



Monday Morning Report

March 24, 2025

INTERNAL

Last Wednesday (3/19), the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee met for a presentation on the upcoming deployment of autonomous trucks in Texas (thanks to PLUS AI personnel), reviewed new staff-generated materials related to rail advocacy, received updates on various State Legislative initiatives of the Corridor Council and pending transportation-related bills, and reviewed new staff infrastructure studies. [Agenda](#).

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

Members may want to be aware that longtime **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council friend and advisor Charles Heimsath, 74 - an expert on real estate economics and development - passed away in **Austin** last week. [Story](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

A leaked policy memo from the US Department of Transportation in **Washington** suggests that the Trump administration will try to 'claw back' up to \$51 billion in funding already committed to projects involving safety, EVs, equity, or climate change but not yet spent or contractually obligated. Ordinarily, new administrations alter funding decisions going forward, not backwards to seize already committed dollars. [Story](#). [Memo](#).

Amid proposed cutbacks to mass transit funding and other transportation initiatives, Amtrak chief operating officer Stephen Gardner has been forced to resign after 16 years with the agency, according to the **Washington Post**. Gardner had been leading recent major expansions of the national passenger rail network. [Story](#). [More](#).

National news network **Axios** has launched a new weekly newsletter focused on the '*Future of Mobility*,' edited by 35-year veteran reporter on the auto industry Joann Muller. News about autonomous vehicles, new mobility technologies, and the deployment of electric vehicles will be central, she says. [Story](#) (and signup info).

Blacksburg, VA-based automated truck developer Torc - an independent subsidiary of Daimler Truck - is scaling up production of completely autonomous, driver-out vehicles for

Freightliner Cascadia using Nvidia AI chip technology for widespread deployment in 2027, officials announced earlier this month. [Story](#).

France has unveiled the 5th-generation of its high-speed passenger rail cars for a **Paris-Lyon-Marseille** service, 45-years after the initial launch of the national TGV rail network. The train (dubbed '*Inoui*,' French for incredible) travels at 200-mph, featuring double-decker dining and observation cars, [CNN](#) reports. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The latest global debt numbers from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development are alarming: government/corporate bond borrowing reached \$25 trillion last year, and now total combined debt is over \$100 trillion, 40% of which matures in 2027. If interest costs rise, debt payments could reach half of the US budget by about 2036. [Item Report](#). [Charts](#).

After cutting off the cities' capacity to fund their budgets - by imposing revenue caps - the Texas state legislature now wants to remove their ability to borrow money by making it more difficult to issue bonds. [Story](#). The war on urban areas continues with lawmakers preempting local jurisdictions about lot sizes in new subdivisions. [Details](#).

Expansions among extraction enterprises along 'Quarry Row' between **New Braunfels** and **San Antonio** are increasingly drawing fire from local residents. The city of **Garden Ridge** is the latest to take action, forming a new citizens' advisory committee to provide an organized voice pressing for oversight of the operations. [Story](#).

That 10,000-acre Crabapple Fire near **Fredericksburg** earlier this month left ranchers scrambling for livestock feed, hay, and fencing supplies, agriculture officials say: "Forage has been destroyed. So, obviously, livestock have nothing to eat." Stores in **Stonewall** and **Fredericksburg** are collecting contributions. [Details](#).

Thought of the Week

"Success is always a combination of passion, dedication, hard work, and being in the right place at the right time." – Lauren Conrad

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