



## Monday Morning Report

August 14, 2023

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### INTERNAL

The next meeting of the Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council will be on **Wednesday, September 20 at 2:00 pm**. Due to member travel schedules and ongoing city/county budget sessions, we're combining the August and September meetings, so there will be no Executive Committee meeting *this* week on August 16. Send any questions or concerns to [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

The excellent television documentary '**San Antonio-Austin: An Emerging Mega-Region**,' hosted by former **San Antonio** mayor Henry Cisneros and written by ex-**Express-News** business writer David Hendricks, airs *this* Thursday, August 17, at 7:00 pm on KLRU-**Austin** PBS. Send your comments to [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Amtrak tossed a 'Hail Mary' lifeline last week to the Texas Central Railway's **Dallas-to-Houston** high speed rail project, long thought-dead by industry observers after its board dissolved two years ago. Amtrak said it might partner on the venture with potential loans, grants, and political support. **Story**. Andy Brown, **Travis County** judge, climbed aboard immediately while urging that **Austin-San Antonio** be included ([here](#)). And there's **more**.

The **Express-News** continued their ongoing series on mega-region growth in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** last week, this time with a piece concentrating on transportation issues surrounding IH-35, State Highway 130, and some snark about commuter rail. Grassroots group **Restart Lone Star Rail District** is also cited. **Story**.

Train horns are sounding again (temporarily) for 10 railroad crossings in **New Braunfels** after a federal inspection found that two of those crossings had fallen out of 'quiet zone' safety compliance regulations. City officials have already started working with consultants to correct the problem, but for now, look both ways at crossings. **Story**.

A recent Corridor Council Executive Committee speaker, Tracy Hadden Loh of the **Washington**-based Brookings Institute, writes that post-pandemic ridership reductions for US transit systems offer some new opportunities which, properly exploited, could help structure a new viability for transit. 'It's not just about commuters.' **Opinion**.

Following a state regulatory ruling last week, **San Francisco** has 'opened the floodgates' for 24/7 autonomous robo-taxis services by Waymo and Cruise, the **Washington Post** reports, calling it a "pivotal moment for the industry." Not so for some critics who believe chaos will result on the city's hills and foggy streets. **Story**.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

You can question the methodology, but **The Economist's** Global Livability Index - which examined 172 metro areas worldwide - found *no* US cities in its *2023 Top Ten Best Places To Live In The World List*. The annual study examines stability, healthcare, culture & entertainment, education, and infrastructure. [Details](#).

US Senator Ted Cruz, ranking member on the relevant Senate committee, is still all in on getting **San Antonio** International Airport an exception to the 'perimeter rule' limiting flights into Reagan National Airport (DCA) in downtown **Washington**. Despite an earlier effort that failed in the US House this year, Cruz told a local business group last week that the regulatory change is a 'massive priority' for him. [Story](#).

Hollywood has discovered **Smithville**, the **Texas Monthly** reports, noting that the small town of about 4000 people in **Bastrop County** has played host to more than 100 film and television productions since 2015. (Most) locals hope for more soon, citing the newly passed \$200-million state incentive fund for film projects. [Story](#).

Float By For Pi: Mark your calendars for September 1-2, new Corridor Council-member **Kyle's** annual '*Pie In The Sky*' hot-air balloon festival, during which the town known as "The Pie Capital of Texas" will offer Uber-style rides from parking areas to the fairgrounds by Lake Kyle for just \$3.14 (you'll get it tomorrow). [Story](#). [Festival](#).

According to the **Kerr County Lead** newspaper, residents of **Kerrville** were shocked to learn last week that the centuries-old Founders Tree in downtown - thought to date back to at least 1858 - was cut down to accommodate a prospective hotel development and because, a worker said, 'It was too big.' Shameful, if true. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

"I love not man the less, but Nature more."

- Lord Byron

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