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neighborhood
involvement

*Enhancing the quality of
neighborhoods through
community participation*

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Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Office of Neighborhood Involvement Crime Prevention Program
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Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design ("CPTED") is the design, maintenance, and use of the built environment in order to enhance quality of life and to reduce both the incidence and fear of crime. CPTED involves the balanced application of these three principles:

Natural Surveillance. Natural surveillance is achieved through design and maintenance that allow people engaged in their normal activity to easily observe the space around them, as well as eliminating hiding places for people engaged in criminal activity. Natural surveillance is generally achieved by the use of appropriate lighting, low or see-through fencing or landscaping, the removal of areas that offer concealment, and the placement of windows, doors, and walkways to provide the opportunity for easy observation of surrounding areas by responsible users of property.

Territoriality. Territoriality means providing clear designation between public, private, and semi-private areas and makes it easier for people to understand, and participate in, an area's intended use. Territoriality communicates a sense of active "ownership" of an area that can discourage the perception that illegal acts may be committed in the area without notice or consequences. The use of see-through screening, low fencing, gates, signage, different pavement textures, or other landscaping elements that visually show the transition between areas intended for different uses are examples of the principle of territoriality.

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 seen by others. Examples of access control would include a highly visible gate or entry way through which all users of a property must enter, or the appropriate use of signage, door and window locks, or fencing to discourage unwanted access into private space or into dark or unmonitored areas.

The principles of Natural Surveillance, Access Control, and Territoriality can be expressed in a *natural/passive* manner (designed-in, not requiring any active effort on the part of responsible users), an *organized/active* manner (planned activities or routines), and/or a *mechanical* manner (installing additional equipment to achieve the principle). Natural/passive CPTED, designed into a space before it is even built, is the ideal.

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Examples of GOOD Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design



Natural surveillance has been designed into these townhouses by creating “eyes” on the front of the building with windows, porches, and balconies.



Paving on the walkway, elevation, and flower beds reinforce a sense of moving from public space on the sidewalk into private space.



A reception/security desk is an example of organized or active access control.



The managers of this convenience store maintain natural surveillance by keeping the windows clear of posters and ads.



Exterior doors should have deadbolts as a form of access control. The deadbolt’s “throw” should be at least 1 inch, making the door harder to kick in.

Examples of BAD Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design



This light is way too bright. Huge differences in light levels make it hard for the human eye to adjust. A gentle, all-over wash of light is far preferable.



In an effort to display territoriality, this homeowner has gone too far, making this an unpleasant place to be for responsible users.



Poor maintenance on this laurel hedge has eliminated almost all natural surveillance of this house, making it more vulnerable to crime.



Little or no maintenance is taking place on this property, giving a sense that a person can do anything here and get away with it.



A would-be criminal may see this store as an easy one to rob because ads in the windows almost completely obscure the view inside.

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Two other important CPTED concepts:

Activity Support. Activity support involves both passive and active efforts to promote the presence of responsible pedestrian users in a given area, thus increasing the community value of the area, while discouraging actions by would-be offenders who desire anonymity for their actions. Passive examples are design elements that make an area appealing to appropriate pedestrian use, such as attractive landscaping, safety from car traffic, and public art. Active examples involve scheduling events for an area to attract appropriate users, such as picnics, concerts, children's play groups, or sports events.

Management and Maintenance. Proper maintenance of landscaping, lighting and other features is vital 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 — will rapidly undermine the impact of even the best CPTED design elements. While CPTED principles supplement effective maintenance and management practices, they can not 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 or overly-permissive management practices will attract would-be offenders and, equally, drive away responsible users of the space. 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 keep their effectiveness.

For CPTED principles to accomplish the goals of enhanced livability and better natural safety, *each principle must work together with the others*. For example, activity support can be undermined if a property is stripped bare of landscaping 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 are aggressive in appearance (such as window bars, harsh lighting treatments, or hostile-looking fencing) can undermine activity support. The intent, therefore, is to use the combined balance of these principles to promote a safer, more livable environment for all.

For assistance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design at your property, contact your Crime Prevention Coordinator. Visit www.portlandonline.com/oni/cp for our line of do-it-yourself CPTED assessment worksheets for different types of properties, and more information about CPTED.

Crime Prevention Program

All numbers are area code 503

Administrative offices	823-4064
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East	823-3505, 823-5532
North.....	823-4098, 823-4094
Northeast.....	823-4763, 823-4764
Northwest	823-4257
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Southwest.....	823-3131
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