CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST

TO:	Mayor and City Council
FROM:	Teri Castillo, District 5 Councilmember
COPIES TO:	Erik Walsh, City Manager; Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Emily McGinn Assistant to City Council
SUBJECT:	Green Alleyways Pilot Program
DATE:	August 2, 2023

Request:

Requesting the City of San Antonio's (COSA) Sustainability Department use the FY24 Resiliency Energy Efficiency, & Sustainability Fund (REES) to develop and implement a Green Alleyways Pilot Program in San Antonio.

This request provides COSA with the flexibility to build out the pilot program with the following considerations:

- Use highly reflective materials and native plants to reduce the heat island effect.
- Work with the Materials Innovation Center to use reclaimed asphalt pavement and other materials when possible.
- Use permeable paving, rain gardens, or other sustainable methods to address stormwater ponding and runoff to adjacent properties.
- Install adequate pedestrian-scale light fixtures that focus their illumination towards the ground and minimize light pollution.
- Examine green alley best practices from programs in other cities (ex. Chicago's Green Alley Handbook).
- Prioritize high-equity needs areas and collaborate with the surrounding community members to understand the area's identity and create a sense of place through naming, signage, art, and other amenities.

Background:

Alleys with low visibility and irregular or no maintenance can attract illegal dumping, safety issues, and other types of nuisance behavior which lowers the quality of life for residents and businesses. The Green Alleyways Pilot provides an opportunity to address reoccurring issues from the public which align with those identified by the City's Solid Waste Management Department in April 2022:

> "The City of San Antonio's *Solid Waste Management Department* performed an alley inventory assessment in 2009. Out of this assessment, 4,357 alley segments were identified as not receiving collection services (~3.2 million centerline feet). These non-service alleys (NSAs) are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain per

> Chapter 14 and 35 of the Unified Development Code. However, many of these alleys have been neglected over the years in the form of overgrown vegetation, rutting, debris, and pavement distresses resulting in the alley to be non-traversable and resulting in drainage impediments and fences being impacted by standing water, etc."

"Green alleys" often use pervious pavements and other sustainable materials, even reclaimed deconstruction materials, to transform service and non-service alleys into inviting spaces where people can walk, play, and interact. These green designs often incorporate appropriate lighting, greenery, public art, and other amenities which can transform an annoyance into an asset the neighborhood can take pride in.

A Green Alleyways Pilot Program also offers an alternative which can help reduce the amount of sidewalk gaps and increase lighting in neighborhoods which do not have sufficient right of way to construct sidewalks or install lighting adjacent to the street.

The benefits of properly designed green alleys extend beyond pedestrian safety and lighting. They also provide effective drainage and heat island relief. Many of the city's older alleys were formed without proper connections to the stormwater systems. Because of this, residents can experience ponding in their yards and even water in their homes. A green alley can help alleviate flooding issues (and increase the amount of recharged ground water) through the use of grading or regrading, permeable pavements, and other water infiltration designs.

The pilot would be funded through the City's FY24 Resiliency, Energy Efficiency and Sustainability (REES) Program Fund. One of the fund's objectives targets heat island impacts, including reducing temperatures in the hottest part of the urban core. In addition to using sustainable, permeable materials, alleys could incorporate ongoing REES programs, like the Cool Pavement Pilot, by constructing green alleys with light, reflective surfaces which reflect more heat away from homes and businesses. Furthermore, the Green Alleyways Pilot has potential to support the REES Fund's community education goals by partnering with nearby residents to maintain green spaces in the alley.

Like the REES Fund, the Green Alleyways Pilot also supports numerous COSA-adopted policies and programs like: SA Climate Ready, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, Vision Zero, Complete Streets Policy, Deconstruction Policy, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Street Light Index, Non-Service Alley Maintenance Program, and the Good Neighbor Program. The City's Unified Development Code (UDC) also, "encourage[s] the design and use of rear alleys in residential neighborhoods to reduce "points of conflict" between automobile and pedestrian traffic."

In conclusion, San Antonio has an extensive network of alleyways, many of which are underutilized and unkempt. A Green Alleyways Pilot Program in San Antonio will improve public and pedestrian safety by redesigning these spaces to be more inviting to pedestrians and cyclists. Community would also experience longer-term benefits as well in the form of better drainage and cooler ambient temperatures. The City of San Antonio should create, fund, and initiate a Green Alleyways Pilot Program in FY24.

Submitted for Council consideration by: Teri Castillo

Councilwoman Teri Castillo, District 5

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (4 only)	District
1. Suja Kaur	1
2. -M-R	2
3. M.Z. Mhyte	10
4.	6

Example: Before and After Green Alley in Richmond, Virginia: