



Monday Morning Report

January 30, 2023

INTERNAL

The next Executive Committee meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is scheduled for Wednesday, February 15th at 2pm by Zoom. For more information or to add an item to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

Heads Up: Join us this Friday, Feb. 3, at 10:00 am for **San Antonio** Mobility Coalition Zoom presentations by Sherry Pifer, TxDOT Transportation Planning & Programming Division, Freight Systems manager, and Chad Coburn, TxDOT Rail Division, with an update on the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program. Meeting ID: 847 5866 2688. Passcode: 311408. Zoom link [here](#).

Also, this Friday (2/3) at 1:30-3:30 is the Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance's monthly policy meeting. Agenda items include a Legislative Overview and update on recently filed bills. On Zoom [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

The US Environmental Protection Agency is now providing loans via state agencies to build or repair water infrastructure, and at least one county just north of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor is already benefiting. The State Infrastructure Financing Authority Water Infrastructure and Innovation Act has already issued \$17 billion in credit assistance to fund \$36 billion in projects, including one in **Bell County**. [Story](#). [More](#) on Texas water.

Quiet Part Out Loud: A top Biden administration official offered tips to city mayors in **Route Fifty** to get more federal transportation funding grants: highlight key Democratic goals such as racial equity and climate change in federal applications, suggests Christopher Coes, assistant secretary at US Department of Transportation. [Story](#).

Austin's Corridor Program Office Director Mike Trimble briefed city officials last week on local efforts to speed up the Our Future 35's cap-and-stitch effort to accommodate green space and east-west connections over Interstate 35 downtown. Trimble notes that there are some challenges meeting TxDOT's 'aggressive' timeline. [Story](#).

Expect traffic delays for the next ten years along a 23-mile stretch of Loop 1604 in **San Antonio**, according to a TxDOT official, as recounted by the **San Antonio Report**. The fun has already started on the first phase of the \$1 billion expansion project that began in May 2021 on a stretch of road from SH 16 (Bandera Rd) to IH-10. [Details](#).

It's 'Rail Tunnel Week' in **Washington** as President Biden travels to **Baltimore** today, and **New York** tomorrow to highlight rebuilding a 150-year old tunnel and a new tunnel under the Hudson River, both financed by the bipartisan Infrastructure law he passed in 2021. [Story](#).

Maybe appropriate for today's chilly weather, the **Washington Post** has created an interactive fake city, **Iceburgh**, to mimic the impacts to infrastructure of extreme cold due to climate change. The project is a companion piece to their earlier virtual metropolis, **Meltville**, which models extreme heat. [Iceburgh. Meltville.](#)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Due to migration and immigration, the American South is poised to become the center of US population for the first time in history, according to estimates from the Census Bureau. The Northeast and Midwest have lost population and six Southern states, including Texas, have gained residents. **Austin** is cited.

[Story.](#)

City officials are making some big changes during the expected four-to-five years the **Austin** Convention Center will be closed for a \$1 billion expansion. A greatly scaled-back calendar of meetings and events will be shifted 'campus-style' to local hotels and 300 staffers will be deployed to other city departments.

[Story.](#)

San Antonio mayor Ron Nirenberg has filed campaign documents for a fourth - and final - term, posting this last week: "We're going to protect our families, keep more money in your pockets, and get our neighbors into great jobs through Ready to Work," the city's major workforce development program.

[Story.](#)

The Jan. 27 episode of **Community Impact's** podcast, '*Austin Breakdown*,' considers the likelihood of **Austin-San Antonio** becoming a single metroplex in the vein of **Dallas-Ft. Worth**. Available [here](#).

That newly discovered vast network of ancient Mayan ruins just announced in **Guatemala City** by the **Wall Street Journal** has an **Austin** connection: a University of Texas geography researcher, Carlos Morales-Aguilar, was co-author of the report outlining the discovery, which used aerial lidar technology to make the find. [Story.](#)

Denise Trauth, former president of Texas State University in **San Marcos**, has received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Mount St. Joseph University in **Cincinnati**, OH, her alma mater. [Details.](#)

The contracts aren't yet signed but it appears that Dottie Watkins, a former bus driver and city native, will become the new president and chief executive officer of Capital Metro in **Austin**. The vote happens today.

[Details.](#)

Thought of the Week

"Community does not necessarily mean living face-to-face with others; it means never losing the awareness that we are connected to each other."

- Parker Palmer

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