



Monday Morning Report

June 5, 2023

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21 at 2pm by Zoom videoconference. For more information or to add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

Join Corridor Council staff, national rail advocates, and emergency responders *tomorrow* for a Federal Railroad Administration panel, 'The State of Rail Safety and the Policy Path Forward,' an update on national freight railroad issues, 12:00 pm CDT on Tuesday June 6. Register [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Two stories involving fire and water emerged last week that may serve as early warning signals to policy-makers in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor**: in California, the state's largest home insurer quit offering new policies due to heightened wildfire risks ([here](#)); in Arizona ([here](#)), water shortages led state officials to limit new housing developments near **Phoenix**. Climate change is reshaping the West and Southwest. [Story](#).

A new group has formed to oppose changes to the 'perimeter rule' that restricts some longer non-stop flights from **San Antonio** and **Austin** to Reagan National Airport (DCA) in downtown **Washington**. The Coalition to Protect America's Regional Airports - which includes United Airlines as a sponsor - is promoting Dulles International, saying DCA is already overcrowded. [Story](#). [More](#).

A key obstacle to widespread deployment of self-driving cars is 'the either/both problem' - what to do in a traffic environment with both human-operated and autonomous vehicles? "The self-driving future will probably be superior...but even an all-human system might be preferable," a **Washington Post** columnist says. [Opinion](#).

And Now There's This: The **BBC** says - among your other worries - that the world should be bracing for a 'waste mountain' of worn-out solar panels by 2050 unless recycling chains are developed soon. Solar panels have only about a 25-year life cycle and, as a result, 2.5 billion panels currently in use will eventually need disposal. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Despite consistently good news, **Axios** reports that Americans remain uncertain about the economy. The stock market, jobs, wages, and Gross Domestic Product are all up; and inflation is down, but US residents still think their personal financial situation is fragile. Post-pandemic anxiety, the 'New Not Normal,' may be why. [Story](#).

Last week's debt deal resolution in **Washington** included cutting \$30 billion in COVID-19 funding previously slated to be doled out to cities and states, signaling, **The Atlantic** says, the end-of-an-era of

huge federal aid that led to flush state and municipal budgets across the US. Retrenchment and austerity will result, they write. [Story](#).

The **Austin Monitor** provided a list of 'good news/bad news' items from the just ended 88th Texas Legislature, based upon a briefing to the city council by intergovernmental relations officer Brie Franco, including six bills with negative implications. Among them, Senate Bill 2038, an annexation measure 'significantly hindering regional planning efforts.' **San Antonio** and **Dripping Springs** were exempted from the bill. [Story](#).

Bexar County judge Peter Sakai highlighted the power of regional collaboration at his first-ever 'State of the County' address last week in **San Antonio**, where he was joined in the audience by **Travis County** judge Andy Brown, **Hidalgo County** judge Richard Cortez, and **Medina County** judge Keith Lutz. A recap of his talk, [here](#).

MarketWatch claims that the Tesla Model Y is the first electric vehicle to become the world's best-selling car. Citing Jato Dynamics figures, the newsletter says **Austin**-based Tesla sold 267,000 global units in the 2023 first quarter, besting other manufacturers including Toyota and Volkswagen. [Details](#).

More Musk Watch: Despite the relatively good news (above) meanwhile, the bloom is off the rose for Elon Musk's neighbors in **Bastrop** and **Boca Chica (Starbase)**, who have filed 'a barrage of complaints' against him and his companies, according to the **Washington Post**. And man, is he *tired*, the **Journal** reports. [Story](#). [More](#).

Thought of the Week

"The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious."

- John Sculley

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