



Buffalo Promise Neighborhood

Crime and Safety

Summer 2014

Community Brief

About

*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.*



Buffalo Promise
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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.

Mike Riegel

Buffalo Police Department

Deputy Commissioner Kimberly Beaty

Chief Carmen Menza

Chief Kevin Brinkworth

Captain David Stabler

Lieutenant Steve Nichols

Officer Derrick Floyd

Officer Angelo Threats

Maureen Oakley

Buffalo PeaceMakers

Pastor James Giles

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Community Council

Bradford Watts

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Erie County Crime Analysis Center

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Erie County Youth Services

Gary Damon, Jr.

Federal Bureau of Investigations, Buffalo

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Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Buffalo

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NYS Minorities in Criminal Justice

Anthony Wiley

University at Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center

Latricia Chisholm

University District Block Club Coalition

Annie Cheatham

University District Councilmember's Office

Councilman Rasheed Wyatt

A plan for Action

A data-driven, community-based approach:

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood's crime and safety strategies were shaped through a collaborative process involving regular meetings of the BCJI Partnership, ongoing engagement of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Community Council's Crime and Safety Committee, comprehensive analysis of crime and community-level data, and a survey of 200+ neighborhood residents and stakeholders.

Community Survey, Summer – Fall 2013:

Over a 3-month period, a community survey focusing on resident perceptions of safety and quality of life was conducted across the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood zone.

The effort's research partner, UB Regional Institute, works regularly with Erie County Crime Analysis Center and Buffalo Police Department to analyze and interpret crime data – where it is clustering, when it is occurring and how it is connected to other information gathered about the community.

Regular meetings of community and law enforcement stakeholders working to develop strategies and collaborate on implementation.

A wide array of other community-level data is regularly reviewed and integrated into the work and analysis.



Community Survey



"Hot Spot" and Crime Analysis



Listening to the community and subject matter experts



Other data - 311, property info., etc

Five Strategies:

Bringing together what the data and community conveys about crime drivers and what the community says is important to neighborhood safety and quality of life, five strategies were developed and are being implemented as part of this effort. Outlined to the right are the strategies intended to address issues of crime and safety and build on evidence-based research about what works to increase safety.

STRATEGY 1. Use **data and tools** to target crime

STRATEGY 2. Partner with the **corner stores**

STRATEGY 3. Preserve housing and target **blight**

STRATEGY 4. Engage **youth in positive opportunities**

STRATEGY 5. Grow **community involvement**

Partnering for Action

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood and its partners know that successful implementation of the five strategies will only happen if neighborhood residents and community partners are willing to join the effort and do their part to achieve the community vision for a safe, healthy, and prosperous neighborhood.

Strategy 1. Use data and tools to target crime

About this Strategy: Crime is not spread evenly across cities, communities or even neighborhoods. Research shows crime often clusters in some areas and not in others. 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.

What the data says

The data tells us a lot. For example, over the past four years (2010 – 2013), 60+ percent of calls to 911 reporting gang and drug activity were clustered in a handful of blocks in the neighborhood. A similar trend can be seen for where shootings or reports of shots fired have occurred. Less than ten percent of the area of the neighborhood accounts for about 40 percent of all shootings.

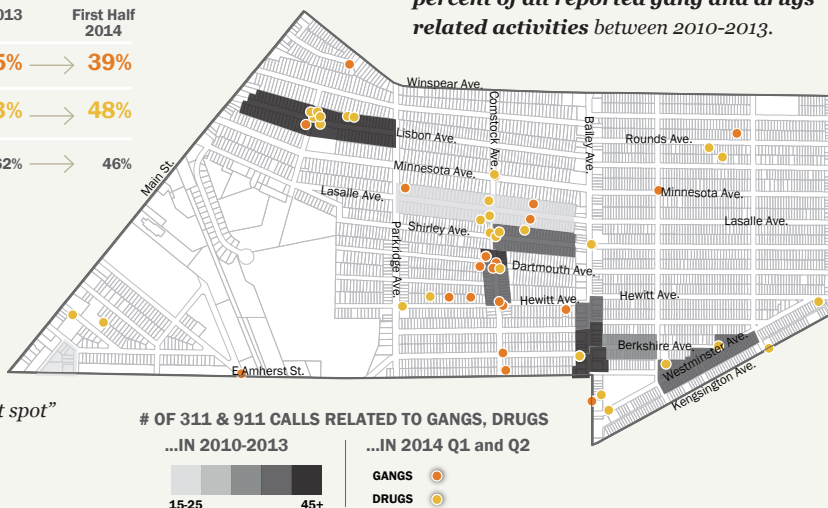
Property crimes, like home burglary and theft are less concentrated in specific areas, but there are trends in the data that can help law enforcement target burglaries and catch criminals.

