

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Ron Whisenand, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Gated Community, Tract 2529
DATE: June 15, 2010

Needs: For the City Council to consider a request from a home owner in Tract 2529 to install a gate on Calle Chorro thereby establishing a gated community.

- Facts:**
1. The Planning Commission at their meeting of June 24, 2003 approved Tract 2529, a 21-lot residential subdivision on Caballo Place, west of Vine Street.
 2. The application for the subdivision made reference to the placement of a gate. The Planning Commission adopted a condition deferring the consideration of the gate to the City Council upon their approval of a comprehensive policy regarding gates controlling access to residential areas.
 3. At their meeting of September 7, 2004, the Council adopted Resolution No. 199 which outlines policies regarding gated streets and gated communities. Resolution No. 199 establishes the finding that gated residential areas are not consistent with access needs of Police and Emergency Services and conflicts with the purpose and intent of the General Plan. Further, Resolution No. 199 establishes the City Council as having the sole purview of the request for gated communities.
 4. Frank Mineo, 401 Calle Alto, has submitted a letter requesting approval to install a gate on Calle Chorro. Calle Chorro is a private street serving as the entrance to Tract 2529.
 5. Mineo cites the remote location of Tract 2529, which lends itself to crime, unwelcome street noise, litter and safety issues as purposes for the request.
 6. The placement of a gate will establish Tract 2529 as a small private community made up of residents on Calle Alto.

**Analysis
and**

Conclusion: At their meeting of September 7, 2004, the Council adopted Resolution No. 199 with findings including “gated residential areas are not consistent with the access needs of the Police and Emergency Services Departments” and “conflict with the purpose and intent of the City’s General Plan goal of enhancing Paso Robles’ unique small town character.” Further, General Plan policy LU-2D on neighborhoods calls for “livable vibrant neighborhoods and districts that are pedestrian friendly”.

While gated communities are gaining popularity nationally, there is no empirical evidence to support the conclusion that people will be safer with a gate that controls access to their neighborhood. In fact, a study by the International Foundation for Protection Officers (attached) indicate that while rates for some forms of neighborhood crime go down the effect is marginal and short lived. Other studies support the fact that “gating” one’s neighborhood only pushes crime to other neighborhoods, an equally undesirable consequence.

Emergency Services is concerned because gates do impede emergency response. The Uniform Fire Code does, however, provide discretion for approval of specifications related to gates.

Gated communities not only provide a barrier to personal residences, they provide a barrier to streets and sidewalks. While a home owners association may be willing to pay for a higher level of street maintenance and associated landscaping, the gate separates features normally considered public and sets them aside as private, exclusive and segregated from the whole community. The creation of gaps in the connectivity of the City results in more auto trips and discourages walking and biking. The Bike Master Plan adopted by council last December establishes the value of bicycling across and through the City.

Perhaps it can be argued that larger cities provide a measure of insulation from self interests; that a vast array of cultures and living experiences are available as choices. However, in a small community such as Paso Robles, the value of a sense of belonging to the overall community is significant. The history of the City “taking care of its own”, the high level of community service and the City’s extraordinary volunteer support system are prime examples of a common sense of belonging to the community of Paso Robles. The concern is whether gated communities are inconsistent with and incrementally undermine these values.

It is recommended that the council consider whether gates for Tract 2529 and future requests for gated neighborhoods are appropriate in Paso Robles.

Policy

Reference: Resolution No. 199 adopted September 7, 2004, establishing policy regarding private gated residential development.

Fiscal

Impact: None

Options:

- a. Adopt Resolution No. 10-xxx to deny the request to establish Tract 2529 as a gated community.
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 10-xxx to allow the residents of Tract 2529 to establish a gated community due to specified unique circumstances.
- c. That the City Council amend, modify or reject the above option.

Attachments: (7)

1. Letter From Frank Mineo
2. Map of Tract 2529
3. Staff Report by Bob Lata, 8-17-04
4. Resolution No. 199
5. Prevention of Crime, An Overview of Gated Communities and Neighborhood Watch
6. Resolution option A
7. Resolution option B

John R. Falkenstien, PE
City Engineer
Community Development Dept.
City of El Paso de Robles
1000 Spring Street
Paso Robles, Ca 93446

May 7, 2010

Re: Access gate for Paso Terrace

John:

Nice to see you again and thank you for taking a few minutes to discuss the procedures for the Paso Terrace Homeowners Association to install an access gate to the development.

According to the resolution numbered 03-054, which you so kindly gave me a copy, the section titled "Engineering Site Specific Conditions" paragraph 17, states:

"Final approval of proposed gates at Calle Churro will be subject to City Council consideration and approval of a comprehensive policy regarding gates controlling access to residential areas. Until a policy decision regarding gates controlling residential areas, the gates shall not be installed."

I don't know if the City Council has made a policy decision as of this writing, but I suspect not.

Howsoever, the time has come to make this decision. I have been living here just about one year now and the only other neighbor, Greg and Stephanie Dettwiler, have lived here at least two years. In that time we have both experienced many trespassers. Those that drive up here at night to view the city lights and enjoy liquid libations and close company in the back seat, almost always deposit the remnants of those encounters on the street or close proximity thereof. This has been tolerated to some extent but on more than one occasion the PD has been called. Unfortunately, two weeks ago, the Dettwiler's were the victim of a "smash and dash" robbery. Their front patio door window was smashed and a sizable amount of personal property stolen. We believe that if an access gate had been installed this would not have happened. A police report has been filed.

