



Racial Equity Assessment Lens (REAL)

NAME OF INITIATIVE PROGRAM/PROJECT: Small Area Planning Process and Implementation

Department: Planning

ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

For the purpose of this REAL, a small area plan (SAP) is a detailed plan to examine and guide decisions in a geographic area of the town. SAPs are often initiated when there are detailed questions and analyses needed for subsets of town. As part of the implementation of a comprehensive plan, engagement, and commitments to climate action and equity are incorporated into the process for a SAP. In its history, the Town conducted very few formal SAPs, predominantly the [Northern Study Area \(1998\)](#) and [Downtown Carrboro New Vision \(2001\)](#) plans. While both plans included significant community engagement, it should be noted that the Northern Study Area came about as the result of concerns registered by residents. Another local example of an SAP includes the [Rogers Road: Mapping Our Communities Future](#) plan. Town of Carrboro staff were not involved in its development, but the plan has shaped other studies, efforts, and amendments the Town of Carrboro has undertaken.

Through extensive public engagement, the *Carrboro Connects* Comprehensive Plan identified four corridors of opportunity that are intended to receive SAPs as part of the Implementation Priority Projects (Land Use 2.2A and 2.2B). These corridors include Downtown and Jones Ferry; NC 54; Rogers, Homestead, and Old NC 86; and Estes and N. Greensboro. The Town of Carrboro has hired a consultant to help facilitate a SAP for the Downtown and Jones Ferry corridor to be completed by the end of Fiscal Year 25. As the Town of Carrboro engages in the Implementation of the Carrboro Connects plan, there may be an opportunity to identify additional geographic areas to receive SAPs.

Share background of planning steps and what should be achieved. Moving forward this REAL will evaluate the need of the SAP process and pocket questions completed for each individual plan.

What is the specific desired result statement –

Desired goals and outcomes for the small area plan and development process:

- Engage community members and stakeholders for more detail about which elements of a specific geographic area they envision changing or staying the same over a long-range timescale (often 10-20 years), with an emphasis on accessibility and representativeness.
- Develop a more detailed understanding about how the Town can implement the comprehensive plan in a specific geographic area.
- Understand the capacity of a geographic area to grow and/or change across a variety of dimensions including housing, environmental impacts, transportation, utilities, and others
- Understand and make recommendations for the programmatic, infrastructural, and resource needs of current and future community members and visitors. Plan for equitable distribution of resources and balance to achieve stated community goals in guiding plans. **What is the desired result as it relates to Race and Equity?** Each desired result includes identifying and addressing existing or potential inequities across various dimensions, including race, ethnicity, age, income, disability status, gender, and others.

BENEFITTING INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS

1. Burden and benefit can shift greatly depending on the scope (both topically and geographically) of a Small Area Plan. Benefits and burdens must be considered throughout the process including, scoping, impact forecasting, and implementation.
2. Those that live and/or work in the scoped areas for each plan.
3. The whole community.
4. Those that own/run businesses, own property, visit area (stakeholders)
5. Users of various transportation modes and transit facilities
6. Future residents
7. The council's prioritization impacts when other areas will be given the same time, effort, and consideration.
8. Chapel Hill residents and stakeholders
9. University students, employees and faculty

BURDENED INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS

1. Burden and benefit can shift greatly depending on the scope (both topically and geographically) of a Small Area Plan. Benefits and burdens must be considered throughout the process including, scoping, impact forecasting, and implementation.
2. (In the case of an existing SAP identified) Those that have already been part of engagement (fatigue)
3. The council's prioritization impacts when other areas will be given the same time, effort, and consideration.
4. Those that don't live and/or work in the scoped area
5. Those that live and/or work in the scoped areas for each plan.
6. The whole community.
7. Those that own/run businesses, own property, visit area (stakeholders)
8. Users of various transportation modes and transit facilities
9. Future residents
10. Chapel Hill residents and stakeholders
11. University students, employees and faculty
12. Residents, ad hoc groups, or organizations that may not have capacity or agency to advocate for their area(s) of interest
13. Regulatory bodies

Type	Potential Unintended Consequence	Mitigation Strategies to Prevent Consequences and Advance Racial Equity
SOCIAL	• Engagement metrics may provide a false sense of representation	• Use a variety of engagement methods to create a continuous feedback loop and capture diverse perspectives (Communications & Community Engagement 1.1 & 1.2) • Recruit community ambassadors and pay them for their expertise

