

# Making Rainier Beach Great! – A Call to Action

## Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan Update Action Plan

Version 4.0

### Initiative: Life Long Learning

**Objective: An innovative, connected learning system that is strategically integrated into the neighborhood's cultural life.**

Rainier Beach is home to a dynamic blend of public and private educational institutions, with the capacity to provide formal and informal education to all 5,000 residents. Situated in the nation's most diverse zip code, Rainier Beach residents represent an amazing wealth of cultural experiences. By intentionally welcoming the community into the schools, both the schools and the neighborhood can be uplifted.



**Existing Assets:** Seattle Public Schools (K-5: Emerson, King Jr., Van Asselt and Dunlap; PK-8: South Shore; 9-12: South Lake, Rainier Beach High School); 20 early childhood development programs; Seattle Public Library, Rainier Beach branch; 5 community computer labs, 1 community academy, 10 tutoring programs, 22 afterschool providers, 6 education advocacy organizations, 1 newly construction 14,000 sq foot community center.



**Key Partners:** Seattle Public Schools, Southeast Seattle Education Coalition, Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSA), City of Seattle, 37<sup>th</sup> District Democrats, Alliance for Education, Community Parents for Public Schools (CPPS), Communities in Schools at RBHS and South Lake, District 7 Advisory Council, Rainier Beach Community Empowerment Coalition, Rainier Beach Neighborhood Association/Academy, Lake Washington Apartments, Rainier Beach Merchants Association, Rainier Scholars, Seattle Times; State of Washington, Seattle University, Kids Co, Seattle Times, Rainier Valley Post, FreedomNet, SouthendSeattle.com, Clear Channel, League of Education Voters, SEED

**Action 1 (example)** Successful Education for All Children: Within 5 years, each neighborhood school achieves Level 5 status. Students will be reading at grade level or above and participating in extracurricular activities. This success will require a unified front with parents, youth and community organizations all together to adopt schools and offer direct services or in-kind resources.

**Active Funders:** Neighbor to Neighbor and Community Center for Educational Results are funding a coordinator position to staff the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition



**Action 2 (example)** Create a Shared Multi-Cultural Center: A place where people (youth through senior centers) from all backgrounds can highlight their heritage, strengthening themselves and informing others in ways that expand far beyond stereotypes. Neighborhood opens spaces, existing public venues and new capital projects in the neighborhood, for example the Rainier Beach Community will be used for this purpose.

Writing contributors: Vallarie Fischer, Guyanthony Parramore, Margaret Yellowwolf, Gregory Davis

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### Initiative: A Place for Everyone

**Objective: Rainier Beach residents, long-term and new, will all have access to safe, healthy and affordable housing; access to transit; and a variety of vibrant commercial centers.**

Rainier Beach is home to residents with incomes that range from deep poverty to high-wealth. Those with incomes below 80% (many far below) of the Area Median Income for Seattle (about \$45,000 for a family of four) have fewer options in market-rate homes and even fewer in available subsidized or partially subsidized housing. Home prices and rental rates are lower in Rainier Beach than most other Seattle neighborhoods which offers opportunities for those looking for lower housing costs but can also force long-term residents out of the neighborhood.



"Rainier Beach" has several places with strong cultural identities, and it is the sum of these places that people feel is the "Town Center." To sustain Rainier Beach these business districts should be strengthened as distinct but linked parts of one neighborhood. Both the physical and human aspects should be considered together. The importance of these places derives from meaning they have for people and community. By employing a place-based approach that focuses and coordinates individual strategies for specific locations, with specific outcomes in mind, we can leverage each effort - no matter how small - to have greater impact.

The area within a .5 mile circle of the Rainier Beach Light Rail Station is a Transit Oriented Development locale offer public and private funding advantages for housing that serves those at or below the 80% AMI level. Since the opening of Link Light Rail in 2010 no developer, for-profit or non-profit, has taken advantage of the location but zoning is in place to allow mixed-use development in that area.

Despite the lack of recent development, easy access to transit and transit that connects our community to good paying jobs is what will keep the neighborhood affordable. Link Light Rail is a great way to encourage people to visit Rainier Beach, especially tourists going into downtown Seattle from Sea-Tac Int'l Airport.



**Existing Assets:** Lake Washington Apartments, South Shore Court, Rose Street Apartments, Walcott Homes, Barton Place (SHA?),Transportable Section 8 Vouchers, low-to-market single family home prices, short sale and foreclosed homes (both asset and deficit);low-to-market apartment and house rental rates (quality issues); high-end homes near Lake Washington; commercial districts at Rose St and on 57 Ave S; community organizations serving cultural communities; major employers: Education Center (5 schools, 1 Library) Neighborcare, Safeway; 107/106 linking RB to Renton job center; Light Rail connecting RB to Downtown - 25 minutes

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### **Initiative: A Place for Everyone, continued**

**Key Partners:** Seattle Housing Authority, SEED, HomeSight, Mt. Baker Housing Association, Homestead Community Land Trust, City of Seattle Office of Housing and Office of Economic Development, Washington State Housing Finance Commission; Urban Impact, Seattle Public Schools, Property Owners of Underutilized Lots, Metro, Transportation Choices, Asian Counseling Referral Services

**Action 1 (example)** Strong & Stable Cultural Commercial Districts at S Rose Street, 57th Ave S & Rainier, Renton Avenue & Henderson. These districts are essential to their communities; they provide goods and services to a range of cultural communities and are susceptible to displacement. Business owners, community members and governmental agencies work together to coordinate efforts to make these districts strong and stable.

