



## Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title: Resolution to Adopt the Orange County Heat Action Plan

Purpose: *To approve the 2026 Orange County Heat Action Plan.*

Department: Town Manager's Office

1. **What are the root causes of inequity in Carrboro and/or overall as it pertains to this subject area?**

The root causes of inequity related to disparities in risk to heat related illness and impacts include income inequity, including access to financing for home ownership, as low-income families are unable to purchase housing in neighborhoods that have more trees. The disproportionate distribution of infrastructure investments has led to inequity in tree canopy coverage. Low-income and BIPOC residents therefore disproportionately live in Carrboro's urban heat islands where the temperatures on hot summer days can be up to 9-11 degrees warmer than in surrounding neighborhoods with more trees and less asphalt. In addition, historical and systemic racism results in biased policies and effects individual's education, health and environmental impacts. Low-income, BIPOC residents make up the majority of outdoor workers, which are especially vulnerable to high summer temperatures. This population also has higher incidences of heart and respiratory diseases, which also increase vulnerability to high heat.

2. **Who is experiencing community burden now? Who will experience community burden if this action is passed? Will others experience community burden if this action is NOT passed?**

Currently, Carrboro's worst urban heat islands are in the downtown area, along NC-54, Jones Ferry Rd., Smith Level Rd., Estes Dr., and in the Rogers. Rd area. Residents living in these areas experience disproportionate burdens related to higher temperatures during heat waves, including higher energy burden and health impacts. Because the Orange County Heat Action Plan was written with equity at the forefront, if approved, cooling initiatives would be prioritized in these communities which are hurt first and worst by harms caused by climate-fueled extreme weather. This plan also prioritizes initiatives for outdoor workers, those with chronic health conditions, those unable to afford high utility bills, and the unhoused, all of whom are especially vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. If this plan is not adopted, these especially vulnerable residents will experience more heat-related illnesses and higher energy burden.



**3. Who is experiencing community benefit now? Who will experience community benefit if this action is passed? Will others experience community benefit if this action is NOT passed?**

Residents living in neighborhoods with more trees and less asphalt experience significantly lower summer temperatures. Enhancing the community's urban forestry program will build resilience in our community by providing much needed shade to urban heat islands and addressing environmental justice issues related to inequities in the tree canopy.

This plan is designed to prepare and protect our residents through outreach and education, enhanced response to extreme heat events, and programs that will cool our community through trees, shade structures, cool pavements, green roofs and weatherization programs. These programs will benefit all residents. If the plan is not adopted, Carrboro will be more susceptible to extreme heat which is expected to worsen in severity and frequency because of climate change.

**4. What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy?**

Unintended consequences include the opportunity costs of implementing this plan. Town spending on climate action and resilience could instead be spent to directly benefit disadvantaged communities in other ways.

**5. What steps has your department taken to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences? What strategies might your department take to address these in the future? NOTE: This does not reflect a formal commitment by the Town of Carrboro.**

Town staff are actively applying for grants that would off-set the costs to implement this plan.