

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title & Purpose of this Initiative: The purpose of this agenda item is to request that the Town Council consider a resolution in support of an application for a 2024 Road to Zero Community Traffic Safety Grant.

Department: Planning, Zoning & Inspections

What are the racial and equity impacts?

A 2022 report by the American Journal of Preventive Medicine reported sharp disparities for transportation related fatalities based on race or ethnic origin: 75% higher rate for passenger vehicle fatalities for non-Hispanic Blacks than non-Hispanic whites, 118% higher rate for pedestrian fatality and 384% higher rate for cycling fatality.¹ The Road to Zero Coalition, managed by the National Safety Council, released a report in 2018 outlining “a vision for achieving zero roadway deaths by 2050”.

Who is or will experience community burden?

No community burden is anticipated. The grant does not require a match. The proposal involves traffic data collection for analysis. There is no enforcement component to the project.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

It is anticipated that the Town would seek consultant services to conduct systematic traffic counts on local streets throughout the Town’s planning jurisdiction to provide a more comprehensive understanding of average daily trips, number of trips during the AM/PM peaks and vehicular speeds- -data that can help inform current safety concerns, locations where traffic calming measures may be needed and/or possible changes to street design standards.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Lack of representation among decision makers, lack of a seat at the table, lack of information about transportation processes, including the collection of traffic counts. Working individuals, particularly shift workers, families with young children or caregivers may find it difficult to attend public meetings, may be reticent to speak in a public setting and may have an overall distrust in government and governmental processes, based on personal experiences and/or examples of structural racism in government decisions, particularly those relating to departments of transportation.

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

Information from the data collection may lead to modifications to the street standards which may affect the location on on-street parking and/or the use of bike lanes. Traffic calming measures such as curb extensions or road narrowing through neck downs may be more challenging for less experienced drivers to negotiate. Changes in traffic patterns, pavement markings, signage, and traffic signals can be confusing, even if the installation is in accordance with state standards. Drivers

¹ [Disparities in Activity and Traffic Fatalities by Race/Ethnicity - American Journal of Preventive Medicine \(ajphonline.org\)](https://ajphonline.org); [Motor Vehicle Fatality Disparities by Race or Ethnic Origin - Injury Facts \(nsc.org\)](https://www.nsc.org)

of motor vehicles may have to drive more slowly. Additional infrastructure—traffic calming measures—are not always sufficient to slow vehicular speeds and/or reduce traffic volume.

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

The Town could provide information prior to the installation of the counting equipment to explain the project and its purpose. Such messaging should be clear that the collection process does not involve enforcement. It would be important to time the messaging well in advance of the beginning of the collection process to ensure that residents do not alter their behavior, leading to inaccurate data. As standards are evaluated and changed, working to ensure access and safety for all users will be a principal interest.