



Monday Morning Report

April 17, 2023

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee meets *this* Wednesday, April 19 at 2 pm by Zoom. Our guest speaker will be Greg Stunz, Ph.D. of the Harte Research Institute ([link](#)). To add an item to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org. **Draft Agenda**.

CORRECTION: Last week's **Monday Morning Report** noted that the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization would consider a proposed 'Connected and Automated Vehicle' facility on the abandoned Missouri-Kansas (MoKan) rail Corridor from **Austin** to **Georgetown** on 4/10; instead, the item was postponed.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Expanding the MoPac South expressway in **Austin** has been under environmental assessment since 2013 by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority; it now appears the agency may move toward a more formal federal Environmental Impact Study, potentially adding years of delay and higher costs for the project. **Story**. (Item 7)

Help is on the way for the US Highway 59 bridge over the **San Antonio** River, which is getting \$14 million in funding from the US Department of Transportation - averting, sponsors say, a nearly 50-mile detour that would be necessary otherwise for 4200-daily vehicles using the facility during construction. **Story**.

That controversial comprehensive transportation plan for **Boerne**, where the population has doubled in the last ten years, was approved by their city council last week. Critics have said the locally developed thoroughfare plan would harm the **Kendall County** city's 'rural character.' **Story**.

Though it may have more to do with a definition change than reality, the Federal Highway Administration in **Washington** says that there are now more trucks than cars in most states across the US - that is, if you define 'trucks' to include commercial vehicles, vans, pickups, SUV's and crossovers, as the FHA does. **Story**.

Broken electric charging stations are doing more than just frustrating drivers; they are among the biggest hurdles to consumers transitioning from traditional to electric automobiles, the **Washington Post** reports. One study says up to 25% of charging stations can be unusable at any given time. Other hurdles include grid capacity, battery-ingredient shortages, legal issues, and (surprise) politics. **Story**. **More**.

A solution? Electric vehicle sales will hit eight million this year (32% of auto market share) in China, boosted by a proliferation of battery-swapping stations. Rather than charge your car, you do an instant battery swap; no waiting, no need for charge-points everywhere; no broken charge stations, the **Telegraph** says. **Story**.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Headed into a fourth two-year term next month, **San Antonio** mayor Ron Nirenberg's 'State of the City' speech last week touted workforce development (a \$200 million Ready To Work program in its first year), housing affordability programs (14 different initiatives), a bigger, better airport (\$2.5 billion expansion), and more. [Story](#).

Two million people fled the US's largest cities from 2020-2022, indicating that a retreat from urban centers in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic is hardening into an enduring and potentially worrisome trend, reports **The Hill**. Suburbs, exurbs, and smaller cities must meet the strain of in-migration. [Story](#).

Everyone seems to agree that there's a US housing shortage, but no one seems to know just what the size of that shortage is, reports the **Wall Street Journal**. Estimates of the shortage range from 1.7 million to 7.3 million units of unmet needs, but even the experts can't agree on what 'normalcy' means in housing markets anymore. [Story](#).

In a measure already passed by the Senate, Texas legislators are considering a measure - SB 28 - that could generate up to 2.3 trillion gallons of water per year for the next decade through water purification technologies, including marine desalination and oilfield wastewater reuse, **Inside Climate** reports. [Story](#).

Multiple new studies indicate the biggest rise in sea levels along the Gulf of Mexico coast in at least 120 years, including Texas coastal communities, the **Washington Post** reports. Texas is particularly at risk, the studies say, due to a combination of sinking land, higher sea levels, and stronger hurricanes. [Story](#). [One Study](#).

You might want to avoid **Boca Chica** today, and it has nothing to do with rising seas. Home to Elon Musk's so-called **Starbase**, the South Texas coastal hamlet is the expected launch site for Musk's latest, largest rocket ([here](#)). These things don't always go according to plan: [Video](#).

Thought of the Week

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."

– Steve Jobs

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