



Monday Morning Report

January 31, 2022

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled to meet Wednesday, February 16, at 2:00 pm by Zoom videoconference. To add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global cases reached 375.3 million this morning, with 5,665,683 million deaths. US cases are at 74.3 million with 884.265 deaths. (1/31/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Yesterday, Texas was reporting 5,158,709 confirmed cases with 78,136 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 430,251 cases with 5,540 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 24,691 cases, with 357 deaths; **Comal County**: 20,080 cases, with 498 deaths; **Hays County**: 48,827 cases with 387 deaths; **Travis County**: 191,887 cases with 1,562 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 102,198 cases with 792 deaths (1/30/22). ([TDHHS](#)). For current regional hospitalization-rate data, go [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

The US Department of Transportation in **Washington** announced last week the largest highway safety initiative in decades, earmarking \$6 billion to reduce traffic fatalities, improve medical emergency care, impose collision-avoidance technologies, lower traffic speeds, and re-design highways to incorporate safer conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. "Only zero deaths is acceptable," said Secretary Pete Buttigieg. [Story. More.](#)

TxDOT is predicting a record funding level of \$80 billion available for the agency's 2023 Unified Transportation Plan, up nearly \$10 billion over 2022 and largely stemming from increased Federal dollars flowing from the recently passed Biden administration infrastructure spending bill. [Staff Presentation.](#)

San Antonio city officials seemed stunned last week by a TxDOT decision to unilaterally reverse a seven-year-old agreement that would have removed 2.2 miles of Broadway Street from state control and returned it to local jurisdiction, calling the move 'illogical' and 'unnecessary.' At issue may be a local re-development plan to reduce the number of traffic lanes to accommodate bikes and pedestrians. [Story. Opinion. More Opinion.](#)

TxDOT unveiled more details of its re-designed plans for IH-35 through downtown **Austin** in two public presentations last week, including lowered main lanes from Ben White to US 290 East, prospective \$700-800 million parkland 'caps' to be paid for by the city, and both north and southbound frontage lanes positioned side-by-side between Caesar Chavez and Dean Keeton streets. Design drawings accompany the story. [Details. More.](#)

Leander will let the local voters decide whether to remain in Capital Metro despite receiving a series of olive branches and infrastructure funding comprises from the **Austin**-area transit agency. An election is scheduled for May 7. [Story. More.](#)

A sprawling 36-hour traffic jam earlier this month on the East Coast's busiest highway, I-95, was the result of political paralysis, miscommunication, and a failure to grasp the severity of the situation, according to a tick-tock timeline report from the **Washington Post** that reads like a network television thriller. A cautionary tale for transportation planners everywhere. [Story](#).

Austin Bergstrom International Airport is reaching out to potential vendors for expansions of utility and airfield infrastructure with an online session on upcoming contracting opportunities Feb. 10, from 5:30-6:30 pm, and an engineering design Request for Qualifications will be released *today* (1/31) for the south airport area. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Elon Musk Watch: In this episode, a four-ton Space X rocket crashes into the moon ([here](#)); Tesla starts building Model Y's at their **Austin** factory ([here](#)); Tesla will NOT introduce a new model this year but WILL perfect its Full Self-Driving technology ([here](#)); Tesla's most important new product is not cars but a humanoid robot named 'Optimus,' says Musk ([here](#)); and, a computer geek won't stop tracking his jets ([here](#)).

A branch of the legendary **Lockhart** Black's Barbecue family is planning a new 64-acre boutique resort hotel and vineyard complex near **Driftwood** that will combine a spa, an entertainment venue, a 20,000 sq. ft. wine cellar, and a high-end restaurant. Mike, Mark, and sister Christina Black hope to open in January 2023. [Story](#).

Even the **San Antonio Express-News** is asking, what does Ohio have against **Austin**? after an economic development agency placed billboards around the city questioning the '*Keep It Weird*' lifestyle in favor of the Buckeye State. Could the answer be this 2005 football scoreboard: Longhorns 25 - Buckeyes 22? [Story](#).

Congratulations to insurance executive Anne Miller, winner of the **New Braunfels** Besserung (Outstanding Citizen) Award last week ([here](#)). And likewise, to **New Braunfels** high school bowler Maggie Thoma, who set state & national records with a flawless 300-point game (take that, **New York**) earlier this month. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance."

- Samuel Johnson

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