

# FBI

## Law Enforcement Bulletin

Senior Citizens  
Against Crime

McGRUFF'S "HOME SAFE" GAME



October 1988

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## Law Enforcement Bulletin

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William S. Sessions, Director

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remain drug-free as they approach critical decision years. This topic was selected because of the proven links between crime and drugs, and thus between crime prevention and drug abuse prevention.

McGruff's call to action is backed up by a kit developed with the strong support of a major corporation. It contains an audio cassette, a video cassette of "The No Show" (a 23-minute McGruff rock video), a range of games and puzzles for a variety of children's ages, and a McGruff computer game.

A modest Federal investment (in producing "The No Show") was leveraged into over a million dollars worth of corporate outlays when a private company underwrote mailing a copy of the Drug Abuse Prevention Kit to every superintendent in the country of a public school system with more than 1,000 elementary grade students.

Again, NCPC emphasis on quality was rewarded. "Thanks so much for the Drug Abuse Prevention School Kit. I take it everywhere I go with McGruff, and it's always an instant winner. I show people lots of things, but always win their hearts with McGruff material," reported the president of the National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth.

A cooperative effort spearheaded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the FBI resulted in over 50,000 pieces of McGruff's crime prevention education information being distributed by the Bureau to visitors to its highly popular tour in Washington, DC. In addition to the literature, a special 5-minute video highlighted McGruff's "Winners Don't Use Drugs" message for those awaiting tours.

The benefits of starting a crime prevention program include drawing upon such partnerships. More importantly, however, they are a superb op-



portunity to bring together children, teens, and adults to prevent crime and develop more caring communities for the betterment of us all. NCPC can provide the tools; communities must provide the creativity, commitment, energy, and desire to "Take A Bite Out of Crime."

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**Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Philip B. Taft, Jr., *Fighting Fear: The Baltimore COPE Project* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986); John Eck and William Spelman, *Problem Solving: Problem Oriented Policing in Newport News* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986).

<sup>2</sup>Anthony Pate, et al., *Reducing Fear of Crime in Houston and Newark*, a summary report, Police Foundation, 1986.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Lavrakas, "Citizen Self Help and Neighborhood Crime Prevention," *American Violence and Public Policy*, ed. Lyn Curtis (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 87.

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# **An Ounce of Prevention**

## **A New Role For Law Enforcement**

***"[Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design] concepts integrate natural approaches to crime prevention into building design and neighborhood planning. . . ."***

By  
**TIMOTHY D. CROWE**  
*Director  
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The well-worn cliché coined by Benjamin Franklin, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," seems an appropriate way of introducing a new role for law enforcement agencies in supporting the public and private activities of communities. Law enforcement agencies are the only major community and governmental service not included in the review and approval process of planning, zoning, traffic, and environmental design decisions.

Why is it that a law enforcement officer who is visiting another city can automatically pick out the problem neighborhoods and business areas? The answer is simple—they learn to associate certain environmental conditions with social, economic, and crime problems. The same may be said for nonlaw enforcement visitors. "If it looks bad, it must be bad"! Everyone knows this!

The degree of attractiveness of any location says a lot about its owners and the type of people who frequent the place. Conversely, it may say a lot about mistakes that are made by public agencies and private developers which

end up making victims (and sometimes hostages) out of the residents. Whatever the interpretation, the atmosphere of any area gives off environmental cues that tell individuals whether they are safe.

There is a resurgence of interest in the concept referred to as "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED). The State of Florida has gone so far as to pass a law entitled the Safe Neighborhoods Act, which provides legal authority and funding for the implementation of CPTED concepts. These CPTED concepts integrate natural approaches to crime prevention into building design and neighborhood planning, instead of responding to crime problems after they materialize.

But, what has this got to do with law enforcement? What right has law enforcement to be involved in planning, zoning, and architectural design decisions? Isn't it true that law enforcement agencies are already overburdened with calls-for-service and investigations to take on another function? Isn't this really someone else's job? Couldn't law



Mr. Crowe

enforcement get sued for suggesting a change that does not work?

There are a number of compelling reasons for law enforcement to be involved in CPTED.

