

# Rainier Valley South – Fulfilling the Promise

## Creating Jobs and Pathways for Economic Mobility

### Excerpts

City of Seattle  
Department of Planning and Development  
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### **Introduction: Rainier Valley South – Fulfilling the Promise:**

Rainier Valley South encompasses two southeast Seattle neighborhoods: Rainier Beach and Othello. The diverse demographics of Rainier Valley South include around 19% White, 28% Black, 38% Asian, 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 8% Hispanic by ethnicity<sup>1</sup>. In 2011 – 2012, the City of Seattle’s Department of Planning and Development (DPD) completed the Rainier Beach and Othello Neighborhood Plan Updates through extensive community engagement. Representatives of these communities organized into neighborhood action committees (NAC) to actively guide the planning process. Following the completion of the plan update, the communities formed Rainier Beach Moving Forward and On Board Othello to shepherd the implementation of priority actions.

The Neighborhood Plan Updates holistically addressed critical community and economic development issues in Rainier Beach and Othello through a Healthy Living Assessment (HLA) funded by the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) fund. The HLA established a driving principle for planning: a great neighborhood is comprised of a strong and resilient community, a place for people to lead healthy lives and a physical environment that supports the community and the people. After a year and a half of inclusive planning, the neighborhood plan updates resulted in the community’s key goals to create a place for everyone, lifelong learning, growing food to develop healthy industry, a beautiful, safe place, a strong multicultural commercial center at Othello and a shared multicultural community center.

Based on these goals, **Rainier Valley South – Fulfilling the Promise** will build on the work of the community, the private sector, philanthropic foundations and City departments to create a coordinated action plan to implement a Food Innovation Zone around the Rainier Beach light rail station. As will be demonstrated in this Section, the Food Innovation Zone addresses the Promise Zone goals to create jobs and increase economic activity; improve education opportunities; reduce violent crime and leverage private investment. In addition, the proposal builds on the work and community infrastructure of the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant funded Rainier Beach: A Beautiful, Safe Place for Youth and leverages Seattle’s HUD Challenge Grant funded program, Community Cornerstones. Beginning in January, 2014 the City of Seattle will have the Jonathan Rose Companies begin predevelopment planning and the University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy conduct a Public Service Clinic to develop an economic development strategy for creating a sustainable food innovation zone in Rainier Beach. The City is also developing an Urban Design Framework and Rezone proposal based on the Food Innovation Zone.

This proposal will help implement a coordinated economic mobility strategy through a needs based and assets driven redevelopment of an area that has long been underrepresented, underutilized and lacking in investment. Rainier Valley South has the key components for a successful redevelopment area, including: a clear vision for its future, active and inclusive community engagement, political and agency support, transit accessibility and a geographic location that fully supports the vision. The Food Innovation Zone will address the need for new education and technical training programs as the first rung to new career-path living wage jobs and an incubator for local business ventures with employment opportunities. Providing education and employment alternatives for neighborhood youth will transform areas that are

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<sup>1</sup> These percentages are derived from Block Groups in Tracts 110.01, 111.01, 117, and 118 of the 2010 Census.

“hubs of crime” into “hubs of employment and education”. The proposal will also leverage existing infrastructure along Seattle’s most used transit lines, attract new investment and build on existing assets through an inclusive process focused on four integrated strategies:

**Creating Jobs and Increasing Economic Activity – The Rainier Beach Food Innovation**

**Zone:** The Rainier Beach Food Innovation Zone at the light rail station builds on its unique position adjacent to the regional light industrial and manufacturing center. A multi-purpose Food Innovation Center with wrap around services will be a catalyst for the area to bring together culinary and business skills training, and opportunities to incubate and grow businesses. The Center will enhance the farm-to-table industry by supporting food entrepreneurs, caterers and mobile food vendors to centralize and grow these businesses.

**Improving Education and Workforce Development Opportunities:** There are already a number of programs in place or under development to increase education capacity and preparation for higher education or workplace readiness at Rainier Beach High School. Community Colleges with service areas that include Rainier Valley South are partners looking at how to have more presence in the area. The Seattle Families and Education Levy is improving academic performance in Rainier Valley South. The proposed Food Innovation Center will build upon these efforts.

