



Monday Morning Report

February 7, 2022

INTERNAL

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

COVID-19 UPDATE: Over 10 billion vaccine doses have been administered worldwide thus far in the pandemic. Global cases are at 395.8 million as of this morning, with 5.74 million deaths. US cases are at 76.5 million with 902,650 deaths. (2/07/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Yesterday, Texas was reporting 5,298,076 confirmed cases with 79,412 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 448,619 cases with 5,610 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 25,454 cases, with 365 deaths; **Comal County**: 20,942 cases, with 504 deaths; **Hays County**: 50,146 cases with 394 deaths; **Travis County**: 196,886 cases with 1,593 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 104,793 cases with 805 deaths (2/6/22). ([TDHHS](#)). For current regional hospitalization-rate data, go [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

A blockbuster internal memo from the Federal Highway Administration detailing how it will spend \$110 billion earmarked for roads & bridges directly threatens states - like Texas - with surging populations. The **Wall Street Journal** reports that projects increasing roadway capacity 'will be sent to the bottom of the pile' and that those requiring new right-of-way will be 'ineligible' for expedited environmental review by the agency. [Story. Memo.](#)

The **Washington**-based national infrastructure advocacy group **CG-LA** has published a new report looking at the next five years of mass transit development, '*2022 Transforming Mass Transit - Opportunities in Innovation*,' highlighting new forms of public and private revenue generation, trends in the \$5.5 trillion US rail project pipeline, new energy efficiencies shaping the market, and new technologies improving service & user experience. [Report.](#)

Deferred maintenance, climate change, and heavier-than-anticipated traffic are causing bridges to wear out earlier than expected, reports **Axios**, leaving more than 43,500 US bridges in poor enough condition to be (unsurprisingly) deemed 'structurally deficient' by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association. But some experts say better warning technology could have prevented last month's **Pittsburgh** collapse. [Story. Report.](#)

Although the Biden administration has assigned one of the nation's top infrastructure experts, John Porcari, to unsnarl shipping traffic backups in **Long Beach** and **San Pedro**, CA, don't expect any supply chain relief until the end of this year or early 2023, the **New York Times** cautions. [Story.](#)

More details have emerged about TxDOT's sudden U-turn on relinquishing state control of Broadway Street in **San Antonio** to local officials, thus potentially scuttling a \$42 million city bond redevelopment project: **Express-News** columnist Greg Jefferson attributes the move directly to Gov. Greg Abbott

([here](#)); **SA Report's** Rick Casey says the reason is larger than just congestion-related, but more part of a state war on cities. [Opinion](#).

Break Out the Clogs: **Austin** Bergstrom International Airport has snagged another European non-stop flight, this time a KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Dreamliner service to **Amsterdam** beginning March 28. The service will operate three times a week with connecting 'points beyond' flights to elsewhere in Europe, Africa, and India. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

With a US housing shortage estimated by officials at 3.8 million homes, the **Los Angeles Times** reports that one option combining affordability and construction speed might be 1600 sq. ft. 3D-printed units completed in 90-days for under \$330,000, depending upon location & terrain. An in-progress **Austin** homeless project is cited. [Story](#).

An **Austin**-based developer has announced a construction-start on a \$2 billion mixed-use project, 156-acre Pearson Ranch, in **Williamson County** on the northeast corner of Texas 45 and West Parmer Lane. Inspire Development says the site will support 2500 upscale residences, parkland, offices, retail, and hotel space. [Story](#).

Samsung's **Austin** semiconductor plant has some official explaining to do after a series of chemical-laced wastewater spills into a tributary of Harris Branch Creek on the city's northeast side. Although the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality investigators found "virtually no surviving aquatic life within the affected stretch," the agency ruled that no violations occurred. [Story](#). [More](#).

Texas Government Insider profiled **New Braunfels** mayor and former **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee member Rusty Brockman last week, revealing a previously undisclosed (to us, anyway) passion for community theater and singing. Who knew? [Details](#) (left-hand column, halfway down).

Thought of the Week

"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

- George Bernard Shaw

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