

# Community Observation Results

St. Paul, Alberta



COMMUNITY HEALTH &  
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



Centre for  
Health Promotion  
S T U D I E S



SCHOOL OF  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# Presentation Outline

- What is the Built Environment
- What we did
- Why we did what we did
- What we found
- How this information can help your community



# **The Built Environment Includes...**

# Community Design Factors





# Land Uses





# Transportation Options





# Activity and Eating Options





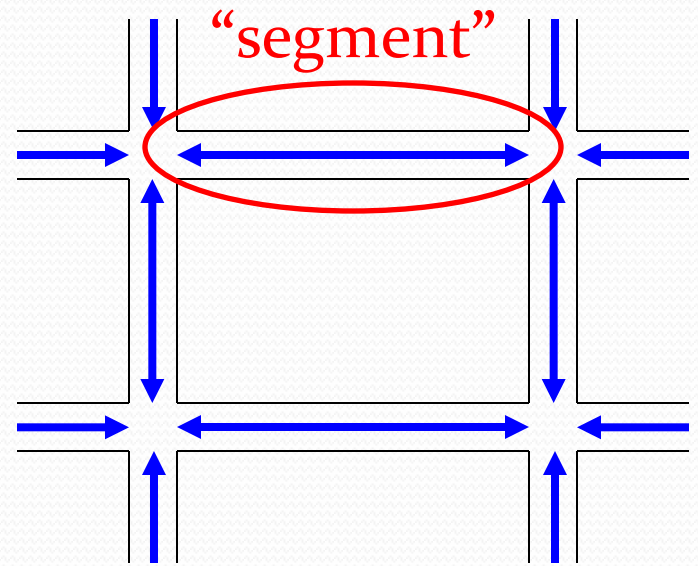
# Aesthetics





# What We Did (September, 2008)

- An observer walked every street in St. Paul.
- The observer stopped at 294 locations.
- These locations represent every “segment” of street between two intersections.
- Each segment was rated on 230 characteristics of the built environment.



# CHBE Team's Core Belief

- The community built environment (BE):
  - influences our health-related decisions, and
  - presents both opportunities and barriers.
- Changes in the BE can have a positive effect on individual and community health.
- The observation data contributes to understanding the BE so that potential changes can be made.



# What We Found

- Results from the St. Paul observation are presented here.
- The 230 characteristics have been organized into 6 themes.
- Within each of the themes, sub-themes have been created of features that are normally found together on the same segment.
  - 21 sub-themes in total

# Themes and their Sub-Themes

## Attractiveness

Attractiveness - Retail

Attractiveness - Park

Attractiveness - Street

Attractiveness - Older Area

## Safety from Crime

Crime Safety - Indicator Aesthetics

Crime Safety - Indicator Services

Crime Safety - Indicator Destinations

## Traffic Safety

Traffic Safety - Crossing

Traffic Safety - Walking

Traffic Safety - Traffic Calming

Traffic Safety - Mid-Block Crosswalk

## Diversity of Destinations

Diversity of Destinations - Retail

Diversity of Destinations - Civic

Diversity of Destinations - Fitness

Diversity of Destinations - Schools

Diversity of Destinations - Industrial

## Density

Residential Density

Building Stories

## Pedestrian Accessibility

Pedestrian Access - Sidewalks

Pedestrian Access - Freeways

Pedestrian Access - Barriers



# Results Interpretation

- A street or area is more walkable when it has more features supportive of walking or other forms of physical activity.
- On the maps, segments are coloured to reflect the quality of the theme or feature relative to the rest of the segments in the community.
- More than one segment can be in close proximity to a given physical feature (e.g., a school). Thus, interpretation of the results relates to understanding the proximity of segments to features, and not to the total number of the features in the community.

# Results Interpretation

- It is important to note that the comparisons presented here are based only on the differences between segments in St. Paul.
  - For example: If a segment has a low rating for crime safety, this does not necessarily mean the segment is not safe. This simply means that in comparison to the other segments in St. Paul, the segment was observed as being less safe.



# Results

- The following slides provide 20 maps representing each of the sub-themes.
- An additional 26 maps are provided for a selection of the individual features that make up each of the sub-themes.



# **Attractiveness**

Features that enhance the pleasure of walking.



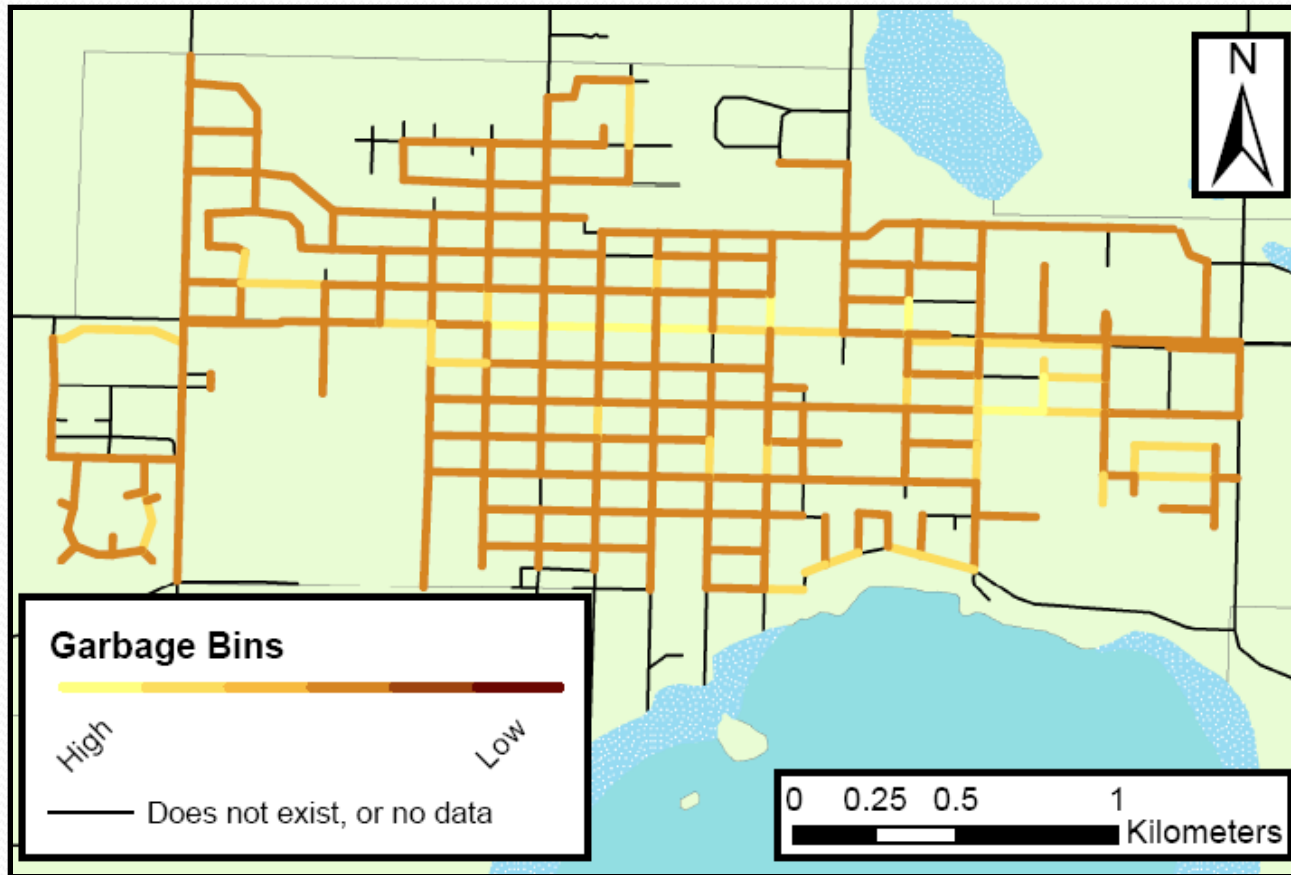
# Attractiveness - Retail

- Garbage Bins
- Newspaper Boxes
- Bus Stops
- Increased Sidewalk Width
- Public Art
- Sidewalk Coverings



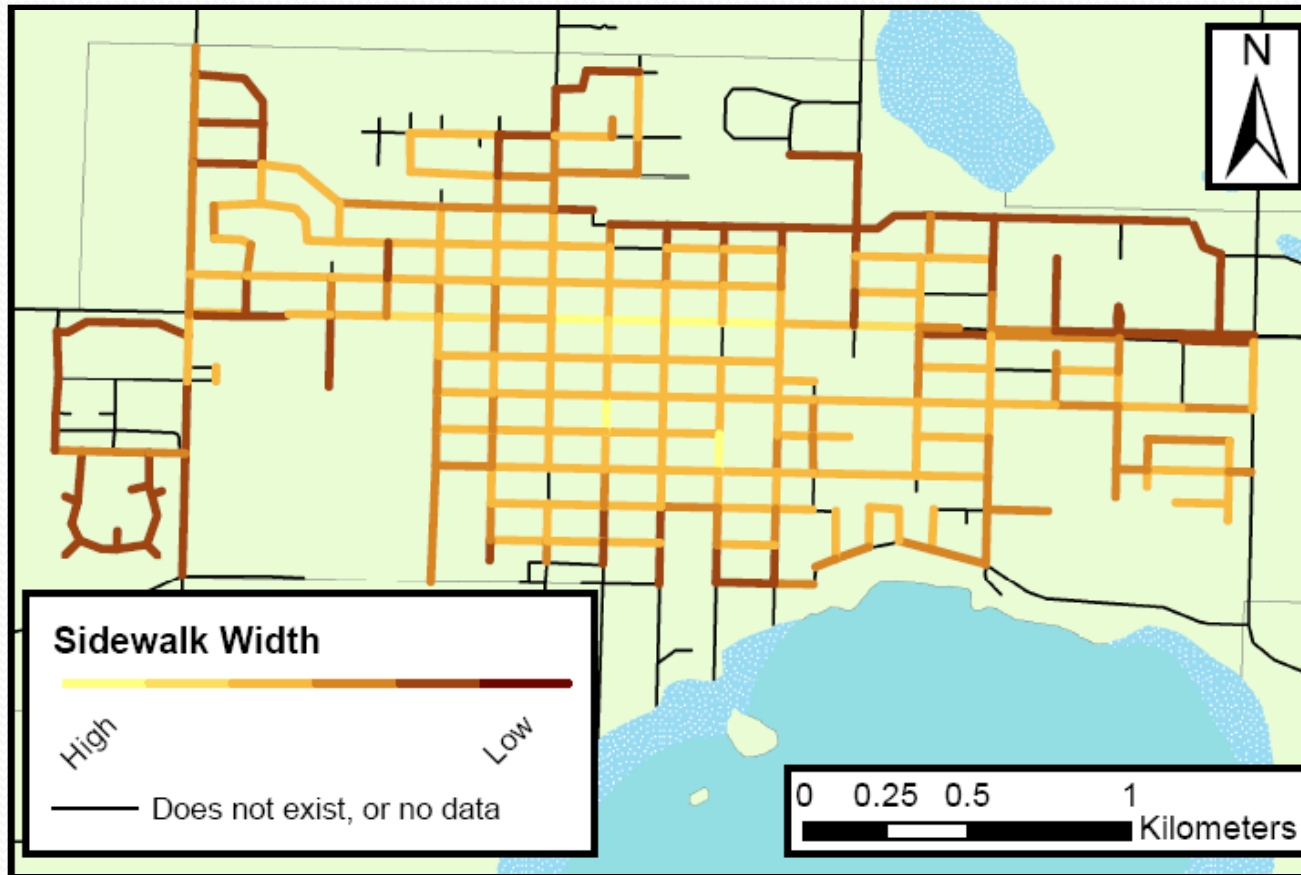
Some features associated with retail locations increase the level of attractiveness.

# Garbage Bins



Presence of garbage bins indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

# Sidewalk Width

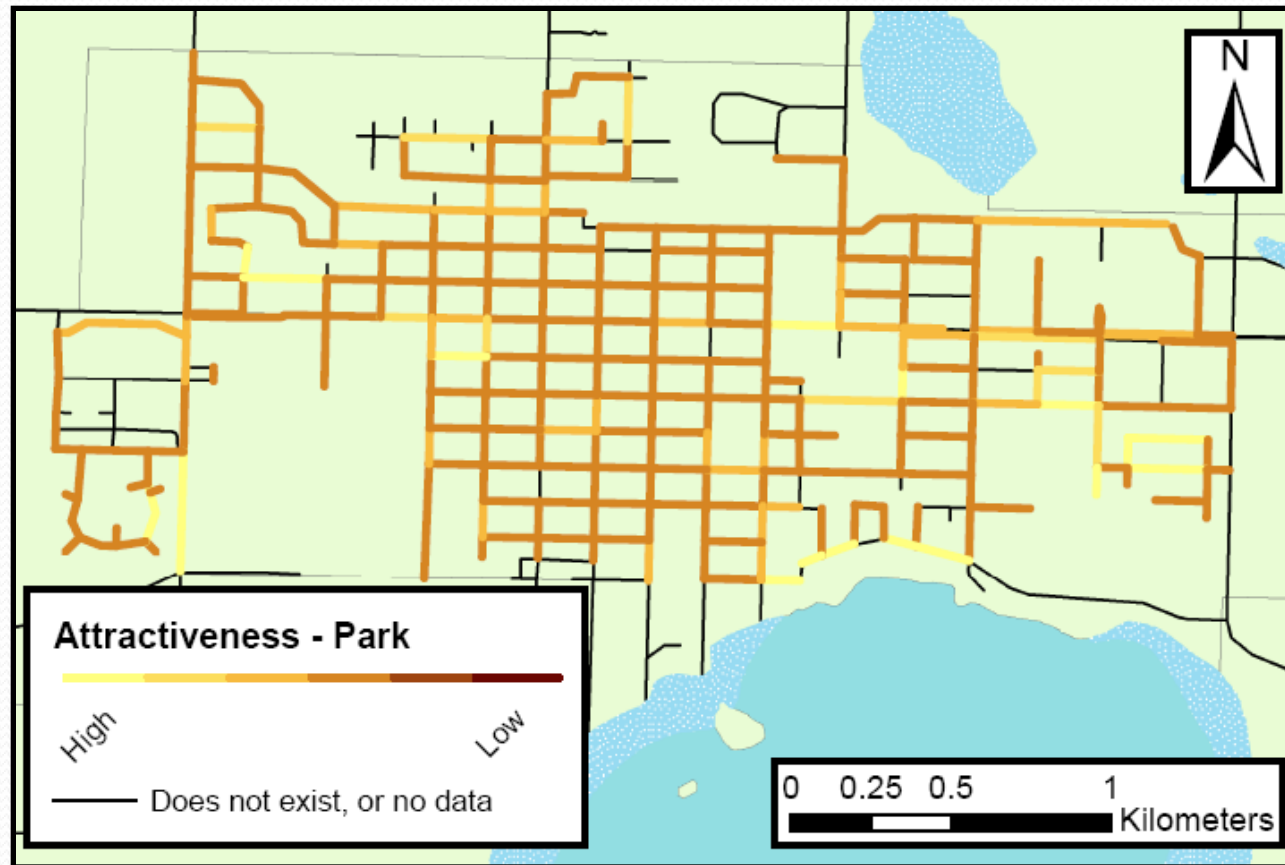


Presence of wider sidewalks indicates a higher level of attractiveness.



