



Monday Morning Report

July 31, 2023

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee met Wednesday, July 19 for an update on advocacy efforts regarding exemptions from the 'perimeter rule' for an air route from **San Antonio to Washington's** DCA Airport, results of TxDOT's I-10 Corridor Study (the final Implementation Report is out), new grant opportunities with priority to local jurisdictions for electric vehicles, TxDOT's spending boom & rising highway construction costs, a roadmap to regional passenger rail prepared by the staff, federal efforts on railroad crossings safety, new data on electric vehicle adoption rates in Texas, and a grassroots rail effort in San Antonio. **Agenda.**

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is tentatively scheduled for August 16 at 2 pm by Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Founding Corridor Council chairman (and onetime **San Antonio** mayor) Henry Cisneros hosted an excellent documentary for public television titled "**San Antonio - Austin: The Emerging Mega-Metro,**" which examines population trends and economic growth predictions for the place a lot of us call home. Written by former **Express-News** business reporter David Hendricks, the 60-minute film features interviews with local leaders about issues past, present, and in the future. It's a fine piece of work that you can view [here](#).

New Braunfels, which has seen an 81% increase in population between 2010-2022 and now numbers more than 100,000 people, is undertaking a new transit planning effort that could include fixed-route bus systems as well as 'microtransit' options that would provide on-demand services at a fixed price, the **Express-News** reports. **Story.**

The largest city in the country without a rapid transit system, **San Antonio**, may lose that moniker beginning in 2027 with the opening of VIA Metropolitan Transit's green line between San Antonio International Airport and downtown. That line, combined with a proposed East/West silver line currently being developed, 'have the potential to usher in a new era of mass transit. After waiting so long, let's go,' the **Express-News** says. **Opinion.**

In what could be potentially bad news for those advocating for passenger rail service in the Texas Triangle cities, a House Congressional faction in **Washington** is attempting to cut billions from rail and water infrastructure spending bills previously passed into law. Their efforts could cut Amtrak funding by over \$1 billion dollars. **Story.**

New Jersey is suing to stop **New York** from imposing a congestion-pricing measure designed to reduce traffic within central Manhattan while raising billions to fund more mass transit, the **New York Times** reports. Proponents say congestion-pricing will bring less traffic, improved air quality,

and better transit; the lawsuit claims the measure is unfair to commuters from outlying regions who must travel to the city for work. [Story](#).

The public has until 4 pm August 7 to comment on TxDOT's \$100 billion ten-year Unified Transportation Program, the annually updated list of projects selected based upon safety, congestion, connectivity, and road preservation. According to the agency, investments will also include public transportation, maritime, aviation, rail, freight, international trade, and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The continuing record heat is costing the US economy billions of dollars in lost productivity, moving beyond expected arenas like agriculture and construction into restaurants, airlines, telecommunications firms and energy companies, the **New York Times** reports. One study pins the cost of lost labor at \$100 billion and rising. [Story](#).

Austin writer Jeff Goodell, author of the important new book *'The Heat Will Kill You First,'* is interviewed by **New York Times** reporter Jennifer Szalai in a podcast series on natural history entitled *'Why Is It So Darn Hot?'* Goodell makes some alarming observations on climate change, including that the world's population is currently pumping the heat-equivalent of three atomic bombs *every second* into the earth's oceans. Scary. [Podcast](#).

Public sector employers across the US are struggling to fill jobs, leading to wage wars between jurisdictions and the largest surge in state government pay raises in 15 years, the **Associated Press** reports. Cities, counties, and school districts are being forced to hike wages amid aggressive competition from the private sector. [Story](#).

Red Coach lux bus company is now offering daily service from **Austin** to **San Antonio** at a current first-class ticket price of \$65, with a scheduled travel time of one-hour and ten minutes; travel time is ten minutes longer going from **San Antonio** to **Austin**. For details, go [here](#).

Living in a fast-moving, high-technology digital society like the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** it is easy to forget just how colorful the recent past here was - until you run across an item like the history of the Six-Shooter Ranch on the **New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung** website today. Killing flies with a pistol? Fascinating. [Story](#).

Viewed as a money-saving hack by some travelers, 'skiplagging' - booking a cheap flight to a destination when you intend to exit the plane at an intermediate stop - is considered fraud by airlines, and major carriers are punishing skiplaggers by banning them from flights & loyalty programs, the **Washington Post** reports. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance."

- Confucius

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