

RE Pocket Questions

Landscaping Equipment Presentation Council Item

Title and Purpose of this initiative: Landscaping Equipment Noise

Department: Town Manager's Office

What are the racial and equity impacts?

In general, due to availability of resources households of color are more likely to have jobs which require shift work or it may be necessary to work multiple shifts resulting in limited times in which households of color Can perform home and yard maintenance.

Also, because of the low barrier of entry, lawn maintenance and landscaping businesses are easier for entrepreneurs of color to start with limited resources. Therefore, such a regulation could place a disproportionate financial burden on businesses of color as they modify their existing equipment or replace their equipment.

Who is or will experience community burden?

Populations most likely to experience burden from these regulations would be those who work various shifts in which their lawn maintenance work can only be accomplished outside of the regulated time periods. Additionally, small landscaping businesses and independent landscape contractors would receive significant financial expenditures in order to bring their equipment into compliance with the regulations. Similarly, businesses may also layoff or reduce some workers if they choose to stop doing businesses in Carrboro or if they have a higher financial burden resulting in lost household incomes.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

Populations most likely to experience benefit from these regulations would be households who are able to have available time in the afternoon, early evenings, or weekends to dedicate to lawn maintenance. This would also include households who have the financial ability to pay a contractor to perform lawn maintenance on their property.

Other populations to experience benefit would be those who live in more dense neighborhoods, as they would benefit from the reduced noise and odd times at which loud noises would be produced from this equipment.

What are the root causes of inequity?

The primary inequity with these regulations would be financial and placed on small landscaping businesses and households living in dense neighborhoods. Combined with racial impacts, the requirements to modify or purchase new equipment would fall hardest on BIPOC landscaping businesses who may already have limited resources.

It would also be more likely to fall on households of color who may be more likely to live in dense neighborhoods due to a lack of financial resources to afford larger lots. While there may be some benefit to more densely populated neighborhoods, there also remains the burden of having to replace their personal lawn care equipment which may be more costly than the louder, gas-run equivalent equipment.

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

An unintended consequence of this action could be to drive away local landscaping businesses as they will not be able to meet our new qualifications for quieter equipment. This action may also make it more difficult for new businesses to start or want to expand their businesses in town. It may also result in an increase in non-emergency police calls as residents attempt to report one another for violating the ordinance. Another unintended consequence could be that less landscaping will occur because people will not want to violate the ordinance. This could result in less maintained lawns. These less maintained lawns could appear different but may be better for pollinators and other wildlife.

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

Should this ordinance be adopted, the Town has several options to mitigate burdens. The Town can launch an educational series on the effects of the new ordinance and work closely with businesses through the Chamber of Commerce to get the word out about these laws. The Town can see if there are grant opportunities that can be used to cover the costs of equipment replacement or muffler devices. The Town can also take a phased approach to implementing the ordinance to allow for businesses to have more time to come into compliance. The Town can conduct follow-up surveys to determine the effect that the ordinance is having on residents and businesses to determine if the ordinance should remain in effect, be amended, or be repealed.

Unintended consequences of implementation may result in refusal of compliance of households who do not or will not replaced their existing lawn care equipment. This could also result in smaller (and more likely to be businesses of color) landscaping businesses removing themselves from doing business in Carrboro, because they cannot afford to come into compliance. Along the same lines, this could result in making it harder for new landscaping businesses or independent contractors to start in Carrboro due to higher start-up costs.