Both the Dettwiler's and I travel for business and are not here 24/7. Hence, we have decided to begin this process of installing an access gate to protect our property. The first step of which is to apply for a permit. Hence our meeting today. I would very much like to apply for the necessary permits and pay the necessary fees, if any.

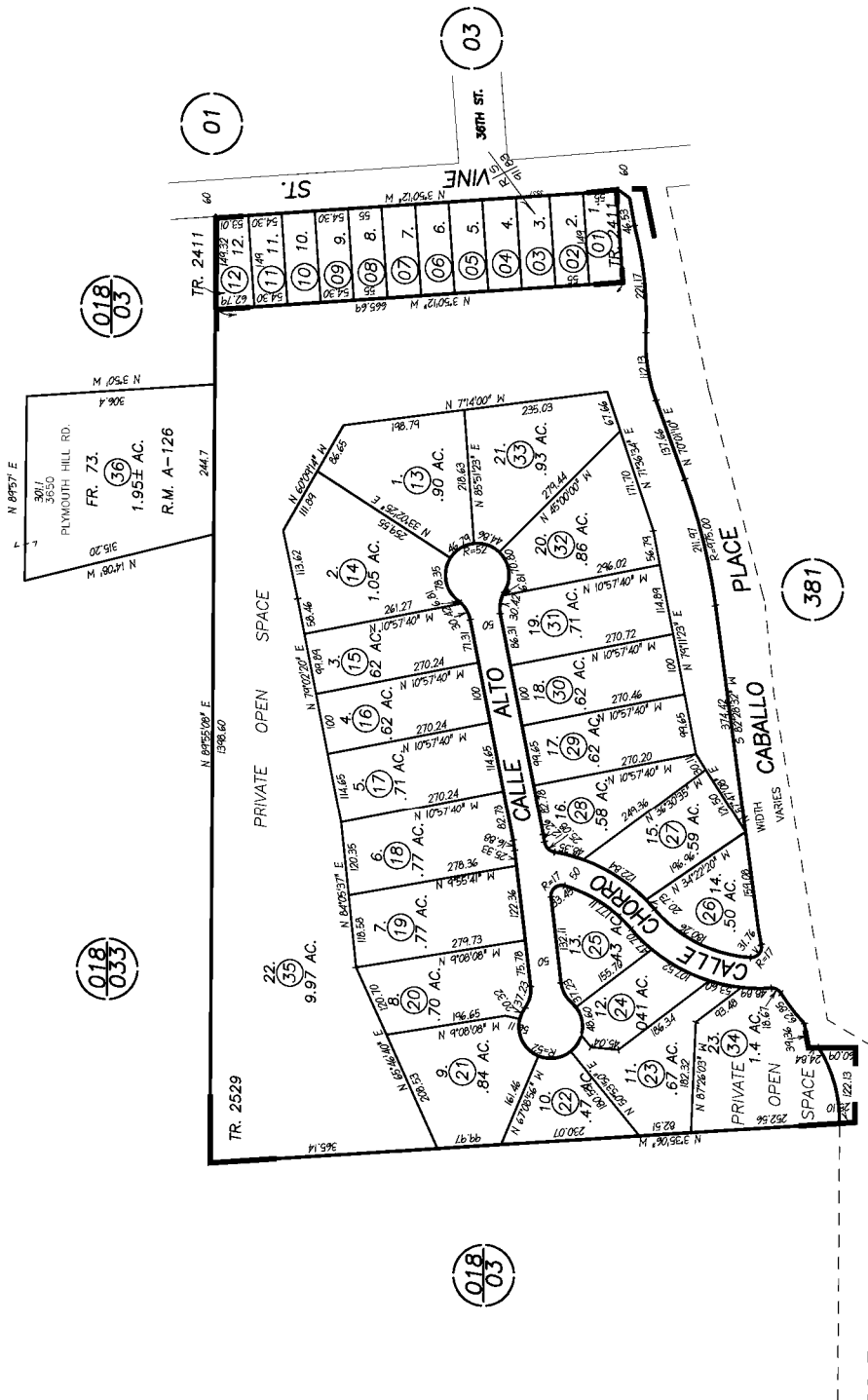
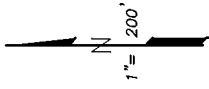
We are prepared to appear before the City Council if needed. I'm hoping it doesn't come to that. There are certainly other city areas, private communities, that have installed an

access gate. We would not be the first. Furthermore, we are in a remote area of the city, the most northwest corner possible and a gate would have little to no impact on city appearance.

Whatever advice you can supply would be appreciated. I'm sure you can understand our desire to proceed as quickly as possible.

Very truly yours,

Frank A. Mineo
401 Calle Alto
Paso Robles, CA 93446



REVISIONS	
I.S.	DATE
07-170	09-20-06

50 0 200 400

THIS MAP IS PREPARED FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY.

