

Racial Equity Assessment Lens (REAL) Form

Name of Initiative/Program or Project: [Transportation](#)

Department: [Planning](#)

Name of all staff conducting the assessment: [Duncan Dodson](#), [Becca Eversole-Robinson](#), [Tina Moon](#)

Is this Initiative/Program or Project New or Existing: [Existing](#)

Section I: Origin and Description

The town maintains 47 miles of local streets connected to state-maintained roadways, local streets, and private roads, in addition to 42 miles of sidewalk and 27 miles of bicycle lanes and greenways. The town's growth and longstanding character have been intertwined with transportation: from its origins of the Old Alberta textile mill along the State University Railroad, to investing in the first federally funded greenway/bike path in North Carolina—the Libba Cotten bikeway named for legendary blues musician Elizabeth Cotten, and to an early eye towards alternative transportation with fare-free transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and arrangement of neighborhoods and the community that focuses on walkability and connection.

Carrboro underscores safety and connectivity in the Town's transportation program today. These programs and policies include:

- Planning, development review, permitting and installation of roads, greenways, sidewalks, and separated-use paths (shared with Public Works, North Carolina Department of Transportation and developers)
- Public road maintenance and safety (shared by Planning, Public Works and Police)
- Residential Traffic Management Plan and Traffic Calming (speed bumps and other tools to slow neighborhood traffic down)
- Education on safety and alternative transportation options, including public transit, biking, and walking—these efforts include programs like Vision Zero, Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- Community engagement about projects and programs, including seeking the public interest on infrastructure projects, distributing safety equipment like bike lights and helmets, developing progress reports for the community, etc.
- Partnership with community organizations (non-profits, community advocacy groups, local businesses, other municipalities) for national programs like Bike Month.
- Accessibility of infrastructure (ADA-American Disabilities Act) – explored in another REAL

Carrboro centers equity in its transportation programming through a variety of means. The Town of Carrboro promotes safety and multimodality for people of all ages through transportation programming, centers resident voices through engagement, and supports a long-term goal of a network of bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle introduction that allows people to safely travel to and through town.

Section II: Desired Results

1. **Topic/Issue:** Topics and issues that have been considered as potential dimensions of inequity in this REAL include the following: pedestrian and bicycle connectivity; access to personal vehicles; disparities by race and income; traffic safety.

2. Baseline Data & Racial Disparities:

Select data from the American Community Survey 2023, 5-Year Estimates

According to the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5- year estimates for Carrboro, 9% of households do not have access to a private vehicle, and 43% of residents commute by walking, bicycling, or transit (or work from home). Local race- specific transportation safety data are limited.

Households by Race	Median Household Income
Entire Town	\$85,927 ± 13,926
White households	\$87,818 ± 13,253
Black/African American Households	\$64,964 ± 18,613
Asian households	\$85,900 ± 38,362
Other Race Households	\$100,670 ± 26,103
Households with two or more races	\$108,125 ± 39,064
Hispanic/Latinx households	\$101,395 ± 27,125

Mode of Transportation to Work	Number of Workers	Percent
Total Workers (16yr or older)	11,934 ± 545	100%
Drove alone	5,923 ± 608	49.6%
Carpooled	784 ± 304	6.6%
Public Transit	862 ± 242	7.2%
Worked from Home	3,248 ± 495	26.5%

*Note: ACS does not provide Carrboro-only geography with separate bicycle vs. walking data

Category	Number of Households	Percent
Total Households	9,415 ± 402	100%
No vehicle available	875 ± 293	9.3%
1 vehicle available	3,646 ± 481	38.7%
2 vehicles available	3,654 ± 452	38.8%
3 vehicles available	1,015 ± 254	10.8%
4 or more vehicles available	225 ± 112	2.4%

Category	# Households	Percent	Category	# Households	Percent
1-person household:	3,157	100%	3-person household:	1,479	100%
No vehicle available	690	21.9%	No vehicle available	102	6.9%
1 vehicle available	2,246	71.1%	1 vehicle available	350	23.7%
2 vehicles available	221	7.0%	2 vehicles available	594	40.1%
3 vehicles available	0	0%	3 vehicles available	433	29.3%
4 or more vehicles available	0	0%	4 or more vehicles available	0	0%
2-person household:	3,214	100%	4-or-more-person household:	1,565	100%
No vehicle available	73	2.3%	No vehicle available	10	0.6%
1 vehicle available	892	27.8%	1 vehicle available	158	10.1%
2 vehicles available	1,910	59.4%	2 vehicles available	929	59.4%
3 vehicles available	275	8.6%	3 vehicles available	307	19.6%
4 or more vehicles available	64	2.0%	4 or more vehicles available	161	10.3%

