



# Buffalo Promise Neighborhood

Crime and Safety

Spring 2015

*Community Brief*

# About this initiative

*This report provides an update on Buffalo Promise Neighborhood's crime and safety initiative. Launched in 2013, **Buffalo Promise Neighborhood** has been working with residents, block clubs, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies to create and implement a series of community-based, data-driven strategies to reduce crime and improve neighborhood quality of life.*

*The community and law enforcement stakeholders guiding this plan have identified five specific strategies derived from a **comprehensive analysis of community and crime data** overseen by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute and an **extensive community engagement process** led by Buffalo Promise Neighborhood and its community partners. Implementation efforts discussed in this report are made possible through multiple funding sources and programs.*



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## BCJI Partnership

In addition to the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood and its research partner UB Regional Institute the BCJI Partnership is listed in alphabetical order below:

**Belmont Housing Resources of WNY, Inc.**

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**Board of Block Clubs, Buffalo and Erie County**

Ada Hopson-Clemons

Linda Friedenbergl

**Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo**

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**Buffalo Police Department**

Deputy Commissioner Kimberly Beaty

Chief Carmen Menza

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**University District Block Club Coalition**

Annie Cheatham

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**University District Councilmember's Office**

Councilman Rasheed Wyatt

# About this report

This report offers a progress update on Buffalo Promise Neighborhood's crime and safety initiative with an emphasis on where and what neighborhood crime looked like in 2014.

The first half of the report offers a dashboard on several key crime metrics - violent crimes, property crimes, shootings or instances of shots fired, and citizen calls reporting suspected gang or drug activity. Readers can explore trends across these metrics for 2014 in comparison to an average from 2010 - 2013. Maps visualizing where various types of criminal activity has concentrated are also provided.

The second half of the report provides a progress update on the five strategies. First, an in-depth, data analysis of "Use Data and Tools to Target Crime" and "Partner with the Corner Stores" is provided followed by programmatic descriptions updating the other three strategies - "Preserve Housing and Target Blight," "Engage Youth in Positive Opportunities" and "Grow Community Involvement."

## Key Terms

**VIOLENT CRIMES:** As defined by FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, violent crime includes murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes are those offenses which involve force or threat of force.

**PROPERTY CRIMES:** As per the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, property crimes include the offenses of burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft. The object of the theft-type offenses is the taking of money or property, but there is no force or threat of force against the victims.

**SHOOTINGS:** This data includes reported shootings or shots fired. Shootings include offenses when a gun's bullet(s) injure a victim, while shots fired include instances when a gun is fired but the bullet(s) do not strike a victim.

**GANG AND DRUG ACTIVITY:** This data includes 911 and 311 calls made during the reporting period for suspected gang and drug activity.

## Buffalo Promise Neighborhood (BPN) Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI)

### Strategies

#### Strategy 1. Use Data and Tools to Target Crime

Through the BCJI initiative, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, its research partner and its partners in law enforcement are performing detailed analysis of where crime is clustering, how it varies by day of the week or time of day, and where different types of crime most frequently occur. This detailed analysis is being used to identify "drivers of crimes," focus resources, and target special crime details for the BPN Zone.

#### Strategy 2. Partner with the Corner Stores

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood and its partners are working to understand why corner stores attract street level crime and are working with business owners, law enforcement, Buffalo PeaceMakers, the City of Buffalo and residents to make sure that corner stores become assets, not liabilities, for the neighborhood.

#### Strategy 3. Preserve Housing and Target Blight

Vacant homes and neighborhood blight are widely recognized as invitations for crime and dangerous activity. Attacking vacancy and neighborhood blight can help residents and law enforcement officials fight crime and promote safety.

#### Strategy 4. Engage Youth in Positive Opportunities

Youth can be our greatest opportunity for change. With the right direction, young people can become the next generation of community leaders. Absent such direction and positive influence, youth can fall victim to the temptations of the street – drugs, violence and crime.

#### Strategy 5. Grow Community Involvement

Through this initiative, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood will support the creation of new block clubs and broaden membership of existing ones, provide training for neighborhood residents, and support the collaborative work of existing organizations and groups who are working to enhance the quality of life and safety of the neighborhood.

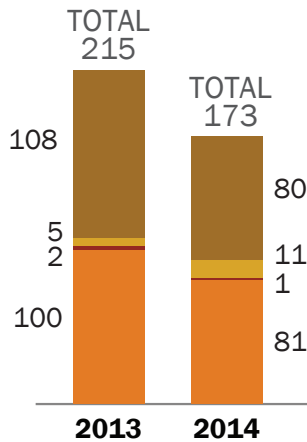
# Violent Crimes

## VIOLENT CRIMES: ASSAULT MURDER RAPE ROBBERY

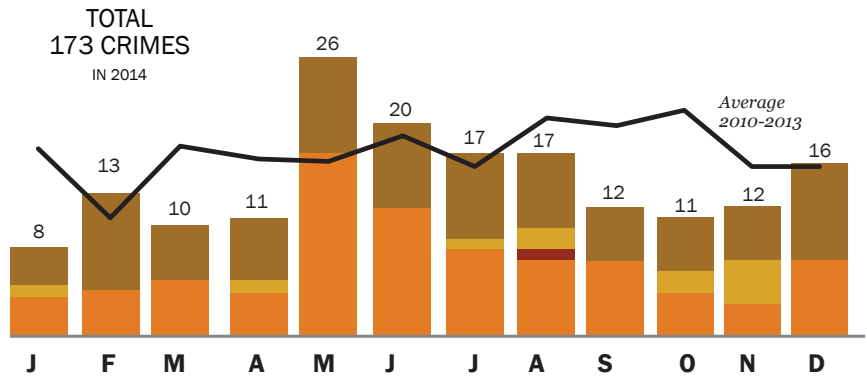
Compared to both recent and historical trends, violent crime is down in the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood zone. Overall, violent crime is down 20 percent from 2013 and down 15 percent from the average for years 2010 - 2013.

Seasonally, spring/early summer saw the most violent crimes. In particular, the month of May was significantly more violent than usual. Conversely, the neighborhood saw considerably fewer instances of violent crime than is typical during the fall months of 2014.

COMPARED TO PRIOR YEAR



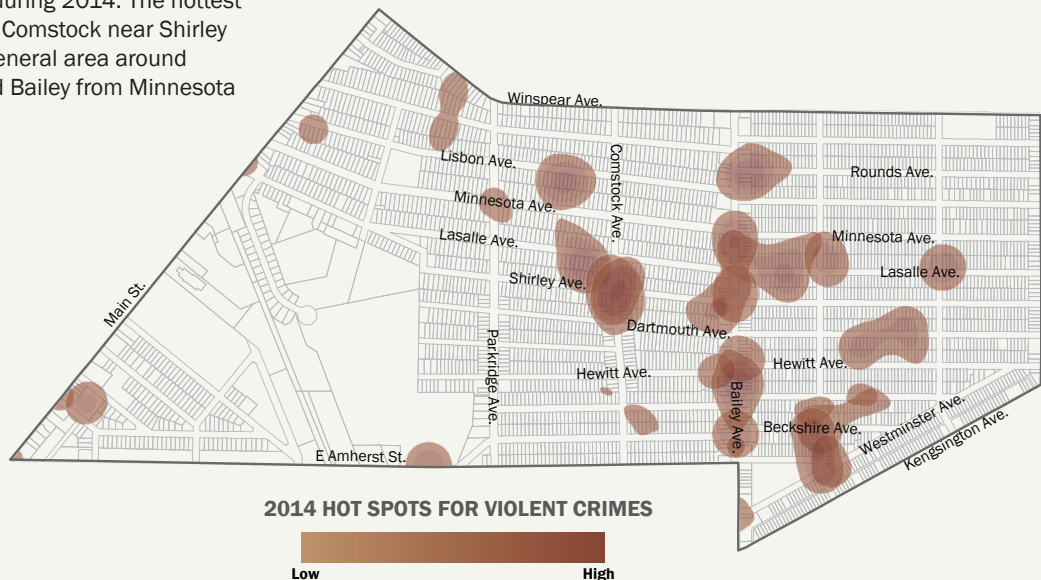
2014 COMPARED TO PAST 4 YEAR AVERAGE



Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center, 2014  
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

## HOT SPOTS RELATED TO VIOLENT CRIMES

Consistent with past trends, violent crime was concentrated around Bailey Avenue and several smaller residential areas during 2014. The hottest spots for the year include: Comstock near Shirley Avenue and Lasalle; the general area around Berkshire and Suffolk; and Bailey from Minnesota to E. Amherst.



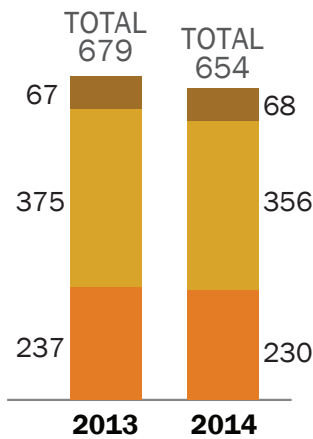
# Property Crimes

## PROPERTY CRIMES: BURGLARY LARCENY MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

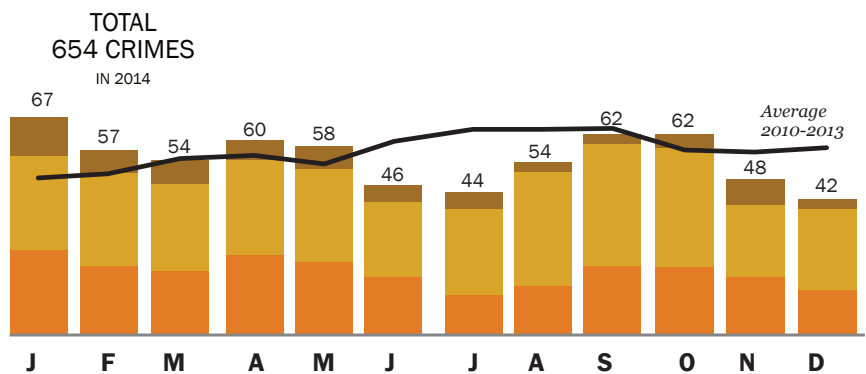
Rates for property crime declined slightly in 2014. Specifically, property crime was down four percent from what was seen in 2013 and down three percent compared to the four-year average between 2010 and 2013.

From a seasonal perspective, property crime was lower than average during the summer and at the end of the year. Conversely, it was slightly higher than average during the first five months of the year.

COMPARED TO PRIOR YEAR



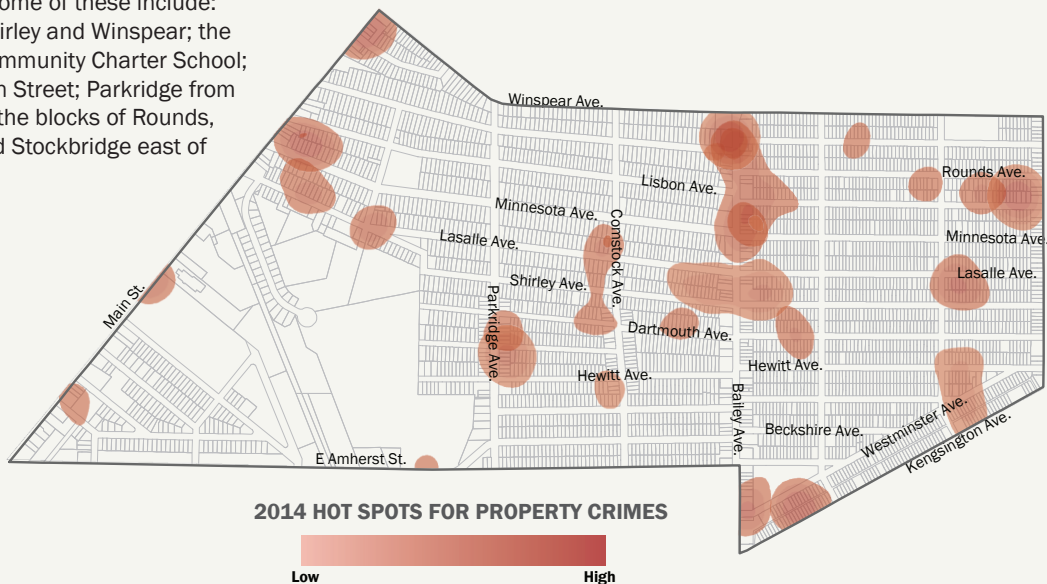
2014 COMPARED TO PAST 4 YEAR AVERAGE



Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center, 2014  
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

## HOT SPOTS RELATED TO PROPERTY CRIMES

While property crime tends to disperse more than violent crime, there are some areas where it concentrated in 2014. Some of these include: Bailey Avenue between Shirley and Winspear; the area near Westminster Community Charter School; several corners along Main Street; Parkridge from Hewitt to Dartmouth; and the blocks of Rounds, Lisbon, Lasalle, Hewitt and Stockbridge east of Suffolk.



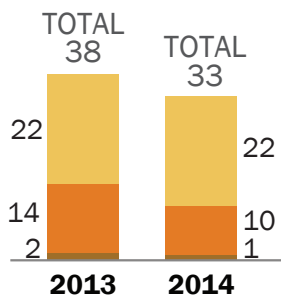
# Shootings

## REPORTS RELATED TO SHOOTINGS WITH INJURY SHOTS FIRED HOMICIDE

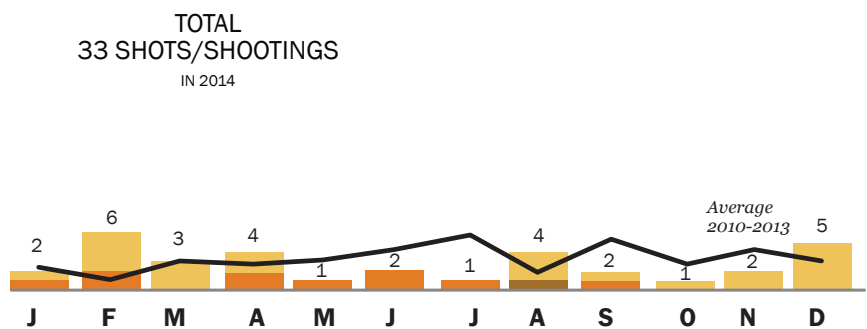
During 2014, shootings were down from both past and recent trends. Compared to 2013, shootings were down 15 percent. In comparison to the 4-year average between 2010 and 2013, shootings were down 16 percent.

Despite a slight spike in shootings in the first four months of 2014, shootings were below average for most months of the year. Between May and December, only two months saw a higher than average amount of shootings: August (which included the neighborhood's only homicide for the year) and December.

COMPARED TO PRIOR YEAR



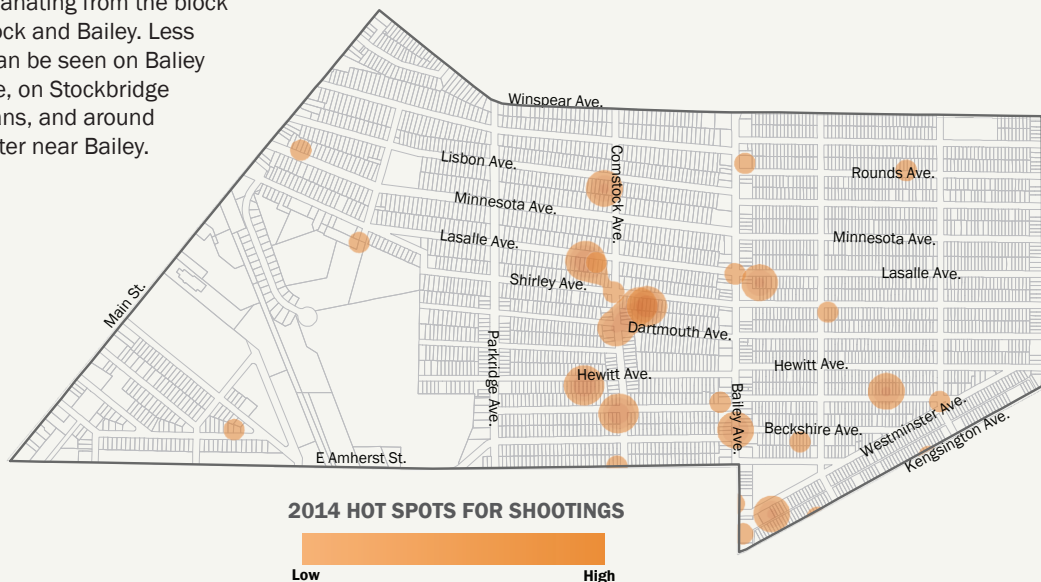
2014 COMPARED TO PAST 4 YEAR AVERAGE



Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center, 2014  
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

## HOT SPOTS RELATED TO SHOOTINGS

A heavy concentration of neighborhood shootings for 2014 were nearby Comstock Avenue, with the greatest frequency emanating from the block of Shirley between Comstock and Bailey. Less frequent concentrations can be seen on Bailey near Berkshire and Lasalle, on Stockbridge between Suffolk and Orleans, and around Kensington and Westminster near Bailey.



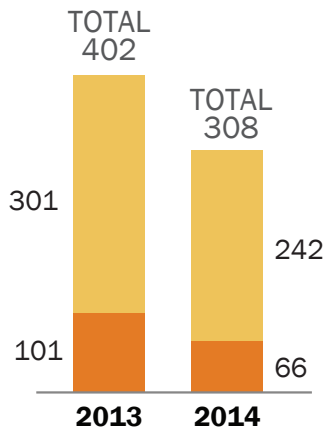
# Gang and Drugs

## 311 & 911 CALLS RELATED TO GANGS DRUGS

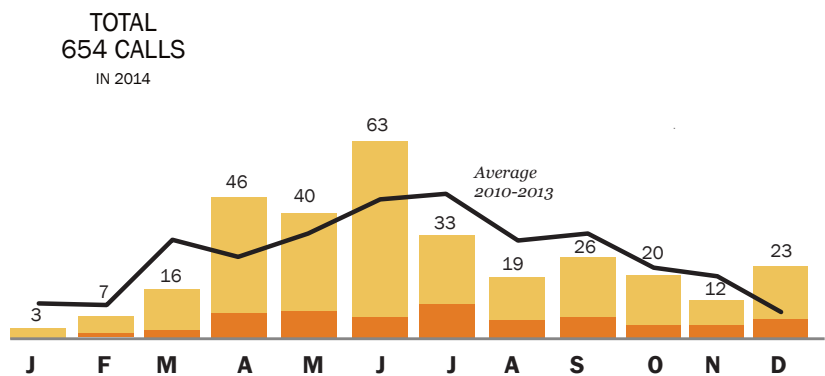
Citizen calls to 311 and 911 to report suspected gang and drug activity are down 23 percent compared to last year and down four percent compared to the average for the past four years.

Although calls were down for most months in 2014, there was a spike in the spring and early summer. The months of April, May and June accounted for nearly half of all calls made and were collectively 42 percent higher than what is typically seen.

COMPARED TO PRIOR YEAR



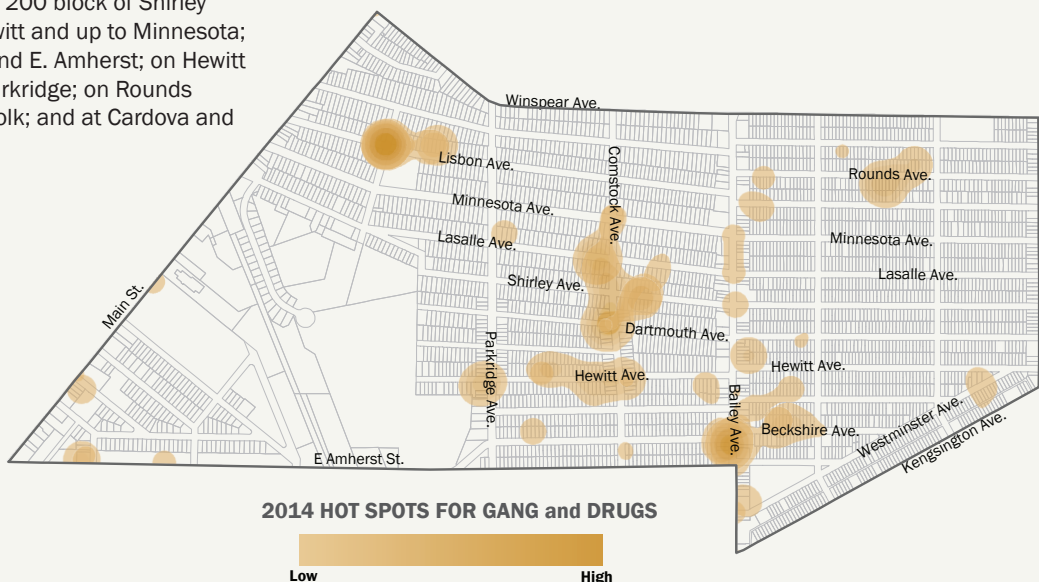
2014 COMPARED TO PAST 4 YEAR AVERAGE



Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center, 2014  
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

## HOT SPOTS RELATED TO GANG AND DRUGS

Suspected gang and drug activity was concentrated primarily around five areas: along Comstock, centered at the 200 block of Shirley and spanning down to Hewitt and up to Minnesota; around Bailey, Berkshire and E. Amherst; on Hewitt between Comstock and Parkridge; on Rounds between Orleans and Suffolk; and at Cardova and Lisbon.



# Strategy Update

## 1. Use data and tools to target crime

### Update in Progress

Working with the effort's research partner and the Erie County Crime Analysis Center, the Buffalo Police Department's E District has identified areas where certain types of crimes have historically clustered. This information has enabled the E District to target police details to areas with chronic crime problems and consider leveraging other tools like security cameras, to better attack criminal activity where it concentrates.

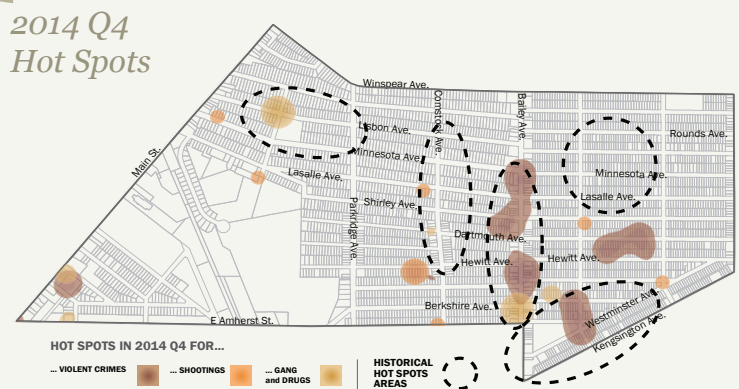
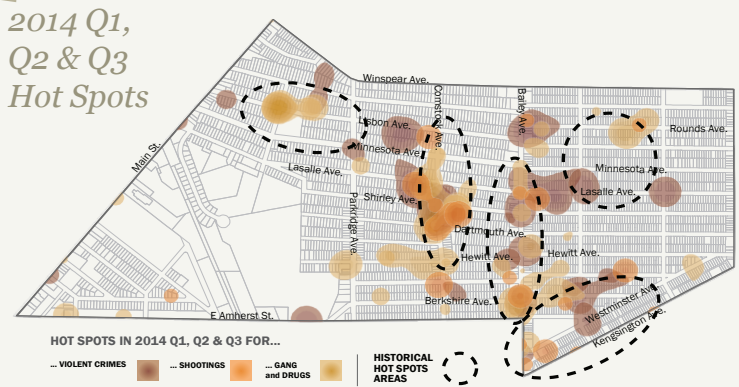
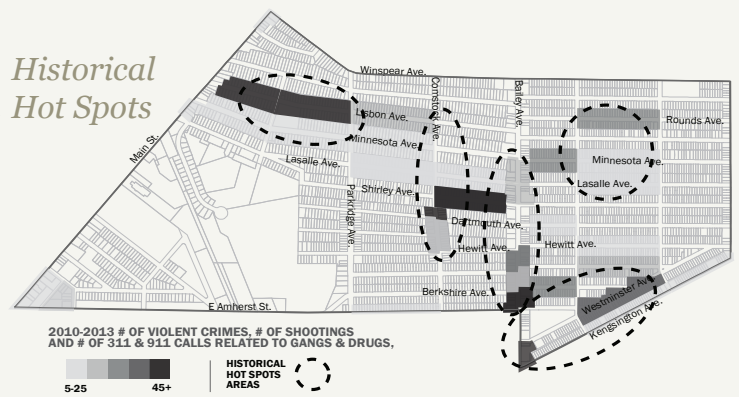
### An In-Depth Look

Shaded blocks on the map below illustrate "historic hot spots" for violent crime, shootings and suspected drug/gang activities. Generally, these areas include Lisbon and Minnesota near Cordova; Comstock from Hewitt to Minnesota; Bailey Avenue from Kensington to Minnesota; Rounds between Suffolk and Orleans; and along Kensington and Westminster.

These areas have been targeted with police details and other safety interventions through the BCJI initiative.

Over the first nine months of 2014, shootings, violent crime and suspected gang/drug activity decreased in these "hot spot" areas. Yet, even as violent crime metrics declined, these areas continued to see the greatest concentration of violence and suspected drug and gang activity. In particular, what has traditionally been the "hottest" area (around Shirley and Dartmouth near Comstock) continued to be the most troublesome.

During the remaining three months of 2014, significant progress can be seen in breaking up some crime hot spot areas. Most notably, violent crime and suspected drug/gang activity was mostly absent in the neighborhood's "hottest" area - Shirley and Dartmouth near Comstock.





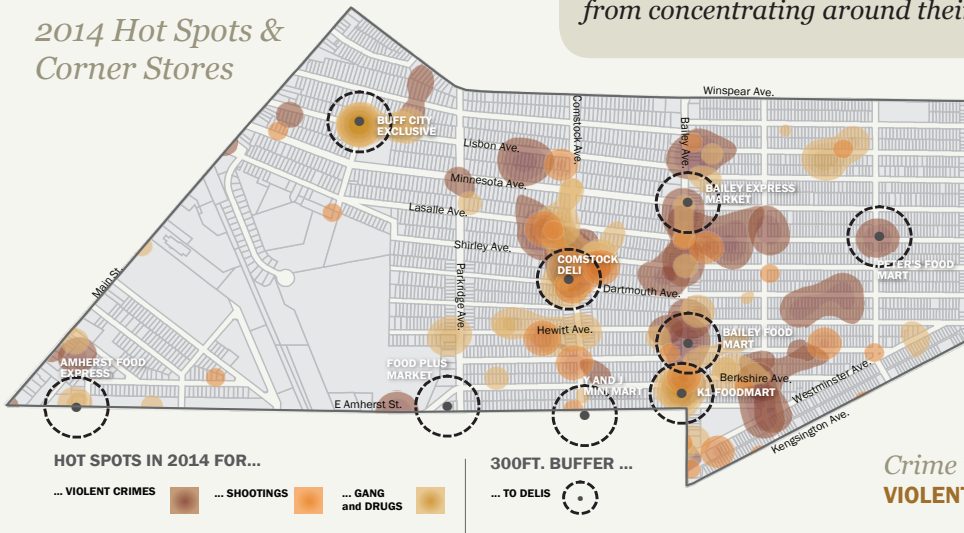
# Strategy Update

## 2. Partner with the corner stores

### Update in Progress

Crime analysis showed that a high concentration of violence and street level crime has concentrated around neighborhood corner stores and delis. Recently, the initiative has launched a “Code of Conduct” pledge and monitoring system to compel business owners to operate in a way that discourages criminal activity from concentrating around their establishments.

### 2014 Hot Spots & Corner Stores



### Crime within 300ft from Corner Stores

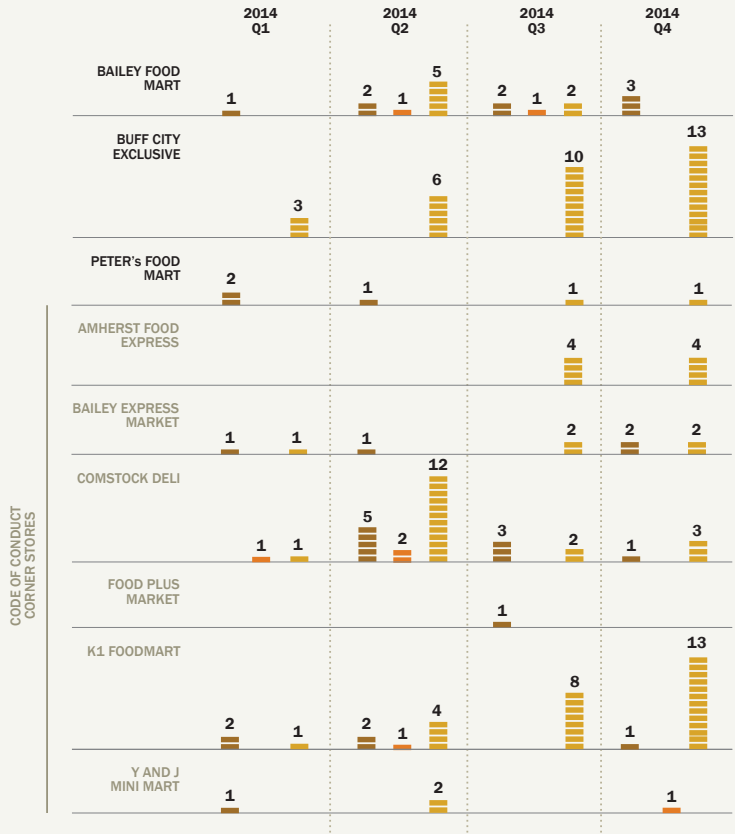
**VIOLENT CRIME SHOOTINGS GANG & DRUGS**

Analysis of crime trends between 2010 and 2013 found that over half of all drug or gang related calls to 311 or 911 were in the immediate vicinity of neighborhood corner stores or delis. Similarly, one in five violent crimes are concentrated around these establishments.