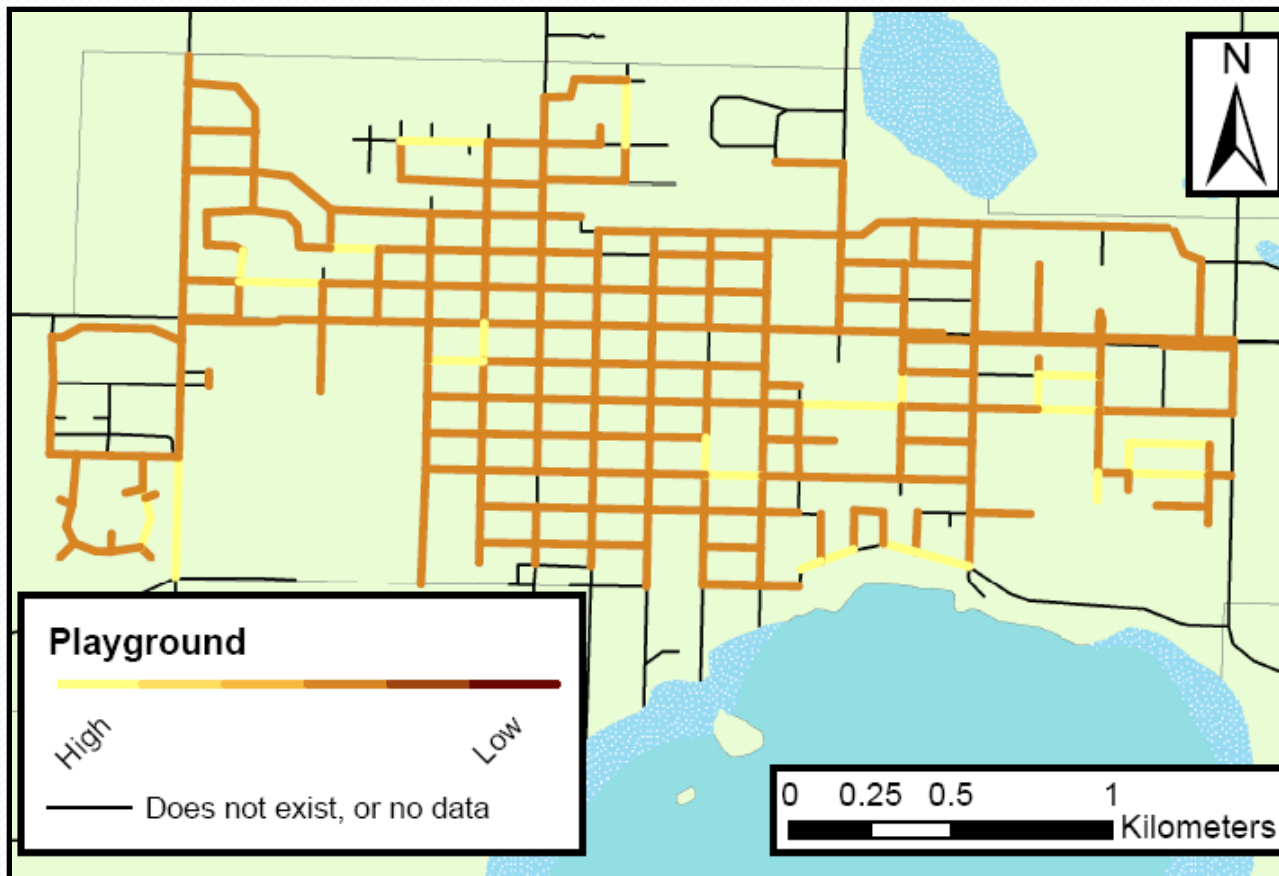
# Attractiveness - Park

- Playground
- Playing Field
- Open Spaces
- Basketball Nets
- Seating Options



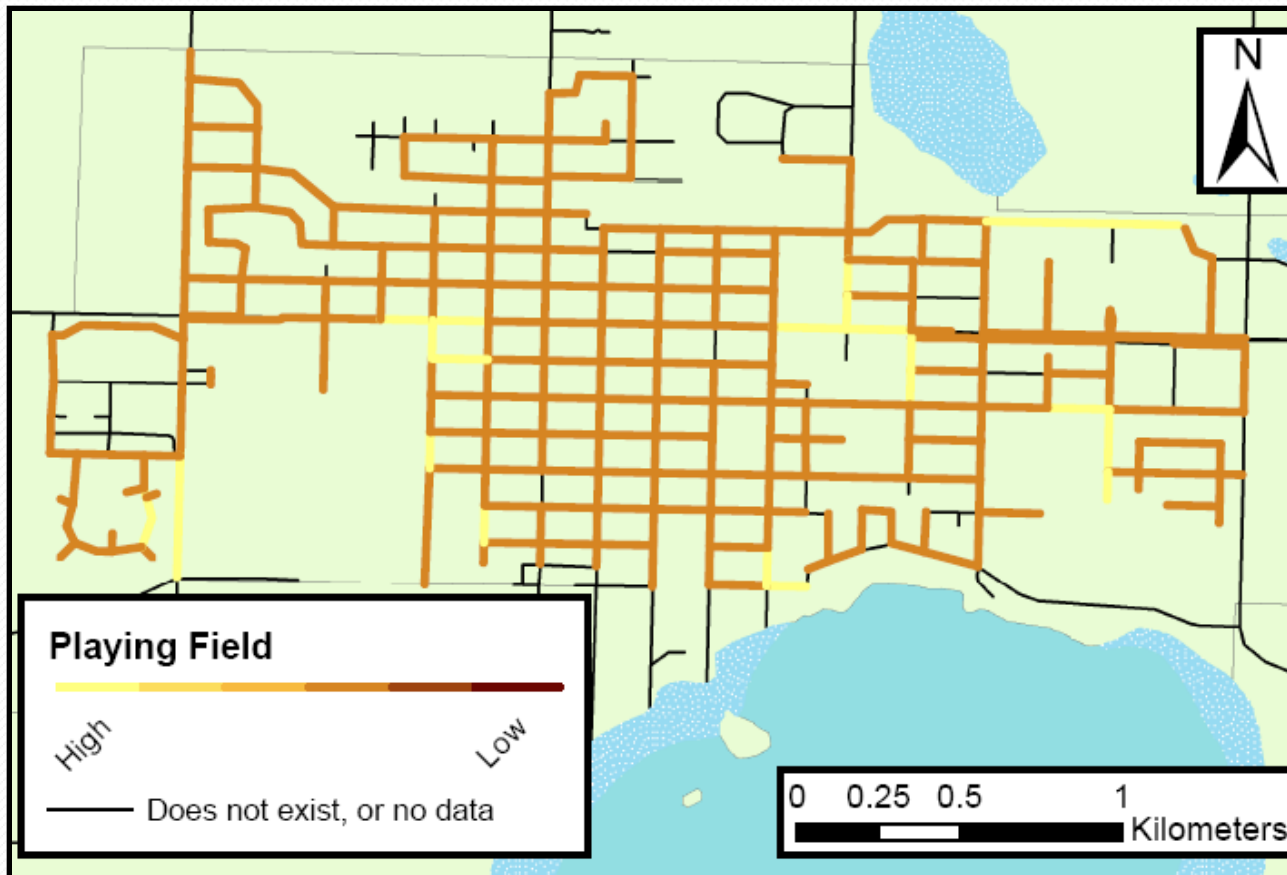
Some features associated with park space increase the level of attractiveness.

# Playgrounds



Presence of playgrounds indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

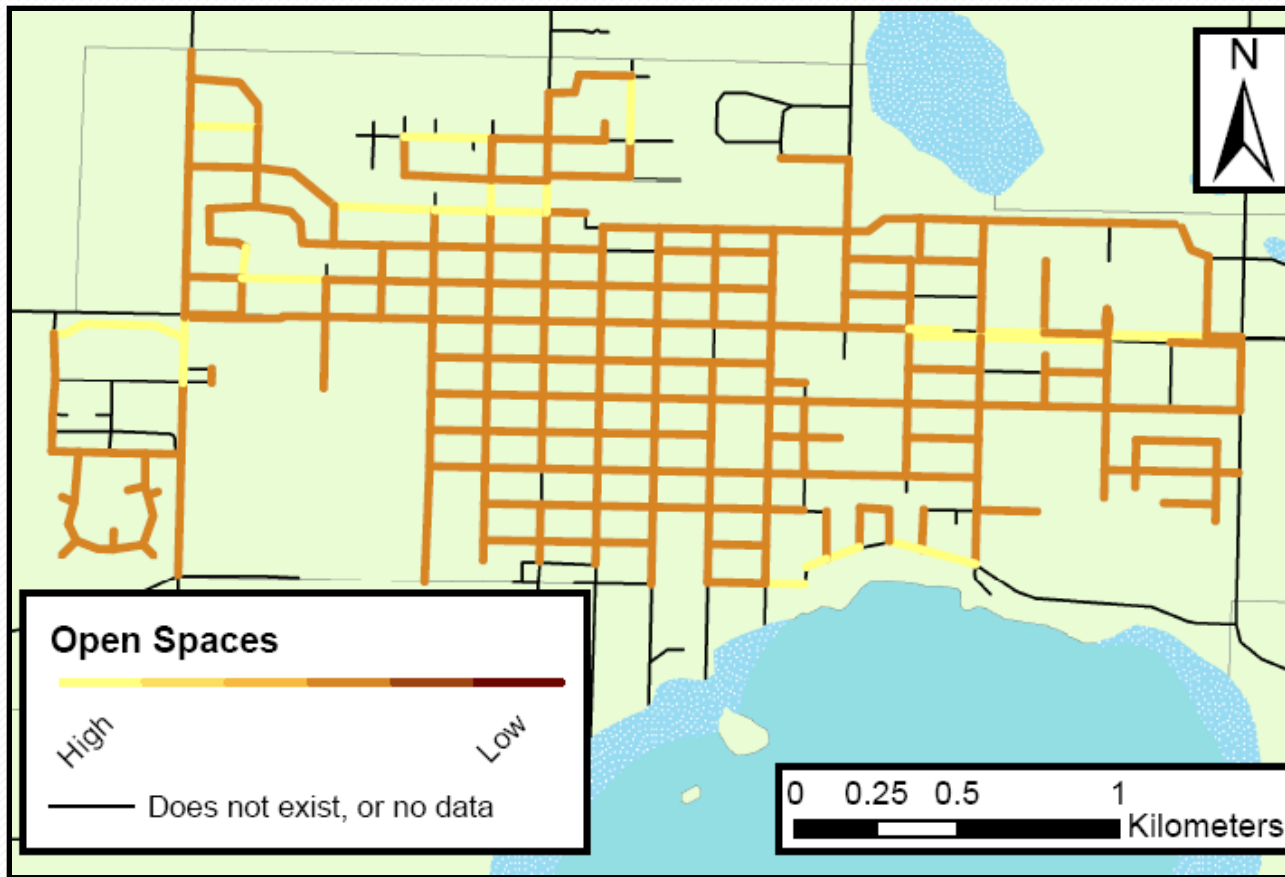
# Playing Field



Presence of playing fields indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

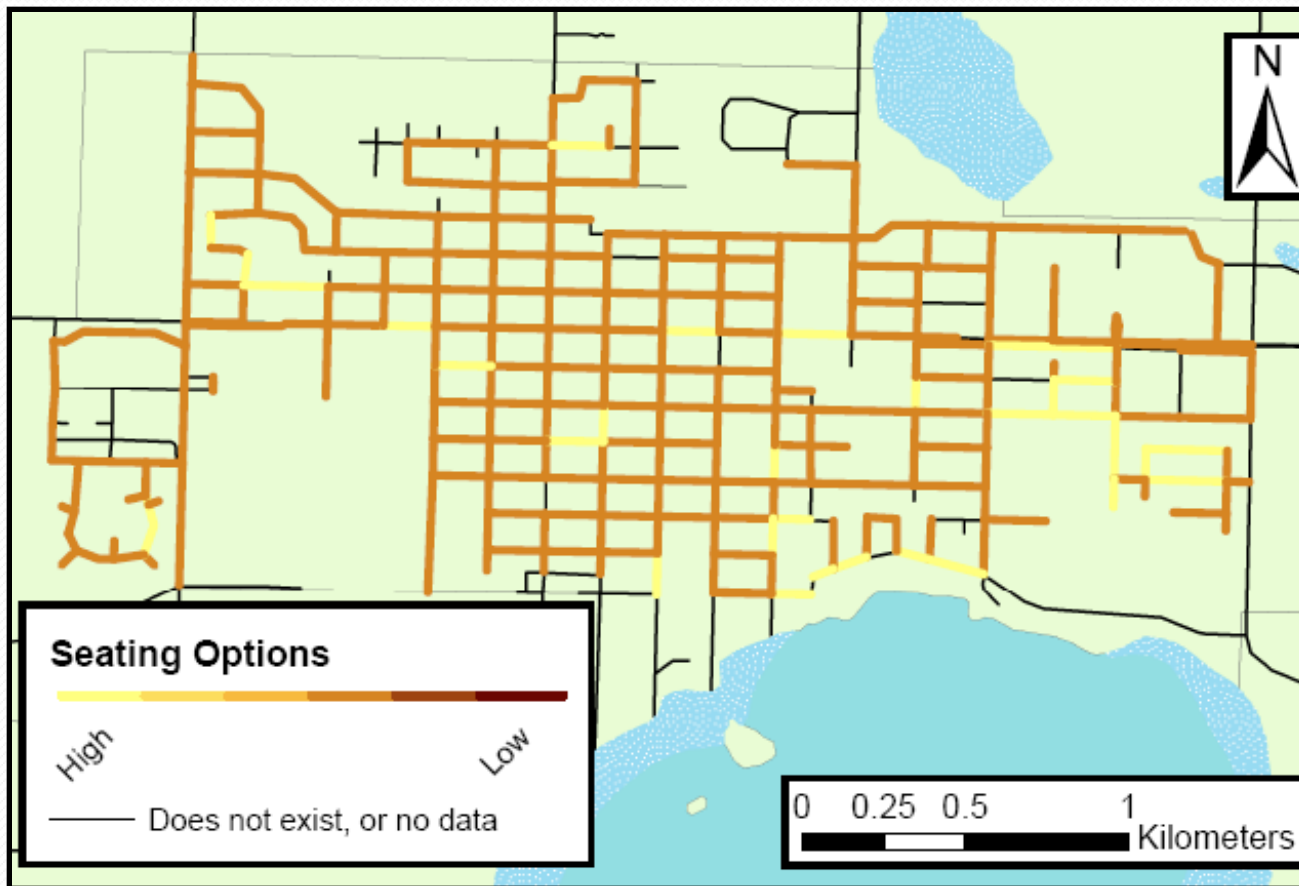


# Open Spaces



Presence of open spaces indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

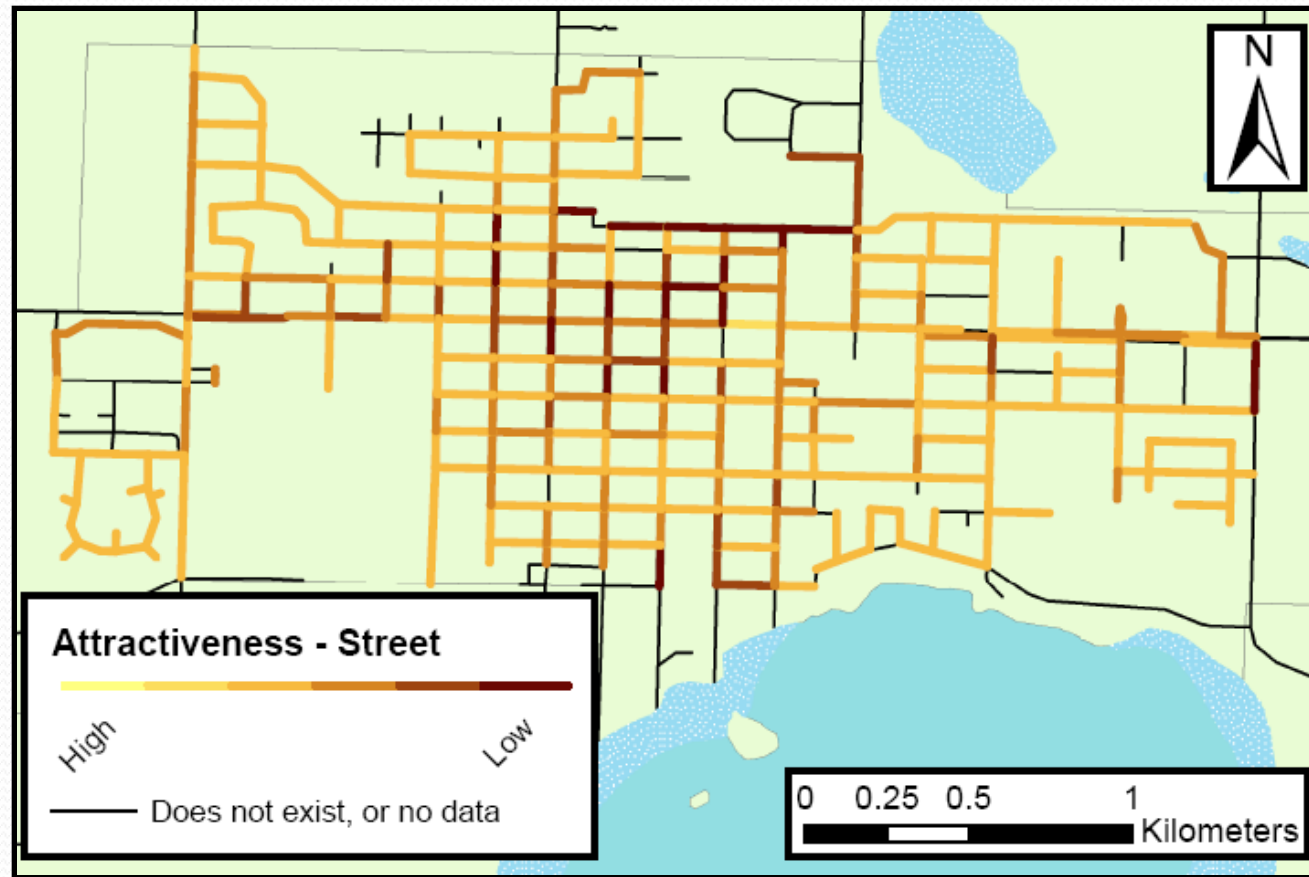
# Seating Options



Presence of seating options indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

