

**SAFETY AUDIT REPORT**

crime prevention

**Optimist Park Safety Audit Report**



January 12, 2011 | Community Services Department, Planning & Development Branch



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## **Acknowledgements**

A special thanks to all of the community members, community stakeholders, business owners, and civic employees who participated in the Safety Audit process, volunteering their time to ensure Riversdale remains a safe place to live, work and play.

## 1.0 Executive Summary

The Riversdale Local Area Plan (LAP) was approved by City Council on May 20, 2008. The report considered various aspects of the neighbourhood, including neighbourhood safety. Unlike previous Local Area Plans, a detailed Neighbourhood Safety consultation, including safety audits, was included as part of the broader Riversdale LAP process. In the past, safety audits were conducted outside of the LAP process, usually arising from an LAP recommendation.

The consultation process for Riversdale involved a number of safety-related exercises including a “perceptions of safety” exercise, a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) workshop, and four Safety Audits in Riversdale. From these activities arose a number of recommendations aimed at improving safety for local residents, property and business owners, as well as other Riversdale stakeholders. A subsequent exercise with a group of neighbourhood youth at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge, entitled “What’s Good in the Hood”, raised additional concerns with an area that had not been included in the Riversdale Local Area Plan Neighbourhood Safety Action Plan. Therefore, the Riversdale LAP included the following neighbourhood safety recommendation:

**9.17 SAFETY AUDIT OF OPTIMIST PARK:** That the Community Services Department, City Planning Branch, work with the Riversdale Community Association, and youth at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge, to conduct a Safety Audit of Optimist Park, using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED Principle - All).

The Neighbourhood Planning Section, Planning and Development Branch met with community stakeholders on Tuesday, October 20, 2009 to conduct a Safety Audit of Optimist Park to identify the community’s real and perceived safety concerns in the area. The recommendations in this report address the issues that were identified during the Optimist Park Safety Audit. These recommendations will be added to the Neighbourhood Safety Implementation list.

## 2.0 Summary of Recommendations

### 7.1 NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

- 7.1.1 Tree Trimming:** That the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, review the landscaping around the northeast entrance of the park and the tennis courts, and implement the appropriate trimming and/or culling to improve site lines into these areas.
- 7.1.2 Industrial Lands North of Optimist Park:** That Fire and Protective Services advise property owners of the vacant industrial lands north of Optimist Park to clear or trim overgrown trees, bushes and grass to eliminate potential hiding spots and improve the appearance of the properties.
- 7.1.3 Land Use Adjacent to Optimist Park:** That the Planning and Development Branch, Community Services Department, send a letter to property owners of the mixed use properties adjacent to Optimist Park that outlines land uses which are complimentary to the park, and identifies existing incentive programs which benefit the development of these lands.

### 7.2 TERRITORIALITY AND ACCESS CONTROL

- 7.2.1 Optimist Park Sign:** That the Planning and Development Branch, Community Services Department, meet with the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, to discuss and coordinate the installation of a new Optimist Park sign, at the northeast entrance to the park, which displays park rules, emergency contact information, maintenance contact information, and hours of operation; and that the old signage be salvaged and placed at the northwest entrance to the park.

### 7.3 IMAGE AND MOVEMENT PREDICTORS

- 7.3.1 Reassessment of Tennis Courts:** That the Leisure Services Branch and the Community Development Branch, Community Services Department and the Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department meet with the Riversdale Community Association to discuss alternate uses for the tennis court, with the intent to increase park usage, while meeting the needs and demands of the primary users of Optimist Park.
- 7.3.2 Tennis Court Fencing:** That in consultation with the programming needs of Leisure Services Branch, Community Services Department, the Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, remove a portion or all of the fencing surrounding the tennis courts to decrease movement predictors in the area and improve the appearance of the park, while maintaining the function of the tennis court surface.

## 7.4 CONFLICTING USER GROUPS

- 7.4.1 Recreation Unit Signage:** That the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, install standardized signage on the Recreation Unit in Optimist Park to clearly display the rules and regulations of the park, and the essential contact information.
- 7.4.2 Off-Leash Dogs Prohibited Signage:** That the Animal Services Program Coordinator, Corporate Services Department, install standardized signage restricting off-leash animals in Optimist Park.

## 7.5 COMMUNITY COHESION, CONNECTIVITY AND CULTURE

- 7.5.1 Optimist Park Recreation Unit:** That the Community Development Branch, Community Services Department, Neighbourhood Planning Section, Planning and Development Branch, and Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department meet with the Riversdale Community Association to discuss possible opportunities to expand the community programming and activities within Optimist Park, and more specifically, the recreation unit.

## 3.0 Background

### 3.1 HISTORY OF RIVERSDALE

According to the Riversdale Local Area Plan, approved May 20, 2008, the Riversdale area of Saskatoon has a long and colourful history as the “heart” of the city. Historically, Riversdale was a place where people came to work, to play, and to connect a myriad of cultures and languages as a part of the Saskatchewan mosaic. There were grand hotels, thriving small businesses, bustling cabarets, vaudeville and movie theatres, and other forms of recreation to entertain the citizens of Saskatoon. From its very beginning, it served as a gateway to Saskatoon.

Riversdale was one of the three founding communities of Saskatoon. On May 26, 1906, the towns of Riversdale, Nutana and Saskatoon, with a combined population of 4500 people, joined together to form Saskatoon.<sup>1</sup>

The original land use plan for Riversdale was proposed in August, 1904 by Dr. Willoughby, a graduate in medicine from the University of Toronto. Originally the land use plan had no land set aside for parks with many lots shallower than others of their time. This design was created to increase land development profits, not to attend to the amenities desired by many of the citizens. As a result, citizens were quick to demand a park and, in 1910, development began on what was to become Optimist Park (originally known as Westside Park), one of Saskatoon’s oldest green spaces.<sup>2</sup>

Located in the southeast of the Riversdale neighbourhood, Optimist Park intersects Avenue K South, between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets, and has grown and changed over the years. Between 1924 and 1931, it was expanded and landscaped as part of an unemployment relief project. Later, a skating rink and rink house were added, and a speed skating oval built, establishing Optimist Park as Saskatoon’s home of speed skating until the 1971 Canada Winter Games, when the Clarence Downey Speed Skating Oval was built.<sup>3</sup> The park has since been developed to include winding tree-lined paths, tennis courts, a ball diamond, paddling pool; play structures and a toboggan hill.

A view of the recreation unit, ball diamond and paddling pool in Optimist Park – 1960



<sup>1</sup> City of Saskatoon, *Riversdale Local Area Plan Final Report*, 2008, pg 25-30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> City of Saskatoon, City Archivist, July 2010

