

Rainier Beach Youth Focus Groups

Rainier Beach: A Beautiful, Safe Place for Youth

October 2014

Focus Group Details

- Number of focus groups: 3
- Total participants: 10 (5 male, 5 female)
- Dates: Late August and early September 2014
- Location: RB Community Center
- Group leaders: Erin Carll, Raphael Mondesir

Focus Group Themes

Safety

- Some youth feel safe everywhere in Rainier Beach. Others felt places with a sense of community and good security were safest.
 - Northern part of RB (toward Othello)
 - South Lake High School
 - Chief Sealth Trail
 - Seward Park, Pritchard Beach:
 - Lake Washington apartments
- Henderson St, The Cut, the 7 bus, and sometimes the Light Rail are places where youth feel unsafe—especially at night.
 - Rainier Beach High School
 - Rainier & Henderson (participants most often talked about Henderson itself)
 - 7 bus route (Rainier Ave from the first 7 bus stop to Columbia City)
 - Mapes Creek Walkway (“The Cut”), Rainier & Henderson to Safeway
 - Light Rail
 - Renton Hill (other side of Rose St)
 - Boundaries of the neighborhood (and out into adjoining neighborhoods)

View and Experiences of Crime

- Most crime happens around “The Cut,” not just Mapes Creek Walkway but all “cuts” away from main streets.
- Youth have witnessed crime, but some feel the neighborhood isn’t as bad as outsiders make out and that these outsiders need to check their prejudice.
- There may be a “no snitching” culture that stops people from reporting crimes.

Gangs and Drugs

- Gangs exist in Rainier Beach, but different groups of youth disagreed on whether they are driving the crime problem.
- Drugs are bought, sold, and used in places where it is easy to hide or escape.

What Can We Do about the Problems?

- Youth need opportunities and positive—not gang-involved—role models. This is beyond what parents alone can achieve.
- The community needs to come together, and also treat youth better—don’t assume that all young people are bad or all youth crime is committed by local kids.
- Youth—and the community as a whole—need a healthier attitude and help with emotions.
- Youth need more safe places to go—either for help when they need it, or just to stay out of trouble. The community center is a start.
- The neighborhood needs to be improved so it looks safe and cared-for.
- Youth have a complex relationship with the police, but ultimately welcome their help—youth want to engage with the police in a positive way.
- Do youth see themselves as having a direct role in crime prevention?