



San Antonio's

**HEAT RESILIENCE
PLAYBOOK**



Table of Contents

Heat Resilient San Antonio	4
Playbook Structure	6
Playbook Reader's Guide	7
Safe and Prepared San Antonians	8
Awareness and Outreach	9
Heat Preparedness, Illness, and Exhaustion Training	9
Heat Training for City Staff	9
Heat Training for San Antonio Partners	10
FLAGSHIP: Heat Outreach to Most Vulnerable	10
Heat Information and Communications	11
Hot Weather Communications and Marketing Materials	11
Hazard Preparation and Alerts	11
Training for the Media	12
Commercial Energy Conservation	12
Data-Informed Decision-Making	13
Heat Vulnerability Maps	13
Health Dashboards for Heat	13
Heat Impact Assessment on the Economy	14
Heat Impact on Health and Transportation	14
Heat-Informed Sub-Area Plans	14
Heat Data Portal	15
Heat Relief	16
Cooling Tools for the Most Vulnerable	16
Cooling Assistance at Home	16
Utility Assistance	17
Cooling and Hydration Tools	17
Cool Tourism and Recreation	18
Heat Relief for Indoor and Outdoor Workers	18
Cool City Employees	18
Cool City Contractors	19
Cool City Facilities	19
City Activation in Advance of and During Extreme Heat Events	20
Heat Response Strategy	20
Collaborative Emergency Management	20
FLAGSHIP: Enhance Network of Places to Stay Cool	21
Cooler Neighborhoods	22
Built Environment and Infrastructure	23
Heat Resilient Buildings	23

Cool Roof Upgrades.....	23
Heat and Energy Retrofits.....	24
Heat Resilient Historic Housing.....	24
Heat Resilient Affordable Housing	25
Heat Resilient City Buildings	25
Heat Resilient Utilities and Infrastructure	26
Cool Pavements Program	26
Cool Parking Lots	26
Cooling through Nature	27
FLAGSHIP: Heat-Resilient Mobility Hubs	27
Cool Corridors	28
Heat Resilient Power	29
Heat Resilient Water Systems	29
Extreme Heat Design Standards and Regulations	30
Maximum Air Temperature Standards	30
Cooling Codes, Zoning, and Design Guidelines	30
FLAGSHIP: Heat Resilient Capital Investment	31
Heat Resilient Cultural Assets.....	32
Parks and Green Spaces	33
Advance and Maintain the Tree Canopy.....	33
Tree Canopy Preservation	33
Tree Planting in Right-of-Ways	34
Tree Planting in All Parks Projects.....	34
Residential Tree Planting	35
Forestry Steward Program	35
Cool Outdoor Spaces.....	36
Cooling Improvements to City Parks.....	36
Green Spaces in Underused Land.....	36
Shade as Art.....	37
Watershed Restoration	37
Biodiversity and Species Management.....	38
Edwards Aquifer Protection Program.....	38
Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System.....	39
FLAGSHIP: Cool Neighborhoods Program.....	39
Implementation of the Heat Resilience Playbook	40
Glossary of Terms.....	41
Acronyms	42

Heat Resilient San Antonio

It's inevitable. Extreme heat is here. Our climate is getting hotter, and its impact is felt severely in San Antonio. It is also intensified by the [urban heat island effect](#) which occurs when temperatures are higher in denser urban areas with more concrete or asphalt and little green space. In 2023, high temperatures reached at least 100 degrees on 75 consecutive days, shattering the city's 2009 record of 59 triple-digit days. In 2025, San Antonio experienced the warmest spring on record, becoming the hottest place on Earth on a particular day in May. By the end of the century, San Antonians will regularly experience 55 to 100 days a year with high temperatures above 100 degrees, many of those consecutive, according to the [SA Climate Ready](#) projections.

Extreme heat is one of the deadliest climate hazards, affecting our health, exacerbating chronic conditions, increasing hospital visits, and reducing our air quality. It also has significant impacts to our infrastructure, agriculture, energy demand, and water availability. What's more, extreme heat does not affect all residents equally; older adults, young children, people experiencing homelessness, individuals with disabilities, outdoor workers, and lower-income communities are disproportionately impacted. To learn more about extreme heat impacts visit our [Climate Adaptation Dashboard](#).

The City of San Antonio is taking action. The **San Antonio Heat Resilience Playbook** is a guide for the Mayor and City Council, action plan for departments, tool for the community, and opportunity to share San Antonio's successes globally. It uplifts existing City-led heat resilience efforts, accelerates actions that have had limited movement to date, integrates existing initiatives to create greater impact, monitors and tracks progress, and develops new transformative initiatives.

Explore what the City is doing today to better prepare San Antonians for a hotter climate through 52 priority actions that address heat relief resources, awareness and outreach programs, built environment and infrastructure improvements, and expansion of park and green space for all. The **Heat Resilience Playbook** was created through a collaboration between the Office of Resilience and Sustainability, City departments, San Antonio area partners and Resilient Cities Catalyst, funded through JPMorganChase Foundation,