# Attractiveness - Street

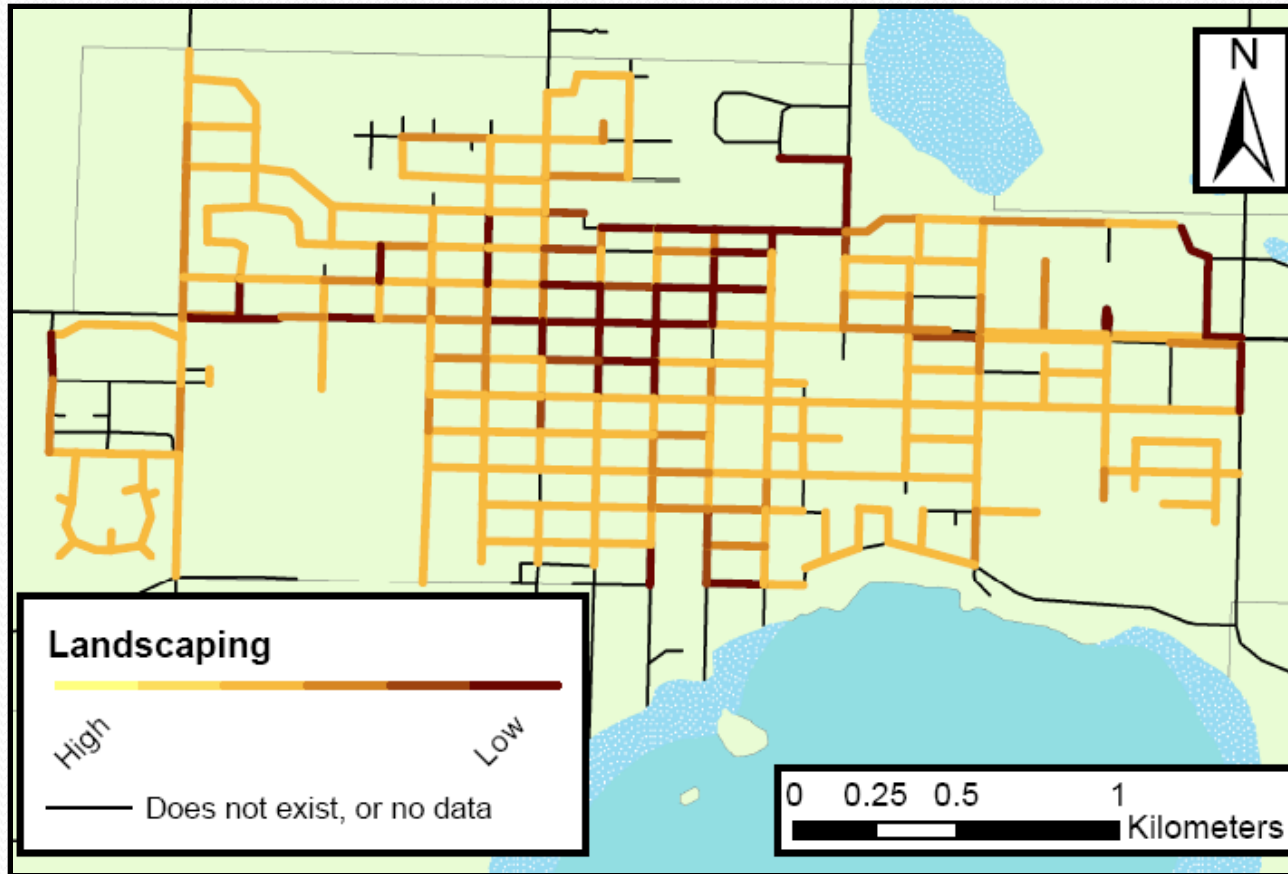
- Landscaping
- Street Flowers
- Absence of Overhead Wires
- Absence of Blank Walls



Some features associated with streetscapes increase the level of attractiveness.

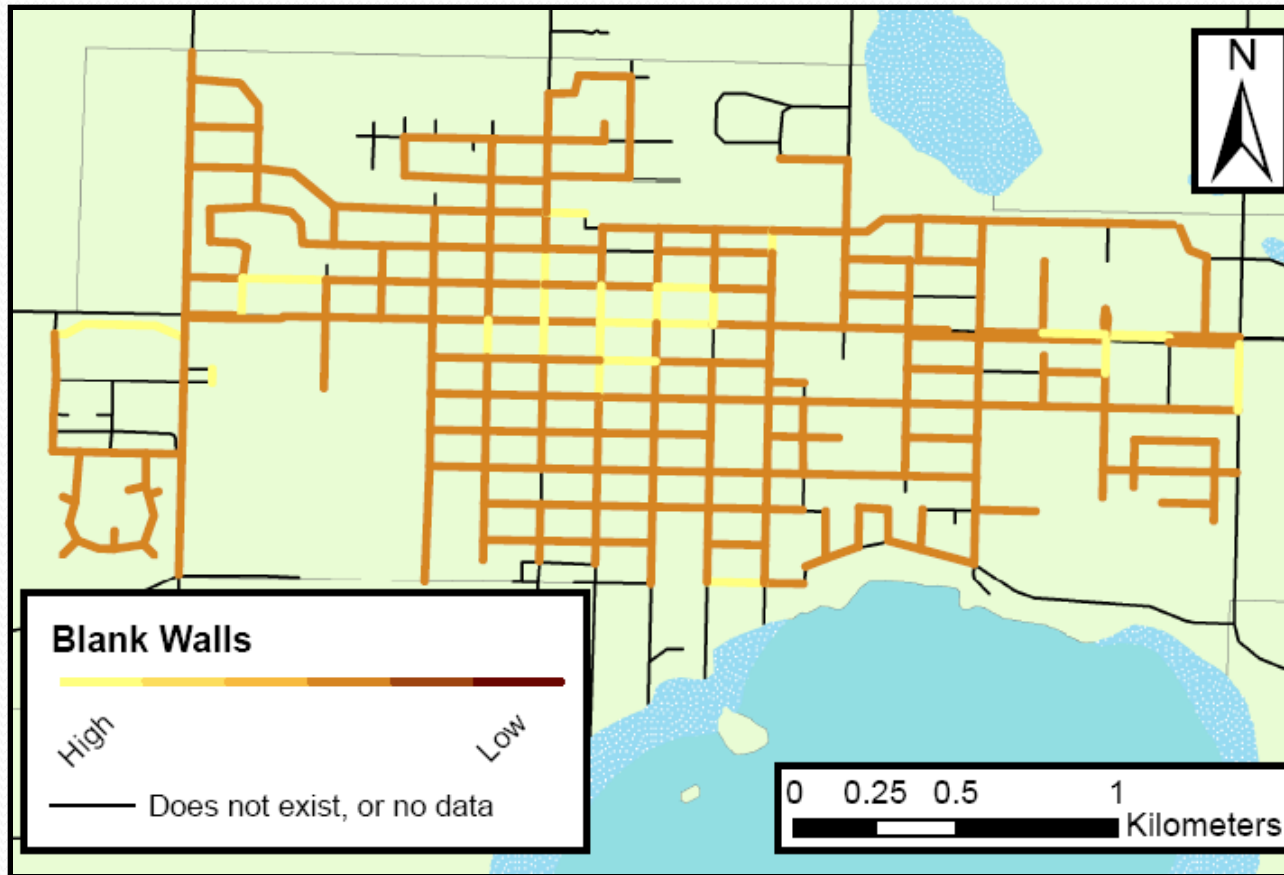


# Landscaping



Presence of nicer landscaping indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

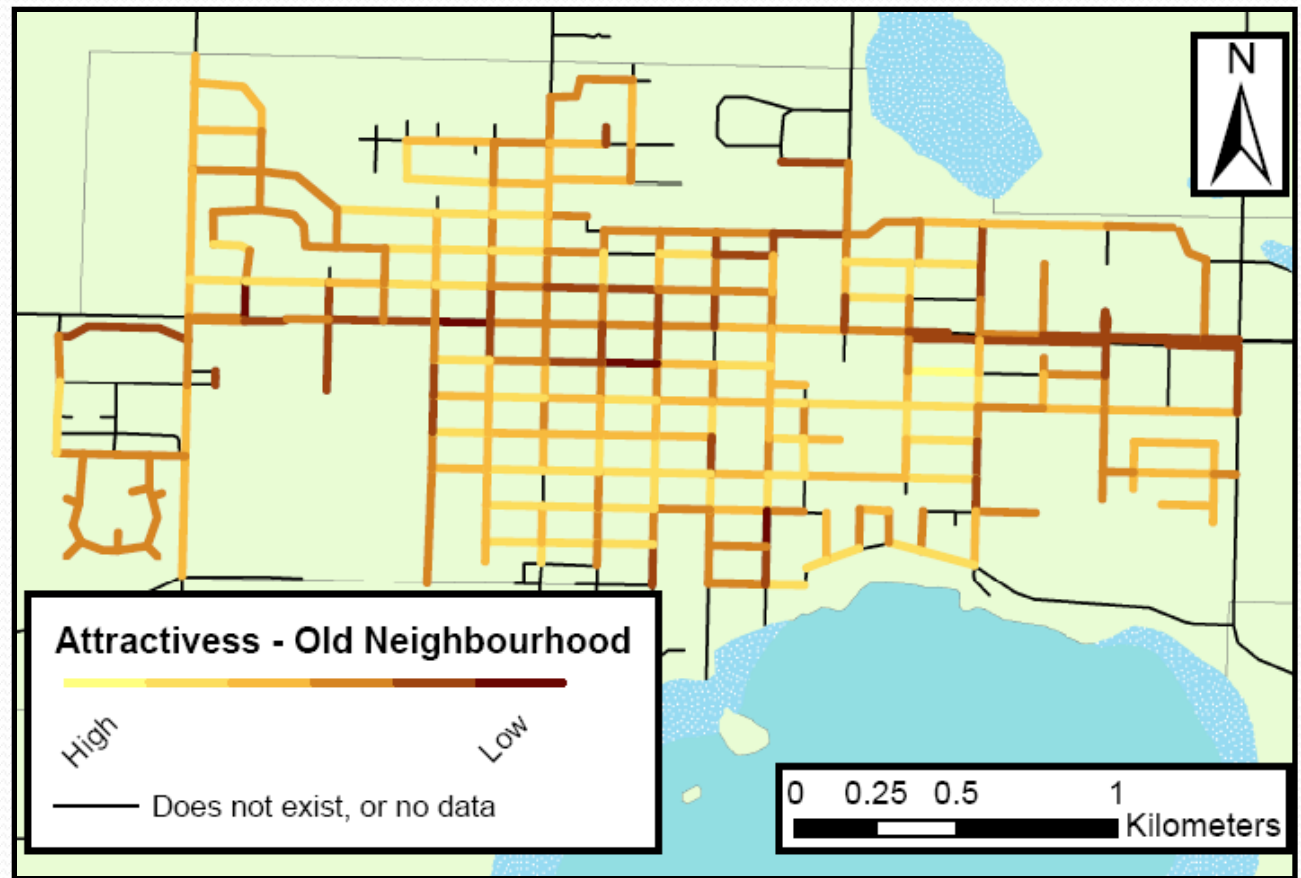
# Blank Walls



Absence of blank walls indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

# Attractiveness – Older Area

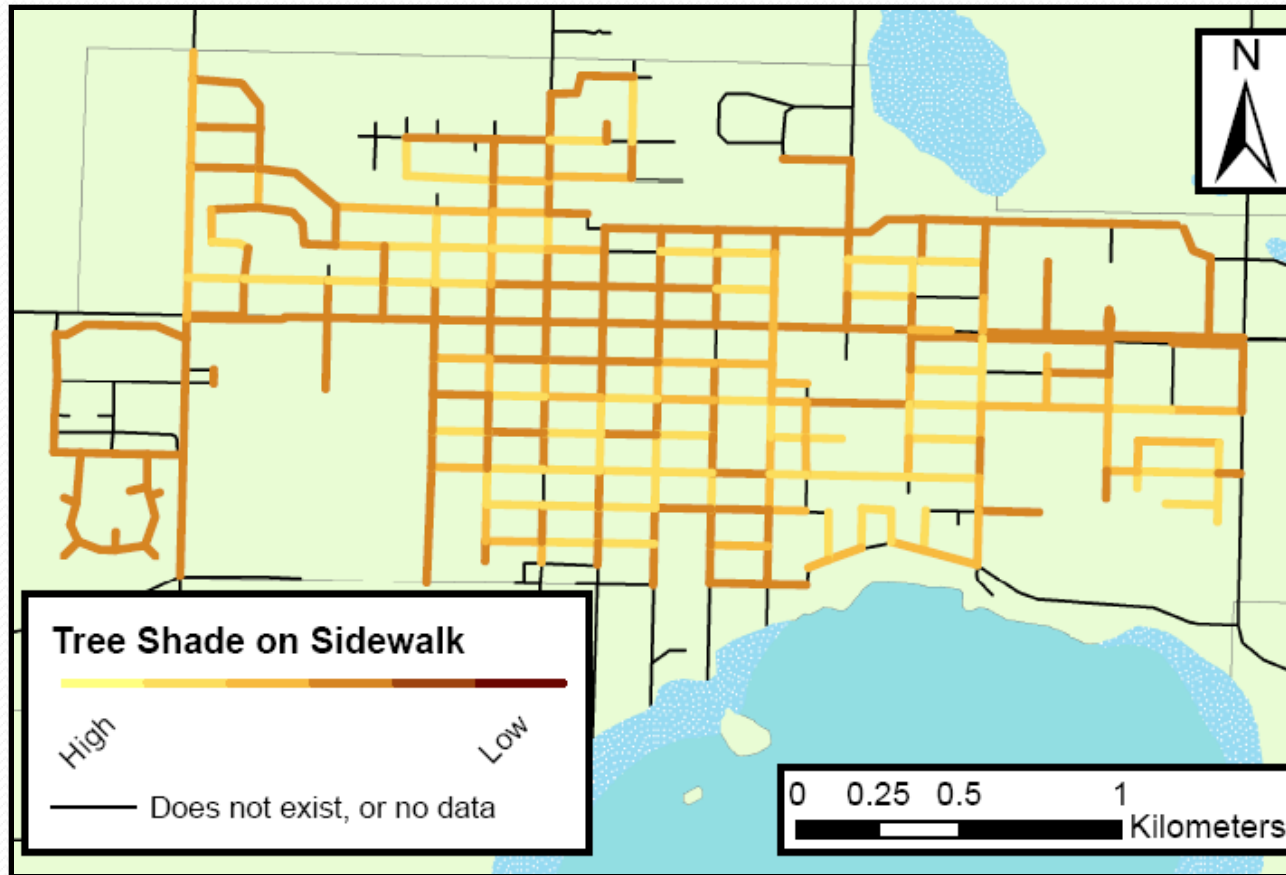
- Garage Visibility
- Verge Quality
- Tree Shade on Sidewalk
- Front Porches
- Off-Street Parking
- Interesting Architecture



Features associated with old neighbourhoods increase the level of attractiveness.

