



Monday Morning Report

June 24, 2024

INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council met last Wednesday (6/19) via Zoom for an update on progress toward 2024 goals, briefings on **Dallas-Fort Worth** rail connections and other high-speed rail developments, congestion pricing issues, Condor's new **SAT-Frankfurt** flights, and the just-released *Connecting Texas 2050* - TxDOT's long range plan set for July approval. Final agenda [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Amtrak's new head of high-speed rail development, Andy Byford, tells UK-based *The Guardian* newspaper that "the time is right" for the US to catch up with other countries in the deployment of bullet trains between major cities. After years of dashed hopes, delays, and an auto-dominated culture, the paper cites half-a-dozen high-speed rail projects under development in Texas, California, Nevada, Florida, and the Northeast. [Story](#).

The Brightline high-speed rail project from **Southern California** to **Las Vegas** has begun construction, a 218-mile route largely following Interstate 15 right-of-way. Advocates say the speed with which the project gained approvals argues for more use of Interstate highway rights-of-way for rail projects. [Story](#).

India is developing a \$168 billion infrastructure project to create a 600-mile-long mega-river by interconnecting a series of smaller rivers and streams into an effort to redistribute water from flood-prone areas to parched ones. It rivals similar projects in China and Sri Lanka, *The Atlantic* says. [Story](#).

Joby Aviation announced last week that it had received approval from the Federal Aviation Administration for various phases of a planned 'air taxi' service modeled after Uber's ridesharing platform, *Axios* reports. The article surveys various players in the air taxi space, reviewing their developments stages. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Delta Airlines will begin operating nonstop flights between **Austin** and **Harlingen** beginning Oct. 7th, the *San Antonio Express-News* reports. The airline is also offering new service to **Midland-Odessa** and **McAllen**, a total of 11 new flights launched since April. [Details](#).

Toyota said last week that it will move forward on a \$531 million expansion project, adding 400 new local jobs, after receiving tax breaks from **San Antonio** and **Bexar County**. City officials are

still struggling with how to deal with future development in the area surrounding the \$4 billion existing Southside facility. [Story](#).

The pending opening of Samsung's \$17 billion dollar chip factory in **Taylor** thrusts the small **Williamson County** community into the international spotlight, **Axios** reports, in a story that highlights the role **Austin** plays in spurring high tech growth in surrounding communities. Other nearby towns are cited also. [Story](#).

New Braunfels is moving closer to a \$20-million deal to buy a 100-acre property that could be used either for an industrial park or a new campus for the **Waco**-based Texas State Technical College, which has been operating in the city since last year and plans to offer advanced welding and industrial systems training. [Story](#).

Slow down if you're driving through **Bexar County** municipalities **Leon Valley**, **Helotes**, or **Alamo Heights**. The **Express-News** says the cities write more traffic tickets than elsewhere in the **San Antonio** region. [Story](#).

In one of those projects that might raise 'what could possibly go wrong?' questions, the Environmental Defense Fund will spend millions of dollars exploring the idea of reflecting sunlight back into space as global warming conditions worsen, the **New York Times** reports. Possible techniques involve injecting aerosols into the stratosphere or brightening clouds to make them more reflective. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"There are no passengers on spaceship earth. We are all crew."

– Marshall McLuhan

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