



SAFE, CLEAN, & GREEN

28

**MUNICIPAL
IMPLEMENTATION
TOOL #28**

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DELAWARE VALLEY
 **dvrpc**
REGIONAL
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This brochure is one in a series of Municipal Implementation Tools available to local governments and planning partners to assist in implementing the region's long-range plan, *Connections 2040: Plan for Greater Philadelphia*. Prepared and adopted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), the long-range plan provides a sustainable land use and transportation vision for the region's growth and development through the year 2040. *Connections 2040* establishes four key strategies that are essential to realizing a sustainable future:

- Manage growth and protect the environment;
- Create livable communities;
- Build the economy;
- Establish a modern, multimodal transportation system.

Municipal governments have the primary authority and responsibility to implement these policies. The Municipal Implementation Tool (MIT) series is designed to introduce local officials and citizens to planning techniques that may be useful in their communities. Each MIT covers a different topic and provides an overview of the use of the tool, the benefits, and best practices from within the Greater Philadelphia region. For additional information about DVRPC and the *Connections* planning process, please visit www.dvrpc.org/Connections2040.

Safe, Clean, and Green

A neighborhood's health and vitality are linked to the perception of safety. Perception and reality are often different, but a neighborhood with relatively little crime with an unsafe image often has problems attracting new residential businesses development.

According to the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, "attracting neighborhood-serving businesses to what is perceived as an unsafe neighborhood will also prove challenging. Dealing with crime and cleaning up unsavory and unsafe features in a neighborhood is a critical first step in changing the area for the better. Neighborhoods that are struggling with safe, clean, and green issues are more likely to have:

- Higher rates of violent crime.
- Prevalence of graffiti and barred windows and doors.
- Higher vacancy rate in the downtown.
- Issues of maintenance regarding trash collection.
- Unmaintained landscaping in parks and public spaces."

This brochure is designed to help planners, government officials, business leaders, community activists, crime prevention practitioners, and law enforcement looking for innovative ways to prevent crime in their downtowns. It will teach you how to apply principles such as access control, natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance to improve your neighborhood or community.

Benefits

Safe, Clean, and Green is based on the idea that proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction of crime, thus providing an improved quality of life. Built on the strategies of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), Safe, Clean, and Green policies provide the following benefits:

- Opportunities for all members of the community to play meaningful roles in community crime prevention.
- Improved sense of security and quality of life.
- Fewer crimes committed in neighborhoods, less victimization of residents.
- Increased interaction among residents creating stronger neighborhood bonds.
- New crime prevention and problem-solving skills.
- Enhanced environmental considerations of public safety in planning, development, and redevelopment projects.
- Safer locations more attractive to customers and employees.
- Enhanced problem-solving partnerships with local government and community members.

Both traditional crime prevention and CPTED share goals of anticipating and preventing injury and loss by initiating actions to remove or reduce risk. Traditional crime prevention is led by law enforcement and focuses on organized strategies to prevent crime, such as neighborhood watch groups and security equipment. Alternatively, CPTED focuses on incorporating “natural” strategies that rely upon elements such as lighting, sightlines, entry design, landscaping, and planned social activities into the normal planning and design of a particular community or retail corridor.

Four Main Elements

The original CPTED theory is based on four main elements:

Natural Surveillance

People who are thinking about committing a crime want to minimize their chances of being seen and caught. As a result, natural surveillance is about designing an environment to maximize visibility and encourage social interaction. Potential offenders will sense the “eyes on the street,” which can deter them from committing a crime.

Access Control

Access control is about clearly differentiating between public space and private space to keep out unauthorized users if they do not have a reason for being there. The placement of entrances and exits, fencing, gates, doors, and shrubs can be used to control access. In public areas, signs, paving textures, and other “psychological” barriers can be used to control access.

Territorial Reinforcement

People naturally protect a territory that they feel is their own, thus having a level of respect for the territory of others. Clear boundaries between public and private areas are utilized by using physical elements such as fences, pavement treatment, or landscaping.

Maintenance

Well-maintained areas communicate that the area is inhabited by people who care about their surroundings. This is related to the “Broken Windows Theory,” which states that maintaining a space prevents small crimes such as vandalism, public drinking, and turnstile-jumping, which in turn creates an atmosphere of order and lawfulness that prevents more serious crimes from occurring.

Natural Surveillance



Source: www.smgov.net

Retail districts and residential neighborhoods are perceived as safer with “eyes on the street.” This illustration shows elements of natural surveillance. They include eyes above the street, proper lighting, and buildings between two and six floors.

Retail districts need to be safe or have the perception of being safe. Shoppers will not want to visit the downtown after dark if they do not feel safe.

Natural surveillance strategies include:

- Keep buildings between two to six floors.
- Encourage active uses (residential or office) above retail spaces.
- Design streets to increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
- Encourage storeowners to keep their windows free of posters and flyers.
- Encourage on-street parking.

Is Crime Linked to Cleanliness?

- Talk to merchants, residents, and visitors about the safety and cleanliness of your district.
- Do a walkthrough of your district and take note of non-functioning streetlights, litter, grass and weeds that need mowing, sidewalks in need of repair or graffiti.
- Conduct walkthroughs of other neighboring communities to compare safety and cleanliness.

Access Control



This store in Princeton, NJ, employs proper access control with a visible entryway, clear windows into the store, and decipherable store name.

Access control should deter the opportunity for crimes but should not hinder the movement of victims in the event that a crime does occur. Natural access control includes elements such as doors, fences, and gates as well as mechanical means of access such as locks, bars, and alarms.

Access control strategies include:

- Provide a single, clearly identifiable entrance for buildings.
- Ensure entrances are highly visible.
- Use low, thorny bushes beneath ground-level windows and climbing thorny plants next to fences to discourage intruders.
- Display street signs and street numbers clearly.
- Keep roll down security guards opaque.

Territorial Reinforcement



Cafés in Philadelphia utilize portions of the public sidewalk. Users of this space are comfortable in this setting making it uncomfortable for potential offenders. Source: K. Ciappa, GPTMC

Territorial reinforcement suggests that physical design can create or extend a sphere of influence to potential offenders. People naturally protect an area that they feel they own. Territorial reinforcement can be seen when a space discourages potential offenders because of users' familiarity with each other.

Territorial reinforcement strategies include:

- Create clearly defined entranceways.
- Use low walls, landscape and paving patterns to delineate ownership and responsibility for the space.
- Install awnings over doors and windows.
- Position parking areas to be clearly visible from the building or street.
- Position reception areas or security in the front at all entrances.

Maintenance



Care and maintenance allows for continued use of a space as it was originally intended. Maintenance is incumbent on community officials, building owners, operators, and occupants. Stores or public spaces that have been consumed by graffiti or even storm drains that are in need of repair, give the perception of disinvestment, which leads to a higher occurrence of crime.

Graffiti is seen as a sign of disinvestment. Communities should define ways to eliminate graffiti in the downtown. Source: Vibrant Streets, Washington, D.C.

Maintenance strategies include:

- Enforce the municipality's property maintenance code.
- Select plants that will not block sightlines when they reach maturity.
- Prune back bushes and trees that block light fixtures.
- Remove graffiti promptly.
- Pick up trash and litter regularly.
- Post information about who to contact if there is needed maintenance.

Towns Against Graffiti

Graffiti removal is the first step in maintaining a community's buildings. Graffiti often is indicative of a blight problem and other illegal activity in the area. Graffiti is not about causing damage but rather recognition. The graffiti artist or "tagger" makes his or her mark on a surface in order to get the recognition and admiration of his or her peers. Only the prompt removal of "tags" has been found to be a successful means of reducing the number of graffiti incidents in a community.



Removal of graffiti is an important maintenance step in maintaining the perception of safety. Source: Vibrant Streets, Washington D.C.

Towns Against Graffiti (TAG) is a cooperative program of multiple communities in Lower Bucks County, including Bensalem Township, Bristol Borough, Bristol Township, Falls Township, Lower Makefield Township, Lower Southampton Township, Middletown Township, Pennel Borough, and Tullytown Borough. TAG was formed for the purpose of quickly removing graffiti from buildings to improve the quality of life in the communities. Residents are encouraged to report graffiti to the TAG hotline. The reports are forwarded to the graffiti officer in the appropriate town and incorporated into the clean-up schedule for the removal crew. TAG towns have also enacted anti-graffiti legislation which limits the sale of spray paint and broad-tipped indelible markers.

The TAG program is funded by donations from private businesses and local municipal governments. In exchange for sponsorship of the program, an organization's name is placed on the TAG graffiti removal truck.

Wayfinding

Well-designed, strategically located wayfinding signs contribute to a feeling of security. Effective signs should be attentive to the point of view of the pedestrian. Wayfinding provides clear and legible information architecture with clear and easy circulation that connects parking, trails, and buildings.

Local ordinances should outline sign details. They should be standardized to provide clear and readable messages from the street. They should be visible at night and easy to read. If signs are in disrepair or vandalized, they should be replaced. This often gives the impression of lack of ownership and investment, leading to a fear of crime.

Sign Design

Signs should be legible, and identifiable. Wayfinding should be used along trails or where people congregate when a park is open, such as trails or recreation areas.

Message

Put the important information first: for example, hours of operation, phone numbers, or security information. Pictographs can also be used to easily convey this information.



This sign board details historic areas along the Schuylkill River Trail in Phoenixville. Source: DVRPC, 2013.

Location

In downtowns, signs should be placed at entrances or near activity nodes, such as intersections. Signs should typically be located at a pedestrian scale, normally 4 to 6 feet above the adjacent walking surface.

Parks and Open Space

The design of a park can have a direct impact on people's perceptions of safety and their willingness to use a space, particularly elements such as:

- Poor lighting
- Physical isolation
- Poor visibility
- Disguised areas
- Poor maintenance



Pathways are clearly defined with visibility in all directions. Source: DVRPC, 2010.

Designing a park for safety should meet the needs of its users, provide a connection, and leave a positive image. Below are three design elements that enhance a feeling of safety.

Active Boundaries

Small parks should be clearly visible from adjacent streets. The boundaries of large parks should be overlooked by residential or commercial uses to ensure "eyes on the area" at all times. Dedicated paths or walkways should also have clear sightlines, especially when they curve or change grade.

Entrapment Areas

Multiple entry and exit points should be provided. Pathways should ensure low border plantings. If shrubs or higher vegetation are used, they should not be planted directly across from one another to avoid potential hiding areas.

Activity Generators

Activity generators such as outdoor cafes or recreation areas should be clustered to attract users. Park activities should be located along the edge of parks close to vehicular traffic or gathered near walkways for extra security.

Retail Store Layout

Safety in the downtown also includes retail space that is properly designed. Store security also begins with store layout and design. Interior layout should strive to provide security for consumers and the employees. Aisles should provide a clear path from the entrance to the cashier. Most shoppers will work in a clockwise motion around the store, therefore, place shelving units that promote this circular pattern. This will help employees keep an eye on activity in the store.



*Storefronts that are covered by signs do not allow for pedestrians to also view what is happening in the store.
Source: Upper Darby, PA.*

Additional safety elements to consider:

- Maintain a clear line of sight from the cashier to all entrances.
- Leave interior lights on during evening hours.
- Keep windows clear of signs and merchandise.
- Keep shelving units low so there are no hiding places within the store.
- Provide mirrors and/or security cameras in hard to see areas such as corners.
- Remove signs from windows to provide clear lines of visibility to the cashier.
- Move displays that block visibility to the cashier from the outside.
- Make sure shelves are not overstocked, providing opportunities to have items fall into the aisles. This can be used as a distraction tactic for potential offenders.
- Train employees to be vigilant for potential threats.

Making Tacony A Safer Community

The Tacony Community Development Corporation (TCDC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the revitalization of the Torresdale Avenue commercial corridor and Tacony neighborhood. Making the Torresdale Avenue commercial corridor safe is a priority for the organization and residents.



Numerous businesses along Torresdale Avenue have taken advantage of Philadelphia's Storefront Improvement Program funding. Photo Credit: Tacony Community Development Corporation (TCDC).

To create a safe retail experience along Torresdale Avenue, staff at the TCDC started planning for better building design and employing better oversight. Building and streetscape design guidelines were created to improve the overall look of the corridor. The nonprofit invested over \$1 million to implement improvements to the streetscape such as new trash cans, removal of dead trees, street lights repaired, and new signage.

Over 20 new storefront designs were created for businesses along Torresdale Avenue. Implemented through the City of Philadelphia's Storefront Improvement Program, the improvements have had a positive effect on the community. According to a report released by Tacony Community Development Corporation, there has been a 95% reduction in graffiti and the vacancy rate has fallen.

The nonprofit continually provides information and education to individual business and property owners regarding safety resources to minimize potential risk for crime such as improved lighting, smarter cash handling, and new security systems. Businesses also partner with SAFECAM to link business security cameras to the Philadelphia Police database. Visit www.taconycdc.org for additional information.

Lansdowne Façade Improvement Program

The Lansdowne Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) created the Façade Improvement Program to make the core retail districts along Baltimore Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue more attractive to customers, business owners, and investors. It is a dollar-for-dollar matching grant program that provides up to \$5,000 to make certain exterior improvements to buildings. Professional design assistance is also available. LEDC partners with local banks and Sherwin Williams to provide Lansdowne business and property owners with additional incentives.



In 2010, a major renovation of the interior and exterior of this building was completed. Exterior improvements were partially funded by the LEDC. The ceramic store has become a regional destination and has significantly increased employment opportunities, merchandise, and service offerings. Source:

<http://lansdownesfuture.org/committees/economic-restructuring/>

Façade grants are targeted to owners or commercial tenants in two designated commercial areas: Lansdowne Avenue, from Stewart to Nyack and Baltimore Avenue, from Owen to Union. Eligible activities must conform to

the Lansdowne Main Street Design Guidelines and may include cleaning and repair, signs, awnings, and canopies, painting and exterior decorations, replacement of doors and windows, signage, exterior lighting, and the removal of inappropriate materials.

Develop a Safe, Clean, and Green Program

1. Check with your local police force to see if a safety initiative is already active.
2. If not, organize a small group to develop the safety initiative. Examples of people to consider inviting include: corridor manager, government leader(s), planning staff, zoning officer, building inspector, police, community group representative, architects, and developers.
3. Organize a walk through the neighborhood or community—preferably at night—using a safety survey to identify areas that might need to be improved.
4. Develop a list of safety elements (e.g., lighting, street and building access control, visibility, and landscaping) to incorporate into zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances, redevelopment plans, or economic development plans.
5. Give all members of the team an opportunity to weigh in on new development proposals. Use a checklist to review development proposals.
6. Municipalities can also provide Do It Yourself surveys for different types of property owners (e.g., single family, multifamily, commercial business, convenience store) on your municipal website.



Post watch signs at various entry points to alert potential criminals: Source: <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/economy/harrisburg-default>.

Interested in Safety Training?

AlterNation

AlterNation is a multi-disciplinary consulting firm specializing in developing safer neighborhoods. They offer training in better building design, culture capacity building, crime prevention and community development.

www.alternation.ca

International CPTED Association (ICA)

ICA supports local organizations, practitioners, and communities that utilize CPTED principles to create safer communities and environments. Training sessions are available for municipal officials and residents.

www.cpted.net

National Institute of Crime Prevention (NICP)

NICP provides the most current training possible and holds several basic and advanced CPTED training courses during the year in many locations throughout the United States.

www.cptedtraining.net

American Crime Prevention Institute (ACPI)

The American Crime Prevention Institute (ACPI) contracts with state and local law enforcement agencies to provide on-site crime prevention training. This allows cost-effective crime prevention training to be conducted without the expense of travel and lodging.

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The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is dedicated to uniting the region's elected officials, planning professionals and the public with a common vision of making a great region even greater. Shaping the way we live, work, and play, DVRPC builds consensus on improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment, and enhancing the economy. We serve a diverse region of nine counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Philadelphia Region – leading the way to a better future.

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