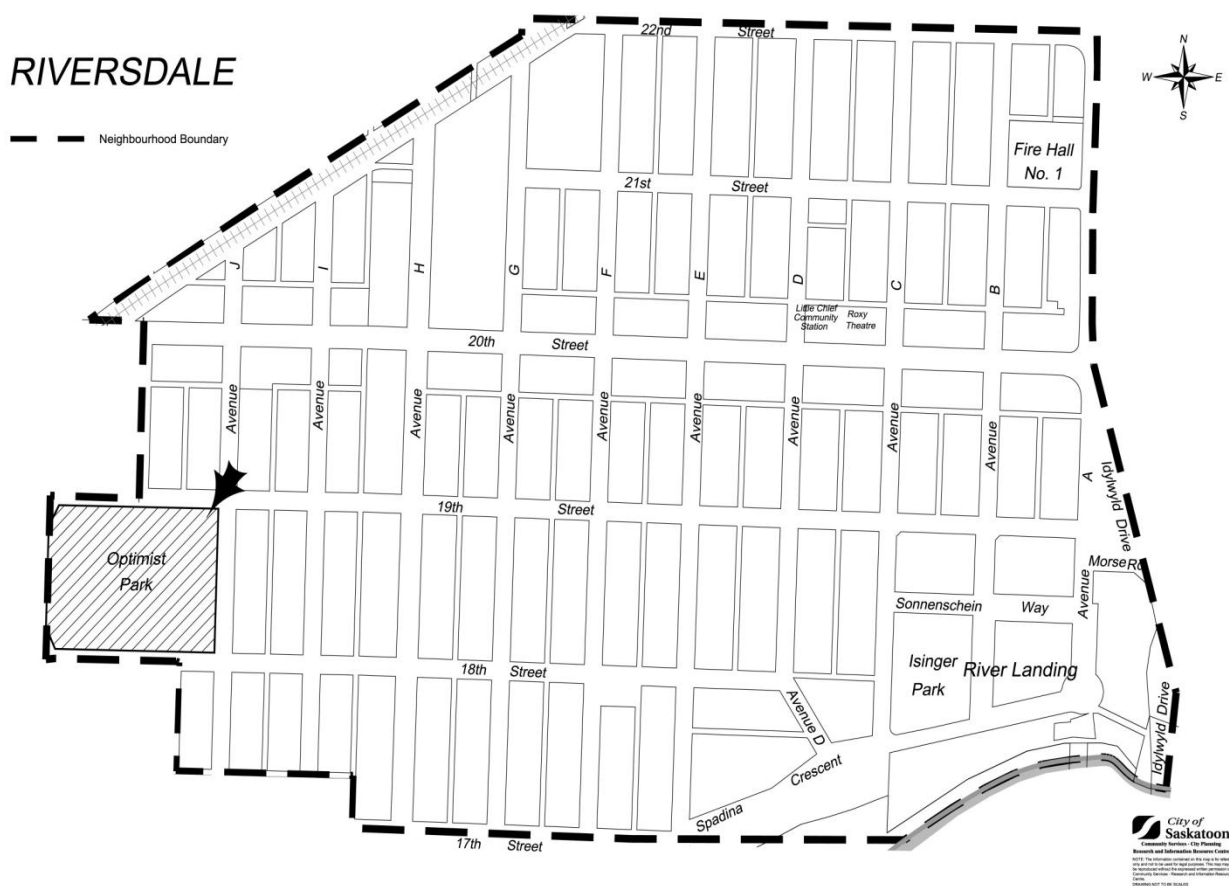


As one of Saskatoon’s original communities, the historic Riversdale neighbourhood is located near the heart of Saskatoon and plays a very important role in providing housing, employment, and services to a diverse range of citizens. The neighbourhood is bounded by 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to the north, Idylwyld Drive to the east, 17<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) right of way, Avenue L South and Avenue K South to the west. Map 1 illustrates the boundaries for the neighbourhood and the location of Optimist Park.<sup>4</sup>

The neighbourhood is predominantly low-density residential, with commercial development along 20<sup>th</sup> Street, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Idylwyld Drive. There are pockets of industrial land use in the northeast, east and west sections of the neighbourhood. River Landing, a development of Saskatoon’s downtown riverfront, is partially located in the southeast corner of the Riversdale neighbourhood.<sup>5</sup>

A more comprehensive history of the Riversdale neighbourhood can be found in the Riversdale Local Area Plan (LAP) on pages 25-30.

**Map 1: Optimist Park within Riversdale Neighbourhood**



<sup>4</sup> City of Saskatoon, *Riversdale Local Area Plan Final Report*, 2008, pg 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## 3.2 RIVERSDALE LOCAL AREA PLAN

Local Area Planning is a public participation-oriented planning approach to developing comprehensive neighbourhood plans that give residents, business owners and other stakeholders an active role in determining the future of their neighbourhood. Participants work with each other to identify issues, develop goals, and outline strategies to ensure the long-term success of the neighbourhood. Their input is used to create a Local Area Plan (LAP), which sets out objectives and policies to guide growth and development at the neighbourhood level.

Since 1998, ten LAPs have been adopted by City Council and two are in progress. These include the areas of Airport Industrial, Caswell Hill, King George, Nutana, Pleasant Hill, Sutherland, Warehouse District, Riversdale, West Industrial, and City Park, with Westmount and Varsity View in progress.

Riversdale was among the neighbourhoods selected for the LAP process for the following reasons:

- The area was originally included in the *1978 and 1991 Core Neighbourhood Studies*.
- The area underwent a review in 1993.
- The area is expected to undergo significant development in the next 10 years.
- The area is experiencing unique circumstances such as traffic pressures, land use changes, socio-economic change, and new development.
- Significant improvements are desired within the neighbourhood.

City Council adopted the Riversdale LAP on May 20, 2008. Recommendations in the report were drafted to help address many concerns and issues in the Riversdale neighbourhood. The neighbourhood safety recommendations of the Riversdale LAP included:

### **9.17 Safety Audit of Optimist Park:**

That the Community Services Department, City Planning Branch, work with the Riversdale Community Association and youth at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge to conduct a Safety Audit of Optimist Park, using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.

The Optimist Park Safety Audit process was intended to gauge both real and perceived safety concerns of Optimist Park and the surrounding area, and to develop recommendations to address the issues. The process involved participation from neighbourhood stakeholders and civic staff in the Optimist Park Safety Audit.

The Optimist Park Safety Audit consisted of a walkabout of the park to identify concerns and opportunities for crime to occur. Youth Participation was encouraged in the process, with the White Buffalo Youth Lodge being invited to participate in a Safety Audit of Optimist Park on numerous occasions. Unfortunately, it was found to be difficult to organize youth participation in the Safety Audit process and, as a result, issues brought forward in the “What’s Good in the Hood?” exercise were used as feedback relating to the youth’s perceived concerns within the park and surrounding area.

## 4.0 Riversdale Neighbourhood Profile

### 4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC AND LAND USE TRENDS

Demographic statistics provide an initial picture of the present state and potential future condition of Riversdale. Population demographics are a part of the quantitative picture of assessing crime and perceptions of crime in a neighbourhood and provide the statistical information required when comparing neighbourhoods within the city of Saskatoon. The City of Saskatoon uses Statistics Canada statistics to formulate future population forecasts along with year to year comparisons. As this information is only available every four years, Saskatoon also utilizes an alternative information system called G5, to provide current estimates and projections between Census years. 2006 Census data showed:

- The total population for Riversdale was estimated at 2,335.
- The percentage of the population 14 and under was 27% (Saskatoon was 20%) and between 15 and 34 years of age was 27% (Saskatoon was 31%).
- Riversdale had the second highest Aboriginal population per neighbourhood at 43%, where 3% were over 45 years of age, while 58% were 19 years of age or younger.
- The Ethnic Diversity Cumulative Index (ECDI), which measures the concentration and diversity of ethnic groups in neighbourhoods, was 3.8 for Riversdale, while Saskatoon's ECDI was 1.3. This portrays Riversdale as a neighbourhood with almost three times the concentration and diversity of ethnic groups when compared to Saskatoon overall.
- Average family income was \$29,441 (Saskatoon average was \$65,487).
- The unemployment rate was 24.2% (Saskatoon was 7.4%).
- There were 202 lone-parent families.
- Home ownership was 41.7% (Saskatoon average was 63%).

The 2006 Census data can be used to describe a number of circumstances in the Riversdale neighbourhood. Neighbourhoods with younger populations require different services than those neighbourhoods that are more evenly distributed in age, and those with older populations. In most cases, a higher youth population generates higher crime rates within an area, including mischief and property crimes like break and enter. Studies have shown that low income areas, when combined with high levels of unemployment, often experience higher than average crime rates, and lower community involvement.

Statistics identify the average family in Riversdale has an income that is less than half that of the average household in Saskatoon, along with an unemployment rate that is more than three times higher than the Saskatoon average. The consequences of high unemployment are significant for low-income communities.

Riversdale is a highly diverse neighbourhood. The EDCI measures the concentration and diversity of ethnic groups in neighbourhoods, which when compared to Saskatoon's Cumulative Index of 1.3, indicates that Riversdale ethnic diversity is almost three times higher than Saskatoon as a whole. Diversity within neighbourhoods can manifest stronger cultural awareness and community cohesion with the inclusion of accessible community and social programming within the neighbourhood. This increased cohesion strengthens the social fabric of the area, which is known to generate a stronger sense of community with an increased understanding of other cultures.

Home ownership in Riversdale is lower than the Saskatoon average, which conforms to the current trend of increased absentee ownership in the city. This is known to lead to less investment in a neighbourhood, while decreasing social cohesion within a community. Evidence suggests that an increased neighbourhood home ownership rate produces positive social consequences as a result of investment in a home; in return, creating more investment in the neighbourhood; increasing the aesthetics of the area; and generating higher levels of community engagement and cohesion.



Home ownership has been strongly linked to strengthening the social fabric of a neighbourhood through continued investment and an increased sense of belonging.

According to the Riversdale Local Area Plan, the Community-University Institute for Social Research's (CUISR) on-going research program, which tracks the quality of life in Saskatoon, identified and focused on three main themes, including income inequality, social inclusion, and the responsibility for change.<sup>6</sup>

CUISR identified an increased income gap between neighbourhoods, which has fostered falling perceptions of social cohesion in Low Socio-Economic Status (SES) neighbourhoods, reducing community involvement, lessening perceptions of safety in the neighbourhood, and triggering increased rates of involvement in crime by those searching for some form of inclusion.

In an effort to foster social cohesion and neighbourhood investment in Riversdale, Local Area Plan participants recommended that the land use policies in the area be amended to promote

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<sup>6</sup>City of Saskatoon, *Riversdale Local Area Plan Final Report*, 2008, pg 36

more residential development<sup>7</sup>; specifically the industrial lands adjacent to Optimist Park and other vacant properties in the neighbourhood. As a result, industrial properties in Riversdale were rezoned to Mixed Use District 1 (MX1) to allow for more residential development in the area. Traditionally, the industrial lands around Optimist Park were zoned light industrial because of their close proximity to and relationship with the railway, however, as industry has moved away from railway dependency, these lands have become more obtrusive to the neighbourhood and its' future development goals and requirements. Following the rezoning, the City of Saskatoon released its Vacant Lot and Adaptive Reuse Incentive Program<sup>8</sup>, which offers incentives to developers and property owners for vacant site development within Established Neighbourhoods in Saskatoon. Collectively, these policy shifts are expected to generate more residential development in the area, promote and provide various housing alternatives in both affordability and design, while strengthening the social fabric and cohesion within Riversdale.

“The purpose of the MX1 District is to facilitate reinvestment in core neighbourhoods and industrial areas of the city by encouraging mixed uses in new development as well as promoting the rehabilitation of existing structures. The MX1 District is intended to facilitate a broad range of compatible commercial, industrial, institutional, cultural, and residential uses, including live/work units.”<sup>9</sup> By establishing a MX1 District around Optimist Park, opportunities are presented to establish an increased level of safety in the area. For example, more legitimate eyes will fall on the street as new residents, or those relocating within the neighbourhood, are attracted to the area. This will make the area unattractive for offenders and prevent it from becoming a place to commit crime. With more home owners around the park, residents will begin take ownership of the park, the park will be better utilised and there will be the possibility of more community activities occurring in the park. The increased usage of the park, when combined with increased residences in the area will stimulate the level of social cohesion in Riversdale and an increase of community participation will develop.

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<sup>7</sup> City of Saskatoon, *Riversdale Local Area Plan Final Report*, 2009, pg 55

<sup>8</sup> City of Saskatoon Zoning Bylaw No. 8770, Appendix B

<sup>9</sup> City of Saskatoon Zoning Bylaw No. 8770, 12.7.1

**4.2 CRIME ACTIVITY PROFILE**

In 2006, Riversdale had the third highest crime incident rate in Saskatoon, following closely behind Pleasant Hill and the Central Business District, and had the highest crime rate based on 1,000 population in Saskatoon.<sup>10</sup> Table 1 identifies the Riversdale neighbourhood crime rates in comparison to other Saskatoon neighbourhoods and the city as a whole. Riversdale’s total crimes against property, including break and enters) is more than three times higher than Saskatoon’s, while crimes against the person, and break and enter rates are four times higher than other historical neighbourhoods and the city as a whole. These statistics indicate the need to address these trends.

**Table 1: Rate of Crime per 1,000 Population**

Rate of Crime per 1000 Population	Saskatoon	Sutherland	Riversdale	Nutana
Total Crimes Against the Person	18.08	18.01	84.57	20.28
Total Break & Enter	10.24	9.67	43.96	10.54
Total Crimes Against Property (including B&E)	71.43	66.16	236.02	79.38

Source: City of Saskatoon, Mapping and Research Section, August 2010

Although crime rates confirm that Riversdale has the highest crime rate within the City, Table 2 presents statistics that specify what types of criminal activity occurred in the area and also illustrates the general direction of crime trends over the recent years (increasing or decreasing). The last column of the table exemplifies the percentage change for the crime incidents that have occurred between 2006 and 2009. It is important to note that there are minor variances between the 2006 values of Table 2 and Table 9.1 of the Riversdale LAP (page 159). These differences, although minor, can be attributed to the use of the G5 statistical information database as opposed to Statistics Canada Census information. To ensure that Table 2 accurately portrayed the most current crime statistics and comparable information, the information was recalculated for 2006 through 2009.

Table 2 shows that, although Riversdale has seen high crime rates in the past, fewer instances of most crimes are being reported in the neighbourhood year over year. It is important that year over year comparisons are considered to maintain a clear view of the changing circumstances within the neighbourhood, while not being misled by the total percentage change from 2006 to 2009. For example, Riversdale saw a total reduction of 35% in assaults between 2006 and 2009; however, the neighbourhood experienced a 19% increase in assaults when 2007 statistics are compared to 2006. This shows that there was actually a 54% reduction in assaults between 2007 and 2009.

<sup>10</sup> City of Saskatoon, *Riversdale Local Area Plan Final Report*, 2008, pg 157

**Table 2: Year over Year Analysis of Reported Crime Incidents in Riversdale**

Description	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change '06-09'
Violations Causing Death	0	2	0	1	100.0%
Attempted Murder	3	2	0	0	-300.0%
Sexual Assaults	7	9	6	6	-14.3%
Assaults	187	223	164	121	-35.3%
Armed Robbery	15	37	23	23	53.3%
Robbery	47	28	16	9	-80.9%
Criminal Harassment	5	10	7	4	-20.0%
Utter Threats to Person	37	27	27	13	-64.9%
<b>Total Crimes Against a Person</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>-41.2%</b>
Break and Enter - Residential	83	79	47	56	-32.5%
Break and Enter - Business	34	31	22	16	-52.9%
Break and Enter - Other	15	10	13	20	33.3%
<b>Total Break &amp; Enter</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>-30.3%</b>
Arson	11	6	6	6	-45.5%
Property - Theft Over \$5000	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Property - Theft Under \$5000	187	211	82	77	-58.8%
Property - Theft of Motor Vehicle	65	80	44	48	-26.2%
Property - Theft from Motor Vehicle	78	59	48	53	-32.1%
Property - Have Stolen Goods	47	62	35	30	-36.2%
Property - Mischief	195	214	166	128	-34.4%
Property - Other Theft & Property Fraud	65	54	60	60	-7.7%
<b>Total Crimes Against Property (includes B&amp;E)</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>-38.0%</b>

Source: City of Saskatoon, Mapping and Research Section, August 2010

During the Riversdale Local Area Planning process, residents and youth from the White Buffalo Youth Lodge expressed concerns about the perceived level of safety in and around Optimist Park. It was recommended that an independent Safety Audit of this park be conducted, which determined that the majority of the concerns were directed towards property crime in the vicinity of the park, including break and enters, theft and vandalism. This evidence was reinforced by the year over year analysis of crime statistics for Riversdale (Table 2), which showed that property crimes accounted for the majority of the crime incidences within the Riversdale neighbourhood over the past four years.

Map 2 shows Property, Break and Enter and Related Crime Incidents for 2009 for the Riversdale Neighbourhood, while Map 3 shows Mischief, Violence related, Assault, Drug and Liquor Related Crime Incidents. The maps show that higher concentrations of reported criminal activity are concentrated along 20<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue H.

Even though Riversdale has the highest crime incident rate in Saskatoon, the area in the vicinity of Optimist Park shows relatively low numbers, with fewer incidences recorded in comparison to other areas of the neighbourhood. However, the youth from the White Buffalo Youth Lodge identified Optimist Park as unsafe both during the day and night. This could indicate that there are incidences of criminal activity in the park that are not being reported and/or the youth feel particularly vulnerable in the park.

