



Monday Morning Report

January 6, 2025

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee meets Wednesday, January 15 at 2 PM by Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, email council@corridor.org.

Please note our office number has changed to: (737) 335-7189.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A major source of drinking water for two million people in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** - the Edwards Aquifer - enters the new year 2025 more than 40 feet lower than normal, a victim of drought and population growth. Local officials describe the situation as 'unprecedented territory.' [Story](#).

The most significant large-scale experiment in US congestion pricing begins with rush hour today in **Manhattan**, a much debated (and much recently modified) effort to ease traffic gridlock, improve air quality, and raise billions for improved regional transit systems. A test or the future for Blue Cities? [Story](#). [More](#). [Costs](#). [Opinion](#).

Hyperloop projects are back in the news suddenly, with new attention brought to the technology by a **Denver-to-Pueblo** test track supposedly opening later this year ([here](#)) and a **Newsweek** report on an estimated \$70 trillion **London-to-New York** mega-tunnel project, which **Austin's** Elon Musk says he can build cheaper. [Story](#).

Noting that **Austin-to-San Antonio** passenger rail is 'back on the public agenda,' former Capital Metro board member Lyndon Henry - in an article entitled '*Utilizing Austin/Central Texas Rail Resources to Transform Public Transit*' - suggests using the former Lone Star Rail's state charter authorities as a financing tool. [Post](#).

New Braunfels plans to launch an on-demand microtransit system, Rio Transit, later this year, which will allow residents and visitors to request a shared, wheelchair accessible van ride to anywhere in the city. [Story](#).

The **Washington Post** reports that investors are flocking to companies developing flying taxis, electric-powered vertical takeoff-and-landing vehicles that are quieter, greener, and more flexible than existing aircraft. Though commercial services have been announced in Florida, California, and abroad, none are yet implemented. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Travis County judge Andy Brown says 2025 will bring a renewed focus on drug overdose protection, mental health issues, and seeking state funding for improved passenger rail ([here](#)). Kirk Watson, **Austin's** mayor, wants stability for city finances, improved efficiency in service delivery, and funding for IH-35 'caps.' [More](#).

The **San Antonio Express-News** ended 2024 by chronicling job losses in **Austin's** high-tech industry, citing a supposed 'mass exodus' of ex-Silicon Valley companies like Microsoft, Expedia, Bumble, Tesla, etc. ([here](#)). Just through July, on the other hand, Opportunity Austin reports the city added 18,000 jobs, up 1.4%. [Report](#).

With a January 15 dockworkers strike deadline looming for US East and Gulf Coast ports, the **Journal of Commerce** says talks will resume tomorrow between the longshoreman's union and port operators represented by the Maritime Alliance. A settlement could avoid supply chain logjams, costing billions. [Story](#). [More](#).

After giving up on their own autonomous vehicle development plans, ride-share companies Uber and Lyft are nonetheless rolling out new apps for servicing driverless taxis - this time using vehicles supplied by Waymo and Alphabet - and providing support features like trunk opening and horn honking. **Austin** testing cited. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

“And now we welcome the new year. Full of things that have never been.”

– Rainer Maria Rilke

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