Designing Out CRIME

There is no doubt that the criminal justice system – in other words, the police, courts and jails – has a significant role to play in reducing crime. However, it is also true that law enforcement alone cannot make crime go away, and that the costs related to it continue to rise. Effective, sustainable crime prevention requires both the criminal justice approach and the application of evidence-based, community-focused strategies.

Designing Out Crime – written by criminologists, published by the University of the Fraser Valley and facilitated by the City of Surrey in British Columbia – now gives local governments a powerful tool for implementing cost-effective and successful crime-prevention solutions. Published in November 2016, the book translates the professional literature and – for the first time – places their valuable insights and best practices into the hands of those responsible for community safety. It's a timely and much-needed resource for communities turning to crime prevention to offset rising law enforcement costs.

WHAT IS DESIGNING OUT CRIME?

To design out crime is to mitigate or eliminate situations and environmental factors that create opportunities for crime. Examples include:

- The design of places and products (e.g. improved lighting).
- Identifying and addressing transition points when people are vulnerable to starting or returning to a life of crime.
- Using technology to curb crime (e.g. security alarms).
- Administrative and regulatory methods, such as public safety inspections of marijuana grow operations.
- Doing a better job of dealing with prolific offenders, the small group of hardened criminals that commit the majority of crimes.

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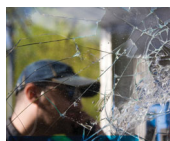
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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The concept for *Designing Out Crime* grew from a 2014 report entitled *Getting Serious About Crime Reduction* by the British Columbia government's Blue Ribbon Panel on Crime Reduction. Among its recommendations was an increased emphasis on designing out crime.

In early summer 2015, with support from the City of Surrey, Len Garis came together with Blue Ribbon Panel chair B.C. MLA Darryl Plecas (a noted criminologist) and Paul Maxim to discuss a book that would bring the concepts of designing out crime into the public realm. It was recognized the book would need to include practical advice that local governments could put to use in their own communities.

The team identified the topics and assigned them to criminologists from across North America. Over the next year, Garis and Maxim worked with the 10 authors to compile and edit their work into a consistent style and format that met the project criteria. The book was professionally designed and then published online and in print in late 2016.

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Chapter 1: Problem Solving: Discusses the need for a problem-solving approach to crime prevention, a more proactive use of resources to anticipate and prevent future crime problems, and proper evaluation of funded programs.

Chapter 2: Administrative and Regulatory Approaches: Discusses the use of these approaches to create safer communities, such as by regulating development. Also emphasizes using data to understand where crime takes place.

Chapter 3: Transitions and Social Programming: Discusses the need for a coordinated net of local services that can intervene during periods of vulnerability in people's lives when they may veer into criminal activity, or return to it.

Chapter 4: Designing Out Opportunities for Crime: Discusses the need to understand the theory behind why and how criminals decide to commit crimes in order to effectively prevent it, and describes some successful theory-based programs.

Chapter 5: Designing Out Crime Through the Use of Technology: Discusses the technological advances that have helped limit certain crime, and what communities can do to protect their citizens against the rising threat of cyber crime.

Chapter 6: Doing Something About Dangerous Offenders: Discusses the need for targeted identification and intervention of prolific offenders, a small group of hardened criminals that commit most of the crime that takes place.

PROJECT PURPOSE

- Refocus the attention of governments towards preventing crime, rather than simply reacting to it.
- Address the stumbling blocks that can plague crime-prevention programs, such as a lack of sustained support and a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Provide governments with evidence-based information and tactics that they could put into action to make their communities safer.
- Highlight the importance of making decisions based on evidence and facts.

PROJECT INNOVATION & BEST PRACTICES

- Supports a proactive and cost-effective approach to improving safety.
- Gives those who are responsible for community safety – governments – access to relevant, practical crime-prevention information gleaned from the professional literature.
- Promotes the use of research and data to evaluate and implement solutions.
- Advances the public service by being made available online for free to ensure widespread use and uptake.
- Is an extension of an innovative collaboration between the City of Surrey and University of the Fraser Valley that has led to the publication of a number of public safety resources.
- Has been very well received within government and academic circles, and a translated Chinese version is now required reading at two police academies in China.

MORE INFORMATION

For information about the book, please contact Len Garis at 604-543-6701 or len.garis@ufv.ca. For public safety publications, visit http://cjr.ufv.ca