% OF CALLS WITHIN HOT SPOTS

Gang and Drug Hot Spots are based on 311 and 911 calls made between 2010 – 2013.

CALLS	2010-2013	First Half 2014
GANG	55%	39%
DRUG	63%	48%
TOTAL CALLS	62%	46%

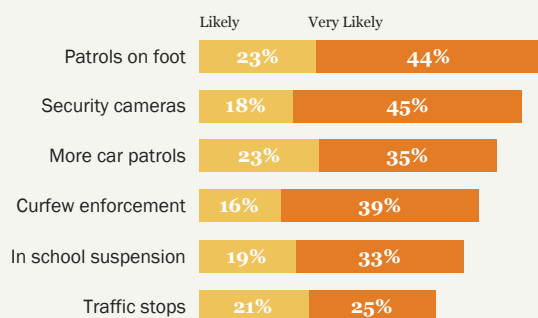
These eight blocks represents **ten percent** of the BPN area, but account for **62 percent** of all reported gang and drugs related activities between 2010-2013.



An example of “hot spot” mapping

Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center

What the community said

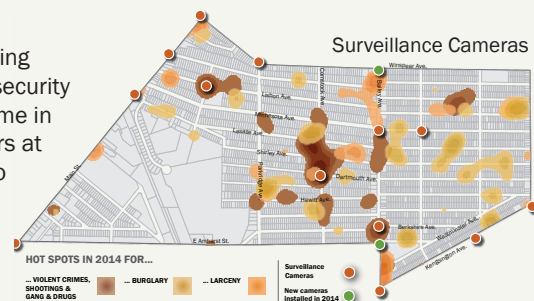


Source: 2013 BPN Community Survey, UB Regional Institute

In the 2013 community survey, residents suggested that additional patrols (preferably on foot) and more security cameras are the law enforcement strategies most likely to help reduce crime.

What is being done

The program is supporting additional patrols and security cameras to address crime in “hot spots.” Researchers at the University at Buffalo Regional Institute are also performing detailed analysis on crime trends within the BPN Zone and are making that information available to law enforcement and community partners to help deter and solve crimes.



Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center

How to get involved

The best way to help with this strategy is to call 911 when you suspect criminal activity and call 311 when you identify a quality of life concern that is impacting the neighborhood. When citizens report problems to these numbers it “creates data” that can be used to inform action.

Strategy 2. Partner with the corner stores

About this Strategy: Residents and law enforcement officials have pointed to corner stores and neighborhood delis as distinct problem areas for neighborhood safety. Data backs up their observations. A lot more gang and drug activity gets reported near these establishments than anywhere else in the neighborhood.

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 United Front, Buffalo PeaceMakers, the City of Buffalo and residents to make sure that corner stores become assets, not liabilities, for the neighborhood.

