

# Improving Safety and Security Through Landscaping and Lighting



Creating outdoor spaces which appear well-cared-for and incorporate crime prevention ideas can actually increase the safety and enjoyment of your neighborhood.

The following is a guide for evaluating and improving the landscaping and lighting on your property and your block. All of the recommendations are based upon the following crime prevention ideas:

- 1) Criminals are less likely to target areas where they feel their actions will be seen, recognized, and reported.
- 2) Landscaping can increase the visibility exposure of criminals when vegetation, fencing, and lighting are used to minimize hiding spots for criminals and maximize people's ability to observe activity in their surroundings.
- 3) Properties which are well-cared-for and have clearly defined boundaries are more easily protected. Owners are considered to be more likely to take action to protect their properties and strangers (possibly criminals) on the properties are more easily recognized.
- 4) Areas with positive activity increase the reporting of criminal activity, sometimes before the crime can be committed.

## Three steps for improving the safety of your home and neighborhood:

**Step 1: Identify landscaping and lighting features which increase the opportunities for criminal activity.**

Do a survey of your own property or join with your neighbors and do a survey of your entire block. Note anything in the physical environment which gives a criminal an edge.

**Step 2: Decide on ways to decrease criminal opportunities by improving landscaping and lighting.**

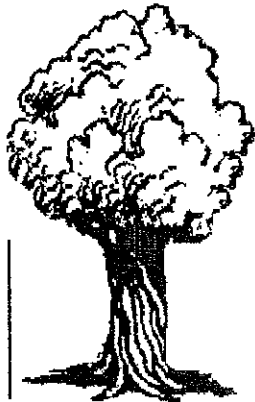
As a household or with your neighbors, choose specific ways to address specific landscaping and lighting problems. As a block, you may be able to approach local businesses about getting a group discount on lighting or landscaping items.

**Step 3: Implement your ideas.**

Combine efforts with your neighbors. Everyone can share their talents and tools.

*(Refer to the next three pages for specific ideas and recommendations.)*

# Landscaping (Identifying and eliminating hiding spots and areas of poor visibility)

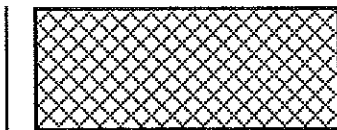


### Problems – what to look for:

- 1) Bushes, shrubs, trees, fences, or other items which:
  - a) prevent you (and your neighbors) from observing people in your yard, in neighbor's yards, on the street, in the alley, and along public sidewalk
  - b) allow criminals to hide or to commit crimes out of sight
  - c) Could a criminal break in a door or window or attack someone walking down the sidewalk without being visible to neighbors or street traffic?
- 2) Property lines, between public-use areas and private property, which are not clearly defined. (How easy can neighbors tell that someone is intentionally on your property? Stepping over a hedge is more obvious than stepping onto a grass lawn.)
- 3) Areas or properties which are poorly maintained or unused, especially alleys.

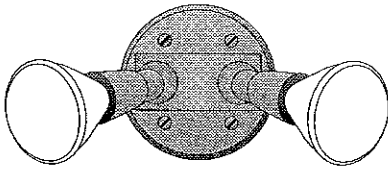
### Recommendations for landscaping:

- 1) Shrubs, bushes, and hedges should be trimmed to a height of 3 feet or less. Those along houses should also be trimmed to create a 6-inch gap between them and any door or window.
- 2) Trees or tall shrubs and hedges should be trimmed to remove all or most branches less than 5 feet from the ground.
- 3) Fences should be chain link, "see-through," and/or 3 feet or less in height. If you have a tall privacy fence, make sure all gates are securely locked, as with any exterior door.
- 4) Residential property lines can be more clearly defined by using one or more of the following along the edge of your property.
  - hedges, shrubs, or bushes trimmed to 3 feet or less
  - flower or vegetable gardens
  - ground cover not intended for walking on; including low-growing evergreens
  - short and/or "see-through" fence
  - change in grade of property
- 5) Activity in specific areas, for example below windows and between garages, can be deterred with the use of properly trimmed thorny hedges or bushes.
- 6) Work with your neighbors to create uses for unused or neglected parts of your block. Ideas include planting gardens or creating play spaces near alleys.
- 7) Talk with neighbors whose yards do not look well-cared for. If necessary, call Housing Inspections (612-673-5858) to report housing codes violations.