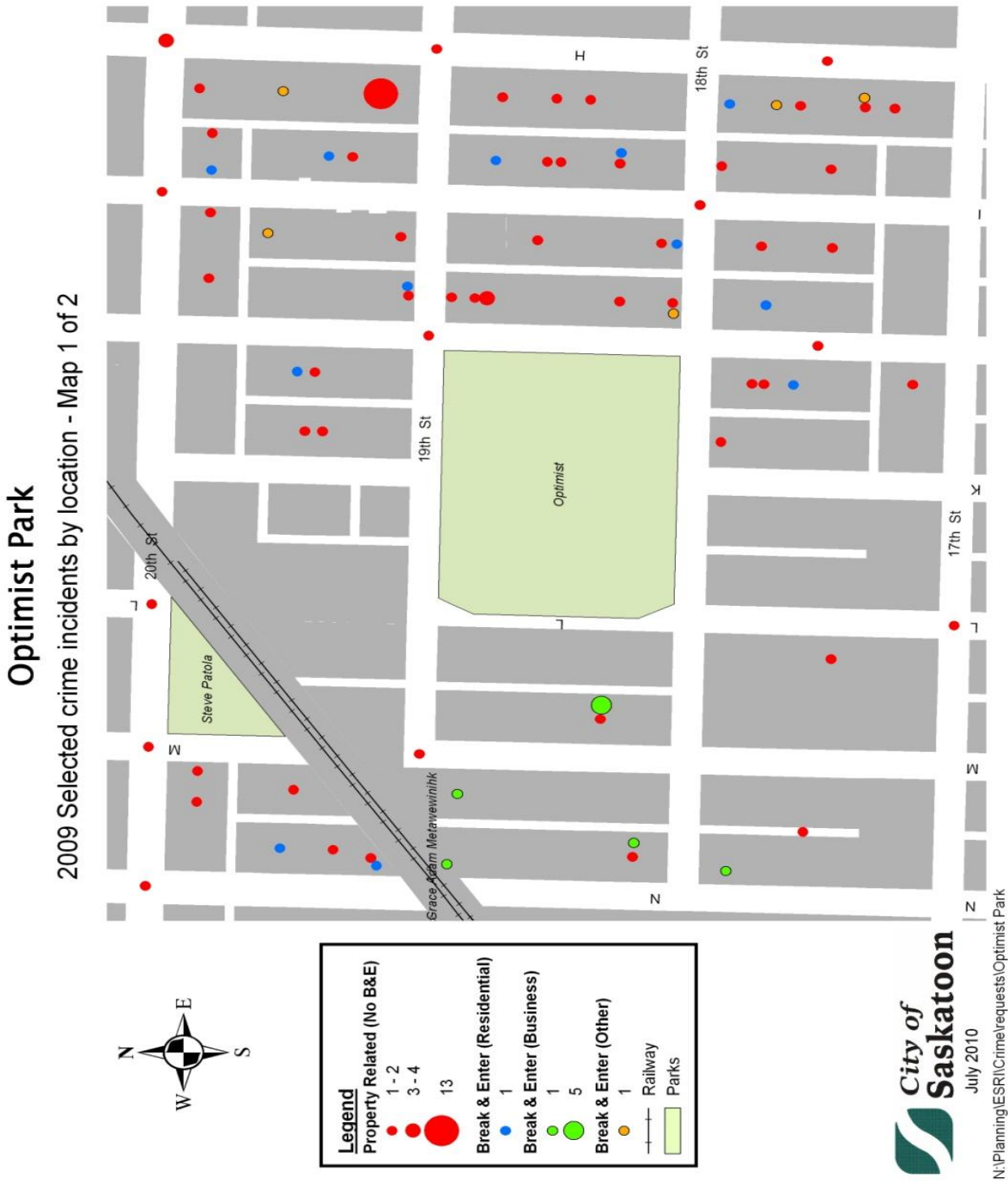


White Buffalo Youth Lodge

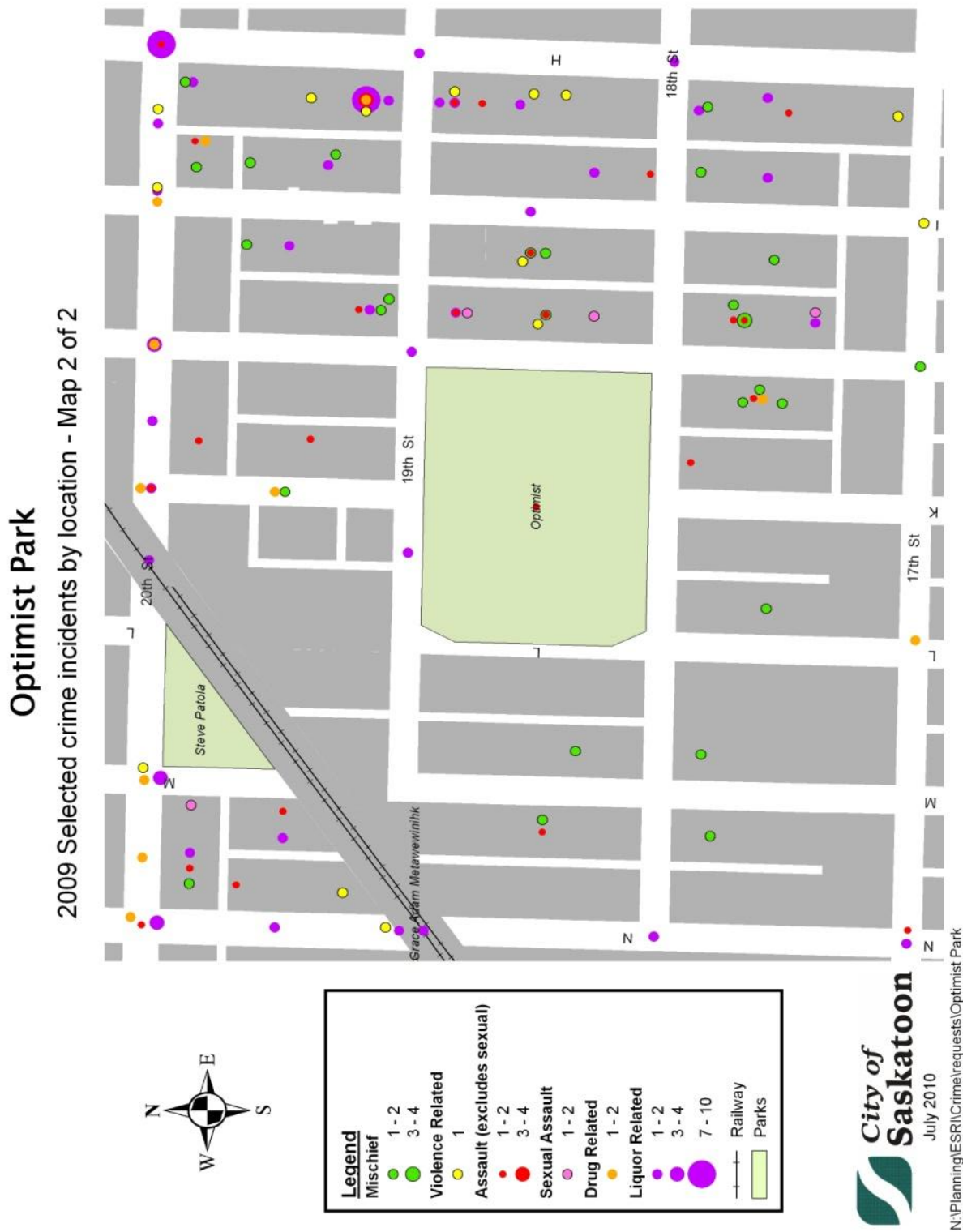
While there was only one serious incident reported within the park over the last two years, it is important to remember that many incidences of crime may not actually be reported to the police. Every crime incident has a context that helps explain its relative importance and/or impact on the community. This context is best understood and related to by community members, and impacts residents' perceptions of the area. These perceptions must be regarded as at least as important as the actual incidences of crime.



Map 2: Property, Break and Enter & Related Crime Incidents for 2009



Map 3: Mischief, Violence related, Assault, Drug and Liquor Related Crime Incidents for 2009



## 5.0 Optimist Park Neighbourhood Safety Audit

### 5.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

A Safety Audit of Optimist Park resulted from a neighbourhood safety recommendation that was brought forward through the Riversdale Local Area Plan (LAP)<sup>11</sup>, which indicated that Optimist Park may have some safety-related issues that required additional feedback and information from the neighbourhood residents.

