



Monday Morning Report

November 12, 2024

Veterans Day Edition

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20 at 2 PM by Zoom. If you would like to add an item to the agenda, please contact council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Experienced **Washington** transportation sources contacted by **Trains** magazine suggested significant headwinds for passenger rail projects following last week's national elections. Some expected the transition period alone to create agency gridlock for at least the next four months; others expected the incoming Trump administration will attempt to 'claw back' rail funding authorized but not yet expended. **Story**.

In a similar assessment, **SmartCities Dive** says federal support for other public transportation, Amtrak, high-speed rail, electric vehicles, and electric charging infrastructure may also be at risk. Federal grant programs will likely focus on roads and rural areas, they report. **Story**.

The Federal Railroad Administration in **Washington** has issued new guidance and resources for the Corridor Identification and Development program designed to assist in planning for intercity passenger rail projects and create a pipeline of projects for federal funding. The latest materials focus on steps 1 & 2 of the process. **Notice**.

Voters approved a contentious plan to close a two-mile section of **San Francisco's** 'Great Highway' along the Pacific Ocean (Proposition K) last week. After a decades-long struggle over the highway's future, it will be converted to public park space for 'cyclists, pedestrians, roller skaters, and dogs.' **Background. Election**.

The **Washington Post** ran a horror story last week on the sometimes unanticipated consequences of automated tolling, citing the case of a man who took a recreational vehicle onto a portion of Interstate 66 from **Falls Church**, VA for a distance of about 45-miles and racked up a \$569 bill in order to save 20 minutes. Yikes. **Story**.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

A **LendingTree** study says **Austin** is the most personal debt-ridden metro area in the US, with **San Antonio** ranking a close second for non-mortgage debt that includes car loans, student loans, credit cards, and personal loans. While the national average for personal debt is \$37,827,

Austinites carry an average of \$45,920; for San Antonians, the average resident debt-load is \$44,812. Auto loans are the largest factor. [Details](#).

The **London**-based **Daily Mail** newspaper claims that **Austin** is "ground zero" for a US real estate crash, citing a 20% drop in house prices since a pandemic-era peak, inventory oversupply, slower population in-migration due to a slowing economy, high insurance rates created by frequent weather disasters, and 'fleeing airlines.' [Story](#).

Reporting out of **Mexico City** suggests that difficult economic, migration, and judicial issues could complicate a required 2026 review of the US-Mexico-Canada trade agreement currently governing \$800-billion-plus in US-Mexico annual trade. Comments by president-elect Donald Trump and newly installed Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum have already signaled potential friction, the **Associated Press** reports. [Story](#).

Nearly a year after announcing a sweeping reorganization of its cyber warfare operations, the US Air Force is still grappling with what exactly that means for the agency's operations in **San Antonio**, which employ almost 5,000 people in Alamo City. In the mix, a \$1-billion new headquarters proposed for Port San Antonio. [Story](#).

Despite torrential rains across the Southeast triggered by Hurricane Helen, all but two US states are suffering drought conditions, a record 87%, according to federal officials charged with monitoring droughts: 'Drought in many parts of the country and the world is becoming more frequent, longer, and more severe.' [Story](#). [More](#).

Thought of the Week

"True patriotism springs from a belief in the dignity of the individual, freedom and equality not only for Americans but for all people on earth."

– Eleanor Roosevelt

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