LZ 09/20/06

VILLA LOTS; CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES , R.M. Bk. A , Pg. 126
 TRACT 2411, R.M. Bk. 23 , Pg. 71-72
 TRACT 2529, R.M. Bk. 28, Pg. 53-55

TO: JAMES L. APP, CITY MANAGER
FROM: BOB LATA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: PRIVATE GATED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS AND
OTHER BARRIERS TO PUBLIC VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FLOW
DATE: AUGUST 17, 2004

Needs: For the City Council to consider whether or not to establish a policy regarding private gated residential developments and other barriers to vehicular traffic.

- Facts:
1. In recent years there have been a number of residential development projects proposed with gates restricting public access. The list includes the following projects:
 - Kapareil Lane cul-de-sac east of Golden Hill Road;
 - One of the phases in tract north of Von's shopping center;
 - The 90 unit multi-family development west of Cuesta College;
 - A recent residential subdivision west of Vine and 36th Streets
 - The Waterford Court private street approved 7/1/03
 2. In addition to development projects, gates, chains and other barriers have been policy issues under other circumstances. For example:
 - A gate was illegally installed across Walnut Drive by local property owners who were concerned about traffic flows through their neighborhood; the City acted to remove the gate;
 - At property owner requests, the City Council has approved both temporary and longer-term installation of bollards across street rights of way (e.g. temporary bollards across Larkfield which have since been removed; longer-term bollards across Via Promesa which are still in place);
 - There are other locations where the City has installed or approved barriers that are designed to preclude public access but would allow emergency vehicles to pass (e.g. chain across the James Street substandard right-of-way; chain at end of Blackburn Street; gates at east end of Wild Mustard Lane in the Oak Meadows development; access gates along Highway 46 East).

3. Physically restricting public access has implications for Emergency Services. In addition, “gating” parts of the City creates barriers to public access, redirects traffic (which may concentrate traffic where it was not intended) and could create negative public perceptions about exclusivity and separateness that may not be consistent with Council policy.
4. The City’s General Plan contains a series of policies that relate to traffic calming; a summary is attached. These policies recognize that there are circumstances where it may be appropriate to design features that will slow the speed of traffic and at the same time insure continuous flow. A basic component of these policies is to avoid unintended displacement of traffic, particularly into residential neighborhoods.
5. The purpose of this staff report is to provide City Council with an opportunity to provide direction regarding whether or not the City should permit private gated residential developments.

Analysis
and

Conclusion:

The City has basically two different circulation systems, each based on different principles and responding to different circumstances:

- Traffic circulation for the historic west side of the City is based primarily on a “grid” system, which was possible to be established because of limited topographic constraints. Although there are collector streets (by designation or function) like Spring Street, 24th Street, 13th Street and Riverside Avenue, the overall grid pattern provides considerable flexibility in terms of vehicular movement. Over the past 100 years of development, few streets have been closed off and the grid pattern remains essentially intact. In neo-traditional planning terms, the west side provides a relatively ideal traffic circulation pattern.
- The east side of the City developed traffic circulation patterns focusing on a hierarchy of arterial, collector and local streets. In addition to being consistent with the trends of post WWII American development trends, topographic constraints have impacted the ability to apply the same grid street pattern as the west side of the City.

With the hierarchy of streets, topographic constraints, and existing subdivision design patterns on the east side of the City, drivers have fewer options than they would on the west side of the City. As a result, any closures of planned streets (e.g. use of bollards) may have a disproportionate adverse impact in terms of displacing traffic from one street to other streets. This problem is particularly acute with the hierarchy of streets on the east side of the City.

Bollards: Installation of bollards for long-term traffic control would create an impediment to emergency services access and also causes vehicular traffic to be redirected in an unplanned manner. The effect is to displace traffic and concentrate impacts where they were not intended, providing a form of traffic calming for one neighborhood and creating an unfair burden on another.

Street systems, particularly in the hierarchy pattern of the east side of the City, rely on disbursing traffic over the available network. To arbitrarily remove a link in the network by placing bollards in a City street weakens the overall effectiveness of the street system.

Residential subdivisions have street systems designed by traffic engineers and paid for by the developer of the subdivision. To install bollards across a dedicated public street thwarts the purpose of the streets and circumvents what the developer has paid for.

Bollards across a public street are, in fact, illegal barriers that need to be removed. They are inconsistent with a designed system of traffic circulation, and have a particularly adverse impact on the east side of the City where a hierarchy of streets provides drivers with fewer travel options.

Secured Secondary Access: Installation of gates and chains where public traffic is not intended (e.g. James Street, the end of Blackburn Street, the end of Wild Mustard Lane) are entirely appropriate traffic control devices and, in fact, often provide a secondary point of access for emergency response vehicles. These can provide a controlled means to access an area during an emergency without providing general vehicular access over a road or through a neighborhood not suited for traffic.

Gated Communities: The broader question of whether gated communities are appropriate from a social perspective is a policy issue that is being addressed in many communities throughout the United States. Gated communities provide real and/or perceived increases in security and are apparently intended as a marketing tool for residential developments. Based on the number of recent projects that have been proposed with private streets and gated access, and considering the widespread use of gates in other (especially larger metropolitan) communities, it seems likely that there will be continued requests for providing gated access.

To date, the City has considered and approved gated residential developments on a case by case basis. There has been no overall policy established.

One context to consider whether or not gates should be permitted on private streets is whether or not they would contribute to the Council's adopted General Plan goal of "preserve the small town character that the City has historically enjoyed". This would seem to be a very judgmental standard and one that can best be addressed as the City has been doing so: reviewing each project on a case by case basis.