- 1) CPTED concepts have been proven to enhance community activities while reducing crime problems.
- 2) CPTED concepts are fundamental to traditional law enforcement values, in terms of helping the community to function properly.
- 3) CPTED requires the unique information sources and inherent knowledge of the community that is endemic to the law enforcement profession.
- 4) CPTED problems and issues bear a direct relationship to repeat calls-for-service and crime-producing situations.
- 5) CPTED methods and techniques can directly improve property values, business profitability, and industrial productivity, thereby enhancing local tax bases.

The nearly proverbial expression, "Pay me now, or pay me later," suggests that the early involvement of a knowledgeable law enforcement agency in the conceptualization and planning of community projects can lead to "improvements in the quality of life, and reductions in the fear and incidence of crime."

What needs to be done? Answer: Law enforcement agencies, regardless of size, must be involved formally in the review and approval process of community and business projects. Moreover, this involvement must be active and creative, rather than passive and

reactive. Any fear of litigation is as groundless as most, since the role of law enforcement in CPTED is to provide additional information and concerns that may have not occurred to the persons who are responsible (and qualified) for making changes to the environment.

#### **CPTED Definitions and Problems**

The CPTED definition used by the National Crime Prevention Institute (NCPI) is that "the proper DESIGN and effective USE of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life." This definition seems to be a "mouthful" until one understands that the definition of CPTED says, basically, that the better we manage our human and physical resources, the greater our profit and lower our losses. In a residential neighborhood, profit translates to the protection of property values and improved quality of life. In a business neighborhood, profit translates to the "bottom-line," to economic growth, and to attractiveness (as well as taxes). And, in both situations, the byproduct is crime prevention.

One big problem with all this is that the public and some law enforcement administrators assume that the role of the police is limited to "trail them, nail them, and jail them"! Public administrators sometimes find it expedient to limit each local government agency to its most visible task, thereby reducing interagency conflict and avoiding consolidated or collective actions which may be hard to control. But, can crime and crime prevention be "cubby-holed" in the law enforcement function? Do we perpetuate the practice of closing the barn door after the horse gets out? Or,

**“...early involvement of...law enforcement...in the conceptualization and planning of community projects can lead to ‘improvements in the quality of life, and reductions in the fear and incidence of crime.’”**

do we acknowledge the necessity for integrated program planning and support?

A common misconception shared by the public, the media, and elected officials is that “reactive” law enforcement approaches are working. However, the facts do not support this notion. Consider the following:

- Only 21 percent of the nearly 12 million serious crimes reported to the police in 1986 were SOLVED (FBI Uniform Crime Reports).
- Only 35 percent of all criminal victimizations were reported to the police, which means that the actual overall solution rate was 5-7 percent (National Crime Surveys, U.S. Dept. of Justice).
- Estimates of the undetected or unacknowledged losses to American business (and thereby to the consumer) vary from a low of \$25 billion annually to a high of \$625 billion (Hallcrest Report on Private Security in the U.S.).
- 15 percent of the cost of consumer goods is due to employee theft and shoplifting (U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

These figures are only the “tip of the iceberg” regarding the true extent of crime, fraud, cheating, and dishonesty in the United States. Clearly, it must be concluded that purely reactive law enforcement responses are inappropriate. It also suggests that something more fundamental than public education and “gadget”-oriented crime prevention programs must be undertaken.

A number of environmental issues have surfaced over the past 40 years which lead to the conclusion that CPTED may be one of the more im-

portant (but not exclusive) crime prevention initiatives for the next 2 decades. Perhaps the most basic of these issues is the discovery that so many of the environmental factors that we take for granted have something to do with crime. Moreover, it has been observed that many community and government functions seem to exist or co-exist in a mutually exclusive manner, while seeming to cooperate. For instance, urban planners and traffic engineers are involved in approving new commercial construction projects. But, it has been found that many of their standards and requirements have gone unchallenged. Sometimes they agree on the same standard, but for different reasons.

