

Title: Lighting of Public Spaces Policy

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Related legislation:

Related policies: Community Safety and Crime Prevention Action Plan and Development Control Plan 29.

Related procedures:

Related forms:

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the lighting of public spaces in the City of Canterbury. The key objective for lighting of public spaces is to deter crime, improve functionality and enhance the prestige of an area.

This policy aims to guide those involved in planning and assessment of lighting for public areas. It identifies specific matters that must be considered when assessing lighting development.

The policy has been developed to meet and implement the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), and to address lighting of public spaces in accordance with CPTED.

Background

Council receives numerous requests from the community and Council staff to install new or additional lighting in public spaces. Lighting is an essential element of CPTED principles and needs to be governed by these principles.

The following is an extract from the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Policy 2006/07. ‘..Council is committed to promoting the interests of the residents of Canterbury City...The local community are fundamentally concerned about these issues and a sense of safety underpins the fabric of the community and social harmony we seek to generate for all residents’ (Canterbury City Council Social Plan).

This policy is based on the use of CPTED principles and strategies when designing public infrastructure. Lighting of areas is a key component of these principles. These principles can be applied to new development as well as assessment of existing area.

WHAT IS CPTED?

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (**CPTED**) is an approach established in the 1970s as a way to modify the urban environment to deter crime.

CPTED relies upon changes to the physical environment to influence offender decisions and deter criminal behavior. CPTED is designed to build a strong sense of community and a cohesive environment that will impact on the motives and causes of crime.

CPTED is based on the theory that through “the proper design and effective use of the built environment can reduce crime, the fear of crime and improve the quality of life” (Crowe 2000).

Rationale

The rationale for the policy has been influenced by a need within Council for clear guidelines on lighting of public spaces. New or improved lighting is constantly requested by the community as it is seen as the primary crime deterrent.

This policy has been prepared in conjunction with the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Action Plan, City Plan and the Development Control Plan 29.

2. Objectives

- To develop a coordinated management approach within Council for the lighting of public spaces.
- To establish guidelines for lighting in conjunction with CPTED that will deter crime and the fear of crime.
- To ensure that community safety and crime prevention are considered in lighting of public areas.
- To increase safety for residents whilst using public area/spaces.

3. Scope

- The lighting policy will affect groups that will access public areas and open spaces.
- It will be applicable to the general public and service provision in public areas after daylight hours.
- This policy will be applicable to staff in Council who assess and review lighting.
- This policy will govern recommendations during and after safety inspections conducted by the Community Safety Committee.
- This policy will influence the review of Development Applications.
- The policy will involve the gradual upgrade of lighting in public spaces when they are reviewed or due for modification.

4. Definitions

The definitions of key terms used in this plan are listed below.

- CPTED: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
- Active Use(s): Uses which by their nature generate activity and thus opportunities for natural surveillance.
- Communal Space or Area: Land within a development that is used primarily by the occupants of that development.
- Development: Includes the use of land, the subdivision of land, the erection of a building, the carrying out of a work, the demolition of a building or work.
- Natural Surveillance: Easy observation of buildings, spaces and activities by people passing or living in the vicinity
- Private Space or Area: Areas accessible only to residents or authorised persons (e.g: inside of a house).
- Public Space/ Area: Areas open to the public (e.g: parks , gardens or pathways).
- Sight Line: The line of vision from a person to a place or building (City of Canterbury DCP 29).

The definition of Public Spaces does not include roads or areas requiring lighting for vehicular traffic, but generally includes the following:

- areas primarily for pedestrian use including lanes, park paths, cycleways;
- transport terminals and interchanges;
- steps and stairway ramps, footbridges;
- parking spaces; and
- parks and gardens.

5. Principles

The guiding principle for this policy is that the installation of lighting in public areas will not occur where there is limited or no natural surveillance. The urban environment where lighting is in question, must have been assessed according to the principles of CPTED, taking into account the levels of natural surveillance, natural access control, natural territorial reinforcement, landscape maintenance and activity support. An area must be consistent with the principles of CPTED.

This policy will provide Council with guidelines that will assist in lighting of public areas, and to incorporate CPTED principles as the governing crime prevention model when assessing where to situate lights. Council will consider the safety of its residents and whether lighting will increase safety, reduce fear of an area, and increase its functionality.

The principles of CPTED are directly relevant to this policy and need to be considered when installing lights in public places. An assessment of an area should commence by assessing the area against CPTED principles. Should the initial assessment indicate that lighting is appropriate, then the level of lighting should be to the relevant Australian Standards.

CPTED Principles

CPTED is reliant on influencing criminal behaviour by reducing environmental cues that may stimulate offenses, or which emphasise that there is a perceived risk of detection and apprehension.

CPTED principles are based upon the theory that the design and the effective use of the built environment can reduce crime, reduce the fear of crime, and improve the quality of life. Built environment implementations of CPTED seek to dissuade offenders from committing crimes by manipulating the built environment in which those crimes proceed from or occur. The three most common built environment strategies are natural surveillance, natural access control and natural territorial reinforcement.

CPTED strategies include the reinforcement of natural surveillance and territorial cues.

Natural surveillance

Natural surveillance works towards increasing the perception that people can be seen. This occurs by designing physical features that will maximise visibility and foster positive interaction between people. Potential offenders feel increased scrutiny and limits on their escape routes.

When creating lighting design, avoid poorly placed lights that create blind-spots for potential observers and miss critical areas. Ensure potential problem areas are well-lit: pathways, stairs, entrances/exits, parking areas, ATMs, phone kiosks, mailboxes, bus stops, children's play areas, recreation areas, pools, laundry rooms, storage areas, dumpster and recycling areas, etc.

Avoid too-bright security lighting that creates blinding glare and/or deep shadows, hindering the view for potential observers. Eyes adapt to night lighting and have trouble adjusting to severe lighting disparities. Using lower intensity lights often requires more fixtures.

Use shielded or cut-off luminaires to control glare.

Place lighting along pathways and other pedestrian-use areas at proper heights for lighting the faces of the people in the space (and to identify the faces of potential attackers).

Natural access control

Natural access control clearly differentiates public space and private space. This is done by placing entrances and exits, fencing, lighting and landscape to limit access or control flow, natural access control occurs.

Natural territorial reinforcement

Territorial reinforcement involves defining space to create a sense of ownership creating where "strangers" or "intruders" stand out and are more easily identified. By using buildings, fences, pavement, signs, lighting and landscape to express ownership and define public, semi-public and private space, natural territorial reinforcement occurs. Additionally, these objectives can be achieved by assignment of space to designated users in previously unassigned locations.

Territorial reinforcement measures make the normal user feel safe and make the potential offender aware of a substantial risk of apprehension or scrutiny.

Maintenance

Maintenance of an area can increase a feeling of ownership, neglect and deterioration indicates a greater tolerance of disorder. This will include maintenance of existing lights ensuring that once broken they are replaced.

Activity Support

Activity support increases the use of a built environment for safe activities with the intent of increasing the risk of detection of criminal and undesirable activities. Natural surveillance by the intended users is casual and there is no specific plan for people to watch out for criminal activity.

Lighting Standards

Canterbury City Council will aim to light public areas in accordance with the Australian/New Zealand Standards for Lighting. The Standards provide a guide for the level of lighting to be achieved throughout Council. This will occur when lighting is assessed and when lighting upgrades are required.

The set Standards assign various levels of lighting performance based on an assessment of the degree of activity, risk of crime and the required aesthetic appeal. In achieving the required performance, attention should be paid to minimizing adverse affects on the night time environment.

The purpose of the lighting covered by the Standards are to 'assist pedestrians to orientate themselves and detect potential hazards and to discourage fear of crime and crime against the person while protecting the integrity of the night time environment through control of light spill and glare' (AS/NZ 1158.3.1:2005 page 1).

6. Responsibilities

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies across several divisions of Council. The Director City Works is the owner of the Policy. The main responsibility to develop and review this policy lies with the Director City Works in consultation with the Manager Community and Recreation.

For issues relating to safety and lighting of existing public areas, the Community Safety Committee or its representatives assess these areas in accordance with this policy.

For the design or the assessment of developments relating to public areas, the responsibility lies within City Works to ensure that the lighting proposed is in accordance with this policy.

7. Procedures

The guidelines in this policy are to be used to assess existing areas for lighting and new designs of public spaces. The policy provides standards that should be achieved with the lighting should lighting be appropriate following an assessment of CPTED principles.

The purpose of this policy is to be used as a guideline for Council Staff when assessing lighting for public spaces, with particular emphasis on Development Application, conducting safety inspections and audits, and when conducting lighting upgrades.

References

Commissioner's Inspector 'Safer by Design Resource' – Crowe (2000).

Australian Lighting Standards

www.cpted.com.au

www.cpted.net

City of Yarra (2005), Draft Public Lighting Policy

City of Canterbury, Community Safety and Crime Prevention Policy 2006/2007

Brisbane City Council – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Planning Scheme Policy.

Canterbury City Council DCP 29

AS/NZS 1158.3.1:1999