

QUICKNOTES

COMMUNITY CPTED

How a community is built, rebuilt, maintained, and managed contributes to its safety and vitality by directly influencing personal behavior. Community Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED (pronounced “sep-ted”) is a multidisciplinary and collaborative design approach (between planners, law enforcement, engineers, designers, code enforcement, and community stakeholders) intended to foster positive social interactions and deter criminal behavior within communities. Proponents of CPTED argue that proper design, use, and management of the built environment leads to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime, while improving community vitality and overall quality of life.

HOW CPTED DIFFERS FROM TRADITIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

Both traditional crime prevention and CPTED share goals of anticipating and preventing injury and loss by initiating actions to remove or reduce risk. Traditional crime prevention, led by law enforcement, tends to focus on organized and mechanical strategies to prevent crime, such as neighborhood watch groups and security equipment. Conversely, CPTED focuses on incorporating “natural” or “passive” strategies that rely upon elements such as lighting, sightlines, entry design, landscaping, and planned social activities into the normal planning, design, and management activities of the built environment.

COMMUNITY CPTED PRINCIPLES

Below are 10 key principles and associated strategies communities should consider when applying the CPTED framework to the design, development, redevelopment, and maintenance of buildings and community spaces. These principles and strategies are most beneficial when used in combination.

1. **Natural Surveillance**—*the design and placement of physical features to maximize visibility and surveillance.* Key strategies include the design, placement, and lighting of doors, windows, walkways, gathering areas, roadways, and structures. The objectives are to eliminate hiding places and increase the perception of human presence or supervision.
2. **Natural Access Management**—*the physical guidance of people and vehicles.* Key strategies include the use of real or perceived barriers such as fencing or plantings, and other wayfinding elements such as lighting, signage, and artwork. The objectives are to provide orientation and a pedestrian-friendly environment and to discourage would-be offenders by making noncompliance obvious.
3. **Territorial Reinforcement**—*the use of physical attributes to delineate space and express a positive sense of ownership.* Key strategies include the use of art, signs, landscaping, and boundary treatments as well as the orientation and strategic placement of buildings. The objectives are to define borders, express ownership, and communicate a space is cared for and protected.
4. **Physical Maintenance**—*the repair, replacement, and general upkeep of a space, building, or area.* Key strategies include the use of low-maintenance landscaping and architectural materials, trash collection and removal, and other programs to maintain a clean and orderly environment. The objective is to allow for the continued use of a space for its intended purpose.
5. **Order Maintenance**—*the attention to minor violations and reduction of opportunities for inappropriate behavior.* Key strategies include posting rules and expectations, using graffiti- and vandalism-resistant materials, and imposing quick, fair, and consistent consequences for violations. The objectives are to foster safe, orderly, and predictable behaviors.
6. **Activity Support**—*the planning and placement of safe activities.* Key strategies include sidewalk and street level activities, such as markets, fairs, and festivals, in key community areas. The objective is to increase the number of people using a space, thereby enhancing visibility, social comfort and control.



An in-fill affordable housing project in Fullerton, California, demonstrates several CPTED principles including natural surveillance. People on the pathway can be seen from the door as well as multiple windows. (Photo taken by Sherry Carter.)



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7. Social Capital—the social trust, norms, and networks people draw upon to solve common problems, foster civic engagement, and discourage inappropriate behaviors. Key strategies include designated gathering areas, social events, community programs, and communication protocols or equipment. The objective is to encourage communication, trust, and collaboration among stakeholders and also with the governmental agencies that serve them.
8. Land Use and Community Design—the distribution, location, and amount of land for various uses; their density and intensity; and the design elements, strategies, and overall character of a planning area. Key strategies include team training for professionals involved in planning and development activities, solicitation of community public safety concerns and collaboration in problem solving, and incorporation of CPTED principles into planning processes. The objectives are to create, or recreate, and manage built environments in a manner that includes considerations for public safety.
9. Target Hardening—the making of potential targets resistant to criminal attack. Key strategies include the reinforcement of entry and exit features, law enforcement or security presence, and security devices such as locks, alarms, and cameras. The objectives are to increase the efforts that offenders must expend and the risk of their being identified or apprehended in committing an offense.
10. Natural Imperatives—ensuring access to necessary goods and services including natural light, clean air and water, healthy foods, physical activity, employment, and housing. Key strategies include pedestrian amenities, public parks, accessible transit systems, quality food sources, and education and employment opportunities. The objective is to promote healthy behaviors and reduce mental fatigue and associated risky behaviors by meeting the biological, social, and economic needs of the population.

COMMUNITY CPTED APPLIED

CPTED principles provide a common language to help government staff work with the community to identify and respond to multiple issues affecting the well-being of neighborhoods, downtowns, schools, parks, transit centers, and other areas of public use. CPTED can be implemented through a number of plans, programs, and polices, including area and comprehensive plans, land development regulations and guidelines, review and approval processes, and capital improvement plans. CPTED has been most successful in communities where government employees train as a team, collaborate with the public through workshops and community assessments, and address public safety in conjunction with related efforts such as economic development, neighborhood and business revitalization, capital improvements, and public health.

MULTIPLE BENEFITS

In addition to reducing the incidence and fear of crime, the implementation of a CPTED program provides a number of additional benefits. It contributes to more efficient and effective use of staff and monetary resources, improves community and government relations, improves public perceptions, and encourages increased social and economic investments in targeted areas. CPTED can also increase activity and camaraderie among residents and visitors by increasing the number of people utilizing the public realm and by providing safe access to goods, services, jobs, and schools.

CONCLUSION

CPTED is a framework that should be incorporated during the planning, design, and development of the built environment to improve quality of life and increase livability. Incorporating the principles and strategies described above can reduce incidence and fear of crime as well as provide many secondary benefits. Communities seeking to utilize the CPTED framework should involve a variety of stakeholders, incorporate principles and strategies into multiple projects and programs, and seek to address public safety in relation to other community goals and priorities.

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2. Other Resources

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CPTED resources and CPTED in U.S. cities and counties are available at Carter & Carter Resources, www.cccpted.com/index.php/resources.