



Monday Morning Report

January 17, 2023

(Tuesday Edition due to MLK Jr. Holiday)

INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council meets *this* Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at 2:00 PM CT by Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org. **Draft Agenda.**

The Rail Committee of the **San Antonio** Mobility Coalition meets Feb. 17, 10:00 am, for a Zoom presentation by Todd Stinson, Amtrak's Director of Government Affairs for the Southern Division. Mr. Stinson will be discussing Amtrak's Connect US expansion plans. Zoom link [here](#).

TxETRA is inviting you to an Advisory Committee meeting regarding the South Central Texas Electric Transportation Compact on Mar. 29, 10:00 am. Zoom link [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

A team of three **Community Impact** journalists surveyed population growth and related transportation issues last week in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor**, concluding - among other things - that the region is becoming a metroplex of roughly five million people. Growth rates and projections for **San Marcos**, **New Braunfels**, and surrounding counties are cited. **Story.**

As freight railroads use longer and longer trains to increase efficiency, the problem of trains blocking rail crossings is rampant across the US (ask **San Marcos** residents). Now, Texas has joined 17 state attorneys general asking for Supreme Court action to help regulate the amount of time freight trains can block roads - something typically under federal purview (though only 900 of 18,000 incidents in 2021-22 were investigated). **Story. Legal Brief.**

According to transportation analytics firm INRIX, **Chicago** had the worst traffic congestion among major global cities during pandemic-recovery year 2022, with local drivers losing 155 hours stuck in gridlock. **Houston** was the only Texas city that made the company's Top Ten list for US cities, based mostly on cellphone data. **Story.**

MIT researchers have found a new issue with electric autonomous vehicles: they may become a climate change problem, the **Washington Post** reports. By modeling the carbon output of a mythical fleet of one-billion global autonomous cars, the analysts discovered that the future energy required to run the fleet's computers could generate as much greenhouse gas emissions as all of the data centers in the world today. Now what? **Story.**

In a first for **San Antonio**, today marks the opening of a single-point urban interchange (SPUI) at the intersection of Harry Wurzbach and Austin Highway on the city's northeast side. SPUI's operate with a single three-phased traffic signal at high traffic volume intersections and are meant to enhance safety,

mobility, connectivity, and traffic flow. This one took three years and \$750,000 to build. See how SPUI's work [here](#).

Austin assistant city manager Gina Fiandaca, who has been handling the city's transportation portfolio since 2019, is leaving later this month to become transportation secretary for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. [Details](#).

The Verge interviews 17 transportation experts for 2023 predictions. Surprises: micro-mobility e-scooters companies collapse as investors and mobility-impaired pedestrians tire of them; car prices fall; pedestrian fatalities soar; autonomous companies consolidate and emphasis shifts away from full autonomous. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The **Express-News** profiled former **San Antonio** mayor (and Corridor Council founder) Henry Cisneros last week, who says at 75 that he is too busy to retire ("There's work to be done"); the interview covers four decades of public and private sector activities of the former US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, up to more recent business activities including funding infrastructure development at **New York's** Kennedy Airport. [Profile](#).

Axios, the national news service that hosts locally focused newsletters across the US, has started a **San Antonio** version of *Axios Local* after hiring Alamo City journalists Madalyn Mendoza and Megan Stringer. You can sign up for **Axios San Antonio** - it's free for now - [here](#).

Among the \$48 million in 'exceptional requests' the University of Texas in **Austin** is making of the Texas Legislature this session is \$18.5 million for a digital molten salt reactor, which the application describes as a nuclear reactor that uses hot fluoride or chloride salt as fuel. The reactor would provide on-demand electricity, water desalination, hydrogen production and other benefits. Read more [here](#).

The annual 'U-Haul Trailer' migration survey is out and once again it demonstrates that Texas is the destination-of-choice for people fleeing California and New York. **Missouri City** and **Conroe** outside of **Houston**, and **Richardson** outside of **Dallas** were the most popular drop off points for their U-Haul trailers. [Story](#).

Economic development and workforce programs, broadband infrastructure, and violence prevention led the legislative wish list presented by eight Texas large-city mayors to legislators before the opening of this year's session last week, according to the **Texas Tribune**. Also high on the list: preserving local control. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"The future depends on what you do today."

- Mahatma Gandhi

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