

TO THE BALITMORE SUN

RE: USING ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN TO FIGHT CRIME INVITED DISCRIMINATION

As the International CPTED Association, a non-profit, non-governmental professional organization promoting the proper use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), we would like to refute the opinion article by Nathaniel Adams, published August 19, 2021 in the Commentary section of your newspaper, in which he makes a number of unsupported assertions about the role of CPTED. We wish to correct some of the many errors in his editorial.

First, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is neither a cause, nor a solution, to the problems of systemic racism and racial injustice. Those matters concern us all and involve every aspect of modern life. They will not be eradicated by eradicating a crime prevention strategy that has cut crime in communities over the past decades, including many communities of color. The International CPTED Association (ICA) has made a number of official statements condemning practices of systemic racism. The purpose of CPTED is to unite, not divide. We ask your readers to see these statements for themselves:

([https://cpted.net/resources/Documents/ICA%20Office%20News/ICA%20position\\_final\\_ENG.pdf](https://cpted.net/resources/Documents/ICA%20Office%20News/ICA%20position_final_ENG.pdf))

There are dozens of published studies showing the success of holistic CPTED approaches in, not only cutting crime, but helping communities of color reclaim their neighborhood from drugs and violence. We recommend that those interested in knowing the actual history of CPTED read published bibliographies on this research (<https://cpted.net/CPTED-bibliography>).

Second, CPTED has nothing to do with removing amenities like toilets or bus shelters. No doubt some cities have removed such amenities, but that has little to do with competent CPTED. If readers want to know what competent CPTED practice looks like, the International CPTED Association has published a Code of Ethics for CPTED (<https://cpted.net/ICA-Code-of-Ethics>). Pay attention to this edict: "In all cases the CPTED practitioner should adhere to a prevention creed similar to the medical profession to do no harm."

Third, the ICA, does not condone "anti-homeless spikes, the metal or concrete studs that seek to deter loitering and sleeping." The ICA has published a White Paper specifically condemning such approaches which are actually called "anti-homeless technologies". We recommend people who are uniformed about CPTED, including 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation CPTED, to read the ICA White Paper that describes the actual practice of contemporary CPTED. We have seen examples of hostile architecture, but that does not mean it is CPTED. The ICA White Paper on Homelessness from 2016 outlines the actual position of CPTED (<https://cpted.net/whitepapers>).

Anyone making extraordinary claims that the CPTED that we advocate has now, or ever advocated, "damaged alterations to the fabric of American cities during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" including street closures and construction that separated and fortified wealthy white enclaves,

should provide proof that CPTED advocates did such things. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. Mr. Adams offers none.

We do not claim that poor CPTED training and incompetent practitioners do not exist. But we don't eliminate the use of electricity because the person installing the outlet is poorly trained and uncertified. Like CPTED, electricity improves the quality of life for all citizens of all colors. What we do is we require proper electrical training and certification. If there is a problem with poorly implemented CPTED in Baltimore, the solution is simple. Rather than throwing out a proven, community-based method for preventing crime, instead develop policy that insists that all CPTED practitioners are professionally certified by the ICA, follow the standards of the International Standards Organization, and are held to a proper code of ethics.

We have been doing precisely those things in the ICA for a few decades and we invite all those with an interest in equitable and just communities to join us in our mission. Working together, we can help all residents learn how to build diverse and safe neighborhoods in the years ahead.

Dr. Macarena Rau-Vargas  
*President of the International CPTED Association*