

## **Racial Equity Pocket Questions – Local Discretionary Allocation to Morgan Creek Greenway Ph 1**

The Town has local discretionary (federal) funds that must be allocated to specific project by the end of the fiscal year. The Council is being asked to allocate the funds to Phase 1 of the Morgan Creek Greenway project, which is currently under design, so that the project—a long-time Town priority—can be completed. Phase 1 of the Morgan Creek Greenway is programmed in the Town's CIP with a project budget of \$1,742,500; the request would increase the budget by \$424,176.

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

Bicycle and pedestrian transportation projects typically provide residents with improved infrastructure. For those without regular access to a car, even small improvements to a sidewalk or paved bicycle facility can significantly improve everyday life. Statistically, BIPOC populations are more likely to experience challenges associated with access to transportation, and live in communities with limited access bike/ped facilities for exercise/recreation. Of note, the apartments along the North side of NC 54 West are located within a qualified census tract/REINVEST neighborhood with more than 32% of the census block group living below 150% of the poverty level. Residents in these neighborhoods will have easy access to the Morgan Creek Greenway System. The percent increases to 41% below for the apartments along the east side of Smith Level Road.

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

The greenway is designed to connect Smith Level Road to the cul-de-sac at Abbey Court, and then continue over a pedestrian bridge to the south side of Morgan Creek and head on toward University Lake with a spur to Carrboro High School. Residents and property owners living or traveling in the vicinity of the greenway project will experience noise and inconvenience during the construction process. Once completed, the greenway will be used by people living along the system, residents using the greenway as a transportation corridor as well as others seeking recreation. Therefore, residents living along the greenway, mainly residents in the Canterbury Townhomes are likely to see the most impact, residents living in the Berryhill development may also see additional users coming into their trail network and recreation facilities.

A separate transportation project is currently under design that involves the design and installation of pedestrian activated signals at the intersections of NC 54 West and the entrances at the Carolina Apartments and the Royal Park Apartments. Once completed, the signals will make it much easier and safer for residents in the apartments to access the greenway as well.

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

The allocation of local discretionary funding should provide sufficient money to complete the construction of Phase 1 of the greenway. In the short term, the greenway will add an important segment of bike/ped infrastructure off-road—a preferred design for less confident cyclists. It will extend roughly parallel to Morgan Creek and will therefore not substitute the installation of sidewalks or bike lanes but only add to the network providing another transportation choice. The paved off-road facility will connect to University Lake and Carrboro High School in Carrboro. It will also connect to the Town of Chapel Hill's Morgan Creek Greenway system that extends parallel to NC 54 / 15/501. Over time, the Morgan Creek Greenway system in Carrboro-Chapel Hill will become a significant off-road bike/ped facility providing residents with better access to transit stops, and a real opportunity to get to destinations by foot or by bicycle, scooter or wheelchair without having to maneuver among vehicular traffic. This infrastructure will provide multimodal transportation choices, which is important in a census block group where more than 15% zero car households.

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

Working individuals and families may find it difficult to attend public meetings when transportation projects are discussed and/or may be reticent to speak in a public setting and may have an overall distrust in government and governmental processes, based on personal experiences and/or examples of structural racism in government decisions, particularly if there is a concern that personal property may be taken/condemned.

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

Greenways 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. While greenways provide safe travel from vehicles, there may be other hazards associated with their use such as encounters with wildlife and possible interactions with an undesirable human element, such as the homeless and/or other predators.