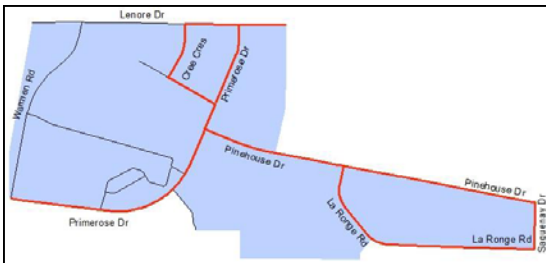


Lawson Suburban Centre

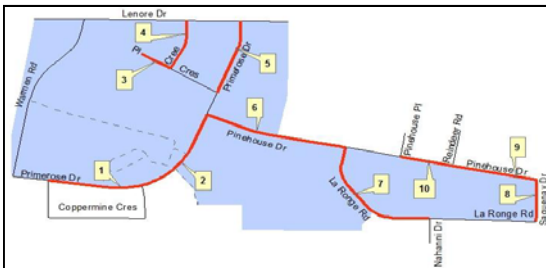


The **Smart Cities, Healthy Kids** research project looks for solutions to childhood obesity by investigating how neighbourhood design affects children's ability to be physically active. Research suggests that safety from traffic and crime, the presence of destinations and built features supporting an 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).

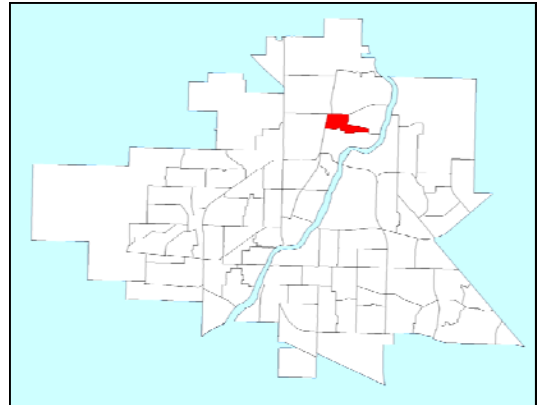
NALP consists of 22 items within four areas: Activity Friendliness, Safety, Density of Destinations, and Universal Accessibility. Using this method, observers rated each item on a 6-point scale after walking a pre-defined route in each neighbourhood that connected 10 randomly-selected street segments.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



NALP Route Map



IMI Segments Map



Lawson Suburban Centre in Saskatoon

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 the Lawson Suburban Centre compare to Saskatoon neighbourhoods in general.

Smart Cities Healthy Kids

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Lawson Suburban Centre Overview

The Lawson Suburban Centre is bordered by Lenore Drive, Pinehouse Drive, Saguenay Drive, La Ronge Road, Primrose Drive, and Warman Road. The Lawson Suburban Centre 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. Development of high density, mixed-use, and neighbourhood commercial was not supported by home buyers and therefore not incorporated into neighbourhoods developed in this period. The Lawson Suburban Centre provides for residents the commercial destinations that are absent from surrounding neighbourhoods.



Lawson Heights Mall

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.



Bike and pedestrian pathway

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **6.63** for Safety from Traffic, above Saskatoon's average rating of **6.06**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **7.95** for Safety from Crime, below Saskatoon's average rating of **8.46**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **3.50** for Safety, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.81**. (NALP)

The Lawson Suburban Centre's safety ratings suggest that pedestrian and vehicular travel areas are fairly well defined and somewhat safe to navigate and that there are some elements that reduce feelings of personal security. For example, most streets we observed had high traffic levels, though the intersections with the most traffic included measures of safety for pedestrians.



Pedestrian crosswalk in high traffic

Further, there were pedestrian paths and access ways separate from traffic in some areas. In terms of safety from crime, plenty of opportunities for casual surveillance of the street by residents and customers contributes to the perception of personal security. However, we observed graffiti in some areas as well as concealed spaces that could be used for lurking.



Crosswalk to a well used pedestrian access way

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.



Lawson Heights Mall



Bishop James Mahoney High School

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **10.00** for Diversity of Destinations, well above Saskatoon's average rating of **6.26**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **4.25** for Density of Destinations, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.92**. (NALP)

The Lawson Suburban Centre's destination ratings suggest that there are many destinations

of a wide variety. For example, observed destinations in the Lawson Suburban Centre include a high school, a park, playing fields, a fitness and leisure center, an indoor pool, a library, a post office, several churches, medical clinics and services, banks, a gas station, a pharmacy, several restaurants, and a wide variety of retail and professional services.



Primrose Plaza

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.



High density development near destinations and a transit stop

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **6.29** for Pedestrian Access, above Saskatoon's average rating of **5.08**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **3.00** for Activity Friendliness, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.67**. (NALP)

These activity friendliness ratings suggest that the Lawson Suburban Centre has both supports and obstructions for pedestrians. For example, most streets have a least one sidewalk, and when present, sidewalks are in fair condition. However, heavy traffic limits the route choices for cyclists. Further, there is a lack of clearly defined pedestrian areas near the shopping centres and other destinations; these areas are much more oriented toward vehicular travel.



Bike parking

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.



Park and playing fields

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **5.33** for Attractiveness, above Saskatoon's average rating of **4.80**. (IMI)

The Lawson Suburban Centre's attractiveness rating suggests that both attractive and unattractive features are present in the neighbourhood. For example, some store facades are faded and in disrepair. Litter was frequently observed throughout the area. Some wide open parking lots are negative spaces that leave pedestrians exposed to the elements. However, pleasant landscaping considerably increases the attractiveness of the area.

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.



Graded curb cut

- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Lawson Suburban Centre rated **3.50** for Universal Accessibility, above Saskatoon's average rating of **2.19**. (NALP)

This universal accessibility rating indicates that the Lawson Suburban Centre has some elements that enable safe movement for those with reduced mobility. For example, few sidewalks are mountable, though curb cuts present at some intersections. Further, several 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.



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