Select Data from the 2024 Biennial Town Survey

Among a generalized list of services provided by the Town, Transportation is listed as the third-highest priority. Detailed breakdown of satisfaction and priority for transportation is shown in the tables on the next page. Additionally, 63% of households include someone who rides a bike—for those households, 39% of riders use a bicycle to commute to work, and 44% use it for errands. 46% of households include someone who uses Chapel Hill Transit, with 46% of those households using the bus to get to and from work.

How satisfied are you with the overall quality of Transportation Infrastructure?					
Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
17.9%	39.6%	20.6%	12.8%	2.7%	6.4%

Question 12: Transportation: How Satisfied are you with...?

Item	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Ease of walking in Carrboro	38.6%	38.3%	10.3%	9.8%	1.2%	1.7%
Ease of biking in Carrboro	22.9%	31.0%	18.7%	12.3%	2.2%	13.0%
Ease of driving in Carrboro	23.1%	43.2%	18.9%	10.8%	1.5%	2.5%
Availability of sidewalks	20.4%	38.6%	17.7%	17.2%	3.4%	2.7%
Availability of greenways/multi-use paths	19.4%	42.5%	18.4%	13.5%	2.7%	3.4%
Availability of on-street bike amenities	14.0%	27.8%	19.9%	11.3%	3.2%	23.8%
Availability of bicycle parking	18.9%	31.2%	16.0%	5.9%	1.2%	26.8%
Adequacy of street lighting	18.2%	47.4%	16.2%	12.5%	2.0%	3.7%
Availability of parking downtown	11.1%	30.2%	21.6%	21.9%	11.5%	3.7%

Which THREE of the services listed in Question 12 are most important to you? (top 3)	
Ease of walking in Carrboro	62.7%
Ease of biking in Carrboro	33.2%
Ease of driving in Carrboro	27.5%
Availability of sidewalks	41.3%
Availability of greenways / multi-use paths	40.5%
Availability of on-street bike amenities	8.1%
Availability of bicycle parking	2.2%
Adequacy of street lighting	23.8%
Availability of parking downtown	42.3%
None chosen	4.4%

- Historical Root Causes of Disparities:** Local race specific transportation safety data are limited. National and regional research indicates that people of color and lower income households are more likely to rely on walking, biking, or transit. Large-scale systemic racism has substantially impacted the economic and social mobility of Black, Indigenous, and/or Persons of Color (BIPOC) community members; this effect can be observed in the disparity between white and Black households by median income. Nationally transportation projects that were built through or next to historically marginalized communities and neighborhoods were not explicitly conducted in Carrboro, but the Town recognizes that such policies and the harm caused are part of the landscape in where community members come from, what they expect from, and how much they engage with their local government.

Desired Results Statement:

The Town’s suite of transportation projects and programs seeks to reduce traffic- related deaths and serious injuries, improve safe and reliable connections between neighborhoods and destinations, and ensure that transportation investments equitably serve residents across income, race, age, and ability.

Section III: Demographics

See Section II above

Section IV: Stakeholder Engagement (community, employees, etc.)

