



## Monday Morning Report

August 21, 2023

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### INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council will meet Wednesday, September 20 at 2:00 pm by Zoom. If you would like to add an item to the agenda, email [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

**Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council founding chairman Henry Cisneros hosted **San Antonio** mayor Ron Nirenberg, **Austin** mayor Kirk Watson, and about two hundred regional elected and civic leaders last week (8/17) at the **Austin** PBS station's broadcast studios for a premier screening of the new documentary '**San Antonio-Austin: An Emerging Mega-Region.**' If you missed the telecast, you can view the project here: [VIDEO](#).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

News from un-skeptical media reports of a new deal between Amtrak and Texas Central Railway for that proposed bullet train between **Dallas** and **Houston** ([here](#)) has led to an expedited planning process for a companion high-speed rail connection between **Fort Worth** and **Dallas** along the IH-30 corridor in North Texas. [Details](#).

Problems continue with the state's highway tolling system, the **Texas Tribune** reports, with issues involving double-billings, huge fines based upon tardy billings, and erroneous billings that TxDOT and the regional tolling authorities just can't seem to solve. New legislation isn't helping. [Story](#).

"We have entire cities and transportation hubs that were all built for a climate that no longer exists," was the grim assessment of a global survey of this year's weather-related infrastructure damage in **Foreign Policy** magazine last week, in an article titled '*On The Highway To Climate Hell.*' One study of 136 cities cited suggests an *annual* price tag of \$350 million per coastal city to get prepared for anticipated flooding events. [Story](#). [Study](#).

With excessive heat and drought keeping water issues top of mind, **New Braunfels** has joined the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and New Braunfels Utilities to create the collaborative inter-agency One Water program, designed to resolve issues in five key areas of water development, protection, and conservation. [Story](#).

Water is also the latest issue raised by the **Express-News** series on population-growth challenges in the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** mega-metro region, including this tidbit from the Texas Water Development Board's 2022 State Water Plan: 90% of Texans will suffer a 10% water shortage by 2070, but a quarter of all municipal water users will be facing a 50% shortage of water. That's trouble. Read [more](#). And still [MORE](#) on Texas water woes.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Airport News: Local business leaders have their sights set on direct flights to Europe from the **San Antonio** International Airport, building a \$2 million fund that could include subsidies for flights to **London** and **Frankfurt**, among others ([Story](#)); non-stop service to **Washington DCA** also remains a goal ([Opinion](#)); and there's [MORE](#).

Mexico's increasingly autocratic president, populist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, is facing a gutsy, profane, and colorful female opponent in tech entrepreneur Xochitl ('so-cheel') Galvez - a **Mexico City** senator currently leading in polls as the most likely challenger in next month's primary election to select an opposition candidate for the presidential election in June. Lopez Obrador, known as 'AMLO,' is term limited. [Opinion](#).

In addition to real floods hitting **Beijing** in recent weeks, China is beset with a flood of bad economic news: slowing GDP rate; rising youth unemployment; a declining birth rate; property market value collapses; and multiple corporate failures. And now there's this: 80% of China's local government financing vehicles do not have enough cash to cover interest payments on their debt. A liquidity crisis is coming. [Story](#).

Add a new police chief to **Austin**'s list of major executive recruitments underway: Police Department chief Joe Chacon will announce his retirement later today. The city is already seeking a new city manager and head executive for the Transportation Department. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."

- Walt Disney

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