

## **Race and Equity Pocket Questions**

**Title and purpose of this initiative:** Amendments to the Town Code and to the Miscellaneous Fees and Charges Schedule Related to Additional Interment Options at Westwood Cemetery

**Department:**

Planning, Public Works

**What are the racial and equity impacts?**

Records indicate the Westwood Cemetery was established in 1948. Until 1968, cemeteries were segregated by race Black residents were not allowed to be buried in the cemetery. The Town has not recorded 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 Cemetery is one of the few remaining locations that offer more affordable public burials in the area. Changes to allowable activities seek to protect 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. The additional burial spaces approved in the approved Master Plan will provide for more diversity in post-death practices and include more spaces for traditional and natural burials as well as smaller plots for cremains, etc. The proposed fees for the new type of burial space is consistent with fees charged for existing spaces.

**Who is or will experience community burden?**

Community burden could be experienced by residents for whom the expanded options for burial do not meet their needs or for whom the new fees are prohibitively expensive. Others could experience burden because the Town's responsibility associated with expansion of options at Westwood Cemetery could limit the provision of other services.

**Who is or will experience community benefit?**

Residents will benefit from the increased number of spaces for traditional burials and for the expansion of options for natural and other types of burials. Continued and expanded use of the cemetery, will continue the availability of more affordable public burials, until the cemetery fills up once more. The 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 will have smaller spaces available for this type of interment. The approved master plan includes a designated public open space, not to be used for burials. This and other features are expected to be phased in over time and can/will provide space for the continuation of some of the activities that have been underway by residents already.

**What are the root causes of inequity?**

Root causes of inequity can be related to discrimination that limited or prevented access to spaces and services based on race. As stated previously, segregation contributed to historical



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exclusion from Westwood (and thus give a racial significance to current and future access to the cemetery).

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

Residents who have been using the site for a different purpose could 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 following strategies are anticipated to mitigate burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences. Monitor information on utilization for any disparities. Include clear and easy to read signage outlining allowable uses at the Cemetery. Maintain and operate the cemetery in a manner that protects the cemetery use and allows quiet, reflective activities in the areas designated for open space. 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 maintenance.