



Monday Morning Report

May 15, 2023

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee meets *this* Wednesday, May 17 at 2pm by Zoom videoconference. For more information, email council@thecorridor.org. ***Draft Agenda.***

TxDOT's Transportation Planning and Programming Division kicks off a Corridor Study on US 90 from I-10 at **Van Horn** to the Louisiana state line this Friday, May 19, 9-11:00 am. If you are interested in participating, contact Curtis.Jones@txdot.gov.

The Texas Electric Vehicle Transportation Resources Alliance hosts its next monthly Policy Working Group committee meeting via Zoom on Friday, June 9th, 1:30-4 pm. For information or an invitation to join, contact amandaalandzes.txetra@gmail.com.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Governor Greg Abbott has signed Senate Bill 505, imposing an initial \$400 registration fee for new electric vehicles and a subsequent annual \$200 registration fee on electric vehicles. Senator Robert Nichols (R-**Jacksonville**) sponsored the measure, passed unanimously by the Texas House & Senate. ***Details.***
Text.

Governor Abbott and Tesla's Elon Musk were at the groundbreaking ceremony for a \$375 million dollar lithium refinery near **Corpus Christi** last week that is expected to help solve electric vehicle (EV) battery-ingredient supply chain issues for Tesla. Meanwhile, other environmental questions arise for EV battery ingredients. ***Story. More.***

Former Texas Transportation Commission member Victor Vandergriff of **Arlington**, who resigned from the commission in 2018, continued to be paid and qualify for retirement and health benefits for an additional *five years* - until Gov. Greg Abbott named a replacement for him in March of this year - the **Austin American-Statesman** reported last week. A quirk in state law appears to be at fault, experts said. ***Story. More.***

The **Express-News** published an analysis last week of more than two million flights at the three airports most used by **San Antonio** flyers - **Dallas/Ft. Worth, Austin, and SAT** - and found some surprising data: cancellations and delays have gotten worse since the pandemic; **AUS** and **DFW** had significantly more severe disruptions than **SAT**; since 2019, the number of disruption-days has doubled, and more. ***Story.***

The **Austin** and **Round Rock** Chambers of Commerce have joined a push by **San Antonio** to eliminate the 'perimeter rule' restricting non-stop flights of less than 1250-miles from accessing Reagan National Airport in **Washington**. Former Texas Secretary of State Rolando Pablas also weighs in with an op-ed. ***Story. Opinion.***

It has been four years since the 90-year-old dam forming Lake Dunlap, near **New Braunfels**, collapsed. The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and local residents - with \$40 million from the Texas Water Development Board - funded replacing the dam, with construction now scheduled to be completed by this July. [Update](#). [Video](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The tourism and hospitality industries had a \$16.2 billion economic impact in **San Antonio** in 2021, back up to about 92% of pre-pandemic activity levels, according to a Trinity University study. The news comes just as the largest US travel trade show - with 5000 travel professionals attending - starts this Saturday (5/20). [Story](#). [Study](#).

Get ready for a big shakeout in the electric vehicle manufacturing sector, the **Washington Post** warns. Startups like Rivian, Fisker, and Lucid are missing product deadlines, burning through cash, facing increased competition from legacy automakers, and finding new funding sources scarce in a high-interest rate environment. And Wall Street is tired of 'dog-ate-my-homework excuses for missing production' goals, said one analyst. [Story](#).

The average age of vehicles on US roads has risen to an all-time high 12.5 years, suggesting a slowing transition to electric vehicles from traditional carbon-based engines as sticker prices go up and existing vehicles are lasting longer, reports **Axios** - giving owners no reason to trade up to an electric or hybrid vehicle. [Story](#).

There are now as many as six parking spaces for every car and rules that require new housing developments to build a minimum number of parking spaces have pushed up construction prices and generated sprawl, according to a new book, "*Paved Paradise: How Parking Explains the World*." Parking requirements have also become a leading reason for opposing affordable housing projects, Henry Grabar writes. [Review](#).

Christian Smith takes over this week as the manager of Economic and Business Development in **San Marcos**, following similar stints in **Allen**, **Carrollton**, and **Garland** providing business support activities. [Details](#).

Unabashed Plug: Our friends at Cody's Bistro in **San Marcos** have opened a new restaurant in downtown **New Braunfels**, Cody's Restaurant Bar and Patio (their innovation shows up on the menu instead of the name), serving upscale 'New American' fusion cuisine. Now, if they'd just bring back the redfish special...[Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Against the laws of nature, there is no appeal."

– Arthur C. Clarke

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