

## Race and Equity Pocket Questions

**Title and purpose of this initiative:** Consideration of Transportation Projects for SPOT Prioritization 8.0

**Department:** Planning

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

Carrboro has an opportunity to address transportation needs within the community and to submit projects for consideration for state and federal funding. The selection of transportation projects can have a significant impact on quality of life. The Town's selection of projects can eliminate/diminish transportation barriers BIPOC community members face. Some recommended projects for approval serve apartment complexes along NC54 and near the eastern boundary shared with Chapel Hill. These neighborhoods have higher proportions of low-income households, as well as households where English is not the primary language spoken. The recommended projects broadly seek to extend the bike and pedestrian network, increase safety for all users, connect parks, and provide safe routes to school.

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

It takes time and energy to learn about and follow discussions on transportation projects. Technical language and drawings can be difficult to understand. Shift workers and people who have limited time, transportation choices, and/or children may have difficulty learning about or providing input on a project. Some residents face a language barrier. Projects may require easements/right of way acquisition before completion. Property owners may be asked to donate or sell land for a project to move forward. Construction noise/dust, etc. can create inconveniences during construction. These projects require local match, and municipal funding for these initiatives, if selected by NCDOT, could result in need for other funding sources for the Town's ongoing assistance programs that support low-income or BIPOC community members.

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

Residents and property owners living near bike/ped projects can most readily make alternate transportation choices. But, when a project completes a missing segment in the overall network, residents living farther out can experience make this change as well. For example, residents living in the Canterbury Townhomes and Berryhill neighborhoods, will have easy access to the Morgan Creek Greenway, but once the signalized pedestrian crossings improve access across NC 54 (also underway), residents in the apartments along NC 54 and in the Lincoln Park neighborhood will be able to experience the greenway system, to enjoy nature, and to eventually walk/bike to University Lake and local schools. Multifamily residents on Smith Level Rd will be able to head into downtown Carrboro without a car. This improves environmental, public health, and economic outcomes by lowering emissions and household expenses (particularly for BIPOC or low-income residents in qualified census tracts) on gas and vehicle maintenance if households choose not to have a car.

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

Generally, a lack of representation among decision makers, lack of a seat at the table, and/or a lack of information and notice about transportation funding and calls for projects results in inequity. Structural racism in government decisions, particularly those relating to land use, as well as residents' personal experiences with government, can further alienate those that may find it difficult to attend meetings and contribute to a reticence by historically marginalized people to speak in a public setting. Nationally and regionally, communities of color have historically fared poorly in decisions relating to transportation improvements—wherein dedicated funding sources used to enhance predominately white neighborhoods while communities of color remain without basic transportation infrastructure.

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

Changes to land use regulations can affect land values and quality of life experiences for surrounding property owners and occupants in ways that can be beneficial and, albeit for some, less desirable. The construction process for a transportation project can involve a loss of trees/shading and screening and privacy. People may be walking/bicycling in close proximity to someone's property, business or home. The character of a neighborhood, the quietness of a low-traffic street can change. Projects often operate on long schedules, which can affect who benefits due to housing tenancy and how neighborhoods may change from year-to-year.

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

Continue reporting and improving transportation project updates to make them as accessible as possible—both in the means to learn about ongoing projects and with plain language and imagery rather than technical language wherever possible. Continue to conduct timely and appropriate environmental reviews to understand climate and environmental impacts, and to preempt environmental injustice. Where engagement is needed, continue collaborating with community partners and Communications and Engagement staff to ensure BIPOC residents, non-English speakers, and/or low-income community members are heard from and can participate in the public process. Ensure sufficient access to new facilities that minimizes impacts of visitors travel to and use of new facilities to existing residents in neighborhoods near new facilities.