**Reducing Violent Crime:** In 2012 the City of Seattle, with the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University, received a \$1 million Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant to develop and evaluate a community-led, non-arrest approach to youth crime in the Rainier Beach neighborhood. The Rainier Beach neighborhood is within the designated Promise Zone. The evidence-informed areas of intervention for youth in Rainier Beach that will be supported by the development of a Food Innovation Center are: 1) Increase supervision and provide structure, 2) Change the physical environment, and 3) “It takes a village...”: Building collective efficacy.

**Leveraging Private, State and Federal investment:**

The catalytic development of a Food Innovation Zone in Rainier Valley South leverages a State of Washington funded Opportunity Center for Employment and Education (OCE&E) concept. Private funding sources include the Gates Foundation and other local foundations. The proposal also leverages Community Cornerstones, Seattle’s HUD Challenge Grant funded program, \$1.2 million in leveraged HUD TOD acquisition funds and \$5.5 million in additional public and private capital to purchase up to four properties near light rail for development.

**CREATING JOBS AND INCREASING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY – THE RAINIER BEACH FOOD INNOVATION ZONE**

Food is a natural connection in the Rainier Valley South community; an expression of the community’s diverse heritage that is easily shared and appreciated, cross-generationally and cross-culturally. Rainier Valley South is uniquely located at the nexus of several regional manufacturing and industrial areas and southeast Seattle’s residential neighborhoods. As part of the Neighborhood Plan update, the Rainier Beach light rail station area was identified as a place for a new model of transit oriented development where employment, education and

entrepreneurship come together to not only grow the local economy of Rainier Beach but also enable the neighborhood to become a contributor to the city and regional economy.

### **An Innovative Center for Ethnic Food Production and Distribution**

There is currently no hub of ethnic specialty food production and distribution in Seattle. Rainier Valley South's ethnic diversity is a valuable, untapped resource to establish an international food culture and trade in the neighborhood. A range of products could be designed in concert with and for Seattle's vibrant restaurant trade and mobile food vendors. Rainier Valley South has a unique opportunity to combine its urban farms, ethnic food producers and light industrial zone to become the city's hub of ethnic food production and delivery.

In October, 2013 a Food Innovation Partners workshop brought together community and non-profit organizations working individually in the Rainier Valley food system to form a partnership and agree on program requirements for a Food Innovation Center. The preliminary building program includes a community gathering space, retail spaces, commissary, incubator and training kitchens, food aggregation and value-add food processing, the food bank, daycare, office, classroom and dry and freezer storage. The Center will have the capacity to train low-income residents in culinary and business skills for the food industry and serve as a kitchen incubator for local food entrepreneurs to develop ethnic catering and food truck businesses.

The momentum and support for a multi-purpose Food Innovation Center is strong and the Partners have the potential to leverage resources. An important step towards establishing a food innovation zone in Rainier Beach has been accomplished with the redevelopment of the former City of Seattle Atlantic City Nursery site into an Urban Farm with multiple opportunities for food production, organic gardening classes, cross-cultural food experiences, youth education and employment training.

### **IMPROVING EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Rainier Valley South community places a high value on education as evidenced by the enthusiastic turnout each summer at the Rainier Beach Back 2 School Bash where the community celebrates the beginning of the school year. Despite the area's challenges, enrollment and graduation rates are gradually improving at Rainier Beach High School and the elementary and intermediate schools in the area. There are already a number of programs in place or under development to increase education capacity and preparation for higher education or workplace readiness. A Rainier Beach Promise Zone focused on food innovation and access to post-secondary education and training could build upon these efforts that benefit students in Rainier Beach.

### **The Opportunity Center for Education and Entrepreneurship**

The Food Innovation Center will co-locate with an Opportunity Center for Employment and Education (OCE&E) programmed by the community college system. While the FIC could provide classes in the technical aspects of food delivery, preparation, production and nutrition, ESL and business skills classes, and other post-secondary degree offerings, the OCE&E could provide supporting immigrant services, resume writing, job skills, workforce development, small business development to provide a comprehensive program offering at the site.

The OCE&E located in North Seattle, on the campus of the North Seattle Community College, Housing approximately 120 professionals, the OCE&E project aims to coordinate services to meet current and future workforce needs and shape the delivery of those services to enable people with career challenges achieve self-sufficiency through employment and life-long learning.