Individual or Group	Please describe the impact.
North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All public roads not maintained by a municipality are maintained by NCDOT. Decisions affecting major Carrboro roadways like Main St, Greensboro St, Hillsborough Rd, Jones Ferry Rd and Old Fayetteville Rd must be made in concert with NCDOT. • NCDOT administers millions of dollars annually in federal pass-through funding, through a variety of annual financial and technical assistance programs. • NCDOT is also responsible for many infrastructure improvements like repaving, restriping for bike lanes, and adding sidewalks.
Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization (TWTPO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TPO provides transportation technical assistance for the Town, provides regional flexible funding for transportation projects, and submits other projects into NCDOT’s SPOT prioritization process for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).
Entire Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement events for projects and plans occur throughout specific projects and plans, to center residents’ needs and experiences. • Staff continue to keep the website updated and provide regular reports to the Council and community as to the status of various infrastructure and programs (Most recent transportation projects update – Jan 2026). • TDM, SRTS, and Vision Zero continue regular in-person outreach, and transportation questions are included on the biennial survey to ensure a wide array of opportunities for community participation.
Directly Impacted Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purchase of right-of-way (ROW) or granting of an easement may be required to build transportation projects. • The design of a project or a plan could affect safety and access to a property, so residents are involved in more focused and direct public meetings and interviews to get their feedback and hear their concerns.
Advisory Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Transportation, Mobility, and Greenways Advisory Commission (TMGAC) provide more specialized recommendations that are used to inform Town Council in its decision making. • Recommendation can prompt developers to include more transportation alternatives within their design in accordance with Town regulations.
Business Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses, individually or through an association like the Chamber of Commerce, are involved in the planning process through interviews, and focused in-person meetings with staff and consultants. • Business owners often report priorities such as parking and access concerns.
Town Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town of Carrboro has an internal Traffic & Parking Committee made up of members from Planning, Public Works, Fire, Police, and Economic Development that meets monthly. • Committee meetings shape staff policy recommendations to Town Council and help coordinate the implementation of transportation projects that require interdepartmental collaboration
Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrboro Town Council sets local development regulation, approves permits, approves the budget (including the capital improvement plan) and adopts transportation plans

Chapel Hill/Orange County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of Carrboro’s transportation projects straddle town limits and are partially within Chapel Hill or unincorporated Orange County. • Many projects also connect to planned or existing projects in Orange County and Chapel Hill (i.e. Morgan Creek Greenway or Jones Creek Greenway) • All governments make use of Orange County Transit Tax funds for transportation projects and make recommendations collectively. • As Carrboro and Chapel Hill share a school system, Safe Routes to School programming benefits from collaboration
SHIFT (formerly Carrboro Bike Coalition) and other advocacy groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrboro has an avid cycling community, represented by the newly merged SHIFT Chapel Hill-Carrboro. • SHIFT partners with Town staff for public engagement events, providing expertise in bicycle training and maintenance and helping the Town notify residents of transportation-focused events in their neighborhoods.

Section V: Benefits and Burdens

Area/Topic	Benefit/Burden	Please describe the impact.
Safety improvements	Benefit	Sidewalk and bike facilities reduce conflict points and exposure to vehicles for bicyclists and pedestrians
Connectivity	Benefit	Increased sidewalk and bicycle facility mileage improves access to employment, school, and services
Economic Access	Benefit	Residents with lower incomes or without vehicles benefit from safer walking and transit access to work or to commercial areas for errands
Mode Share Diversity	Benefit	Notable shares use transit or work at home; supports investment in non-automobile infrastructure
Construction Impacts	Burden	Temporary detours, noise, and access disruption during infrastructure upgrades.
Maintenance	Burden	Long-term budgets required for repair; may compete with other municipal priorities.
Outreach	Both	Benefit: Strategic and broad outreach allows for resident participation in decisions about connectivity and safety, centering their needs and experiences Burden: improvements may not prioritize areas with high need but lower political engagement.

If you mentioned communities of color in the table of above, how might this initiative negatively impact them?

Improvements in and around historically Black and African American neighborhoods aim to provide long-term benefits but could cause short-term burden during construction. Public engagement must be aligned with community needs by including translated materials, utilizing neighborhood and organizational networks to advertise and host events, and holding opportunities to engage at convenient times for people with work or family obligations. Additionally, without a broad focus on all modes, including cars, community members who must use a car due to a physical disability, employees that work downtown but live beyond regular transit access (i.e. service industry employees), and transit users will experience burdens from changes to the network and access.

If you mentioned people with low incomes in the table above, how might this Initiative negatively impact them?

In addition to engagement impacts, changes to the network may disproportionately impact low-income community members in the way they affect access, particularly for community members who must use a car. Projects must consider impacts to pedestrian, bicyclists, and driver safety and access, and must balance the needs of low-income households. Individuals in low-income households disproportionately live far from their place of employment. Residents may often depend on a personal vehicle to access their job due to distance, service-industry shifts that are not aligned with transit schedules, or inaccessibility to transit or other modes of transportation.

Section VI: Funding

Transportation funding is derived from local, state, federal, and grant sources. Federal funding often requires a 20% local match, which must be accounted for in the Town’s local budget. Additionally, federal funding usually is distributed as a reimbursement, meaning that the Town must be able to pay for various stages of a project and the recoup costs from NCDOT.