		(Communications & Community Engagement 1.1B)
ECONOMIC	Increased activity in the Downtown and other commercial districts may lead to increased levels of public nuisances (e.g., noise, trash) and/or crime for nearby residents	- Establish partnerships/build relationships between the town (PD, Emergency Response), businesses, residential neighborhoods, and nonprofits that provide support services (Police Dept. 1, 2, 5, & 7) - Continue to engage business community to understand emerging and existing conditions, and points of tension in maintaining existing businesses - Ensure the Revolving Loan Funds meets the needs of not only new businesses, but existing ones that seek to grow or continue to compete.
HEALTH		
ENVIRONMENT	- Changes in land use have the potential to alter the social fabric of a community, leading to the loss of local cultural and historical landmarks - Increased activity in the Downtown and other commercial districts may lead to increased levels of public nuisances (e.g., noise, trash) and/or crime for nearby residents - Green infrastructure often requires ongoing maintenance that might be more complex and costly than traditional infrastructure - Reliance on technology for energy efficiency and stormwater management may create dependencies, making it harder for communities to manage systems without specialized skills or resources	- Partner with Racial Equity Commission and Planning Board to protect and preserve cultural/historical landmarks that maintain the community's character and heritage (LU 7.2) - Continue capacity analyses of various areas, to understand development pressures and how these might impact existing fabric of small areas. - Involve the community in park planning to ensure it is mutually beneficial - Install natural noise barriers - Expand financial assistance and resident education opportunities around GSI (GSI 4.1) - Proactively implement watershed management and restoration projects (WAT 2.1) - Revise stormwater standards in the LUO (WAT 2.2) - Use an equity lens/framework to prioritize projects - Expand financial assistance opportunities for GSI (GSI 4.1)

	Some strategies to reduce our carbon footprint may increase costs for businesses and consumers; disproportionately affecting low-income communities	
OTHER	- Transportation improvements might benefit some areas/population groups more than others, leading to unequal access and services - Inadvertently increasing property values exacerbating the issue and leading to displacement - Changes in the community's character and landscape may lead to social friction and delays in implementation	- Use an equity lens/framework to prioritize projects (T&M 1.1) - Most projects compete regionally with other municipalities' projects – if the Town identifies a project that prioritizes race & equity but does not compete as well for state and federal programming, the Town will need to identify other sources of funding (grants, bonds, etc.) - Implement anti-displacement strategies in conjunction with any policy recommendations for redevelopment (AF 2.1) - Inform policy recommendations with good data and representative community engagement - Emphasize that small area plans are long-range guiding documents in communications

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Complete high level/board steps that are customized based on the plan and needs to the community area.
2. Emphasize equitability, community engagement and removing barriers.
3. Review in one year.
4. Consider transportation options other than walking and biking. Parking is not available in all areas and businesses suffer. Circulation and access is key.
5. Include demographic data on the Asian population.
6. Bus shelter repair still needed along Jones Ferry Road.
7. Farmers Market and other vendor type services – need to include variety of services and cultural background.
8. Community engagement needs to continue using a variety of ways to reach residents.
9. Listen to and consider all recommendations from the community.
10. Each plan should be revisited at different intervals of time.
11. Continue capacity analyses of various areas, to understand development pressures and how these might impact existing fabric of small areas.

12. Continue to use a variety of engagement methods to create a continuous feedback loop and capture diverse perspectives.
13. SAPs should consider expanding or highlighting the resources available through existing programs like the Revolving Loan Fund or Stormwater Assistance Program.
14. SAPs should use an equity lens or framework to prioritize recommendations.
15. The Town should consider exploring ways to obtain disaggregated demographic data for smaller geographies.
16. SAPs should consider zoning/code amendments that increase affordable housing incentives, remove development barriers, and lower development costs such as density bonuses and missing middle housing provisions.
17. As part of implementation of a SAP, establish partnership/build relationships between the Town (PD/Emergency Response), businesses, residential neighborhoods, and nonprofits that provide support services.
18. The Town should consider recruiting community ambassadors and paying them for their expertise as it relates to community needs/solutions for the SAP process and other major projects.
19. Opportunities for redevelopment to add density may result in some level of displacement. Therefore, the Town of Carrboro will need to consider potential displacement mitigation strategies, such as the Town's Affordable Housing Fund, the proposed Affordable Housing bond, right of first refusal, or the affordable housing density bonus, that balance production, preservation, and neighborhood stabilization.
20. SAPs should integrate climate action projects to restore and conserve watersheds and ecosystems, especially in neighborhoods that have been denied and historically underserved
21. SAPs should focus on minimizing car-dependency and expanding multimodal transportation options through increasing pedestrian and bike infrastructures
22. SAPs should focus on understanding the limitations of infrastructure (like utilities), and placement of sites for services like waste disposal and wastewater treatment.
23. SAPs should place an emphasis on data and impact analysis to monitor and track displacement.