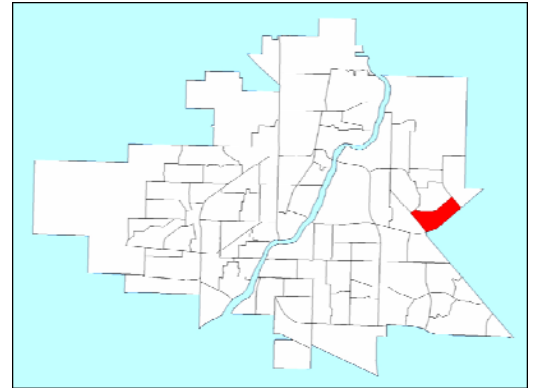


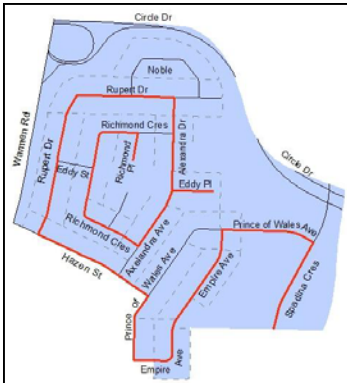
# Richmond Heights



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).



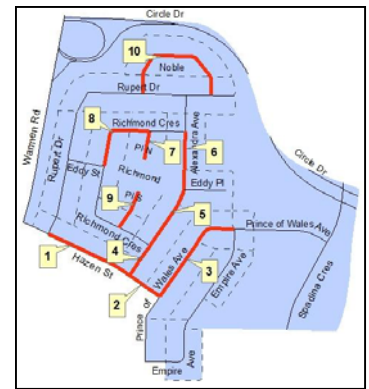
*Richmond Heights in Saskatoon*



*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** 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 Richmond Heights compare to Saskatoon neighbourhoods in general.

Smart Cities Healthy Kids

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# Richmond Heights Overview

Richmond Heights is bordered by Circle Drive, Spadina Crescent, Empire Avenue, Prince of Wales Avenue, Hazen Street, and Warman Road. Richmond Heights was designed under the First Community Planning Scheme, which was in effect between 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, Richmond Heights is primarily residential, with commercial needs designed to be served by nearby Lawson Heights Suburban Centre.



*Richmond Heights street view*

## 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, Richmond Heights rated **6.75** for Safety from Traffic, above Saskatoon's average rating of **6.06**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Richmond Heights rated **9.42** for Safety from Crime, above Saskatoon's average rating of **8.46**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Richmond Heights rated **4.25** for Safety, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.81**. (NALP)

Richmond Heights' safety ratings suggest that pedestrian and vehicular travel areas are fairly well defined and easy to safely navigate and that there are only few elements that reduce feelings of personal security. For example, though only one intersection in the neighbourhood had a crosswalk for pedestrians, most streets we observed had low traffic levels and speeds. In terms of safety from crime, well maintained homes, a low amount of graffiti, and plenty of opportunities for casual surveillance of the street by home owners all contribute to the perception of personal security.



*Houses facing onto the park provide opportunity for casual*



## 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.



*Richmond Heights Strip Mall*

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Richmond Heights rated **5.00** for Diversity of Destinations, below Saskatoon's average rating of **6.26**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Richmond Heights rated **3.69** for Density of Destinations, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.92**. (NALP)

Richmond Heights' destination ratings suggest that there are some destinations of moderate variety. For example, observed destinations in Richmond Heights include a neighbourhood park with a playground, the Meewasin Valley Trail, and a strip mall with a restaurant, fitness centre, retail shops, and professional and medical services.



*G.D Archibald Park*

## 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, Richmond Heights rated **5.33** for Pedestrian Access, above Saskatoon's average rating of **5.08**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Richmond Heights rated **4.25** for Activity Friendliness, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.67**. (NALP)



*The Meewasin Valley Trail connects Richmond Heights to the rest of Saskatoon*

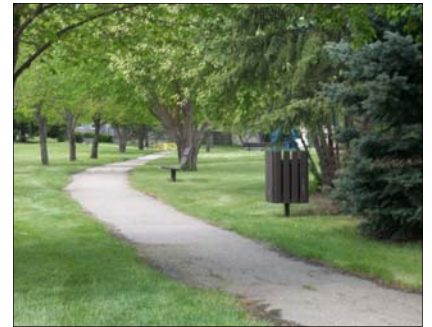


*Wide streets are supportive of cyclists*

These activity friendliness ratings suggest that Richmond Heights has both supports and obstructions for pedestrians. For example, all observed streets have well-maintained sidewalks on both sides of the street. Wide streets provide adequate room for cyclists. The Meewasin Valley Trail provides an active connection to the rest of Saskatoon. However, the street design may be confusing and difficult to navigate, though alleyways throughout the neighbourhood can link otherwise disconnected streets and increase route choices 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.



*Park with a bench and well-kept garbage can*

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Richmond Heights rated **5.47** for Attractiveness, above Saskatoon's average rating of **4.80**. (IMI)

Richmond 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 in the parks. The street trees observed on several streets provide partial shade for some of the sidewalks. Well maintained homes, architectural variety, neighbourhood parks, and pleasant landscaping considerably increase the attractiveness of the neighbourhood. Further, the Meewasin Valley Trail serves as an attraction to more than Richmond Heights residents.

## 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, Richmond Heights rated **2.00** for Universal Accessibility, below Saskatoon's average rating of **2.19**. (NALP)

This universal accessibility rating indicates that Richmond Heights has few elements that enable safe movement for those with reduced mobility. For example, few sidewalks in Richmond Heights are mountable, though curb cuts are present at some 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.ca](http://www.smartcitieshealthykids.ca)**

**If you have any further questions about the project, please contact our research co-ordinator [tracy.ridalls@usask.ca](mailto:tracy.ridalls@usask.ca) or call 966-2237.**