



## Monday Morning Report

December 9, 2024

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### INTERNAL

The **San Antonio Express-News** ran a fitting tribute to former mayor (and former Corridor Council chairman) Howard Peak last week, highlighting Peak's long-lasting legacy contributions to the Alamo City's trails, greenways, and aquifer protection. But the piece also captured well the person behind the politician. [Opinion](#).

The December meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee has been postponed to Wednesday, January 15 at 2 PM by Zoom.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Contrary to popular belief, most of the federal government's 2.2 million civilian workers don't work in **Washington**; 80% work elsewhere across the country. The **San Antonio-New Braunfels** metro area hosts 31,537 federal civilian workers, about 2.5% of the local workforce; and **Austin-Round Rock** has 11,630 federal workers, 0.9% of the local workforce. Figures don't include contractors, intelligence, or postal workers [Story](#).

Following an infusion of \$4.5 billion in federal cash from Biden administration programs for infrastructure and service improvements, Amtrak has posted record gains in ridership and revenues for fiscal year 2024 - with riders up 15% and ticket revenue up 9% year-over-year. Demand for passenger rail service continues to increase, Amtrak leadership in **Washington** said, adding, 'this is just the beginning.' [Story](#). [More](#).

After gaining a brief reprieve settlement earlier this year, freight forwarders told the supply chain newsletter **Loadstar** that a dock strike at US East Coast and Gulf Coast ports this January is now "inevitable." The master contract settling a dispute over automation technologies at US ports expires January 15th. [Details](#).

The US government is considering a ban on all commercial truck traffic at **El Paso's** Bridge of the Americas into Mexico due to local air pollution issues caused by the trucks. Officials say other nearby bridges can handle the demand, but some local leaders and industry groups claim the ban will throttle imports and exports. [Story](#).

Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro has directed his state's Department of Transportation to shift \$153 million in federal highway funding to the state's largest transit agency, allowing it to minimize impending fare increases. Advocates say other governors could go even further to move highway dollars into other modes. [Story](#).

TxDOT announced last week the first of a series of long-term road closures on IH-35 related to construction of the Central Capital Express project through downtown **Austin**. A northbound

bypass at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. is closed until early 2025, the agency said. Construction on the overall project concludes in 2033. [Details](#).

Today is the deadline for responding to TxDOT's application to the US government to continue approving its own environmental reviews - a controversial arrangement originally designed to speed highway projects to completion but, according to some, often used to avoid federal environmental protection rules. [Story](#). [Comment](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The **New York Times** has added new details to an item we ran last week out of **Johnson County** about sewage sludge, sold as 'environmentally friendly' fertilizer, which is poisoning Texas farmland, crops, and livestock. Now, the companies producing the fertilizer are lobbying for federal protections from liability lawsuits. [Story](#).

In the national news: A **San Antonio** program to combat family violence with an unusual court system ([here](#)) and the *Community First!* homelessness shelter ([here](#)) in **Austin** both made the **New York Times** last week. And five **Austin** residents featured prominently in a **Forbes** magazine "30-Under-30" list ([here](#)). Entire list [here](#).

Texas State University unveiled their ten-year expansion and renovation vision in a presentation to the city of **San Marcos** last week. The plans include rehabbing many structures, adding a hotel, an arts building, a housing complex, and a new indoor sports facility over the next decade. [Story](#).  
Texas State [More](#).

## Thought of the Week

"Conflict cannot survive without your participation."

– Wayne Dyer

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