



## Monday Morning Report

March 6, 2023

---

### INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is tentatively scheduled to meet Wednesday, March 15 at 2pm by Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

TxDOT plans to file applications this for the federal Corridor Identification and Development Program proposing enhanced Amtrak service for at least three routes connecting Texas Triangle Cities (**San Antonio-Dallas/Ft. Worth** including **Austin**; **Dallas/Ft. Worth-Houston**; and **Houston-San Antonio**). Lone Star Rail district supports the TxDOT application, and the Corridor Council has written to the appropriate Texas Legislative committees requesting funding to match federal dollars for this program. [Story](#).

At last week's Policy Meeting of the Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance (3/3), members got a first look at pending legislation filed in **Austin** regarding electric vehicles and charging station regulations, fees, various certifications, incentive programs, and more. Details: [Agenda](#). [SB 2001](#). [SB 2002](#).

---

### INFRASTRUCTURE

With the deadline looming *tomorrow* (3/7) for end of public comments on the IH-35 Capital Expressway project through central **Austin**, the city and **Travis County** continue to push back against TxDOT's design plans; both jurisdictions have filed more comments to the already 7000-page environmental study of the \$5 billion project. **Travis County** wants more focus on air/water quality issues, fewer land-grabs ([here](#)); **Austin** also wants a smaller footprint, more crossings, and shifting semi-trailer trucks from downtown onto State Highway 130. [Story](#). [More](#).

The **San Antonio Express-News** reconsiders **Austin** Bergstrom International's 'airport apocalypse' during South By Southwest last year - thousands were stranded by traffic and airline security disruptions - and takes a look at what precautions Bergstrom is taking to prevent a repeat this year. The steps include a new CEO. [Story](#).

The job of US Secretary of Transportation in **Washington** is usually a political plum: lots of ribbon-cutting and favorable local media exposure. But for Democrat Pete Buttigieg, a recent rash of railroad accidents, air travel breakdowns, supply chain issues, and air traffic control near-misses have turned the plum to sour grapes from Republican critics, [The Hill](#) reports [here](#).

Two Norfolk Southern derailments in the last ten days have placed a new spotlight on US railroads, and the **Washington Post** responded last week with a graphics package in six charts showing how the industry has changed in the last 40 years of rebuilding networks, pricing shifts, deregulation, and globalization. [Story](#).

Head west on I-10 out of **San Antonio** and you'll quickly hit **Boerne**, a **Kendall County** city whose population has soared by 70% since 2010. Local leaders have created a 211-page Mobility Master Plan to

deal with the resulting development growth and traffic issues, but a proposed 'Loop' is creating controversy. [Story](#).

Climate change-fueled hurricane winds will begin reaching further and further inland in the next thirty years, putting 30 million Americans and their homes at risk, according to the **Washington Post**. Based upon a new study, the paper has created a zip code-searchable interactive database of who will be affected. [Story](#). [Study](#). [More](#).

The Great Springs Project continues to make progress on its ambitious plan to create a 100-mile trail system linking key water features between **Austin** and **San Antonio** and they've picked up a big ally in Spurs legend Manu Genobili, who is narrating a new film about the venture. [Story](#).

---

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Interim **Austin** city manager Jesus Garza is wasting no time in shaking up the Capital City's government, announcing two notable departures (including the executive director of Bergstrom International Airport) and four key new hires he touted as 'a solid foundation for the future' of the staff's executive management. [Story](#). [More](#).

Tesla officials announced last week that construction has begun on a \$375 million lithium refinery in **Nueces County** near **Corpus Christi**. The facility will package and ship battery-grade lithium hydroxide, a key component for the batteries in Tesla's electric vehicles fleet and products. [Story](#). More on Musk's 'Master Plan' [here](#).

The **Brookings Institute** has a new report on the US-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement and a raft of recommendations for which additional investments and policies are required to develop more integrated, resilient, and secure supply chains. Labor standards, Asian imports, and national security are also included. [Report](#).

Plans for a 5000-seat music venue on Fitzhugh Road near **Dripping Springs** are drawing fire from **Hays County** residents opposed to the project's impact on local wildlife and water quality. "No one is asking for this proposed venue," local rancher Bob Ayres said. "It's unnecessary, poorly devised and threatens to significantly impact Barton Creek and the natural and human communities in the region." [Story](#). [The Plan](#). [The Opposition](#).

A former professional bull rider is opening a new, high-end rooftop bar, restaurant, and performance venue in downtown **New Braunfels** this summer. The three-story 'Cowboys and Cadillacs,' a limousine company and clothing brand spin-off (that's a whole other story) is being developed by rodeo pro Cameron Corzine. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"You should never plan the future by the past."*

– Edmund Burke

---

This newsletter is available to our members. If you wish to unsubscribe, please send an email request to [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

---