

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative: Town Policy for Memorials and Donations Located on Town Property

Department: Public Works

What are the racial and equity impacts?

Access to opportunities for BIPOC communities to engage in Town programs are exacerbated by existing racial inequities. According to the National League of Cities, “existing municipal policies, programming, and protocols may be unintentionally exacerbating racial economic disparities. For some, access to the services or benefits the program provides may be the key barrier, either because of geographical location within the city or other barriers that may be preventing access for certain groups.”¹

Who is or will experience community burden?

The following may experience burden:

- Community members who may not have the financial means to honor an individual, a place, or an event and are not approved for funding assistance under Section 10 of the new policy.
- Community members with accessibility barriers and lack access to the monuments.
- Community members with language barriers as monument plaques are typically typed in English only.
- Community members who may have wanted to customize their monuments or plaques.
- Recreation and Parks Commission and Town employees may be burdened due to time involved.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

This initiative will benefit:

- Community members who utilize the program and Town employees as the policy aims to mitigate the on-going time and expenses associated with maintenance of monuments by standardizing guidelines and procedures for the installation and care of donated improvements.
- Community members that are approved for funding assistance under Section 10 of the new policy.
- Community members who utilize monuments, such as park benches.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Root causes of inequality can include “historical racial segregation, governmental policies, a stagnating minimum wage, outsourcing, globalization, changes in technology, and the waning power of labor unions.”²

Working individuals and families may find it difficult to attend public meetings when policies and projects are discussed. Structural racism in government decisions, as well as residents' personal experiences, can further contribute to a reticence by historically marginalized people to speak in a public setting. Some community members, especially those who are historically marginalized may not be aware of programs the Town offers.

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

Unintended consequences include:

- A negative perception of the monument policy; or individual, place, or event being memorialized.
- Potential negative perception of the program.
- Potential temporary disruptions such as access to an area or noise and other disturbances from construction activities during installation of approved monuments.
- Town funds used to pay for the purchase and installation of monuments may prevent funding of other programs and projects.

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

The Town will monitor feedback from community members to identify any currently unforeseen burdens or inequities and address those with corrective measures as needed.

1. "How Prioritizing Racial Equity Can Build Family Wealth." *National League of Cities*, 12 Apr. 2023, www.nlc.org/article/2023/04/12/how-prioritizing-racial-equity-can-build-family-wealth/. Accessed 15 Mar. 2024.
2. Johnston, Matthew. "A Brief History of Income Inequality in the United States." *Investopedia*, 20 May 2022, www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/110215/brief-history-income-inequality-united-states.asp.