

Racial Equity Pocket Questions

Title & Purpose of this Initiative: Consideration of Transportation Projects for Regional Flexible Funding, Continued. The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Town Council with additional information about the call for projects for Regional Flexible Funding and an opportunity for further discussion regarding the selection of projects to be submitted for consideration for funding.

Department: Planning, Zoning and Inspections

What are the racial impacts?

Bicycle and pedestrian transportation projects provide residents with improved infrastructure and are important components of complete streets and the development of a multimodal network. These are improvements that will positively affect everyday life for those without regular access to a car. BIPOC populations are more likely to face barriers to accessing reliable transportation and live in communities with limited access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. South Greensboro Street is located along a qualified census tract (QCT) and will have direct access to some of these facilities.

Who is or will experience burden?

Transportation improvements typically involve some inconvenience to surrounding residents, businesses and visitors during construction. Residents with property along Bolin Creek and Jones Creek (Bolin Creek Greenway Phase 2 and Bolin Creek Greenway phases 3 & 4) are most likely to be disturbed with noise and dust during construction. During this initial step of design, burdens may involve surveyors and members of the design firm walking the alignment and boundaries of the study area. With regard to the bike plan facilities, similar impacts could be expected for residents along the different corridors, with the most impact anticipated for the 500 & 600 blocks of Shelton Street. Residents along that segment of Shelton may have limited access to driveways during certain periods and potentially lose some vegetation, screening their properties. Construction along Shelton Street could also affect direct access to the Carrboro Elementary School and Carrboro United Methodist Church; a construction management plan combined with early and continued engagement with the school and church would be essential.

As with all transportation projects there are certain community-wide burdens relating to costs. Even with projects involving 80-percent federal funds, the 20-percent of local funds allocated to transportation projects are not available for use for other town initiatives. Once completed, there are no burdens anticipated except for some ongoing costs for maintenance as there are for sidewalks or other forms of public infrastructure.

Who is or will experience benefit?

All of the projects identified as possible candidates for Regional Flexible Funding (RFF) would provide important segments to the existing network. Phase 2 of the Bolin Creek Greenway provides a direct connection to the Jones Creek Greenway, currently under design, and extends the off-road system from Eubanks Road to Homestead Road and on to Chapel Hill High School and neighboring campuses for Smith Middle School and Seawell Elementary School. Phases 3 & 4 have the potential to connect from Estes Drive Extension or Wilson Park to Homestead Road and

Seawell Road as well as the three schools, and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The bike plan infrastructure would improve bike-ped access to Carrboro Elementary School, connect the Shetley Bikepath and North Greensboro Street to Hillsborough Road. The improvements to the 100 block of Maple Avenue would work in concert with the one-way conversion of Maple Avenue as part of the 203 Project furthering the connections from Libba Cotten to the PTA bikepaths, from East Main to Jones Ferry Road/West Main Street and to Old Pittsboro Road.

All of these projects would benefit the community overall, as well as residents living along the specific corridors. In addition to the Shelton Street project, the Bolin Creek Greenway segments provide opportunities for a greater number of families to walk/bike to school, a Town and community interest. If selected, the 80-percent of federal funds would substantially reduce costs that would be otherwise be passed on to local residents. Once completed the projects would be public facilities—available for all community members to use. Off-road and designated bicycle facilities can encourage less confident cyclists to integrate cycling into their everyday lives.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Working individuals and families may find it difficult to attend public meetings when transportation projects are discussed. Structural racism in government decisions, particularly those relating to transportation and land use, as well as residents' personal experiences with government, can further contribute to a reticence by historically marginalized people to speak in a public setting, and/or may be reticent to speak in a public setting, particularly if there is a concern that personal property may be taken/condemned.

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

Transportation infrastructure projects can benefit or harm land values and quality of life experiences for surrounding property owners and occupants. As noted above, some property owners along the Bolin Creek corridor may experience a loss of privacy during the surveying phase, and from increased bicycle and pedestrian traffic as part of public input and/or once the project is constructed from regular use. The bike plan projects should have less impact to residents, however, residents along the 500 & 600 blocks of Shelton Street, students/teachers and faculty at Carrboro Elementary School and staff and parishioners at Carrboro United Methodist Church will experience some inconvenience during construction. The use of local funds toward these projects may take away funding for other Town initiatives, including those with more direct benefit to specific groups/individuals such as affordable housing. The completion of these projects will provide benefit to Town residents overall and provide a much safer way to walk or roll to school and to other Carrboro destinations.