Gated communities also raise issues with regards to emergency response, and how a gated area may relate to the overall traffic circulation pattern within the community. Gates will unavoidably slow access for emergency response vehicles, although automated systems can be installed to minimize delays. It is, however, essential that gated areas do not create a blockage that conflicts with the effectiveness of overall street systems.

Traffic Calming: The General Plan provides a policy basis for adopting a traffic calming program. It is important to note, however, that installation of bollards, gates, or other impediments to traffic flow are not consistent with traffic calming (particularly if they displace traffic into other geographic areas). Traffic calming focuses on slowing traffic but helping to insure a continuous flow. The design of a street system relies on all of its component parts, and installation of unplanned impediments to traffic flow often have unintended consequences. Although traffic calming may include partial or full street closures under certain circumstances, these are design solutions that need to be analyzed and implemented by professional traffic engineers.

Summary: Depending upon the specific circulation pattern, gates (or other barriers to traffic flow) could have significant impacts on overall City traffic circulation; each situation does, however, need its own analysis. It is important to look at the overall traffic circulation system and consider the potentially adverse implications.

The recently updated General Plan contains a series of traffic calming policies that are designed to discourage unnecessary traffic intrusions into residential neighborhoods (including but not limited to policies that support new design solutions and creation of truck routes). Each circumstance does, however, warrant separate analysis by traffic engineering professionals.

Emergency Services can make arrangements to provide access to gated communities in the same manner as other secured properties (e.g. use of Knox boxes or other physical techniques). It should be noted, however, that any impediment to easy access would incrementally reduce the speed with which Emergency Services can respond. The level of "significance" would seem to be judgmental and may not alone be grounds to deny requests for gates.

Removal of existing illegal temporary barriers to traffic circulation (i.e.: bollards) is an issue that warrants attention. The illegal bollards are inconsistent with good traffic engineering principles and circumvent the purpose and intent of City street design, particularly for areas served by a hierarchy system of streets.

Policy

Reference:

As noted above there is no established policy for gates, bollards, or for non-public emergency vehicle access to private property. If the Council wishes to establish a policy, the General Plan would be an appropriate place to locate that policy. The bollards on Via Promesa were established pursuant to City Council Resolution 99-30.

Fiscal

Impact:

None

Options:

- a. That the City Council direct:
 - staff to insure that no additional illegal gates or barriers to traffic are installed; and
 - staff to investigate what types of automated systems are available and could be required of new developments in order to facilitate access by Police and Emergency Services; and
 - staff to confer with the City Attorney to confirm the process for removal of any illegal barriers in City streets; and
 - the Planning Commission to continue considering gated residential developments on a case by case basis, considering the impacts on the City's General Plan / traffic circulation system, emergency response times, and implications for traffic calming.
- b. Amend, modify or reject the foregoing options.

h:\bob\60\cc\04\gates 2 Aug 04

RESOLUTION NO. 199

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
ADOPTING A CITY COUNCIL POLICY AND DIRECTING STAFF TO TAKE FOLLOW-UP
ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO PRIVATE GATED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER
BARRIERS TO PUBLIC VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FLOW

WHEREAS, the City of Paso Robles has considered and approved requests for private streets and gated residential developments on a case-by-case basis; and

WHEREAS, there have also been instances where other barriers to vehicular flow have been installed in a manner that was unplanned and inconsistent with approved traffic circulation patterns; and

WHEREAS, barriers to vehicular flow, including but not limited to gates, bollards, and similar devices, can constitute a significant hindrance to access by Police, Emergency Services, and the general public, particularly when not designed and consistent with good traffic engineering practices and policies contained in the City's General Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City's General Plan, adopted December 16, 2003, includes a goal that the City "enhance Paso Robles' unique small town character", and the concept of private, gated communities has been discussed as not being consistent with that goal; and

WHEREAS, at its August 17, 2004 meeting, the City Council considered a staff report and held a public discussion on the topic of private gated residential development and other barriers to vehicular traffic flow and determined to direct staff to prepare a policy addressing this topic; and

WHEREAS, at its meeting of September 7, 2004, the City Council considered a resolution containing a draft policy and direction with regard to the subject topic.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles, using its independent judgment and analysis, does hereby:

1. Find and determine that the concept of private streets, gated residential areas, and other unplanned barriers to public vehicular flow are not consistent with the vehicular access needs of the Police and, Emergency Services Departments and restrict unhindered public access, conflicting with the purpose and intent of the City's General Plan and Goals, Policies, and Action Items contained therein; and
2. Direct the Planning Commission and City staff to actively discourage residential development proposals that incorporate use of private streets and gated public access, and the City Council hereby establishes a policy that requires that projects with private streets and gated public access shall be the sole purview of the City Council and shall be critically reviewed in terms of public safety and convenience and, if approved, shall be required to provide automated systems for public safety access and may also be required to provide alternative public access provisions so as not to conflict with community vehicular traffic flow patterns; and

3. Direct City staff to work with the City Attorney to take the steps necessary to cause removal of any illegal and/or unplanned barriers to public vehicular access.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Paso Robles this 7th day of September 2004 by the following vote:

AYES:	Finigan, Heggarty, Nemeth, and Picanco
NOES:	Mecham
ABSTAIN:	None
ABSENT:	None

