



Monday Morning Report

July 29, 2024

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, August 21 at 2 pm by Zoom. For more information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

JetBlue Airways and United Airlines are fighting American Airlines' application to provide nonstop service from **San Antonio** to **Washington DC** - long-sought by the Alamo City's civic and business leadership - arguing the flight would have 'limited demand' and noting SAT is 'within driving distance of **Austin**'s airport.' [Story](#).

The **Texas Tribune** highlights movement on many fronts toward developing passenger rail between Texas Triangle cities - noting revived efforts in **Austin-San Antonio** led by the **Travis** and **Bexar County** judges - but quotes the House Transportation Committee chairman as skeptical about state funding to match a 'once in a lifetime' deluge of federal dollars (\$66 billion) flowing to US passenger rail projects. [Story](#).

Dallas-based Texas Rail Advocates urges action on \$150 million just made available from the Federal Railroad Administration for passenger rail projects, suggesting applications for additional frequency on the existing Amtrak Heartland Flyer (**San Antonio-to-Oklahoma City**) or a new **San Antonio-to-Austin** service. [Opinion](#).

The **Express-News** took aim last week at the \$4.5 billion IH-35 Capital Express Central project in **Austin**, focusing on Latino and other businesses being forced to move by the project and referencing an opposition lawsuit claiming construction will worsen traffic, displace people, and harm the environment. [Story](#).

Austin's Capital Metro Transit is pausing its plans to convert to an all-electric fleet, citing limited-range, maintenance problems, and industry-supply chain issues. Half of their electric buses were sidelined last year, awaiting replacement parts as the industry supplier-pool for electric buses shrank to two. [Story](#).

London published data last week showing that congestion/pollution fees on cars and trucks have led to significantly reduced particulate matter and nitrogen oxide, key ingredients for worsening asthma and other ailments. The move has also reduced pollution in suburbs, where opposition to the fees was strongest. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Venezuela sits atop the world's largest proven petroleum reserves, which is why yesterday's disputed presidential election results, announced last night in **Caracas**, could significantly affect US energy prices and immigration policy. Some are even predicting a civil war fueled by outside global interests. [Story](#).

Corpus Christi will receive \$535 million in financing via the Texas Water Development Board for a desalinization plant, capable of producing 30-million gallons of potable water per day, expected to open in 2028. [Story](#).

Austin-based Tesla delayed the expected reveal of its self-driving robotaxi from August to October but pressed by investors on the company's recent stock struggles, Elon Musk teased a look at a potential \$5 trillion market roll-out. He envisions current Tesla owners renting out their vehicles 50-60 hours a week, 'Airbnb-style.' [Story](#).

Construction of a new quarry over the Edwards Aquifer in **Comal County**, near **New Braunfels**, is sparking fears among local residents of water contamination from the newly permitted quarry. Vulcan Materials, an Alabama-based aggregate company, bought the 1500-acre site in 2017 and received state approvals this year. [Details](#).

The **Wall Street Journal** says aging US rural towns, including many in Texas, are cash-strapped and hungry for new workers. It also notes that two-thirds of Texas towns with 3000-5000 population are missing a finance director, as are nearly all cities with fewer than 3000 people. **Muleshoe**, in West Texas, is cited. [Story](#).

In the midst of an aggressive downtown revitalization and development Master Plan, **Kyle** has approved the purchase of multiple downtown properties on Burleson Street for \$4.45 million. The city is working with affected businesses on new locations or leases (which is good news: those Hays City Donuts are *tasty*). [Details](#).

Thought of the Week

"History is a vast early warning system."

– Norman Cousins

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