

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative:

Town Code Amendment to Establish a Four-Way Stop at W Poplar Ave and Davie Rd.

The purpose of this item is for the Town Council to consider adopting an amendment to the Carrboro Town Code that would establish a four-way stop at the intersection of West Poplar Avenue and Davie Road.

Department:

Planning

What are the racial and equity impacts?

W. Poplar Avenue is located in an area determined by NCDOT to be Transportation Disadvantaged based on income and employment conditions, percent of residents who speak English 'less than well,' proportion of environmental conditions that lead to vulnerability. The area's census tract is designated as a QCT due to 50 percent of households with incomes below 60 percent of the Area Median Gross Income (AMGI) or have a poverty rate of 25 percent or more. Residents living north of Jones Ferry Road to W. Poplar Avenue and west towards Old Fayetteville Road, have a median income of \$44,357; approximately 70.7% are listed as White, 15.1% Black, 19.1% Hispanic/Latinx, 10.7% Asian, and 3.5% multi/other. A 2022 report by the American Journal of Preventive Medicine reported transportation related fatalities rates based on race or ethnic origin: 75% higher rate for passenger vehicle fatality for non-Hispanic Blacks than non-Hispanic whites, 118% higher rate for pedestrian fatality and 384% higher rate for cycling fatality.¹ Bike and pedestrian facilities are located along W. Poplar Avenue. Residents using transit services must walk or bike to routes that run along W. Main Street, NC Highway 54 West, and Jones Ferry Road. Converting the intersection to a four-way may provide improved safety for these residents.

Who is or will experience community burden?

The burden will fall primarily on Public Works staff to fabricate and install the signage and associated pavement markings, and the Police Department to conduct additional patrols in the area and issue warnings/tickets as may be appropriate. Drivers who are not familiar with the change may also experience a burden if they fail to stop at the new signs.

Some residents who travel along West Poplar may experience temporary inconvenience during installation. All four signs would be installed roadside. Installation would involve driving an anchor post into the ground with a small machine and bolting the pre-assembled sign/post into the anchor. Temporary traffic tape would be installed as stop bars in front of the each of the two stop signs. All total, the installation would take less than an hour.

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

Who is or will experience community benefit?

Reduced conflicts and increased safety are expected to result from the installation of two additional stop signs at this intersection.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Structural racism in government actions, particularly those relating to transportation and land use, as well as residents' personal experiences with government, can contribute to a reticence by historically marginalized people to access processes to request changes to regulations and policies, to speak in a public setting, and to participate as advisors or decisionmakers. Working individuals and families may also find it difficult to attend public meetings when transportation projects are discussed due to work schedules and/or access to transportation.

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

A potential concern would be the possibility of rear-end collisions for vehicles travelling on West Poplar Avenue and/or accidents with vehicles crossing West Poplar from Davie Road. Some drivers may receive tickets for failure to stop until they become accustomed to the new traffic pattern.

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

Possible mitigation plans would involve attaching orange flags to the new stop signs to make them more visible and monitoring the intersection for the first several months to ensure that drivers are stopping at all four legs of the intersection. The Town could also prepare a news flash to alert residents of the new stop location and associated signage. The Police Department could issue warnings rather than tickets for a certain period of time.