Frank R. Mecham, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharilyn M. Ryan, Deputy City Clerk



IFPO Membership



Educational Programs



Member Exclusive



Articles and Reports



IFPO Accessories

[Home](#)

[IFPO Membership](#)

[Educational Programs](#)

[Recertification Guide](#)

[Member's Only Area](#)

[Articles and Reports](#)

[Publications](#)

[Security Resources](#)

[IFPO Certified Instructors](#)

[Industry Testimonials](#)

[Corporate Members](#)

[IFPO Accessories](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Contact IFPO](#)

Prevention of Crime: An Overview of Gated Communities and Neighborhood Watch

Edward J. Drew & Jeffrey M. McGuigan

For centuries the criminal justice system has worked in a very simple manner: take away the "criminals" and put them behind gates and walls segregated from the rest of the population. This method holds true today, except now people are voluntarily surrounding themselves with concrete and metal fences to escape the so-called "criminals" of society. Americans are scared and residential society is slowly beginning to show it. More and more people are moving into and raising families in "gated communities."

Gated communities are residential areas with restricted access designed to privatize normally public spaces. These new residential areas occur in both new suburban developments and older inner city areas for the purposes of security and segregation. "Terrified by crime and worried about property values, Americans are flocking to gated enclaves in what experts call a fundamental reorganization of community life" (Dillon, 1994, p. 2). The developers of gated communities brilliantly market their projects as safer, friendlier, and more economically stable than traditional urban or even suburban neighborhoods.

History

The gating of a residential area is not a new phenomenon. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, kings and other royalty provided gated enclaves for their families and loyal followers during times of siege and pestilence. "Fortified with towers, moats, and drawbridges, they stood as formidable reminders of class distinctions" (Dillon, 1994, p. 6). In the late nineteenth century, St. Louis developed a large network of private gated streets for its beer barons, most of which still exist today. Since the real estate boom in the late 1980's, this rapidly growing phenomenon of gating off communities has become more prevalent in today's society.

Types of communities

Gated communities come in three different types: lifestyle communities, elite communities, and security zone communities. All of these community types differ in their inhabitants, but they all serve the same basic service, to keep unwanted individuals out. Lifestyle communities provide security and separation for leisure activities and the amenities offered inside. These lifestyle communities include retirement communities, leisure communities, and suburban "new towns." The lifestyle communities offer residents the chance to engage in a wide variety of activities close to their own homes. Activities inside these communities can include golf courses, horseback riding, and many other "leisure" activities for residents.

The second type of a gated community is known as an elite community, "These communities are primarily occupied by the rich and famous, the top one fifth of Americans" (Tucker, 1998, p. 3). These developments focus on exclusion and status. In these communities, the primary focus is on image. The gates represent a barrier of status to all who are outside and looking in. Security is another major concern due to the resident's status within the community. Like lifestyle communities, the developers of the

elite communities build walls and gates as a marketing strategy.

The final type of gated community is the security zone community. Unlike the other two communities, security zone communities are gated by the residents themselves and can somewhat represent a "fortress" mentality. "The fortress mentality is perhaps clearest here, where groups of people band together to shut out their neighbors" (Tucker, 1998, p. 3). Many of these new communities are located in inner city and lower income neighborhoods where the residents see crime increasing. The fear of crime and outsiders is the major reason that these people gate themselves in.

Security Measures

The walls and fences that surround them primarily protect these new communities, but many other security measures are used as well. Inside may be surveillance cameras, infrared sensors, motion detectors and armed guards. "St. Andrews, a gated community in Boca Raton Florida, spends over a million dollars a year on helicopters and canine patrols" (Dillon, 1994, p. 3). A few communities also contain bollards to keep non-residents at bay. Bollards, mostly used in airports and other high security areas, prevent the tailgating of vehicles by raising metal cylinders up out of the ground to impale vehicles that try to slip by.

In many communities including some in San Antonio, Texas, entry into these communities is difficult: "to enter you pass through a metal gate where a uniformed guard bearing a neighborhood ranger badge and a .38 pistol checks for your name on a visitors list" (Diamond, 1997, p. 3). These security measures are very important for the residents of gated communities, and they will protect themselves at great costs.

Costs

Private communities provide their own security, street maintenance, parks, recreation, garbage collection, and other services. The residents of these communities pay dues for all of the services rendered. "One family pays homeowner dues of \$85 a quarter to keep up the swimming pool, recreation center, basketball court, baseball diamond wood structure playground, and three miles of jogging path" (Diamond, 1997, p. 3). Many times, this security can become extremely expensive. "At \$10 an hour, a low figure, the annual cost for 24-hour security covering one gate and one guard is \$87,000" (Dillon, 1994, p. 8). If this figure is multiplied by many guards, more gates, services, canine patrols, cameras, and escorts, the cost is dramatically higher. Each homeowner is assessed a portion of this cost.

Statistics

As some scholars see it, the United States is being transformed into a nation of walled-off enclaves, or gated communities. These new residential communities are being built at record rates. By 1997, an estimated 20,000 gated communities, with more than 3 million units, had been built across the country, with the concentration mostly in metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, Phoenix, Dallas, and Miami. The gated community population in America, now eight million Americans, is growing at a fast rate. Eight out of every ten new urban projects are gated. According to a survey by consultant Arthur Anderson, "New home sales in master-planned communities, which are usually walled off and gated, rose 17 percent in 1992" (Dillon, 1994, p. 2).