After many years of attempting to relate, it has become commonplace for planners, transportation engineers, developers, public housing officials, and code enforcement authorities to seem to coordinate and cooperate through “subtle conflict,” that is, instead of openly fighting, they establish territories and stick to them, keeping their noses out of each other’s bailiwicks! Consequently, many fundamental errors slip through which result in failed business areas and declining neighborhoods that stand as a permanent legacy to the “failure to communicate.”

Following are some environmental problems and issues that are a small sample of areas in which a CPTED effort may help:

- One-way street systems* have been found to improve traffic flow, but create “dead zones” for business, with resulting crime or fear of crime that deters development efforts.
- Through traffic in neighborhoods* has been found to be detrimental

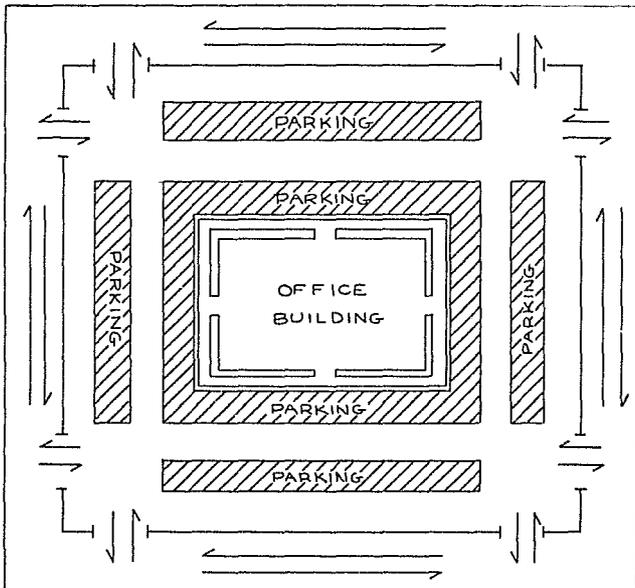
to residential housing values, stability, and crime rates.

- Downtown projects* continue to fail by making fundamental errors that reduce natural surveillance and natural access control, resulting in the loss of desired users and the domination of the unwanted.
  - Fortress effects* produced by designers of convention centers, hotels, banks, senior citizen housing, and parking lot structures destroy the surrounding land uses and create a “no man’s land.”
  - Bleed-off parking* enhances conflict between commercial and residential land uses and both lose.
  - Store design and management* actually reduces business and increases victimization of employees and customers.
  - Mall and major event facility parking*, access control, and layout produce traffic congestion and magnets for undesirable activity.
  - School and institutional designs* create unsurveillable and dysfunctional areas resulting in increased behavioral and crime problems and overall impediments to successful operations (e.g., achievement in schools).
  - Public housing and “affordable” housing projects* serve as magnets for transients, as opposed to local poor, with further deteriorating effects on existing neighborhoods.
- Nearly every environmental situation or location is amenable to the application of CPTED concepts. And, believe it or not, the law enforcement

OFFICE BUILDING SITE PLAN AND PARKING

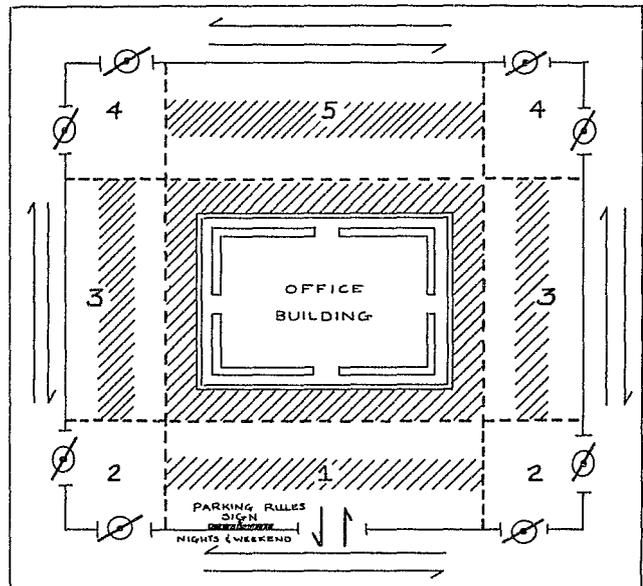
POOR DESIGN

- A. Parking is undifferentiated by time of day and day of week.
- B. Through access and night-time use are poorly defined and unclear.
- C. Cars parked anywhere are not subject to scrutiny by security, law enforcement officials or building management.



