

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative: Receiving the 2024 Annual Report on the Schools Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (SAPFO) from the Technical Advisory Committee. To provide the Town Council with the 2024 Annual Report on the SAPFO. The Orange County Board of Commissioners has referred the draft report for information.

Department: Planning

What are the racial and equity impacts?

This technical report relates to a long-standing agreement and process for local governments and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School district in southern Orange County to maintain the adequacy of K-12 instructional building capacity for students in the district. The inequity of K-12 educational outcomes and the persistent challenges in life beyond primary and secondary education for students of color in the United States is well-documented. The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School system is recognized for its high achievement in test scores, graduation rates, and college advancement. At the same time, the experience, and outcomes among students of color is vastly different. This gap is documented most recently in the Southern Coalition for Social Justice report card, the focus of which is the school-to-prison pipeline, found here The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City 2021-2022 Racial Equity Report Cards - Southern Coalition for Social Justice, as well as the 2015 report by the Campaign for Racial Equity in our Schools, Microsoft Word - Excellence with Equity Report- Final10-23-15.docx (wordpress.com).

Who is or will experience community burden?

Students and their families for whom sufficient building capacity is not provided. The community, which in experiencing disparities, does not reach its full potential. The SAPFO does not account for Pre-K classes in evaluating capacity. Pre-K programs have been developed and included in the CHCCS to assist with improving outcomes for students by earlier participation in classroom experiences.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

Students and their families, for whom there is sufficient space and capacity for educational experiences.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Past structural racism has affected the number of teachers of color in schools. A lack of teachers whose race matches that of students can affect achievement and success. The Excellence with Equity report discusses power differential between white families, staff/faculty and students, and those of color (particularly Black families) in the CHCCS school system, including tracking into gifted, honors, and AP classes that disproportionately advantage white students. The report details stereotyping that plays a role in lowered academic expectations, fewer advanced academic and non-academic opportunities, and disproportionately harsh discipline for students of color. Racial disparities in educational attainment and household income that affect mobility can limit options for families in shifting from assignments if students experience negative and detrimental conditions.

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

The Schools Adequate Facilities processes and reporting were developed to ensure that sufficient capacity existed for required areas of educational instruction. The capacity requirements have changed over time, both by the Department of Public Instruction at the state level and within the local school district. By not incorporating, for example, the Pre-K classrooms within the calculation of adequate facilities, the process may miss its desired result and may prevent the identification and prioritization of needs for space to serve educational programming. Based on the extent of disparities and conditions experienced by students of color, the consideration of building capacity needs can evaluate, in part, whether changes to the built environment are needed to provide safe and appropriate learning environments.

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

The department will continue to review and modify the ways in which planning processes are scoped and carried out. The department will work to prevent and remove requirements that result in new or perpetuate existing disparities based on race. The department will continue to evaluate the environmental justice and equity tools used in these processes for selecting and proceeding with projects and programs in relation to the racial equity lens.