.1 million square feet of office buildings are under construction in **Austin**, placing the city as the second in US cities for projects currently underway, behind **Nashville**. The **Austin Business Journal** surveys 25 new high-rises going up in the Central Business District [here](#).

US shopping malls are dying and those that are thriving are spending millions reinventing themselves as 'integrated lifestyle hubs,' adding niche elements like yoga studios, microbreweries, and medical clinics - according to the **Washington Post**. One in four shopping malls are predicted to fail by 2022, says one study, and there is an accelerating polarization between the 'best' and the 'rest.' [Story](#).

President Donald J. Trump visited **Austin** last week to tout Apple's manufacturing facilities there and the company's plans to expand in the near future. Reports on the trip inevitably became mingled with political speculation about his *seventh* visit to Texas this year. Could there be an election coming? [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"After a good dinner, one can forgive anybody, even one's own relations."*

- Oscar Wilde

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