Flyers were sent to neighbourhood residents and other stakeholders inviting them to attend this site specific safety audit. The Optimist Park Safety Audit was held on Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, from 6:00 -8:00 pm, which was a cloudy day with a temperature of three degrees Celsius. It was led by the Neighbourhood Safety staff and included interested community stakeholders.

Initially youth from the White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL) were asked to participate in the audit; however, no youth were able to participate at the scheduled time. Additional requests were sent out to the WBYL to meet at various occasions, but unfortunately timing, along with prior obligations and commitments, limited their participation in the Safety Audit for Optimist Park. Youth perspectives used within the Safety Audit are those which resulted from the LAP's "What's Good in the Hood" exercise.<sup>12</sup>

A total of seven participants were involved in the audit which identified specific areas of concern within the park, along with concerns from the area surrounding the park. Participants were asked to complete Safety Audit handbooks which direct participants to actively observe the audit area and identify specific safety concerns and perceptions. The information collected in these Safety Audit handbooks, provided the Neighbourhood Safety Program with valuable data that assisted in the formulation of recommendations to address perceived and actual safety concerns.

On December 1, 2010, representatives from the Neighbourhood Safety Program forwarded these recommendations to the Community Association for review and approval, prior to being documented in the Optimist Park Safety Audit Final Report. The safety issues were reviewed and prioritized in an order that community members felt would best represent the opinions of the Riversdale stakeholders.

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<sup>11</sup> Page 174, *Riversdale LAP Final Report*, Recommendation 9.17

<sup>12</sup> Page 173, *Riversdale LAP Final Report*

## 6.0 Park Status

### 6.1 PARK SUMMARY

Map 4 (page 17) shows an aerial view of Optimist Park. This park is one of two neighbourhood parks in Riversdale and is located in the southeast portion of the neighbourhood. It is surrounded by both residential and industrial uses. There are numerous trees lining the well-lit pathways, as well as bordering three of the four boundaries of the park, with the northern boundary being the only side without trees.

There is a recreation unit located between the paddling pool and play structure area, which are located along the eastern boundary of the park. To the west of the paddling pool is an underutilized ball diamond and to the south of the play structure area is a poorly maintained tennis/basketball court that is surrounded by chain link fencing. The tennis enclosure has a gate on the east side and one on the west. At the time of the audit, the west gate was closed and locked.

Optimist Park Play Equipment Area



The remainder of Optimist Park is open space with two asphalt pathways: one running from the northeast corner to the south side, where the park intercepts Avenue K South; while the other one allows pedestrians to travel between the northwest and southeast corners. There is a toboggan hill in the northwest corner of the park, which is utilized as a sliding hill in the winter months, but also serves as a shield for illegal activity.

#### Participants' Areas of Concern:

**Vacant Lots:**

Neighbouring vacant industrial lots, north and west of the park, provide little surveillance to the area.

**Lighting:**

Overhead lighting and large trees create areas of low visibility in the park.

**Use:**

The park is underutilized. There is a lack of signage in the park. Tennis/basketball courts are not used and should be redeveloped.

**Conflicting User Groups:**

The northwest area of the park shows signs of illegal activity, while graffiti vandalism is prevalent on the recreation unit and tennis/basketball court. Off-leash dogs have reportedly caused a nuisance to users in the area.



Map 4: Aerial View of Optimist Park



## 6.2 RECENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

The Local Area Plan and Safety Audit processes allow members of the community to voice their concerns and opinions on issues within their neighbourhood, which help form the recommendations in this report. The completion of recommendations by the City of Saskatoon is reliant on a number of variables including, but not limited to, the complexity of the recommendation; how many city departments and other outside groups are involved; and budget availability.

In some instances, neighbourhood issues are identified and addressed prior to the community classifying them as such. This can be achieved through previous community consultation, community programming, scheduled upgrades, and various other factors, as was the case for Optimist Park.

Community Stakeholders identified concerns with the placement of the Needle Drop Box in the park. Initially the box was fastened to the fence in the trees at the northwest corner of Optimist Park. This location was identified as an area within the park where higher concentrations of drug activity was taking place, with a large amount of improperly disposed drug paraphernalia being found. Stakeholders identified the placement of the Needle Drop Box to be hazardous, as it was located in an area removed from natural surveillance possibilities, with diminished sightlines. Prior to the completion of the Optimist Park Safety Audit Final Report and the formulation of the related recommendations, Fire and Protective Services identified the placement of the box as a hazard and moved it to a more visible location along the west side of the park. In conjunction with this, the Parks Branch attended to the trimming and removal of trees in the area to increase visibility and restore natural surveillance possibilities.



Placement of the needle drop box in a more visible location was identified by community stakeholders as a concern.



The Safety Audit process allowed community stakeholders to identify increased concerns with the amount of overgrowth and maintenance in the park; namely the area surrounding the tennis courts, the recreation unit and the main entrance to the park. Because members of the Parks Branch actively participated in the Safety Audit and heard the communities concerns, these matters were also attended to prior to the completion of the Optimist Park Safety Audit Final report by including them in the scheduled maintenance of the park.



A distant view of the Recreation Unit before any maintenance



A closer view of the Recreation Unit after paint and general maintenance

The fencing surrounding the tennis courts was also identified by the community as an area of concern. Participants identified that the courts have not been utilized for a number of years and have become a target of vandalism; evident in the fencing being cut in a number of places. This matter was discussed with the Open Space Consultant, Community Services Department, and a Facilities Superintendant, Infrastructure Services Department. Options for adaptive reuse and user safety in the interim are under discussion to ensure that safety concerns are attended to without jeopardizing the possible reuse of the area.



The tennis court fencing has two formal exits, creating an entrapment area that generates predictable movement from the courts. As a result, vandals have cut the fencing in numerous locations.

## 7.0 Significant Findings and Recommendations

Recommendations of the Optimist Park Safety Audit have been grouped by the CPTED principle referenced. In many cases, recommendations could have been listed under multiple principles, as the recommended improvement will address more than one principle.

### 7.1 NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

Natural surveillance refers to what can naturally or easily be seen within a line of vision. It also refers to the ability of people to see and be seen. Any element of design that increases the chance that a potential offender will be seen, or at the very least think that they may be seen, is a form of natural surveillance. Common strategies to improve natural surveillance include window placement, lighting improvements, and removal of obstructions.

It is important to note that additional lighting, while often requested, does not always deter unwanted behaviour. Additional lighting may, in some cases, attract more unwanted behaviour. Consideration should be given as to whether the facility or area being lit should be used, or encouraged to be used, at night time.

#### 7.1.1: Tree Trimming:

Finding:	Although the majority of the Safety Audit participants felt Optimist Park was generally safe and well-used, the youth from White Buffalo Youth Lodge perceived the park to be unsafe both day and night. There are areas which have limited natural surveillance due to overgrown trees and shrubs, specifically around the tennis courts and the toboggan hill. Since the Safety Audit, the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, has cut the undergrowth and removed unnecessary trees and shrubs around the toboggan hill to create clearer sight lines in the vicinity, but more needs to be done around the tennis courts and other areas of the park.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>That the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, review the landscaping around the northeast entrance of the park and the tennis courts, and implement the appropriate trimming and/or culling to improve site lines into these areas.</b>
Justification:	The ability to be seen greatly enhances personal perceptions of safety. Additionally, if illegitimate users cannot find hiding places, they may choose to go elsewhere reducing undesirable behaviour in the park. Park maintenance should include the trimming or removal of trees and shrubs around the tennis courts and toboggan hill to produce clear sightlines, eliminate potential hiding places, create more inviting pathways, while increasing natural surveillance opportunities in the area.



**7.1.2 Industrial Lands North of Optimist Park:**

Finding:	The vacant lands north of Optimist Park are not maintained or cared for, which may indicate to criminals that the place will not be defended and criminal activity will be tolerated. There is evidence of drug use, alcohol consumption, and people living in the overgrowth along the property lines of these properties. Since the Safety Audit, the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, has performed maintenance to the city owned vacant land around Optimist Park and have included its maintenance in their scheduled seasonal work.
Recommendation:	<b>That Fire and Protective Services advise property owners of the vacant industrial lands north of Optimist Park to clear or trim overgrown trees, bushes and grass to eliminate potential hiding spots and improve the appearance of the properties, and that the Land Branch, Community Services, ensure that city owned vacant land around Optimist Park is maintained to the same level as expected of our citizens.</b>
Justification:	The maintenance of vacant properties promotes a sense of ownership, which deters vandalism and other criminal activity from occurring, while also increasing the possibility of natural surveillance with the creation of clear sightlines into the surrounding area. This may increase the attractiveness of the area, especially with the reduction of litter present within the bushes, while creating a stronger sense of safety for those entering and exiting the park.



