

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE APRIL 30, 2007

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED) PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GENERAL FILE

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. THAT the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles and Guidelines For Development Review appended to this report as Attachment #1, BE APPROVED.
2. THAT City Staff be directed to implement these CPTED Principles and Guidelines in the review of development proposals.

Economic Impact

There are no requirements for new funding associated with this report.

Communications Plan

The development application forms will include a notification that all development submissions are subject to the CPTED Principles and Guidelines. These Guidelines will be available to the public on the City's corporate website. The applicants can also purchase a hard copy of the Guidelines at the Development Planning Department.

Purpose

The Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and guidelines will provide the City of Vaughan's staff and the development industry with the necessary guidance in developing land in a manner which will foster safer communities. In doing so, CPTED design strategies intend to create security conscience neighbourhoods that can facilitate the police and other crime prevention groups to keep the community safer.

Background – Analysis and Options

Item 28, Report No.63, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by Council on September 27, 2004, recommended:

“That Staff review the City of Mississauga's guidelines relating to the integration of CPTED safety initiatives in the development application review process and provide a report on implementing a similar process in Vaughan.”

To reduce the rate and occurrence of crime in towns and cities, since the mid 1980's, the Canadian Government has promoted crime prevention through the National Strategy on Community Safety, and Crime Prevention. The new approach includes policies to decrease the crime rate by reducing the availability and attractiveness of opportunities for criminal activity. Following the Federal Government initiative, many Canadian cities have developed their own crime prevention strategies by employing the “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” (CPTED) guidelines.

a) Context for Application of Design Guidelines in the Development Review Process

In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), urban development has grown and expanded to such an extent that the resources of the police force are strained in their efforts to protect communities from the crime. As a new and fast growing community in the GTA, the City of Vaughan has evolved to become a major urban centre of commerce and industry, with varying types of residential communities. With a growing population, and an expanding developed land mass the duty of the York Regional Police is becoming increasingly difficult and challenging. The purpose of the following design guidelines is to create an urban landscape designed to facilitate improved surveillance by the police and the public of our urban environment to help protect against potential criminal activities. It is with this intention that the following guidelines were prepared by the City of Vaughan's Development Planning Department to be used as a tool for planners, design professionals and developers to build high quality urban environments with the idea of reducing the opportunity for crime to occur.

b) Value of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

CPTED is a crime deterrence method based on the proper design and the effective use of the built environment, leading to a reduction in the incidence of crime, as well as an improvement in quality of life. CPTED reduces criminal opportunity and fosters positive social interaction among legitimate users of space. The emphasis is on deterrence rather than apprehension and punishment. Despite the fact that crime cannot be prevented by well-designed places alone, CPTED is an important tool with proven benefits. To be most effective, CPTED needs to be part of a broader crime prevention strategy that incorporates social, environmental and community development strategies.

c) Fundamental Principles

Most criminal behaviour studies show that the decision to offend or not offend is highly dependent upon the prospect or chances of being caught. This behavioural characteristic shapes the CPTED chief strategy that intends to increase the perceived risk of detection and apprehension. The CPTED built environment strategies to discourage the occurrence of crime are, surveillance, access management, territorial reinforcement and quality environments.

- Natural Surveillance:

The natural surveillance strategy includes the design of all publicly accessible spaces, which are visible to the public eye with clear sightlines. This approach increases the perception that the intruders are constantly under observation. The proper design and placement of physical elements maximizes visibility and promotes social activities among the citizens in public and private realms, as well as effectively reduces the potential offenders escape routes. Once the natural surveillance strategy is implemented, it deters crime by making criminal activities visible to both local citizens and police patrols.

- Natural Territorial Reinforcement:

Territorial reinforcement utilizes natural, and design elements to define the space, and its limits. With visibly defined realms, CPTED encourages social control by assigning ownership of public and semi-public space to the local residents. This strategy promotes sense of ownership that encourages the residents to defend their own space against intruders or report to the police. Furthermore, the sense of space ownership limits potential intruders' movements and makes them more vulnerable and identifiable.

- Natural Access Control

Natural access control deters potential criminals from entering onto private space, by clearly separating the private and public realms. The primary objective for the access control strategy is to limit the intruders' access to the private realm and to increase the perception of being identified and apprehended. In order to control flow, or limit access through the entrances, access control method limits the number of entrances to the private realm by the placement of a constant barrier system on the perimeter.

- Quality Environment

Activity support and maintenance are major factors to establish quality environments. Quality environment occurs when all parts of the urban environment appropriately function and are maintained well. Good-quality and well-maintained places attract people and promote social activities that create natural surveillance in a casual way with no specific plan to watch out for criminals or criminal activity. As a result, active urban environments deter offenders by increasing the possibility of being watched and detected. Maintenance indicates the state of the ownership and management of the urban area. Once the urban space deteriorates, the condition of the site indicates there is less control by the intended users and greater tolerance of disorder. It is proven that the presence of deteriorated and unattended sites persuade vandals to damage more properties in the vicinity, including the prominence of poor graffiti. As a result, many North American cities have adopted a zero tolerance approach to substandard property maintenance.

These principles may seem self-explanatory, however to properly administer these principles can become a challenge depending upon social needs, behaviour and perception.

Significance to Site Development Applications

Understandably, applying a blanket set of CPTED guidelines to the City of Vaughan is impossible. The most appropriate application of CPTED should come from a site-by-site basis. The differing site conditions and land uses will always dictate how best to apply the four principles in physical form. This can be a difficult process, therefore the attached report has outlined a series of problems and a general approach to a physical CPTED design solution for each principle. Through these general solutions, Urban Planners and Designers will be able to devise the most appropriate response under varying circumstances.

Implication to Staff

Planners and Urban Designers will take the introductory course offered by CPTED Ontario, in order to ensure that City Staff is CPTED conscious. This is particularly important for anyone reviewing Site Plan and Subdivision applications. In addition, there is a tremendous amount of CPTED work outlined for internal building design and organization.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2007, particularly 'A5', "Plan and Manage Growth".

Regional Implications

The Region of York will be required to provide approval on certain development applications that are within their jurisdiction.

Conclusion

The Development Planning Department has developed draft CPTED principles and guidelines (Attachment #1) based on the review of the City of Mississauga's Guidelines relating to the integration of CPTED safety initiatives in their development review process.

This document was produced for the benefit of development applicants and their designers, however, the principles and guidelines set out in the document provide a conceptual framework derived through CPTED, which serves to develop and ensure a better designed property.

Attachments

1. Draft Design Principles and Guidelines (COUNCILLORS ONLY)

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