

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative: Safe Streets for All Regional Action Plan; Demonstration Grant Application

Department: Planning

What are the racial and equity impacts? Approval of the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Regional Action Plan will provide the region, including Carrboro, the framework to improve overall transportation safety, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians. Statistics show that BIPOC residents are overrepresented in the number of injuries and deaths due to crashes, especially in crashes involving pedestrians. Safety improvements allow for all residents, especially BIPOC residents, to have greater mobility and reduce barriers to transportation. The recommended grant projects are intended to improve access to Carrboro Elementary and McDougle Elementary/Middle Schools under the Town's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Action Plan, providing an incentive for students, parents, faculty, and staff to choose an alternative to commuting by car.

Who is or will experience community burden? There is no expected community burden from enacting the Regional Action Plan itself, as it was an initiative of the Triangle West TPO (former DCHC MPO) and therefore no local funds beyond the Town's dues to the organization were used to create the Plan. The Action Plan allows for the Town to apply for additional SS4A grants, and there is an expectation that the Town will apply for a 2025 SS4A Demonstration Grant. Should a grant be awarded, there will be a need for some town resources as a local match (approximately \$70,000). The proposed demonstration projects are temporary in nature and will require minor installation such as restriping and the addition of signage, so any disruptions should be brief.

Who is or will experience community benefit? The proposed projects are either in the school zone for Carrboro Elementary School or along Hillsborough Rd between Carrboro Elementary School and McDougle Elementary/Middle Schools. Residents in those neighborhoods would experience the most benefit, as would students, parents, faculty, and staff of these schools. However, as such projects are designed to improve safety and mobility in the Town of Carrboro, and one of the proposed projects will better connect MLK, Jr. Park to McDougle schools, all town residents and visitors benefit from a more robust non-vehicular transportation network. With promotion of cycling and walking to these schools, overall vehicle miles traveled may decrease, and with it, emissions in nearby neighborhoods, including those with a greater percentage of BIPOC and/or low-income residents.

What are the root causes of inequity? Generally, a lack of representation among decision makers, lack of a seat at the table, and/or a lack of information and notice about transportation funding and calls for projects results in inequity. Structural racism in government decisions,

particularly those relating to land use, as well as residents' personal experiences with government, can further alienate those that may find it difficult to attend meetings and contribute to a reticence by historically marginalized people to speak in a public setting. Nationally and regionally, communities of color have historically fared poorly in decisions relating to transportation improvements—wherein dedicated funding sources used to enhance predominately white neighborhoods while communities of color remain without basic transportation infrastructure.

What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy? Improvements to transportation infrastructure, particularly with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, might lead to an area becoming more desirable to new residents and therefore raise property values, rents, and tax burden. This could subsequently lead to gentrification of historically BIPOC and low-income neighborhoods, making the neighborhood unaffordable for longtime residents. Such improvements could also lead to more foot/cycling traffic in residential neighborhoods, which could be detrimental to neighborhood character.

How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences? Continue reporting and improving transportation project updates to make them as accessible as possible—both in the means to learn about ongoing projects and with plain language and imagery rather than technical language wherever possible. Continue to conduct timely and appropriate environmental reviews to understand climate and environmental impacts, and to preempt environmental injustice. Where engagement is needed, continue collaborating with community partners and Communications and Engagement staff to ensure BIPOC residents, non-English speakers, and/or low-income community members are heard from and can participate in the public process. Ensure sufficient access to new facilities that minimizes impacts of visitors travel to and use of new facilities to existing residents in neighborhoods near new facilities.