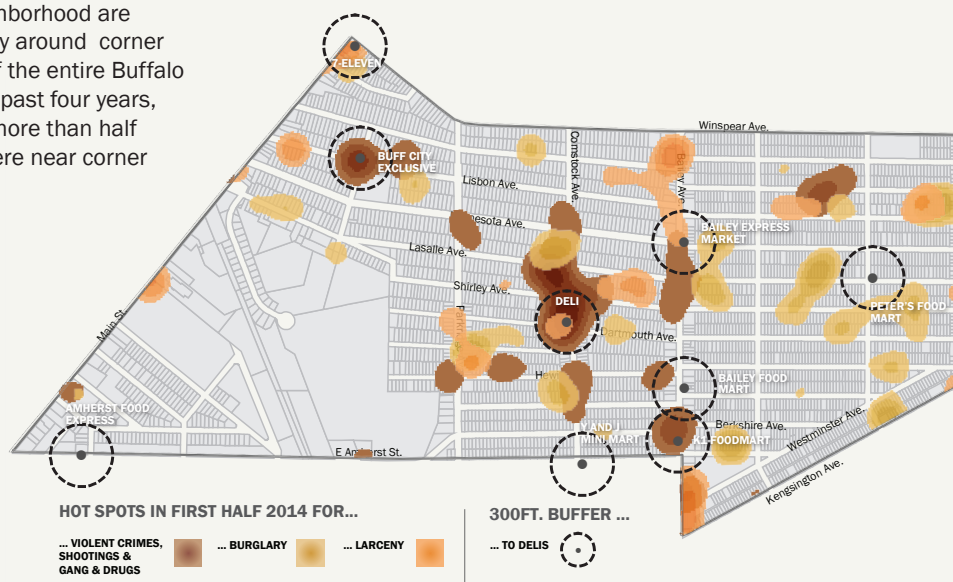
What the data says

Data shows that corner stores in the neighborhood are hot spots for crime. The areas immediately around corner stores account for less than 10 percent of the entire Buffalo Promise Neighborhood zone. Yet over the past four years, more than one quarter of shootings and more than half of 911 calls reporting gangs and drugs were near corner stores.

% OF CRIME WITHIN 300ft FROM DELIS

Hot Spots are based on concentration of Crimes in the second half of 2014.

	2010-2013		First Half of 2014
VIOLENT CRIMES	20%	→	24%
PROPERTY CRIMES	12%	→	11%
SHOOTINGS	28%	→	28%
GANG & DRUGS CALLS	52%	→	36%
TOTAL	24%	→	17%



Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center

Areas around corner stores represent less than **10 percent of the BPN area**, but account for **62 percent of all reported gang and drugs related activities** between 2010-2013.

What the community said

Residents of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Community Council and law enforcement and community stakeholders of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood BCJI Team have raised repeated concerns about corner stores and delis in the neighborhood.

Concerns were raised about owners selling illegal merchandise (e.g. drug paraphernalia, loose cigarettes) and unhealthy products (e.g. expired baby formula, junk food, etc.). There is also suspicion with some members of the community that some stores are allowing or even promoting illegal behavior in and around their stores.

What is being done

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood residents and organizers are working with the Bailey Avenue Business Association, Councilmember Wyatt's office, Buffalo United Front, Buffalo PeaceMakers, block clubs and others to actively engage deli and corner store owners to become partners in the effort to reduce crime in the neighborhood. One such initiative, the "BPN Deli Store Code of Conduct" asks business owners to pledge to do their part by abiding by all laws, keeping their properties clean, refraining from selling illegal products, and working with law enforcement to deter criminal activity in and around their establishments.

How to get involved

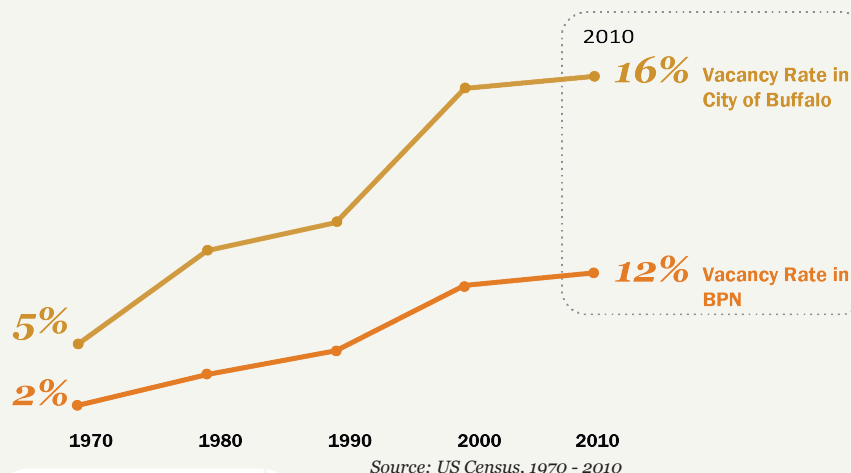
Buffalo Promise Neighborhood is looking for neighborhood volunteers to petition their neighborhood corner store owners to sign the code of conduct and be accountable to the process of enhancing the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood community.

Strategy 3. Preserve housing and target blight

About this Strategy: Vacant homes and neighborhood blight are widely recognized as invitations for crime and dangerous activity. While the built environment provides the neighborhood with many assets, it is also troubled with signs of blight – abandoned and vacant buildings, graffiti, illegal dumping, and other forms of vandalism.

