



## MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Alice Kennedy, Acting Housing Commissioner

Date: July 27, 2021

**Re: City Council Resolution 21-0040R Informational Hearing - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design**

### Resolution Information

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 21-0040R for the purpose of inviting the Director of the Department of Planning, the Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City, the Commissioner of the Baltimore City Health Department, the Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, the Acting Director of the Department of Public Works, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, the Sheriff for Baltimore City, the Chief of the Baltimore City School Police, the Director of the Department of General Services, the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Director of the Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation to appear before the Baltimore City Council to discuss ways that the City can prevent crime through the concepts utilized in the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design model.

City Council Resolution 21-0040R calls on the Acting Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) along with various agency heads, to participate in an informational hearing on crime prevention through environmental design.

### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) model refers to the effective design and use of the built environment to

- encourage a reduction in the fear of crime,
- lower the actual number of crimes being committed,
- improve community safety,
- improve the perception of safety,

- and an improvement in the overall quality of life in a community.<sup>1</sup>

DHCD's operations reflect the implementation of the following principles of the CPTED:

1. Image Maintenance
2. Natural and Physical Surveillance
3. Territorial Reinforcement
4. Access Control

## DHCD Programs that support CPTED

*Image Maintenance* – is related to the neighborhood's sense of 'pride of place.' The more dis-invested an area, the more likely it is to attract unwanted activities. Just recently with the additional support of a Baltimore Community Catalyst Grant (CCG) of \$40,000, the Heritage Crossing Resident Association has completed work on the Central West Gateway Project which redesigned the deteriorated MLK Boulevard and Franklin Street entrance to the community and will serve as a catalyst for homeownership retention, development and the reduction of crime, grime and blight. The Gateway project is an example of image maintenance and will create further social cohesion by reinforcing the identity of the community. A strong community identity can have an impact on whether a neighborhood will become targeted for crime. The CCG program focuses resources in long-disinvested areas to spur growth, transformation, and additional investment.

*Natural and Physical Surveillance* – the fundamental premise of Natural and Physical Surveillance is that criminals do not wish to be observed. Natural surveillance can be achieved by techniques to put "more eyes" on potential crime areas by removing obstructions that impair sight lines and preventing access to areas that may be appealing to those wishing to conduct illegal activity. DHCD's code enforcement inspectors conduct pro-active inspections and respond to complaints generated through the 311 system and issue notices and citations for conditions such as high grass and weeds, trash and debris and vacant properties. Excessive overgrowth and unsecured vacant buildings can obstruct visibility and become areas where crime may occur.

*Territorial Reinforcement* – Communities naturally protect a territory that they feel is their own, clear boundaries between public and private areas achieved by using physical elements such as fences, pavement treatment, art, signs, good maintenance and landscaping are ways to express ownership. The concept of territorial reinforcement can be seen in DHCD's Adopt-A-Lot program which allows residents, businesses or neighborhood groups to steward and care for city-owned vacant lots in their

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<sup>1</sup> National Crime Prevention Council, 2003, [Crime prevention through environmental design guidebook](#)

community. An Adopt-A-Lot license holder is able to create community spaces that include, community gardens, clean and green spaces and recreational areas.

*Access Control* – Natural access control relies on physical elements to keep unauthorized persons out of a particular place if they do not have a legitimate reason for being there. Housing Inspectors make referrals to DPW for cleaning, cutting and boarding in order to address community nuisances and lessen the chance for environmental conditions to invite crime.

DHCD plays an active role in improving public safety by enforcing the building and sanitation codes, providing grants to organizations to support community development, creating partnerships with residents to create clean safe spaces and working across agencies to deliver timely results to citizen complaints.

DHCD **supports** the passage of City Council Resolution 21-0040R.

AK/sm

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*