



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 2.

Agenda Date: 1/27/2020

In Control: Innovation and Technology Committee

DEPARTMENT: Office of Innovation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brian Dillard, Chief Innovation Officer

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT: R&D League, a new research and development program

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this item is to provide the Innovation and Technology Committee with an overview of the City of San Antonio's new research and development program administered through the Office of Innovation.

BACKGROUND:

The City of San Antonio, Southwest Research Institute (SwRI), The United Services Automobile Association (USAA), and The University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA) are aligning efforts to form the R&D League, a new research and development program for the City.

The League will advise and provide tools to the City to investigate new ideas, and make data-driven, equitable decisions benefiting the residents of San Antonio. Locally, USAA, SwRI and UTSA have robust R&D programs that have made them leaders in their respective fields. To leverage this success and bring similar techniques into the public sector, USAA, SwRI and UTSA will lend talent, insight and expertise to community-focused R&D projects where mutual benefit and strategic alignment exist.

The R&D League will create opportunities for highly-skilled, cross-sector teams of academics, engineers, scientists and City staff to explore new ways of operating and addressing challenges. Each project team will start with a hypothesis to be tested and end with a report on the results of the investigation, lessons learned and recommended next steps. The project plans will follow a phased approach that is agile and iterative in nature; allowing teams to learn along the way and adjust project parameters or end a project if it becomes clear it will not meet stated goals or would be cost-prohibitive. When an idea is disproven, it helps the City avoid wasted time and money. When an idea is successful, it allows the City to make data-informed decisions, scale iteratively, and make educated plans for the future. For SwRI, USAA and UTSA, the League helps expand their research by utilizing the City as a living lab and making them more competitive for grant funding.

The R&D collaborators have completed a Memorandum of Understanding. City staff will present their plans to the full City Council on February 12 at B-Session.

ISSUE:

A briefing on the the City of San Antonio R&D League program.

ALTERNATIVES:

There are no alternatives to propose as this is a staff briefing only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this briefing.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff will present a briefing on the Research and Development program, subject to possible action by the Committee.