Renton Technical College and South Seattle Community College are looking at how to locate programs in Rainier Valley South so that high school students may move seamlessly from high school to community college programs. South Seattle Community College's 13th Year Promise Scholarship is now available to Rainier Beach High School's class of 2014. The purpose of the 13th Year Promise Scholarship is to increase access to higher education for Seattle students, from underrepresented communities.

In addition to its traditional academic curricula, Rainier Beach is home to three Seattle Public Schools Skill Centers program that provides advanced career and technical education programming for high school juniors and seniors including Aerospace Science, Cisco/Information Technology, and Culinary Arts. The Culinary Skills Center provides students with the option for hands-on training in culinary arts that enables entry to food industry employment upon high school graduation or advancement to community college or private culinary programs.

The Families and Education Levy helps schools to prepare all children to graduate from high school and be college/career ready. The 2011 Levy integrated funding from early learning through elementary, middle and high school allowing for investments that are adjusted for the needs and characteristics of individual schools and their students. Rainier Beach's South Shore PK – 8 School, with a racially diverse student body, is a recipient of \$310,000 from the Levy. With the funds, South Shore is able to provide tutoring, improve attendance and counsel at-risk students.

### **REDUCING VIOLENT CRIME:**

In 2012 the City of Seattle, in collaboration with the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University, received a \$1 million grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program to develop and evaluate a community-led, non-arrest approach to youth crime in the Rainier Beach neighborhood. The Rainier Beach neighborhood is within the designated Promise Zone.

This project takes a "hot spots" approach to crime prevention. Concentrations of crime vary from street to street within cities and even neighborhoods. Within cities about half of all recorded crime is concentrated at just 3-5% of street segments (the two block faces between two intersections). Thus, focusing interventions on these small groups of street segments is an efficient way to prevent crime. While increased police activity at hot spots is effective in preventing crime, youth respond better outside the criminal justice system and may be more likely to reoffend if they are arrested and formally processed through the system.

This project therefore aims to develop non-arrest based responses to youth crime hot spots. Community task forces comprised of community members, living and working in identified Rainier Beach hot spots, will be trained in crime prevention and problem-solving techniques and

will select strategies tailored to the specific risk factors at the hot spot based on an evidence-informed framework.

### **Intervention Strategies for Youth**

The evidence-informed areas of intervention for youth in Rainier Beach that will be supported by the development of a Food Innovation Center are:

#### **Increase supervision and provide structure**

Youth crime and violence may be prevented when youth are engaged in structured, supervised activities with positive peer or adult role models. Examples of evidence-based approaches include one-on-one mentoring; Big Brothers, Big Sisters programs.

The Food Innovation Center will provide a structured learning environment where youth are supervised by mentors teaching culinary and life skills. Mentors and community college faculty teaching at the Food Innovation Center have a record of success in their respective fields and will provide positive role models for youth and adult learners.

#### **Change the physical environment**

Environmental approaches change the look and feel of a place to encourage people to look out for each other and follow rules (e.g., improving street lighting, cleaning up trash and graffiti). Environmental approaches also bring together multiple agencies (e.g. police and city agencies like Parks and Recreation or Public Utilities) in a proactive approach to crime prevention. Environmental approaches can also be used with crime problems primarily driven by adult offenders.

The Rainier Beach Food Innovation Center, located at one of the identified Hot Spots, is a redevelopment approach that will change the physical environment that will change the look and feel of the place. The Food Innovation Center will be a structured environment designed and programmed to be a managed space for the purpose of skills training and local business development. The facility will also include community gathering spaces that will be managed and where activity is visible. Redevelopment of the station area into a center focused on food related education and employment will also encourage investment in and improvement of surrounding areas that will help with crime reduction.

#### **“It takes a village...”: Building collective efficacy**

Collective efficacy is the willingness of community members to work together for the common good. Places with high collective efficacy tend to have lower crime rates over time and are unlikely to become crime hot spots, because residents look out for each other, exercise informal social control, and take pride in their surroundings. Building collective efficacy in a community helps young people bond to positive influences like families, schools, and places of worship. Interventions to build collective efficacy are developing and activities like Neighborhood Watch, block parties, trash and graffiti cleanups, and civic participation can help to develop collective efficacy and potentially reduce crime in the long term.

