



Monday Morning Report

June 17, 2024

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet *this* Wednesday, June 19, at 2:00 pm via Zoom. **Draft Agenda**. For more information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The pause imposed earlier this month on **Manhattan's** congestion pricing program has US transit agencies re-evaluating other options for future funding streams. "[Governor] Hochul didn't just kill congestion pricing in **New York**, she killed it across the country for a long time," said an expert. Others referred to 'a lost opportunity,' citing transformational projects like the **San Antonio** Riverwalk, **DFW Airport**, and **Boston's** 'Big Dig.' **Story. More.**

That elevated 17-story high speed rail line connection between **Dallas** and **Fort Worth** appears dead - for now. First, the **Dallas** city council voted 14-0 to pause the project for more study. Then, **North Texas** Council of Governments director Michael Morris told his board that a new alignment must be found. **Story. More.**

Energy specialists and environmentalists around the world are reaching a consensus that small-scale nuclear reactors are the most promising alternative to carbon-burning electric power generation. Now, Microsoft founder Bill Gates has joined the chorus, putting \$1 billion of his own money into a \$4 billion small nuclear plant that began construction last week in **Kemmerer**, Wyoming. New cooling technology is the key. **Story.**

Bexar County judge Peter Sakai told a local audience last week that he is hoping to supplement funding for a West Side VIA Bus Rapid Transit project already recommended for federal dollars and eyeing a revived effort, also using federal funding for **San Antonio-to-Austin** passenger rail. **Story.**

It took twelve years in development but last month Amtrak launched its new Borealis service between **St. Paul**, Minnesota, through **Milwaukee** to **Chicago**, the first new passenger route in Minnesota since 1975 and the first in Wisconsin in more than two decades, officials said. As to multiple required studies that delayed the project, a rail advocate asked, "They already have a train running, so what are they studying?" **Story.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Austin's future will have more hot days (in excess of 102-degrees) for longer periods of time, according to a new city study ([here](#)), and the staff has developed a new Heat Resilience Playbook

to guide policy in response ([here](#)). The **Washington Post** published an interactive tool to show just how hot your US city will be ([here](#)).

Robotaxi News: Amazon's Zoox unit will begin testing autonomous vehicles in **Austin** and **Miami**; initially, with safety drivers aboard ([here](#)); Waymo issued a software recall and fix to their autonomous vehicles ([here](#)) after their car hit a telephone pole in **Phoenix**; and Baidu adds another 1000 driverless cars to their 500 existing AV's operating in **Wuhan**, giving China the world's largest autonomous vehicle fleet, the **Times** says. **Story**.

The **San Antonio Express-News** analyzed IRS data to discover that most of the in-migration into the fast-growing **Texas Hill Country** counties came NOT from New York or California, but from elsewhere in Texas. In 2021, 62,700 people moved into just eight Hill Country counties. **Details**.

Construction begins next month on a new industrial center in **Buda**, Tower Business Park, a 23-acre development with 163,000 sq. ft. of small bay spaces tailored to tenants ranging from 5,000 to 15,000 sq. ft. divided among six new buildings. The project should be open by April 2025. **Details**.

In the wake of **Austin** neighbor Elon Musk's massive new \$50 billion Tesla pay package, the **Washington Post** is out this morning with an analysis of where the wunderkind's \$203 billion net worth is stashed. Tesla, SpaceX, the Boring Company and X make up the bulk, unsurprisingly, but he's also got \$13 billion in debt. **Details**.

Thought of the Week

"Life appears to me too short to be spent in nursing animosity or registering wrongs."

– Charlotte Bronte

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