GOOD DESIGN

- A. Parking is zoned and clearly identified by allowable spatial and temporal uses.
- B. Improper parking is more subject to notice and scrutiny by local law enforcement officials or security officers.
- C. Zones may be closed depending upon need.



agency can assist in asking the right questions and supplying the right information to help the community to make more-informed decisions.

**Solutions**

Someone has to challenge, albeit politely, the unidimensional decisions that are made often by individuals with the responsibility to develop, manage, and control our environment. Someone also has to challenge the foundation for

many of these decisions. After all, it is common for other disciplines to practice as many "time-honored traditions" as does the law enforcement profession.

A simple example of this occurred several years ago in an upper Midwest community. The police department had been incurring excessive overtime costs for a number of years as a result of the popularity of jogging and bicycle events. Event planners planned the routes and activities and then relied on the police to secure the routes. No one

questioned the basic routing until a police sergeant who was trained in CPTED asked the big question, "Why are you racing on this street pattern?"

The sergeant who asked this question had a personal motivation. He wanted to run in the planned event, but he could not because the chief of police had assigned him to extra duty to supervise a team of officers assigned to the race. Guess what the response was to the question? Naturally, one might

***“A number of environmental issues have surfaced. . .which lead to the conclusion the CPTED may be one of the more important. . .crime prevention initiatives for the next 2 decades.”***

expect a sophisticated response that would suggest that the police mind their own business. However, the response was, “It seems to be a good idea!”

After the initial shock of realizing that the police had been “holding the bag” for a number of years, the sergeant helped the event planners to select a route that reduced police personnel requirements by 50 percent. And, the race was still a success!

What does a law enforcement agency have to do to conduct CPTED reviews without embarrassing itself? Moreover, how does the agency go about getting anyone to listen or even allow the agency to get involved in the first place?

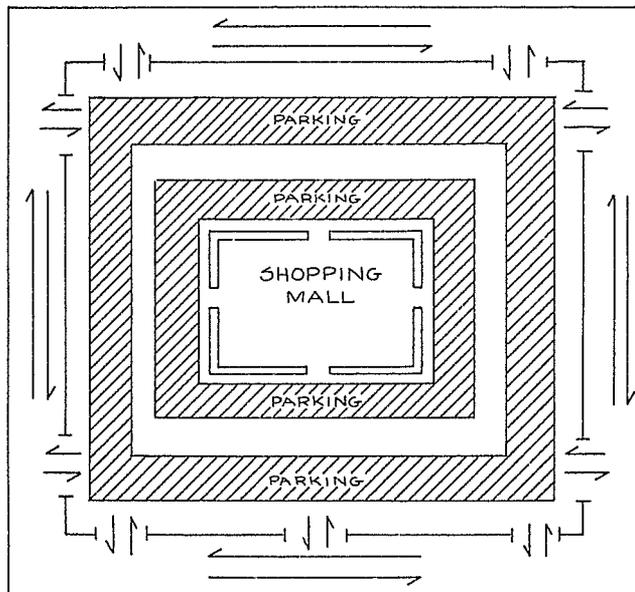
First, the head of the agency needs to make the commitment. Second, someone has to study the CPTED concept. It is much easier than it appears,

and there are some excellent training and orientation programs. Third, the agency head has to sell the concept and request formal involvement in the local review and approval process. This is the tricky part! It is easy to sell if it appears that it will help the other agencies or developers meet their own objectives. It is hard to sell if it appears that the “tail is wagging the dog,” at least from their viewpoint. No one will

