



## Monday Morning Report

April 3, 2023

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### INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm by Zoom. Our guest speaker will be Greg Stunz, Ph.D. of the Harte Research Institute. To add an item to the agenda, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

That **Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance** (TxETRA) Group Policy meeting scheduled for *this* Friday (4/7) HAS BEEN CHANGED to next Friday, April 14, 1:30 pm (CT). Join us by Zoom [here](#).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Train ridership in Virginia and North Carolina is recovering faster from the COVID-19 pandemic than the **Northeast Corridor**, but the reason isn't better service, higher frequencies of service, faster service, or environmental concerns. The reason is traffic, "Unsustainable highway traffic," says an official. [Story](#).

City leaders from **Austin** and **San Antonio** warned a Texas Senate panel last week that **Georgetown** Senator Charles Schwertner's 'catastrophic' Senate Bill 1110 would force local tax increases to pay for badly needed services like police and street maintenance. The bill would limit 72 municipally owned utilities in Texas from transferring funds to buttress city budgets. [Story](#). [More](#). [Opinion](#). Texas Municipal League weighs in [here](#).

**Austin's** highest-paid city employee, Jackie Sargent, has stepped down as Austin Energy's top executive after nearly six years at the helm. Stuart Reilly, currently deputy general manager, will step in as interim leader. [Story](#).

The **Texas Tribune** provides a legislative state-of-play update at this session's midpoint for bills dealing with electric vehicles [here](#). Senate Bills 1001 and 1002 deal with vehicle chargers and regulatory infrastructure; SB 505, setting a road-use fee of \$400 for EV's, has already passed the Senate.

**Round Rock** residents will have access to a mobility-on-demand service beginning this month via a five-year, roughly \$6 million contract with ride-share company zTrip, which, like Uber and Lyft uses, a phone-based app. The city will continue offering its fixed-route bus service through Capital Metro. [Story](#).

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Oil prices shot up nearly 7% overnight, following a surprise announcement yesterday that a group of petroleum-producing countries including Saudi Arabia would cut production by over a million barrels per day. The news jolted **London** markets and raised more global concerns about inflation and the fragility of the banking system. [Story](#).

**Austin** mayor Kirk Watson, responding to staffing shortages within the city's police force, announced a plan last week to deploy Texas Department of Public Safety troopers at the state's expense to augment

local law enforcement resources in reacting to emergency calls and traffic violations. [Story](#). [Staffing Plan](#).

While **Austin** and **San Antonio** policymakers wrestle with management of large fleets of e-scooters, they might want to consider the **Paris** experience: once pushed by local politicians as a climate-friendly mobility solution (15,000 were distributed on city streets), voters yesterday overwhelmingly supported (90%-10%) outlawing them. [Story](#).

**San Antonio** resident Paul Rusesabagina, whose exploits were depicted in the 2004 film "Hotel Rwanda," is back home this week years after being abducted and imprisoned over trumped-up terrorism charges in his native country. This morning, the **New York Times** has the fascinating backstory of his release [here](#).

## *Thought of the Week*

*"Every problem is a gift—without problems we would not grow."*

– Anthony Robbins

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