



American Planning Association  
**Washington Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

## TRANSMITTAL VIA EMAIL

April 4, 2016  
The Honorable Edward B. Murray  
Mayor, City of Seattle

Dear Mayor Murray:

For the second year in a row, the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Washington) had the honor of participating in the **Rainier Beach High School BLOC Party (Building Leaders of Change!) Event**. This inspirational event was held on March 24, 2016 and organized by Urban Impact.

APA Washington participated because urban planning is a dynamic profession that works to improve the welfare of people and their communities. Professional planners **make great communities happen** by working with civic leaders, businesses, and residents to envision new possibilities and solutions to community problems. It was a natural fit for the APA Washington Chapter's "Youth in Planning Task Force" to propose a workshop that would seek to engage youth at the high school on planning for their community. Several of the session organizers are also participants in the APA's Ambassador Pilot Program, which seeks to reach future planners with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Professional, retired and student planners from the region worked with high school students from Rainier Beach High School and University Prep during a workshop called **Access to Opportunity Begins at Home – Where You Live Matters!** Bundled together with where you live are a host of factors that have a profound impact on opportunities for success. This was the theme of the workshop and an engaged and thoughtful group of students identified what factors they feel influence access to success. Factors identified by the students included:

- ✓ **Race**
- ✓ **Economic Status**
- ✓ **Education**
- ✓ **Access to Jobs**
- ✓ **Access to Transportation**
- ✓ **Respect and Honesty**
- ✓ **Emotional Support**
- ✓ **Networks**
- ✓ **A sense of Purpose**
- ✓ **Access to Food**

We explored "Opportunity Mapping" that identifies how different areas in the Puget Sound region have different levels of access to opportunity taking into account indicators representing education, economic health, housing and neighborhood quality, transportation/mobility, and health and environment.

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Using maps of the Rainier Beach area kindly provided by the City's Planning and Community Development Department, the students were asked to consider what they would want to share with decision-makers about the following: What they love about their neighborhood and would want to preserve; what they would like to see go away or have turned into something else; and, what they feel is missing, or that they would like to see more of. The following represents input in two of the categories:

### **Love and Preserve**

- ✓ Rainier Beach Community Center
- ✓ Rainier Beach High School (but they would love to see it remodeled and made bigger)
- ✓ Rainier Beach Athletic Fields Complex
- ✓ Rainier Beach Urban Farm
- ✓ Honest Communications
- ✓ Light Rail
- ✓ Rainier Beach Safeway
- ✓ King Donut
- ✓ Pho Shop

### **Go away**

- ✓ Violence along Rainier Ave S and 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave S south of S Henderson Street

### **Missing**

- ✓ Recording Studio
- ✓ Theater
- ✓ Food Court
- ✓ Indoor Soccer Field
- ✓ Light Rail to Northgate
- ✓ Free Transportation for All Students
- ✓ Pedestrian/Running Trails
- ✓ Higher Quality Grocery Stores
- ✓ Healthy, Affordable Restaurants

One City of Seattle mission is: "To promote democracy on the local level by facilitating citizen debate on public issues and participation in government decision-making." We committed to share the students' ideas with you to demonstrate to the young community members one way that they can engage with community leaders.

We are grateful that we had the opportunity to participate in this inspiring event, and to engage with youth on community planning. We hope that you find the exercise and material thought provoking too.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Reid, AICP  
Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association  
Youth in Planning Task Force Co-Chair

cc: The Honorable Bruce Harrell, City of Seattle Councilmember  
The Honorable M. Lorena González, City of Seattle Councilmember

The Honorable Tim Burgess, City of Seattle Councilmember  
Diane Sugimura, Interim Director, City of Seattle Department of Planning and Community Development  
Paula Reeves, President, Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association  
Steve Butler, FAICP, Co-Chair, Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association, Youth in Planning Task Force  
Laura Wright, Director of Education, Urban Impact  
Lila Chin, Educator, Rainier Beach High School  
Darryl Eastin, Principal Planner (retired)  
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