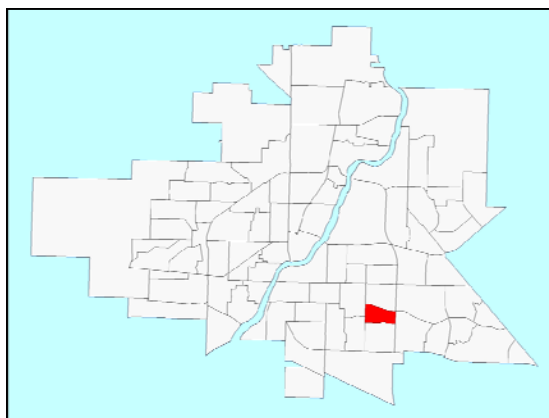


Nutana Suburban Centre



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).



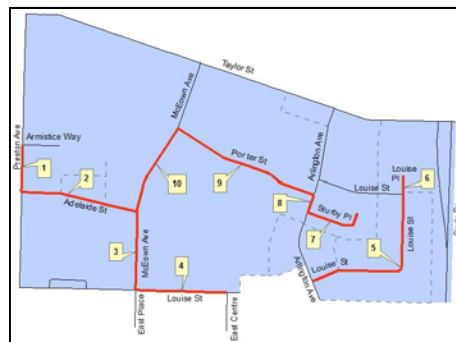
Nutana Suburban Centre in Saskatoon



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 the Nutana Suburban Centre compare to Saskatoon neighbourhoods in general.

Nutana Suburban Centre Overview

The Nutana Suburban Centre is bordered by Taylor Street, Circle Drive, Louise Street, and Preston Avenue. The Nutana Suburban Centre was designed under the First Community Planning Scheme, which was in effect from 1966-1982. This was Saskatoon's first comprehensive neighbourhood plan that sought to design neighbourhoods as independent communities. As such, each neighbourhood was required to develop around a school site and neighbourhood park, and park space became standardized at 10 acres per 1000 people. Commercial types became distributed into neighbourhood and suburban centre uses. Core neighbourhoods became the focus for high density and mixed-use while suburban neighbourhoods became primarily single-family residential. The Nutana Suburban Centre provides commercial destinations that are absent from surrounding neighbourhoods.



Nutana Suburban Centre street view



Well marked pedestrian crossing

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, Nutana Suburban Centre rated **5.89** for Safety from Traffic, below Saskatoon's average rating of **6.06**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Nutana Suburban Centre rated **7.12** for Safety from Crime, below Saskatoon's average rating of **8.46**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Nutana Suburban Centre rated **4.75** for Safety, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.81**. (NALP)

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



Graffiti

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.



Market Mall



High density near destinations

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Nutana Suburban Centre rated **9.00** for Diversity of Destinations, above Saskatoon's average rating of **6.26**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Nutana Suburban Centre rated **5.06** for Density of Destinations, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.92**. (NALP)

The Nutana Suburban Centre's destination ratings suggest that there are many destinations of a wide variety. For example, observed destinations in the Nutana Suburban Centre include indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities, two schools, parks with playgrounds and playing fields, a community garden, a library, churches, medical services, banks, a mall, restaurants, and a variety of retail and professional services.

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, Nutana Suburban Centre rated **6.15** for Pedestrian Access, above Saskatoon's average rating of **5.08**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Nutana Suburban Centre rated **3.67** for Activity Friendliness, in line with Saskatoon's average rating of **3.67**. (NALP)



Outdoor Farmer's Market



A place to rest while walking

These activity friendliness ratings suggest that the Nutana Suburban Centre has both supports and obstructions for pedestrians. For example, most streets have a least one sidewalk, and when present, sidewalks are in good condition. Further, wide streets provide adequate room for cyclists though heavy traffic limits the route choices. High density residential located close to destinations enables many residents to easily access destinations using active transportation.

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.



Nutana Kiwanis Park



Public art

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Nutana Suburban Centre rated **5.64** for Attractiveness, above Saskatoon's average rating of **4.80**. (IMI)

The Nutana Suburban Centre's attractiveness rating suggests that both attractive and unattractive features are present in the neighbourhood. For example, sidewalk amenities, such as benches and well-kept garbage cans, were present in some observed areas, although litter was also commonly observed. Some wide open parking lots are negative spaces that leave pedestrians exposed to the elements. However, the parks 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.



Graded curb cut

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

This universal accessibility rating indicates that the Nutana Suburban Centre has some elements that enable safe movement for those with reduced mobility. For example, although few sidewalks in the Nutana Suburban Centre are mountable, there are curb cuts present at many 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.



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