

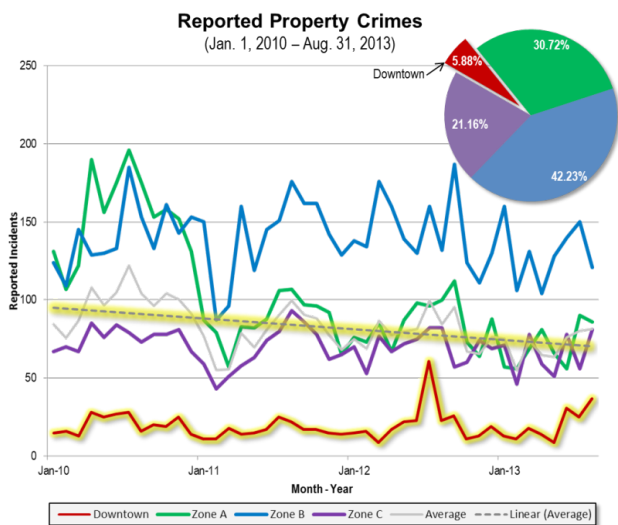
LOCATION: Niagara Falls, NY

REQUESTOR: Niagara Falls Police Department

REQUEST: In March 2013, the Niagara Falls Police Department (NFPD) requested support to create sustainable public safety and community collaborations to combat tourism-related crime by using data-driven policing strategies.

Priorities

- Identify applicable problem-oriented and intelligence-led policing models to combat rising crime.
- Increase the capacity to recognize and prevent tourism-related crimes.
- Enhance the use of data and analysis to identify crime trends and inform decision-making.



Reported property crimes in the city of Niagara Falls from January 2010 to August 2013.



Diagnostic Center Findings

- Organizational barriers to use of data, information and intelligence.
- Limited communication and outreach activities.
- Lack of data and intelligence-driven strategies to address crime.
- Gaps in data quality management.
- Disproportionate number of crimes against tourists.
- Weakened community relations and interactions.



Diagnostic Center Recommendations

- Build organizational capacity to leverage data and intelligence.
- Develop a crime prevention awareness strategy.
- Utilize data and intelligence to inform operational strategies.
- Enhance data quality and management.
- Develop a tourism-related crime response strategy.
- Increase community engagement and accountability.

Overview

The Diagnostic Center worked with the NFPD and the community of Niagara Falls to assess crime issues and their operational capability. Partnering with local, state and national organizations, the Diagnostic Center utilized a broad range of law enforcement, academic and government organizations to determine both the challenges and possible models for response. Niagara University, neighborhood patrols, retail crime officers, the New York State Police, the United States' Attorney, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Service, the National Criminal Justice Association and the Congressional Research Service were all utilized in the assessment and recommendation effort.

Subject matter experts in the areas of Intel-led policing, Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) and, Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) were also brought in by the Diagnostic Center to assist the community.

Once the in-depth diagnostic was complete, the Diagnostic Center matched a series of recommendations and data-driven models to those needs. The Diagnostic Center presented its findings and recommendations to the community.

Recommendations included developing strategies for tourism-related crime response and crime prevention awareness; improving data quality and management enhancements to inform operational strategies; and increasing community engagement and accountability.

"The NFPD is fully committed to the community policing concepts recommended by the (Diagnostic Center's) subject matter experts."

- Lieutenant Nicholas Ligammari, NFPD

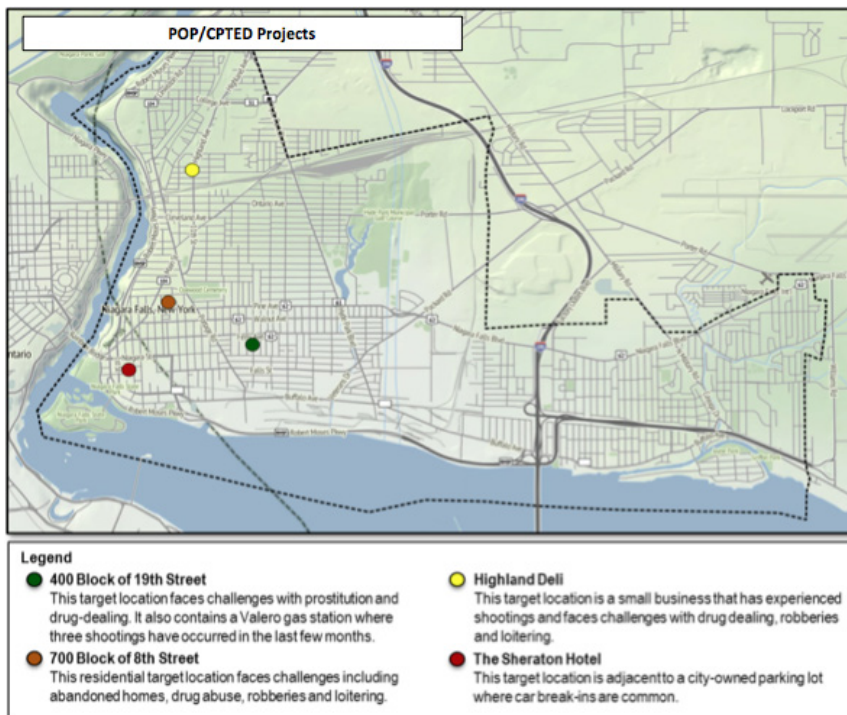


Community's Response - Niagara Falls Police Department

The NFPD focused their response efforts on two of the Diagnostic Center's recommendations: (1) developing a tourism-related crime response strategy and (2) increasing community engagement in crime prevention.

POP was the primary strategy utilized by the city. The POP strategy requires the community and police to work together to analyze community problems and develop customized responses together to address the issues.

At the request of the city, the Diagnostic Center provided two trainings for law enforcement and stakeholders to assist with the department's response efforts: POP and CPTED. The Diagnostic Center provided technical assistance to NFPD to support the practical application of POP and CPTED strategies through the selection of four projects by NFPD training participants.



What is the Diagnostic Center?

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs launched the Diagnostic Center in Spring 2012 to serve as a technical assistance resource for state, local and tribal policymakers seeking to implement data-driven strategies to combat crime and improve public safety in their communities. The defining characteristic of the Diagnostic Center is its approach to being smart on crime by helping state and local leaders to use local data to apply what works in criminal justice in their communities. This effort ensures that limited local resources are invested wisely, federal assets are leveraged where they are needed most and communities reap better public safety outcomes.

Contact the Diagnostic Center:



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Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Engagement of the entire community of stakeholders – business, law enforcement, government, private citizens – was critical in addressing the tourism-related crime. Working as a team, the community was able to put forward their ideas, discuss the benefits and challenges associated with each suggestion and then select its direction forward with full support of stakeholders.

Access to, and analysis of, the data and its associated programs provided a broader picture of available programs to address the crime.

As the community's effort is ongoing, so is the Diagnostic Center support. The Diagnostic Center continues to provide ongoing, remote technical assistance to support the specific POP/CPTED projects. This effort includes identifying and collecting baseline indicators for each project, reporting the indicators and assessing outcomes.

The Diagnostic Center recognizes the challenges ahead for NFPD as it seeks to apply the knowledge gained through training to routinely deploy POP and CPTED strategies to include: (1) ensuring officers have discretionary time to implement the project plans; (2) leveraging anchor points to increase community involvement in crime prevention; and (3) engaging other city and state agencies on a consistent basis as part of a new holistic approach to crime prevention and problem-solving.