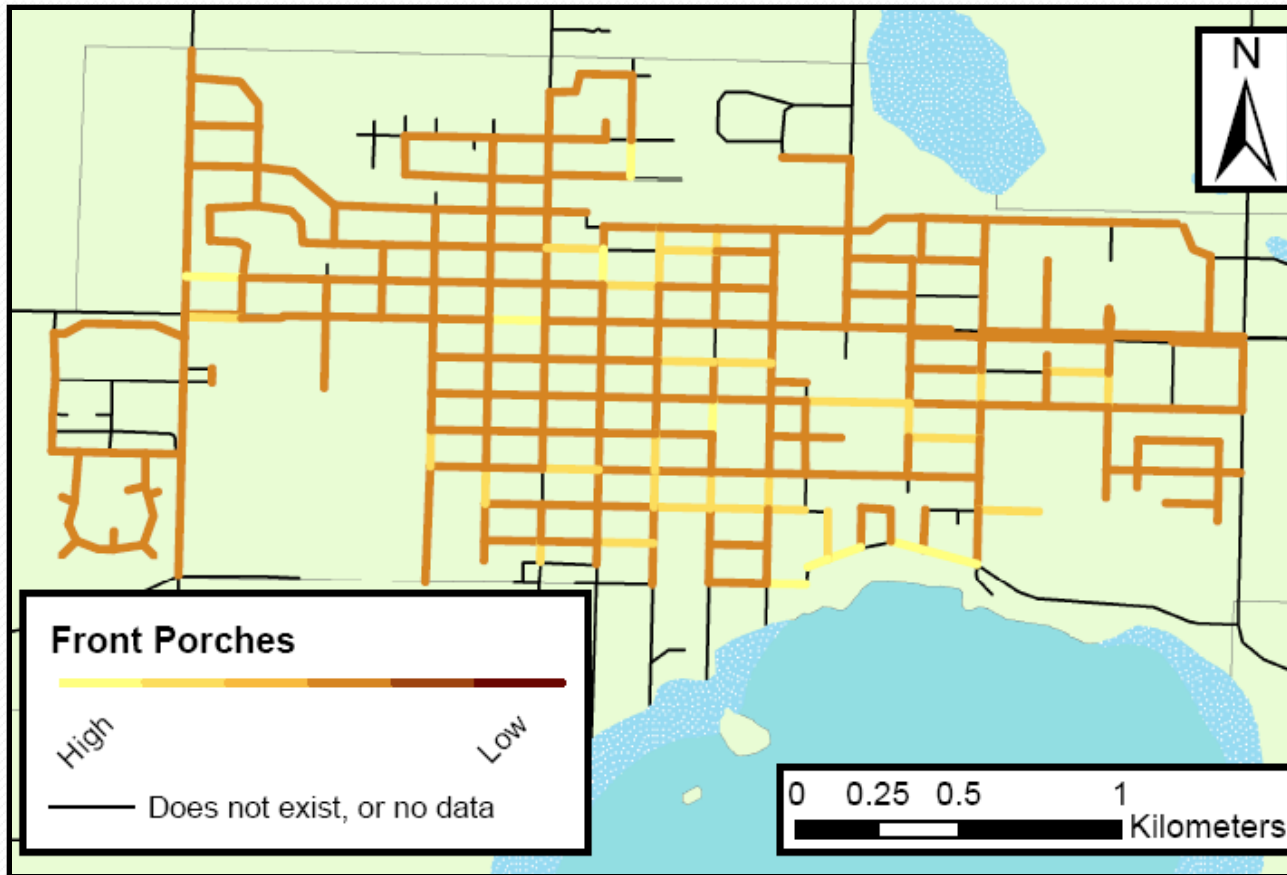


# Tree Shade on Sidewalk



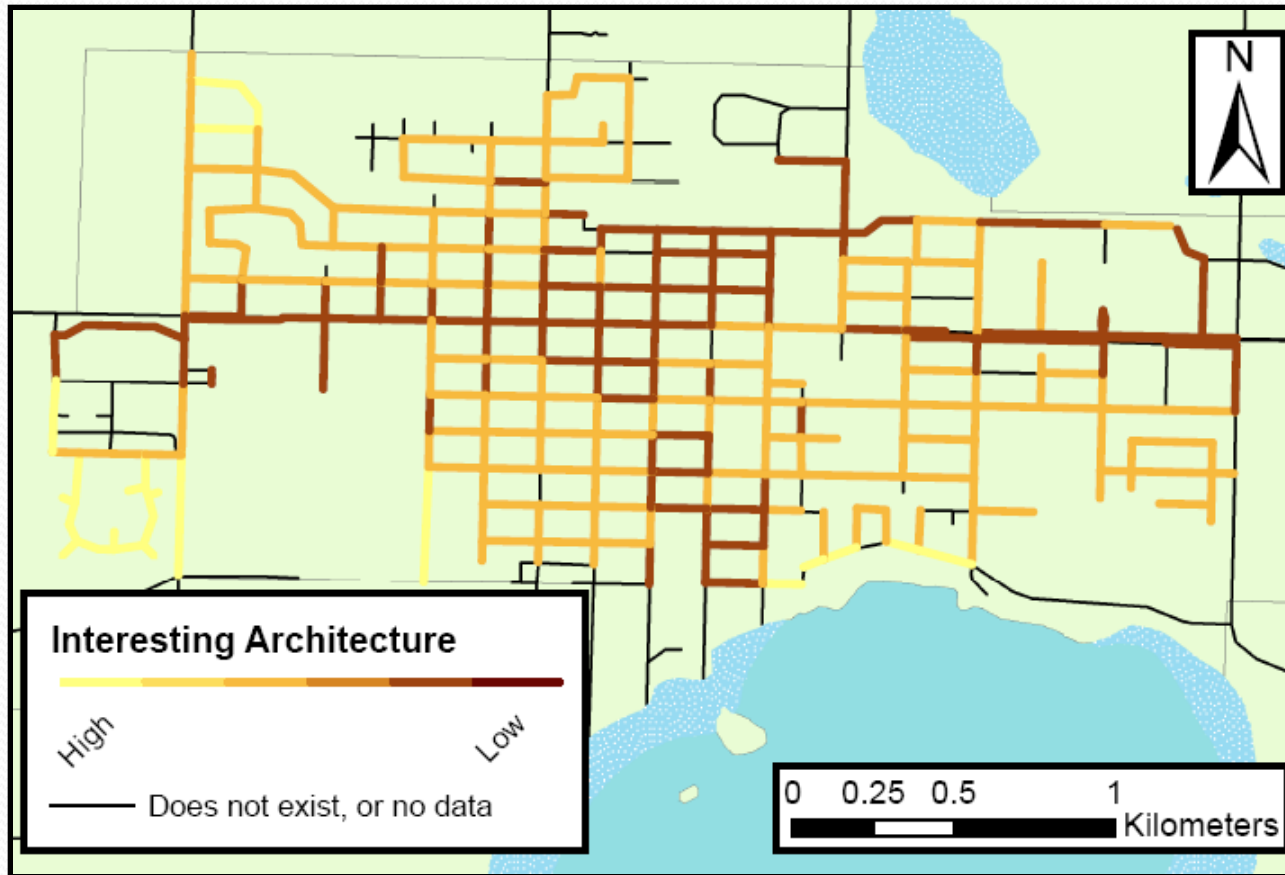
Presence of tree shade indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

# Front Porches



Presence of front porches indicates a higher level of attractiveness.

# Interesting Architecture



Presence of interesting architecture indicates a higher level of attractiveness.



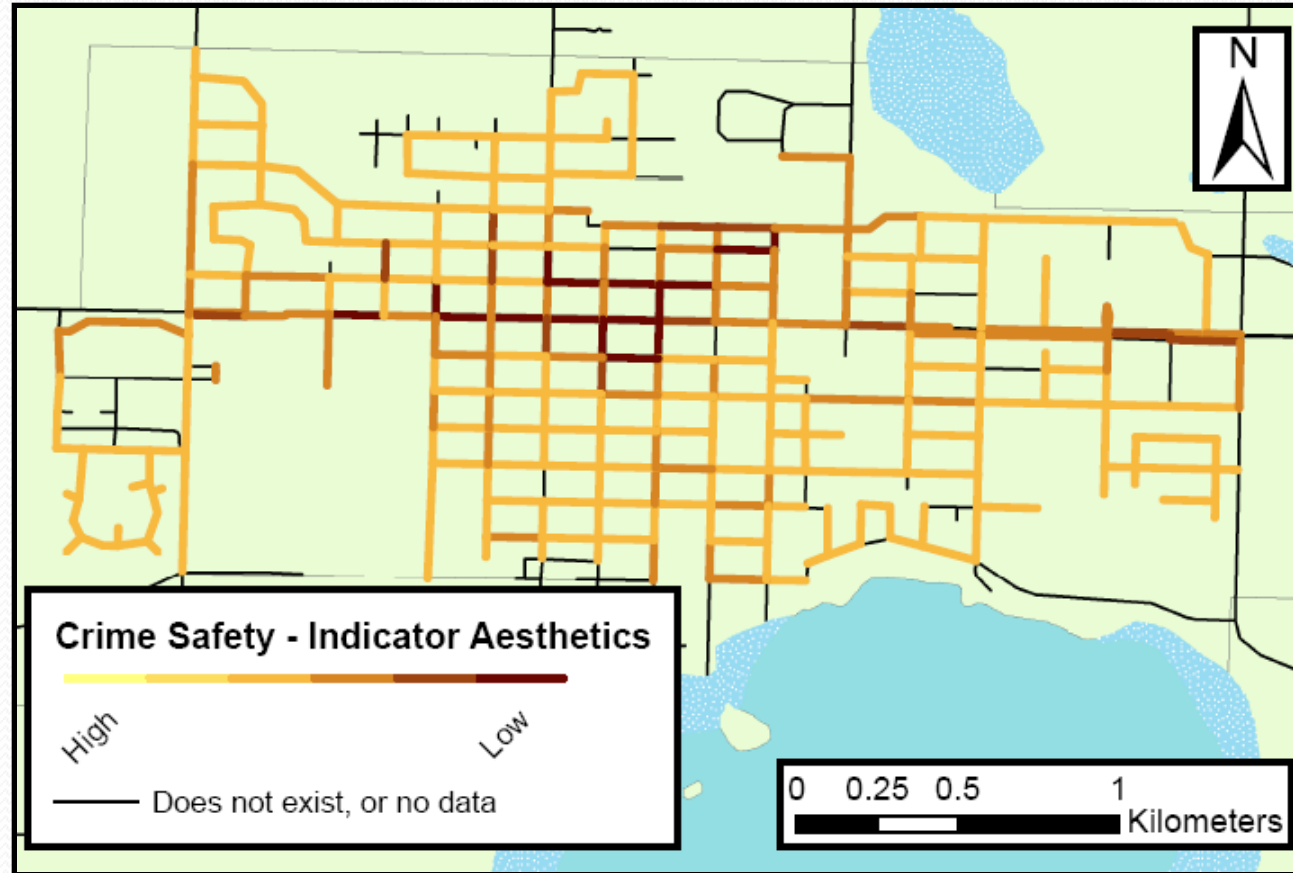
# **Crime Safety**

Features that suggest an area is more safe in relation to crime.



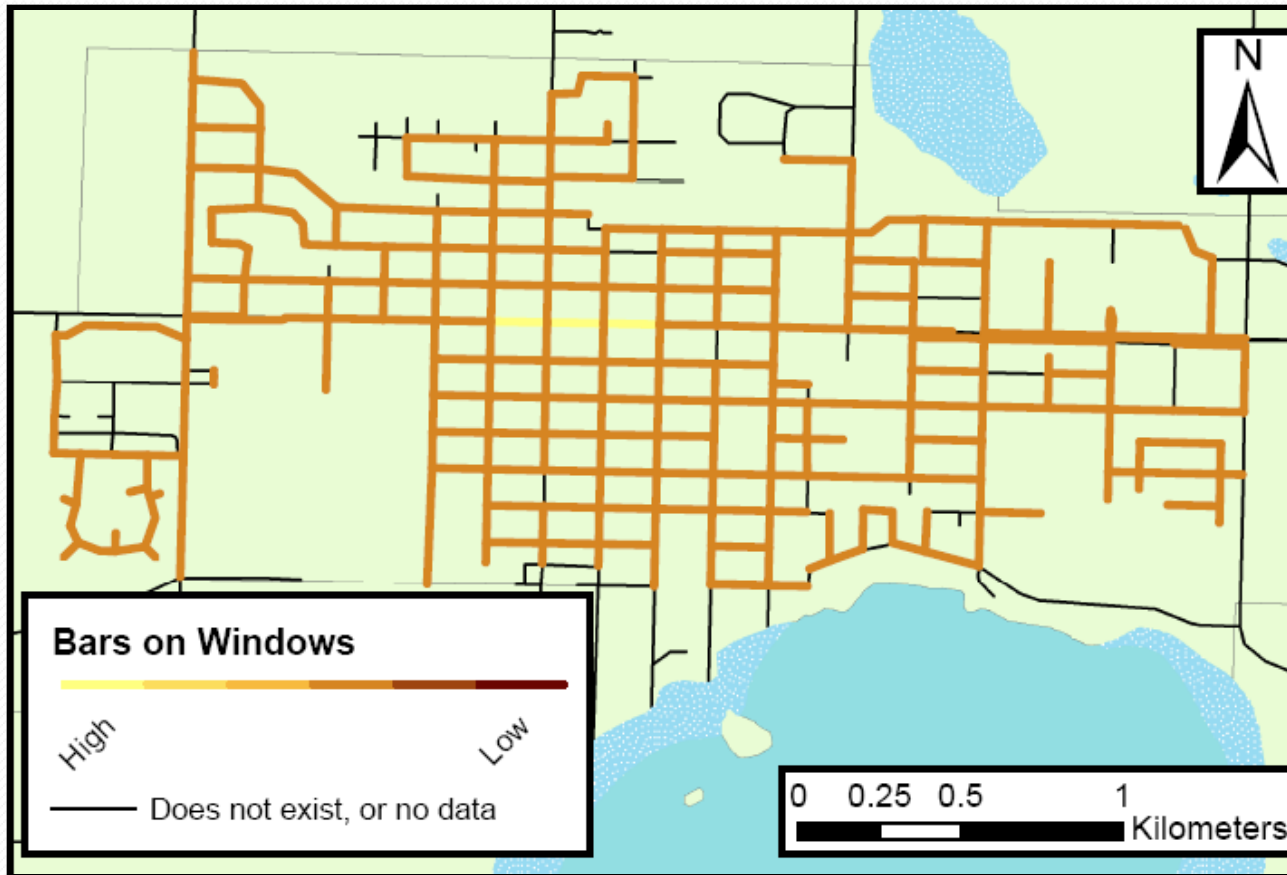
# Crime Safety - Aesthetics

- Abandoned Buildings
- Bars on Windows
- Building Maintenance
- Graffiti
- Litter



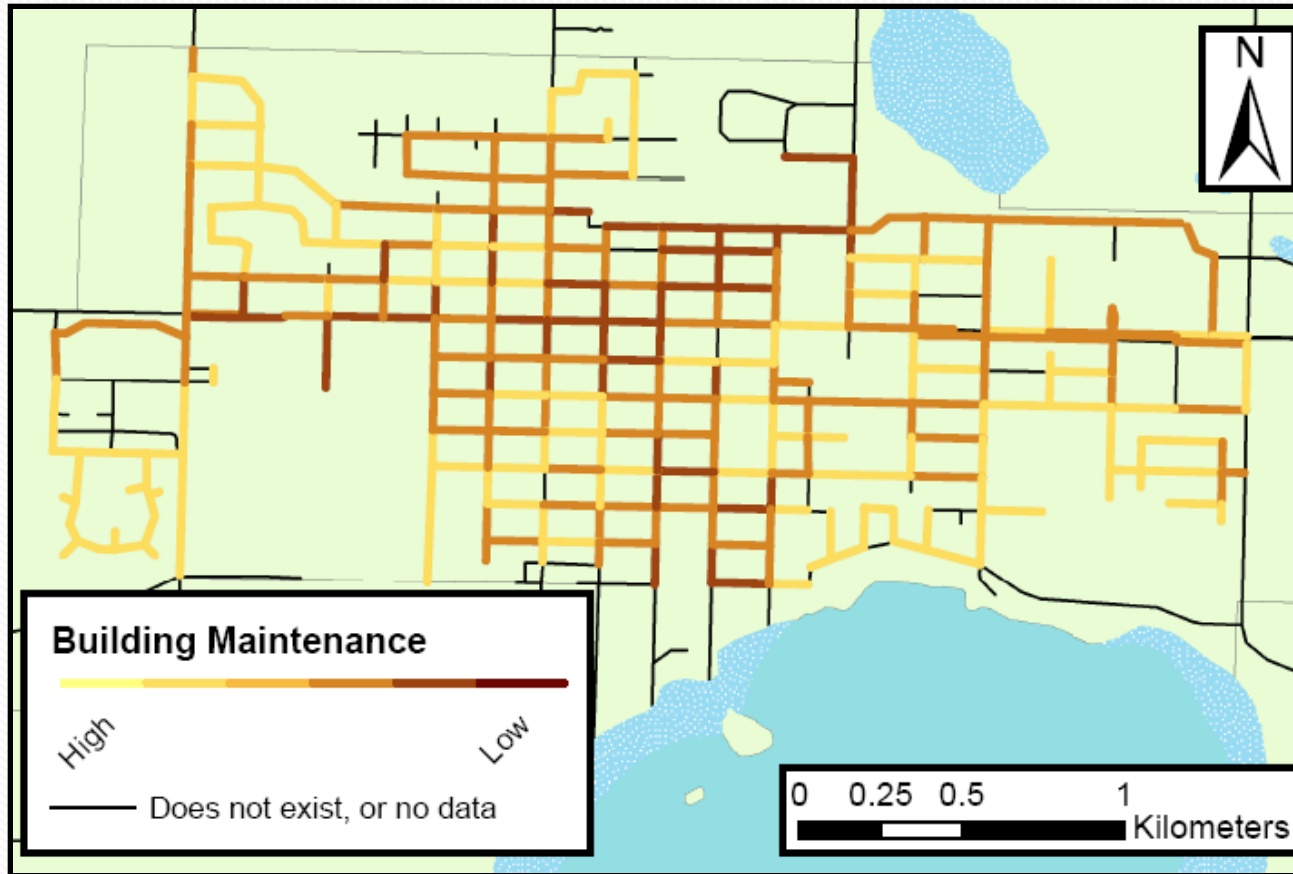
Absence of some street characteristics indicates a higher level of crime safety.

# Bars on Windows



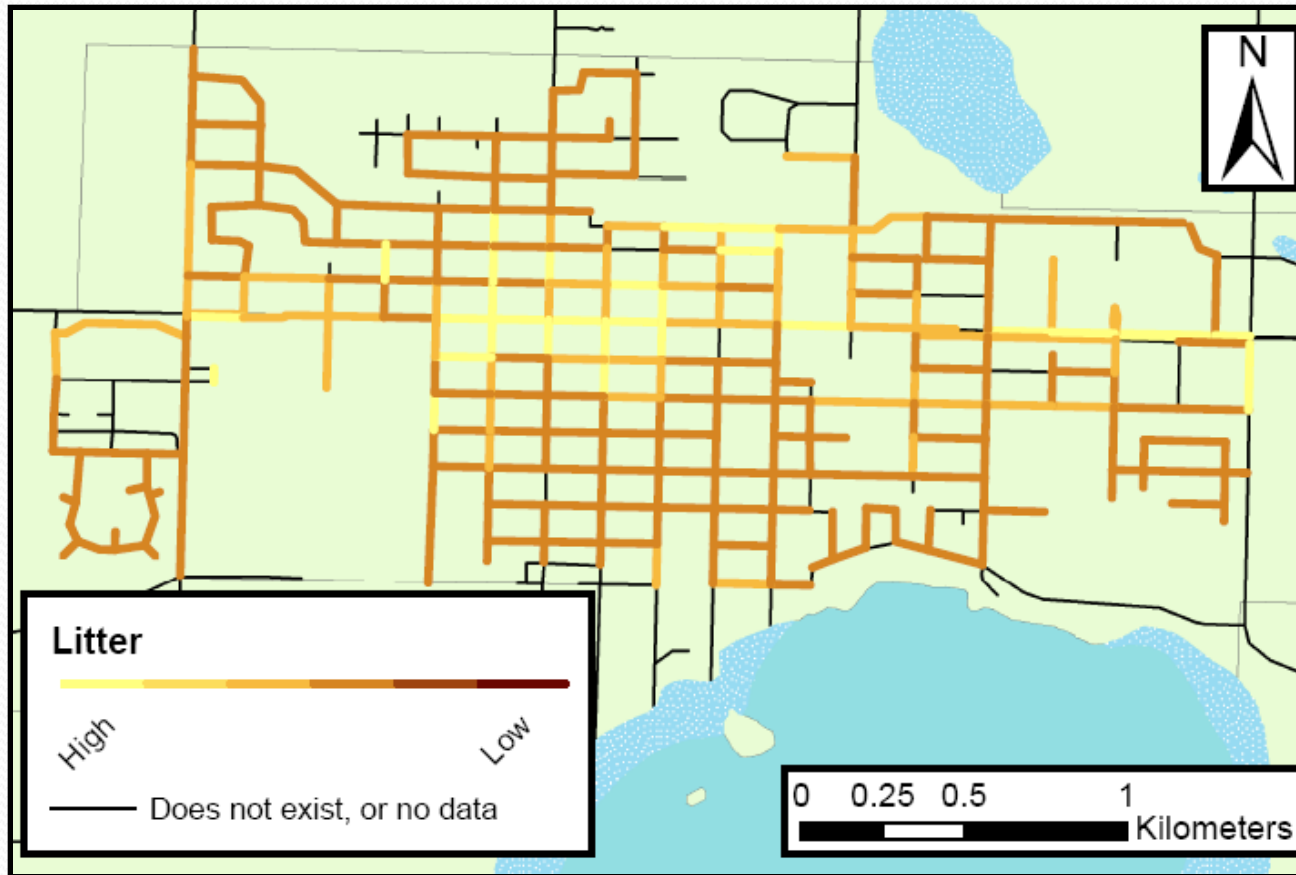
Absence of bars on windows indicates a higher level of crime safety.