Playbook Structure

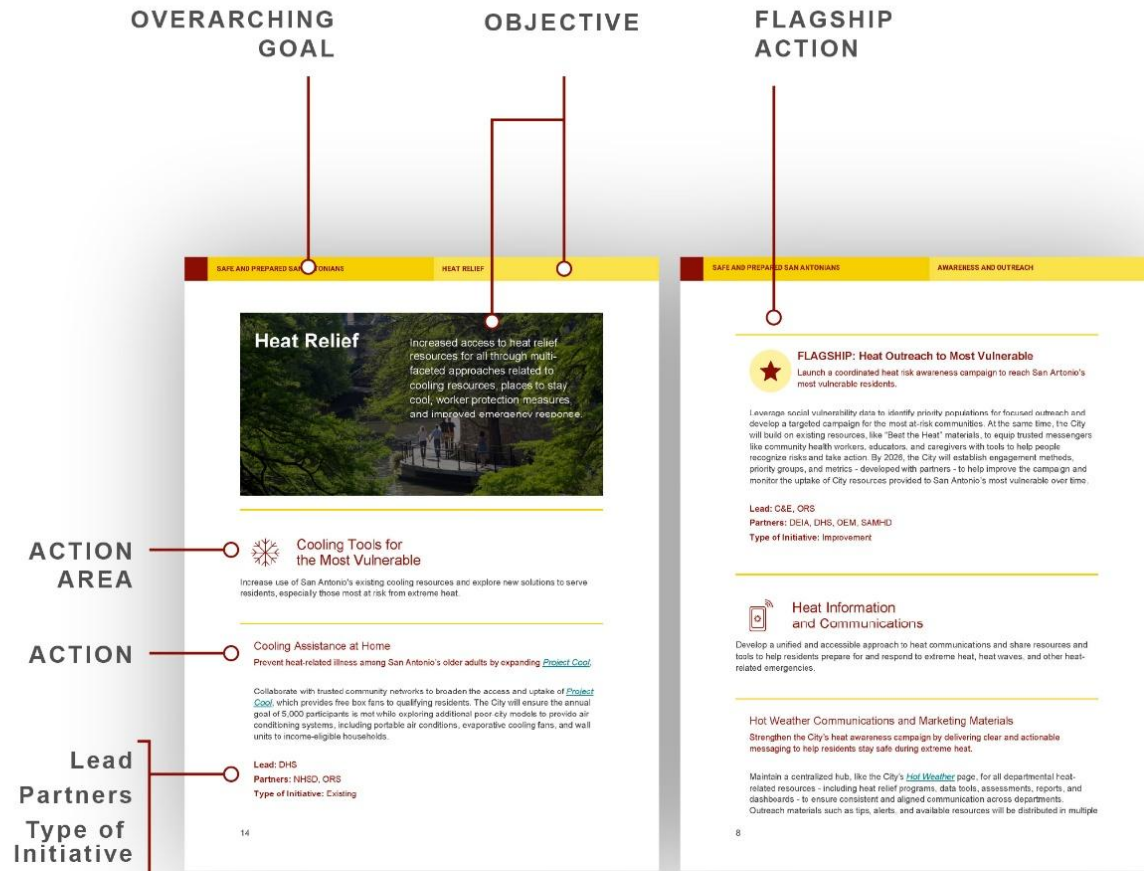
Two goals, four objectives, 11 action areas, and 52 actions, five of which are Flagship Actions. Flagship Actions are initiatives that have been prioritized because there is alignment between departments, are impactful in building heat resilience, and can be accelerated for implementation.



Each goal, objective, action area, and action are described within this **Playbook**. Additionally, each action indicates the department(s) responsible for leading the action, partner departments and/or organizations, and the status of the action - existing, new, or improved.

- **Existing:** An initiative that is currently being implemented by the City of San Antonio or its partners. These actions are active and operational.
- **Improved:** An initiative that needs to be enhanced, scaled, or optimized to better align with resilience goals. These actions may have limited scope, effectiveness, or coordination and require updates, expansions, or interdepartmental integration.
- **New:** A proposed or conceptual initiative that has not yet been implemented or formally adopted. These actions fill identified gaps in heat resilience.

Playbook Reader's Guide





Safe and Prepared San Antonians

Awareness and Outreach

Tailored approaches to ensure San Antonians are connected and equipped to navigate hot summers and extreme heat.



Heat Preparedness, Illness, and Exhaustion Training

Train City staff - outdoor workers, outreach employees, first responders, and other frontline personnel - to identify extreme heat risks, implement mitigation strategies, respond effectively to heat illness symptoms, and administer first aid.

Heat Training for City Staff

Equip frontline workers with training, tools, and response protocols to prevent and respond to heat-related illness.

Standardize heat training for staff and leadership, including first responders and those conducting operations activities or engaging closely with residents at recreational centers, libraries, senior centers, preschools, and other resource centers. Training will build on existing Office of Risk Management (ORM) initiatives and materials, maximize content from the Texas Division of Emergency Management [Preparing Texas](#) courses, and integrate with other capacity-building programs like [SAReadytoWork](#), [Living Heritage Trades Academy](#), and all City summer programs. It will cover early warning signs, emergency response, and proactive workplace safety strategies based on updated temperature thresholds to ensure safety for City employees.

Lead: ORM

Partners: BESD, DHS, HR, OEM, SAFD, SAMHD, SAPD, SWDM, WDO, City operational departments

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Real-Time Temperature Tracking

Track temperature and distribute temperature awareness cards that show warning signs for heat stress and offer tips on prevention and response. These resources will help employees in both indoor and outdoor hot environments make safer, more informed decisions during heat events.

Heat Training for San Antonio Partners

Provide training on outdoor working conditions and heat safety to partners across San Antonio.

Extend the City's heat safety training and tools to local organizations, including nonprofits, businesses, schools and universities, and community groups, especially those with outdoor field workers and community-facing roles. Training will cover how to identify and respond to heat illness, deliver first aid basics, and refer residents to local cooling and relief resources. The City's [Community Health Worker Program](#) will serve as a pilot to be enhanced with San Antonio area businesses and area partners.

Lead: SAMHD

Partners: EDD, OEM, ORM, San Antonio area partners

Type of Initiative: New



FLAGSHIP: Heat Outreach to Most Vulnerable

Launch a coordinated heat risk awareness campaign to reach San Antonio's most vulnerable residents.

Leverage social vulnerability data to identify priority populations for focused outreach and develop a targeted campaign for the most at-risk communities. At the same time, the City will build on existing resources, like "Beat the Heat" materials, to equip trusted messengers like community health workers, educators, and caregivers with tools to help people recognize risks and take action. By 2026, the City will establish engagement methods, priority groups, and metrics - developed with partners - to help improve the campaign and monitor the uptake of City resources provided to San Antonio's most vulnerable over time.

Lead: C&E, DRS

Partners: COA, DHS, OEM, SAMHD

Type of Initiative: Improvement



Heat Information and Communications

Develop a unified and accessible approach to heat communications and share resources and tools to help residents prepare for and respond to extreme heat, heat waves, and other heat-related emergencies.

Hot Weather Communications and Marketing Materials

Strengthen the City's heat awareness campaign by delivering clear and actionable messaging to help residents stay safe during extreme heat.

Maintain a centralized hub, like the City's [Hot Weather](#) page, for all departmental heat-related resources - including heat relief programs, data tools, assessments, reports, and dashboards - to ensure consistent and aligned communication across departments. Outreach materials such as tips, alerts, and available resources will be distributed in multiple languages and through a variety of channels, aligned with City partners, and timed around major events to support residents, event organizers, and transportation providers in making informed decisions.

Lead: C&E

Partners: DRS, OEM, SAMHD, San Antonio area partners

Type of Initiative: Existing

Hazard Preparation and Alerts

Enhance the region's emergency communications to ensure timely, accessible alerts before and during extreme heat events.

Integrate and improve systems such as the [Ready South Texas](#) app, accessible alerts, and utility customer outreach in partnership with Bexar County, San Antonio Water System and CPS Energy. These tools will be aligned with and improved through the Emergency Management Coordination Information Sharing (EMCIS) partnerships and the Joint Information Center, if activated, to deliver clear, actionable information to all residents — including those with disabilities or language barriers—to support safe decision-making in real time.

Lead: OEM

Partners: 311, C&E, Bexar County, CPS Energy, SAWS

Type of Initiative: Existing

Training for the Media

Provide media professionals with training on how to effectively communicate heat-related risks and public safety messages.