The Rainier Beach FIC is a collective effort on the part of Rainier Beach Moving Forward and other community partners to work together on an innovative approach to improving an area that is currently a Hot Spot. The FIC brings together community groups, education institutions, agencies and non-profit organizations to proactively program the space for activities that provide

youth and adults with opportunities for learning and positive social interaction. The community effort to update the Rainier Beach neighborhood plan reached out to and included youth in the planning process. Rainier Beach youth will continue to be engaged in the process of creating the Food Innovation Center.

**LEVERAGING PRIVATE, STATE AND FEDERAL INVESTMENT:**

The Food Innovation Partners intend to leverage the State funded Opportunity Center for Employment and Education (OCE&E) concept to catalyze the development of the Food Innovation Center. The OCE&E in north Seattle has been successful in providing Seattle's business sector with trained employees and could attract support from the business sector when established in Rainier Valley South. A group of advocates are conducting a feasibility study through Impact Capital and Skillup Washington to create a southeast Seattle version of the North Seattle OCE&E. The feasibility study is identifying: 1) possible locations in South Seattle, 2) agency partners, and 3) other partners committed to the building in order to submit a proposal for legislative funding by November 2013.

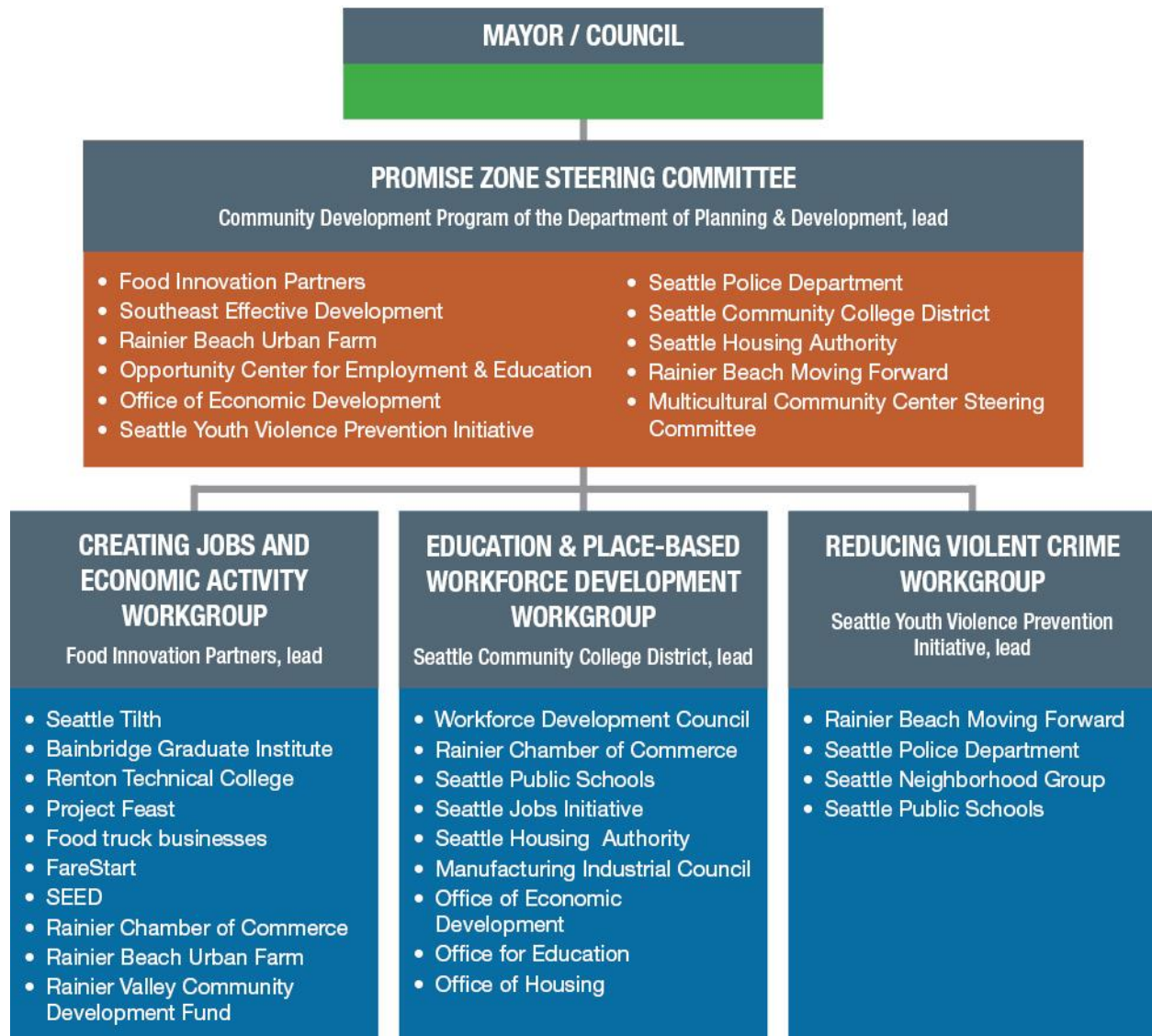
We anticipate accessing private funding sources like the Gates Foundation and other local foundations for the predevelopment, development and operational planning for the FIC. The FIC could also leverage additional private investment from local food industries looking to locate in an area with a potential workforce and facilities to train Rainier Valley and south Seattle residents.