Different parts of the country are building these communities at different paces. It seems that the phenomenon of gated communities has really picked up in the South and West. As many as 15 percent of new homes in the South are being built behind walls; in the West, 10 percent; and in the North these new communities are being built at a rate of 3 percent. These numbers are slowly increasing in all areas of the country.

The concept of gating off a community has many critics. Some people believe that they accomplish their purpose of keeping the population safe from crime, while others argue that they tear away at our delicate society. But regardless, Americans are still flocking to these new communities for safety and security reasons.

Pros of gated communities

Many people believe that there are great benefits to raising a family inside a gated community. According to members of a gated community in San Antonio, "I'm not scared

community. According to members of a gated community in San Antonio, "I'm not scared here by myself; I'm not scared to have my kids here by themselves, I wouldn't feel that way in a non-gated community"(Diamond, 1997, p. 5). Many of the residents of these enclaves seem to have the same view. They feel a sense of safety that they never felt when they lived outside the gates. Another supposed benefit of gated neighborhoods is the sense of community they generate. "One might expect greater community spirit or tight-knittedness in gated areas because they have such clear boundaries, as well as homeowner associations and other vehicles designed to include members in the social structure of the community"(Blakely, 1995, p. 3).

Other advocates for these new enclaves love the fact that there is no longer traffic throughout the neighborhood and they feel safe about letting their children play in the streets at night. Others also feel that they know their neighbors better and have more of an opportunity to chat with them. Still others love these new communities because the private facilities are much better than public works. "Between 1980 and 1990, federal funding to cities and states slipped from 25 percent of total revenues to 17 percent" (Dillon, 1994, p. 5). The property values of gated communities are also higher than those outside the walls. Some real estate experts estimate that the gates can easily add \$50,000 or more to property values.

Cons of gated communities

Many individuals strongly believe that gated communities are affecting our society in a negative way. Some scholars believe when people wall themselves off from others, they are cutting themselves off from the mixed, open society that is needed for a social and political democracy. According to Edward J. Blakely, Ph.D., "The thing that is most worrisome for me is this kind of 'forting up,' turning our backs on what I think is the nation's civic destiny—a more heterogeneous, open society"(Tucker, 1998, p. 1).

For many years, the United States has been a society that seeks to make everyone equal. We want to bring all the races together, and we want everyone to be on the same levels economically, but this gated trend is moving us in the opposite direction. Rather than being involved in an open society, gated communities tend to foster segregation. They also promote privatization, replacing public government with private organizations. According to Blakely, "As more private communities provide their own security, maintenance, parks, recreation, and other services, the poor and less well-to-do are left more dependent on the ever reduced services of the city and county governments" (Tucker, 1998, p. 2).

According to a study conducted by the city of San Antonio "such economic segregation could divide the community in ways similar to the divisions caused by racial segregation in the past year" (Diamond, 1997, p. 4). There are also many legal ramifications of closing off streets to the public. In 1991, a group called Citizens Against Gated Enclaves sued the city of Los Angeles for allowing residents of prominent Whitley Heights to gate public streets against outsiders. The superior court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, stating that "the city owes a duty to the public not to allow gates on public streets"(Dillon, 1994, p. 7)

Do they work?

The major question that is asked of gated communities is "Do they really keep crime rates down?" The answer seems to be yes, but only by very little. The city of Miami reports that "some forms of crime such as car theft are reduced, at least immediately after the streets are closed. However, data indicates that the long-term crime rate is at best only marginally altered" (Blakely, 1995, p. 1).

In gated communities, the trend is that crimes against the person go down and stay down in controlled access developments. This occurs because perpetrators do not want to go to an area that they are unfamiliar with and where it might be hard for them to make an escape. "According to preliminary research, crimes such as burglary drop in the first year or so of gating, but then rise back to the level of the areas outside"(Diamond 4).

Many people believe that the residents of gated communities are living with a false sense of security. According to Ed Cross, a real estate broker, "It's a marketing gimmick; it's a fad" (Diamond, 1997, p. 5). The codes to unmanned gates are also given out to numerous people who do not live in the community but have frequent access, such as pizza delivery boys. Many also argue that the communities cannot be as safe as they advertise. Many

individuals wonder how far a security guard, who receives \$9 an hour, will go to enforce internal laws on the private property. The security is only as good as the people who provide it.

There is also an issue on access to the communities by emergency vehicles. With more communities being built, and more security codes being used, it is becoming more difficult for emergency personnel to access the gates. "In East Lake Florida, rescue workers must rummage through a briefcase containing as many as 50 separate gate-opening devices for unmanned entries"(Diamond, 1997, p. 5). Many rescue workers also complain of time lost in maneuvering over-sized emergency vehicles into narrow gates.

No matter what the statistics show, gated communities are becoming more popular each year. People are abandoning their old neighborhoods to start new lives behind closed walls where they feel safe and secure. Old "neighborhood watch" programs are being abandoned for these new safe enclaves. The neighborhood watch programs have been proven to reduce crime if properly run by the community. In some cases these "watches" can be just as safe as living in a gated community.