Facilitate training for journalists and other communications professionals about the risks of heat in San Antonio and the greater South Central Texas area with the goal of empowering local residents to make heat-smart decisions that will keep their homes, families, property, and pets safe. This initiative will emphasize equity, responsible storytelling, and best practices in risk communication to support informed decision-making and advocacy in vulnerable communities.

Lead: C&E

Partners: DRS, GA, San Antonio media partners

Type of Initiative: New

Guidance for media professionals

The media can play an integral role and through coverage can convey awareness on heat health risks that save lives. The National Collaborative Centre for Environmental Health's guidance, ["Storyline of a silent killer: Extreme heat and media communication"](#) provides specific recommendations that can be leveraged for training.

Commercial Energy Conservation

Align heat-related messaging with CPS Energy's commercial conservation guidance to support businesses during summer months.

Collaborate with CPS Energy to share energy-saving tips, promote grid resilience, and distribute heat safety resources to San Antonio's commercial customers. This effort will help businesses lower costs, reduce heat risks for employees and customers, and support citywide energy demand management.

Lead: CPS Energy

Partners: C&E, DRS, EDD, OEM

Type of Initiative: Existing



Data-Informed Decision-Making

Maintain and regularly update a centralized and transparent set of heat-related data through a data governance model that supports public engagement, planning, decision making, and tracking of heat resilience measures.

Heat Vulnerability Maps

Update [San Antonio's Heat Vulnerability Story Map](#) using the latest data from UTSA and integrate it with the [Risk and Vulnerability Assessment to Hazards](#) and the [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#).

Maintain interactive, user-friendly heat maps that visualize priority areas for action, highlight key components of the City's heat resilience strategy, and align with the centralized communications hub. These tools will also link directly to City programs and resources, helping residents and decision makers take informed and localized action.

Lead: DRS, ITSD

Partners: C&E, OEM, Planning, PWD, Transportation, SwRI, UTSA

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Health Dashboards for Heat

Track impacts of heat to health and expand the Heat Illness and Deaths dashboard.

Continue to use dashboards to track key indicators like heat illness, deaths, and heat equity across San Antonio neighborhoods. The City will explore integrating these dashboards with tools like the [City Places to Stay Cool](#) maps, asthma prevalence data and the [Air Quality Program](#), and energy burden information to better inform future programming and service delivery.

Lead: SAMHD

Partners: C&E, DRS, ITSD, OEM, UTSA, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Existing

Heat Impact Assessment on the Economy

Commission an assessment to quantify the cost of extreme heat to the City.

Conduct a citywide assessment to quantify how extreme heat affects labor, healthcare costs, tourism, and energy use, among other factors. The findings will support long-term resilience investments and inform budget and policy decisions that strengthen San Antonio's economy, workforce, and quality of life.

Lead: DRS

Partners: EDD, Finance, OMB, ORM, SwRI

Type of Initiative: New

Heat Impact on Health and Transportation

Measure how transportation projects affect public health and urban heat.

Apply Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) methodology to transportation plans and infrastructure projects to evaluate how they affect resident safety, comfort, and exposure to extreme heat. These assessments will help identify opportunities to reduce heat-related illnesses while improving walkability and air quality in high-risk neighborhoods. Results will be used to inform design decisions, track performance over time, and ensure that public investments promote both health and climate resilience.

Lead: Transportation

Partners: DRS, Planning, SAMHD, SwRI

Type of Initiative: New

Heat-Informed Sub-Area Plans

Incorporate heat vulnerability data in the Sub-Area planning process to identify cooling investments in high-risk neighborhoods.

Analyze all available urban heat island, tree canopy, and other data to identify hot spots while developing Sub-Area Plans. These plans will layer land use, mobility, parks, and infrastructure needs to identify co-benefit opportunities and ensure future development is climate- and heat-ready. Sub-Area Plans will include proposals for mitigating extreme heat, learning from the City's [Cool Neighborhoods Program](#) and seek to integrate nature-based solutions where possible.

Lead: Planning

Partners: DRS, PWD, Transportation, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Existing

South San Heat Resilience Plan

As part of the Low-Income Community Resilience Program, the Office of Resilience and Sustainability selected the South San/Quintana neighborhood based on heat vulnerability and other vulnerability factors to pilot the development of community driven neighborhood cooling solutions, while empowering leadership in climate resilience. Through a robust partnership with Fuerza Unida and Adaptation International, this initiative engages residents to develop a [neighborhood resilience plan](#), identify climate vulnerabilities and develop sustainable cooling strategies, promoting environmental justice. Identified investments are steered and tracked through a Cooling Committee of neighborhood residents, business owners, and other stakeholders.

Heat Data Portal

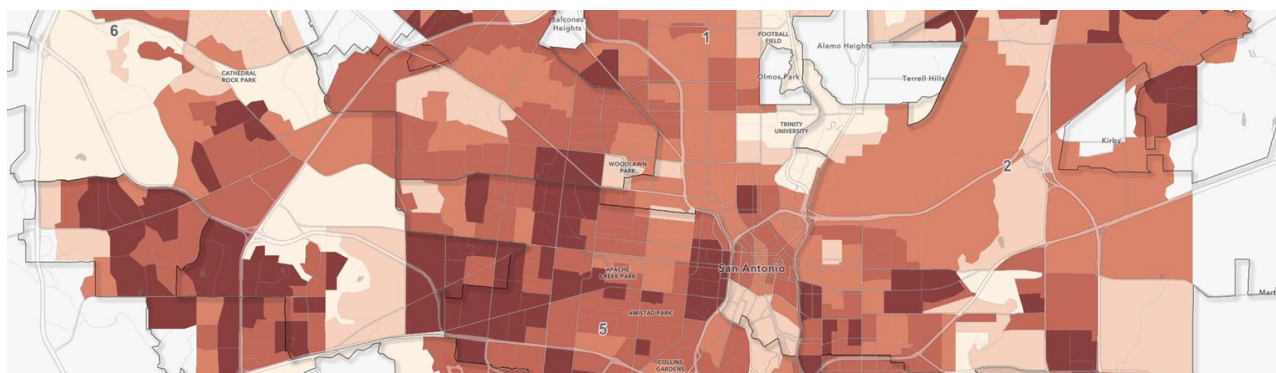
Develop a publicly accessible, user-friendly heat data portal featuring maps, dashboards, and tools that visualize risks and vulnerabilities.

Present data in a transparent and understandable manner, keep resources up to date for the public, and include guidance, including data governance guidelines, for departments on how to integrate within decision-making and program development. The portal will centralize data from UTSA sensors, maps, 311 calls, public feedback, tree planting tracking, and other measures implemented. The website should also align with the [Hot Weather](#) central communications page, City's programs, and resources. The City will explore use of the data to conduct surveys of program adoption and project implementation to inform future improvements.

