



## Monday Morning Report

November 6, 2023

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### INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday, November 15, at 2:00 pm by Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, email [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

Amid reports of internal staff turmoil, the executive director of **San Antonio's** Alamo-Area Council of Governments (and **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee-member) Diane Rath retired last week from the agency she had led since 2014. [Story](#).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

General Motors-backed subsidiary Cruise has suspended all US testing of its driverless automobiles, including commercial robo-taxis in **Austin** and **Phoenix**, following an accident involving a Cruise vehicle that dragged a **San Francisco** woman for more than 20-feet after a collision. [Story](#). [More](#). [Local Angle](#).

Despite requests from **Austin** and **Travis County** to delay advancing the IH-35 Central Expressway project through downtown for further environmental reviews, TxDOT officials told the **Austin Business Journal** that the agency will proceed on its current schedule to begin construction next year, in 2024. [Details](#). [Background](#). Meanwhile, 300 demonstrators protested the project in its current form over the weekend. [Story](#).

The city council in **San Marcos** will be making some big decisions *today* regarding approval of options for a Comprehensive Downtown Development Plan and potential uses for reportedly the last remaining undeveloped riverside lot along the C.M. Allen Parkway ([here](#)). Not everyone is happy with the process by which the plan was developed, however ([here](#)).

TxDOT is developing its first-ever [Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan](#) to improve statewide mobility and connectivity options - and has created a survey to solicit public input. The Plan will identify needs for public transportation policies, strategies, and priorities for future investments, now through 2050. [Survey](#).

A dramatic rise in pedestrian and bicyclist deaths is causing cities across the country to consider banning right-turn-on-red-lights, once light-heartedly considered a cultural advantage of **Los Angeles** over **New York**. The **AP** reports that **Washington DC** will impose a ban next year, something **Chicago**, **Seattle**, and yes, even **Los Angeles** are considering. Critics say the move will impede traffic and commercial deliveries. [Story](#).

Delta Airlines has joined the rush among major airlines toward electric air taxis, partnering with start-up Joby's advanced engineering group to announce plans for a battery-powered air service from urban centers to the **Los Angeles** and **New York** airports by 2025. [Story](#). [More](#).

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

**San Antonio** mayor Ron Nirenberg took to the opinion pages of the *Express-News* last week to announce a new focus by the city on its regional partners to the south, following a meeting in **Weslaco** this summer to form the South Texas Mayors Alliance for economic and infrastructure development. The mayors of **Brownsville, Harlingen, Edinburg, Mission, and McAllen** are all participating. A list of their priorities is [here](#).

**San Antonio** ranked #1 for downtown pandemic recoveries in a survey of non-resident employees returning to work among 80 US major cities, outpacing **Nashville** and **Manhattan**, the *San Antonio Report* notes. [Story](#).

The booming Texas wine industry attracted the attention of the *Washington Post* last week in a lengthy article that highlighted, in particular, eleven of the 50 wineries now located in the Hill Country west of **Austin** and **San Antonio**. The piece discussed local winemakers' attitudes toward climate change, challenges of the marketplace, and even provided a pretty good starter list for your next tasting itinerary. [Story](#).

Texans are turning to luxury bus travel, according to *Axios*, which cites heavy reliance on congested highways and a lack of passenger trains as the reasons. The news service surveys the rapidly growing number of luxury bus services operating among major Texas cities (including **Austin** and **San Antonio**, which saw one company's passenger load increase 280% last year), but notes there's still a similar need for public transportation services. [Story](#).

American Airlines is canceling service in 2024 to nearly half of the destinations (21 out of 46) it currently serves out of **Austin** Bergstrom International Airport - just as the airport launches a \$6.5 billion expansion program. The airline gave no reason for the cutbacks, but *Axios* says the move could signal other problematic economic issues for the city, coming as it does following Virgin Airlines shutting down its **London** service. [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

"Nine-tenths of wisdom is being wise in the nick of time."

- Theodore Roosevelt (*paraphrased*)

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