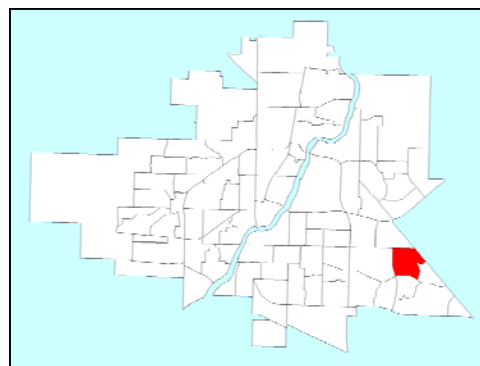


Briarwood



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).



Briarwood in Saskatoon



NALP Route 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.

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 Segments 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 Briarwood compare to Saskatoon neighbourhoods in general.

Briarwood Overview

Briarwood is located on the south-eastern edge of Saskatoon and is bordered by 8th Street, Taylor Street, and Boychuk Drive. Briarwood was designed under the Municipal Development Plan of 1982. This plan focused on low-density development and separated single-family homes from all other forms of land use except parks, churches, and schools in order to protect property values. Briarwood is predominantly single-family residential, although there are pockets of medium-density housing. The streets in Briarwood are curvilinear in design with several crescents and culs-de-sac. With its wide streets and prominent garages, Briarwood is obviously designed to accommodate motor vehicles. The neighbourhood has no school and very few destinations.



Typical street view in Briarwood



One of the few crosswalks

Safety

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, Briarwood rated **7.74** for Safety from Traffic, above Saskatoon's average rating of **6.06**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Briarwood rated **9.47** for Safety from Crime, above Saskatoon's average rating of **8.46**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Briarwood rated **3.88** for Safety, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.81**. (NALP)



Landscaped grass buffer separating the sidewalk from the roadway

Briarwood's safety ratings suggest that pedestrian and vehicular travel areas are well defined and easy to safely navigate and that there are few elements that reduce feelings of personal security. For example, although most observed intersections were uncontrolled and few were marked for pedestrian crossing, traffic levels were quite low, so observers felt most streets were safe to cross. Further, some sidewalks were separated from traffic by a grass buffer. In terms of safety from crime, well maintained homes, an absence of graffiti and concealed spaces for lurking, and plenty of opportunities for casual surveillance of the street by home owners all contribute to the perception of personal security.

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 physical activity by providing a place to go and a means to interact with others.



Nature park and pond

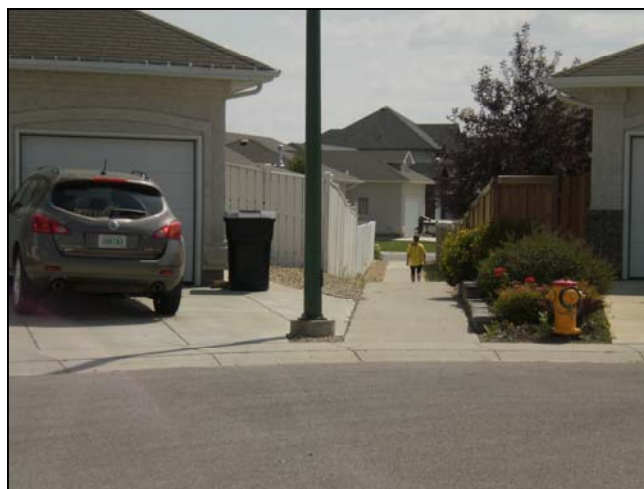
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Briarwood rated **3.00** for Diversity of Destinations, below Saskatoon's average rating of **6.26**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Briarwood rated **3.19** for Density of Destinations, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.92**. (NALP)

Briarwood's destination ratings suggest that destinations are few and limited in variety. For example, the only observed destinations in Briarwood were a splash park and playground, playing field, and nature pond.

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, Briarwood rated **5.58** for Pedestrian Access, above Saskatoon's average rating of **5.08**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Briarwood rated **3.25** for Activity Friendliness, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.67**. (NALP)



Pedestrian access way

These activity friendliness ratings suggest that Briarwood has some supports and few obstructions for pedestrians. For example, all observed streets have sidewalks on both sides of the street. Further, wide streets provide adequate room for cyclists, and bike parking at the park considerably increases bike friendliness. The street design, with several crescents and culs-de-sac, limits the route choices and access for pedestrians and cyclists. Although some areas have pedestrian access ways that join disconnected streets and increase route choice for pedestrians.

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, Briarwood rated **4.81** for Attractiveness, above Saskatoon's average rating of **4.80**. (IMI)



Bench in Briarwood Park

Briarwood's attractiveness rating suggests that both attractive and unattractive features are present in the neighbourhood. For example, homes are well maintained in Briarwood, although garages dominate most street views. Young street trees are present on some streets, though few are large enough to provide shade for pedestrians. Sidewalk amenities, such as benches and well-kept garbage cans, were only present in the parks. However, pleasant landscaping, parks, and nature features 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.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Briarwood rated **3.00** for Universal Accessibility, above Saskatoon's average rating of **2.19**. (NALP)



Graded curb cut

This universal accessibility rating indicates that Briarwood has many elements that enable safe movement for those with reduced mobility. For example, almost all sidewalks in Briarwood are mountable, and there are graded curb cuts present at most intersections. However, unpaved pathways through the parks limit access for wheelchair users or for those pushing a stroller.

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.