

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

What are the racial impacts?

Bicycle and pedestrian transportation projects 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. BIPOC populations are more likely to face barriers to accessing reliable transportation and live in communities with limited access to bike/ped facilities for recreation. Of note, the apartments along the North side of NC 54 West are located within a qualified census tract (QCT); the median income is \$57,479 (more than 50% of the households in this area make less than the median income for Carrboro - \$76,599). 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 these neighborhoods to access the Morgan Creek Greenway System.

Who is or will experience burden?

The greenway is designed to connect Smith Level Road to the cul-de-sac at Abbey Court, which will become a walking route for residents to the nearby Frank Porter Graham Elementary school. The greenway will 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, residents living along the greenway, mainly residents in the Canterbury Townhomes, could see long-term impacts as more people use the greenway. Residents living in the Berryhill development may also see additional users coming into their trail network and recreation facilities. While long-term Morgan Creek will be part of a connected system, there are still gaps in the network, so users and nearby residents will experience some burden until the greenway connects to new sidewalks/infrastructure.

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 not substitute the installation of sidewalks or bike lanes but only add to the network providing another paved, off-road transportation choice. The paved off-road facility will connect to University Lake and Carrboro High School in Carrboro. 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, schools, a larger greenway system, 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, particularly for households in the QCT across NC 54, of which more than 15% have no access to a car.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Working individuals and families may find it difficult to attend public meetings when transportation projects are discussed. Structural racism in government decisions, particularly those relating to land use, as well as residents' personal experiences with government, can further contribute to a reticence by historically marginalized people to speak in a public setting, and/or may be reticent to speak in a public setting, 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 benefit or harm land values and quality of life experiences for surrounding property owners and occupants. While greenways provide safe travel from vehicles, there may be other hazards associated with their use such as encounters with wildlife and interactions with other users.