

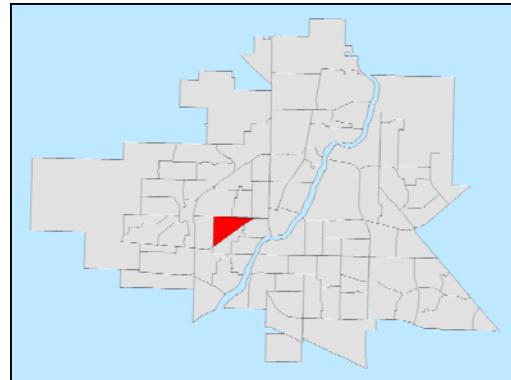


Pleasant Hill

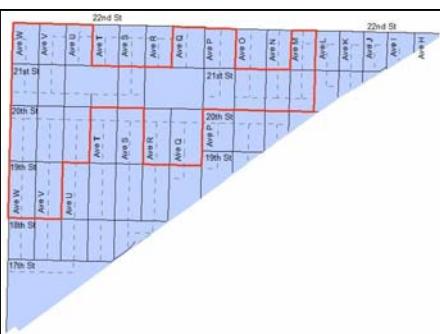


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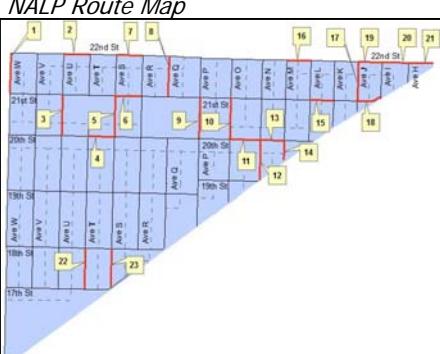
The **Smart Cities, Healthy Kids** research project looks for solutions to childhood obesity by investigating how neighbourhood design affects children's ability to be physically active. Research suggests that safety from traffic and crime, the presence of destinations and built features supporting an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



Pleasant Hill in Saskatoon



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.

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 Pleasant Hill compare to Saskatoon neighbourhoods in general.

Pleasant Hill Overview

Pleasant Hill is bordered by 22nd Street, Avenue W, and the CN railway line.

Pleasant Hill was developed under the Yorath Plan, which was in effect from 1913-1930. This plan was the first growth plan for Saskatoon with a city-wide focus. It identified general areas for residential, industrial, and greenspace, although neighbourhoods with discrete boundaries were not yet identified. As such, there was little consideration for localized neighbourhood facilities, such as schools, community centres, leisure facilities, or park space. Rather, development was focused on grand, city-wide initiatives that would improve the image and quality of urban life at the time. Over time, Pleasant Hill has evolved into a more defined neighbourhood including schools, park space, and other amenities and places of interest.



New development in Pleasant Hill

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.



Opportunity for casual surveillance by residents

- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Pleasant Hill rated **2.88** for Safety, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.81**. (NALP)

Pleasant Hill's safety ratings suggest that pedestrian and vehicular travel areas are fairly well defined and safe to navigate, but there are some elements that reduce feelings of personal security. For example, many streets had moderate to high traffic levels. Some high traffic intersections included crosswalks or other safety measures for pedestrians, but there were places where better consideration for the safety of pedestrians was necessary, particularly on 22nd Street. In terms of safety from crime, plenty of opportunities for casual surveillance of the street by residents contributes to the perception of personal security. However, in some areas, we observed many poorly maintained homes, a high amount of graffiti, and spaces concealed by bushes or in alleyways that could be used for lurking.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Pleasant Hill rated **5.47** for Safety from Traffic, below Saskatoon's average rating of **6.06**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Pleasant Hill rated **5.64** for Safety from Crime, below Saskatoon's average rating of **8.46**. (IMI)



Well marked pedestrian crossing

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.



Commercial Strip along 22nd Street

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Pleasant Hill 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, Pleasant Hill rated **4.88** for Density of Destinations, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.92**. (NALP)

Pleasant Hill's destination ratings suggest that there are many destinations of a wide variety. For example, observed destinations in Pleasant Hill include St. Paul's Hospital, two schools, parks, and commercial strips along 22nd Street and 20th Street with a variety of restaurants, retail, entertainment, 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.



Street Signs to accommodate cyclists

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Pleasant Hill rated **4.81** for Pedestrian Access, below Saskatoon's average rating of **5.08**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Pleasant Hill rated **3.58** for Activity Friendliness, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.67**. (NALP)

These activity friendliness ratings suggest that Pleasant Hill has both supports and obstructions for pedestrians. For example, grid pattern streets provide route choice and easy access for pedestrians



Streets provide adequate room for cyclists

and cyclists, though the CN railway prevents through passage to areas east of the neighbourhood. Most streets have at least one sidewalk, and many areas have sidewalks on both sides of the street. Sidewalks were in fair condition, though tree roots caused some sidewalks to lift unevenly. High traffic streets as well as narrow streets with street parking can prove difficult for cyclists, but streets signs intended to accommodate cyclists increased bike friendliness considerably.

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.



Fred Mendel Park

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Pleasant Hill rated **3.67** for Attractiveness, below Saskatoon's average rating of **4.80**. (IMI)

Pleasant Hill's attractiveness rating suggests that both attractive and unattractive features are present in the neighbourhood. For example, large street trees are present on most streets and they provide shade for the pedestrians on the sidewalks.

Sidewalk amenities, such as benches and well-kept garbage cans, were present in some areas of the neighbourhood. Some architectural variety and pleasant landscaping considerably increase the attractiveness of the neighbourhood. However, poorly maintained homes and a high amount of litter took away from the attractiveness.



Bus shelter



Graded curb cut

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, Pleasant Hill rated **2.33** for Universal Accessibility, above Saskatoon's average rating of **2.19**. (NALP)

This universal accessibility rating indicates that Pleasant Hill has some elements that enable safe movement for those with reduced mobility. For example, although sidewalks in Pleasant Hill are not mountable, curb cuts were present at many intersections. However, only one of the observed pedestrian crossings is 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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