

East Liberty, Larimer, Garfield



2009

Weed & Seed

Report to the Community



Lawrenceville



West Pittsburgh Communities



A partnership of Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, the U.S. Attorney of Western Pennsylvania and community stakeholders.

“Operation **Weed & Seed** gets at the heart of what the City of Pittsburgh is all about: growing our communities into safe, secure, green and vibrant places for people to live, work and thrive.”
-Mayor Luke Ravenstahl

About the Initiative

Weed & Seed is a comprehensive, joint law enforcement and community investment strategy designed to make communities safer. This multi-agency strategy, sponsored by the Department of Justice, is focused on crime prevention and community revitalization.

The City of Pittsburgh currently has three Federally-recognized Weed & Seed sites: 1) East Liberty, Larimer, Garfield, 2) Lawrenceville, and 3) West Pittsburgh communities.

It is a community-driven strategy. Residents, community leaders, business owners, law enforcement, social service providers, partners, and other key stakeholders come together to plan and implement programs that address the strengths and needs of *their* neighborhoods.

Four elements make up Operation **Weed & Seed** :

Law Enforcement Operation Weed & Seed enables communities to reduce violent and drug crime. By working in partnership with the local police Zone, as well as the Weed & Seed Task Force—a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional task force designed to interrupt the flow of illicit drugs into neighborhoods—we are able to enhance community safety and suppress crime.

Community Policing Operation Weed & Seed assists communities in forming collaborative partnerships with law enforcement, and enables neighborhoods to mobilize residents in proactive strategies against crime and drugs.

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Operation Weed & Seed strengthens community capacity to increase the quality of life. The strategy enables communities to assess prevention, intervention, and treatment needs, and promotes culturally relevant and effective social service programming.

Neighborhood Restoration Operation Weed & Seed promotes effective neighborhood restoration and economic development efforts to revitalize family and community economic stability.



Mayor Luke Ravenstahl at Lawrenceville United's Summer Celebration, a Weed & Seed Initiative

East Liberty, Larimer, Garfield

The neighborhood of East Liberty was first awarded official recognition as a Weed & Seed site in 1997. In 2003, the site was expanded to include the neighborhoods of Larimer and Garfield. Over the past 10 years, community partners, residents, law enforcement, the U.S. Attorney of Western Pennsylvania, and City agencies have worked together to turn the tide on crime.

In recent years, neighborhood leaders have encouraged economic vibrancy and have been successful in attracting new businesses to their streets. In order to ensure a workforce prepared to meet these new demands, the East Liberty, Larimer, Garfield Weed & Seed Steering Committee decided to focus its efforts on connecting residents with local employers, with a special emphasis on those reentering the community after incarceration.

Over the past year, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation and Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center spearheaded a Weed & Seed-sponsored workforce development initiative that brought together 18 local organizations to provide job training and placement to East End residents. More than 1,500 job seekers participated in employment events in the East End through this initiative.

Said Rick Flanagan, director of youth development for Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, **“Weed and Seed has had a tremendous impact on tens of thousands of young people in the Greater East Liberty area. It has been a dynamic force that has encouraged partnerships on projects in the East End. After all these years, we’re a pretty collaborative group.”**

In 2009, the East Liberty, Larimer, Garfield Weed & Seed site became the first “Graduated” site in the City of Pittsburgh. It will no longer receive Federal funding, but will continue to work towards promoting the safety and wellbeing of its neighborhoods.

Job Seekers and employers met at a job fair hosted by the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center



Photo credit: Paula Martinac, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Weed & Seed
promotes
long-term
community
health and
resilience

Lawrenceville

Weed & Seed strengthens communities and increases quality of life

In 2006, the neighborhood of Lawrenceville began to implement the Weed & Seed strategy. With long-standing community organizations already working to address public safety and quality of life issues, the Steering Committee has worked to develop and strengthen strategies to reduce crime and revitalize their neighborhood.

