



Monday Morning Report

September 30, 2024

INTERNAL

Agreed to unanimously at last month's meeting, there will be no October meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee. The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, November 20.

INFRASTRUCTURE

SAT - AUS Amtrak trip: **Travis County** judge Andy Brown, **Bexar County** judge Peter Sakai, and **San Antonio** city councilwoman Melissa Cabello-Havrda led a delegation of local civic leaders and elected officials on a special Amtrak train ride last Monday (9/23) to promote their request to the Texas Legislature for \$300 million per year to match federal programs for statewide passenger rail improvements. Andy Byford, Amtrak's vice president of high-speed rail development spoke during the two-hour-twenty-six-minute trip. [Story](#). [Video](#). [Video](#).

Tomorrow is a day of reckoning for US shipping as thousands of dockworkers are set to strike East Coast and Gulf Coast ports in the first such walkout in nearly half a century. Without federal intervention from **Washington**, a strike could snarl commercial shipping, wreak havoc on supply chains, and disrupt the economy. [Story](#).

The Brightline West high-speed rail project from Southern California to **Las Vegas** received a \$3 billion grant last week from the Federal Railroad Administration, making the effort likely to become the first true high-speed rail service in the US by 2028. Officials said construction alone would create 35,000 new jobs. [Story](#).

Southwest Airlines sued **San Antonio** International Airport in federal court last week, ratcheting up a fight with the airport and eight other airlines over lease agreements scheduled to become effective October 1. Southwest alleges it had been promised gates in the airport's new Terminal 3, coming online in 2028. [Story](#).

Prevented by national security concerns for two decades from directly investing in US ports, Dubai-based port terminal operator DB World is now in talks with Mexico about building a large industrial complex for more direct access to US markets from the south. The company is already heavily invested in five Canadian ports. [Story](#).

Meanwhile, outgoing Mexican president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador last week basically expropriated American-owned port-and-limestone-quarry operator Vulcan Materials' operations near **Playa del Carmen**, claiming their 6000-acre site in Quintana Roo to be a protected natural area. Cue outraged protests. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The Biden administration has proposed a ban on Chinese and Russian software and hardware components in US-sold connected vehicles due to security concerns, the **Wall Street Journal** reports. As most modern vehicles connect to the internet, US officials expect all Chinese electric vehicles would fall under the prohibition. [Story](#).

With the average US commute time now averaging 55-minutes both ways, that soul-draining daily drive is a leading excuse for why workers don't want to return to the office, reports the **Wall Street Journal**. Most commuters say time, not cost, is the most important factor. **Ft. Worth** and **El Paso** are cited models. [Story](#).

Washington DC-based newsletter **The Hill** says scientific research proves global climate change is making hurricanes, such as last week's devastating Helena, stronger and more intense. A hotter planet means more energy can be transferred from the ocean to the atmosphere, fast-feeding storms. [Details](#). And the **Washington Post** says **Galveston** developers are ignoring history and evidence to build more condos. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"You can find peace amidst the storms that threaten you."

– Joseph B. Wirthlin

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