



Monday Morning Report

July 15, 2024

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee meets **this** Wednesday, July 17, at 2:00 pm via Zoom. The guest speaker will be Jeff Goodell, best-selling author of "*The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet.*" For more about the book, go [here](#). Members and guests are invited to attend. [Meeting Link](#) (Meeting ID: 899 6784 3284 & Passcode: 898169). The meeting agenda is forthcoming.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ron Nirenberg and Erik Walsh, the mayor and city manager of **San Antonio**, are seeking letters of support to the US Department of Transportation for nonstop flights from **San Antonio** to **Washington D.C.**'s Reagan National Airport (DCA). All are invited to participate in a public comment period that began July 8 and ends July 17. Submit comments directly to USDOT [here](#). Mayor's request [here](#). Corridor Council sample letter [here](#).

The Federal Railroad Administration announced funding availability last week of \$1.1 billion for rail crossing safety and efficiency projects, of which \$37 million is dedicated to planning efforts. Projects can involve grade separations, upgrades to safety devices, or closures to crossings where roads and train tracks intersect. [Details](#).

That **Dallas-Fort Worth** high speed rail connection is back on track after the North Texas Council of Governments proposed a new western route that would bypass downtown **Dallas**, avoiding a 17-story flyover but delaying the project by about a year. Final approvals are needed by August, officials said. [Details](#).

Incoming Mexico president-elect Claudia Sheinbaum is pledging at least \$22 billion to build 1,850 miles of new electric, 100-mph passenger trains from **Mexico City** to the US border cities of **Nuevo Laredo** and **Nogales**. Her plan involves having the military supervise private contractors re-purposing existing freight lines. [Story](#).

Construction began earlier this month on a new 110-mph intercity passenger rail line along an existing freight line between **Raleigh**, North Carolina and **Richmond**, Virginia. Virginia purchased 75-miles of the right-of-way from CSX railroad in 2020, in a deal permitting higher-speed trains when freight is not moving. [Story](#).

Heat related emergencies are soaring in the US and hospitals are struggling to keep up, as one of the hottest summers on record scorches much of the West - particularly our neighbor state of New Mexico, says the **Times**. The worst outcome, heatstroke, can have the highest fatality rate of any condition in emergency rooms. In California, excessive heat is making it too hot for medical emergency helicopters to fly. [Story](#). [More](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Skyrocketing home insurance rates, particularly in Texas, are frequently linked by insurance companies to increased risks related to climate change (floods or wildfires). But a **New York Times** investigation reveals that rates are unequal among states with comparable risks. The difference? State-led regulatory oversight. [Story](#).

Like many other communities in the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor, **New Braunfels** - long a model for other Texas cities in developing short-term rental rules - is struggling with a re-write of local land development codes to deal with the issues raised by both short-term rentals and large investment companies acquiring housing units, pricing out local homeowners. The city is seeking public input. [Story](#). [Existing code](#).

Elon Musk's currently California-based Neuralink brain implant company is moving to the **Austin** area. The **Express-News** reports that the company is planning a 37-acre multi-building campus 20 minutes from the Tesla gigafactory on State Highway 130. The company is conducting human trials of its Neuralink brain chip. [Story](#).

[The Washington Post Remembers the Alamo](#): In a lengthy spread last week the paper covered the \$550 million remake of the state's most iconic historical site in **San Antonio**, focusing largely on controversies involving how to tell the story of slavery's role in the origins of the Texas war of independence. Interesting details. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"People only see what they are prepared to see."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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