Overgrown vacant industrial lands north of Optimist Park

**7.1.3: Land Use Adjacent to Optimist Park**

<p>Finding:</p>	<p>The adjacent industrial lands do not compliment Optimist Park and are a hindrance to the parks’ safety and level of use. An abundance of vacant property lies to the north and west of the park, which limits natural surveillance of the area, reinforces a poor perception of the area, and facilitates numerous escape routes for those participating in unlawful acts. Recent rezoning, addressed by a recommendation in the Riversdale Local Area Plan, converted most adjacent industrial properties from light industrial (IL1) to mixed used (MX1) to foster a variety of housing options in the area and to revitalise Optimist Park usage.</p>
<p>Recommendation:</p>	<p><b>That the Planning and Development Branch, Community Services Department, send a letter to property owners of the mixed use properties adjacent to Optimist Park that outlines land uses which are complimentary to the park, and identifies existing incentive programs which benefit the development of these lands.</b></p>
<p>Justification:</p>	<p>Increased residential development around Optimist Park would provide more natural surveillance of the area, increase legitimate usage of the park, and complement the existing land use in the park. The Riversdale Local Area Plan identifies that residential infill development should be encouraged in Riversdale and that higher density residential development should be established in or near commercial areas.</p>



Land uses adjacent to Optimist Park

**7.2 TERRITORIALITY AND ACCESS CONTROL**

The concept of territoriality refers to clearly defining public, semi-public, and private spaces. It includes the idea of redefining the physical space so that local residents and legitimate users can be responsible for their part of the public environment.

Access control is an element of territoriality. It includes the creation of access points, exits, and gateways to a particular area in such a way as to encourage legitimate users of the area to take ownership of it. Access control may help discourage illegitimate users from inappropriate behaviour in the area.

**7.2.1: Optimist Park Sign**

Finding:	Audit participants felt that the northwest corner of Optimist Park should have signage installed to identify the park, as it does on the northeast and southeast corners of the park. It was also identified that there is not any signage displaying park rules, emergency contact information, maintenance contact information or hours of operation.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>That the Planning and Development Branch, Community Services Department, meet with the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, to discuss and coordinate the installation of a new Optimist Park sign, at the northeast entrance to the park, which displays park rules, emergency contact information, maintenance contact information, and hours of operation; and that the old signage be salvaged and placed at the northwest entrance to the park.</b>
Justification:	The increased signage will help establish a feeling of ownership and clearly identify the park as a public space. The display of park rules and contact information, along with clearly defining the space as public will help encourage more legitimate use of the park, while providing important information to guide users of Optimist Park.



Signage clearly defines public space



**7.3 IMAGE AND MOVEMENT PREDICTORS**

The image of an area is either enhanced or detracted from by the level of maintenance it receives. If a property is well-maintained, it indicates that the owner will protect and/or defend the property against crime, while portraying that the property is cared for. Lack of maintenance may signal that the owner will overlook crime or nuisance activities on the property.

Movement predictors are elements of the built environment and landscaping that force potential victims to take a certain route. Providing obvious alternative routes reduces the ability of potential attackers to predict an individual’s route. Isolated and limited routes are examples of movement predictors.

**7.3.1: Reassessment of Tennis Courts**

Finding:	Audit participants and Summer Playground Leaders advised that the tennis courts have not been utilized in over three years and are subject to vandalism. The surrounding fencing has been cut in more than one location and the court surface is in disrepair.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>That the Leisure Services Branch and the Community Development Branch, Community Services Department and the Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department meet with the Riversdale Community Association to discuss alternate uses for the tennis court, with the intent to increase park usage, while meeting the needs and demands of the primary users of Optimist Park.</b>
Justification:	The recognition of an unused recreation unit and the identification of alternative uses will promote and increase legitimate use of the park through various times of the day, while increasing the levels of natural surveillance in the area. This area of the park is underutilized and should be considered for adaptive reuse which meets the needs of the residents of Riversdale. This underused amenity increases operating costs in the form of maintenance, where those funds could be better allocated to the redevelopment of the site to meet existing demands in the area.

A view of the tennis court area within Optimist Park



**7.3.2 Tennis Court Fencing:**

Finding:	The enclosed tennis courts were identified as an area of concern as there is a lack of entrances/exits to the court surface. This creates an entrapment area where movements can be easily predicted. As a result, vandals have cut the fencing surrounding the tennis courts in three locations to create easier access to and from the area.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>That in consultation with the programming needs of Leisure Services Branch, Community Services Department, the Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, remove a portion or all of the fencing surrounding the tennis courts to decrease movement predictors in the area and improve the appearance of the park, while maintaining the function of the tennis court surface.</b>
Justification:	The cut fencing surrounding the tennis courts detracts from the appearance of the area and adds to the feeling of insecurity. With only two entrances to the tennis courts, illegitimate users are able to predict the movement of anyone who may be in the confines of the courts. Removal of some or all of the fencing will increase security for users of the tennis courts, while ensuring the adaptability of the area to various activities.



Holes in the tennis court fencing detract from the desired appearance of Optimist Park.

## 7.4 CONFLICTING USER GROUPS

This principle refers to identifying and easing the conflicts between diverse user groups in an area. The separation of land uses due to potential conflicts is one strategy that is commonly used to deal with conflicting user groups.

### 7.4.1: Recreation Unit Signage

Finding:	Participants acknowledged that Optimist Park has seen increased illegitimate usage at all hours of the day and night resulting in less legitimate usage by the community. It was noted that there is no clear information directing users who to contact in case of emergency or if maintenance is required.
Recommendation:	<b>That the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, install standardized signage on the Recreation Unit in Optimist Park to clearly display the rules and regulations of the park, and the essential contact information.</b>
Justification:	Strategically placing signage on the recreation unit within the park will provide users with instructional information to assist in the maintenance of the park, to provide contact information in case of emergency, and to promote legitimate usage of the area.



November, 1947, community members enjoy a winter day on the community skating rink.



1947 Westfield Park (renamed Optimist Park in 1953) Sandbox Competition

**7.4.2: Off-Leash Dogs Prohibited Signage**

Finding:	Audit participants stated that some dog walkers using the park allow their dogs to roam off-leash, creating unease with legitimate users of the area who feel they are at a higher risk of being attacked.
Recommendation:	<b>That the Animal Services Program Coordinator, Corporate Services Department, install standardized signage restricting off-leash animals in Optimist Park.</b>
Justification:	The City of Saskatoon has established off-leash sites to attend to dog owners who wish to allow their animals to walk free of restraint. The installation of signage prohibiting this activity within Optimist Park would support the legitimate use of the park and increase the sense of security to those who use the area.

**7.5 COMMUNITY COHESION, CONNECTIVITY AND CULTURE**

Community cohesion refers to creating opportunities to encourage participation and responsibility among residents for their neighbourhood. Positive social interaction allows residents to foster a sense of community, responsibility, and pride in their area.

Community culture is created through a shared sense of place and history among residents. This can be established and strengthened through festivals, sporting events, public art, and music events. A strong sense of community culture enhances pride and territoriality, thereby helping to reduce crime rates.

The principle of connectivity refers to maintaining connections both within the community and with other groups and organizations external to the community. These connections help the community to access information and services that support the goals of the community and its residents.

**7.5.1: Optimist Park Recreation Unit**

Finding:	The recreation unit is underutilized for the majority of the year leaving it the target of graffiti vandalism and other forms of vandalism and mischief.
Recommendation:	<b>That the Community Development Branch, Community Services Department, Neighbourhood Planning Section, Planning and Development Branch, and Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department meet with the Riversdale Community Association to discuss possible opportunities to expand the community programming and activities within Optimist Park, and more specifically, the recreation unit.</b>
Justification:	The increased use of the existing recreation unit will promote the park as a community place; increasing pride of ownership, while also promoting sustainable practices within the city as existing infrastructure could be used for community functions.

