

TRANSFORMING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT:

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in Chula Vista

Chula Vista, in San Diego County, about seven miles north of the “busiest international border crossing in the world,” is an ethnically and economically diverse community. The western part of the city has high rates of poverty and is predominantly made up of Latino families, but it is also home to African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and white residents. While children live in more than 40 percent of local households, there are few safe parks and outdoor spaces for physical activity and healthy food options; conversely, fast food outlets abound. Because of the correlation between childhood obesity prevention and public safety, Chula Vista Healthy Eating, Active Communities (HEAC), in partnership with local youth, promotoras, and the Public Health, Parks, and Police departments, has been using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to transform the built environment and to make safe, active living an option for all residents.

CPTED operates on the premise that criminal activity can be deterred by making potential offenders feel as if they can easily be seen. The strategy is to enhance well-lit public spaces, create landscaping that does not shield public view, and limit entry and exit points. Resident participation in planning is key. This crime prevention approach is unique because it promotes both physical and social change and allows community members to engage in making their streets safer.

With the support of the National Convergence Partnership and Prevention Institute, the collaborative has recently launched a new initiative that focuses on the redesign of six sites throughout west Chula Vista that are too dangerous for residents to access safely. As the work progresses, residents remain invested in and accountable for the work, strengthening the social fabric of the neighborhood.



Harborside Park and Eucalyptus Park in Chula Vista have been redesigned to promote safety and encourage physical activity.



ENVIRONMENTS: ● Social ● Physical