Location	Problem	Strategy

# Lighting (Identifying and lighting up dark spots)

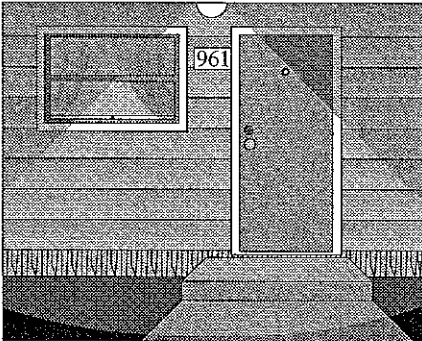


### What to look for:

- 1) No lights near all entry points to houses or businesses
- 2) Dark areas along sidewalks
- 3) Reasons for dark areas:
  - lack of public street or alley lights
  - lack of private residential lights
  - damaged and/or nonworking lights
  - existing lighting being blocked by tree branches, fences, or buildings

### Recommendations for lighting:

- 1) Private residential lighting: (Residential lighting should be used to light up all home and business entry points and is an essential complement of public street and alley lighting.)
  - lights should be protected from being easily unscrewed or broken
  - photoelectric lights: provide constant lighting when it is dark
  - motion detector lights: for areas where constant lighting is unnecessary but would be beneficial when activity (positive or negative) is occurring there.
- 2) Public street and alley lights: (Eligible for: 1 per intersection, 2 per block on north/south streets and alleys, and 1 by alley intersections on east/west streets.)
  - To request lights, call 612-673-2411.
  - To report damaged or nonworking street lights:
    - Metal poles: 612-673-5750
    - Wooden poles: 1-800-960-6235 (Xcel Energy)
  - To report damaged or nonworking alley lights, call Xcel Energy at 1-800-960-6235.
  - To request trimming of trees on boulevards, call 612-370-4900. (Ask for Forestry Department.)



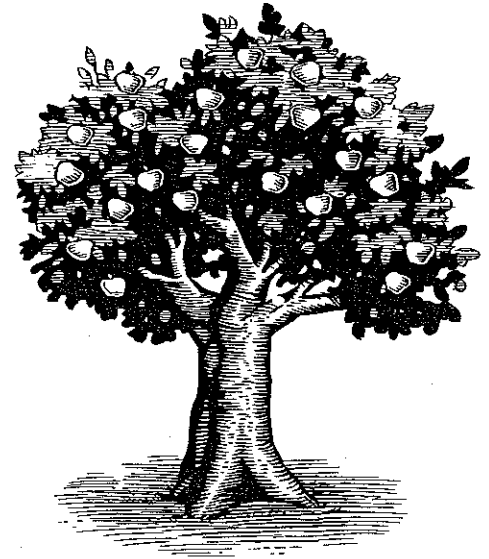
(Regular incandescent lighting is sufficient for residential lighting; however, low-pressure sodium or mercury vapor lighting is more efficient and will illuminate a larger area.)

- 3) Semiprivate lighting: can be used to light up areas shared by several neighbors; especially alleys.
  - Speak with your neighbors about having a light put up and share the energy costs. Contact Northern States Power Company for information on a variety of affordable residential lighting options.

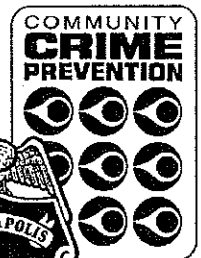
Location	Problem	Strategy

# Shrubs — Under 3 feet

1. Crimson Pygmy Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* 'Crimson Pygmy')
2. Korean Littleleaf Boxwood (*Buxus microphylla koreana*)
3. Globe Peashrub (*Caragana frutex* 'Globosa')
4. New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
5. Cranberry Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster apiculata*)
6. Alpine Currant (*Ribes alpinum*)
7. Dwarf Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*)
8. Turkestan Euonymus (*Euonymus nanus turkestanicus*)
9. Hughes Juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis* 'Hughes')
10. Genista (*Genista multibracteata*)
11. Annabelle Hydrangea (*Jydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle')
12. Kalm St. John's - Wort (*Hypericum kalmianum*)
13. Japanese Dwarf Yew (*Taxus cuspidata* 'Nana')
14. Sartent's Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Sargenti')
15. Japgarden Juniper (*Juniperus procumbens*)
16. Arcadia Juniper (*Juniperus sabina* 'Arcadia')
17. Skandia Juniper (*Juniperus sabina* 'Skandia')
18. Canby's Pachistima (*Pachistima canbyi*)
19. Dwarf Forsythia (*Forsythia varidissima boxensis*)
20. Katherine Dykes Bush Potentilla (*Potentilla fruticosa* 'Katherine Dykes')
21. Gold Drop Potentilla (*Potentilla fruticosa* 'Gold Drop')
22. Japanese White Spirea (*Spiraea albiflora*)
23. Anthony Waterer Spirea (*Spiraea bumalda* 'Anthony Waterer')
24. Alpine Spirea (*Spiraea japonica aplina*)
25. Hetz Midget Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Hetz Midget')
26. Globe Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Woodwardi')
27. Dwarf European Cranberry (*Viburnum opulus* 'Nanum')
28. Gooseberry
29. Raspberry



*Listing provided by Minnesota Extension Service, Master Gardeners Program. For a listing of publications on plant characteristics and other landscaping or gardening information, contact the Minnesota Extension Service Distribution Center at 612-624-4900.*



## VISION

The City of Minneapolis is the safest place to live, work and visit.

### For individuals with disabilities:

If you need this material in Braille, large print, computer disk, or cassette tape, call 612-673-2912. Sign language interpreters available — call 612-673-3220 or 612-673-2626 (TTY). Please allow two weeks for accommodation.