Lead: ITSD

Partners: C&E, DRS, SAMHD, SwRI, UTSA,

Type of Initiative: New



Heat Relief

Increased access to heat relief resources for all through multi-faceted approaches related to cooling resources, places to stay cool, worker protection measures, and improved emergency response.



Cooling Tools for the Most Vulnerable

Increase use of San Antonio's existing cooling resources and explore new solutions to serve residents, especially those most at risk from extreme heat.

Cooling Assistance at Home

Prevent heat-related illness among San Antonio's older adults by expanding [Project Cool](#).

Collaborate with trusted community networks to broaden the access and uptake of [Project Cool](#), which provides free box fans to qualifying residents. The City will ensure the annual goal of 5,000 participants is met while exploring additional peer-city models to provide air conditioning systems, including portable air conditions, evaporative cooling fans, and wall units to income-eligible households.

Lead: DHS

Partners: DRS, NHSD

Type of Initiative: Existing

Utility Assistance

Support heat-vulnerable residents by expanding access to utility assistance and energy conservation programs.

Partner with CPS Energy and SAWS to increase outreach and enrollment in their financial assistance program to prevent service disconnection. The City will also advertise programs like the [CPS Energy's Residential Energy Efficiency Programs](#) and [SAWS Water Saver Conservation Programs](#) to help San Antonio access rebates and no-cost weatherization resources to help residents stay cool, reduce utility bills, improve home comfort, and adapt housing for periods of extreme heat and increasing temperatures in our region.

Leads: DHS, CPS Energy, SAWS

Partners: DRS, NHSD

Type of Initiative: Existing

Cooling and Hydration Tools

Explore additional protective measures that could be deployed to support the most vulnerable residents.

Identify and evaluate innovative cooling products, like evaporative fans, hydration packs, and moisture-wicking clothing, for potential deployment to protect vulnerable populations during extreme heat events. The City will assess financial and operational feasibility and encourage adoption by community partners and the private sector.

Lead: DRS

Partners: DHS, ORM

Type of Initiative: New



Cool Tourism and Recreation

Assess and strengthen City policies to ensure safe recreation and tourism during extreme heat.

Inventory current heat safety policies and guidelines for outdoor activities at public spaces and facilities, conduct a gap assessment, and provide guidance on communication, resource provision, and heat response protocols. Strategies may include multi-language heat warning signage, designated cool-down zones, and expanded partnerships with the hospitality industry to provide relief and raise awareness among tourists, recreation areas, and outdoor event attendees.

Lead: EDD

Partners: CCDO, CSEF, DHS, DRS, OEM, Parks, SAMHD, SAPL, Visit San Antonio

Type of Initiative: New



Heat Relief for Indoor and Outdoor Workers

Protect San Antonio's workforce from the effects of extreme heat through targeted workplace policies, training, and environmental interventions.

Cool City Employees

Protect public servants and equip City workforce with the policies and tools needed to stay safe during extreme heat events.

Equip the workforce with water, rest breaks, shade, protective clothing, and flexible schedules during periods of extreme heat. Training will support employees in recognizing and responding to signs of heat illness. The City will continue to use tools like OSHA's [Heat Safety Tool](#) to guide real-time safety decisions across job sites. To further support departments, the City will provide data to inform budget decisions around investments for worker safety for extreme heat.

Lead: ORM

Partners: DRS, HR, City operational departments, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Cool City Contractors

Lead by example to strengthen protections to outdoor workers and City contractors citywide.

Enforce, monitor and report compliance of the [City Contractor Worker Safety Ordinance](#) to continue to protect City-contracted outdoor workers through heat safety measures like shade, water, breaks, and other innovative solutions. The City will explore and share best practices and tools with local businesses to strengthen and encourage protections for outdoor workers citywide.

Lead: DSD, ORM

Partners: DRS, Finance, City operational departments, San Antonio area partners

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Cool City Facilities

Ensure City-owned facilities are safe, livable, and fully operational, especially during extreme weather events.

Identify indoor and outdoor high-risk City-owned locations, such as garages, warehouses, fleet repair shops, kitchens, and drop-off centers, where extreme temperatures elevate the risk of heat illness or exhaustion. City departments will collaborate to implement immediate relief measures, like fans or cooling stations, while exploring long-term upgrades, like improved HVAC systems, and funding to create safer indoor environments that are operational during extreme weather events.

Lead: BESD, ORM

Partners: Aviation, CSEF, DHS, DRS, ORM, Parks, PWD, SAFD, SAPL, SWMD

Type of Initiative: Improvement





City Activation in Advance of and During Extreme Heat Events

Enhance coordination and activation protocols among departments and partners to deliver timely relief and communication before and during extreme heat emergencies.

Heat Response Strategy

Ensure the City is ready to act quickly and equitably when extreme heat emergencies arise.

The City will update its [Heat Response Plan](#) to clearly define leadership roles, departmental responsibilities, and activation thresholds for extreme heat and compounding hazards like flooding or power outages. The strategy will integrate lessons from past heat events, improve coordination through the Emergency Operations Joint Information Center and Emergency Management Coordination Information Sharing (EMCIS) partnerships, and align with departmental continuity of operations plans. Special focus will be placed on protecting unsheltered residents, vulnerable populations like seniors, and pet safety, to include pre-positioning supplies at community centers. The City will also work with national partners, like the [10 Across Network](#), to explore criteria for heat emergency declarations and advocate for stronger response tools at the state and federal levels, leveraging the [Framework for a Heat Ready Nation](#).

Lead: OEM, SAMHD

Partners: C&E, DHS, DRS

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Collaborative Emergency Management

Strengthen coordination among City departments and external partners to ensure an effective, real-time response to extreme weather events.

Enhance collaboration through the EMCIS meeting and expand engagement with nonprofits via the [Climate Ready Neighborhood Network](#). This initiative will support real-time communication, align departmental protocols, and increase public awareness of resources like [Places to Stay Cool](#). Efforts will also ensure coordinated messaging and equitable deployment of support services provided by community-based organizations during high-heat events, especially for the most vulnerable populations

Lead: OEM

Partners: DRS

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Transportation during Extreme Weather

The City has partnered with VIA to offer discounted or free transportation to Places to Stay Cool for all individuals during extreme weather events. San Antonio area partners can continue to partner with VIA to provide these transportation services, safely, with a particular focus on houseless and older adults.



FLAGSHIP: Enhance Network of Places to Stay Cool

Expand, diversify, and increase access to San Antonio's network of cooling locations with public and private partners.

