



Monday Morning Report

September 6, 2022

Labor Day Edition

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet Wednesday, September 21 at 2 PM by videoconference. The meeting will include a presentation by Will Smithson of HNTB on 'Future Traffic Trends on Interstate Highway-10 and Interstate Highway-35.' To add an item to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global cases reached 605,688,770 this morning, with 6,503,751 deaths. US cases are at 94,768,178 with 1,047,563 deaths (9/6/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Texas is reporting 6,272,686 cases, with 88,676 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 537,702 cases with 6,294 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 29,068 cases, with 412 deaths; **Comal County**: 25,049 cases, still with 563 deaths; **Hays County**: 60,850 cases, still with 449 deaths; **Travis County**: 241,866 cases, with 1,782 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 126,502 cases with 903 deaths (9/6/22). ([TDHHS](#)). *Regional hospitalization-rate data found [here](#).*

INFRASTRUCTURE

That proposed public bus route pilot program for the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** along IH-35 was pitched to a **San Antonio** city council committee last week, airing for the first time a potential financing plan for the \$1.5 million, two-year costs. As currently proposed, the 90-minute route would include stops in **New Braunfels** and **San Marcos** with participating cities and counties splitting the operating expenses. [Story](#). [More](#).

Two more **Austin** suburbs will reconsider their financial participation in the Capital Metro bus program this November, **Lago Vista** and **Manor**. In a May election earlier this year, after prolonged negotiations, **Leander** voters decided to remain in the transit agency. [Story](#).

Public transit provides so many benefits for the environment, for economic opportunity, for traffic congestion, and for social mobility that some regions (**Boston, Kansas City, London, Stockholm**) are beginning to ask the question "Should public transit be free?" An economist for [Streetblog](#) examines related issues. [Opinion](#).

In the most recent reporting on the Texas Central Railway high speed train project between **Dallas** and **Houston** since winning a major court case but losing all of its senior executive leadership, the [Texas Tribune](#) said last week the project is still alive - if barely. But a federal oversight agency reported they hadn't heard from the company in more than two years. [Story](#).

The cost for that 1000-mile long Mayan Riviera tourist train in Mexico has risen to over \$20 billion, the [New York Times](#) reports, more than three times the original estimates. But 'AMLO,' the Mexican media's moniker for President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, vows to complete the project within his current term. [Story](#).

Look for more computer-controlled trucks on IH-45 between **Dallas** and **Houston**, following an announcement by Waymo and trucking giant Freightliner that their level four self-driving semi-trailers fleet will increase to 60 vehicles on public roads in Texas and Arizona. All continue to have safety drivers onboard. [Story](#).

Five major flaws have emerged as the cause for a construction halt on that billion-dollar Harbor Bridge project in **Corpus Christi**, according to an engineer from Texas A&M. They include faulty design issues for the central span, torsion problems with some of the support pylons, and inadequate foundation supports. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The under-the-radar, lowbrow marketing strategies of **Austin**-based Yeti Coolers, focused on rural sports and barbecue pit masters, have drawn the attention of highbrow literary publication **The Atlantic**. With \$1.4 billion in revenues last year, Yeti is all about the 'bro,' the magazine says. [Story](#).

The Texas heat index will reach 125-degrees at least once per year in most counties within the next 30 years, according to a study quoted last week in the **Texas Tribune**, with profound impacts on roads, dams, railways, and water systems. And hot as it was, this may be our coolest summer for decades to come. [Story](#). [More](#).

While many environmental groups oppose nuclear power as dirty and risky, a new generation of climate activists are embracing the technology as the world's best response to the rising demand and cost of energy, the **Wall Street Journal** reports. The Diablo Canyon project in California is just the latest example of the change. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"There has always been enough fossil fuels to power human civilization for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years, and nuclear energy is effectively infinite."

- Michael Shellenberger

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