

**Future City Design by Law Enforcement?
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design**

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The Command College Futures Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue of relevance to law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future; rather, to project a variety of possible scenarios useful for strategic planning in anticipation of the emerging landscape facing policing organizations.

This journal article was created using the futures forecasting process of Command College and its outcomes. Defining the future differs from analyzing the past, because it has not yet happened. In this article, methodologies have been used to discern useful alternatives to enhance the success of planners and leaders in their response to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing it—creating, constraining and adapting to emerging trends and events in a way that optimizes the opportunities and minimizes the threats of relevance to the profession.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College Futures Project and journal article are those of the author, and are not necessarily those of the CA Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

Future City Design by Law Enforcement? Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Imagine a downtown entertainment, dining and shopping district including building and street layout designed by law enforcement personnel. This may sound a bit odd; however city planners and architects are turning to police departments more and more to help them with design ideas to improve emergency response and public safety in future downtown districts. Although a partnership between law enforcement and city planners is not a new concept, there is a need to increase them to further the future design of suburban communities in California.

As cities run out of land to expand, they are now expanding with more focus in the downtown core areas, combining retail and residential in one multi-use zone. Some of this expansion is vertical, combining multi-story shopping malls, dining establishments and condominiums all in one, condensed area. Cities are adding a large amount of both permanent and transient retail and commercial population. This growing trend has begun to pose some unique challenges to law enforcement. Amongst those are to provide service, safety and enforcement in this emerging environment; one in which many agencies in suburbia have little experience.

The idea of law enforcement personnel being involved in the initial planning and development process of commercial, retail and residential projects, could add significantly to the success of policing and service models in these future developments. By integrating the philosophy of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) along with the

philosophy of the Law Enforcement Planning Association of California (LEEPAC), law enforcement and planning departments will work together to design and develop the future downtown cores of mid-size suburban communities.

Building Alliances

There are several specific areas of concern to law enforcement in a condensed, downtown environment. Issues such as crime prevention, building technology, infrastructure protection, homeland security threats, building systems and critical incident response all pose challenges for police. Because of this, law enforcement is looking for ways to form partnerships with other government agencies, and using their resources to impact the future of how police services are provided in today's modern society.¹ With law enforcement personnel involved during the initial stages of planning and design, many structures could be designed and built with safety and service response access as an equal partner to the success of the establishment. For example, The City of Walnut Creek California recently completed a multi story, multi use project combining dining, retail and residential use. The police department worked with the city planning department at the outset of the project to suggest security and emergency access ideas to the architects. The adoption of these recommendations is a part of an emerging trend where agencies across disciplines work seamlessly towards common goals; an extension of the concept of a familiar term: interoperability.

Interoperability

After the attacks of 9/11, the term "interoperability" became a common word to describe the combining of law enforcement resources to combat terrorism in the United States. Agencies

across the country began to share information, join resources and enhance the possibility of success in a novel environment. In a similar fashion, “planning interoperability” can be applied to the future of community design to assist both law enforcement and planning departments.

Planning interoperability has started to become more prevalent in communities as they develop future community designs, due largely to the war against terrorism. Terrorism threatens to become a war against the livability of American cities.² This can trickle down to everyday crime. The result of this has opened some new doors for community development departments to begin working with law enforcement to design suburban areas that will assist with emergency response.

After the Oklahoma City bombings and the attack on 9/11, city government was slow to begin considering how law enforcement responses could be affected by planning and design. The American Planning Association (APA) was concerned that an over emphasis on law enforcement and security within future planning and design could result in zoning and land use changes. Enabling legislation through local planning commissions and zoning boards to work with law enforcement helped to alleviate those concerns.³ Cities have begun to expand beyond their planning departments to include the use of other resources including law enforcement. The City of Mesa Arizona, for instance, has applied this idea of interoperability for the future design of the city. The City of Mesa offers a CPTED assessment for any business in the city. Any initial architectural plans can be reviewed by a CPTED trained police practitioner to ensure CPTED principles have been applied to the design.⁴

Implementing Change

A network of public governmental officials including architects, developers, engineers, lawyers, planners and now, law enforcement, are creating a new generation of building, planning and design regulations.⁵ For instance, in 1998, the San Diego Police Department along with their City Planning Department conducted a review of eighty-nine different vertical city building designs and on-going building projects to assess the environmental elements contributing to the prevention of crime and potential to reduce overall crime. Applying suggestions from this team representing both departments saw a 42% drop in reported crimes over a five year period.⁶ If the remainder of law enforcement agencies follow suit, these partnerships would enable both planning and police to meet their goals while helping to design more livable communities in the future. In fact, formal programs are already in place to assist in those efforts.

The California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) has formed a partnership with the National Institute of Crime Prevention (NICP) to explore law enforcement's involvement in future community development in the State of California.⁷ The focus of the partnership is Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). CPTED is a concept which attempts to analyze potential crime and law enforcement response to crime in future community design and development. By obtaining input from the police, city planning designs can incorporate these ideas when developing future expansion.⁸ CPTED is based on the philosophy that proper design and effective use of an urban environment can lead to a reduction in fear and incidents of crime, as well as improve the quality of life and allow for better service from law enforcement. This philosophy is best utilized in the design phase before any commercial or residential areas are built.

The use of CPTED will reduce crime and fear. The City of Sarasota Florida is a good example of successfully applying CPTED principles. In 1990 Sarasota put together a team of city planners, police officers and architects to address one specific part of their city experiencing significant crime problems. Over an eight year period, this team collaborated with other architects, educational leaders, business owners and local residents to adopt and apply several CPTED principles. These specifically included increased outside lighting for walkways, business entrances and parking lots. New landscape designed to allow better visibility. New building designs that focused on porches, balconies, residential space above street-level retail space and parking that could be shared by residents and business users. These CPTED ideas discouraged illegal behavior and made the environment more comfortable for legitimate behavior. Over the eight year project, calls for police service were reduced by almost 2000 calls out of a total of 8000 calls in the target area, where calls for service in the rest of the city over the eight year period increased by almost 5000 calls out of a total of 63000 calls.⁹

In addition to CPTED, the Law Enforcement Environmental Planning Association of California (LEEPAC) is comprised of crime prevention police officials who have formed partnerships with planning and community development departments. LEEPAC reviews plans for new developments and recommends design changes to make new projects less vulnerable to crime and assist with law enforcement response capabilities. Several of the suggestions range from sufficient lighting to walkway design, emergency access to all levels of multi story project and natural surveillance and access control.¹⁰

A good example of this LEEPAC partnership developing ideas involves the design of hospitals and other large structures that use a large amount of steel in the building design. These

buildings generally prevent any type of radio transmission or cellular communication signal inside the building. Once law enforcement enters this type of structure during a response, communication ability is lost. Through a partnership with city planners, law enforcement could offer ideas such as the communication issue to help plan and incorporate solutions at the outset of the planning process. Shopping malls and schools should have adequate maps and adequate vehicle and personnel access points to allow for first responders to access the desired location. These are the types of incidents that can be pre-planned with law enforcement input, prior to building design and construction.

For instance, The City of Walnut Creek California is currently working with the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) to design a Transit Village. The village will consist of BART facilities and parking, residential condominiums and retail shopping and entertainment. BART will serve approximately 12,000 commuters daily through the Walnut Creek station, while the village will house 600 condominiums. The Police Department and Planning Department are working with the BART Transit Authority and the BART Police Department to plan for the service needs of several different groups of customers. The planning will entail issues of building design, flow of persons using and living there, and also address environmental design to enhance safety for all at the locale. This is a good example of the concept of interoperability between different agencies that traditionally might not confer prior to the construction of such a site.¹¹

Another good example of this was the decision of the New York City Council and several of the architectural firms hired to build the Freedom tower that will stand where the Twin Towers used to prior to 9/11. The initial design was not endorsed by the New York City Police Department due to several safety and response security issues. Paying attention to the concerns

of law enforcement, the City Council, Planning Department and architects joined forces with the police department and implemented the changes recommended by the New York City Police Department. The changes addressed safe access routes throughout the building for first responders, including elevator locations.¹² Building alliances are an important part of the successful plan and modifying staff deployment will play an important role in the final outcome of the plan.

Making the Partnership a Reality

Although agencies may consider merely sending a representative to attend planning meetings, the need for a member of police staff who is specifically trained in CPTED is both necessary and desirable. The ideal person for this position would hold the rank of Lieutenant, Captain or Commander and would possess general law enforcement experience as well as financial experience in budgeting and working on service delivery issues with city and county councils. A law enforcement manager would also bring the experience necessary to share ideas with command level police administration as well as with government department heads and managers. Members of an expert panel assembled to study CPTED commented that, “it makes sense that a seasoned police manager would have the background and varied experience to contribute to the successful outcome of a CPTED project.”¹³

Part of the reality of partnering police managers and city planners is funding. To reassign a police manager to the planning department, there will need to be some type of personnel backfill while that manager is reassigned. Several CPTED-related funding sources are available through different Grant programs. The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) sponsors the COPS Grant (Community Oriented Policing Services) which has funding to support a wide variety of COP related work. Specific to the topic of planning and design to help law

enforcement in the future, DOJ has announced for 2008, the Community Policing Development Grant Program. This Grant establishes programs and initiates studies that address key community policing issues. These new Grant programs are intended to become national models that law enforcement agencies throughout the country can use. Use of these Grants would be a good fit for funding a police manager to work with the city planning department to design future commercial, retail and residential areas. If successful, this could set the stage for the future of policing and providing public service in a different approach through design and planning.¹⁴

Future Challenges

As midsize cities continue to expand their downtown cores, attention is needed to provide public services, especially law enforcement. For instance, suburban residential policing requires fewer officers and resources due to the low level of calls for service, predominantly a family environment, low use of alcohol, easy parking and access and mainly smaller scale property crimes. Policing a densely populated downtown business and entertainment area requires more officers and resources. It is more difficult for police to access these areas. There is a higher level of alcohol use and more people are frequenting nighttime clubs and restaurants. Crimes such as assault and robbery are more prevalent requiring greater police staffing. Police access in many cases is restricted to walking and the use of stairs and elevators to arrive at a scene. More detailed tactics for prisoner transport and communication are required.

Police departments are being challenged daily to adjust their response and service models to the ever-expanding, and vertically-expanding, downtown building districts. If law enforcement has the opportunity to offer their input before downtown development projects are approved, the result could be a very well designed future downtown where both the public and

law enforcement benefit equally. The public and business owners will have a safe, effective design for frequenting the downtown areas and law enforcement will have effective response avenues and enhanced abilities to provide more efficient and effective service. The positive relationship built during this partnership between law enforcement and a city planning department will make this plan a success. Cities such as Mesa, Arizona have successfully applied this partnership to help design the future of their city.¹⁵ Additionally, this partnership will enhance future relationships between other city departments and the police department. There are several positive outcomes including officers being more supportive of their communities as they now have a vested interest in how they approach their daily work as they will be more efficient and effective in providing services. The community is likely to be supportive knowing that a strong positive relationship exists between law enforcement and the planning department.

Conclusion

Creating a partnership between law enforcement and city planning departments definitely has a positive impact on providing police services to the community. There is a logical relationship between divisions and both departments would appear to be able to positively benefit from that relationship. Government has begun to recognize the importance of this relationship and is actively promoting the concept to law enforcement throughout the State of California. Police agencies should do their best to make a commitment to working with planners to help create a positive working relationship. Law enforcement is exploring new training models and response capabilities to try and meet the challenges of rapidly growing downtown areas. All these factors lead to the conclusion that being proactive rather than reactive will make a significant difference within a few years. The results have the potential to be very successful and

truly contribute to the future development of downtown areas while enhancing law enforcement capabilities and creating long-term partnerships and relationships.

Notes:

¹ State of California P.O.S.T. (Police Officers Standards and Trainings) Policing Strategies & Crime Prevention and Environmental Design.

<http://www.cpted.sacpd.org/highrise> (accessed July 2007), 1.

² Three Years After 9/11, Security Mindset Threatens Civic Design (New Urban News) September 2004, 1.

³ Planning Communities for the 21st Century (December 1999), A Special Report of the American Planning Association's Growing Smart Project, 2-4

⁴ Crime prevention Through Environmental Design. City of Mesa, Arizona.

<http://cityofmesa.org/police/literature/cpted> (accessed July 2008) 1-3.

⁵ Three Years After 9/11, Security Mindset threatens Civic Design, 2-4.

⁶ Creating a Dynamic Community Policing Organization. California Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center. <http://www.safestate.org/documents/copps> (accessed July 2008) 58-63.

⁷ National Institute of Crime Prevention (NICP), P.O.S.T. Forms Partnership with NICP; Plans for the Future of Community Development. <http://www.nicp.net> (accessed September 2007). 1.

⁸ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Historical References. C. Ray Jeffery, Criminologist (1971-1990), History of Law Enforcement's Impact on Environmental Design. <http://www.cpted.net> (accessed September 2007) 1-5.

⁹ Zoning Out Crime and Improving Community Health in Sarasota, Florida: "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design." U.S. bureau of Justice Assistance. <http://ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluations> (accessed July 2008) 1442-1445.

¹⁰ Police Offices Form Partnership with Planning and Community Development Departments. Law Enforcement's Environmental Planning Association of California (LEEPAC) <http://www.leepac.org> (accessed September 2007) 1-5.

¹¹ City of Walnut Creek Police Department Command Staff Personnel assigned to work with BART Officials on the Transit Village Project. 2007-2008.

¹² Three Years after 9/11, Security Mindset Threatens Civic Design, 2-4.

¹³ POST Command College Nominal Group Technique (NGT) Expert Panel assembled to study CPTED in the City of Walnut Creek. Panel convened at City Hall in Walnut Creek, California on Wednesday October 10, 2007.

¹⁴ Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2007/2008 Grant Program, United States Department of Justice <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov> (accessed September 2007) 1-4.

¹⁵ CPTED. City of Mesa Arizona. 2008.