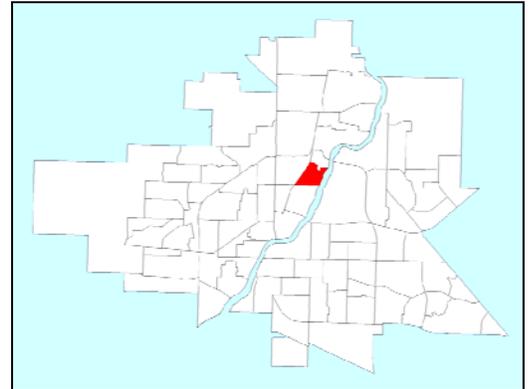


North Park



The **Smart Cities, Healthy Kids** research project looks for solutions to childhood obesity by investigating how neighbourhood design affects children's ability to be physically active. Research suggests that safety from traffic and crime, the presence of destinations and built features supporting an active lifestyle (eg. parks, playgrounds, and bike lanes), a neighbourhood's attractiveness, and its accessibility are all very important in determining whether people will be active there. To determine which Saskatoon neighbourhood designs are the most supportive of active living, researchers walked each neighbourhood in Saskatoon in the summer months of 2009/2010, collecting data on these areas using two research surveys: the Neighbourhood Active Living Potential (NALP) and the Irvine-Minnesota Inventory (IMI).



North Park in Saskatoon



NALP Route Map



IMI Segments Map

NALP consists of 22 items within four areas: Activity Friendliness, Safety, Density of Destinations, and Universal Accessibility. Using this method, observers rated each item on a 6-point scale after walking a pre-defined route in each neighbourhood that connected 10 randomly-selected street segments. The route, typically 4 to 5 kilometres in length, is shown in red on the map.

IMI consists of a 229-item inventory of neighbourhood features within five areas: Attractiveness, Diversity of Destinations, Pedestrian Access, Safety from Traffic, and Safety from Crime. Twenty percent of street segments in each neighbourhood were randomly selected and observed. Each segment is the two facing sides of a street block and is indicated by a numbered flag on the map.

The NALP tool is more subjective in nature and takes into account the impression of the entire neighbourhood based on the systematic observations of the researchers. In contrast, the IMI is more objective in nature and is based on observations of each individual segment. The following report will discuss how the characteristics of North Park compare to Saskatoon neighbourhoods in general.

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North Park Overview

North Park is bordered by Hazen Street, Spadina Crescent, 33rd Street, and Warman Road. North Park was designed under the First Zoning Bylaw, which was in effect from 1930—1966. This Bylaw marked the beginning of a formal land use classification system that separated land use types into more defined categories for the purposes of controlling land uses and protecting property values. This Bylaw also



North Park street view

marked the beginning of a street classification system that separated volumes of traffic into classes (local, collector, and arterial). Neighbourhoods developed under the First Zoning Bylaw include early forms of curvilinear streets, where grid patterns give way to crescents linked by a collector street. However, North Park is primarily made up of grid-pattern streets, though not all streets are connected in the same manner as a typical grid pattern.

Safety



Kids At Play road sign

We rated each neighbourhood according to the presence or absence of certain neighbourhood elements that increase or detract from a feeling of personal security. Observing both the physical and social characteristics of the neighbourhood, security was measured both in terms of traffic and crime. These ratings suggest whether safety concerns affect an individual's related active living decisions in their neighbourhood.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, North Park rated **5.66** for Safety from Traffic, below Saskatoon's average rating of **6.06**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, North Park rated **7.89** for Safety from Crime, below Saskatoon's average rating of **8.46**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, North Park rated **4.13** for Safety, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.81**. (NALP)

North Park's safety ratings suggest that pedestrian and vehicular travel areas are fairly well defined and safe to navigate and that there are few elements that reduce feelings of personal security. For example, most streets we observed had low traffic levels. Most of the high traffic intersections included measures of safety for pedestrians, though it was noted at some intersections that better safety measures were needed. In terms of safety from crime, mostly well maintained homes, a low amount of graffiti, and plenty of opportunities for casual surveillance of the street by home owners all contribute to the perception of personal security. However, there were several areas that were concealed by bushes or in alleys that could be used for lurking.



A concealed space that could be used for lurking

Destinations

We rated each neighbourhood according to the number, diversity, and density of its destinations. These ratings suggest whether destinations in a neighbourhood can motivate deliberate, localized active living choices by providing a place to go and a means to interact with others.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, North Park rated **7.00** for Diversity of Destinations, above Saskatoon's average rating of **6.26**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, North Park rated **3.94** for Density of Destinations, in line with Saskatoon's average rating of **3.92**. (NALP)



Convenience Store



Playground and park

North Park's destination ratings suggest that there are some destinations of a moderate variety. For example, observed destinations in North Park include were a drug store, several churches, two schools, a park, Meewasin Valley trails, an indoor arena, an outdoor community pool, and a convenience store.

Activity Friendliness

We rated the activity friendliness of each neighbourhood based on specific features that encourage or present barriers to an active lifestyle. These ratings suggest whether a neighbourhood assists or limits the opportunities for physical activities such as walking, cycling, or skateboarding.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, North Park rated **4.47** for Pedestrian Access, below Saskatoon's average rating of **5.08**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, North Park rated **4.50** for Activity Friendliness, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.67**. (NALP)



Designated bike lane

These activity friendliness ratings suggest that North Park has both supports and obstructions for pedestrians. For example,



Lack of designated bike parking

most streets have at least one sidewalk, and when present, sidewalks are in good condition. Further, wide streets provide adequate room for cyclists and a designated bike lane on Spadina Crescent considerably increases bike friendliness. However, a lack of bike parking at several destinations makes it more difficult to cycle. Further, the street design with in North Park can be confusing and difficult to navigate because not all streets are continuous or logically connected; however, the grid-pattern provides route choice for pedestrians and cyclists.

Attractiveness

We rated each neighbourhood based on specific features that could potentially increase or decrease the attractiveness of the neighbourhood. This rating suggests whether the level of attractiveness for each neighbourhood itself can encourage or discourage individuals to participate in an active lifestyle.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, North Park rated **4.79** for Attractiveness, below Saskatoon's average rating of **4.80**. (IMI)



Archibald Park

North Park's attractiveness rating suggests that both attractive and unattractive features were present in the neighbourhood. For example, sidewalk amenities, such as benches and well-kept garbage cans, were absent from all observed streets except along the Meewasin Valley Trail. Street trees observed on several streets provide shade for many of the sidewalks. Further, well maintained homes, some architectural variety, and pleasant landscaping considerably increase the attractiveness of the neighbourhood.

Universal Access

We rated the universal accessibility of each neighbourhood according to the presence or absence of specific features that help or prevent safe movement for those with mobility, visual, or hearing impairments. These ratings suggest whether people with reduced mobility are able to travel in the neighbourhood safely without assistance.



Curb cut

- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, North Park rated **2.00** for Universal Accessibility, below Saskatoon's average rating of **2.19**. (NALP)

This universal accessibility rating indicates that North Park has few elements that enable safe movement for those with reduced mobility. For example, few sidewalks in North Park are mountable, though curb cuts are present at some intersections. However, none of the observed pedestrian crossings are adapted for individuals with visual or hearing impairments.

The principal investigator for this project is Nazeem Muhajarine, PhD. For a complete list of contributing researchers, partner organizations, project staff, and more information, please visit our website: www.smartcitieshealthykids.com

If you have any further questions about the project, please contact our research co-ordinator tracy.ridalls@usask.ca or call 966-2237.