# Building Maintenance



Higher maintenance of buildings indicates a higher level of crime safety.

# Litter

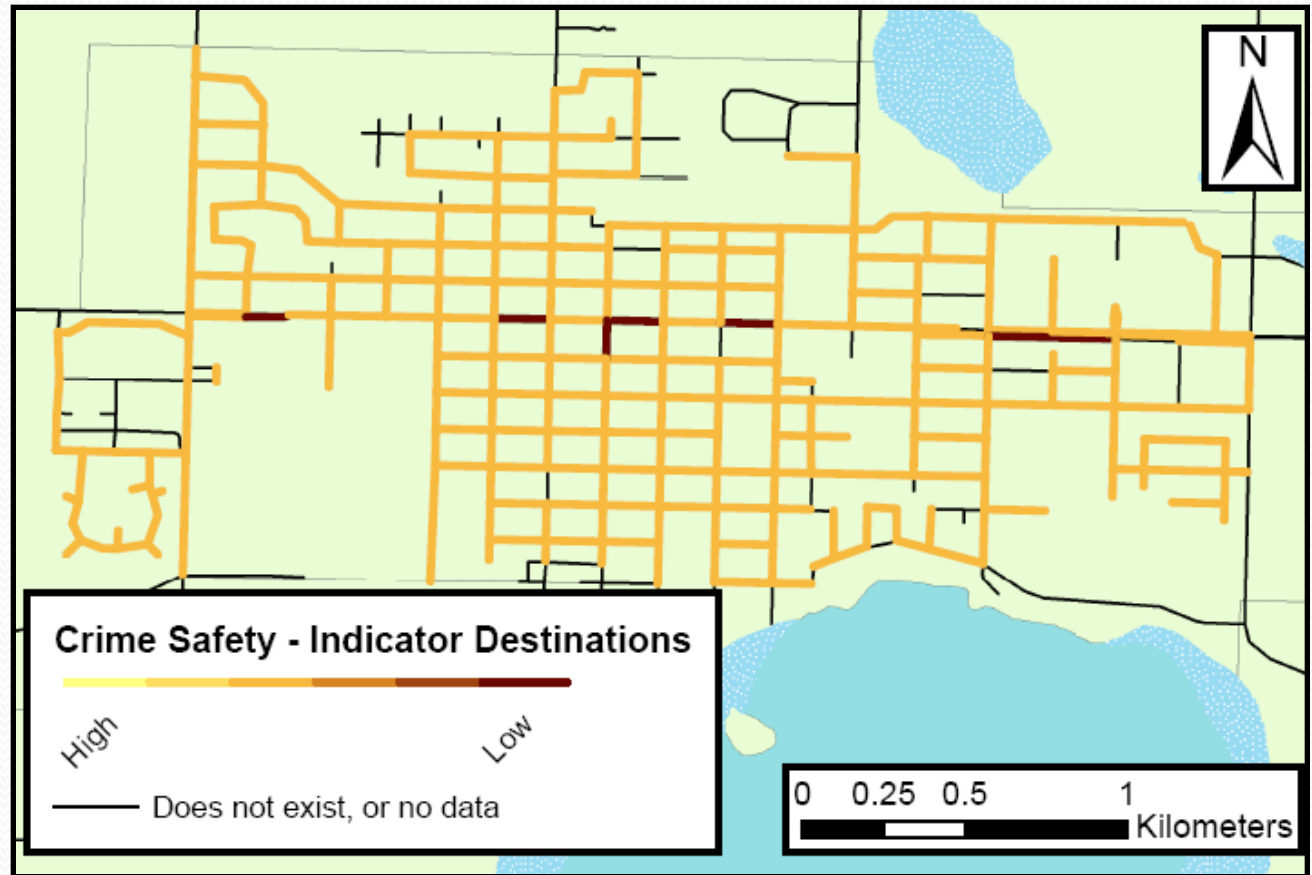


Absence of litter indicates a higher level of crime safety.



# Crime Safety - Destinations

- Liquor Stores
- Bars or Nightclubs



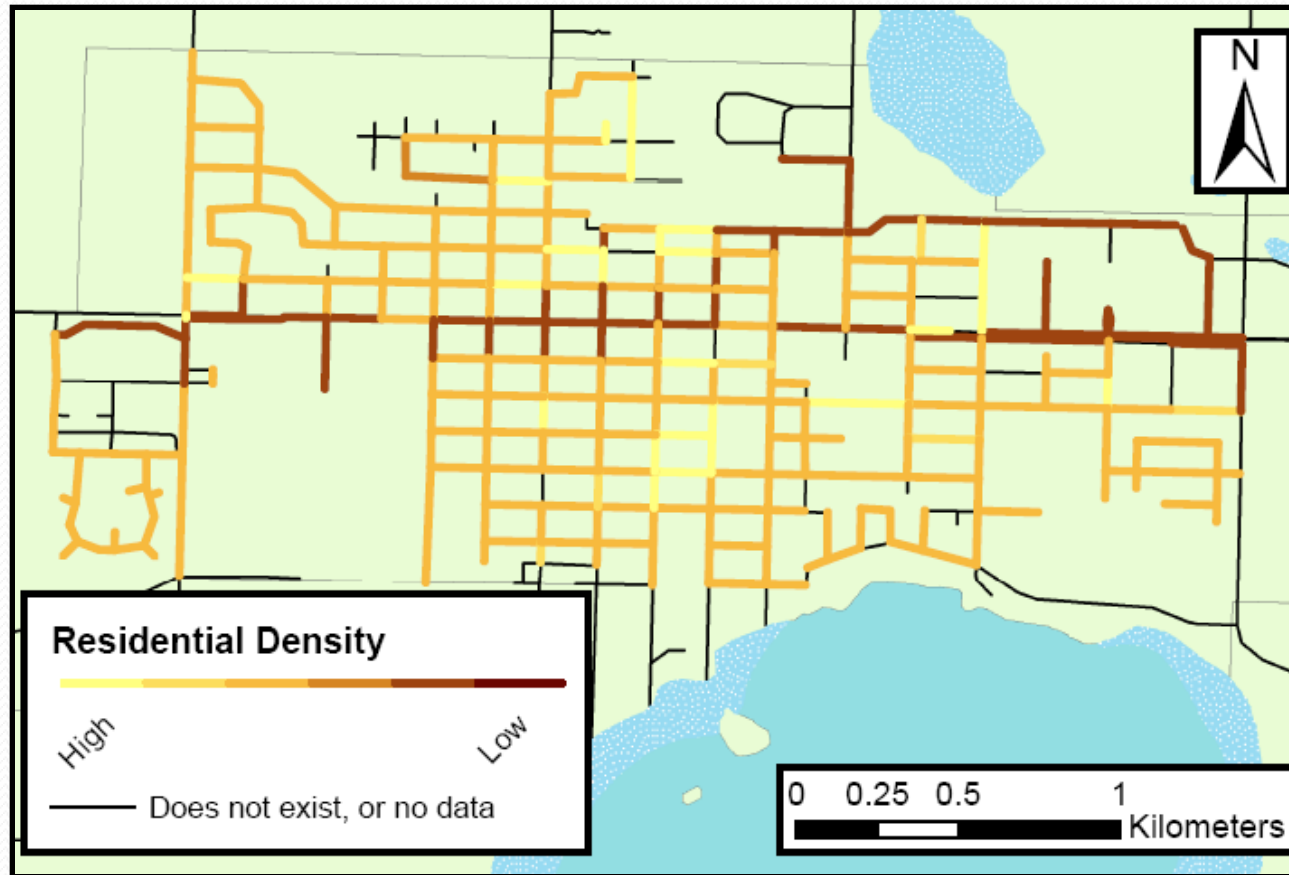
Absence of some destinations indicates a higher level of crime safety.



# Density

Features that describe the number of people that could live in an area.

# Residential Density



Higher residential density indicates higher potential for pedestrian traffic.



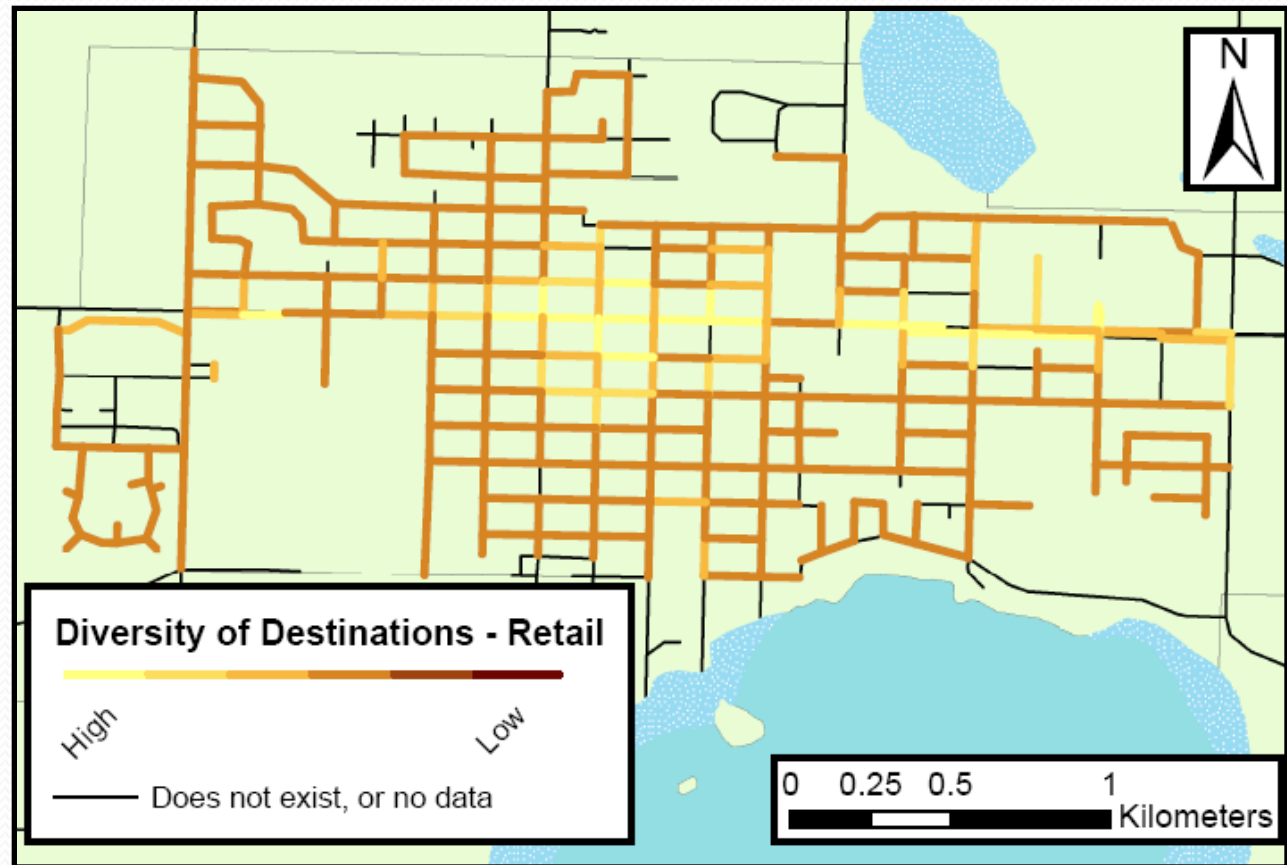
# **Diversity of Destinations**

Features that are destinations community residents would be interested in accessing.



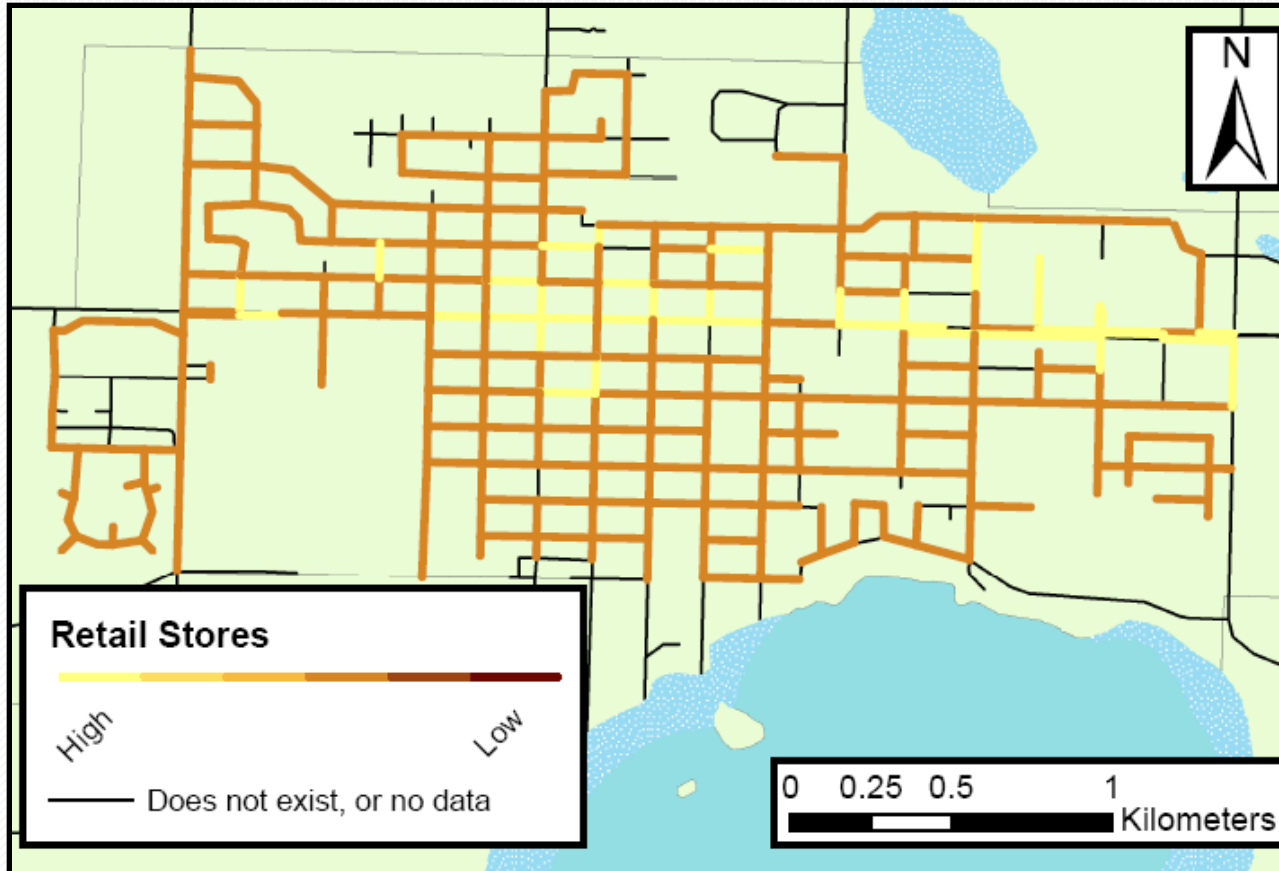
# Diverse Destinations - Retail

- Services
- Row of Shops
- Retail Stores
- Offices
- Restaurants
- Banks
- Specialty Food Shops
- Grocery Stores