Grow the network of [Places to Stay Cool](#) beyond municipal facilities to include a greater number and diversity of spaces, including those managed by nonprofit organizations, those serving the unhoused, private businesses, museums, academic facilities, and faith-based institutions. Explore the need and impact of expanding access to municipal facilities by adjusting hours of operation. This initiative will begin leveraging community surveys in [Climate Ready Neighborhoods](#) to understand where residents currently seek relief and why. Using this input, the City will pilot new cooling sites, explore alternative hours of operation, and form new public-private partnerships to serve vulnerable populations and build a scalable model for expansion citywide. By 2040, the City aims to ensure every heat-vulnerable neighborhood has access to place to stay cool within a 15-minute walk.

Leads: DRS, OEM

Partners: C&E, DHS, EDD, HSSD, Parks, SAFD, SAMHD, SAPD, SAPL, SARA, CRN

Type of Initiative: Improvement





Cooler Neighborhoods

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Strengthened and adaptive homes, buildings, and infrastructure that are climate-ready with a focus on extreme heat.



Heat Resilient Buildings

Upgrade residential, commercial, and public buildings with weatherization, energy-efficiency improvements, and innovative design strategies that help reduce indoor heat and provide climate resilience benefits.

Cool Roof Upgrades

Promote use of reflective, light-colored, and green roofing materials, in City-led and private development.

Enhance the [Under 1 Roof Program](#) by integrating alternative roofing materials that increase heat resilience and energy efficiency in homes. To lead by example, the City will explore opportunities to implement roof upgrades on new development and retrofits for City-owned facilities and commercial and residential development.

Lead: BESD, DSD, NHSD

Partners: DRS, EDD, OHP, CPS Energy

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Heat and Energy Retrofits

Prioritize weatherization and energy retrofits in residential, commercial, and City facilities.

Ensure that existing weatherization programs, such as [Casa Verde](#), are scaled, explicitly include heat resilience measures, and boost residents' participation. The City will explore opportunities for commercial, multi-family, and City-owned facilities while integrating cooling-focused retrofits, [Municipal Solar](#) projects, reflective materials that reduce energy use, cut emissions, improve safety, and enhance San Antonio's tree canopy through initiatives like CommuniTree.

Lead: BESD, DSD, NHSD, CPS Energy

Partners: DRS, EDD, OHP

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Weatherization

The [Casa Verde Weatherization Program](#) helps income-eligible residents reduce energy loss and improve comfort through no-cost energy efficiency improvements. The program supports cooling and resilience during heat events by sealing gaps, installing insulation, and optimizing HVAC systems in homes across San Antonio.

Heat Resilient Historic Housing

Integrate innovative heat resilience features into housing preservation programs.

The City will test new cooling materials, circular economy approaches, and shade-enhancing design strategies for homes, including those participating in [Rehabarama](#) - San Antonio's home repair program for historic and aging housing stock. The City will employ the [Material Innovation Center](#) as a training and demonstration hub for tradespeople through the [Living Trades Academy](#). The City will also ensure that owners of older homes receive guidance on the most effective and regionally appropriate resilience interventions—helping preserve neighborhood character while adapting to a hotter climate and highlighting examples of climate-adaptive architecture.

Lead: OHP

Partners: DRS, NHSD, SWMD

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Heat Resilient Affordable Housing

Integrate heat resilient features in new affordable housing developments and retrofits.

Incorporate design elements like reflective roofing, ventilation, shade structures, better insulation, and other heat resilient building interventions, using data on indoor temperatures and resident outcomes - comfort, utility savings, and health outcomes - to inform future investments. The City will also evaluate the program scoring criteria within the funding mechanisms to promote climate-readiness principles across City-funded affordable housing programs, which currently require Build San Antonio Green level 2 or equivalent.

Lead: NHSD, DRS

Partners: DSD, OHP, PWD

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Heat Resilient City Buildings

Integrate heat resilience strategies into all new City-owned facilities and building retrofit projects.

The City will regularly update the [Facilities Design Guidelines and Standards](#) to incorporate new energy-efficiency and weatherization solutions, technologies, and other requirements. The City will establish performance metrics while engaging local communities in planning and monitoring efforts to ensure equitable outcomes and long-term impact.

Lead: BESD, PWD

Partners: ACS, Aviation, CSEF, DSD, DHS, OHP, ORM, DRS, Parks, SAFD, SAPL, SWMD

Type of Initiative: New





Heat Resilient Utilities and Infrastructure

Modernize public infrastructure to withstand rising temperatures and reduce exposure to extreme heat through maintenance, heat-resilient design, and nature-based solutions.

Cool Pavements Program

Deploy cool pavements in heat vulnerable communities to reduce surface temperatures and improve pedestrian comfort.

Expand [Cool Pavement Program](#) citywide, developing a long-range strategy to phase projects across all council districts. In partnership with UTSA, the City will monitor pavement performance, integrate successful approaches into the Street Maintenance Program, and explore opportunities for private sector contributions through development-linked roadway improvements.

Lead: PWD

Partners: DRS, SwRI, UTSA

Type of Initiative: Existing

Cool Parking Lots

Transform hot, paved surfaces into cooler, safer, and more sustainable community spaces.

Identify prime locations that have the capacity to reduce heat buildup in City-managed and private parking lots through cool pavement, tree and solar canopies, and shade structures. The City will prioritize parking lots within public facilities and share findings of high-impact opportunities for private sector adoption based on heat mapping and community need. These upgrades will decrease surface temperatures, directly contributing to improving urban heat island effect.

Lead: DRS

Partners: BESD, CESF, CCDO, DSD, EDD, Parks, PWD, UTSA, SwRI

Type of Initiative: New

Cooling through Nature

Identify nature-based solutions during the planning process that would be incorporated in infrastructure projects as a frontline defense to heat across San Antonio neighborhoods.

Identify locations where nature-based interventions deliver the greatest community and heat reduction benefits. The City will expand green infrastructure using the [Urban InVEST Tool](#) and San Antonio River Authority's [Green Infrastructure \(GI\) mapping tools](#) while coordinating across departments to deploy solutions like tree planting, bioswales, rain gardens, stormwater buffers, and reflective landscapes in areas with high urban heat and other climate risks like flooding. These projects will help reduce temperatures, improve air quality, and strengthen neighborhood resilience. The Parks and Recreation Department's CommuniTree program and [Howard H. Peak Greenway Trail System](#) are also examples of programs that help maximize cooling benefits through nature.

Lead: Planning

Partners: DRS, OHP, Parks, PWD, SARA, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Improvement



FLAGSHIP: Heat-Resilient Mobility Hubs

Design and implement heat-resilient transit infrastructure at high-ridership VIA stations and new transit corridors.

