



## Monday Morning Report

July 22, 2024

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### INTERNAL

Last week's meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee (7/17) featured a presentation from Jeff Goodell, author of *'The Heat Will Kill You First,'* updates on various Council and Interstate 35 construction projects, and a lengthy discussion of a **Travis County** proposal to re-invigorate passenger rail initiatives in the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor. For details, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org). [Agenda](#).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Trains** magazine surveyed the impact of last week's global tech glitch meltdown and found little damage to the operations of the nation's freight and passenger rail networks. Some collateral services (credit card processing and station timetable postings) were slowed or unavailable, but commuters and freight were barely affected. [Story](#).

Although the tech meltdown didn't slow down passenger rail services last week (above), extreme heat did: Amtrak reported record delays, the **New York Times** reported, with aged US rail infrastructure struggling to stay operational as climate change accelerates and intense heat waves and localized flooding increase. [Story](#).

**Austin** bicycle and pedestrian advisory commissions are pushing for city council consideration of a \$230-million plan, called CityLeap, that would convert a lane on every city-owned main road into a bus or bike lane over the next five years. According to the **Austin Monitor**, five council members have signaled their support. [Story](#).

**San Antonio** housing advocates are considering a strategy started in **Austin**, the controversial *Affordability Unlocked Development Bonus Program*, initiated by current US Rep. Greg Cesar while he served on the Austin city council. The program removes some building restrictions in exchange for affordable housing. [Story](#).

The US Environmental Protection Agency will announce \$4.3 billion in grants today earmarked for locally driven projects ramping up climate action - funding everything from forest management projects to household energy efficiency - reflecting how the Biden administration is rushing to distribute climate money before the November election, the **Washington Post** reports. \$1.7 billion went earlier this month to electric vehicles. [Story](#).

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) will award the University of Texas \$840 million to build a microelectronics manufacturing center to create higher-performance,

lower-power, lightweight and compact defense systems. Combined with state commitments the total project investment is \$1.4 billion. [Story](#).

The Teacher Retirement Fund of Texas, the state's largest pension fund with \$202 billion in managed assets, is shifting \$10 billion out of private equity investments into public equities beginning in October. The Fund characterized the move as an 'asset re-allocation,' according to *Mergers and Acquisitions* magazine. [Story](#).

California-based Line 204 production company still says it will break ground in **Bastrop County** in October on a massive six-studio film-and-television production facility, three years after it was originally approved by city leaders. The Bastrop 552 project, its backers say, will generate \$1.9 billion in productions over 10-years. [Story](#).

**New Braunfels** is revamping the local speed management program, changing the process by which city staff analyzes and implements traffic calming measures such as speed bumps. According to one transportation official, concerns about speeding make up the majority of residents' traffic requests. [Details](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"Time is more than money. Time is life."*

– Thich Nhat Hanh

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