

CHAPTER 9: CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

The City recognizes that certain building and site design techniques have a positive effect on reducing the instances of crime. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is an internationally recognized collection of design principles for the built environment, both indoors and outdoors. These principles encourage users of a building, park, or street to feel safe about their surroundings while discouraging would-be criminals from engaging in anti-social behavior.

9.1 Natural Surveillance. “Eyes on the street” and “eyes from the street” are two phrases that describe the concept of natural surveillance. Allowing people to see their surroundings, whether inside or outside of a building, will prevent people from “sneaking up.” Additionally, people are attracted to well-designed buildings and sites. When people look at a building, they are also observing the activity around it. An unattractive building discourages people from looking at it, thus giving criminals their necessary cover to commit a crime. Hiding spaces can also be reduced or eliminated through proper placement of windows, landscaping, reception areas, and front offices.

9.2 Territorial Reinforcement. The way that spaces are defined can give a welcoming feel to wanted users or an unwelcoming feel to undesired users. There are three divisions of space:

Public Space. This space is typically where anyone in the general public is free to travel. Such examples would include public streets, sidewalks, parks, and public plazas. The spaces are open and visible. Few or no barriers exist to control entry to these spaces.

Semi-Public Space. Semi-public spaces are areas that are open for people conducting business or have regular permission to use, either supervised or unsupervised. Examples would include a single-family home’s front yard or porch, a hotel lobby, a retail store, or a private plaza. A postal carrier could enter a front yard only to deliver the mail. A person could enter a store to shop or browse only. A person would feel comfortable in these spaces doing limited or specified activities, but uncomfortable doing other things. Few or no physical barriers may exist to control entry to these spaces

Private Space. This space is designed specifically for the owner or user. Examples would include a home’s back yard or interior, an employee’s office, or a retail store’s back room. Uninvited or unauthorized people would feel uncomfortable in these spaces or feel as if they were not supposed to be there. Typically, there are barriers or controls established to limit access into these spaces.

Providing clearly defined spaces will help reinforce feelings of comfort in authorized users and discomfort in unauthorized users.

9.3 Building Design

The following design principles aid in positive visibility for a building. These principles can be applied in both commercial and residential situations.

Visible Entrances. Locating the main entrance of a building in an area clearly visible from the street serves two functions: it assists building users in identifying the building and it allows law enforcement personnel to monitor the entrance during routine patrol.

Windows. Windows create a welcoming feeling from the outside. They also allow users of the building to see people approaching the building. The use of some unobstructed opaque windows should be used in every business and multi-family application, especially near entrances.

Gathering Spaces. People tend to feel safe when in groups. Plazas, lobbies, and parks provide places for people to interact and should be encouraged wherever possible. Porches have similar effects in residential areas.

Building Placement. In commercial settings, buildings that are oriented towards the public right-of-way provide opportunities to people of all mobility types (drivers, pedestrians, and transit users) a means to access the building easily. Typical suburban building placement places buildings away from the street and away from each other. The only way to access these buildings safely is by automobile. When a building is placed close to a street, it gains more attention from users of the adjacent streets and sidewalks. Additionally, buildings that are isolated from each other do not allow for natural surveillance that close buildings enjoy.

9.2 Interior Designs

Crime prevention methods should also be considered within a building. In business applications, the concepts of territorial reinforcement and natural surveillance can be addressed through (but not limited to) proper placement of reception areas, limiting shelving height, and limiting hallway lengths. In multi-family applications, design of common areas (such as social rooms or laundry facilities) should be open and visible. The City will continue to work with businesses and multi-family building owners or managers through the design process.

Access control can be managed through mechanical means such as locks or card-key access systems. Security cameras should not be relied upon as the sole means of security or access control.

9.3 Site Design

9.3.1 Landscaping

Landscaping can be used in a variety of ways to both enhance a site visually and detract crime. Improperly placed landscaping can give a potential criminal a place to hide. Like building design, people tend to look at attractive landscaping therefore providing natural surveillance to a building and site.

Territorial Reinforcement. Trees and shrubs, planters, walkways, fences and walls, and other landscape features help define a space into public, semi-public, and private areas. The landscape design should be created with this in mind.

Screening. Berms, fences, and landscaping used for screening purposes should be designed based upon the adjacent land uses and for what is being screened. For example, when screening parking lots from adjacent roadways, screening only needs to be high enough to shield vehicle headlights. Building design should be considered first when placing loading and waste areas. Fencing and walls may be a better screening tool than berms and should be considered.

9.3.2 Parking Lots & Structures

Adequate convenient parking is essential for businesses success. Proper design and placement of a parking lot or ramp can provide safety for its users and protection of the vehicles and property. Visibility from the building or public areas is critical in providing safety for its users as well as discourages improper use of the lot (i.e. loitering).

9.4 Lighting

Proper lighting can create a welcoming feel to an area as well as thwart criminal activity.

Site Lighting/Exterior Lighting. Proper exterior lighting should enhance the architecture of a building and provide a safe environment. Poor lighting can focus attention in the wrong area, create shadows, and/or glare. Different light sources produce a different color light—choosing the right color is important based on the use and setting. The City will continue to work with property owners about choosing the right light source and fixtures for their situations.

Public Lighting/Roadway Lighting. Roadway lighting is primarily designed for vehicle safety. A secondary effect of street lighting is pedestrian safety and comfort. Street lighting can be effective with shorter standards that more pedestrian in scale. Another effect of street lighting is providing security lighting to adjacent properties. The City will consider these other effects of street lighting with roadway projects.

9.5 Social Interaction

Positive constructive social interaction between residents of Brooklyn Park will have long-lasting benefits on the community. Following are annual and scheduled public events or activities that encourage social interaction.

National Night Out. The City has been a national leader in the number of block parties that are held during this annual August event. The intent of the event is to promote neighbors getting together socially to discourage crime.

Tater Daze. The City sponsors a community celebration every summer based the area's historical agricultural crop—the potato.

Recreation and Parks Programs. The City offers many opportunities for residents to participate in organized or passive park programs. Youth and adult sport and wellness programs allow people to interact with other residents in the community in a positive and safe environment.