



Monday Morning Report

January 10, 2022

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet Wednesday, January 19, at 2:00 pm by Zoom videoconference. To add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global cases surpassed 307.3 million this morning, with 5,490,117 deaths. US cases now exceed 60 million cases, with 837,664 deaths. (1/10/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Yesterday, Texas reported 75,281 fatalities thus far with 4,176,423 confirmed cases, including in **Bexar County**: 310,962 cases with 5,381 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 19,921 cases, with still 348 deaths; **Comal County**: 14,009 cases, with 483 deaths; **Hays County**: 37,710 cases with 366 deaths; **Travis County**: 151,941 cases with 1,509 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 81,378 cases with 748 deaths (1/9/22). ([TDHHS](#)). For current regional hospitalization-rate data, go [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

New details emerged over the weekend about TxDOT's evolving plans for the Central Expressway project to rebuild Interstate 35 through downtown **Austin**, including lowering the highway beneath Holly Street and Woodland Avenue, increasing pedestrian crossings, adding a new pedestrian bridge, and shifting frontage roads to the west. A public meeting on the project is scheduled for January 25. [Story](#).

Travis County officials are not too happy about the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority's plans to expand MoPac freeway in south **Austin**: they fired off a three-page litany of complaints last week about both the project and the public process ([here](#)), noting that data supporting the expansion was more than five years old. [Story](#).

Worldwide supply chains roiled by the pandemic have sparked an economic boom along the US-Mexican border as companies race to shift their production closer to US markets, according to [Bloomberg News](#). Texas-linked beneficiaries cited are **Juarez**, **Matamoros**, and **Reynosa**. Backed-up ship traffic at major ports from **Los Angeles** to **Corpus Christi** have created a 'supply chain hell,' Bloomberg says. [Story](#).

Austin-based Tesla managed to successfully navigate those snarled supply chains (above) to achieve record productivity while other manufacturers, like General Motors and Ford, were forced to close factories due to shortages. The [New York Times](#) says Tesla used superior technology and production-line forecasting techniques to double their output. [Story](#).

Elon Musk was maybe less successful at managing another venture, the underground tunnel known as the **Las Vegas** Loop, called 'an underground death trap' by one tech journal last week after video of a subsurface traffic jam stoked online fears of a potential battery fire someday. [Story](#). [Video](#).

Transit officials and electric vehicle proponents might want to take a look at a website created by **Washington**-based public policy group Atlas Perspectives, [EV HUB](#), that collects up-to-date data and analysis of federal funding programs for all sorts of alternative transportation efforts. You can find it [here](#).

The city council in **San Marcos** passed a new Transportation Master Plan last week, including a much cussed and discussed Thoroughfare and Bicycle Plan modifying various roadway alignments and biking classifications. Taking roadway lanes for bicycle routes, deemed a 'sustainability effort,' created some controversy. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Meta Platforms, the social media company formerly known as Facebook, signaled a massive influx in its **Austin** footprint by leasing the entire commercial half (589,000 sq. ft.) of the new 66-story Sixth and Guadalupe building - the city's tallest. Meta also announced it is adding several hundred new jobs to their local operations. [Details](#). [More](#).

The Greater **San Marcos** Partnership, an economic development advocacy group, says Amazon will build a second regional distribution facility in **Hays** and **Caldwell Counties** - this one even larger than the company's current campus in **San Marcos**. Partnership director Jason Giulietti explains the benefits. [Opinion](#).

Consumer electronics giant Sony announced in **Tokyo** last week that it was forming a subsidiary devoted to transportation, taking it one step closer to entering the electric car market. The company has been testing a prototype electric vehicle in Europe for the past year. [Story](#).

Automation robotics continue growth as a niche industry in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor**. Plus One Robotics ([here](#)), which develops automation software to improve warehouse functions, just expanded at Port **San Antonio**, and Torc Robotics - a self-driving truck technology developer - has set up an **Austin** engineering hub. [Details](#).

Bastrop may be going **Hollywood**: a California-based company, [Line 204 Studios](#), has proposed building a 550-acre mixed development/golf course/studio-and-sound stage complex with a reported build-out cost of over \$500 million. Former actor Alton Butler (*Walnut Creek*, *Bikini Goddesses*) is behind the venture. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"The distance between insanity and genius is measured only by success."

- Bruce Feirstein

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