Lawrenceville United, a non-profit, resident-driven organization, maintains an active block watch network with five block watches that meet on a monthly basis. Captains from each of these block watches come together bimonthly to discuss the most pressing neighborhood concerns with Commander George Trosky of Zone 2. Additionally, Lawrenceville United hosts an annual National Night Out Celebration in the neighborhood, providing an additional opportunity for residents to interact and build relationships with local law enforcement. Community members regularly share intelligence with law enforcement through meetings, silent complaint forms and phone calls to 911.

Since the inception of Operation Weed & Seed in Lawrenceville in 2006, the most serious crimes (Part I) have decreased by 21 percent, compared to a Citywide decrease of 14 percent. Drug violation arrests have increased by 19 percent as compared to a 7 percent increase Citywide, and weapons violation arrests have increased by 50 percent as compared to a 15 percent decrease Citywide. These statistics are a testament to the work of the Zone 2 Police, Weed & Seed Task Force and the core of active, engaged community residents that make public safety a priority. The most serious crimes have declined, while increased arrests have taken drugs and weapons off the street.

Pittsburgh Police Commander George Trosky of Zone 2 said of Lawrenceville, “Weed & Seed initiatives have benefited my community by providing above baseline police resources to apprehend the most violent criminal offenders, while creating the valuable opportunity to foster partnerships with community leaders to make neighborhoods safer.”



Officer Janine Davis of Zone 2 at the 9th Ward Happenings Block Watch

In the coming year, the Lawrenceville Steering Committee will continue to build and strengthen partnerships between law enforcement and residents in an effort to augment gains in public safety.

Photo credit: Sarah Ralich, Lawrenceville United

West Pittsburgh Communities

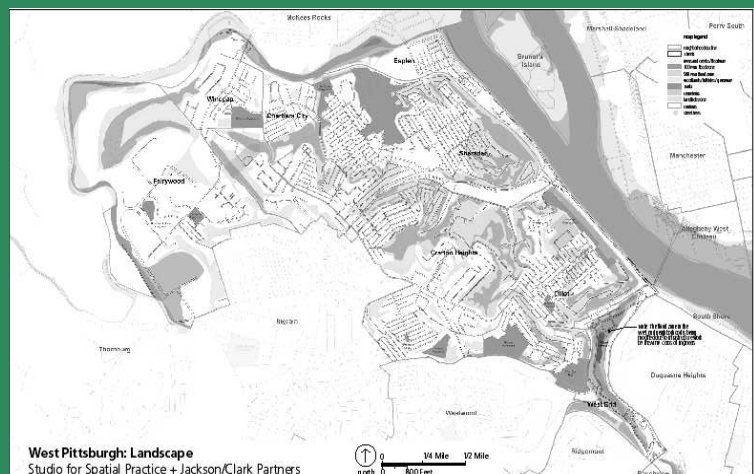
The West Pittsburgh Communities Weed & Seed site is composed of eight neighborhoods: Chartiers City, Crafton Heights, Elliott, Esplen, Fairywood, Sheraden, West End, and Windgap. Since 2007, these neighborhoods have strategized to address seemingly intractable public safety issues in their communities including blight, drug dealing, and quality of life crimes.

Over the past year, the West Pittsburgh Steering Committee has worked towards the development of a community action plan that will develop a cross-neighborhood vision outlining how the neighborhoods can work together to overcome key common issues. The plan focuses on capacity building and collaborative problem-solving in the entire West Pittsburgh geography.

With funding from Senator Wayne Fontana, Jackson Clark Partners and Studio for Spatial Practice were hired as consultants to spearhead the process.

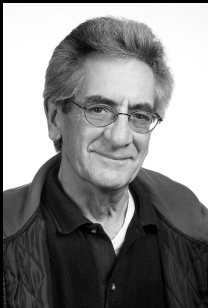
Karen Kirchner, resident and vice president of Esplen Citizen's Council, encouraged all in the site to get involved: **"You can participate in seeing the development of a plan that will be a start into changing our declining neighborhoods into healthy, thriving neighborhoods. How exciting it will be to know that you are a part of the history of our communities!"**

More information about the West Pittsburgh Community Planning process is available at www.westpittsburghplan.org.



Map of West Pittsburgh Communities by Studio for Spatial Practice

Weed & Seed revitalizes neighborhoods



West Pittsburgh Community Action Plan Participants

Photo credit: Larry Rippel

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