



Pacific Heights

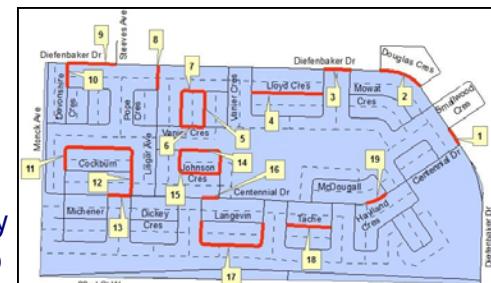


The **Smart Cities, Healthy Kids** research project looks for solutions to childhood obesity by investigating how neighbourhood design affects children's ability to be physically active. Research suggests that safety from traffic and crime, the presence of destinations and built features supporting an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

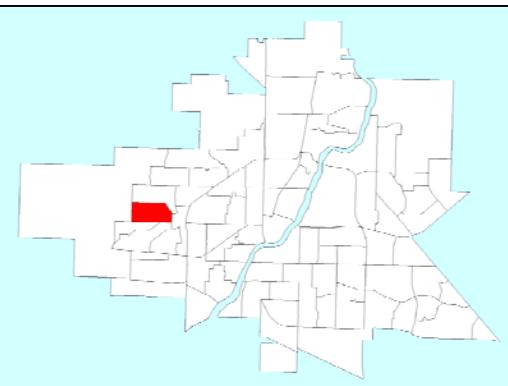
NALP consists of 22 items within four areas: Activity Friendliness, Safety, Density of Destinations, and Universal Accessibility. Using this method, observers rated each item on a 6-point scale after walking a pre-defined route in each neighbourhood that connected 10 randomly-selected street segments.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



IMI Segments Map

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 Pacific Heights compare to Saskatoon neighbourhoods in general.



Pacific Heights in Saskatoon

Pacific Heights Overview

Pacific Heights is bordered by Diefenbaker Drive, 22nd Street, and Monck Avenue.

Pacific Heights 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. As a suburban neighbourhood, Pacific Heights primarily contains residential uses, with commercial needs intended to be served by the nearby Confederation Park Suburban Centre.



Diefenbaker Drive can promote high traffic speeds

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, Pacific Heights rated **6.04** for Safety from Traffic, below Saskatoon's average rating of **6.06**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Pacific Heights rated **9.08** for Safety from Crime, above Saskatoon's average rating of **8.46**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Pacific Heights rated **3.38** for Safety, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.81**. (NALP)

Pacific Heights' safety ratings suggest that pedestrian and vehicular travel areas are well defined and easy to safely navigate and that there are only a few elements that reduce feelings of personal security. For example, although traffic levels were high on Centennial Drive and Diefenbaker Drive, crosswalks were only in place near schools. Some traffic calming measures, such as bulb outs, were in place to slow down traffic. However, Pacific Heights could benefit from better consideration for the safety of pedestrians. In terms of safety from crime, mostly well maintained homes, plenty of opportunities for casual surveillance of the street by residents, and low levels of graffiti contribute to the perception of personal security. However, we observed a high number of spaces concealed by bushes or in alleyways that could be used for lurking.



Pacific Park in Pacific Heights

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.



Well marked pedestrian crossing

Destinations



Saint Patrick's Church

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, Pacific Heights rated **1.00** for Diversity of Destinations, below Saskatoon's average rating of **6.26**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Pacific Heights rated **3.00** for Density of Destinations, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.92**. (NALP)

Pacific Heights' destination ratings suggest that there are few destinations, which are of a limited variety. For example, observed destinations in Pacific Heights include a school, a park with a playing field and playground, two churches, 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.



Father Vachon School

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Pacific Heights rated **4.92** for Pedestrian Access, below Saskatoon's average rating of **5.08**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Pacific Heights rated **3.58** for Activity Friendliness, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.67**. (NALP)



Bike parking and bench seating

These activity friendliness ratings suggest that Pacific Heights has both supports and obstructions for pedestrians. For example, all observed streets have well maintained sidewalks on both sides of the street. Further, wide streets provide adequate room for cyclists and bike parking located at the school and park considerably increases bike friendliness. However, the street design with several crescents and culs-de-sac limits the route choices and access 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, Pacific Heights rated **5.02** for Attractiveness, above Saskatoon's average rating of **4.80**. (IMI)



Pacific Park

Pacific Heights' 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 only in parks, and litter was observed in some areas of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood park, mostly well maintained homes, 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.



Absent curb cut

- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Pacific Heights rated **2.33** for Universal Accessibility, above Saskatoon's average rating of **2.19**. (NALP)

This universal accessibility rating indicates that Pacific Heights has few elements that enable safe movement for those with reduced mobility. For example, few sidewalks in Pacific Heights are mountable, and curb cuts are absent from most intersections. Further, 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.