Leveraging the updated equitable transit-oriented development policy, incorporate shaded walking paths, expanded tree canopy, and other cooling features across various stations, including the Green Line Corridor and its 26 priority hubs, based on vulnerability, safety, and walkability. The City will partner with VIA and other agencies to use rider experience data and metrics to guide investment, funding strategies, and future expansion to improve conditions and reduce risk of prolonged exposure to heat.

Lead: Transportation

Partners: Arts and Culture, DRS, OHP, Parks, PWD, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Existing

Cool Corridors

Create cooling pathways between key neighborhood destinations.

Deploy safe, shaded walking and biking connections between neighborhoods and key community assets. The City will use learnings from the [Cool Neighborhoods Pilot Program](#) and [Complete Street](#) efforts to define interventions such as trees, built shade, green infrastructure, and cool pavements along priority pedestrian routes. These corridors will improve safety, comfort, and encourage multi-modal access, particularly in high heat, underserved areas.

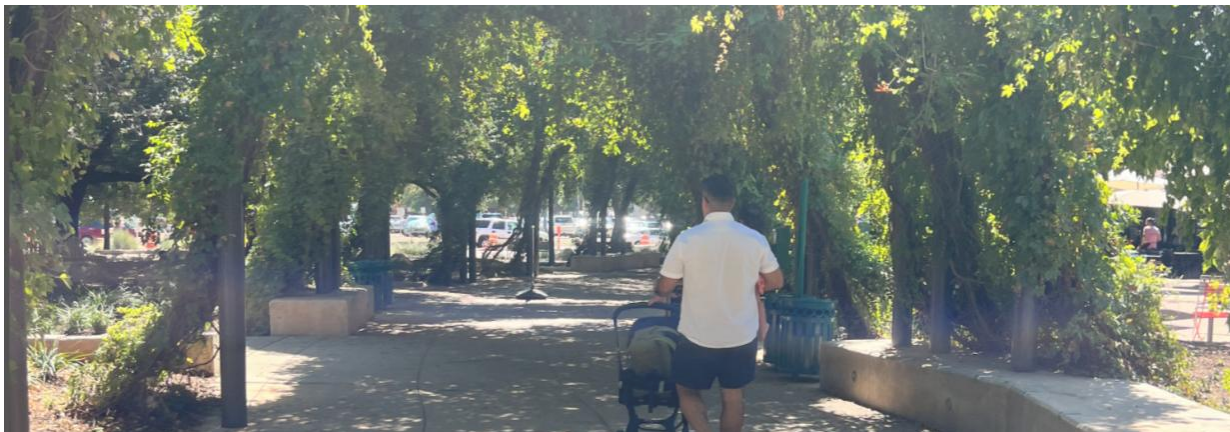
Lead: Transportation

Partners: DRS, OHP, Parks, Planning, PWD, SARA, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Existing

Cool Routes

Provide safe and cool routes to libraries, Places to Stay Cool, parks, and essential services. Improve local walking and biking routes to community destinations like parks and libraries using street trees, shade structures, cool pavement, and green infrastructure. These localized upgrades will prioritize routes in underserved neighborhoods, focused on a 15-minute walkshed, and help ensure residents can safely access cooling, health, and social services during extreme heat. [The Zarzamora Project](#) will improve over 7 miles of roadway and provide additional elements such as wider sidewalks, enhanced bus facilities, traffic signal upgrades, new signage while connecting to Normoyle Park and Community Center.



Heat Resilient Power

Ensure San Antonio's power system can withstand and respond to extreme heat.

Support CPS Energy in strengthening grid resilience to ensure reliable power during extreme heat, especially in vulnerable communities. The City and partners will explore local generation, including solar installations, microgrids, storage and other backup systems, that support heat relief and critical services. The City will also continue to advocate for proper maintenance of transmission and distribution networks, especially in high-risk areas.

Lead: CPS Energy

Partners: DRS, JBSA, SAWS, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Heat Resilient Water Systems

Safeguard San Antonio's water resources and infrastructure in a hotter and drier climate.

The City will collaborate with SAWS to plan for long-term impacts of extreme heat on San Antonio's water quality, supply, and infrastructure, including system reliability for City buildings. The City will collaborate on raising awareness about water's role in supporting cooling, power generation, and community resilience. The City will also integrate drought-resistant landscaping and infrastructure upgrades into public facilities and partner with SAWS to promote sustainable water use in homes and neighborhoods.

Lead: SAWS

Partners: BESD, DRS, Parks, PWD, SARA, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Improvement





Extreme Heat Design Standards and Regulations

Develop and deploy design standards and regulations that ensure buildings and infrastructure are resilient to extreme heat.

Maximum Air Temperature Standards

Explore the feasibility of a maximum indoor air temperature standard.

Learn from other peer cities, like Austin and Dallas, to establish a maximum indoor air temperature threshold beyond which indoor environments are considered unsafe or uncomfortably hot, particularly for vulnerable populations. This effort would expand [San Antonio's Property Maintenance Code](#), like Section 6-52 for heating during cold weather, to require adequate cooling in rental housing, prioritizing protection for vulnerable residents. The City will use local health data and social vulnerability metrics in addition to public input to inform the proposed standard and enforcement approach.

Lead: DRS

Partners: City Council, DSD

Type of Initiative: New

Cooling Codes, Zoning, and Design Guidelines

Make heat resilience a core part of how San Antonio designs and builds to improve health and quality of life outcomes.

Revise building and zoning codes, development incentives, and design guidelines to embed heat resilience into how neighborhoods, buildings, regional centers, and public spaces are planned and constructed. Updates will address building orientation, materials, tree coverage, street design, and access to green space — guided by project checklists and metrics. These changes will prioritize equity and health outcomes by promoting compact, shaded, and low-heat development, especially in vulnerable and fast-growing areas.

Lead: DSD

Partners: BESD, DRS, EDD, OHP, Planning, PWD

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Heat Resilient Design for Airports

Apply the San Antonio Airport System Sustainable Airport Manual throughout all phases of procurement, design, and construction of new airport buildings and renovations. This manual includes green building practices intended to reduce energy consumption and mitigate extreme heat through strategies like reflective roofing, cool pavement, and integrated shading solutions.



FLAGSHIP: Heat Resilient Capital Investment

Align San Antonio's long-term planning and infrastructure investments with heat resilience, equity, and sustainability goals.

The City will embed heat risk, sustainability, and equity metrics into how plans are developed and how capital projects are prioritized, designed, and delivered through various funding streams, including bonds. Using tools like the Heat Data Portal, GIS-linked vulnerability maps, and departmental checklists, City teams will identify overlapping needs, streamline project coordination, and target resources for maximum cooling benefit. In 2025, capital-project-generating departments will develop project-specific scorecards with guiding principles to evaluate resilience in design, construction, and maintenance—and will refine funding criteria, shade integration, and interdepartmental alignment tools to ensure that climate readiness is embedded from concept to completion in future capital investments.

