

Rapid Racial Equity Impact Analysis

SUBJECT:

Small Business Codes and Processes Ordinance (Case #PL2025-33)

WHO PARTICIPATED IN COMPLETING THIS ANALYSIS:

Dakota Kastenday, Planning Supervisor; Nick Johnson, Planning Manager; Barb Wolff, Assistant Port Authority Administrator

1. WHAT ARE THE RACIAL EQUITY IMPACTS OF THIS DECISION?

The aim of the project is to lower barriers and costs to development and operation of small businesses by evaluating a range of City Code standards. The topics addressed include broader flexibility for: 1) exterior building materials; 2) off-street parking requirements; 3) refuse and recycling storage standards; 4) odor control standards; 5) rooftop equipment screening standards; and 6) grease interceptor requirements. The proposed code amendments do not create or distribute resources, so it can be difficult to estimate to what extent there are racial equity impacts. The proposed amendments will result in more flexibility for small businesses to open in Bloomington, particularly for small businesses retrofitting existing commercial and industrial spaces. With greater flexibility and less prescriptive requirements, it is expected to reduce complexity of permit requirements and review and provide relief for business owners. While achieving these goals would be broadly beneficial, they will have a stronger impact on applicants that are more resource or time constrained or otherwise are less familiar with navigating regulatory processes. From this perspective, the small business code amendments have the potential for positive racial equity impacts to ease some of the barriers to gaining approval and starting the operation of their business.

2. WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM AND/OR BE BURDENED BY THIS DECISION?

Since this project is a code change and not a policy, it does not address any specific groups. However, communities that are less familiar with navigating complex regulatory processes or are more resource constrained may experience the benefits to a greater degree than other more experienced development applicants or business owners. Businesses locating in an existing tenant space or building that may not meet current standards will also benefit from greater flexibility and cost-effective options to retrofit the space or building. Small businesses that undergo new construction to locate/relocate in the City may be slightly burdened, particularly around refuse and recycling storage standards, as those standards are not changing for new construction and only apply to businesses retrofitting an existing space. The goal is to provide more flexibility and cost-effective options for business owners that still meet broader City goals related to public health, safety and welfare.

3. ARE THERE STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE ANY UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DECISION?

Staff are always available to answer questions from business owners about our permitting and review process. The City Code standards explored in these amendments were selected by staff based on feedback from business owners in the City. The Port Authority will continue to regularly engage with businesses and track policy or code change requests from the business community for evaluation and continuous process improvements. This process could be similar to that of the City's annual Miscellaneous Issues Ordinance to have a routine process to address unintended consequences and to provide further improvements and benefits to businesses in Bloomington.