

## **Race and Equity Pocket Questions**

**Title and purpose of this initiative:** Century Center Chiller Replacement and Direct Digital Control (DCC) system upgrades.

**Department:** Public Works

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

The Century Center chiller (cooling system) is aging, inefficient, and in need of replacement and the DDC system is obsolete as Town staff are unable to program it for effective control and energy conservation. For example, the lack of proper control is resulting in a significant amount of excess reheat during the summer and employees have observed that the existing chiller is unable to meet the building's cooling requirements.

Historically, marginalized communities suffer and will suffer disproportionately larger impacts due to climate disruption. The cooling system in the Century Center represents 11.3% of the buildings energy consumption. Replacement of the chiller and DDC system upgrades have the potential to reduce the Town's municipal greenhouse gas emissions, showing a commitment to reducing burdens that historically disadvantaged groups face because of greenhouse gas emissions.

There is also a racial disparity in households who experience severe cost burden in the community: 15% of white, non-Hispanic households in Carrboro experience severe cost burden, while 19% of Hispanic households and 21% of Black households experience severe cost burden. Replacement of the chiller and DDC system upgrades have the potential to reduce the Town's maintenance and utility expenses, again showing a commitment to reducing burdens that historically disadvantaged groups face because of greenhouse gas emissions.

Any reduction in the Town's use of fossil fuels will have an impact on air quality, which has a disproportionate impact on the health of marginalized communities, especially children. Additionally, reduction in the Town's maintenance and utility expenses may benefit households who experience severe cost burden in the Town.

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

Replacement of the Century Center chiller and DDC upgrades may burden:

- Taxpayers due to the expense of the repair.
- Community members who may face barriers in accessing the Century Center such as, but not limited to, individuals who may be required to work during the facility's accessible

hours, those with health conditions hindering participation or individuals impacted by other circumstances.

- Pedestrians near the Century Center during installation may be burdened due to the closure of sidewalks during construction.
- Noise and dust during construction may burden community members and businesses near the Century Center.
- Town staff and visitors may be burdened due to the lack of air-conditioning in the building while the new chiller is being installed and DDC system upgraded. Although the new chiller will be installed during winter months, unseasonably warm temperatures may impact individuals in the building.
- Companies that were not awarded the contract will not be receiving business from the Town. Staff ensured that all Town procurement procedures were followed throughout the process.
- Contractors and Town staff due to time involved.

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

Replacement of the Century Center chiller and DDC upgrades may benefit:

- Community members, visitors, and Town staff due to the reduction in GHG emissions, improvements in air quality, the ability to maintain indoor temperatures and thermal comfort, and the reduction in time and expense associated with the use and maintenance of the existing chiller.
- Environmental Air Systems DBA Envirotrol company, sub-contractors, and their employees will benefit from being awarded the contract to replace the Century Center chiller and upgrade the DDC system.

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

Institutional policies, both intentional and unintentional, have created inequities for Black and other marginalized communities (for example, people with disabilities and refugee populations) in employment, housing, generational wealth, and health outcomes, and can include shorter lifespan and higher susceptibility to cardiovascular and pulmonary disease caused by exposure to airborne particulates. These inequities will only be exacerbated by continued business-as-usual fossil fuel use and its associated greenhouse gas emissions and climate disruption.

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

Unintended consequences include:

- Opportunity costs from using Town funds to replace the Century Center chiller and upgrade the DDC system may prevent the funding of other programs that would directly benefit Black and other historically marginalized and low-income communities or those with disabilities.
- Some community members may have a negative perception of the building improvement.
- Community members and businesses located near the Century Center may be burdened with noise, dust, or the closure of sidewalks during construction.

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

The Town will monitor feedback from patrons and daily use patterns to identify any currently unforeseen burdens or inequities and address those with corrective measures as needed.