

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative:

Land Use Ordinance Rewrite Worksession. This agenda item is designed to provide the Town Council with an opportunity to receive an update from CodeWright, the consultant team preparing the Land Use Ordinance rewrite, and to ask questions and provide comments in an informal setting

Department: Planning

What are the racial and equity impacts?

Goal #4 of Carrboro Comprehensive Plan, *Carrboro Connects* speaks to the need to update the existing development code to align with the goals and projects contained within the plan. Updating or in this case preparing a complete rewrite is a typical and necessary step in the implementation of any major policy document. *Carrboro Connects* is centered on advancing racial equity and addressing climate change and resiliency. Therefore, the development of the new land use ordinance is also centered on these foundational elements as well as, to extent practicable, standards that would lead to more opportunities for attainable housing and development predictability for applicants and members of the community. Changes to the ordinance will, in part, affect land development patterns, land values, climate resiliency, housing access and choice, and community character topics which nationally and locally have intersections with disparities across various demographic characteristics (i.e. land ownership, tenure, income, race, and others). The Land Use Ordinance will not be able to mitigate these potential impacts on its own, and as the project team begins the analysis and drafting of the code, impacts, benefits, and burdens will continue to be considered and reflected in the changes to the text.

Who is or will experience community burden?

The scope of the project currently identifies a series of analyses and tools for outreach designed to craft a new development code, one that is more predictable, more accessible, and more equitable. Engagement at various levels, from townwide to strategic small groups will require time of community members. Some residents may find the existing development code difficult to access, meaning that it may be difficult to understand its format, content and/or writing style. The engagement component of the project is intended to provide a way for developers and community members to provide input directly to the consultant team and to staff regarding current barriers to the text and ways to make the new code more accessible to all users. It should be noted, however, that there may be a period of transition immediately after the adoption of the new code where additional instructions/cheat sheets may be needed before the new regulations become familiar.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

One of the primary purposes of the Land Use Ordinance rewrite is to align the development regulations with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, *Carrboro Connects*, which include the advancing the vision and goals established by the community in 2022 as part of the development of the plan. Therefore, a key component of the rewrite will involve incorporating the foundational pillars of the comprehensive plan—race and equity, and climate action into the new code. In addition, the presentation of the material in the actual document, the font, the use of illustrations and use of clear straightforward language will make the regulations easier for developers and members of the public to find information whether seeking the



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process to apply for a permit and/or understanding when and how to provide input on a development project.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Inequities stem from systemic racism, from policies that have excluded marginalized communities and from planning theories that do not adequately recognize, or address, disparity. Land use decisions affect land values. Land use decisions also affect the experiences of everyday people going about everyday life. The placement of buildings relative to the streetscape, building height and massing, changes in street and sidewalk dimensions the inclusions of benches at regular intervals, signage, street trees and canopy cover; all these factors affect the experience that residents and visitors have when they visit the Town of Carrboro or chose to live here. Changes to development regulations in turn add to or take away from these experiences. Historically, the decisions about these important aspects of the built environment have been controlled by a limited group of people with a seat at the table, people with the resources to fund development and/or people with the ability to participate due in part to time and transportation.

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

In addition to the objectives noted above, the purpose of the rewrite is also to ensure that the land use code meets all applicable state and federal regulations. Some of these regulations may limit local control on matter, such as prohibit design standards or limit the extent of stream buffers. These types of matters are outside of the Town's control. In addition, due to the technical nature of development regulations some requirements and/or zoning concepts may still be confusing for some.

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

To date, the project team has conducted a series of small interviews with a variety of community members and stakeholders, including community non-profit partners, residents, developers, property owners, and business owners. The team has also met with advisory board members and assembled a project advisory group made up of representatives from all advisory boards and commissions. Staff and the consultant are preparing for the first community-wide meetings, scheduled for February 20th and 22nd. With engagement so far and throughout the entirety of the process, representation and participation from community members will continually be evaluated and connected back to guiding documents such as Inclusive Carrboro Community Engagement Plan and the Race and Equity Action Plan.

Staff and the Consultant team will continue to prepare materials for community members and council members that effectively distill technical information and connections among this project and other ongoing work, to preempt confusion. Additionally, where possible, outreach and engagement for this project will occur as part of existing events, to both provide access and reduce fatigue on community members.

Staff will continue to monitor land development patterns and usage of the ordinance after the adoption of the rewritten code, to understand where there may still be opportunities for improvement.