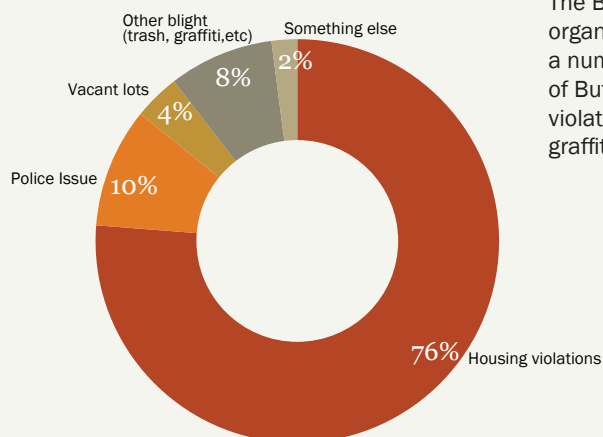
Attacking vacancy and neighborhood blight can help residents and law enforcement officials fight crime and promote safety.

What the data tell us



Buffalo Promise Neighborhood's housing stock remains largely in place (only two percent of housing units have been lost through demolition) and vacancy rates are significantly lower than the city as a whole. Despite those encouraging signs, blight and vacant housing have been on the rise. Research suggests that working to repair "broken windows" and improve the built environment will inhibit crime.

What the community said



The Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Community Council as well as many active organizations in the neighborhood have made blight and neighborhood beautification a number one priority. It should come as no surprise that when citizens call the City of Buffalo's 311 Call and Resolution Center they overwhelmingly call about housing violations, and to a lesser extent, crime, vacant lots and general blight issues (trash, graffiti, etc.).

What is being done

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood continues to work with its partners in government, foundations, the business community and the not-for-profit sector to focus money and effort on improving the quality of housing in the BPN Zone. Through its' partnership with Belmont Housing Services of WNY, Buffalo LISC and the Oishei Foundation, BPN has acquired 10 homes in the neighborhood, 4 have been rehabbed, 3 sold, and 6 are in process of completion.

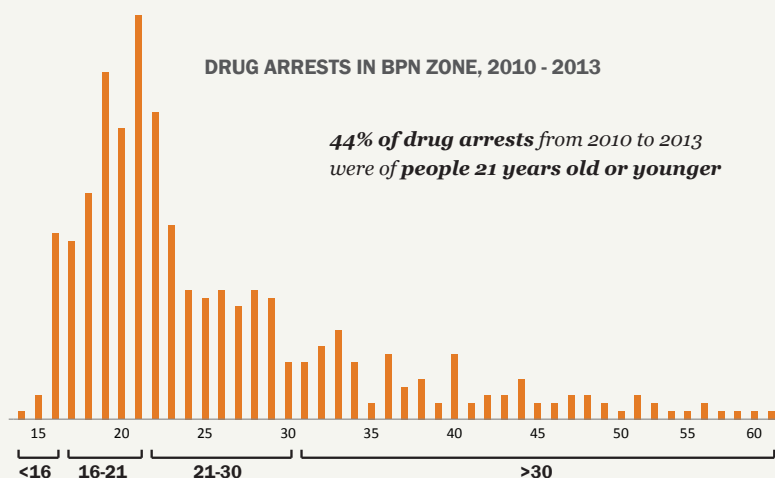
How to get involved

Partners in the community have been organizing a variety of beautification activities, including Re-Tree the District and tending to community gardens. Buffalo Promise Neighborhood's community engagement team is guiding a comprehensive "community mapping" activity where citizens are documenting each suspected vacant or abandoned home in the neighborhood and sharing their results with city officials.

Strategy 4. Engage youth in positive opportunities

About this Strategy: 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.

What the data tell us



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

A significant proportion of the individuals arrested for drug and gun offenses in the neighborhood are age 21 or younger. We also know from school data that high school graduation rates for neighborhood youth are relatively low and absenteeism continues to be a chronic problem starting in middle school and continuing through high school.

What the community said



Source: 2013 BPN Community Survey,
UB Regional Institute

The "word cloud" above shows the top ten responses to the question in the 2013 community survey: "what services would be most helpful to the quality of life of the neighborhood?" Overwhelmingly, survey respondents suggested programs for kids, teenagers and productive opportunities for after school.