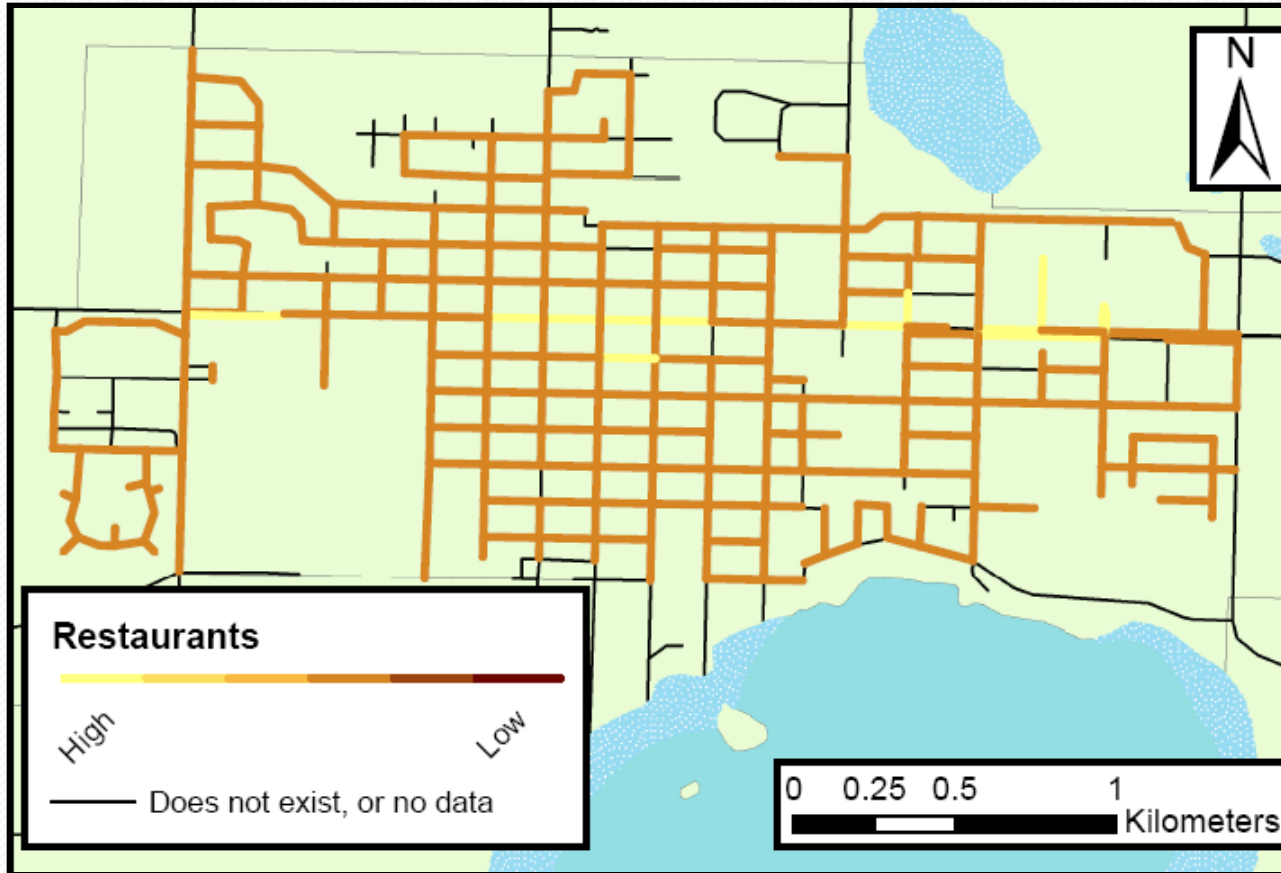
Areas with a diversity of destinations encourage pedestrian traffic.

# Retail Stores



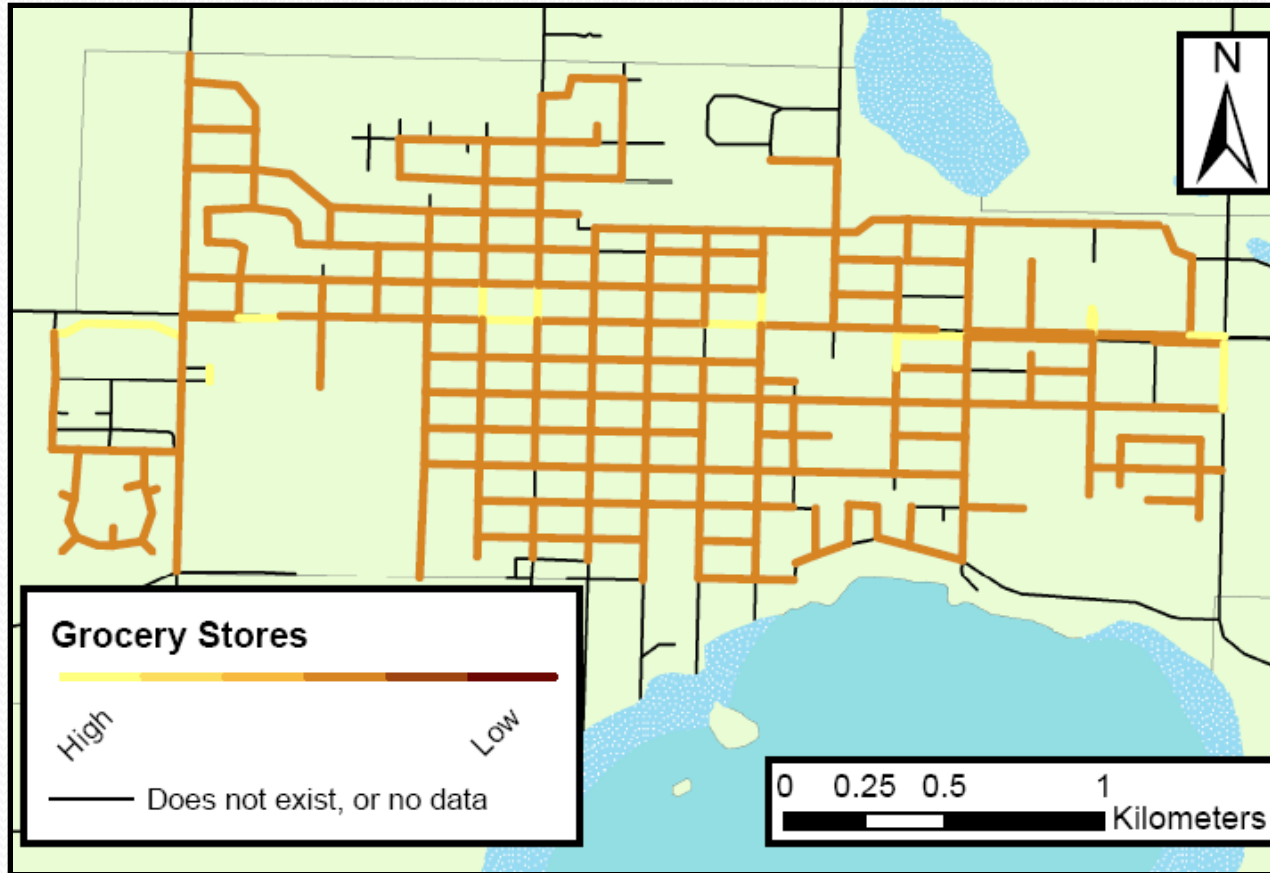
Presence of retail stores increases the chance a resident will access the segment.

# Restaurants



Presence of restaurants increases the chance a resident will access the segment.

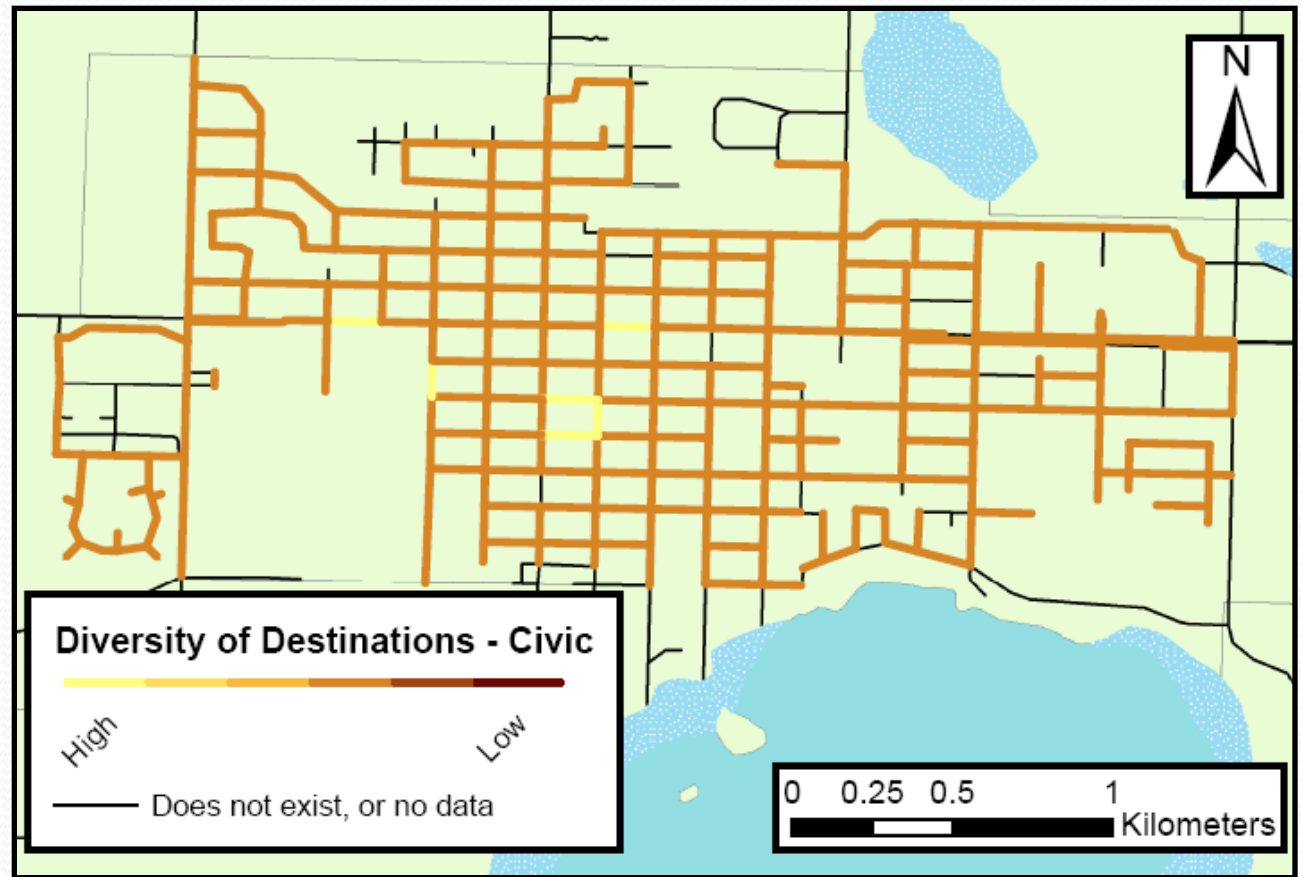
# Grocery Stores



Presence of grocery stores increases the chance a resident will access the segment.

# Diverse Destinations - Civic

- Auditorium or Concert Hall
- Museum
- Courthouse
- Theatre
- Post Office
- Library

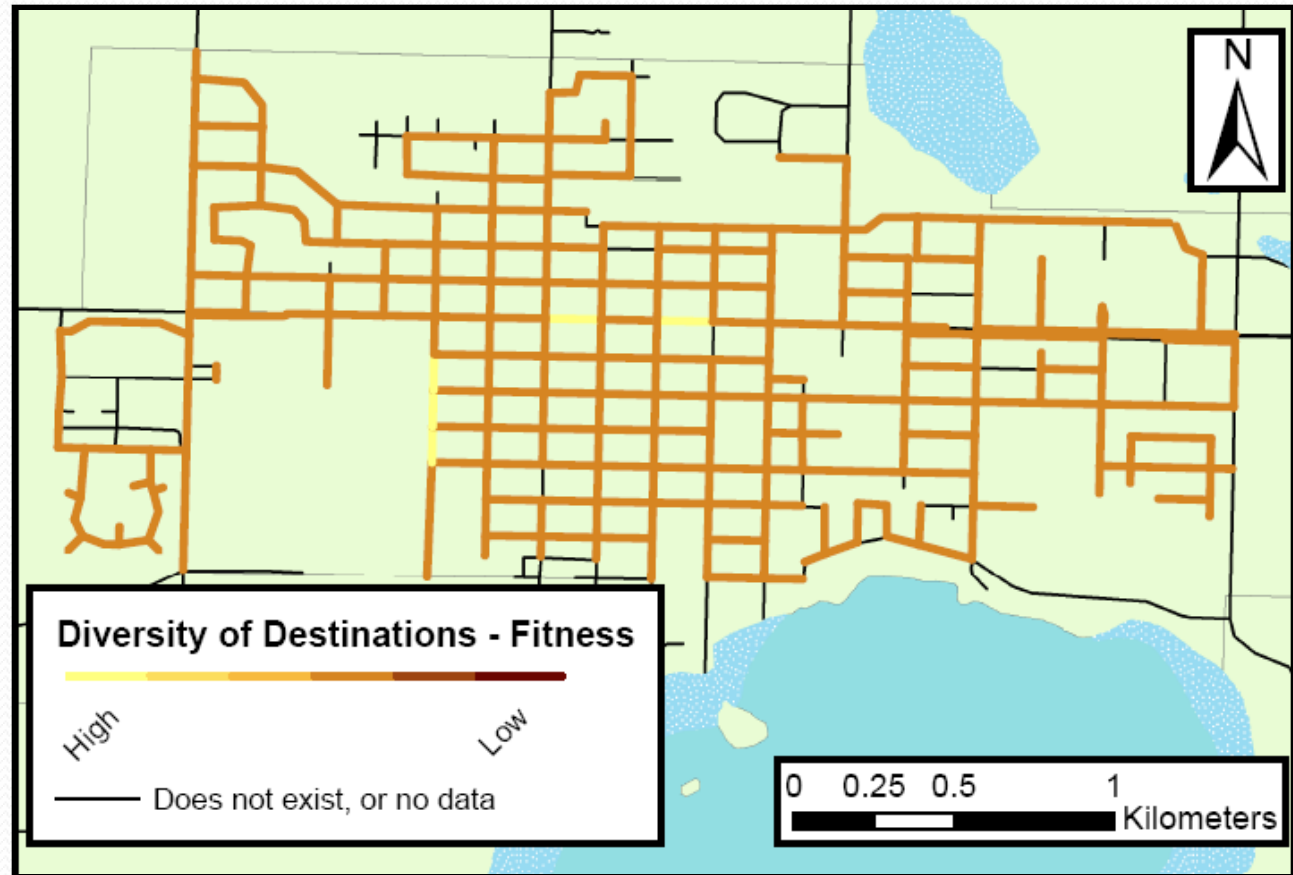


Areas with a diversity of destinations encourage pedestrian traffic.



# Diverse Destinations - Fitness

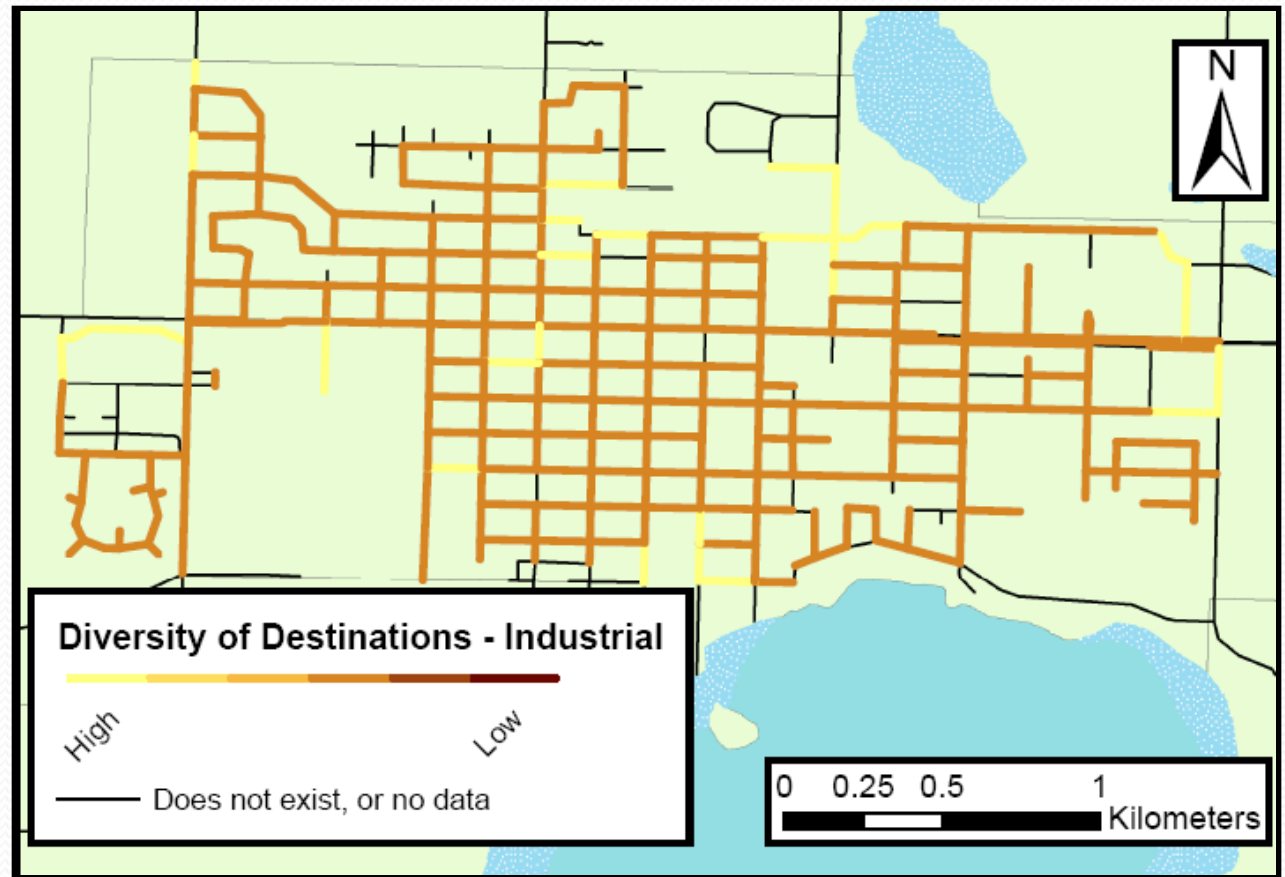
- Hockey Arena
- Indoor Pool
- Fitness Centre
- Other Recreation



Areas with a diversity of destinations encourage pedestrian traffic.