## 8.0 Implementation

### 8.1 SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

The Riversdale Community Association reviewed the Optimist Park Safety Audit Report and identified the following neighbourhood concerns:

1. Lighting and Visibility throughout Optimist Park;
2. Off leash dogs and owners not cleaning up waste;
3. Tennis court fencing and adaptive reuse of tennis courts;
4. Overgrown bushes and the needle drop box; and
5. Reduced sense of community

### 8.2 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

In addition to identifying neighbourhood concerns, the Riversdale Community Association was asked to categorize the recommendations included in the report into high, medium, and low priorities. The following list of recommendation priority is based on the feedback received from the Riversdale Community Association and the community at large:

#### High

**7.1.1 Tree Trimming:** That the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, review the landscaping around the northeast entrance of the park and the tennis courts, and implement the appropriate trimming and/or culling to improve site lines into these areas.

**7.3.1 Reassessment of Tennis Courts:** That the Leisure Services Branch and the Community Development Branch, Community Services Department and the Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department meet with the Riversdale Community Association to discuss alternate uses for the tennis court, with the intent to increase park usage, while meeting the needs and demands of the primary users of Optimist Park.

**7.3.2 Tennis Court Fencing:** That the Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, remove a portion or all of the fencing surrounding the tennis courts to decrease movement predictors in the area and improve the appearance of the park, while maintaining the function of the tennis court surface.



**Medium**

**7.1.2 Industrial Lands North of Optimist Park:** That Fire and Protective Services advise property owners of the vacant industrial lands north of Optimist Park to clear or trim overgrown trees, bushes, and grass to eliminate potential hiding spots and improve the appearance of the properties.

**7.1.3 Land Use Adjacent to Optimist Park:** That the Planning and Development Branch, Community Services Department, send a letter to property owners of the mixed use properties adjacent to Optimist Park that outlines land uses which are complimentary to the park, and identifies existing incentive programs which benefit the development of these lands.

**7.2.1 Optimist Park Sign:** That the Planning and Development Branch, Community Services Department, meet with the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, to discuss and coordinate the installation of a new Optimist Park sign, at the northeast entrance to the park, which displays park rules, emergency contact information, maintenance contact information, and hours of operation; and that the old signage be salvaged and placed at the northwest entrance to the park.

**Low**

**7.4.1 Recreation Unit Signage:** That the Parks Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, install standardized signage on the Recreation Unit in Optimist Park to clearly display the rules and regulations of the park, and essential contact information.

**7.5.1 Optimist Park Recreation Unit:** That the Community Development Branch, Community Services Department, Neighbourhood Planning Section, Planning and Development Branch, and Facilities Branch, Infrastructure Services Department, meet with the Riversdale Community Association to discuss possible opportunities to expand the community programming activities, and more specifically, the recreation unit.

## 9.0 Appendices

### 9.1 CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN: SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES

#### Definition

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) focuses on the relationship of the built environment and the social behaviour that occurs in that built environment. It is an inclusive, collaborative, and interdisciplinary approach to reducing opportunities for crime, improving perceptions of safety, and strengthening community bonds. CPTED principles, which are now widely applied in the United States, Canada, and other Commonwealth countries, stem from the observed phenomenon that certain “cues” in the physical environment can prompt undesirable or crime-related behaviours as well as perceptions of being safe or unsafe in users of that same environment.

CPTED practitioners utilize design, activity, and community involvement to reduced opportunities for crime and reduce users’ fear of crime. CPTED strategies are usually developed jointly by an interdisciplinary team that ensures a balanced approach to problem solving that includes the community in all aspects of the process.

#### CPTED Principles

The principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design are divided into categories commonly known as “First Generation”, “First Generation Advanced”, and “Second Generation”. First Generation and First Generation Advanced principles focus mainly on addressing the physical environment, while Second Generation principles focus on how people interact with each other in that physical environment and have a distinctive social change theme. A brief explanation of each CPTED principle follows.

- **Natural Surveillance:** the concept of putting “eyes on the street”, making a place unattractive for potential illegitimate behaviour. Street design, landscaping, lighting and site design (i.e. neighbourhood layout) all influence the potential for natural surveillance.
- **Access Control:** controlling who goes in and out of a neighbourhood, park, building, etc. Access control includes creating a sense of “turf”, for legitimate users, while focusing on formal and informal entry and exit points.
- **Image:** the appearance of a place and how this is instrumental in creating a sense of place or territory for legitimate users of the space. A place that does not appear to be maintained or cared for may indicate to criminals that the place will not be defended and criminal activity in the area will be tolerated.
- **Territoriality:** the concept of creating and fostering places that are adopted by the legitimate users of the space (i.e. take ownership); making it less likely for people who do not belong to engage in criminal or nuisance behaviour at that location.

- **Conflicting User Groups:** refers to instances where different user groups may conflict (e.g. a school near industrial development or a seniors centre near a nightclub). Careful consideration of compatible land uses can minimize potential conflicts between groups.
- **Activity Support:** the concept of filling an area with legitimate users (by facilitating or directly scheduling activities or events) so potential offenders cannot offend with impunity. Places and facilities that are underused can become locations with the potential for criminal activity.
- **Crime Generators:** activity nodes that may generate crime. For example, a 24 hour convenience or liquor stores may not be a problem in itself but where it is located in the community may cause conflict or unforeseen secondary activity. The location of some land uses is critical to ensuring an activity does not increase the opportunities for crime to occur or reduce users' and resident's perceptions of their safety in the area.
- **Land Use Mix:** the concept that diversity in land uses can be a contributor or detractor for crime opportunities. Separating land uses (i.e. residential) from each other can create places that are unused during certain times of the day.
- **Movement Predictors:** force people, especially pedestrians and cyclists, along a particular route or path, without providing obvious alternative escape routes or strategies for safety. Potential attackers can predict where persons will end up once they are on a certain path (e.g. a pedestrian tunnel or walkway).
- **Displacement:** can be positive or negative so it is critical to understand how crime may move in time or space and what the impact may be. In general, the displacement that must be considered is:
  - Negative displacement – crime movement makes things worse;
  - Diffusion of benefits – displacement can reduce the overall number of crimes more widely than expected;
  - Positive displacement – opportunities for crime are intentionally displaced which minimizes the impact of the crime.
- **Cohesion:** the supportive relationships and interactions between all users of a place to support and maintain a sense of safety. Though not a specific urban design function, design can enhance the opportunity for positive social cohesion by providing physical places where this can occur, such as activity rooms, park gazebos, or multi-purpose rooms in schools and community centers. In some cases property owners or building managers can provide opportunities for social programming. This will increase the ability of local residents or users of a space to positively address issues as they arise.
- **Connectivity:** refers to the social and physical interactions and relationships external to the site itself. It recognizes that any given place should not operate in isolation from surrounding neighbourhoods and/or areas. Features such as walkways and roadways connecting a particular land use to the surrounding neighbourhoods and/or areas can

accomplish this. Features such as centrally located community centers or program offices can also encourage activities to enhance this.

- **Capacity:** the ability for any given space or neighbourhood to support its intended use. For example, excessive quantities of similar land uses in too small an area, such as abandoned buildings or bars, can create opportunities for crime. When a place is functioning either over or under capacity, it can be detrimental to neighbourhood safety.
- **Culture:** the overall makeup and expression of the users of a place. Also known as “placemaking”, it involves artistic, musical, sports, or other local cultural events to bring people together in time and purpose. Physical designs that can encourage this include public multi-purpose facilities, sports facilities, and areas that local artists and musicians might use. Community memorials, public murals, and other cultural features also enhance this. These features create a unique context of the environment and help determine the design principles and policies that best support the well being of all user groups and contribute to their cohesiveness.

CPTED principles are generally considered and utilized in combination with one another. However, for any CPTED strategy to be successful, the nature of the crime or safety-related issue must be carefully and accurately defined. It is important to understand the context within which crime occurs in an area to be able to implement appropriate solutions.

### **Risk Assessment**

Risk Assessments combine scientific field research and analytical methods with the practical experience of crime prevention practitioners and the perception of community members; a combination of quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (perception) approaches. In a Risk Assessment, a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative data is collected and considered to allow for an accurate portrayal of issues. This in turn allows for a much more effective solution or action plan to be developed. A Risk Assessment is critical to the success of a CPTED strategy because, in addition to “obvious” problems, there are often less obvious or underlying problems that need to be identified and addressed.