**SHOPPING MALL**

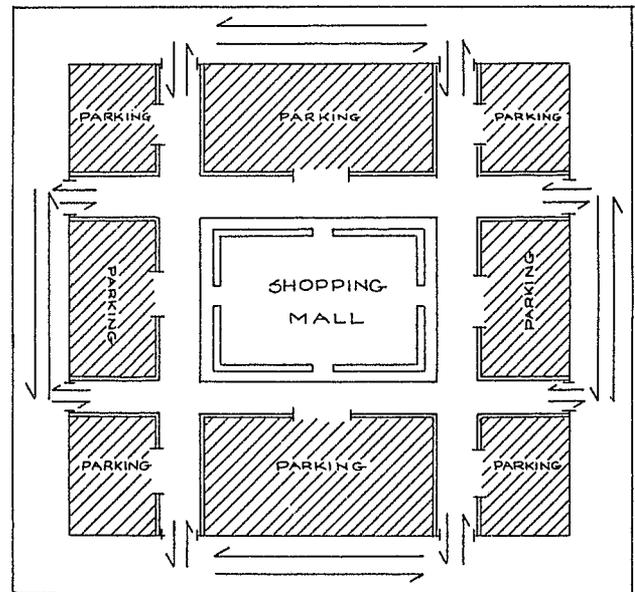
**POOR DESIGN**

- A. Parking is 360 and undifferentiated.
- B. Safety hazards persist because of uncontrolled access to all lanes.
- C. Undesirable night-time activities occur.
- D. Transition from public to private space is undefined.



**GOOD DESIGN**

- A. Parking is enclaved in relation to business entrances.
- B. Lateral access by vehicles is severely restricted.
- C. Aesthetic design opportunities are enhanced to screen ugly parking lots.
- D. Extreme transitional definition exists, thereby reducing escape opportunities.
- E. Parking areas may be closed with barricades by time of day.



listen if you are merely selling another "target hardening"-type of crime prevention activity, FOR CRIME PREVENTION PURPOSES, SOLELY!

The law enforcement administrator must adopt the attitude and priority system reflected in basic CPTED questions. What are you trying to accomplish in this space or project? How may we help you do it better? The law enforcement agency is not in the business of telling other professions how to do their job. The role of law enforcement in CPTED is to ask questions, share ideas, and provide information that would otherwise be unavailable to the builders, designers, and planners.

Law enforcement agencies are in a unique position to collect, collate, and analyze the following types of information for use in conducting CPTED reviews:

- Crime analysis — A study of events and methods,
- Demographics—A description of the inhabitants and users of environmental locations,
- Land use — The actual approved and planned uses of space that is available through maps and guidelines maintained by city/county planning departments,
- Observations — How the land or space is used presently and how the users react to physical design and use, and
- User interviews — What the present users and/or residents think about an area; in some cases this portion of a review needs additional input from nonresident users (e.g., downtown shopping districts).

A CPTED assessment uses the aforementioned information to provide answers to the following questions:

#### *Designation*

- What is the designated purpose of this space?
- For what was it originally intended to be used?
- How well does the space support its current use? Its intended use?
- Is there conflict?

#### *Definition*

- How is the space defined?
- Is it clear who owns it?
- Where are its borders?
- Are there social or cultural definitions that affect how the space is used?
- Are the legal or administrative rules clearly set out and reinforced in policy?
- Are there signs?
- Is there conflict or confusion between the designated purpose and definition?

#### *Design*

- How well does the physical design support the intended function?
- How well does the physical design support the definition of the desired or accepted behaviors?
- Does the physical design conflict with or impede the productive use of the space or the proper functioning of the intended human activity?
- Is there confusion or conflict in the manner in which the physical design is intended to control behavior?

A variety of general strategies and concepts may be applied to problem situations.