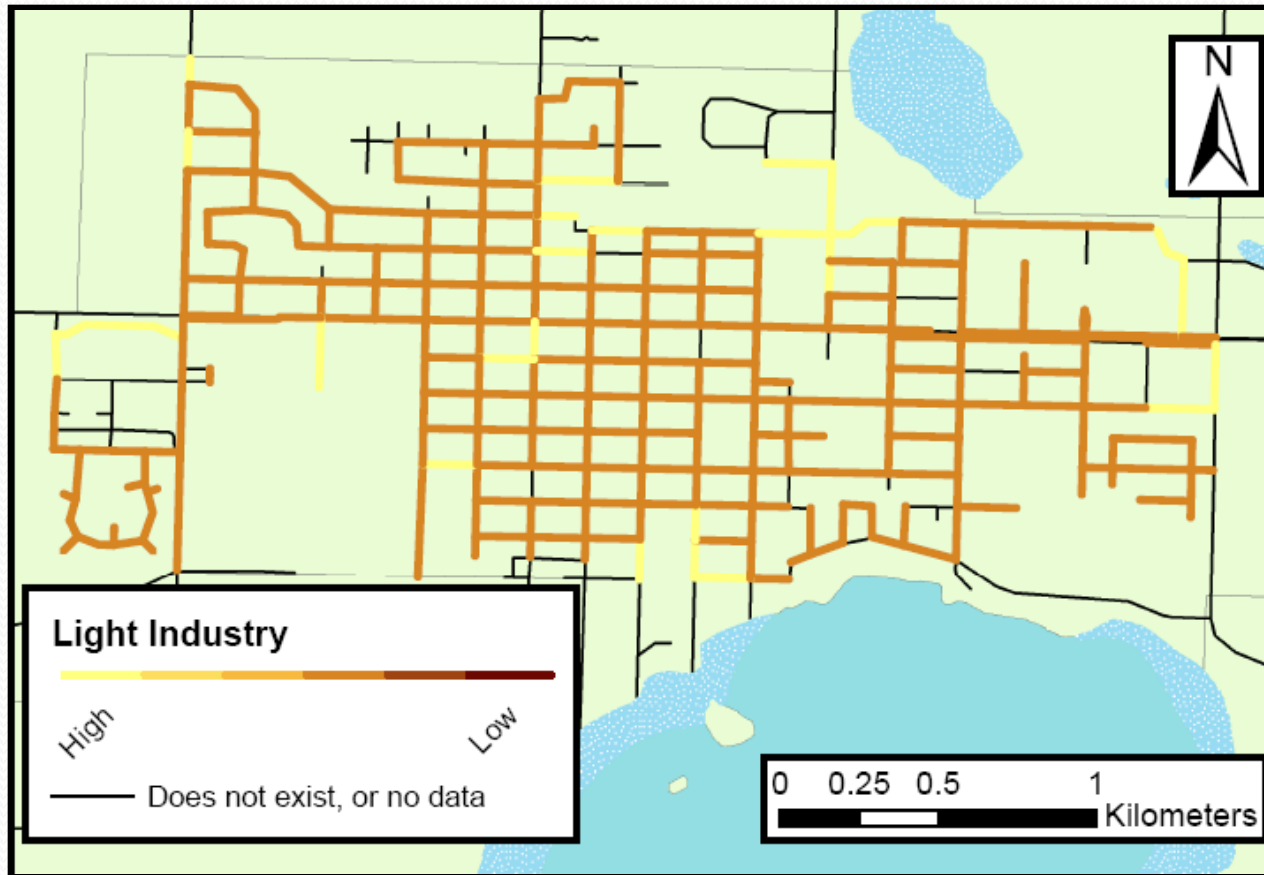
# Diverse Destinations - Industrial

- Light Industry
- Medium or Heavy Industry



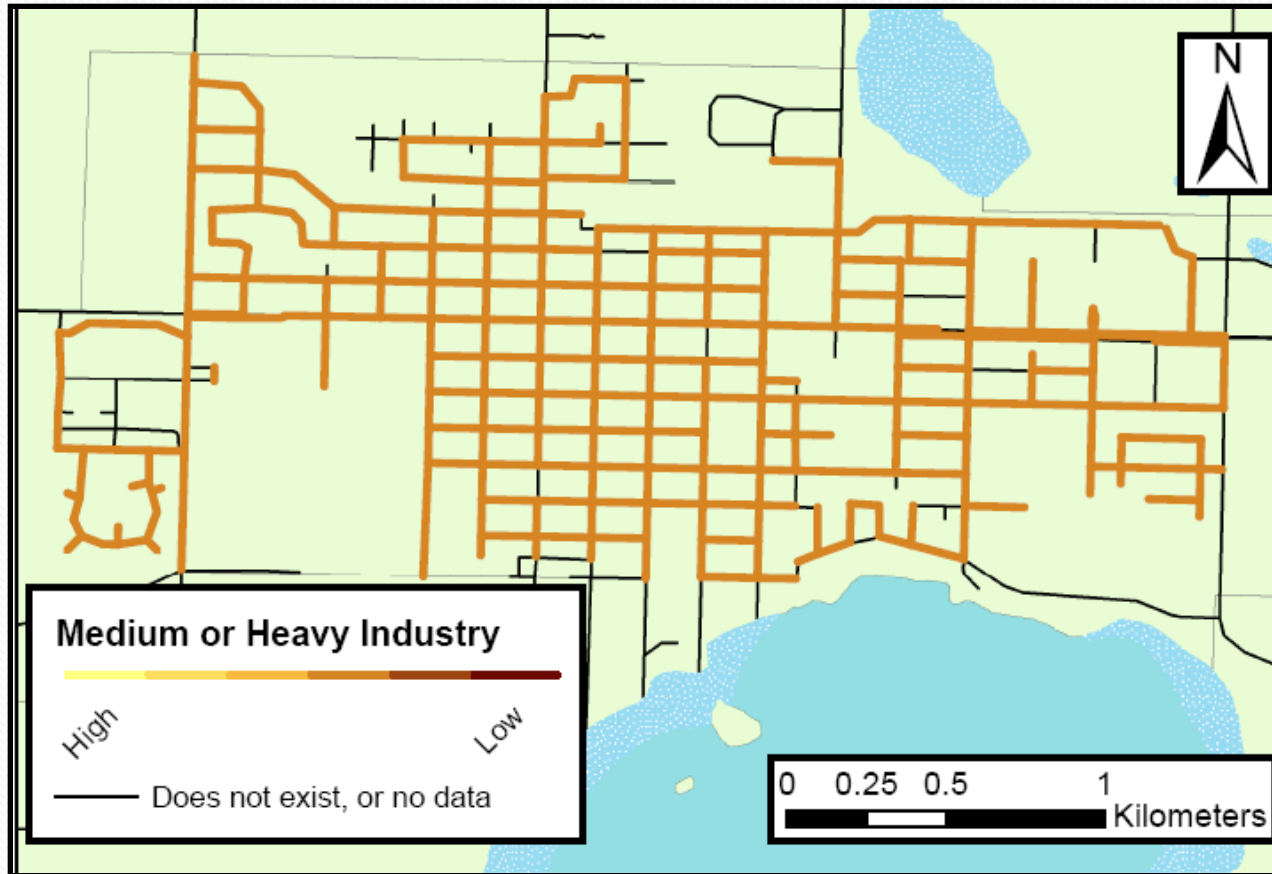
Areas with a diversity of destinations encourage pedestrian traffic.

# Light Industry



Light industry increases the chance a resident will access the segment.

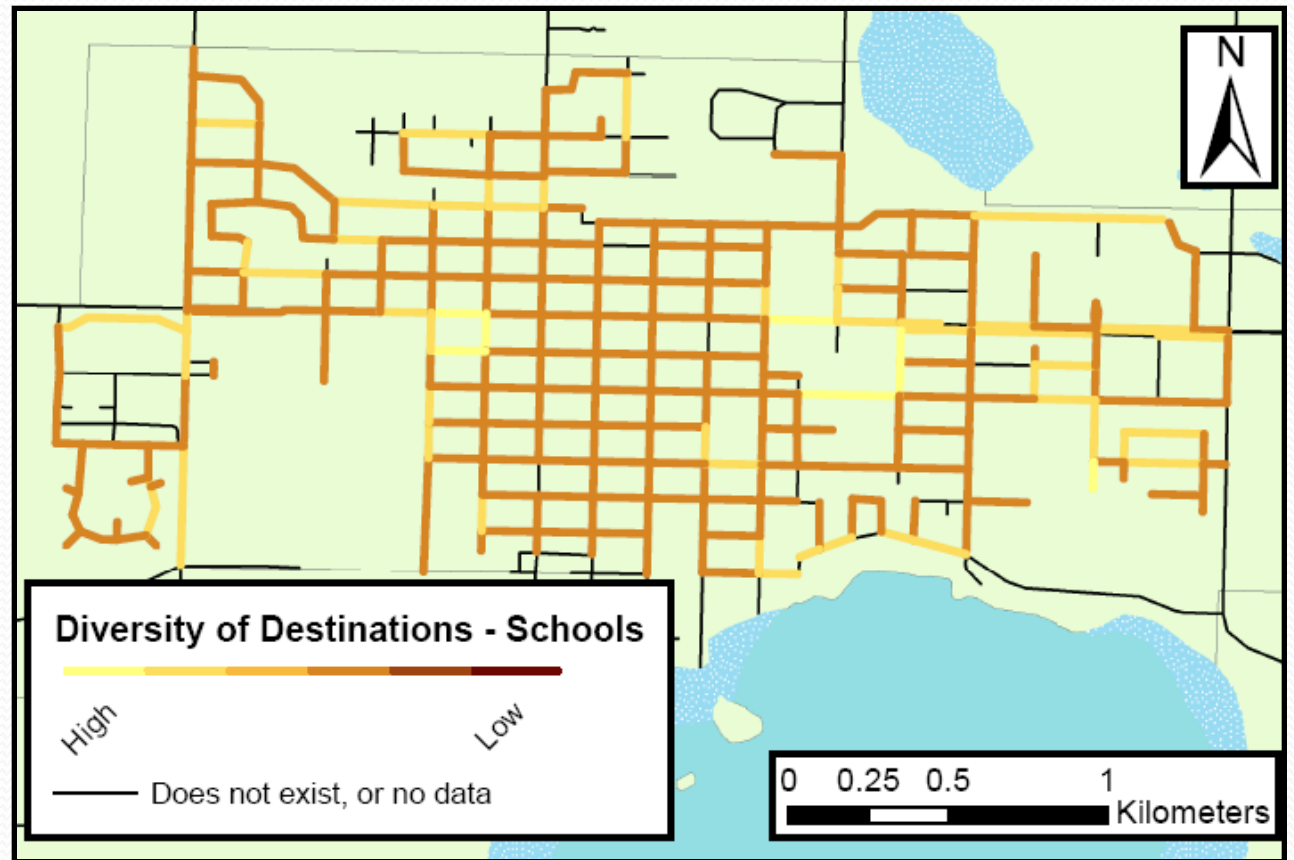
# Medium or Heavy Industry



There were no medium or heavy industry destinations observed in St. Paul.

# Diverse Destinations - Schools

- Schools
- Public Space



Areas with a diversity of destinations encourage pedestrian traffic.



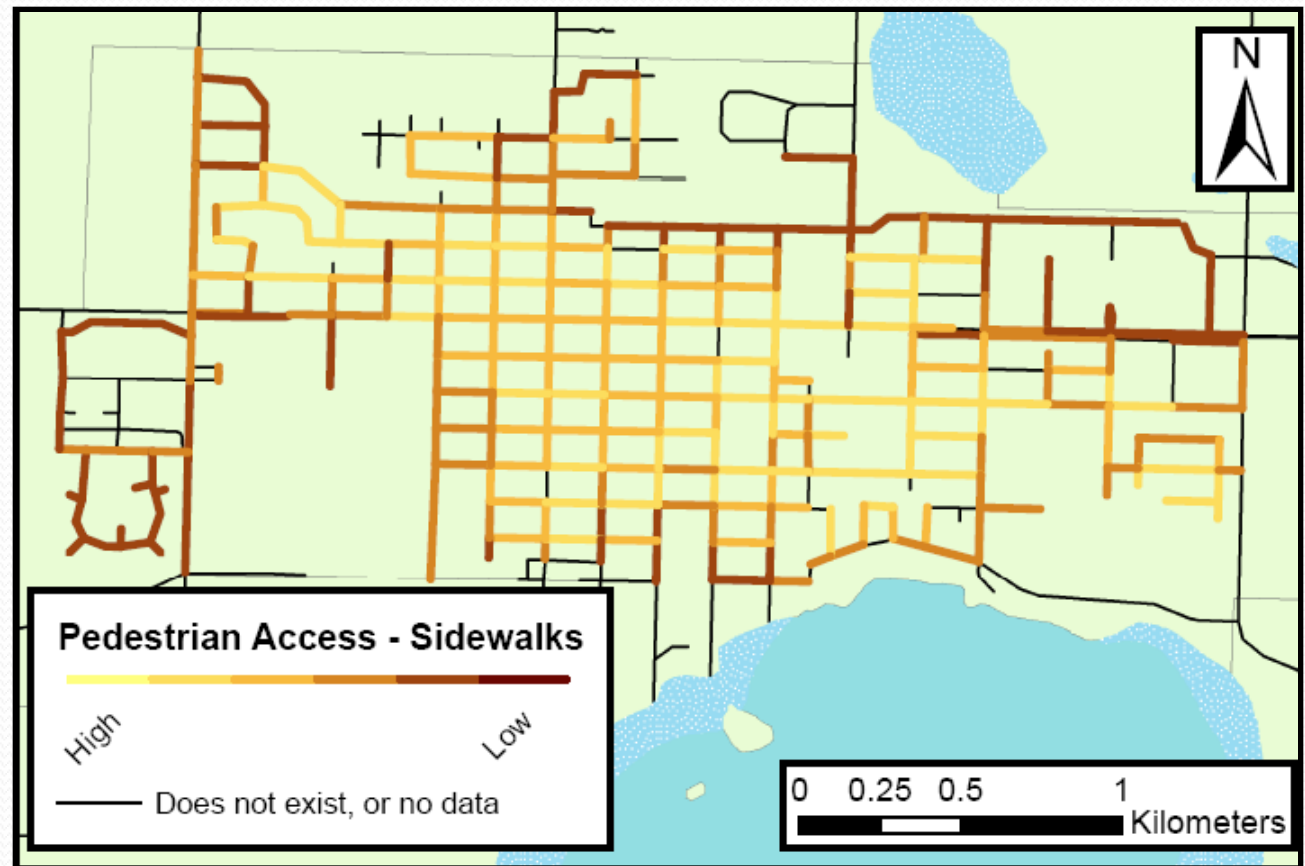


# **Pedestrian Access**

Features that make walking to a destination easier.