Neighborhood Watch

The concept of neighborhood watch has proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce crime. The idea centers on neighbors recognizing suspicious activities and reporting crimes to police. Through Neighborhood Watch techniques, neighbors can help police catch rapists, muggers, drug dealers, kidnappers, or others who pose a danger to the safety of their community. And, most importantly, they keep an eye out for each other.

History and Development

Neighborhood Watch began as a response to a rise in home burglaries in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Although initiated by citizens, Neighborhood Watch rapidly became associated with police programs. In 1972, the National Sheriffs Association formally endorsed it as a tool to educate neighbors to recognize and report crime.

The National Association of Town Watch estimates that at least 20,000 organized neighborhood groups exist today that use watch techniques. The Neighborhood Watch approach is usually most effective in middle class neighborhoods where the majority of residents own their homes or have children-factors that go along with low turnover. Apartment buildings and neighborhoods with many renters can use watch techniques, but because of the relatively high number of people moving in and out, it takes extra organizing and persistence to be successful. Still, it can be done if there is a stable core group committed to the concept of Neighborhood Watch.

In low-income neighborhoods, the Neighborhood Watch idea can also be effective, but problems such as unemployment, deteriorating housing or a relatively large number of drug abusers can threaten to overshadow it.

Patrol

An effective tool for some Neighborhood Watch programs to use is a citizen patrol. It usually is up to the community in correspondence with law enforcement to decide whether a patrol is needed. Citizen patrols utilize volunteers who walk or drive an area on a regular basis to report incidents and problems to the police and provide a visible presence that deters criminal activity. They are in no way police officers; in contrast, they carry no weapons, are non-confrontational, and always plan their work with the local authorities. A citizen patrol, as the NCPC (1999) reports, can cover a neighborhood, an apartment complex, a business district, or a park. They contact the police dispatcher through two-way radios or cellular phones.

Cellular phones seem to be a good tool for Neighborhood Watch groups to use to fight crime. Over a nine-month period, use of cellular phones by Neighborhood Watch groups in 11 areas in Florida caused a decrease in burglaries, robberies, and thefts.

Florida International University researchers found the following statistics within the combined 11 neighborhoods:

- Burglaries decreased 33 percent, from 341 to 229;
- Robberies decreased 24 percent, from 42 to 31;
- Thefts decreased 9 percent from 77 to 70.

In addition, the response times to in-progress events appeared to be faster by the police, according to many participating volunteers. As the Public Safety article (1996) reports, the project brought neighborhoods and local police officers closer together. As Fred Taylor, director of the MetroDade Police Department states, "The use of phones appears to have a displacement effect. Criminals avoid neighborhoods with active cellular crime watch groups as opposed to neighborhoods without such a program" (p. 20).

Another effective citizen patrol is in Washington D.C.'s North Lincoln Park neighborhood. Together, this neighborhood has banded together and patrols the streets in orange hats, distinguishing themselves as patrollers. The movement to make the neighborhood safer was started 10 years ago and today has over 20 "orange hat" groups in the nation's capital. Black and whites alike participate in these groups, picking up litter around the neighborhood and noting license numbers of cars suspected of involvement in drug dealing, as the American Survey (1994) reports. The orange-hat groups do seem to be appreciated by people because they help keep drunks and drug-dealers out of the area, and report a 7 percent drop in street crime from a year ago (American Survey 1994).

CPTED

Another effective method for neighborhoods to use to help prevent crime is through environmental design. Crime prevention through environmental design is focused on how to design or redesign the built environment to reduce opportunities for crime. Practitioners of CPTED, as Brennan and Zelinka (1997) note, generally refer to three principles: natural surveillance (placing physical features, activities, and people to maximize visibility); natural access control (through the judicious placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping, and lighting); and territorial reinforcement (using buildings, fences, pavement, signs, and landscaping to express ownership).

An example of CPTED in action is in Arizona. In Phoenix's Isaac neighborhood next to an Interstate highway interchange, Brennan and Zelinka (1997) report, criminals have used the area for years. Over a 60-acre neighborhood, prostitution, drug sales, and burglaries have long encompassed this area. In 1995, city departments and Isaac's Neighborhood Action Committee began coming up with ways for reducing crime. Assistance for the project came from the neighborhood services department, the street transportation department, and the planning department. With local residents providing input, the group came up with a plan for making the neighborhood safer by closing one street, making another one-way, and removing damaged edifices. Since the time that the CPTED plan has been implemented, residents have indicated that crime in the neighborhood has been greatly reduced (Brennan & Zelinka, 1997).

Communities can prevent crime in their neighborhoods. For neighborhoods to have an effective Neighborhood Watch program, they should be organized and have contact with local authorities. Watch groups should distinguish themselves, like the orange-hat groups in Washington D. C., and let the criminals know that a group is present and on the lookout for would-be criminals.

It has been shown that watch groups using cellular phones lower crime rates. Using cellular phones to contact authorities to report information is an excellent fast deterrent to criminals. Watch groups interested in using cellular phones should contact a local phone provider for donation information. CPTD is another way for neighborhoods to reduce crime. Assistance with the local government and input from local residents can reduce the crime in an area by using principles such as maintenance, good property management, and activity support.

Overall, a neighborhood watch program can be a great thing for any neighborhood. It brings the community together and helps to reduce serious crime at the same time. If a successful neighborhood watch program is effectively carried out, then there is no need for people to segregate themselves in gated communities. Until society can begin to change and work together to prevent crime, gated communities will continue to appear more and more in our society, leaving the neighborhood watch programs with no neighborhoods to watch.