What is being done

At its core, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood is committed to changing the prospects of youth in the neighborhood through academic, social and community-based interventions. Through the BCJI initiative specifically, several specific partnerships have been added. These include creating a "Council for Unity," a youth leadership program for school age students, a series of Teen Summits to make youth aware of positive opportunities to get involved in the community, and a Buffalo Urban League neighborhood youth case worker who is working with law enforcement and community partners to identify youth in need of help and point them to opportunities to enrich their lives. These include social supportive services, educational support, vocational training, employment, and any other services that promotes a safe and stable community.

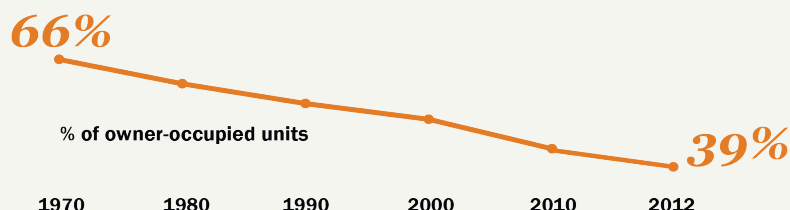
How to get involved

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood is always looking for volunteers to help with youth programming, become mentors and assist with activities like intramural sports. Residents are also encouraged to refer youth in need of help to the Buffalo Urban League case worker assigned to the neighborhood.

Strategy 5. Grow community involvement

About this Strategy: Sustaining a safe and friendly environment in the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood must have broad buy-in and support from the community. 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.

What the data says



Source: U.S. Census, 1970 - 2010;
American Community Survey, 2012

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood counts fourteen active block clubs within the zone's boundaries. As impressive as that sounds, less than one in five homes are in an area served by a block club.

As neighborhood residents seek to create new block clubs and expand membership to existing ones, it will be important to be open and responsive to the needs of renters. Most recent counts suggest that more than 60 percent of residents rent their home and at least half of landlords live outside the neighborhood, either elsewhere in Buffalo or WNY, or from someplace outside the region all together.

What is being done

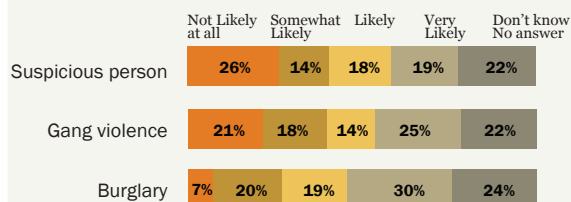
Buffalo Promise Neighborhood's community council is working with a broad base of partners from across the neighborhood – the Bailey Avenue Business Association, the University District Block Club Coalition, the Mayor's Office of Citizens Services, LISC Buffalo, Buffalo Urban League, Buffalo Police Department E District, Buffalo PeaceMakers, Buffalo United Front, the University Heights Tool Library and others – to create avenues for people to get involved with neighborhood-based initiatives. The team will continue to provide training and capacity building for neighborhood residents to form block clubs, engage in neighborhood watch programs, implement "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" strategies, engage in community gardening, care for neighborhood vacant lots, and become more active community members in general.

How to get involved

There are many ways to get involved. A good place to start is by attending community council meetings, talking to your neighbors, block club members and organizations involved in the neighborhood. If you need help, reach out to Buffalo Promise Neighborhood to learn more about what is going on in the neighborhood and get involved.

What the community said

How likely are residents and visitors to call 911?



Do residents and visitors use the city's 311 service?



Source: 2013 BPN Community Survey,
UB Regional Institute

In general, reporting suspicious activity to 911 is a way all citizens can play a part in making their neighborhood safer. The 2013 Community survey shows that many neighborhood residents may not feel comfortable calling 911 to report suspicious activity. Overwhelmingly, residents pointed to fear of retaliation as the prime reason.

In addition, the survey asked people their general perceptions of the neighborhood. For the most part, the survey showed residents have some serious concerns - ranging from issues ranging like neighborhood blight to healthy eating options - but most residents believe in the neighborhood and do not have an overly negative view of its quality of life.

