

Home Zone Program: Compensation and Community Engagement

Background

The Seattle Department of Transportation's (SDOT) Home Zone program is a planning and development effort between community members and SDOT planners to co-create walkability and neighborhood livability projects. A Home Zone is first and foremost a community driven effort. In order to ensure the community's voice is represented in all stages of the Home Zone process, a steering committee made up of five to ten representative neighborhood residents oversees the process. We look for steering committee members that are involved in community organizations already active in the area. Through an iterative process, a draft Home Zone is developed and then circulated amongst the wider community to obtain feedback and support for the projects.

Steering Committee Requirements

Serving on a Home Zone Steering Committee is a recurring commitment, with meetings typically taking place for one hour each month until the Draft Home Zone Map is developed. It is also ideal to have some steering committee members attend at least one of the Home Zone walking tours. Some amount of time outside of meetings is desirable to review planning and outreach materials as well as other elements related to developing the Home Zone. In total, this time is estimated to be 10 to 20 hours.

The Challenge

Community engagement is fundamental to the development of a Home Zone, however, there are some challenges. One of these is compensation for the time needed to *meaningfully* engage so that some voices—particularly low-income and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities—are not left out of the conversation. Centering SDOT's Transportation Equity Framework (TEF), the following value statement supports the Home Zone's intention to address this challenge:

- TEF Value on Community Engagement: We believe community engagement is a holistic and on-going relationship building process where collaboration and partnership with community-based organizations and individuals are essential for culturally relevant outreach and engagement strategies with communities and individuals most impacted by institutional and structural racism.

Compensation is discussed openly with the committee members with the focus of including BIPOC and other under-represented voices. We allocate around \$8,000 to compensate Steering Committee members and other BIPOC and/or community organizations for outreach. Here are some ways that Home Zone staff have compensated community members in specific Home Zones.

New Holly

New Holly is a linguistically, racially, and economically diverse neighborhood in Seattle's south end and a majority of the housing is under the Seattle Housing Authority. SDOT contracted with the New Holly based community group Healthy Othello Safer Through Environmental Design (HOSTED) to reach the community (they have 200 members) and hire local translators. HOSTED and their translators organized and participated in several community events and helped residents navigate the website, complete the

survey, and answered any questions that they might have. HOSTED was reimbursed \$50/hour and a total of \$8,000. The Home Zone program was also able to offer free ORCA cards to survey respondents thanks to a partnership with the Seattle Transportation Plan.

Aurora Licton Urban Village

Compensation of \$8,000 was discussed with the Home Zone Steering Committee. They determined that Somos Mujeres Latinas would receive \$2,500 for their members to attend the steering committee meeting and neighborhood walks as well as for some translation; members were compensated at \$50/hour. Once these funds were exhausted, then additional funds would be forthcoming. The steering committee also requested that their leader be compensated for his time in organizing the meetings and engaging the broader community at \$50/hour. All other steering committee members chose to volunteer their time and input.