

## CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

### **CPTED DEFINITION:**

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design ("CPTED") is the proper design, maintenance, and use of the built environment in order to enhance the quality of life and to reduce both the incidence, and the fear, of crime.

### **CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES:**

The adopted principles will assist in the creation of a built environment that reduces opportunities for crimes that are inherent in the design of structures, landscape, and/or in the design of the community/neighborhood. The CPTED principles are:

1. *Natural Surveillance.* Natural surveillance involves design and maintenance elements that ensure full opportunity for people engaged in their normal behavior to observe the space around them, and equally, to minimize the perceived opportunity for concealment or anonymity by a person intending a criminal act. Natural surveillance is generally achieved by the use of appropriate lighting, low or non-opaque fencing or hedges, the removal of areas that offer concealment, and the placement of windows, doors, and walkways to ensure the opportunity for easy observation of surrounding areas by responsible users of property.
2. *Territoriality.* Territoriality is the principle that providing clear delineation between public, private, and semi-private areas makes it easier for pedestrians to understand, and participate in, an area's appropriate use while simultaneously communicating a sense of active "ownership" of an area that can discourage the belief that illegal acts may be committed in the area without concern or consequence. The use of non-opaque screening, low fencing, signage, pavement treatments, or other landscaping elements that visually indicate the transition between areas intended for different uses are examples of the principle of territoriality applied.
3. *Access Control.* Access control is a concept directed primarily at decreasing criminal accessibility, especially into areas where a person with criminal intent would not easily be observed. Passive examples of access control would include a highly visible gate or entryway through which all users of a property must enter. Active examples include appropriate use of door and window locks, security fencing, or similar security barriers, to discourage unwanted access into private space or into dark or unmonitored areas.
4. *Activity Support.* Activity support involves both passive and active efforts to promote the presence of responsible pedestrian users in a given area, thus elevating the perceived community value of the area while discouraging actions by would-be offenders who desire anonymity for their actions. A basic understanding of the value of activity support can be gained by considering the difference in both perceived and actual safety of a city park or a sidewalk that is rarely used as compared to a park or sidewalk that benefits from the routine

presence of many responsible users. Passive examples are all manners of design that makes an area appealing to appropriate pedestrian use. Active examples involve event scheduling and similar steps to attract users.

5. *Management and Maintenance.* Proper maintenance of landscaping, lighting and other features is a necessary requirement to ensuring that CPTED elements serve their intended purpose. Unfortunately, failure to maintain property — and its management parallel, the failure to stop harmful use of property by its legal occupants — will rapidly undermine the impact of even the best CPTED design elements. As such, while CPTED principles supplement effective maintenance and management practices, these principles cannot make up for the negative impacts of ineffective management. Damaged fencing, overgrown hedges, graffiti left to weather and age, litter and debris, broken windows, as well as such factors as inattentive, lax, or overly permissive management practices will advertise an environment of permissiveness to would-be offenders and, equally, undermine the desire of responsible users to remain in an area. While effective design is an important part of good crime prevention, following through with consistent maintenance and management practices ensures that the designed-in elements retain their effectiveness. In effect, this is the direct application of what has come to be known as the Broken Window Theory — ensuring that indicators of disorder are corrected promptly in order to prevent the greater disorder they may attract.

In order to accomplish the twin goals of enhanced livability and better natural safety as set out in the five principles listed above, each must work in concert with the other. For example, activity support can be substantially undermined if a property is stripped bare of landscape elements in the interests of natural surveillance alone. Installing a tall opaque wall or fence will take the concept of territoriality too far by undermining natural surveillance benefits. Access control solutions that advertise a “target hardened” appearance (such as window bars, harsh lighting treatments, or hostile-looking fencing) undermine activity support. The intent, therefore, is to use the combined balance of these principles to promote a safer, more livable environment for all. Recognition of these underlying concepts may help guide owners, architects, planners, developers and managers of property in designing and maintaining built environments that accomplish the goals of CPTED and this policy resolution.