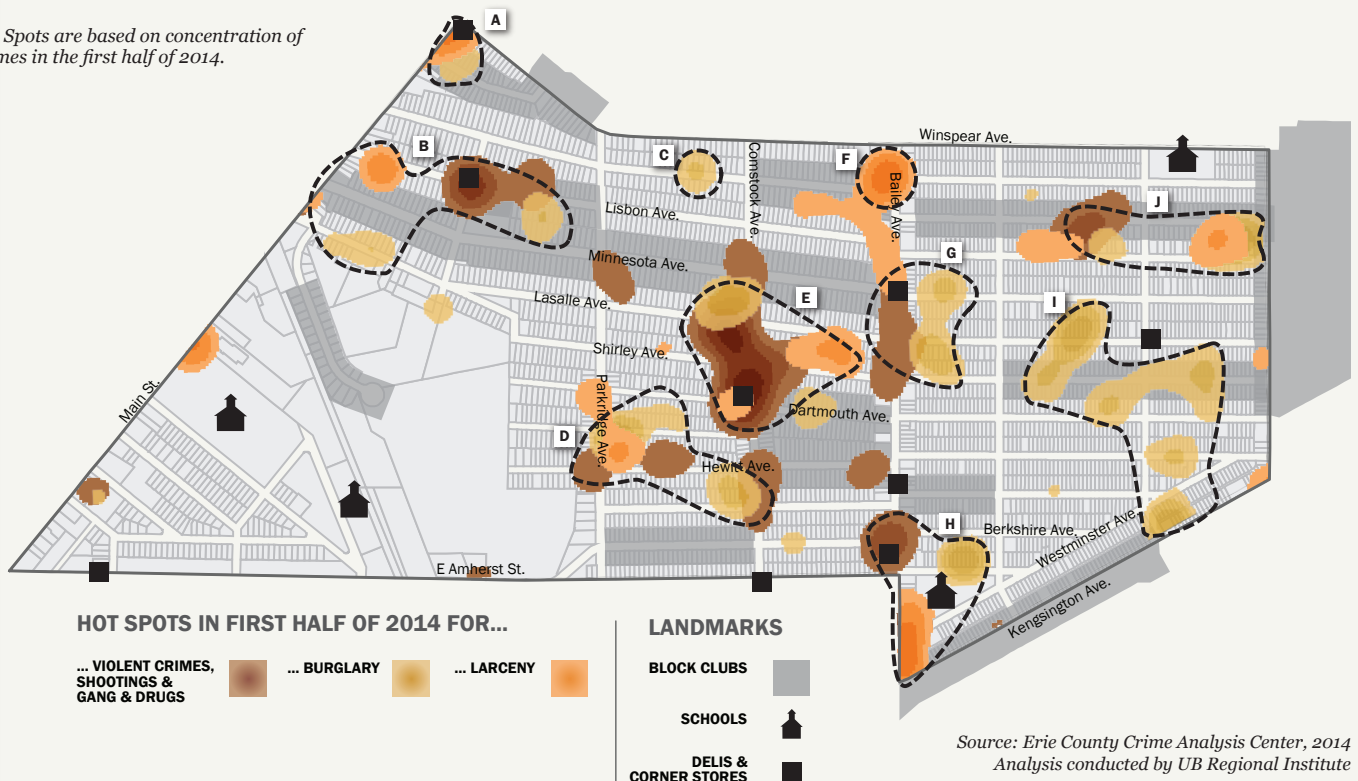
Summary of First Half of 2014

Through the first half of 2014, approximately ten small cluster areas emerged as the “hottest spots” for crime. These areas vary in size and the types of crime occurring in their general vicinity. The hottest spots are listed below and illustrated in the map at the bottom of the page.

- A. The corner of Main and Winspear** saw high instances of larcenies and some burglaries.
- B. Minnesota and Lisbon, between Main and Parkridge** experienced clustering of both burglaries and larcenies as well as suspected gang and drug activity on Lisbon Ave.
- C. Winspear, one block east of Comstock** saw a clustering of burglaries.
- D. Hewitt and Dunlop on both sides of Parkridge** (between McCarthy Park and Comstock) saw clusters of burglaries, larcenies and suspected gang and drug activity.
- E. Shirley and Lisbon between Bailey and Comstock** saw clustering of burglaries, larcenies, violent crimes, suspected gang/drug activity, and several shootings. This has historically been *the hottest spot in the neighborhood* and continues to be through the first half of 2014.
- F. The corner of Highgate and Bailey** was a hot area for larcenies.
- G. The 3-block area of Minnesota, Lisbon and Shirley between Bailey and Suffolk** experienced clustering of burglaries, violent crimes and suspected gang/drug activity.
- H. The area near Westminster Community Charter School, between Bailey and Suffolk, from Berkshire to Kensington** saw clustering of violent crime, some burglaries, larcenies, shootings and suspected gang/drug activity.
- I. Residential blocks between Suffolk and Eggert (from Minnesota down to Westminster)** were a hot area for burglaries.
- J. Rounds (from Suffolk to Eggert)** was a hot area for violent crime, burglaries and larceny.

FIRST HALF OF 2014 HOT SPOTS

Hot Spots are based on concentration of Crimes in the first half of 2014.



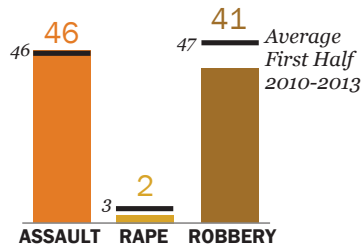
Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center, 2014
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

Violent Crimes

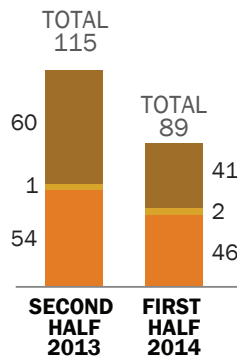
VIOLENT CRIMES: ASSAULT MURDER RAPE ROBBERY

Violent crime through the first half of 2014 is down slightly compared to the historical average, but compared to the second half of 2013, it is down considerably. Assault was the most frequent violent crime, followed by robbery. There were two reported rapes and no murders during the reporting period.

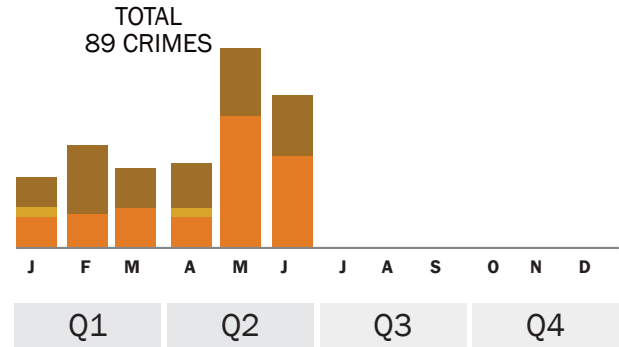
COMPARED TO 4 YEAR AVERAGE



COMPARED TO PRIOR 6 MONTHS



YEAR TO DATE - 2014



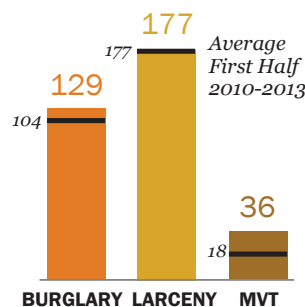
Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center, 2014
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

Property Crimes

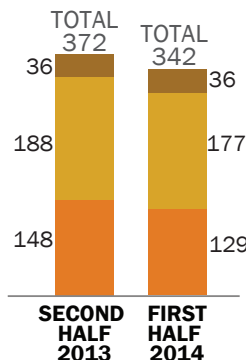
PROPERTY CRIMES: BURGLARY LARCENY MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

Property crime through the first half of 2014 was slightly above the historical average. Burglaries were up 24 percent and motor vehicle thefts were double the average. Compared to the second half of 2013, though, property crime was down slightly.

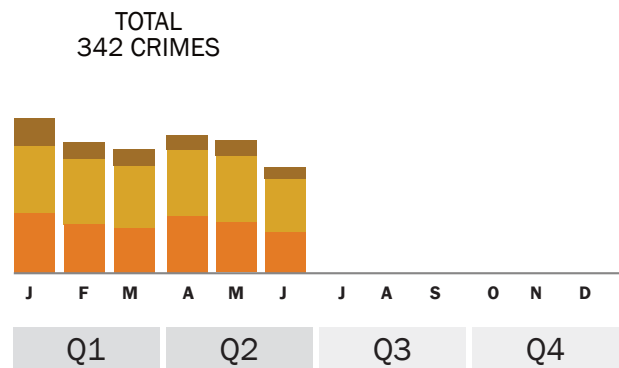
COMPARED TO 4 YEAR AVERAGE



COMPARED TO PRIOR 6 MONTHS



YEAR TO DATE - 2014



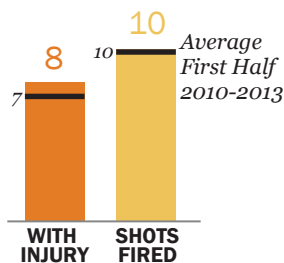
Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center, 2014
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

