

Race Equity Pocket Questions

Title: Reimagining East Weaver Street - Update

Purpose: *The purpose of this item is to provide a follow-up to the June meeting that discussed capacity study results and potential changes to East Weaver Street that would reduce or eliminate vehicle traffic, thereby creating a pedestrian-priority space or pedestrian plaza.*

Department: Planning

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

- Income and its intersection with race, and disability status are major contributing factors to inequitable access to multiple transportation choices.
- Low-income households are more likely to have to rely on transit, walking, and biking or must own a car to get to work or access their basic needs.
- Community members with physical disabilities often require use of a motor vehicle.

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?

- Rights-of-way and pavement widths on downtown streets are often too narrow for separate facilities for cyclists, requiring them to ride with vehicles or take other roads.
- Community members that do not have the luxury of transportation choice are burdened disproportionately from infrastructure changes that result in rerouting of transit, changes in congestion, and varying levels of access.
- Residents in the Lloyd-Broad & Tin-Top neighborhoods who experience extended wait times entering/exiting the neighborhood due to queueing during peak travel times.
- Business owners and residents may be burdened by suggested queueing on N Greensboro Street that could affect access to everyday businesses
- Carrboro and Chapel Hill emergency responders in will have to navigate congestion which could result in impacts to residents needing emergency response.

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?

- Benefits will be provided foremost to patrons and visitors along E Weaver Street, as well as those that can travel to and through downtown without a vehicle
- Closure allows the Town to explore public space enhancement in the downtown and pursue climate-friendly and green infrastructure improvements that contribute to shading, acute air quality improvements, and reduction in heat island effects
- East Weaver Street can also serve more frequently as a space activated by local events, which may bring more visitors to downtown.
- Improvements to the space that make it safer for pedestrians, and safe infrastructure for bicyclists, will improve the pedestrian and bike experience downtown.
- Changes may make it easier for those who live close enough and/or are able-bodied to choose alternate modes of travel which could reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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

- Additional safety considerations will be necessary at both ends of East Weaver Street to protect pedestrians exiting the facility to cross N Greensboro or Main Street and cyclists who may not dismount when traveling through the block.
- If the improved pedestrian experience does not counterbalance impacts of those that choose to/must drive, visitors and residents may choose destinations other than downtown Carrboro.
- Placement of recently installed bike loop detectors may need to be changed to account for restriping recommendations by the consultant engineering firm.
- Transit routes are rerouted away from downtown due to increased difficulty of buses navigating the roads (road geometry and/or congestion affecting scheduling)

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.

- Mitigation will be interdepartmental and require collaboration.
- Safe intersection improvements will need to be designed to coordinate circulation changes and provide for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using the facility.
- The Town will need to reach out to business owners to measure economic impacts.
- Town staff should continue counting travelers in downtown to understand whether closing E Weaver to vehicles leads to an increase or decrease of visitors/patrons to downtown businesses or changes to downtown visitation as a whole.
- The Town will need to pull data from Orange County to monitor emergency response times.
- The Town has conducted engagement with, and will continue to reach out to downtown residents, particularly those in historically Black neighborhoods including Lloyd-Broad and Tin Top, to understand how these changes are impacting access to their neighborhoods