

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**COSA - CITY CLERK  
2025 APR 21 PM01:14**COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

**TO:** Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk  
**FROM:** Councilmembers Teri Castillo & Jalen McKee-Rodriguez  
**COPIES:** Erik Walsh, City Manager; Andy Segovia, City Attorney  
**SUBJECT:** Tracking and Preventing Heat Deaths  
**DATE:** April 16, 2025

**Issue for Proposed Consideration**

After coordinating this Council Consideration Request (CCR) with the City Manager, I respectfully request for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee:

Request Metro Health track heat-related deaths in the City of San Antonio through intergovernmental collaboration, shared research and best practices.

**Brief Background**

“Earth’s average land and ocean surface temperature in 2024 was 2.32 degrees Fahrenheit above the 20th-century average — the highest global temperature among all years in NOAA’s 1850-2024 climate record. It was 0.18 of a degree Fahrenheit warmer than 2023, which was previously the warmest year on record.”<sup>i</sup> Texas itself reported over 306 heat-related deaths last year. Heat related deaths is a silent killer. Repeated and prolonged exposure to high temperatures can cause heat cramps, heat exhaustion or be fatal with a heat stroke. Years are shaved off people’s lives for repeated exposure to extreme heat with no ability to cool down.

There is no standardized way that the different municipalities in Texas track heat related deaths.<sup>ii</sup> According to recent reporting, the Bexar County’s Medical Examiner’s Office is understaffed and usually does not have the ability to disseminate if someone died due to a heat induced injury such as heart attack, diabetes flair up, etc.<sup>iii</sup> Maricopa County, Arizona began assessing any possible heat related death in their county starting in 2006, with enhanced heat surveillance season usually beginning in May until October. Since then, they have used such data to ensure they know the causal relationship of heat to deaths in their community, as well as categorizing deaths between Heat Caused deaths (direct causal and lead to sequence of events causing deaths), and Heat Contributed deaths (was not in a sequence of events causing deaths).<sup>iv</sup> Further, in 2012, Maricopa County started monitoring energy use and air-conditioning availability in homes, as many heat-related deaths happen within homes that lack quality cool air circulation.



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Through this, Metro Health and other City departments can continue working on developing an Urban Heat Island Mitigation and Adaptation Plan<sup>v</sup> and Heat Risk Assessment<sup>vi</sup> with more direct data on the number of heat related deaths in San Antonio within both indoor and outdoor settings. Many of our constituents have old unweatherized homes and or cannot afford to fix them or to run their window unit all day and return to homes that are hotter than the air outside causing constant heat stress on our constituent's bodies. Cooling centers are usually seen as a solution, but we request a holistic solution that ensures our constituents can keep cool at home, if they have a home.

### **Request**

We request that Metro Health explore best practices of tracking heat-related deaths in the City of San Antonio through an intergovernmental collaborative effort with the Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office, City and County public safety departments, and local hospitals.

This tracker should be public (without displaying individuals' names), and data collected on the heat-related deaths should include the individual's zip code, income, race/ethnicity, gender/sex, place of death (including indoor or outdoor settings, and if an indoor setting had a functioning AC system), heat caused vs heat contributed designations, and other relevant data that would help Metro Health and the City continue its efforts in creating and implementing an Urban Heat Island Mitigation and Adaptation Plan.



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Submitted for Council consideration by:

Councilmember Teri Castillo, District 5

Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, District 2

### Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### District

3  
6  
1

<sup>i</sup> <sup>[1]</sup> [https://www.noaa.gov/news/2024-was-worlds-warmest-year-on-record#:~:text=It's%20official%3A%202024%20was%20the,extent%20\(coverage\)%20on%20record.](https://www.noaa.gov/news/2024-was-worlds-warmest-year-on-record#:~:text=It's%20official%3A%202024%20was%20the,extent%20(coverage)%20on%20record.)

<sup>ii</sup> <sup>[2]</sup> <https://www.texastribune.org/2024/08/14/texas-heat-deaths-undercount/>

<sup>iii</sup> <sup>[3]</sup> <https://www.axios.com/local/san-antonio/2023/08/07/san-antonio-heat-wave-deaths>





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iv<sup>[4]</sup>

[https://www.maricopa.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/5934#:~:text=In%202024%2C%2077%25%20of%20heat%2Drelated%20deaths%20occurred%20outdoors.&text=Nearly%20two%2Dthirds%20\(62%25\).in%20a%20house%20in%202024.&text=case%20s...functioning%20in%2070%25%20of%20cases](https://www.maricopa.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/5934#:~:text=In%202024%2C%2077%25%20of%20heat%2Drelated%20deaths%20occurred%20outdoors.&text=Nearly%20two%2Dthirds%20(62%25).in%20a%20house%20in%202024.&text=case%20s...functioning%20in%2070%25%20of%20cases)

v<sup>[5]</sup> [https://www.sasustainability.com/action-](https://www.sasustainability.com/action-plan#:~:text=URBAN%20HEAT%20ISLAND%20Analyze%20and%20quantify%20the%20urban%20heat%20island%20(UHI)%20in%20San%20Antonio%20and%20develop%20an%20implementable%20and%20impactful%20UHI%20mitigation%20and%20adaptation%20plan%20with%20a%20focus%20on%20vulnerable%20populations%20and%20ecosystems.)

[plan#:~:text=URBAN%20HEAT%20ISLAND%20Analyze%20and%20quantify%20the%20urban%20heat%20island%20\(UHI\)%20in%20San%20Antonio%20and%20develop%20an%20implementable%20and%20impactful%20UHI%20mitigation%20and%20adaptation%20plan%20with%20a%20focus%20on%20vulnerable%20populations%20and%20ecosystems.](https://www.sasustainability.com/action-plan#:~:text=URBAN%20HEAT%20ISLAND%20Analyze%20and%20quantify%20the%20urban%20heat%20island%20(UHI)%20in%20San%20Antonio%20and%20develop%20an%20implementable%20and%20impactful%20UHI%20mitigation%20and%20adaptation%20plan%20with%20a%20focus%20on%20vulnerable%20populations%20and%20ecosystems.)

vi<sup>[6]</sup> <https://www.sa.gov/Directory/Initiatives/Urban-Heat-Island#:~:text=Metro%20Health%20and,community%20engagement>