



## **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**

The arrangement and design of buildings and open spaces can *encourage* or *discourage* undesirable behavior and criminal activity. CPTED works by decreasing opportunities for crime and increasing the chances that a legitimate user will see and report crime as it occurs. Municipalities throughout the world are adopting CPTED ordinances requiring site plan reviews with crime prevention and safety in mind.

Definition: The **proper design** and **effective use** of the built environment that can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime and an improvement in quality of life.

**CPTED is based on these key overlapping concepts:**

**Natural Surveillance:** "See and be seen" is the overall goal. A person is less likely to commit a crime if they think someone will see them do it. Natural Surveillance increases the threat of apprehension by taking steps to increase the perception that people can be seen. Lighting and landscape play an important role.

- Designing landscapes that allow clear, unobstructed views of surrounding areas.
- Improving visibility with lighting or transparent building materials
- Avoid lighting that creates glare or shadows
- Avoid the creation of building entrapment areas.

Examples:

- Decorative fencing with open view rather than barrier fencing with no natural sightline.
- Windows to provide perception that activity can be seen.
- Trim ground cover to below 2 foot high and tree limbs above six foot.

**Additional Benefit:** Provides a greater sense of community. Increases beauty and sense of ownership in neighborhoods. i.e. Local artists create scene with human figures on blank brick walls in blighted areas. Discourages tagging and gives perception of being watched.

**Natural Access Control:** Strategically designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances and landscaping to physically obstruct or guide access by people and vehicles. This strategy works by deterring access to potential targets of crime. If criminal behavior does occur, the access control makes it easy for legitimate users to notice and report the crime to police.

Examples:

- Ensuring entrances are visible, well lit, and overlooked by windows.
- Clearly defining entryways and controlling other points of access to site.

**Territorial Reinforcement:** Creating or extending a "sphere of influence" by utilizing physical designs such as pavement treatments, landscaping and signage that enable users of an area to develop a sense of proprietorship over it is the goal of this CPTED principle. Public areas are clearly distinguished from private ones. Potential trespassers perceive this control and are thereby discouraged.

**Benefits:** When residents feel a sense of ownership in an area, they are more likely to take pride, maintain and self-police. i.e. change in pavement color and texture delineates restaurant terrace from public sidewalk

**Maintenance:** CPTED supports the "Broken Window Theory" that one "broken window" or nuisance, if ignored, will lead to others and ultimately to the decline of an entire neighborhood. Neglected and poorly maintained properties are breeding grounds for criminal activity.

- Serves as an additional expression of ownership.
- Prevents reduction of visibility from landscaping overgrowth and obstructed or inoperable lighting.

Implementing CPTED concepts requires the involvement of CPTED practitioners in the planning, development and design review of construction and community projects. CPTED uses a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior; incorporating principles from:

- Planning
- Architecture
- Landscape Architecture
- Law Enforcement
- Engineers

Specially trained law enforcement officers, city or county planners, architects and developers are working together to ensure the proper design of structures, schools and neighborhoods. Building partnerships between public and private entities is a key tenet of CPTED.

The real power and effectiveness of CPTED lies in the fact that all parties involved in the development practice can benefit. This includes municipalities, property owners, developers and the public.