Some transportation funding coming from the state and federal levels is awarded through the SPOT prioritization process: a competitive pool of projects scored by NCDOT using a variety of prioritization metrics including connectivity, proximity to a qualified census tract, cost, etc. Other funding sources and programs include the Hiway Safety Improvement Project (HSIP) fund, the Regional Flexible Fund (RFF), the Safe Routes to School (SRT) program, Safe Streets for All (SS4A), the BUILD Grant, TWTPO discretionary funds, the Orange County Transit Fund, Powell Bill funds, and local budget allocations in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

These various funding sources and structures are complex and are frequently linked to help address gaps in funding for large infrastructure projects. There is no standard timeline for transportation projects— frequently infrastructure projects are separated by phases of their completion, like design and construction.

The complex nature of funding projects, as well as the multi-year timeframes of projects can be difficult to convey to residents and can make it difficult to address issues around connectivity immediately/over short timeframes. Impacts from long and complex infrastructure project funding is mitigated by grant programs that promote “demonstration” projects, which allocate funding for improvements that are quicker to install and allow the Town to test reversible designs on roadways and across the network to improve safety and connectivity.

Section VII: Unintended Consequences and Mitigation

Type	Potential Unintended Consequence	Mitigation Strategies to Prevent Consequences and Advance Racial Equity
Social	Underrepresentation in planning	Conduct targeted outreach to historically marginalized communities Continue to enhance multilingual materials and translation services

	Urban/Rural differences in needs are not considered sufficiently	Ensure that strategies and improvements consider the needs and experiences of residents throughout town Infrastructure improvements suited for the highly-dense downtown core may not be the safest or most-needed improvement in the rural buffer Ensure connectivity of the network includes rural communities in the transition areas
Economic	Travel Disruption During Construction	Phased work and advance notification to residents.
	Increased Traffic in Adjacent Areas	Monitor post-implementation traffic patterns and adjust traffic calming accordingly.
Health	Extensive project timelines for infrastructure result in persistent negative health outcomes (i.e. over the multiple years it can require to install a greenway, people may not have access to an alternative mode of transportation)	Continue to supplement infrastructure improvements with programming that connects residents to alternative transportation modes and routes that have been shown to improve health (walking, biking, etc.) and reduce exposure
Environment	Greenhouse gas emissions from induced demand or lack of network connectivity	Continue to supplement infrastructure improvements with programming that connects residents to alternative transportation modes and routes that have been shown to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (transit, walking, biking)
Other	-	-

What challenges should be overcome? How? Challenges include funding limitations and data gaps, community representation and participation, and equitable prioritization of infrastructure projects. Negative impacts can be mitigated through continued strategic and equitable engagement to understand public need and interest—and provide transparency on project status—systematic safety analyses (like traffic counts that are conducted annually or safety perception questions that are asked on the biennial survey), and continued use of race and equity decision-making tools when considering the prioritization of infrastructure projects.

Share and relevant data: See Section II.

Section VIII: Impacts

Transportation safety and connectivity programs, both within the Town and nationwide, show reductions in crashes and increased walking and bicycling when infrastructure gaps are addressed. Continued analysis and investment to build the network equitably increase the transportation choices members of the public can make and increase the overall safety of residents and visitors in town. In tandem with infrastructure improvements and maintenance, continued programming through initiatives like Vision Zero and Safe Routes to School build local knowledge and familiarity of safe practices and alternatives to driving that are available to them. Continued data analysis and comprehensive public engagement are necessary to make sure transportation projects are located where they are most needed, which results from both internal and external sources, town staff as well as partner organizations.

Section IX: Accountability

How will the impact of the initiative be measured?

Number of events and number of participants engaged with through various programs:

- Infrastructure - growth of the multimodal network (linear feet of bike lanes, sidewalks, multi-use paths, etc.); budgetary allocations to capital projects for infrastructure improvements through town funding and/or funding from other sources such federal, state or regional transit tax revenues.
- SRTS - Increased student trips on bike, foot, and bus to and from school. Number of school programs related to biking and walking to school.
- Vision Zero/Residential Traffic Calming – reduce injuries or deaths related
- TDM – Reduced single occupancy vehicle trips.
- Inclusion of bike-ped infrastructure and/or bus stops in new development projects.

