



Monday Morning Report

July 10, 2023

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled for July 19 at 2 pm by Zoom. For information or to add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

This Thursday, July 13, 9-11:00 am is the final meeting of the Steering Committee for TxDOT's I-10 Texas Corridor Study, which has been meeting for the last year (with three additional geographically based working groups, to analyze data and issues along this important east-west trade corridor). The Committee will review and finalize the I-10 Texas Corridor Study Implementation Plan. [Details](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

A **New York** Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture study found that a high-quality **San Antonio-to-Austin** train service would have the highest ridership (4 million per year) of any potential city-pair in Texas. Christian Budow, a recent graduate, used transportation modeling analysis derived from 2021 Next Generation National Household Travel Survey data collected by the Federal Highway Administration. [Story](#). [Study](#).

Capital Metro will receive \$18 million to double-track the Red Line into downtown **Austin** from the federal 2023 RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) discretionary grant program; interestingly, **Caldwell County** will get \$22.9 million for an Advanced Commercial Truck Travel (parking) plaza that aims 'to encourage truck drivers to use SH 130 rather than IH-35.' [Story](#). [2023 Project List](#).

Careful What You Wish For: In a first for the US, Volkswagen will begin testing its driverless electric vans in **Austin** this month, expecting to expand to three other Texas cities as yet unnamed and launching delivery or robo-taxi service widely by 2026. Meanwhile, reports of **San Francisco** traffic chaos related to driverless vehicles are stirring complaints, potential restrictions, and even sabotage. [Story](#). [More](#). [Still More](#).

The nationwide supply of electric vehicles in stock has swelled nearly 350% this year, to more than 92,000 units, **Axios** reports. More than 30 new models arrived on the market in 2023; 50 new models are expected next year. Unsold inventories are piling up and analysts say consumers just aren't ready to transition. As Jesse Jackson used to say: "We're making things no one wants to buy." [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

In case you hadn't noticed, imports from China to the US are slowing, while US exports to China are going up, **Axios** reports. Both as a percentage of total imports and as percentage of Gross Domestic Product, Chinese imports are at their lowest level in 20 years, down 25% from a year ago. **Story**.

Meanwhile, US-Mexico trade is up, way up to \$780 billion, a 17% increase over 2021, according to **Lodestar**, and increased trade volumes have led to a new freight rail partnership. Just months after the merger of Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern, the combined company (CPKC) is joining with CSX to acquire Meridian & Bigbee Railroad - thus creating a new freight corridor linking Mexico, Texas, and the Southeastern US states. **Story**.

A backlash is building up over the Texas Legislature's "Death Star" measure limiting local control over anything the state deems its sole authority. **San Antonio** was discussing legal action last week, but **Houston** beat the city to the courthouse with a lawsuit claiming the law is unconstitutional. Water breaks for workers amid record-setting heat, restricted by "Death Star," is putting a simple human face on some bad, convoluted public policy. **Story**.

An increase in family homelessness - driven by funding cutbacks, mortgage rates, and the ending of an eviction moratorium - are leading to **San Antonio's** Haven For Hope shelter having its busiest year ever and a new concentration on data-driven programming, according to the **San Antonio Report**. They've hired an in-house data scientist and researcher to seek patterns in demographics to learn what works, and for whom. **Story**. Use vacant federal property to house the homeless? **Here**.

At a meeting last Friday in **London**, the United Nations body overseeing worldwide shipping regulations adopted 'historic' goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The International Maritime Organization pledged to a net-zero emissions goal 'by or about 2050' - a big deal for a polluting industry (about 3% of global emissions, equal to Germany) that has been resistant to decarbonization. **Story**.

Thought of the Week

"Be an encourager. The world has plenty of critics already."

- Dave Willis

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