



Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth

A community-led, data-driven, and research-informed approach to addressing juvenile crime hot spots through non-arrest strategies.

Project Timeline Summary

2011-City Council inspires community action

The Seattle City Council hosted several large public meetings to share new research on how crime in Seattle is highly concentrated in small geographic areas, called hot spots. The research showed that crime concentrations were stable in those hot spots over a 14-year period. Further, the research suggested that efforts to change the characteristics of those hot spots (e.g., improve guardianship, increase eyes-on-the street, etc.) could be a more effective approach to reducing crime at those locations than arresting individuals.



2012-City helps Rainier Beach secure federal grant

Community members from Rainier Beach had attended the City Council's presentations regarding crime hot spots in 2011. So, when they created the Neighborhood Plan Update for Rainier Beach in 2012, the community members indicated that they wanted to try a hot spots approach to reducing crime in Rainier Beach.



Based on the community request included in the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan Update, the Office of City Auditor, the Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, and George Mason University (GMU) applied for and received a nearly \$1 million Byrne Innovation grant from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to address five juvenile crime hot spots in Rainier Beach through a community-led non-arrest approach. The City then partnered with the Seattle Neighborhood Group to provide overall coordination for the planning and implementation of the project.

2013-Systematic community-problem-solving



The DOJ required a year-long planning process. We assembled a task force for each of the five juvenile crime hot spots comprised of over 100 community members who had a deep attachment to that particular hot spot. Community task force members live, work, worship, own businesses, commute, attend school, etc. at these hot spot locations. Our research partners from GMU provided each task force with all of the 2012 crime data for each hot spot.

We followed a research-based community-problem-solving process, and we put a strong emphasis on diverse participation. Each meeting included translation into multiple languages and fun team-building activities that inspired deeper connections with one another.

We followed a research-based



2014-Community uses data to design non-arrest interventions to reduce crime

In addition to analyzing Seattle Police Department crime data, our community task force groups systematically collected information about the physical characteristics and activity patterns at each hot spot. The community task force groups created a “logic model” for each hot spot that mapped the specific crimes occurring at that location with the unique characteristics of the place. Further, they identified evidence-based non-arrest strategies that were likely to reduce crime at each location, given its unique characteristics.

For example, at the Rainier and Henderson hot spot, community task force members saw from the crime data that after-school fights and disturbances among youth were a leading problem. Task force members recognized that three of the five schools near the intersection were releasing students at the same time. They asked school administrators to stagger the release times. In addition, we designed an intervention called, Safe Passage, to increase after school supervision of youth. Community Safety Specialists (pictured right) walk throughout the Rainier and Henderson hot spot between 2pm and 6pm. They ensure that youth get safely to the bus or light rail, diffuse potential conflicts, and encourage youth to attend activities at the Community Center and library.



2015-Non-arrest interventions and rigorous program evaluation underway



In 2015, all of the evidence-based, non-arrest interventions got underway. **Safe Passage** has continued into the 2015-16 school year. In addition, our multi-lingual **Business Outreach** team

(pictured left) has connected with the diverse business owners at all five hot spots to discuss physical and operational improvements they might make to reduce crime. And

a dynamic group of local high school students (pictured right), supervised by the Rainier Beach Action Coalition, create pop-up activities at each of the five hot spots. From art projects, to Pictionary, to poetry, and giant chess, our **Corner Greeter** intervention brings positive activity to each hot spot and provides a leadership opportunity for the youth.



Throughout the project, our GMU research partners have been monitoring the interventions and have been tracking crime data and community survey data for all five hot spots. They will compare these results with those for five nearby comparison sites to help more precisely determine the effect of our approach. They will submit their rigorous research evaluation to the City and to the DOJ in 2016.

2016-Sustaining the effort

With leadership from the City Council, support from City agencies, and considerable investment from hundreds of community stakeholders, [Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth](#) has come to life for the Rainier Beach community from the pages of their neighborhood plan. Now that the DOJ funding will be ending in December 2015, the City and community will need to consider how best to sustain this effort.





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Community Partner Organizations

- Dunlap Elementary School
- Rainier Beach High School
- South Lake High School
- South Shore Pre-K-8 School
- Aki Kurose Middle School
- Atlantic Street Family Center (Rainier Beach)
- Boys and Girls Club of King County
- Catholic Community Services Youth Tutoring Program
- Emerald City Bible Fellowship
- Ethiopian Community Services of Seattle
- Fathers and Sons Together (FAST)
- Feet First
- HomeSite
- Lake Washington Apartments
- Oromo Center
- Rainier Beach Action Coalition
- Rainier Beach Campus Safety Team
- Rainier Beach Merchants Association
- Rainier Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Rainier Valley Community Development Fund
- Rainier Beach United Methodist Church
- Rainier Beach Community Center Advisory Committee
- Rainier Valley Corps
- Seattle Neighborhood Group
- Seattle Police Foundation
- Somali Community Services of Seattle
- South East Effective Development (SEED)
- South Seattle Crime Prevention Council
- The Mission Continues (veterans service organization)
- United Story
- Urban Impact

City of Seattle Partner Agencies

- Department of Neighborhoods
- Office of City Auditor
- Office of Economic Development
- Seattle Department of Transportation
- Seattle Parks and Recreation
- Seattle Police Department
- Seattle Public Library
- Seattle Public Utilities
- Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative