

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative: Municipal Solid Waste Disposal

Department: Public Works

What are the racial and equity impacts?

Proper collection and disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) has a significant impact on public health and quality of life. According to NC DEQ, trends show illegal dumping is rising in North Carolina “which impact human health, damage the environment, and can discourage economic development” and a study of illegal dump sites conducted by the Department of Environmental Studies at San Jose’ State University in 2017 concluded that “most illegal dumping occurred within census block groups with low median family incomes, high percentages of non-English speaking individuals, and high percentages of renters.”¹ Providing convenient, reliable collection and proper disposal of MSW, in all communities, will improve the environmental health of the communities.

Who is or will experience community burden?

The following may experience burden:

- The collection and disposal of MSW is a financial and environmental burden on citizens and local governments.
- Residents may experience noise and other disturbances during the collection.
- Residents with language barriers or mobility barriers may have difficulty understanding the collection guidelines.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

- The MSW contract benefits community members serviced by the Town’s solid waste collection and disposal operation. Carrboro Public Works provides MSW collection services to single family dwellings, duplexes, multi-unit apartment buildings, and businesses in Carrboro.
- Businesses serviced by dumpsters are charged a collection fee; however, the fee is less than fees charged by private haulers.

What are the root causes of inequity?

According to report by the California Department of Public Health: “Structural racism has affected land use, housing, transportation, and other government decisions made over decades. These decisions have led to inequitable impacts and significant health disparities among lower-income, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). These populations also live disproportionately in communities with environmental justice concerns, experiencing more risk and exposure to environmental pollution and toxic substances than other communities.”²

These communities have not always had opportunities to meaningfully participate in shaping policies, programs, and activities that affect them. They may distrust government due to unfair treatment or past neglect. They may also face greater cultural, linguistic, or literacy barriers in accessing health information and services.”

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

MSW generated in Carrboro will be transferred to an active landfill. Landfills and incinerators are disproportionately located in low income and BIPOC communities and have negative public health impacts on these communities.

How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences?

The Town will continue to:

- Continue monitor feedback from community members to identify any currently unforeseen burdens or inequities and address those with corrective measures as needed.
- Continue to comply with state and local solid waste regulations for the proper disposal of MSW.
- Continue to provide accurate and timely information that is accessible to all community members.

Sources:

1. “Illegal Dumping | NC DEQ.” *Www.deq.nc.gov*, www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/waste-management/solid-waste-section/compliance-and-monitoring/illegal-dumping.
2. “Engaging Communities for Health Equity and Environmental Justice.” *ww.cdph.ca.gov*, www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPPH/DEODC/EHIB/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Guide-Engaging_Community_for_Health_Equity_and_EJ_ADA.pdf.