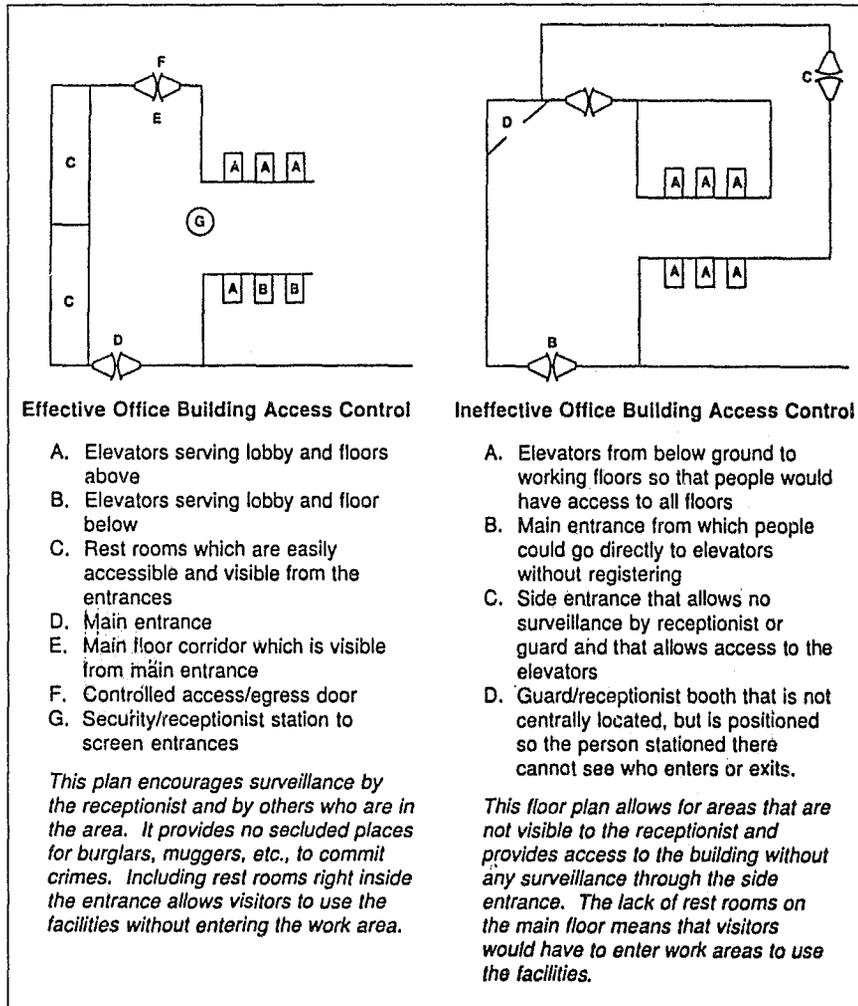
These include:

- Provide clear border definition of controlled space.
- Provide clearly marked transitional zones which indicate movement from public to semi-public to private space.
- Relocate gathering areas to locations with natural surveillance and access control; or to locations away from the view of would-be offenders.
- Place safe activities in unsafe locations to bring along the natural surveillance of these activities (to increase the perception of safety for normal users and risk for offenders).
- Place unsafe activities in safe spots to overcome the vulnerability of these activities with the natural surveillance and access control of the safe area.
- Redesignate the use of space to provide natural barriers to conflicting activities.
- Improve scheduling of space to allow for effective use and appropriate "critical intensity" and spatial definition of accepted behaviors.
- Redesign or revamp space to increase the perception or reality of natural surveillance.
- Overcome distance and isolation through communications in design efficiencies.

#### **Conclusion**

CPTED may appear at first to be the proverbial "two thousand pound

***“The role of law enforcement in CPTED is to ask questions, share ideas, and provide information that would otherwise be unavailable to the builders, designers, and planners.”***



marshmallow." You think it is going to be good, but you don't know where to start chewing. Experience has shown that most law enforcement administrators have an inherent understanding of the concepts. As long as you keep it simple, it is easier than it appears. And, the potential value to the community is worth it.

CPTED planners and specialists are taught above all else that they have to:

- 1) Never look at the environment the same way again!
- 2) Question everything, as politely as possible!
- 3) Learn the "lingo" of the other professions!

CPTED can and will work for the law enforcement agency if it adopts the attitude of "What are you trying to achieve, and how can we help you do it better?" A successful parade, major

event, school, hotel, shopping center, or neighborhood has less crime problems.

A growing number of law enforcement agencies are adopting CPTED concepts. It is working for them and it is improving their image in the community. Perhaps CPTED may work for you in developing new forms of cooperation and assistance between law enforcement and the public and private sectors.

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