

## Attachment C

### RACE & EQUITY POCKET QUESTIONS

**Title & Purpose of this Initiative:** Westwood Cemetery Master Plan: A development plan for the Westwood Cemetery

**Department:** Public Works

**What are the Racial and Equity impacts?** Records indicated the Westwood Cemetery was established in 1948. Cemeteries were segregated by race Black residents were not allowed to be buried in the cemetery until 1968. The Town does not track the race of cemetery plot purchasers or of those interred on the site. Chapel Hill and Hillsborough have no more plots available meaning Carrboro's Westwood Cemeteries is one of the few remaining locations that offer more affordable public burials in the area.

Nationally, it is reported that there has been a rising trend of cremations and other post-death practices. At the Westwood Cemetery, the cremated remains of up to three individuals are allowed within a single traditional burial plot. There remains a cultural component to traditional burials, and the visitation of burial sites that intersects race, place, and religion. Any changes to the use of the remaining unplotted area will need to consider the protection of the ongoing use of Westwood Cemetery, the dignity of funeral goers and subsequent visitors and all that accompanies this - grief and distress, honoring and celebrating lives passing on. Additional space for the cemetery use would allow for more diversity in post-death practices (natural burials, cremains, etc.)

**Who is or will experience community burden?** Residents who have expressed interests in using the area for a different purpose would feel burdened. The Town would be burdened with enforcement of use of the space and its continued obligation of management of the Cemetery property.

**Who is or will experience community benefit?** With the master development plan some residents in the short- and mid-term would have more space for traditional burials, in the long-term they would still be burdened when the site runs out of space. Others would benefit from the variety of interment methods the master plan envisioned. Continued and expanded use of the cemetery, if priced similarly to the fees charged at present, would continue the availability of more affordable public burials, until the cemetery filled up once more. A mix of burial options for traditional and other methods is expected to extend the timeline of demand for traditional burial sites, as those interested in burial or scattering of cremated remains having those options available. The master

plan's inclusion of passive recreational features, such as a walking trail, reflection wall can provide space for residents seeking areas for such recreation and would allow some who are currently using the undeveloped portion of the cemetery property in ways they have been doing so already.

**What are the root causes of inequity?** Root causes of inequity can be related to governmental actions like land use planning that overlooks the interests of historically Black communities/communities. As stated previously, segregation contributed to historical exclusion from Westwood (and thus give a racial significance to current and future access to the cemetery). On a national scale land use decisions have often sited multi-family and affordable housing near less suitable adjacent units, or without access to recreative spaces—Carrboro has had both an open space and recreation requirement for subdivisions and multi-family developments that aims to ensure recreational needs can be met through a combination of public and private areas, amenities, and programs.

**What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy?** Unintended consequences could be that residents who have been using the site for a different purpose would continue to do so, and the Town might have to mitigate this with some level of enforcement. Retention of the cemetery use also will require the Town to revisit the capacity issue later when the remaining area has been designated/plotted, and those plots are purchased.

**How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences?** The Public Works Department will work with other Town departments on the following strategies:

- Include clear and easy to read signage outlining allowable uses at the Cemetery.
- Maintain and operate the cemetery in a manner that promotes passive recreation and peaceful reflection in the developed and undeveloped areas.
- Maintain the grounds and landscape to a high standard.
- Provide information to the community on cemetery expansion, burial options, plot availability, and fees.
- Ensure there are sufficient staff resources for all cemetery operations including property maintenance and customer service for plot sales and markings.