Lead: CDD, DRS

Partners: BESD, DHS, NHSD, OHP, Parks, Planning, PWD, SAPL, Transportation, WHO, SARA

Type of Initiative: New



Heat Resilient Cultural Assets

Continue to honor and protect San Antonio's cultural and historic assets while promoting innovative climate-sensitive interventions that preserve the character of the city.

Work through the [Climate Heritage Network](#) and the upcoming Climate Heritage Strategic Plan to advance innovative approaches like shading for historic sites, using heat-resilient or salvaged materials in repairs and appropriate green infrastructure like xeriscaping and water-wise landscaping. San Antonio will also continue to lead globally by sharing best practices and strengthening collaboration with heritage and sustainability leaders across the region and the world.

Lead: OHP

Partners: DRS

Type of Initiative: Improvement



Parks and Green Spaces

Increased cooling benefits of parks and green spaces that maximize health and quality of life benefits for all San Antonians.



Advance and Maintain the Tree Canopy

Advance the growth and quality of the city's urban tree canopy through promotion of tree planting programs featuring drought-resistant native and native-adapted tree species. Programs will prioritize neighborhoods with limited tree cover, high surface temperatures, and populations at greater risk from extreme heat.

Tree Canopy Preservation

Protect San Antonio's existing trees through development policy and reinvestment.

Continue to preserve San Antonio's existing tree canopy through enforcement of San Antonio's [Tree Preservation Ordinance](#) and its associated funds - the Tree Canopy Fund and the Tree Mitigation Fund. The City will support plating, replanting efforts and address threats such as oak wilt, extreme heat and development pressure. As the city grows, targeted reinvestment in the tree canopy will be essential to maintaining neighborhood livability and climate resilience.

Lead: DSD

Partners: DRS, Parks, Planning

Type of Initiative: Existing

Tree Planting in Right-of-Ways

Use right-of-way tree planting to increase shade, safety, and street-level cooling.

Identify priority areas for tree planting along sidewalks, bike routes, and corridors connecting to community assets such as schools and transit stops. This initiative will address infrastructure and permitting barriers—like subterranean utilities—and embed planting plans into capital projects. The result will be more shaded, accessible, and comfortable travel routes for all residents.

Lead: Parks, PWD

Partners: DRS, SARA, VIA

Type of Initiative: New

Tree Planting in All Parks Projects

Design every new park project to be cooler and more comfortable year-round.

Embed climate-appropriate tree planting into all new Parks and Recreation Department projects to maximize shade and support biodiversity. The City will also work to properly budget for maintenance needed to support the trees planted. The Urban Forestry Team will review and update species recommendations and revise planting techniques to ensure long-term survival in hotter, drier conditions. This effort will contribute to cooling public spaces while enhancing community health and enjoyment.

Lead: Parks

Partners: DRS, OMB

Type of Initiative: Existing



Residential Tree Planting

Help residents grow shade at home to stay cool and save energy.

Expand tree planting in neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by the urban heat island effect by embedding trees planting in City home repair programs and raising awareness of available rebates. Programs like CommuniTree—which offers free tree planting and services — and CPS Energy’s [Green Shade Tree Rebate](#) – offering \$50-per-tree - will be promoted alongside Casa Verde and other home rehabilitation initiatives serving housing vulnerable neighborhoods. These combined efforts will reduce household heat exposure, lower energy bills, and increase overall tree canopy across San Antonio’s neighborhoods.

Lead: NHSD, Parks

Partners: DRS, CPS Energy, SAWS

Type of Initiative: Existing

Forestry Steward Program

Train and empower youth and community members to care for San Antonio’s urban forest.

Engage community members in urban forestry initiatives such as tree adoption event support and education outreach and programming with a focus in serving heat-vulnerable neighborhoods. Participants will receive hands-on training in tree care, climate resilience, and community engagement, helping to extend the impact of City-led forestry engagement efforts. By cultivating a network of local stewards, the program will build long-term capacity to sustain and grow San Antonio’s tree canopy as the climate warms. In addition, the City will link program materials to the Junior Forestry Program.

Lead: Parks

Partners: DRS

Type of Initiative: Existing



Cool Outdoor Spaces

Transform public spaces into cooler environments by adding shade, reflective materials, and other heat-mitigating features to support year-round use and public health.

Cooling Improvements to City Parks

Transform parks into cool spaces where San Antonians obtain relief during extreme heat days.

Invest in features like shaded seating, drinking water access, cooling stations, pools, splash pads, and heat-tolerant landscaping to transform parks into comfortable, climate-resilient destinations. Improvements will prioritize areas with limited access to cooling and ensure parks remain welcoming and usable throughout the hottest months. By integrating cooling into park design, these public spaces can become true community assets year-round and serve as a model for other City-facilities like recreational centers, libraries, senior centers and more.

Lead: Parks

Partners: BESD, DRS, SARA, SwRI

Type of Initiative: Improvement

Green Spaces in Underused Land

Redevelop unused land into living landscapes that cool and connect communities.

Convert underused paved areas—such as excess parking lots and vacant hardscapes—into green spaces that provide shade, reduce surface temperatures, and support stormwater management. With only 51% of San Antonians living within a 10-minute walk to a park, these conversions will prioritize underserved neighborhoods and expand access to cooling and recreation. The City will leverage bond funding and capital improvement projects to drive implementation and will work with external partners to develop replicable models that encourage private sector participation.

Lead: Parks

Partners: DRS, DSD, PWD, SARA

Type of Initiative: New

Shade as Art

Design and implement beautiful, functional shade that reflects San Antonio's culture and keeps people cool.

Partner with artists, architects, and community members to integrate shade structures into public art installations that provide real heat relief. These designs will be placed in high-use outdoor areas like plazas, transit stops, and community gathering spaces, prioritizing heat-vulnerable neighborhoods. The initiative will celebrate local identity while making public spaces more livable in extreme heat.

Lead: Arts and Culture

Partner: DRS, Parks, PWD

Type of Initiative: Existing

Watershed Restoration

Restore natural systems to reduce heat, manage stormwater, and support healthy neighborhoods.

The City will support the San Antonio River Authority's transformation of historical creeks, streams, rivers, and riparian corridors in priority watersheds. These nature-based interventions—like native reforestation, wetland restoration, and stream daylighting—can lower land surface temperatures by up to 10–15°F, while reducing localized flooding, improving air and water quality, and enhancing biodiversity. The City will explore aligning land use planning, bond investments, and park connectivity projects with restoration goals to co-invest in cooling benefits, public access, and long-term climate resilience—especially in underserved, heat-burdened communities.

Lead: SARA

Partners: DRS, Parks, Planning, PWD

Type of Initiative: Existing



Biodiversity and Species Management

Protect native species and ecosystems that help San Antonio adapt to rising temperatures.