Shootings

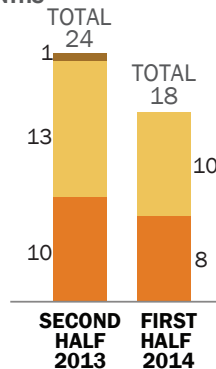
REPORTS RELATED TO SHOOTINGS WITH INJURY SHOTS FIRED HOMICIDE

Shootings are about on par with historical averages and down 25 percent from the second half of 2013. Of the reported shootings, eight involved an injury, while the remaining ten involved shots being fired, but without a victim struck by a bullet.

COMPARED TO 4 YEAR AVERAGE

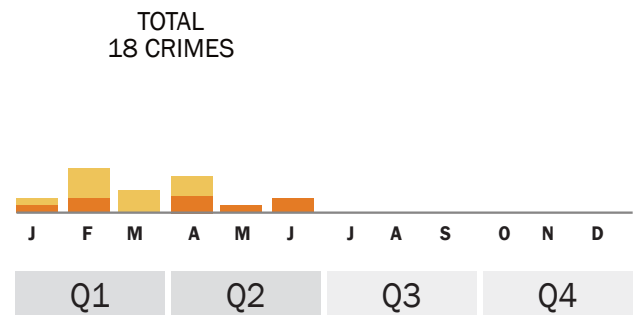


COMPARED TO PRIOR 6 MONTHS



February was the month with the highest amount of shootings, with March and April following. May and June saw shooting activity decline as there was only one and two shooting incidents in those months respectively.

YEAR TO DATE - 2014



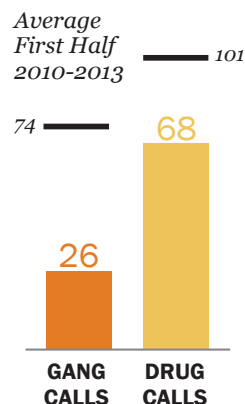
Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center, 2014
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

Gangs and Drugs

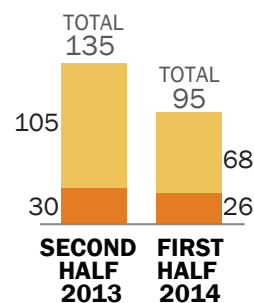
311 & 911 CALLS RELATED TO GANGS DRUGS

Calls to 311 and 911 reporting suspicions of gang and drug activity were significantly down through the first half of 2014. It is not clear if the decline was a result of less activity of this crime, or if residents have been less active in using 311 or 911 to report suspicions.

COMPARED TO 4 YEAR AVERAGE

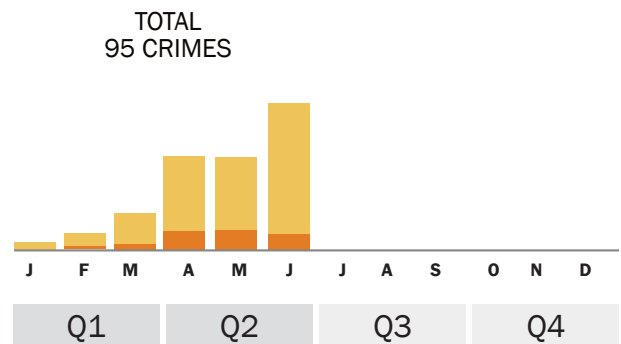


COMPARED TO PRIOR 6 MONTHS



Suspicious of gang and drug activity rose as summer approached, with a high in June and March. Overall, calls were primarily reporting drug activity but not necessarily activity involving gangs.

YEAR TO DATE - 2014



Source: Erie County Crime Analysis Center and City of Buffalo 311, 2014
Analysis conducted by UB Regional Institute