**Action 2 (example)** Decent and Affordable Housing for All: Develop and rehabilitate a range of housing options that provide safe, healthy and affordable options for all income levels to create an equitable neighborhood in which gentrification does not create significant displacement

Writing Contributors: Harry Hoffman, etc.....

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### Initiative: Growing Food to Develop Healthy Industry

**Objectives:** Rainier Beach is an employment center for the agricultural products grown in the valley. Rainier Beach has a unique opportunity to combine its urban farms and light industrial zone to become a hub of food and agricultural production.

Its location as a "Gateway" not only to the city but also to the Rainier Valley as a whole makes it an ideal candidate for a new sustainable employment pool, where both goods and labor can be readily available. In partnering with local schools and volunteer groups, training initiatives can be generated with the perspective of a valued and rewarding job. As an added benefit, a range of products could be designed with the help of well-known chefs to celebrate the community's diversity and market its neighborhood to the rest of the city. Local plant-based materials with a range of attributes (bamboo/structural; beans/filler; flowers/dye) could also be grown and crafted into products.



**Existing Assets:** Rainier Beach Learning Garden; Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands; Cloverdale P-Patch; Light Industry zoning; University of Washington

**Key Partners:** Rainier Valley Eats, Seattle Tilth, Friends of the Atlantic City Nursery, Community Kitchens Northwest, Public Health Seattle & King County, United Way

**Action 1 (example)** Food creates jobs and links people:

Develop an alternative food distribution system that creates jobs and celebrates our multi-cultural culinary heritage. Neighborhood residents will be educated in food production, origin and nutrition. New jobs and lots of good things to eat!

**Action 2 (example)** Rainier Beach is the center for farm product innovation for the future economy. The light industrial zoning along MLK, coupled with easy access to light rail and I-5, makes this a feasible location to support innovation. For example, landscape materials for the green roofs ideal for our climate could be grown along the Chief Sealth Trail.

Writing contributor: David Sauvion, Cheryl dos Remedios



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### Initiative: Rainier Beach is a Beautiful, Safe Place

#### Objectives: Strengthening the neighborhood through beautification increases

**public activity by 72%. Once we are all out in the neighborhood together, we have the opportunity to get to know each other, the more we know our neighbors, the safer we will be.** Areas of the neighborhood that need physical improvements like street lighting, crosswalk markings and public art will also be inventoried. These efforts will work in tandem with other neighborhood and city public safety initiatives that enhance the beauty of our neighborhood.



**Existing Assets:** A wealth of public art installations and landmarks; Beach Square; Beer Sheva Park; Rainier Beach

Community Center and Plaza; Seattle Public Schools; Library; Pritchard Beach; Rainier Beach Gateway Plan; Henderson Corridor plan, Mapes Creek/52<sup>nd</sup> Ave Walkway, a merchants association, 3 community public safety advocate organizations, a PK-12 education center serving 1000 families, 1800 students, art advocates

**Key Partners:** Wing Luke Museum and Great City; Rainier Beach Community Club; Upper Rainier Beach Preparedness Community; Rainier Beach Neighborhood Association; SEED; Seattle Police Department; Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, Rainier Beach Merchants Association, Seattle Neighborhood Group, South Seattle Crime Prevention Council, , Rainier Beach Community Center Advisory Committee; Principals at local schools, neighborhood block watch groups, POCAAN.



**Action 1 (in progress) Touchstones:** A Walking Tour of Rainier Beach will highlight existing places and reveals neighborhood history, culture and stories through QR codes. It will also connect community members to information about the public processes that shape our neighborhood. The tour routes will begin to define our neighborhood greenways.

**Active Funders:** Seattle Department of Information Technology has provided grant funding for Touchstones with the Wing Luke Museum acting as fiscal sponsor



**Action 2 (example)** Bring all of our neighborhood public safety advocates together to create an alliance that utilizes a comprehensive community plan to reduce crime by 20% in Rainier Beach. This alliance will track public safety initiatives in use in the neighborhood and monitor their outcomes. A matrix will show where the initiatives are on a continuum of public safety strategies from prevention to pre-arrest diversion. A campaign

will be initiated to have all of the school buildings, apartment buildings, businesses, privately owned property owners in the neighborhood be informed about the initiatives, how they can support them and the subsequent increase in neighborhood friendliness. A communication tool using social media will keep people informed about public activity going on in the neighborhood.

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#### **Initiative: Rainier Beach is a Beautiful, Safe Place (continued)**

**Action 3 (example)** Transit Shuttle/Connector Route between Light Rail and our three Business/Cultural Districts: With Metro, local business, and community partners pilot a shuttle that will make it easier for tourists and residents alike to see the diversity and richness of Rainier Beach: Connects RB Station to the "beach," Rose Street, and (Othello); Promote the "8" as the connector bus from RB Station to 57th Business District and the "beach." Initiate rider safety campaign with badges and tokens identifying safe riders.

**Action 4 (example)** Partner with the Transit Justice youth project to improve student equity to transportation and safe routes to school--apply for the Safe Routes to School grant, adopt safety recommendations to Rainier & Henderson transit hub. Create a pilot project with the City of Seattle, School District, and Metro to have reduced fare cards available in the neighborhood, and partner with them on an education campaign to inform residents that FINALLY Sound Transit and Metro resolved the transfer issue from bus to light rail with the ORCA Card, and push them to fix it for folks who pay cash, also.

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