



## Monday Morning Report

July 17, 2023

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### INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee meets *this* Wednesday, July 19 at 2 pm by Zoom. For information, email [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org). The meeting agenda is forthcoming.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Instead of taking the months expected to repair a collapsed segment of I-95 in **Philadelphia**, the rebuilt highway was re-opened in just 12 days - and therein are some lessons for US infrastructure, says Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro: Empower strong leadership; speed up the bureaucracy; encourage creativity; and work together. [Opinion](#).

Freight trains blocking road crossings are a nationwide problem that is getting worse as railroads run longer trains, the **New York Times** reports, yet Congress refuses to act because the rail industry wields such enormous political and legal power (and has spent \$454 million on federal lobbying in the last two decades). [Story](#).

In the wake of that **East Palestine**, OH train accident last February, cities across the country are re-assessing their emergency preparedness planning regarding large-scale train derailments including what's coming to be called the 'Dunkirk Method' - mass evacuations aided by plume-analysis, reverse 911 calls, and more. [Story](#).

A simple provision buried in the 2,700 pages of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act - a Vehicle-Miles-Traveled test program - could revolutionize the funding of highways, just in time for the advent of electric vehicles, which will further reduce revenue from the ever-dwindling gas tax, says a **New York Times** Op-Ed from the author of '*Revitalizing A Nation: Competition and Innovation in the US Transportation System.*' [Opinion](#).

In the midst of the biggest spending boom in its history (\$1.74 billion in July alone, with \$12 billion more approved by year's end), the **Express-News** reports that TxDOT is facing a simultaneous expense challenge: the highway cost index, which tracks materials-and-labor costs for construction, is 32.2% higher this year over last. [Story](#).

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Nine of the 15 fastest-growing cities (by percentage change in population) in the US were in the South, and of those nine, six were in Texas; and of those six, four were in the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor, the US Census Bureau reports: **Georgetown, Kyle, Leander, and New Braunfels**. More details [here](#).

Something New: General Motors filed a patent application for a robotic electric vehicle charger that plugs itself into a vehicle and then unplugs when charging is completed, **DexPatent** reports. The charger consists of a base and vertical pillar with an attached arm that rotates or extends to position the charge cable. **Details**.

Far from being a "crazy dream," that 100-mile Great Springs trail project connecting **San Antonio** Springs with Barton Springs in **Austin** - via **Comal** Springs and **San Marcos** Springs - is moving rapidly forward, according to the **Express-News**, and, when completed, will generate over \$50 million in economic benefits. **Story**.

That proposed 546-acre development in **Comal County**, 13-miles southwest of **New Braunfels**, has now made statewide news because of concerns and complaints from local residents. The **Texas Tribune** says the 1400-lot subdivision could dump 600,000 gallons of treated wastewater *per day* into Dry Comal Creek. **Story**.

## Thought of the Week

"The return we reap from generous actions is not always evident."

- Francesco Guicciardini

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