References

- American Survey. (1994). On the orange hat patrol. The Economist, 331, 26.
- Bagne, P. (1991). They're taking back their neighborhoods. Reader's Digest, 139, 103.
- Bennet, S. (1995). Community organizations and crime. Annals of Academy of Political and Social Science, 539, 72.
- Blakely, E. (1995). Fortress communities: The walling and gating of American suburbs. Land Lines, 7, 1,3.
- Davis, J. (1998). Reinventing or repackaging public services? The case of community-oriented policing. Public Administration Review, 58, 485.
- Diamond, D. (1997). Behind closed gates. USA Today, 1, 1-3.
- Dillon, D. (1994). Fortress America: more and more of us living behind locked gates. Planning, 60, 2-8.
- Hirst, J. (1988). The power of watch. New Statesman and Society, 1, 26.
- Judd, D. (1998). Fortress America: Gated communities in the United States. Journal of The American Planning Association, 64, 505.
- Kilburn, J. (1998). Private and collective protection in urban areas. Urban Affairs Review, 33, 790-794.
- Misthe, T. (1991). Citizen based crime control activity and victimization risks. Criminology, 3, 421.
- McGoey, C. (1999). Gated communities [On-line]. Available: <<http://www.crimedoctor.com/gated.htm>>
- McKenzie, E. (1998). Fortress America: Gated communities in the United States. Whole Earth, 94, 531-533.
- National Crime Prevention Center (1999). Using citizen patrols in your neighborhood [On-line]. Available: <<http://www.ncpc.org>>
- Neighborhood watch programs and coalitions. (1997) [On-line]. Available: <<http://www.rpd.vtts.com>>
- Public Safety (1996). Cell phones reduce major urban crimes. American City & County, 111, 20.
- Sipes, L. (1989). The power of senior citizens in crime prevention and victim services. The Police Chief, 56, 45-47.
- Stark, A. (1998). America, the gated? The Wilson Quarterly, 1, 58-62.
- Tucker, C. (1998). Gated communities: Barriers go up. Public Management, 80, 1-3.

[Refund Policy Information](#)

© Copyright 1996-2008 - International Foundation for Protection Officers - All Rights Reserved

[Mailing List Rental Information](#)

RESOLUTION NO. 10-

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
DENYING A REQUEST TO ESTABLISH A GATED COMMUNITY FOR TRACT 2529
(MINEO)

WHEREAS, Tentative Tract 2529, a 21-lot residential subdivision located off of Caballo Place, west of the intersection of Vine and 36th Streets, was approved by Planning Commission Resolution No. 03-054 on June 24, 2003; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopted a condition deferring to the City Council the proposal of a gate controlling access to the private streets in Tract 2529; and

WHEREAS, at their meeting of September 7, 2004, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 199 which outlines policies regarding gated communities, and

WHEREAS, in a letter dated May 7, 2010, Frank Mineo, has requested the placement of a gate controlling access to Tract 2529 citing the remote location, street noise, litter and safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, Council Resolution No. 199 establishes the finding that gated residential areas are not consistent with the purpose and intent of the General Plan, and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that gated communities impede emergency services response; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the placement of a gate at Tract 2529 will negatively impact the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles does hereby deny the request of Frank Mineo to construct a gate on private property at the entrance to Tract 2529:

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Paso Robles this 15th day of June, 2010 by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Duane Picanco, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lonnie Dolan, Deputy City Clerk

OPTION A

RESOLUTION NO. 10-

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
APPROVING A REQUEST TO ESTABLISH A GATED COMMUNITY FOR TRACT
2529
(MINEO)

WHEREAS, Tentative Tract 2529, a 21-lot residential subdivision located off of Caballo Place, west of the intersection of Vine and 36th Streets, was approved by Planning Commission Resolution No. 03-054 on June 24, 2003; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopted a condition deferring to the City Council the proposal of a gate controlling access to the private streets in Tract 2529; and

WHEREAS, at their meeting of September 7, 2004, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 199 which outlines policies regarding gated communities, and

WHEREAS, in a letter dated May 7, 2010, Frank Mineo, has requested the placement of a gate controlling access to Tract 2529 citing the remote location, street noise, litter and safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, Council Resolution No. 199 establishes a policy that projects with private streets and gated public access shall be the sole purview of the City Council and shall be critically reviewed in terms of public safety and convenience and if approved shall be required to provide automated systems for public safety access; and

WHEREAS, all streets in Tract 2529 are privately maintained; and

WHEREAS, due to steep grades and no sidewalks, Tract 2529 is not a desirable route for bikes and pedestrians, nor does Tract 2529 provide any connection to public destinations favorable to autos, bikes and pedestrians; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the placement of a gate at Tract 2529 will not negatively impact the community due to its remote location.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles does hereby approve the request of Frank Mineo to construct a gate on private property at the entrance to Tract 2529, subject to the following:

SECTION 1: The gate shall not interfere with utility easements held by the City and other public utility companies, and

SECTION 2: The gate shall be constructed in accordance with plans approved by the Emergency Services Department and the City Building Department.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Paso Robles this 15th day of June, 2010 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Duane Picanco, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lonnie Dolan, Deputy City Clerk