



Monday Morning Report

July 18, 2022

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet *this* Wednesday, July 20 at 2 PM by videoconference. Our guest speakers will be D.J. Stadler, Executive Director, and Mike McLaughlin, Chief Operating Officer, of the Virginia Public Rail Authority, which recently negotiated a \$3.8 billion transaction with CSX Railroad to acquire trackage rights on 350-miles of right of way with the goal of launching hourly Amtrak service from **Richmond** to **Washington DC**. ***Draft Agenda***.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global cases this morning are at 562,488,292 million, with 6,369,664 million deaths. US cases are at 89,542,371, with 1,023,799 deaths (7/18/22) (***Johns Hopkins***). Yesterday, Texas reported 5,955,673 cases with 87,402 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 510,794 cases with 6,195 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 27,964 cases, still with 401 deaths; **Comal County**: 23,860 cases, with 560 deaths; **Hays County**: 57,086 cases, with 439 deaths; **Travis County**: 228,745 cases, with 1,752 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 120,069 cases with 886 deaths (7/17//22). (***TDHHS***). *Current regional hospitalization-rate data is found [here](#)*.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Governing Magazine says a reckoning is fast approaching for US mass transit agencies faced with shrinking, pandemic-driven ridership losses that have taken a toll on multiple revenue streams. Although temporarily buoyed by nearly \$70 billion in federal COVID-relief funds in the last two years, that money is gone with little hope for more from **Washington**. Next year's budgets will require deep cuts, the magazine reports. ***Story. Local Effects***.

TxDOT's 10-year Unified Transportation Plan, released last week, envisions spending \$85 billion on highway construction and Bob Rivard in the ***San Antonio Report*** says it won't cure congestion, won't make roads safer, and won't help reduce global warming. "It's a scary rejection of science and the world we are leaving for our children and their children," he writes, before going *really* negative about the process and the plan. ***Opinion***.

Ship congestion disrupting supply chains continues to be a problem for US and Canadian ports, but now the problem has shifted from the West Coast to the East Coast. Waits for dock space are down to 3-4 days in **Los Angeles** and **Long Beach** but stretch to 20 days in **New York** and **Savannah**. For more details, go ***here. More***.

Construction on the new, nearly-\$1 billion Harbor Bridge in **Corpus Christi** has been halted by state authorities over safety concerns with 'certain elements' of the project's central span. Officials can't say yet when construction will resume, nor whether it will delay the projected 2024 completion schedule. ***Story***.

Faced with some of the fastest population growth in the nation, transportation in **New Braunfels** is starting to feel the strain - at least in the eyes of local residents. Surveys conducted of residents over the last five years indicate a downward trend in satisfaction levels for traffic, parking, and public transit. On

the other hand, 9 out of 10 rated the city 'excellent' or 'good' as a place to live. Officials outlined a raft of new projects to address traffic. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

An interesting study from Dartmouth College in **Hanover**, NH says there is a scientific basis for climate liability claims and quantifies each nation's potential culpability, linking both the US and China to \$1.8 trillion each in global economic losses due to greenhouse gas emissions from 1990-2014. The study also attributes exact economic costs to specific countries, i.e., the US inflicted \$34 billion in damage on the Philippines. [Story](#).

Spirit Airlines will return to **San Antonio** International Airport with new flights to **Las Vegas** and **Orlando** this fall ([here](#)). And **Austin** Bergstrom International Airport adds a non-stop flight to **Vail**, CO, starting Dec. 15th. [Details](#).

The brutal heat continues to bear down on **Austin-San Antonio** with new record temperatures ([here](#)) and add power supply for air conditioning to new worries: Texas power plants are running at full capacity but are delaying needed maintenance work to keep pace with the heat. 'Things will break,' predicts one official. [Story](#).

Highlighting a 2019 study from Lending Tree, the **San Antonio Report** notes this morning that Military City USA (a city trademark) has the highest percentage of franchise businesses in the country, ranking Number 1 out of major metro areas. The reason may be the high number of military retirees. Austin ranked 13th. [Story](#). [Study](#).

Austonia newsletter has put together a pretty good 'things to do in **San Marcos** list,' if you haven't visited the home of Texas State University in a while - but they've got some explaining to do about how they missed mentioning the legendary [Manske Rolls](#) at Gil's Broiler & Bakery - said to be Lyndon Johnson's favorite. [Details](#).

[Elon Musk Watch](#): We're going to skip as mere gossip the Twitter lawsuits, the stepfather/stepdaughter story, the twins with a Neuralink executive story, the new house in **Westlake** story, and instead focus on just a **Washington Post** piece from yesterday. Who knew his mother was a **Sports Illustrated** swimsuit model? [Profile](#).

Thought of the Week

"Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability."

- Sam Keen

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