



Monday Morning Report

January 20, 2025

INTERNAL

Members and guests at last week's Executive Committee meeting (1/15) of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council discussed and approved a two-session marketing plan in support of a request to the State Legislature for \$300 million in funding for intercity rail initiated by **Travis** and **Bexar Counties**. The Committee also welcomed new member **Austin** city council member Paige Ellis and received updates on IH-35 cap-and-stitch efforts, new congestion data for **Austin** and **San Antonio**, the status of the Edwards Aquifer, and a new \$310 billion California statewide rail plan, among other items. For more information, please email council@corridor.org.

Please note our new office telephone number: (737) 335-7189.

INFRASTRUCTURE

California governor Gavin Newsom announced an ambitious \$310-billion statewide rail plan last week in **Sacramento** to create a zero-emission passenger network by 2050. The proposal seeks to shift 200-million daily passenger-miles-traveled from cars to rail and includes intercity, regional and local transit systems linked to a spine of high-speed passenger rail currently in the initial stages of construction. *Story. The Plan.*

In **Washington DC** last week, the Federal Railroad Administration sent Congress a report on its plans for Amtrak's daily long-distance services, which prioritizes 15 new long-distance routes and calls for restoration of daily-service between **New Orleans-Los Angeles**, through **San Antonio**, on the Sunset Limited. *Story. Report.*

A **Washington Post** writer discusses **New York's** congestion-pricing plan, noting that **London, Singapore, and Stockholm** have had similar programs for years and claiming congestion charges are actually about personal freedom - from cars. "That makes New York the freest place in the country." *Opinion.*

A new report and data tool from the US Geological Survey could help policy makers better understand where water supply risks exist in the US, and where surplus water resources may be available. The USGS released a nationwide water data and availability assessment last week to identify where shortages exist, where surpluses are located, and the quality of water supplies across the US. *Story. Data. Availability Assessment.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The Milken Institute's annual 2025 'Best-Performing Cities Index' placed **San Antonio's** economic performance at No. 26 among the US's top metro areas, outshining **Austin** on a range of economic indicators including - most significantly - housing affordability. Thirteen factors were analyzed in making the assessments. [Story](#).

Culture newsletter ***The Barbed Wire*** asks "Why Doesn't Texas Have-High Speed Rail? Will We Ever?" - attributing the answer to a confluence of political, economic, and cultural factors, before zeroing in on legislation by **Round Rock** state representative John Bucy's bill to create a high-speed corridor along IH-35. [Story](#).

The **New York Times** reported last week on the resurgence of **San Antonio's** Philharmonic Orchestra, revived after the demise of the 83-year-old San Antonio Symphony. in 2022. A piece that chronicles the hardships of similar organizations in **New Orleans, Denver, and Kansas City**, highlights the group's resiliency. [Story](#).

New Braunfels has picked Osbaldo Flores as police chief, former assistant chief in **Arlington**, to replace Keith Lane, who retired last year. Flores has more than 27 years of law enforcement experience. [Details](#).

Well, now we know where the next Buc-ee's mega-gas station will be: construction starts this month on a new \$47 million, 74,000-sq.ft. travel center on IH-35 in **San Marcos**, this one boasting 120 fuel pumps. [Details](#).

Thought of the Week

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that."

- Martin Luther King Jr.

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