

pruned up to eight feet from the ground, whether evergreen or deciduous. In some cases, trees with drooping limbs, such as weeping willow or weeping cherry, should be trimmed higher to maintain adequate visibility.

## Lighting

The correct use of lighting can mean the difference between a safe or unsafe landscape. Lighting should be considered to minimize shadows around buildings and parking areas. Lighting on buildings, under trees and shrubs can be used effectively to illuminate the surroundings, while not blinding pedestrians and residents. Although lighting is an important aspect of CPTED, certain types of lights illuminate more effectively without "overlighting" the landscape. Select the types of lighting that achieve your lighting needs and avoid confusing the landscape with too many poles, fixtures and electric cables. Also, select lights that provide similar light intensity. For example, incandescent, fluorescent, mercury and sodium lamps generate different ranges of illumination and should not be used together in a lighting scheme to avoid "hot spots" of light or shadows. Some lights, such as mercury vapor lamps, produce 50 percent more light and use less energy than conventional lighting.

## Summary

The key issue in landscaping for safety is that Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design enhances the safety of any facility, whether that facility is a walkway, playground, parking lot, or common area. For more information on CPTED guidelines, contact the crime prevention office of your local police force. *For more information on CPTED in the Washington area call Josh D. Brown of the Fairfax County Police Department at (703) 354-5889.*

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For information on CFN, call (202) 962-3393



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# DESIGNING SAFE LANDSCAPING

Personal security, especially in the urban environment, is increasingly difficult to achieve. In urban housing such as single/multi-family, or high rise condominiums, it is difficult to maintain safety while retaining landscape aesthetics. Frequently, landscaping is mismanaged or avoided altogether due to the threat of criminal or mischievous activity. Research has shown that the more excessive and/or poorly maintained the landscaping, the higher the incidence of crime. This information bulletin provides some guidelines on how to design landscapes and maintain security using the concept of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

## Landscape Design

Although lush landscapes can provide a more aesthetic environment, they also create places for crimes to occur. One goal of CPTED is to design a landscape that provides a secure common-use area and/or general open space. However, aesthetics do not have to be sacrificed in order to achieve a safer environment. Good landscape design supports the three primary functions of CPTED:

- ▲ Territoriality (Awareness and familiarity of surroundings)
- ▲ Access Control
- ▲ Enhanced Visibility



A common mistake, particularly in the case of security in multi-family residential developments, is overplanting. Overplanting in areas around entrances, walkways, parking areas, and other common-use areas creates hiding places for criminals. Here are some landscaping tips to increase security in these areas:

- ▲ Design open landscapes
- ▲ Do not plant trees close to buildings or in front of windows or doors
- ▲ Reduce obstructions to view
- ▲ Use thorny shrubs (not around children's play areas) as a natural barrier to traffic and to discourage concealment
- ▲ Do not create dimly lit areas by allowing landscaping to become overgrown .

Many of the landscaping techniques of CPTED also enhance public safety, particularly in multi-family residential landscapes. Rows of shrubbery, trees, ornamental plants and flowers, even planter boxes can be used as long as they are arranged or designed with CPTED in mind.

## Plant Selection

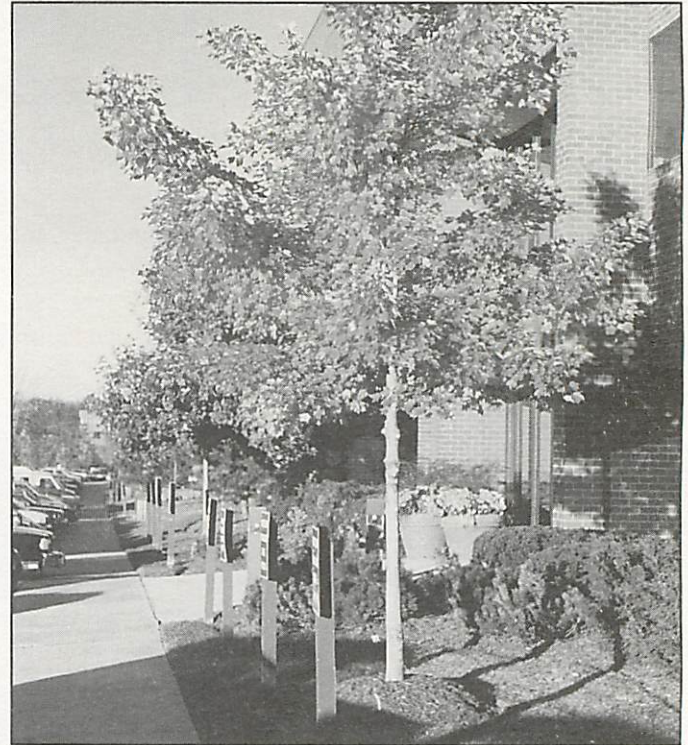
Select trees, shrubs, plants and planters with safety in mind. For example, plant a thorny low-growing hedge as a deterrent to traffic and to discourage concealment of criminals. There are several different varieties of thorny shrubs from which to choose. Barberry, pyracantha, flowering quince, and roses are good choices. Most of these varieties have showy foliage and berries that attract birds and other wildlife. Consult a local nursery to find the variety appropriate for your needs.

When selecting trees for the landscape, avoid those with low-growing, weeping or hanging branches. If evergreens are desired, use a species that can be pruned eight feet from the ground and will not look out of place. Varieties of black pine, white spruce, or hemlock are some examples.

Annual and perennial flowers and other ornamental plants can be used as well. Avoid using tall ornamentals such as pampas grass, since it can reach heights of six to eight feet and obstruct views in confined areas. Consider the mature height of the plants you select before planting.

## Retrofitting Existing Landscaping

Often a crime problem is recognized after the fact, that is, after a facility is completed and landscaping is installed. A safer environment can be achieved, however,



through redesigning or merely rearranging the existing landscape. Another method of creating a safer environment in existing landscapes is to develop a network of citizens to care for open areas. Options include the development of community garden plots or ornamentally landscaped areas.

According to Officer Josh D. Brown of the Fairfax County Police Crime Prevention Unit, assigning community members to serve as caretakers to communal areas can increase territorial loyalty. Officer Brown cited a housing development in Louisville, Kentucky where a flower garden was established, and the maintenance was assigned to several members of the community. This provided a regular visual inspection by those responsible for the garden. This reduced loitering, crime, and vandalism as community members discouraged non-residents from using their communal space.

## Landscape Management/Maintenance

Maintaining a secure landscaped environment can also be achieved through proper management techniques. Trees and shrubs that are not pruned regularly create places for crimes to occur. Trees should be limbed or