



## Monday Morning Report

February 13, 2023

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### INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is meeting *this* Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 2pm by Zoom. There will be a Regional Water Supply presentation from Craig Smith, former executive director of the Barton Springs Aquifer District. **Draft Agenda**. For information, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

Last week's Zoom presentation to the **San Antonio** Mobility Coalition Rail Committee by Chad Coburn, deputy director of TxDOT's Rail Division, is now available online [here](#), beginning at 28:53. Mr. Coburn's discussion of a TxDOT application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Fed-State Partnership grant program for the **San Antonio-to-Dallas** corridor begins at 45:30. If prompted for a password, use !6eqbuKA.

Reminder: Be sure to join us this week for the **San Antonio** Mobility Coalition's Rail Committee presentation on Amtrak's "Connecting US" expansion plan Feb. 17, 10:00 am. Todd Stennis, Amtrak Director of Government Affairs, South, and Arun Rao, Director of Network Development, are presenters. Meeting ID: 810 3137 4268. Password: 580763. **Zoom**.

An enterprising graduate student in Public Administration at Texas State University in **San Marcos** - Kevin Scott - analyzed the environmental benefits of a theoretical **San Antonio** to **Georgetown** high speed rail service, finding that it could remove nearly 8 million cars from IH-35 and eliminate 42 million pounds of CO2 annually. **Study**.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

We hear a lot about how environmental regulations reduce productivity by adding delays and costs to large infrastructure projects (and they frequently do), but **New York Times** economics columnist Paul Krugman refuted the productivity argument over the weekend and says the collective benefits (safer workplaces, cleaner air, water, and oceans) outweigh any negative impacts. Worth a read. **Opinion**.

Texas US congressman Colin Allred (**Dallas**) has introduced the bipartisan Federal Infrastructure Bank Act of 2023, which creates an institution to work with state and local partners to facilitate private infrastructure investments via loans and loan guarantees. **Story. Bill**.

The relentless industry push for driverless big-rig trucks continues to converge on Texas, the largest US freight-trucking market and a target-rich environment of open spaces and a third more highway miles than any other state, reports **Bloomberg News**, in a **Dallas**-datelined story about Aurora, an autonomous startup. **Story**.

Mexico is planning to ban cargo-only flights into **Mexico City's** Benito Juarez International Airport, the country's busiest, shifting cargo flights to the new Felipe Angeles Airport that opened last year. Not everyone is happy about it: "Neither airline for the associated cargo supply chain can just pack up and move." **Story**.

Billed as an intermediate step towards full autonomy, German start-up Vay has become the first company to deploy remote-controlled vehicles driven from physical steering stations located sometime miles away - currently Vay's offices in **Berlin**. The company says 'teledriving' can become widespread within months. [Story](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

**KXAN-TV News** reports that two agenda item addenda for a special meeting of the **Austin** city council this week (2/15) indicate that city management changes may be coming soon. One addendum authorizes severance benefit payments; the other regards "potential appointment of an interim city manager." [Story](#).

A new industrial park, ATX 130, is being planned for southeast **Austin** along the route of State Highway 130 near Elroy Road. Scheduled for a groundbreaking next month, the business park will boast 602,400 sq. ft. of office, warehouse, and distribution space just a mile from Bergstrom International Airport. [Story](#).

The **New Yorker** writer Lawrence Wright unloads on his hometown in "*The Astonishing Transformation of Austin*," calling the state capital 'a turbocharged tech megalopolis being shaped by exiles from places like Silicon Valley.' Among the litany of complaints cited: stifling traffic, unaffordable restaurants, and no free parking. [Story](#).

Following a petition drive by local activists that required just 1300 signatures, the **San Marcos** city council last week voted to repeal a four-month-old contract with their police union that was supposed to have lasted until September 2025. Activists are seeking five transparency changes, the so-called 'Hartman Reforms.' [Story](#).

Higher-education guide website **Intelligent** has given top rankings in five categories to Texas State University in San Marcos: Marketing, Master's in Social Work, Master's in Public Administration, and Criminal Justice. TSU was also cited as one of the best online colleges with low out-of-state tuition. [Details](#).

**Comal County** is crafting a master plan for its parks, open space, and natural areas, planning for both short- and long-term projects as the county population continues to soar ([here](#)). And, after nearly 140-years of operations, the historic Dittlinger Mills on east San Antonio Street in **New Braunfels** is set to close next month. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"Don't tell me how wonderful things will be someday. Show me you can risk being at peace with the way things are right now."*

- Oriah

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