The FID leverages Community Cornerstones, Seattle's HUD Challenge Grant program that funds a new model for equitable development that supports existing economically and culturally diverse residents and businesses while mitigating the impacts of rapid change and gentrification. The three programs of Cornerstones are: a TOD acquisition fund; strengthen the culturally diverse commercial district in Rainier Valley South; and creating the capacity for a shared multicultural community center. The TOD acquisition fund leverages \$1.2 million in HUD funds with \$5.5 million in additional public and private capital to purchase up to four properties near light rail for development of mixed-use projects that will require millions of dollars more in permanent financing.

## CAPACITY AND LOCAL COMMITMENT

### The Partnership Structure

**Rainier Valley South – Fulfilling the Promise** will be led by the City of Seattle. The Mayor and Seattle City Council will jointly oversee the effort. The Promise Zone Steering Committee includes implementing partners who have the expertise to develop an evidence based plan with measurable outcomes in each work area will join the City in leading the effort. The Steering Committee will create the work plan and logic model for the entire project, coordinate plan execution, and oversee the three work groups: Reducing Violent Crime workgroup, Education and Place-based Workforce Development workgroup, and Creating Jobs and Economic Activity workgroup as illustrated in the following organizational chart. The Steering Committee will meet monthly for the first year to set up the initiative.





The **City of Seattle**'s Community Development Program in the Seattle Department of Planning and Development will lead the Promise Zone Steering Committee. The Community Development program has successfully engaged communities in Southeast Seattle, the city's most diverse neighborhood to create their own neighborhood plans. Two are within Rainier Valley South: Rainier Beach and Othello. Through neighborhood planning, these neighborhoods have clearly envisioned innovative projects that are the blueprints for the city's successful federal grants: a planning grant from the Economic Development Administration; Communities Putting Prevention to Work; the Byrne Justice Innovation Grant; and a HUD Challenge Grant. Each of these grants has focused on creating stability for the Rainier Valley community. The Promise Zone designation would coordinate the work of our partners and focus local and federal investments to create economic mobility for its residents through real pathways to career-path living wage jobs by decreasing violent crime and by catalyzing private investment.

Steering Committee Leads:

**SYVPI**, manager of "Rainier Beach: A Safe and Beautiful Place for Youth", the City's Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant will coordinate and cross fertilize these two place-based initiatives to maximize success. SYVPI will use its deep community relationships and expertise using data analysis to develop evidence based non-arrest strategies to lead the Reducing Violent Crime workgroup.

The **Food Innovation Partners** will lead the Creating Jobs and Economic Activity workgroup and coordinate neighborhood and community support around the creation of a first catalytic development to kick off this multi-phase effort to create an Innovation District that supports education, entrepreneurship, employment and economic development. It will also provide program support and services through the existing programs of the Partners, to support the overall goals of the Promise Zone.

