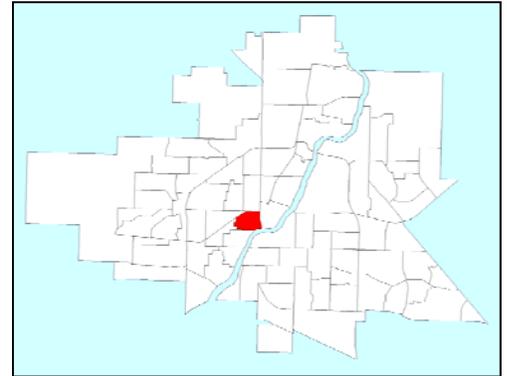


# Riversdale



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).



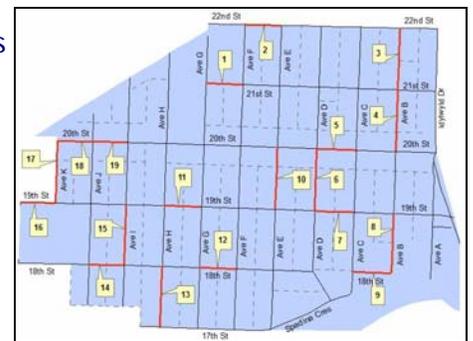
*Riversdale in Saskatoon*



*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 4-5 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 Riversdale compare to Saskatoon neighbourhoods in general.

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# Riversdale Overview

Riversdale is bordered by 22nd Street, Idylwyld Drive, Spadina Crescent, 17th Street, Avenue L, and the CN Railway. Riversdale is one of Saskatoon's first established neighbourhoods. Originally, there were three distinct village settlements on the South Saskatchewan River: Saskatoon (now the Central Business District), Nutana, and Riversdale, which were incorporated as the City of Saskatoon in 1906. Each of these villages developed on 25-foot lots in a grid pattern around a main street. In Riversdale, 20th Street was the centre of the neighbourhood commercial district for many years, though 22nd Street has also developed as another primary commercial corridor. As reflected in the surroundings, Riversdale has hosted numerous ethnic populations over the years, resulting in a culturally rich and diverse neighbourhood.



*Riversdale street view*



*Pedestrian crosswalk*

## 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, Riversdale rated **5.98** for Safety from Traffic, below Saskatoon's average rating of **6.00**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Riversdale rated **5.23** for Safety from Crime, below Saskatoon's average rating of **8.46**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Riversdale rated **3.38** for Safety, below Saskatoon's average rating of **3.81**. (NALP)

Riversdale's safety ratings suggest that pedestrian and vehicle areas are fairly well defined and somewhat safe to navigate, although there are some elements that reduce feelings of personal security. For example, high traffic areas had well marked crosswalks, but not all areas in the neighbourhood considered the safety of pedestrians to the same extent. In some areas, grass buffer strips separate the pedestrians on the sidewalk from the traffic on the street. The absence of bike lanes makes cycling unsafe on high traffic roads like 22nd Street and 20th Street. In terms of safety from crime, plenty of opportunities for casual surveillance of the street by residents and businesses contribute to the perception of personal security. However, we observed a considerable amount of graffiti and poorly maintained homes, as well as several spaces concealed by bushes or in alleyways that could be used for lurking.



*The absence of bike lanes makes cycling unsafe on high traffic roads*



*Farmer's Market*

## 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.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Riversdale rated **8.00** for Diversity of Destinations, above Saskatoon's average rating of **6.26**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Riversdale rated **5.56** for Density of Destinations, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.92**. (NALP)



*Commercial along 20th Street*

Riversdale's destination ratings suggest that there are many destinations of a wide variety. For example, observed destinations in Riversdale include a school, a park, and commercial strips along 20th and 22nd Streets with a wide variety of restaurants, retail, entertainment, and professional and medical 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, Riversdale rated **5.13** for Pedestrian Access, above Saskatoon's average rating of **5.08**. (IMI)
- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Riversdale rated **4.33** for Activity Friendliness, above Saskatoon's average rating of **3.67**. (NALP)



*Sidewalk amenities supportive of pedestrians: bike parking, garbage and recycling can, and a pay phone*

These activity friendliness ratings suggest that Riversdale has some supports and few obstructions for pedestrians. For example, sidewalks were in fair condition, present on both sides of most streets, and occasionally separated from the street by a grass buffer. Wide sidewalks along the commercial corridor support high amounts of foot traffic.



*Benches provide a place to rest*

Bike parking located at some destinations considerably increases bike friendliness. Sidewalk amenities, such as benches, garbage or recycling cans, and pay phones are supportive of pedestrians. Further, the grid street pattern is easy to navigate and provides a wide range of 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.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 10, Riversdale rated **4.59** for Attractiveness, below Saskatoon's average rating of **4.80**. (IMI)



*Public mural*



*Statues near Riverlanding*

Riversdale's attractiveness rating suggests that both attractive and unattractive features are present in the neighbourhood. For example, large street trees are present on many streets and provide shade for pedestrians on the sidewalk. Sidewalk amenities, such as benches and well-kept garbage cans, are present along 20th Street and the new development near River Landing. Public art is also present in many areas. Further, many historic buildings and references 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.

- Out of a possible highest rating of 6, Riversdale rated **3.00** for Universal Accessibility, above Saskatoon's average rating of **2.19**. (NALP)



*Graded curb cut*

This universal accessibility rating indicates that Riversdale has some elements that enable safe movement for those with reduced mobility. For example, curb cuts were present at many intersections in Riversdale. Further, a few 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.**



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