Collaborate with San Antonio River Authority in preserving and restoring native plant and animal habitats that provide ecological and climate benefits, such as temperature regulation, pollination, and drought resilience. This City will work with partners to evaluate impact on biodiversity focusing on heat-tolerant native species, habitat corridors, and ecosystem health across both public and private land. The City will also partner with landowners, conservation organizations, researchers, and other appropriate nonprofit partners to promote species management practices that support long-term climate and ecological resilience.

Lead: SARA

Partners: DRS, Parks, PWD, UTSA

Type of Initiative: Existing

Edwards Aquifer Protection Program

Protect San Antonio's most critical water resource and natural cooling system.

Preserve open space and recharge zones that help cool the region, replenish water supplies, and buffer against drought. The [Edwards Aquifer Protection Program](#) has preserved over 187,000 acres to date serving natural buffers, helping to cool surrounding areas, maintain water quality, and prevent sprawl-related heat impacts. The City will continue working with conservation partners and voters to expand and sustain the program, manage protected areas for habitat and ecosystem health.

Lead: Parks

Partners: DRS, Edwards Aquifer Alliance, Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance, Green Spaces Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, SAWS

Type of Initiative: Existing

Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System

Enhance safe access to outdoor space along San Antonio's trail network through additional tree planting and heat education.

Continue to expand the [Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System](#) and neighborhood nodes towards its 130-mile vision, prioritizing shaded trails, access points in underserved areas, and linkages to parks, neighborhoods and public facilities. The City will increase tree planting alongside trails with an emphasis on the West Side Creek trails, an area affected by low lacking tree canopy. Additionally, the [City's Trail Stewards](#), who monitor trails and support trail users, will provide heat preparedness information to trail users on high heat days, alert users to the locations of hydration stations, distribute emergency water, and more.

Lead: Parks

Partners: DRS

Type of Initiative: Existing



FLAGSHIP: Cool Neighborhoods Program

Implement tried-and-proven heat mitigation efforts and concentrate them in priority heat vulnerable neighborhoods to maximize temperature reduction.

The City will refine best practices and support justification to drive funding commitments to scale up pilots citywide. The City will continue to implement heat mitigation efforts and raise awareness about the program through a robust resident engagement campaign throughout 2025. Key findings and recommendations will be presented to City leadership and City Council to shape future implementation and guide policy regarding extreme heat mitigation practices for San Antonio.

Lead: DRS

Partners: Arts and Culture, C&E, COA, EDD, DHS, NHSD, OHP, Parks, PWD, Transportation, SAMHD, CPS Energy, SARA, SAWS, SwRI, UTSA, VIA

Type of Initiative: Existing

Implementation of the Heat Resilience Playbook

Implementation of the Heat Resilience Playbook will be monitored and coordinated by the Office of Resilience and Sustainability through an interactive dashboard that will track action progress and share data to ultimately maintain public transparency. The dashboard will include metrics tied to each action and offer ongoing updates on impact, investments, and milestones. As each action enters the implementation and delivery phase, DRS, in collaboration with leads and partners, will ensure lead and partner roles are thoroughly considered and delineated, tie data metrics to quality of life and equity outcomes, determine timeline for providing action updates, and ensure all individual action support the goals of the Heat Resilience Playbook.

This Playbook was developed in collaboration with all City departments and many external partners. It aligns with multiple City frameworks including SA Climate Ready, SA Tomorrow, SA Forward, the Equity Atlas, Parks System Plan, departmental strategic plans, and other resilience and planning efforts. The City will continue to work across agencies and with community partners to ensure that this strategy evolves in response to local needs, equity goals, and emerging climate conditions.

To learn more, visit San Antonio's [Heat Resilience Playbook Story Map](#).

Glossary of Terms

City Operational Departments: Refers to City departments responsible for delivering essential public services and noted with an asterisk on the Acronyms section.

Extreme Heat: A period of unusually hot weather, often accompanied by high humidity, that lasts for two or more days. It can cause serious health effects including heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and can exacerbate existing medical conditions.

Flagship Actions: Initiatives that have been prioritized because that are impactful in building heat resilience and can be accelerated.

Green Infrastructure Mapping Tools: Includes Green infrastructure resources, [Green Infrastructure \(GI\) ~ San Antonio River Authority](#) and, [Watershed Master Plan Viewer](#).

Heat Resilience: The capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, and systems to prepare for, respond to, and recover from extreme heat events while minimizing harm to health, infrastructure, and the environment. This includes physical, social, and policy interventions.

Joint Information Center (JIC): A centralized communications hub activated during emergencies to coordinate consistent and accurate public messaging across City departments and partner agencies. The JIC ensures unified outreach during high-risk events like heat emergencies.

San Antonio Area Partners: San Antonio area businesses, schools, universities, non-profits, community organizations, and other local jurisdictions.

Urban Heat Island (UHI): An environmental phenomenon where urban areas experience significantly higher temperatures than nearby rural areas due to built surfaces like asphalt and concrete, limited vegetation, and waste heat from buildings and vehicles. UHI intensifies during summer and impacts energy use, air quality, and public health.

Acronyms

ACS*	Animal Care Services
BESD*	Building and Equipment Services Department
C&E	Communications & Engagement Department
CCDO*	Center City Development and Operations
CDD	Capital Delivery Department
COA	Compliance, Opportunity, and Access
CPS*	CPS Energy
CRN	Climate Ready Neighborhoods
CSEF	Convention, Sports, and Entertainment Facilities
DSD	Development Services Department
DRS	Department of Resilience and Sustainability
DHS	Department of Human Services
EDD	Economic Development Department
EMCIS	Emergency Management Coordination Information Sharing
GA	Government and Public Affairs Department
HR	Human Resources Department
HSSD	Homeless Services and Strategy Department
ITSD	Information Technology Services Department
JIC	Joint Information Center
NHSD	Neighborhood and Housing Services Department
OEM*	Office of Emergency Management
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
ORM	Office of Risk Management
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
Parks*	Parks and Recreation Department
PWD*	Public Works Department
RCC	Resilient Cities Catalyst
SA Climate Ready	San Antonio Climate Action & Adaptation Plan
SA Tomorrow	San Antonio's Comprehensive Plan
SAWS*	San Antonio Water System
SAPL	San Antonio Public Library
SAMHD	San Antonio Metropolitan Health District
SARA	San Antonio River Authority
SWMD*	Solid Waste Management Department
TDEM	Texas Division of Emergency Management
UTSA	University of Texas at San Antonio
VIA	VIA Metropolitan Transit
WDO	Workforce Development Office

* = Operational Departments, to also include San Antonio Fire Department and San Antonio Police Department