The **Seattle Community College District** will lead the Education and Place-based Workforce Development workgroup. Through the Pathways to Careers initiative, SCC honed educational delivery and support structures to accelerate student progression. Working with industry, SCC strengthened employment engagement strategies that ensure academic offerings meet industry needs and secure employment opportunities for graduates. The Georgetown Campus of South Seattle Community College is well-positioned to shape education and technical training programs as part of a place-based workforce development strategy.

The Remaining Steering Committee Members:

- Southeast Effective Development: strengthening businesses and working to bring jobs into Rainier Valley South
- Rainier Beach Urban Farm: growing businesses from farm products, including value added products, and providing food education to the community and local schools
- Opportunity Center for Employment and Education: provides integrated educational, vocational, employment and supportive services
- Office for Economic Development: works to create a robust economy and broadly shared prosperity
- Seattle Police Department: a partner in the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant

- Seattle Housing Authority: owns and manages a HOPE VI community and other apartments in Rainier Valley South and provides services to its residents, including its youth
- Rainier Beach Moving Forward: convener of community members and organizations working for the future of its neighborhood
- Multicultural Community Center Steering Committee: a coalition of immigrant and refugee community leaders

#### Supporting Partners and Workgroup Members:

- Reducing Violent Crime workgroup
  - SYVPI, lead
  - Rainier Beach Moving Forward
  - Seattle Police Department
  - Seattle Neighborhoods Group: works to prevent crime and build community through partnerships
  - Seattle Public Schools
- Education & Place-based Workforce Development workgroup
  - Seattle Community College District, lead
  - Workforce Development Council: a nonprofit workforce “think tank” and grant-making organization - support a strong economy and each person achieving self-sufficiency
  - Rainier Chamber of Commerce: improves businesses and neighborhood growth for Southeast Seattle
  - Seattle Public Schools
  - Seattle Jobs Initiative: creates opportunities for people to support themselves and their families through living-wage careers.
  - Seattle Housing Authority
  - Manufacturing Industrial Council: advocates for industrial businesses
  - Office of Economic Development
  - Office for Education: manages Seattle’s Families and Education Levy - support to children and their families both in and out of school so that all children are ready to learn
  - Office of Housing: manages Seattle Housing Levy - funds affordable workforce housing
- Creating Jobs and Economic Activity workgroup
  - Food Innovation Partners, lead
  - Seattle Tilth: co-manages the Rainier Beach Urban Farm – cultivating farm to table jobs and knowledge, and supporting food aggregation through partnerships with the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and local agricultural community
  - Bainbridge Graduate Institute: knowledge base and research support for food production and aggregation facilities and the use of food hubs for economic development
  - Renton Technical College: prepares a diverse student population for work, fulfilling the employment needs of individuals, business and industry
  - Project Feast: empowering immigrant and refugee cooks: Transforms lives by providing pathways to sustainable employment in the food industry
  - Food Truck businesses: small business operators based in the community
  - FareStart: training for people for jobs in the food industry and providing institution production of meals for schools and childcare facilities
  - Southeast Effective Development
  - Rainier Chamber of Commerce

- Rainier Beach Urban Farm
- Rainier Valley Community Development Fund: spurs economic development in the Rainier Valley by offering technical assistance and loans with flexible terms and affordable interest rates.

Areas of Expertise:

The Steering Committee and each workgroup are carefully constructed to include partners with a balance of the following areas of expertise:

- subject matter experts who will inform the project with research, data analysis and national best practices
- public and private sector partners to inform the work with both perspectives
- strategy implementers who have deep experience in the intricacies of making an idea real will inform the design of the program to minimize implementation glitches
- local experts who intimately know the area, the community, and the local politics in addition to the subject matter will bring the community perspective and interests to the table through direct engagement
- collaborators who understand how professional expertise and community passion can work together for the greater good and lead a group of people with very different expertise to work together

Accountability:

The Workgroups will meet monthly with the lead of each workgroup reporting on progress and seeking opportunities for synergy at the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee will brief the Mayor and Council two times each year to keep the decision makers updated on the progress of the program; to seek input; and to provide guidance to inform upcoming policy and investment decisions.

Finally, the Promise Zone Steering Committee and the workgroups will host annual community meetings build community capacity as well as to provide updates and to solicit input.