

## **Race and Equity Pocket Questions**

**Title and purpose of this initiative:** Supplemental Agreement and Capital Project Ordinance Amendment for Morgan Creek Greenway, Phase 1. The purpose of this item to request that the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to execute a supplemental agreement with NCDOT for the Morgan Creek Greenway and to approve an amendment to the CIP ordinance to increase funding and extend the project milestones.

**Department:** Planning and Finance.

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

This is an administrative step in the design process for Phase 1 of the Morgan Creek Greenway, a bike-ped infrastructure project involving 80-percent federal funding. Bicycle and pedestrian transportation projects provide residents with improved infrastructure and by extension transportation choices. For those without a car, a sidewalk or paved bicycle facility can significantly improve everyday life. BIPOC populations are more likely to face barriers to accessing reliable transportation and live in communities with limited access to bike-ped facilities for recreation. The median income of residents living in the apartments along the north side of NC 54 West is \$57,479, and more than 50 percent of the households in this area make less than the median income for Carrboro--\$76,599.

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

The greenway is designed to connect Smith Level Road to the cul-de-sac at Abbey Court, which will become a walking route for residents to Frank Porter Graham Elementary School. The greenway will continue over a pedestrian bridge to the south side of Morgan Creek heading toward University Lake. Residents and property owners living or traveling in the vicinity of the greenway project may experience noise and dust during the construction process. Once completed, residents living along the greenway, mainly residents in the Canterbury Townhomes, could see long-term impacts as more people use the greenway. Residents living in the Berryhill neighborhood may also see additional users coming onto their trail network and recreation facilities. This is first phase of a multi-phase greenway system, so while the Morgan Creek Greenway will become part of a connected system, there are still gaps in the network so users and nearby residents will experience some burden until the greenway connects to new sidewalks/infrastructure.

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

The greenway will add an important segment of bike/ped infrastructure off-road, which is the preferred facility for less confident cyclists. It will not substitute the installation of sidewalks or bike lanes but will create another alignment/route to get from one point to another. Over time, the Morgan Creek Greenway system in Chapel Hill-Carrboro will become a significant off-road bike/ped facility providing residents with better access to transit stops, schools, and the larger greenway system--a real opportunity to get to destinations by foot, bicycle, scooter or wheelchair



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without having to maneuver among vehicular traffic. In addition, the new pedestrian activated signals earmarked for NC 54 West at Abbey Lane and Westbrook Drive will provide access from the apartments and downtown area to the greenway—multimodal transportation choices, particularly for households living in the apartments along NC 54 West, of which more than 15 percent have no access to a car.

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

Root causes of inequity can be related to past governmental actions like land use planning, transportation planning and discriminatory lending practices that have disproportionately harmed the interests of historically Black communities/communities. With regard to transportation projects such as greenways or sidewalk projects, working individuals and families may find it difficult to learn about projects in time to have meaningful input and/or to attend meetings when transportation projects are being discussed. Personal experiences with government can contribute to reticence by historically marginalized people to speak in a public setting, particularly if there is a concern that personal property may be taken/condemned.

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

Greenways can benefit or harm land values and quality of life experiences for surrounding property owners and occupants. While greenways provide safe travel from vehicles, there may be other hazards associated with their use such as encounters with wildlife and interactions with other users.

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

Public outreach before and during the construction process will be an important part of keeping residents apprised of the project and when noise is anticipated. Maintaining safety protocols will also be important, particularly around project boundaries so that Canterbury Court residents have access to cul-de-sac and parking areas, and Berryhill residents are able to access their informal trail network and recreation area.