

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

STRATEGIES FOR PARKS AND HEALTHY RETAIL

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, otherwise known as CPTED, is defined as “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 the quality of life.” CPTED strategies are internationally recognized as an effective approach to reducing crime in communities while increasing quality of life of residents.

THE BASICS OF CPTED

CPTED strategies are broken down into four main categories¹ to help activate the built environment:

Natural Surveillance

Natural surveillance uses the placement of physical features, activities, and people to maximize visibility. Strategies include landscaping, lighting selection and placement, seating, and reduced placement of ads in retail windows or transit stops.

Natural Access Control

Natural access control uses the design of walking paths, landscaping, and building orientation to guide people through a space and identify points of entry. Strategies include wayfinding, celebrated points of entry, and clearly marked public pathways to entrances.

Territorial Reinforcement

Territorial reinforcement supports clear definition of public, semi-public and private property. Territorial reinforcement combines natural surveillance and natural access control to define ownership of a space. Strategies include fencing, pavement treatments, signage, and landscaping.

Maintenance

Routine maintenance of a space or property creates a sense of ownership that deters crime. By contrast, properties that lack regular maintenance signal a smaller consequence for negative activity offenders. Strategies include regular trimming and care for landscaping so as not to obstruct views, upkeep of building structures, and functional lighting. Parks and retail spaces can often address 85% of safety issues with a maintenance plan.

A NOTE ABOUT CRIME PREVENTION USING MECHANICAL STRATEGIES

Mechanical strategies include CCTV, high security fences, and other technological tools to support security of property. While mechanical strategies are often a property owner’s first instinct, they do not guarantee a reduction in crime or may even decrease the quality of life due to the appearance of a more hostile environment. Natural Surveillance, Natural Access Control, Territorial Reinforcement, and Maintenance strategies should be prioritized before resorting to mechanical strategies.

¹ “CPTED Training | Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Basic CPTED Course.” *CPTEDTraining.net*, www.cptedtraining.net/.

HEALTH AND CPTED

Both public health professionals and CPTED professionals have agreed that the built environment can support positive or negative activity. Increased levels of crime associated with the built environment include low-lit vacant areas, vacant buildings, drinking establishments, and car dominant areas. However, the built environment can also influence opportunities for public health outcomes such as access to parks and recreational trails, access to healthy retail, active transportation infrastructure, improved air quality, and much more. The health and safety of communities are heavily influenced by design. CPTED best practices not only support safe environments for all users, but also help improve quality of life by encouraging active travel and social cohesion.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN CPTED?

CPTED is best facilitated through a multi-disciplinary approach. CPTED is most effective when considered from the beginning of a design processes, however CPTED treatments can also help improve and enhance existing environments. Public health professionals, planners, engineers, law enforcement, architects, elected officials, business owners, and residents all have a role to play in carrying out CPTED practices to improve quality of life in a community.

APPLYING CPTED STRATEGIES TO PARKS AND RETAIL

The following two guides provide subject specific CPTED approaches for parks and retail. These resources are meant to provide a quick start guide for key stakeholders to begin a conversation about improving parks and retail sites using CPTED. These solutions are generalized with the understanding that each site is designed differently and may have site specific priorities stakeholders want to address. Use the guide for CPTED in Parks and CPTED in Retail as a starting point to identify easy-to-implement CPTED strategies and long term priorities for improving specific sites.