CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN PLAN

Site Plan Review: Best Practices and Checklist for CPTED

The checklist shared below is based on principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), which adopts a strategic approach to designing built environments in a way that reduces opportunities for crime through improved planning, design, and management of spaces. The following are the key CPTED principles:

Natural Surveillance, focused on increasing visibility within a space to deter criminal activity. It suggests designing layouts that maximize sightlines, use windows and lighting effectively, and position landscaping to avoid creating hiding spots can ensure that people can easily observe their surroundings, which in turn fosters a sense of safety.

Territorial Reinforcement, to encourage and communicate a sense of ownership and responsibility for spaces. It involves using physical design elements, such as fences, paving treatments, signage, and landscaping, to delineate public and private areas clearly. This allows residents to feel empowered to watch over their environment and signals to visitors the boundaries of private territory.

Access Control, to limit access to certain areas while enhancing legitimate entry. Recommendations include designing pathways, entrances, and exits to naturally guide movement, using barriers to restrict access to vulnerable areas, and employing entry systems like gates or controlled access points. This helps to manage who can enter a space and when.

Maintenance signals that an area is cared for and monitored, which can deter crime. This principle encourages regular upkeep of properties, prompt repairs of vandalism, and the removal of litter. A clean and well-maintained environment not only improves aesthetics but also fosters community pride and engagement.

Activity Support emphasizes the importance of having active participants engaged in legitimate activities to foster a sense of safety. By designing spaces, opportunities, and events that promote social interaction, recreation, and community engagement, we can encourage "natural guardians" to inhabit these areas— individuals who help deter crime simply by being present and involved in positive activities. This can include features such as parks, gathering areas, and strategically placed seating that offers clear sightlines to other well-used spaces.

Target Hardening focuses on securing premises through use of systems like cameras, mechanical access control systems, smash-proof doors and windows, and emergency alarms. It is most relevant in places where it's hard to naturally watch or control access through design, or where there might be blind spots.

More details and recommendations can be found at stpaul.gov/CPTED-developers, and in the summarized infographic below.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
Best Practices for Developing Safer Spaces

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) leverages improved planning, design, and management of built environments in a way that can increase safety and reduce opportunities for crime. Here are some crime prevention strategies to incorporate in your development.

Activity Support
involves designing spaces, opportunities, and events that promote social interaction and recreational use

Natural Surveillance
focuses on increasing visibility and a sense of safety by allowing people to easily observe their surroundings as well as activities of potential offenders, which deters criminal activity

Access Control
uses design elements to limit access while enhancing legitimate entry

Target Hardening
involves mechanical systems like emergency alarms and smash-resistant doors and windows

Territorial Reinforcement
communicates a sense of ownership and responsibility for spaces by using design elements to delineate between public and private spaces

Maintenance
signals an area is cared for and monitored, which can improve aesthetics, foster community pride and ownership, and deter crime

SAINT PAUL NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

To learn more about CPTED principles and other detailed recommendations, visit stpaul.gov/CPTED-developers

	✓ DO	✗ DON'T
Natural Surveillance	Downcast and uniform lighting for visibility without glare or shadows; LED and motion-sensor lighting where possible	Poor lighting that creates glare or shadows, limiting visibility of areas that are beyond 10 feet or more from you
	Main entrances, driveways and parking spaces visible from entrances, streets, and/or nearby windows	Dense vegetation, narrow alleyways, garbage cans, electrical boxes or blind corners that can create hiding spots
	Indoor workstations and active areas facing windows and entrances	Windows obstructed by signs, pamphlets, or plants
	See-through stairways and railings to minimize blind turns	Shrubs taller than 2 feet; tree branches lower than 6 feet high
	Light-colored parking garage walls and ceilings with convex mirrors at turns	Fences, gates, or walls that are difficult to see through and easy to hide behind
Maintenance	Plan and assign responsibilities for regular upkeep of property, repairs, cleanliness, functional lighting and trimming of landscaping	Let the site go into a state of disrepair, ignore litter and overgrown landscaping, make it seem abandoned
Access Control	Pathways, barriers, landscaping, and signage directing movement to well-marked entrances, exits, and away from restricted areas	More than one entry and exit point, which make it difficult to monitor trespasses and unauthorized entries
	Gates, buzzers, peepholes and electronic systems like key fobs, cameras and vehicle sensors to control access	Fences, walls, gates, or plants that are easy to climb over
Territorial Reinforcement	Fences, low walls, paths, or plants to separate public, private, and semi-private spaces and show property boundaries	Ignore the role of landscaping in defining territorial boundaries
	Signs to communicate ownership, hours of operation, and permissible activities	No clear signs or barriers to differentiate between public and private spaces
Activity Support	Community spaces and events that promote social interaction and recreational use with clear sightlines to streets, nearby windows, and other well-used spaces	Abandoned, isolated, or poorly monitored areas that are not attractive for regular use by inhabitants
Target Hardening	Install smashproof doors, locks, and windows whenever possible	Ignore vulnerable spots around the property, like holes in fences or broken gates

How to use the checklist:

The following checklist outlines questions based on recommended crime prevention principles for new developments. While not every item will apply to every site plan, we encourage you to review safety and security considerations in your neighborhood and integrate crime prevention strategies into your design wherever feasible.

The checklist below serves as a discussion guide for design and development teams during the pre-Site Plan Review stage, helping to identify strategies for enhancing on-site safety. Please select 'Yes', 'No', 'Maybe' or 'NA' as applicable for each of the questions listed below. In addition, you may add 1-2 lines of detail in the 'Comments' column alongside your responses in the checklist.

Please note that city, county, state, or federal codes might regulate many of these items and should supersede recommendations made for crime prevention purposes. Please check with the proper code authority prior to making any changes.

	Yes	No	May be	NA	Comments
Lighting					
Is the overall lighting on property sufficient for visibility without glare, dispersion, or shadows that could conceal illicit activities?					
Is there sufficient IES standard illumination (e.g.: LED lights) along walkways, entrances, exits, and on parking lot?					
Is there motion-sensor lighting?					
Natural Visibility					
Are potential areas of concealment (e.g., dense vegetation, blind corners, narrow alleyways, hiding spots) minimized?					
Can the property's surrounding areas, (including parking lots, if any) be viewed clearly from windows in the concerned/neighboring building?					
Are there clear sightlines and visibility throughout the site?					
Are workstations or active areas within the site facing windows that overlook the street and parking lot?					
Does landscaping follow the 2 ft / 6 ft rule (no shrubs higher than 2 ft and no tree branches lower than 6ft)?					
Territorial Definition					
Are the boundaries between public and private property clearly defined through fencing, landscaping, bollards, paving treatments, etc.?					
Are access and exit points to the overall site clearly indicated for new visitors?					
Are there sections on site that are transition zones between the public and private spaces? If so, where?					
Signages					
Are there clear signs to guide users for appropriate use of space?					
Do the signs reinforce a sense of ownership and identity (e.g.: mention private property, permissible and forbidden activities, etc.)?					
Maintenance					
Is there a maintenance plan to ensure functional lighting and trimming of landscaping for visibility?					
Is there a process for regular repairs to prevent the appearance of neglect or abandonment?					
Mechanical surveillance					
Are there security cameras or surveillance measures in place, strategically located to monitor critical areas?					