While 2014 experienced a decline in crime and suspected gang/drug activity around corner stores, it remained significant. This was especially true for three corner stores: K1 Foodmart on Bailey near Berkshire; the Comstock Deli at Dartmouth and Comstock; and Buff City Exclusive at Lisbon and Cardova.

Of the nine corner stores in the neighborhood, six signed the Code of Conduct pledge earlier this year. Identified in grey text to the right, the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Deli Code of Conduct Impact Team will look to monitor progress of these stores in the coming months of 2015.

For the three corner stores listed at the top of the table, the Code of Conduct Team will continue outreach efforts to encourage their owners to sign the pledge.



# Strategy Update

## 3. Preserve housing and target blight

**10 Houses Renovated**

5 sold  
4 under sales contract  
1 under construction

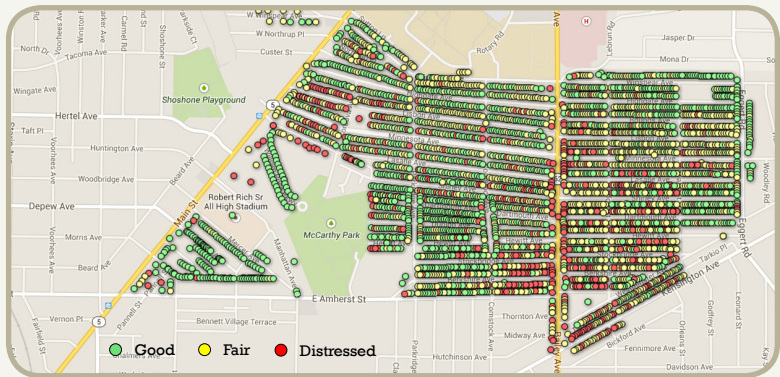
**4,400** housing units surveyed

Worked with Re-Tree the District to plant

**180 trees**

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood continues to work with community partners, housing agencies and funders to target blight and invest in the neighborhood's housing stock. Major highlights include: the **renovation of ten vacant and abandoned neighborhood homes** in partnership with Belmont Housing Resources of WNY, the John R. Oishei Foundation, Buffalo LISC, and M&T Bank; launching a **citizen-driven survey of housing conditions** to better understand neighborhood vacancy and inform investment and revitalization strategies; and providing resources and organizing volunteers for **Re-Tree the District and Bailey Fights Blight** to make the community more welcoming and less conducive to criminal activity.

Community Blight Windshield survey



## 4. Engage youth in positive opportunities

Building on its partnerships with neighborhood schools, law enforcement, community groups, and social service providers, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood supports efforts that engages young people in positive opportunities. Highlights for the year include: Launching the **PACE (Positive Actions Create Excellence) referral program**, supported by a designated Buffalo Promise caseworker who works with the Buffalo Police Department and other law enforcement partners to identify at-risk and disconnected youth and connect them to programs that can better themselves; hosting annual **“Teens in Leadership Training”** conferences to build confidence and civic engagement in seventh and eighth graders; and launching the **Council for Unity**, a school-based service learning program focused on teaching youth conflict resolution and other skills to promote safety.

**180**

young people receiving services through the **PACE program**

**300** teens

trained to be civic leaders through the **TILT conference**

**546**

schoolchildren

learning how to be anti-violence advocates through the

**Council for Unity**

# Strategy Update

## 5. Grow community involvement



Annual Day of Service  
March, 2015



Community Safety Meeting  
July, 2014

# 1,488 citizens engaged

at Buffalo Promise  
Neighborhood  
community meetings,  
events,  
training sessions and  
service programs

Through its various community-based programming, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood seeks to partner with residents and stakeholders to enhance neighborhood quality of life. Some highlights for 2014 include: convening a **Community Council for Buffalo Promise Neighborhood** that collaborates with the University District Block Club Coalition and other neighborhood partners to address community issues; **launching a neighborhood watch program** in partnership with the community police officers from E-District; supporting a **citizen training program** in the concepts of “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design”; and hosting an **annual Community Fun Day and Holiday Food Drive**.