What success indicators or progress benchmarks are incorporated in the proposed Initiative? (Provide indicators/benchmarks/metrics/timeline)

- Infrastructure – NCDOT administered funds have a built-in timeline with benchmarks for various steps of infrastructure projects (initiation, design, ROW/utility, construction, close-out)
- SRTS – more students walking, biking and rolling to school.
- Vision Zero/Residential Traffic Calming – See Residential Traffic Calming REAL.
- TDM – reduced number of SOVs, and by association reduction in greenhouse gas.

Who will track them? Planning, Town Manager's Office via Clearpoint metrics.

What is missing? What will happen if these metrics are met and what will happen if they are not met?

- Infrastructure – missed deadlines and benchmarks could result in a loss of state or federal pass-through funding. Not meeting the goal of a connected network as envisioned in the Bike Plan and the Comprehensive Plan will result in travelers continuing to use the road/bike/sidewalk network as it exists
- SRTS – reduced student activities, negative impacts to attention in class, poor health habits throughout life.
- Vision Zero/Residential Traffic Calming – Continued perceived and real safety concerns on roads throughout Carrboro, particularly neighborhoods
- TDM – Increased or continued single occupancy vehicle trips, increased traffic congestion and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

In what way does this Initiative deeply consider the experience of the residents it will impact?

Living in a community with real transportation options positively affects all residents, particularly those who cannot drive or do not have access to a vehicle. It creates a community where everyone can fully participate regardless of income and ability.

How will you share your results with your leadership and other funders?

Clearpoint and regular reports/information items to the Town Council, updates to the Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization Board.

How will you share results with community members and stakeholders?

Use of Town communication channels like Carrboro This Week (weekly email blast), mailings and postcards, the Town website, online maps, and community events to report progress on and share results with community members. For large infrastructure projects, the Town will expect to do a ribbon cutting or other similar style 'grand opening' event.

How will you acquire feedback from community members and stakeholders and incorporate findings?

- Biennial town survey
- Various engagement efforts across transportation program (SRTS, TDM, Vision Zero, Small Area Plans, etc.)
- Town staff are also available via phone and email, and for in-person feedback and questions M-F 8:30am-5pm
- Presentations to the Town Council
- Data and information collected by regional partners in their transportation-focused programs (i.e. Co-Gen Rail project, Chapel Hill Everywhere-to-everywhere Greenway Study, TWTPPO MTP/CTP)

Section X: Timeline and Feedback

<p>Department Recommendations:</p> <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with advisory boards (REC, PB, TMGAC, and others) to ensure infrastructure opportunities and connected topics are considered by the development community• Administer federal, state, county, and local money for infrastructure and community engagement programs• Utilize website and clearpoint to provide transparent updates to public about transportation projects and programs• Use multi-prong communication approach – Town Information Centers, Carrboro This Week, pop-up events, etc. to engage with communities (i.e. Bike Month, SRTS, etc.)• Explore grant funding at county, state, and federal level to help cover local match and/or program funds for prioritized infrastructure• Use race and equity tools for day-to-day and council decisions to ensure equitable implementation• Work with community partners and organizational partners to continue understanding needs of residents and administer projects in timely and transparent manner <p>Low Cost Short-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore creation of online map to show high-level distribution and status of transportation projects. Site could be linked to webpages with more information• Participate in GARE 2026 Community Planning Cohort for the NC-54 Small Area Plan <p>High-Cost Short-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze and report on network connections and gaps in relation to various demographic data beyond qualified census tracts (requires data collection)• Explore the purchase of analytical software like Synchro Traffic Modeling, StreetMix for street cross-section visualization, and other tools to help build data and visualization capacity <p>Low-Cost Long-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reformat transportation project updates report to make more visual• Complete funded projects in queue before adding new priorities; this also allows for staff to have capacity to meet emergency project needs <p>High Cost Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore bond and/or municipal service districts to help build local funding for federal match or for smaller-scale neighborhood projects• Explore personnel needs and potentially explore hiring term staff to administer projects
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Date submitted to R&E/CORE Team:
Signature of Assessor(s):
Date Reviewed by CORE Team:
CORE Team Recommendation/Feedback:
Date reviewed by REC:
REC Recommendation/Feedback:
Date returned to Department:
Other Notes: