



University of Canterbury

GEOG309 - Research for Resilient Communities

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Community Partner: ReVision

October 17, 2024

Youth account for approximately 18% of Christchurch's population (StatsNZ, 2023). Despite this, urban planning decisions often overlook their needs and perspectives. This research seeks to address how youth-relevant design can complement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in creating safer and more inclusive spaces for youth in Christchurch. The relevance of a youth's perspective on urban planning can be drawn out through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12, which specifies that children and young people have the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them (United Nations, 1990). Additionally, the recent UN Pact for the Future, Youth and Future Generations 2024, highlights the importance of including youth in decision-making through Actions 35 and 36, strengthening "meaningful youth participation at the national level" (United Nations, 2024).

Since youth are limited in their influence and power over decision-makers, it raises the question of how we are incorporating youth voices into the decision-making process. This research intends to facilitate informed decision-making about crime prevention through environmental and youth-relevant design. It offers insights into how the two principles complement each other and the tensions between them, along with indicating the awareness of youth-relevant design among Christchurch's planning professionals.

Our report utilises qualitative methodology, which includes interviews, focus groups, and the analysis of existing audit reports provided by our community partner, ReVision.

It's important to note that 'youth' is a broad term that can vary in age range depending on the country and context. In this review, 'youth' refers to individuals aged 12 to 24, defined by the Ministry of Health (2024).

CPTED principles are internationally recognised within urban design and policy frameworks for their effectiveness in crime reduction (Cozens & Love, 2015). These principles are executed in the design

The concept of youth-relevant design prioritises youths' social, physical, and experience-based needs in designing spaces, ensuring that areas are safe, welcoming, and practical (Evans, 2007).

Figure 1. The 6 C's of Positive Youth Development (Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa, 2021)

Nissen et al. (2020) identified two key factors in Sustainable Development Goal 11 that are directly related to young people. These factors are transport and greenspace. Greenspace is recognised as a contributing factor to youth well-being, although this relationship is complex and dependent on sociodemographic factors, such as neighbourhood safety (Zhang et al., 2024). Additionally, amplified greenspace influences perceived safety and negatively correlates with violent crime (Garvin et al., 2013; Stevens e

emotional side of safety, such as not wanting their children to be around areas subject to crime or witness verbal abuse on streets (Krishnamurthy, 2019; Witten & Ivory, 2018)

Although these frameworks generally benefit youth, these principles do not specifically address youth issues. Youth is often lumped into the same category as children and families, where the focus is on either young children or parents. This approach misses the specific needs of this group and creates a social disconnect at a time when connection is essential for healthy development (Ardoin

Table 1. An example of a table used to identify key themes and quotes from the interviews.

In their audits, ReVision takes groups of young people through sites, or site plans, in tautahi. They gather feedback from their participants on the youth-relevant design aspects through focus groups and scorecards. These sites include urban buildings, urban spaces, recreation centres, parks, reserves and playgrounds. The feedback is categorised into five aspects: safe, appealing, accessible, resourced and youth-friendly. To address our objective of understanding the intersection and conflict between CPTED and youth-

Furthermore, cleanliness is a significant concern for young people; for example, one auditor proposed the formation of a community group to conduct monthly clean-ups, positing that such initiatives would "increase connection, ownership, and pride of place in the local area" (10 Shirley Road Audit, 2021). 15n

were problematic patrons who were perceived differently compared to other users of the space.”
(Bus Interchange, 2022).

Territoriality aims to clearly define who a space belongs to through its design elements (Jeffrey, 1977)

After analysing transcripts from our eleven participants, we identified four key themes that were common across our responses. These themes included consultation, participation, sense of place & culture and policy & integration.

When receiving community input, it was emphasised that the most effective way is through face-to-face communication or workshops. One interviewee stated, "...it is about outreach and relationship building to gather input." This makes the community and youth feel involved and ensures their voices are heard in the design process. In-person community input enables a deeper understanding of the needs of locals, allowing broad demographics to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and increases reliability in answers (Saloniki et al., 2019). An urban planner interviewee highlighted the importance of "prioritising reach to younger audiences, the generations that will be enjoying the spaces".

A common idea mentioned in nearly all interviews was a lack of youth willingness to participate in the design process. This is because organisations "lack money for incentives" or they "struggle to find time" to engage with youth. One interviewee mentioned that youth involvement is often seen "as an add-on, rather than essential". Many of the professionals interviewed mentioned that time was a barrier to youth participation. Alongside time barriers, there was a trend of youth not being willing to participate; one interviewee went into depth on the importance of having meaningful connections to avoid youth outreach becoming a tick-box activity and highlighted the benefit of approaching organised groups of young people "for direct conversations."

Interviewees acknowledged young people need a sense of place and that including homegrown aspects can foster connection and pride for a place. Interviewees also acknowledged that place-based connection, through cultural design aspects and activity, brings spaces to life through social inclusion, "Social cohesion, creating a place that youth can connect with others, there are so many ripple effects to consider". Providing spaces that attract youth and opportunities through building connections and suited spaces ensures that there are "resources available for future generations of Rangitahi," as stated by a planner.

There appears to be a lack of policy for implementing youth-relevant design. Throughout our interviews, we noticed a lack of framework for including youth-relevant design processes. This is likely due to planners viewing youth-relevant design as an add-on or tick-box activity. However, most interviewees mention the need for youth-relevant design and its early implementation, as shown in this quote by a community advisor, "Bring young people into that planning stage, instead of making solutions in retrospective." Some planners mentioned they had already used ReVision audits in urban spaces, but often, these audits were conducted after places were built. This proved interesting as an acknowledgement of the audit process needing to be undertaken earlier was evident across interviews.

In the audits, young people expressed a clear preference for well-lit, visually appealing spaces that support diverse activities and foster a sense of belonging (Table 3). This clearly demonstrates that young people value CPTED, and there is significant overlap between CPTED and youth-relevant design. The wider literature supports this overlap; for example, Vagi et al. (2018) found that their results of the CPTED School Assessment were correlated with student-perceived safety and violence.

The auditors at ReVision consistently connected their preferences to perceived safety, as well as concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime. All interviewees also agreed that CPTED effectively enhances safety, although many expressed that this is only the case when applied correctly, as poor implementation can worsen safety. Cozens & Love (2017) delve into the "dark side" of CPTED, which includes the severe consequences of misapplying principles such as excessive target hardening, stand-off space and defensible space. This supports the insights provided to us by the interviewees and further emphasises the need for refining design frameworks to prevent poor implementation. One way to ensure CPTED meets its objectives is by gathering input from a diverse range of people, including youth.

After analysis of our interviews and audits, we collated our findings into an infographic (fig. 2). This infographic illustrates the intersection between the two concepts. It is designed to advise and be a support tool for professionals to use when designing spaces that are youth-friendly.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

1. Can you briefly describe your role and involvement in Christchurch's urban design or public safety initiatives?
2. Do you know any specific examples of spaces around Christchurch, such as youth involvement or design initiatives?
3. What do you/your organization believe are important factors to consider when planning/designing urban spaces
4. Is ecological design an important factor that you consider in urban planning?
5. Does your organization receive input and opinions from the community about urban design?
 - If yes, how do you gather that data?
 - If no, who makes the decisions, and what are the decisions based off
6. What do you know about YRD?
7. Do you consider youth in the design process of a space?
 - If yes, is it included in the framework (planning documents, official papers)

Cathedral Square, 2022	7	unspecified	Selected based on their background and interest in the space.	41%	-28.57
Parks, Reserves and Playgrounds					
10 Shirley Road, 2021	6	10-20	Unspecified	42%	-37.5

McFarlane Park
Basketball courts.