Data collection such as crime statistics, resident surveys, user surveys, and population demographics are all part of the quantitative picture. This information aids in understanding the context around the issue and the opportunities for crime. The other part of the picture, the qualitative, deals with the perceptions that people have about their safety. Safety Audits, perception and intercept surveys (of actual users), and site inspections all add to the understanding of what environmental cues the area is presenting and how these affect people’s “feelings” of safety.

Without this larger picture, the appropriate solutions to a problem may not all be identified. Solutions will be generated by virtue of the discussion around the issue, in this case identifying a new use for an existing underutilized area, but the best solution may not be generated or solutions chosen may, on the surface, look effective but may create another problem entirely.

### **The Safety Audit and CPTED Review**

A Safety Audit is a process that allows the regular users of an area to identify places that make them feel unsafe. Area residents are considered the “local experts” because they are the most familiar with the area and what happens on a day-to-day basis. Change then becomes the responsibility of a group of people who care about the community and will include audit participants, the community as a whole and local government. Residents become directly involved in making their community safer through this process.

The goal of a Safety Audit is to identify and to improve an environment. Reduced opportunities for crime and improved perceptions of crime in the area improve everyone’s personal safety. Depending on the circumstances, residents, local business, and local government should work together to find solutions to safety problems in the community using the audit results as one tool, or input, in the overall Risk Assessment of the area. A Safety Audit is a highly flexible process and can be easily adapted to meet the needs of the community. In Saskatoon, Safety Audits based on CPTED principles have now been applied in a number of settings including parks, streets, and buildings.

A Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Review is similar to a Safety Audit in that it reviews an area of concern using the principles of CPTED, but has less public participation. It can be used when the area is small, timelines are short, or public participation is not possible or very difficult. It is also effective if there is specialized knowledge needed to assess the site or the potential solutions.

**9.2 SAFETY AUDIT FORM**

**Safety Audit**

Neighbourhood: \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Conditions (e.g. sunny, rainy, cloudy, full moon, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
Temperature: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: (Please circle the age range that applies to you)

10-14	40-44	70-74
15-19	45-49	75-79
20-24	50-54	80-84
25-29	55-59	85-89
30-34	60-64	90-94
35-39	65-69	95+

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation (Community Association, Merchant, Resident, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL IMPRESSIONS**

1. Your gut reactions: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What five words best describe the place? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**LIGHTING**

3. Impression of lighting:

- |                                    |                                     |                                       |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor       | <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good      | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good  |                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too dark  | <input type="checkbox"/> Too bright |                                       |

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4. Is the lighting even?  yes       no      why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many lights are out? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What proportion of lights are out? (e.g. Maybe only two bulbs on the block you are on are burned out, but if there are only three bulbs to start with, then a more powerful was to say this is that two-thirds of the lights are out) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Can you identify a face 25 paces away? (walk 25 paces from the group to check)

yes       no

8. Do you know where/whom to call if lights are out, broken, not yet turned on, etc.?

yes       no

9. Is the lighting obscured by trees or bushes?

yes       no      where? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How well does the lighting illuminate the following:

	Very poor					Very well	location
	1	2	3	4	5		
Sidewalks	1	2	3	4	5		
Bus stops	1	2	3	4	5		
Seating	1	2	3	4	5		
Signs	1	2	3	4	5		
Entrances	1	2	3	4	5		
Exits	1	2	3	4	5		
Alleys	1	2	3	4	5		
Walkways	1	2	3	4	5		
Phone booths	1	2	3	4	5		
(other)	1	2	3	4	5		
	1	2	3	4	5		

If poor or very poor, please describe why: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNAGE**

11. Are there location or street signs nearby that can help identify where you are?

- yes       no

12. Are there signs that show you where to get emergency assistance if needed?

- yes       no

13. Are there signs that direct you to wheelchair access?

- yes       no

14. Do exit doors identify where they exit to?

- yes       no

15. Is there information posted describing the hours the building or site is legitimately open?

- yes       no

16. Impression of overall signage:

- Very poor       Poor       Satisfactory  
 Good       Very good

17. What signs should be added and where? (if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SIGHTLINES**

18. Can you clearly see what's up ahead?    yes       no

19. If no, why not?

- Bushes       Fences       hill  
 Other      \_\_\_\_\_

20. Are there places someone could be hiding?    yes       no

21. If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_



22. What would make it easier to see?

E.g.:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angled corners | <input type="checkbox"/> Security mirrors               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trimmed bushes | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicles moved                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snow cleared   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transparent building materials |

Other comments:

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***ISOLATION – EYE DISTANCE***

23. At the time of your audit, does the area feel isolated?  yes  no

24. How many people are likely to be around?

▪ In the early morning:

- None  A few  Several  many

▪ During the day:

- None  A few  Several  many

▪ In the evening:

- None  A few  Several  many

▪ Late at night (after 10pm):

- None  A few  Several  many

25. Is it easy to predict when people will be around?

- yes  no

26. Is there a monitor or surveillance system?  yes  no  not sure

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***ISOLATION – EAR DISTANCE***

27. Are there any areas where a call for help could not be heard?

yes  no  don't know

28. How far away is the nearest emergency service such as an alarm, security personnel, crisis telephone? \_\_\_\_\_  don't know

29. Can you see a telephone or a sign directing you to emergency assistance?

yes  no

30. Is the area patrolled?  yes  no  don't know

31. If yes, how frequently?

every hour  once per afternoon/evening  don't know

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

***MOVEMENT PREDICTORS*** (a predictable or unchangeable route or path)

32. How easy is it to predict a person's movements (e.g., their route)?

very easy  somewhat obvious  no way of knowing

33. Is there always an alternative well-lit and frequently travelled route or path available?

yes  no  don't know

34. Can you tell what is at the other end of paths, tunnels, or walkways in this area?

yes  no

35. Are there corners, alcoves, or bushes where someone could hide and wait for you?

yes  no where? \_\_\_\_\_

36. Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***POSSIBLE ENTRAPMENT SITES***

37. Are there small, confined areas where you would be hidden from view?

- between garbage bins                       unlocked equipment or utility shed  
 alley or laneway     recessed doorway     construction site  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***ESCAPE ROUTES***

38. How easy would it be for an offender to disappear?

- very easy                       quite easy                       not very easy

39. Is there more than one exit from the lane/stree/walkway?

- yes                       no                       don't know

40. If yes, please describe. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***NEARBY LAND USES***

41. What is the surrounding or nearby land used for (list all that apply)?

- stores                       offices                       restaurants  
 residential houses or streets                       factories  
 busy traffic                       heavily treed/wooded areas  
 riverbank                       parking lots                       campus buildings  
 don't know                      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

42. Can you identify who owns or maintains nearby land?     yes                       no

43. Impressions of nearby land uses:

- Very poor                       Poor                       Satisfactory  
 Good                       Very good

***MAINTENANCE***

44. Impressions of maintenance:

- Very poor                       Poor                       Satisfactory  
 Good                       Very good

45. Is there a lot of litter lying around?

- yes                       no

46. Do you know to whom maintenance concerns should be reported?

- yes                       no

47. From your experience, how long do repairs generally take?

- 1 day                       Within 1 week                       1 – 3 weeks  
 More than 3 weeks                       Don't know

***FACTORS THAT MAKE THE PLACE MORE HUMAN***

48. Does this area feel cared for?

- yes                       no

49. Does this area feel abandoned?

- yes                       no

50. Is there graffiti vandalism on the walls?

- yes                       no

51. In your opinion, are there racist or sexist slogans/ signs/ images on the walls?

- yes                       no

52. Are there signs of vandalism?

- yes       no

53. Would other materials, tones, textures or colours improve your sense of safety?

- yes       no

54. Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***OVERALL DESIGN***

55. Impressions of overall design of this area:

- Very poor       Poor       Satisfactory  
 Good       Very good

56. If you weren't familiar with this area, would it be easy to find your way around?

- yes       no

57. Does the place "make sense"?  yes       no

58. Is the place too spread out?  yes       no

59. Are there a confusing number of levels?  yes       no

60. Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***IMPROVEMENTS***

61. What improvements would you like to see?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

62. Do you have any specific recommendations?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_