



Monday Morning Report

April 24, 2023

INTERNAL

Last Wednesday (4/19), the Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council met for a presentation by Dr. Greg Stunz on the water resources-related work of the Harte Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies ([here](#)), a discussion of an Interstate 35 presentation delivered to the Texas Transportation Commission ([here](#)), an update on the Federal Railroad Administration/Amtrak/TxDOT activity related to passenger service in the Corridor ([here](#)), legislative developments on highway funding and electric vehicle regulation, discussion of plans for the MoKan corridor between **Austin** and **Georgetown**, and status reports on other Council activities. For more information, email council@thecorridor.org.

In case you missed it, you can read Corridor Council Executive Committee-member Diane Rath's editorial opinion from the **San Antonio Express-News** regarding the importance of state funding for community colleges and the role they play in workforce development [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hammered by rising costs, driver shortages, and sinking ridership levels following the COVID-19 pandemic, transit agencies across the US are increasingly turning to state governments for financial help - especially now, with federal pandemic-relief funds drying up, the **Route-Fifty** government newsletter reports. [Story](#).

Stand by for a do-over election on Project Connect in **Austin**: Mayor Kirk Watson - in a significant shift in legislative strategy - now says that legislation aimed at forcing multiple elections on the city's multi-billion transit plan appears destined to pass and that at least one re-affirming vote will be required this November. [Story](#).

At the **Austin** Chamber of Commerce's *Regional Mobility Summit* earlier this month, officials from various local agencies touted upcoming investments in road, rail, and airport infrastructure, which, taken together, promise a whopping \$25 billion in project funding over the next decade, the **Austin Monitor** says. [Details](#).

In an announcement from **London** that may have international repercussions in the transportation safety world, the national government of prime minister Rishi Sunak in the United Kingdom is pausing or canceling further deployment of an ambitious 'smart motorways' program launched in 2020 as a cost-cutting exercise. Critics say the move abandons proven safety policies. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

In the usual 'attraction game' to lure major employers to a given state or region, the larger public purpose of taxpayer investment (local economic prosperity) sometimes gets lost in the push to land a deal. Now,

two new pieces of federal legislation - the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act - change that dynamic, say **Brookings Institute** economists. [Essay](#).

Walmart will invest \$21 million into improved technology for its **New Braunfels** regional distribution center, one of 42 such facilities nationwide the company will be retrofitting by 2030. The move will help the **Bentonville**-based company ship and receive items more quickly, handle inventory, and handle customer orders. [Story](#).

San Antonio-based developer Mission DG is building 216 apartments for families with a range of incomes, the first affordable housing project of its kind in **San Marcos** in more than 50 years, according to the **Express-News**. The company is partnering with the San Marcos Housing Authority for the venture. [Story](#).

Kyle has a new city manager: Bryan Langley, formerly city manager in **Burleson** - following stints with city governments in **Addison**, **Denton**, and **Dallas** - was approved last week. [Details](#). (right column)

Recent Biden administration regulations on auto emissions were designed to improve air quality and hasten the US transition to electric vehicles. But the rules will have exactly the opposite effect, argues a former Bush administration official in the **Washington Post**. Robert Grady says the rules raise new car prices, slow 'fleet turnover' and make the air dirtier. [Opinion](#).

The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets are now losing more than three times as much ice each year as they were 30 years ago, according to a new study using 50 different satellite estimates reported last week by the **Associated Press**. Official: "These rates of ice loss are unprecedented during modern civilization." [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Innovation is the unrelenting drive to break the status quo and develop anew where few have dared to go."

– Steven Jeffes

This newsletter is available to our members. If you wish to unsubscribe, please send an email request to council@thecorridor.org.