



## Monday Morning Report

September 26, 2022

### INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee met last week (9/21) for a presentation by Will Smithson of HNTB Engineering on "*Current & Future Traffic Trends on IH-10 and IH-35*," considered workplans and legislative agendas for 2023, and approved filing an 'Expression of Interest' with the Federal Railroad Administration requesting enhanced Amtrak passenger rail service for the Austin-San Antonio Corridor, including stops in **New Braunfels** and **San Marcos**. Members also received updates on various other Council projects. For more information, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

COVID-19 UPDATE: This morning global cases are at 615,183,989 with 6,537,236 deaths. US cases are at 96,074,024 with 1,056,434 deaths (9/26/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). As of Friday, Texas reported 6,340,258 cases, with 89,093 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 544,055 cases with 6,328 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 29,345 cases, still with 413 deaths; **Comal County**: 25,354 cases, still with 563 deaths; **Hays County**: 61,772 cases, still with 451 deaths; **Travis County**: 244,604 cases, with 1,788 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 128,043 cases, still with 907 deaths (9/23/22). ([TDHHS](#)). *Regional hospitalization-rate data found [here](#).*

### INFRASTRUCTURE

The US Department of Transportation in **Washington** released \$1.5 billion last week in a funding tranche made available from the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America program and, as **Texas Government Insider** pointed out on Friday, the selection criteria places a high premium on public-private partnerships - part of an aggressive move by Congress to encourage private sector investment in public projects. [Details](#).

"Filling a dead man's shoes:" **San Antonio**-based civil engineer Grady Hillhouse has scored over 300,000 views on You Tube's **Practical Engineering** channel with a video describing the design and contracting issues surrounding the troubled **Corpus Christi** Harbor Bridge project - currently suspended by TxDOT over safety concerns. It's a cautionary tale for policymakers that involves replacing the original design-build team. [Video](#).

It's taken four years to complete but the three major flyovers at the IH-35 and US 183 interchange in **Austin** are finally open to traffic. Construction included a southbound IH-35 overpass to northbound US 183, a southbound IH-35 flyover to southbound US 183, and a northbound US 183 flyover to northbound IH-35. [Details](#).

Later this week (9/29), the **Austin** city council will consider a submission to the USDOT of the 'Our Future 35: Connecting Equitably Study' as a candidate for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot program, administered for funding and planning needs associated with the I-35 Cap and Stitch initiative. [Livestream](#). (10:00 am)

As Amtrak prepares to roll out a new fleet of Acela high speed trains next year on the Northeast Corridor routes connecting **Washington-New York-Boston**, the **Washington Post** looks at the US manufacturing center turning out the faster, sleeker, more comfortable, and safer cars that will replace the current 22-year-old fleet. [Story](#).

'For it before he was against it:' Folks traveling to **Lubbock** Saturday for the UT-Texas Tech game (overtime heartbreaker) may have heard a local report critical of Texas senator Ted Cruz claiming 'an incredible victory' for funding an Interstate 27 project that he actually voted against. [Story](#). Senator Cruz's version is [here](#).

Air Canada, United, and Mesa are among the airlines buying environmentally benign, four-propeller, 30-passenger battery-operated passenger planes for delivery in 2028, designed for short-haul routes such as **Palm Springs-to-Los Angeles**, or **Denver-to-Aspen**. Or how about **Austin-to-San Antonio**? [Story](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The rising strength of the US dollar overseas creates difficulties for export sales but at least has a bright side for American tourists. **Investing.com** published an interesting graphic portrayal yesterday of just how dramatic the fall of the British pound against the US dollar has been over the past few years - almost to parity as of last week - you can view it [here](#).

Although still not back to the pre-pandemic level of 2019 after canceling in 2020 and going virtual in 2021, **Austin's** iconic South by Southwest Film and Music festival generated a healthy \$280.7 million impact on the Capital City's economy in 2022, according to a study conducted for the festival by Greyhill Advisors. [Story](#).

NASA may attempt another launch this week (9/27) for its unmanned moonshot Artemis 1 rocket and the **San Antonio Express-News** used the occasion to survey current space program connections to the Alamo City, including the nearly 365 Southwest Research Institute workers involved locally in space research. [Story](#).

The **New Braunfels** city council will consider its \$1.8 million, three-year professional services agreement with the local Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce tonight (9/26). The agreement sets forth six measurements for progress on various economic development programs. [Details](#).

Federal energy assistance funding programs for the financially distressed have traditionally focused on heating oil in northern states during the colder winter months, the **Washington Post** reports. But global climate change - evidenced perhaps by this year's widespread droughts and heat-spikes - may be changing that focus. [Story](#). NOAA's take: heat is the bigger killer. [Details](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"If you build two kilometers of track, you can go two kilometers. If you build two kilometers of an airplane runway, you can go around the world."*

- Carlo van de Weijer

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