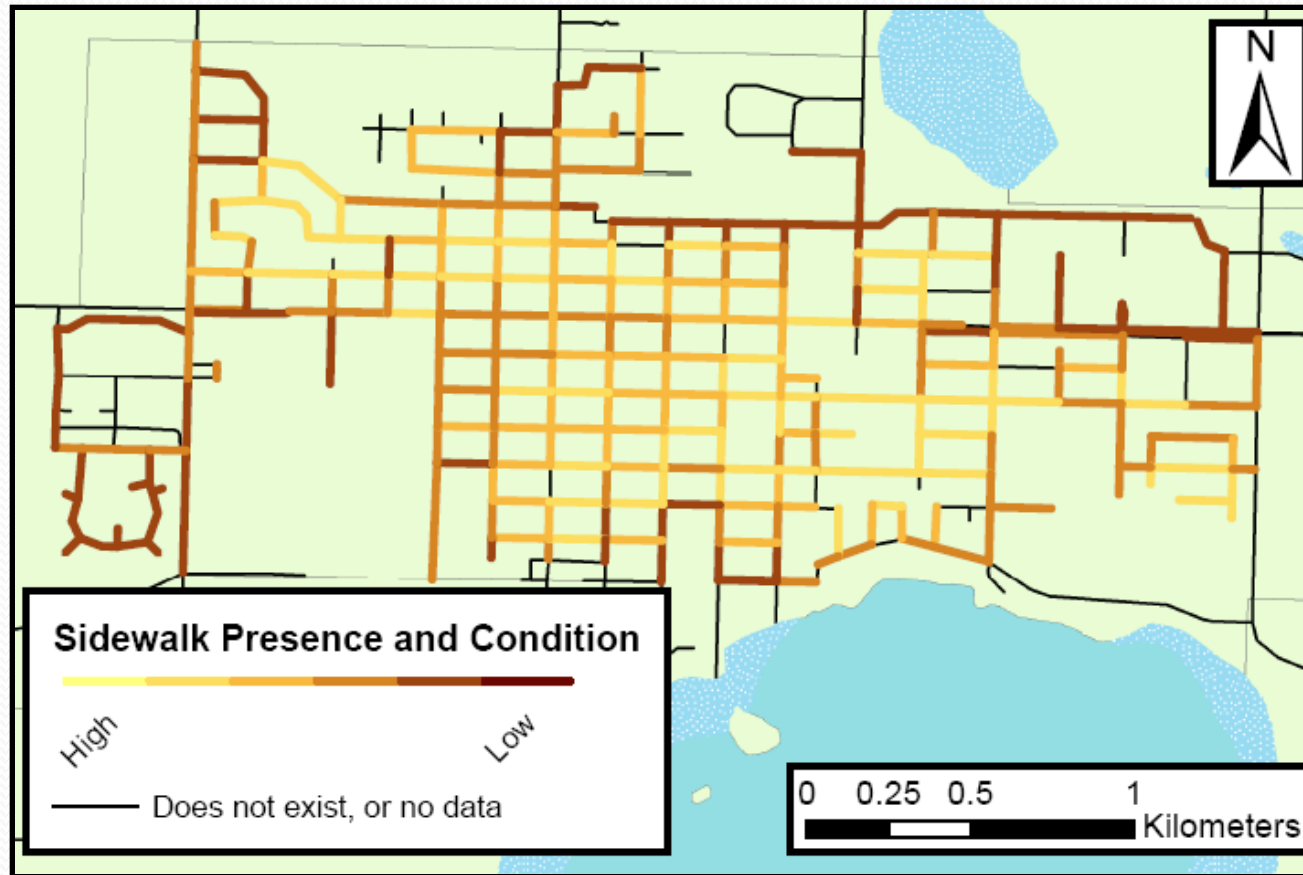
# Pedestrian Access - Sidewalks

- Sidewalk Presence and Condition
- Sidewalk Connections



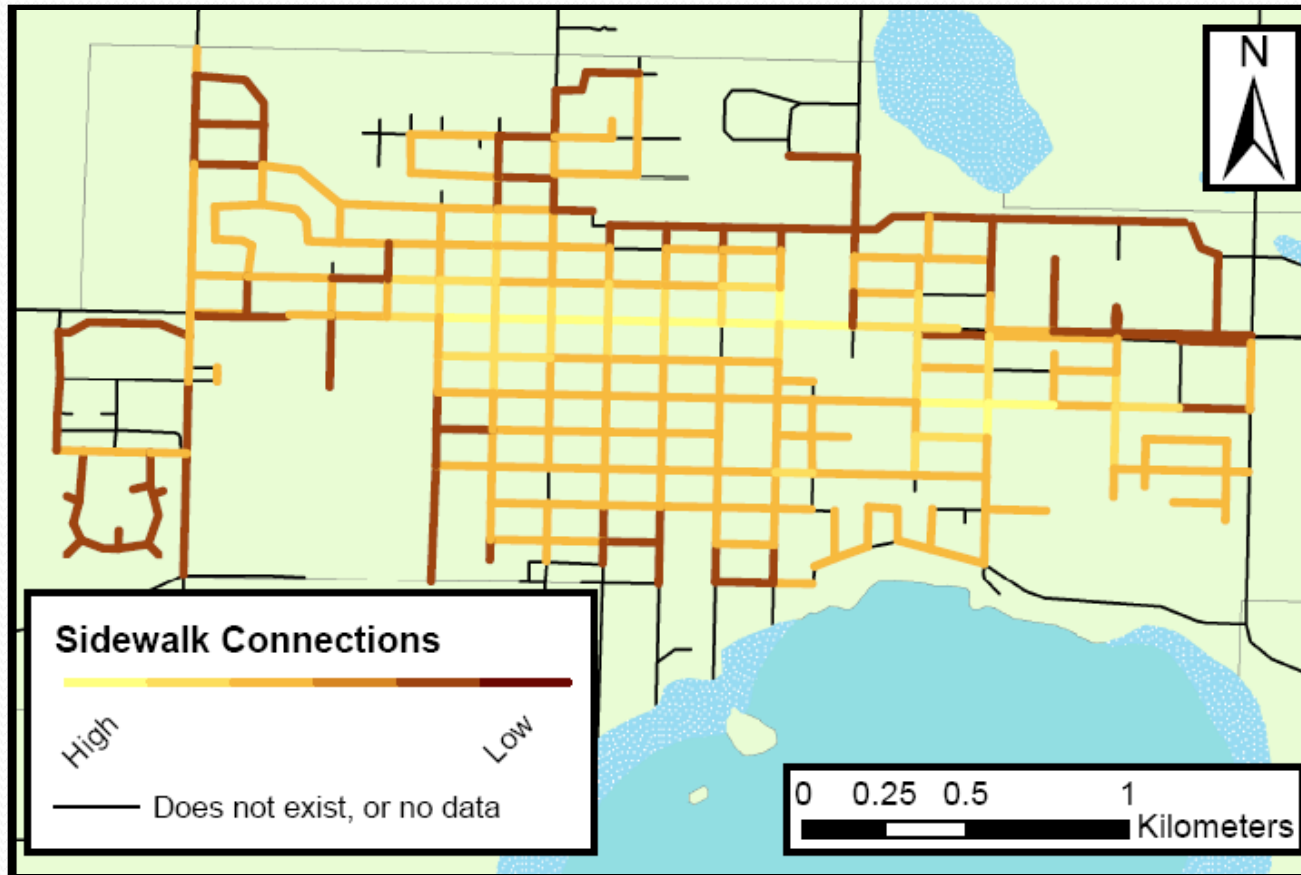
Higher quality sidewalks result in a higher level of pedestrian access.

# Sidewalk Presence/Condition



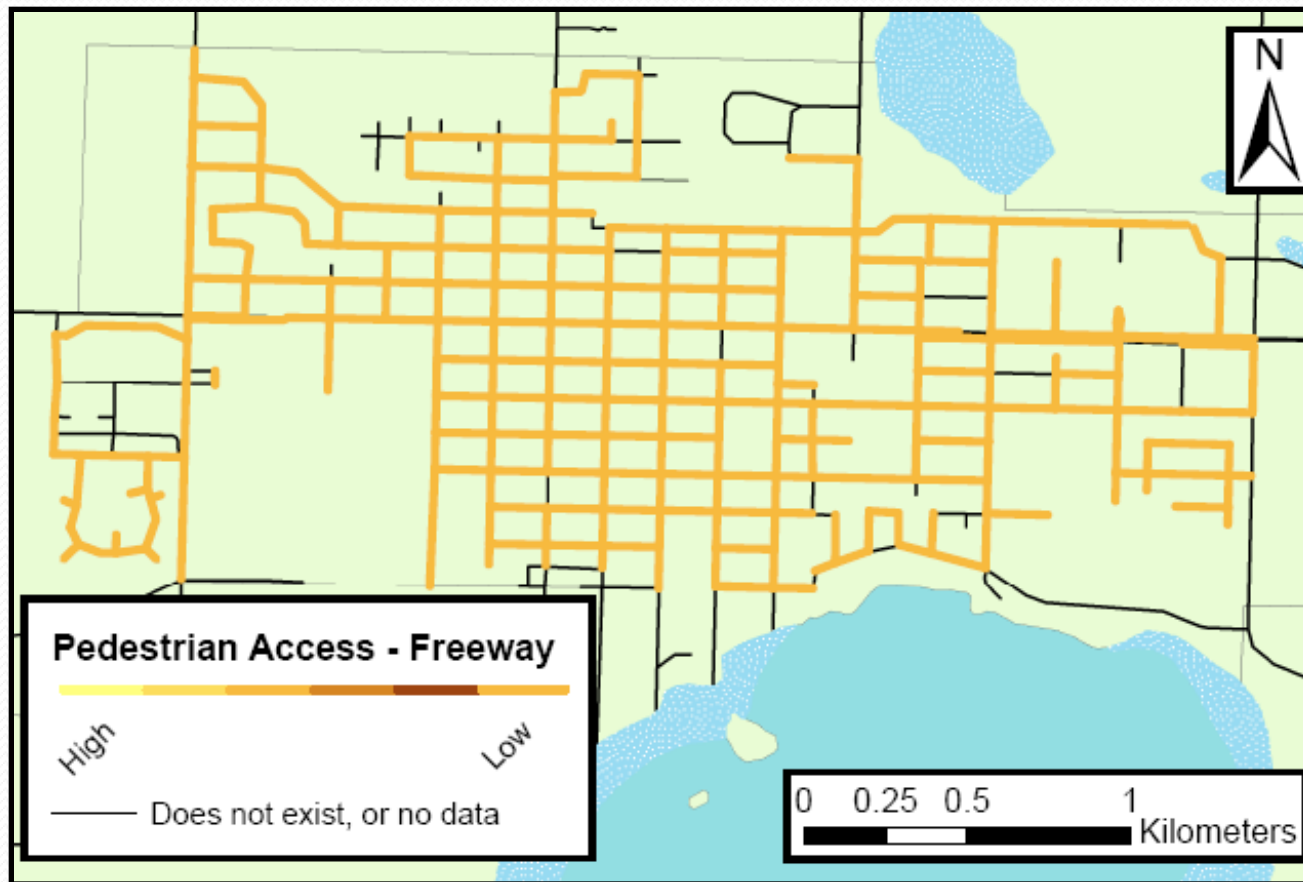
Presence and condition of sidewalks indicate a higher level of pedestrian access.

# Sidewalk Connections



Well-connected sidewalks indicate a higher level of pedestrian access.

# Pedestrian Access - Freeway

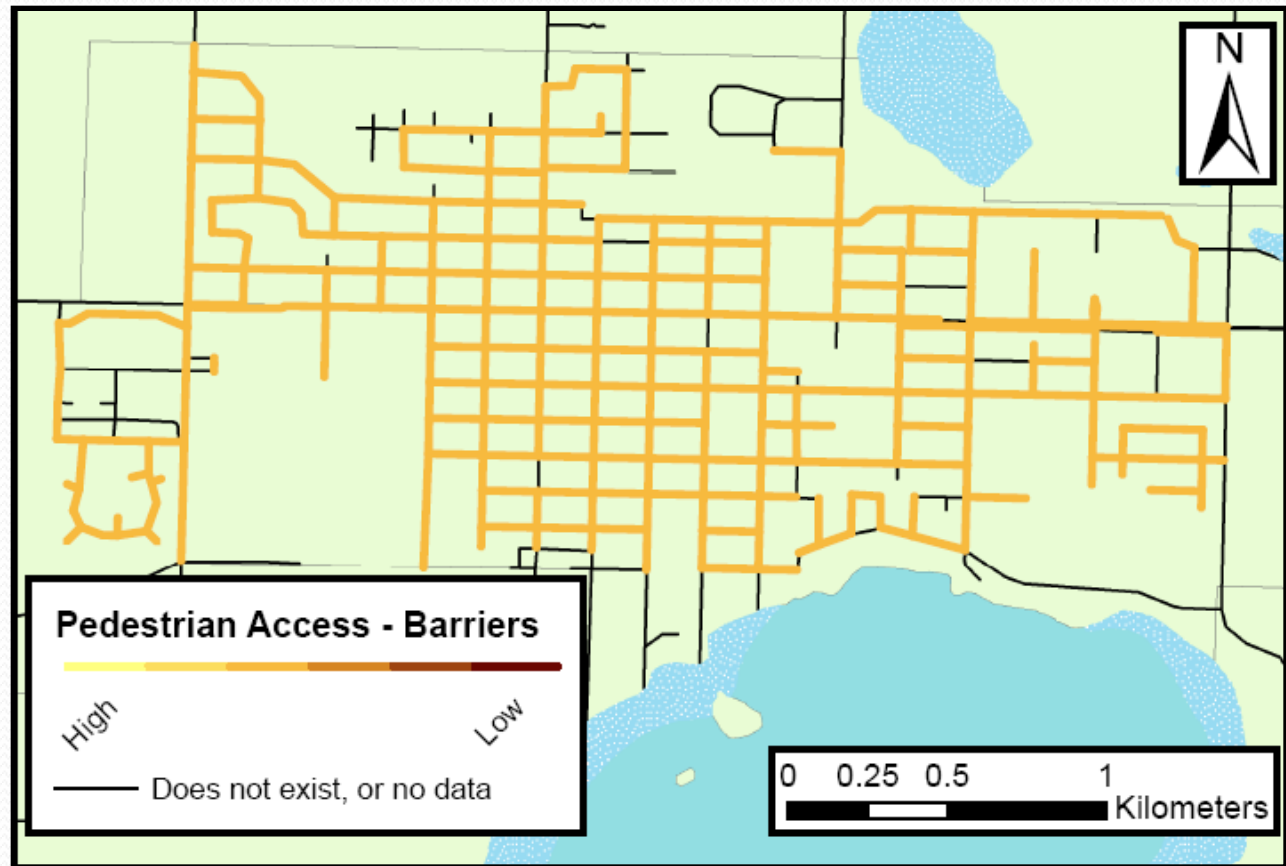


There were no freeways observed in St. Paul.



# Pedestrian Access - Barriers

- Highway Barrier
- Railway Barrier
- Impassable Land Use
- Roads with 6+ Lanes
- Temporary Construction
- Other Barrier



There were no barriers to pedestrian access observed in St. Paul.

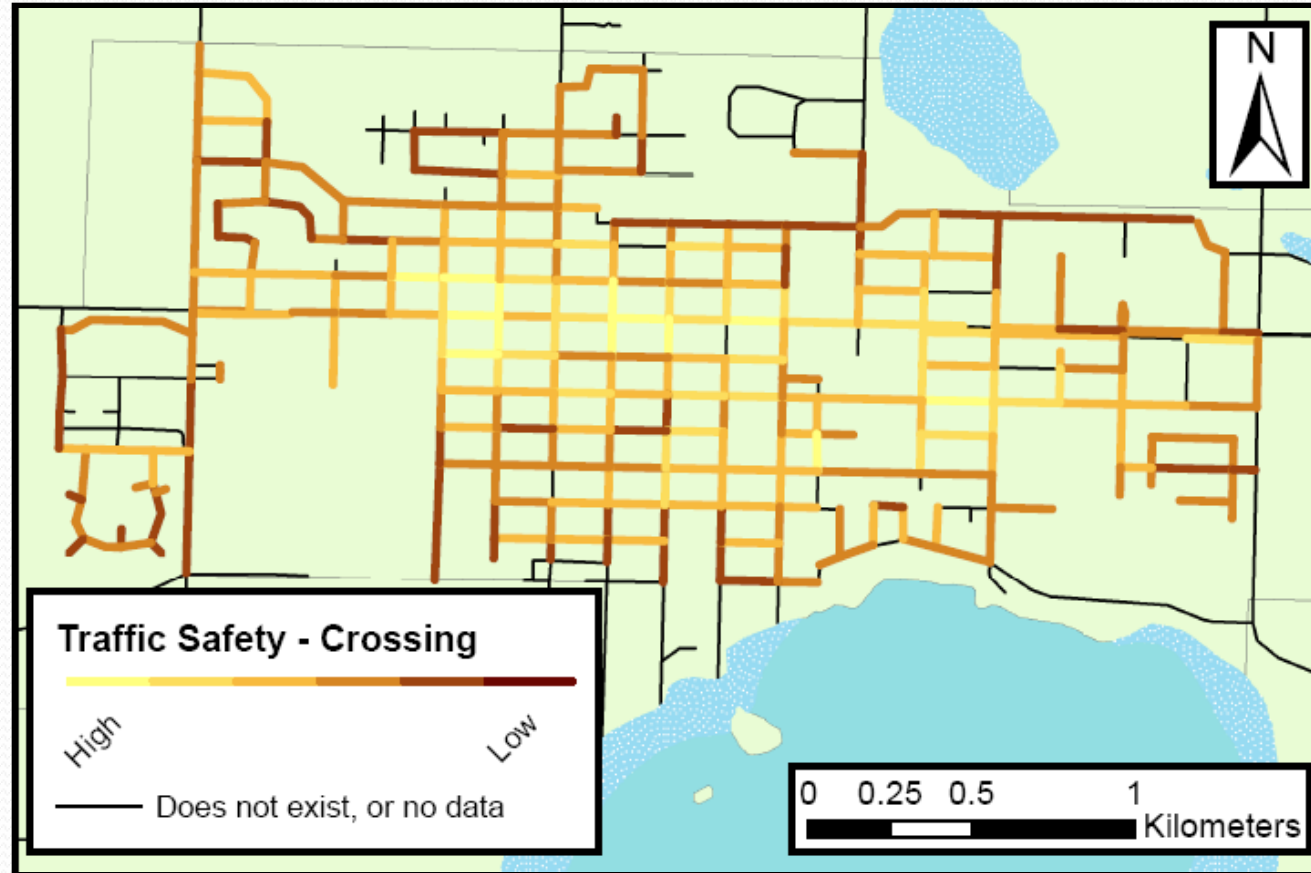


# Traffic Safety

Features that suggest an area is more safe for pedestrians in relation to traffic.

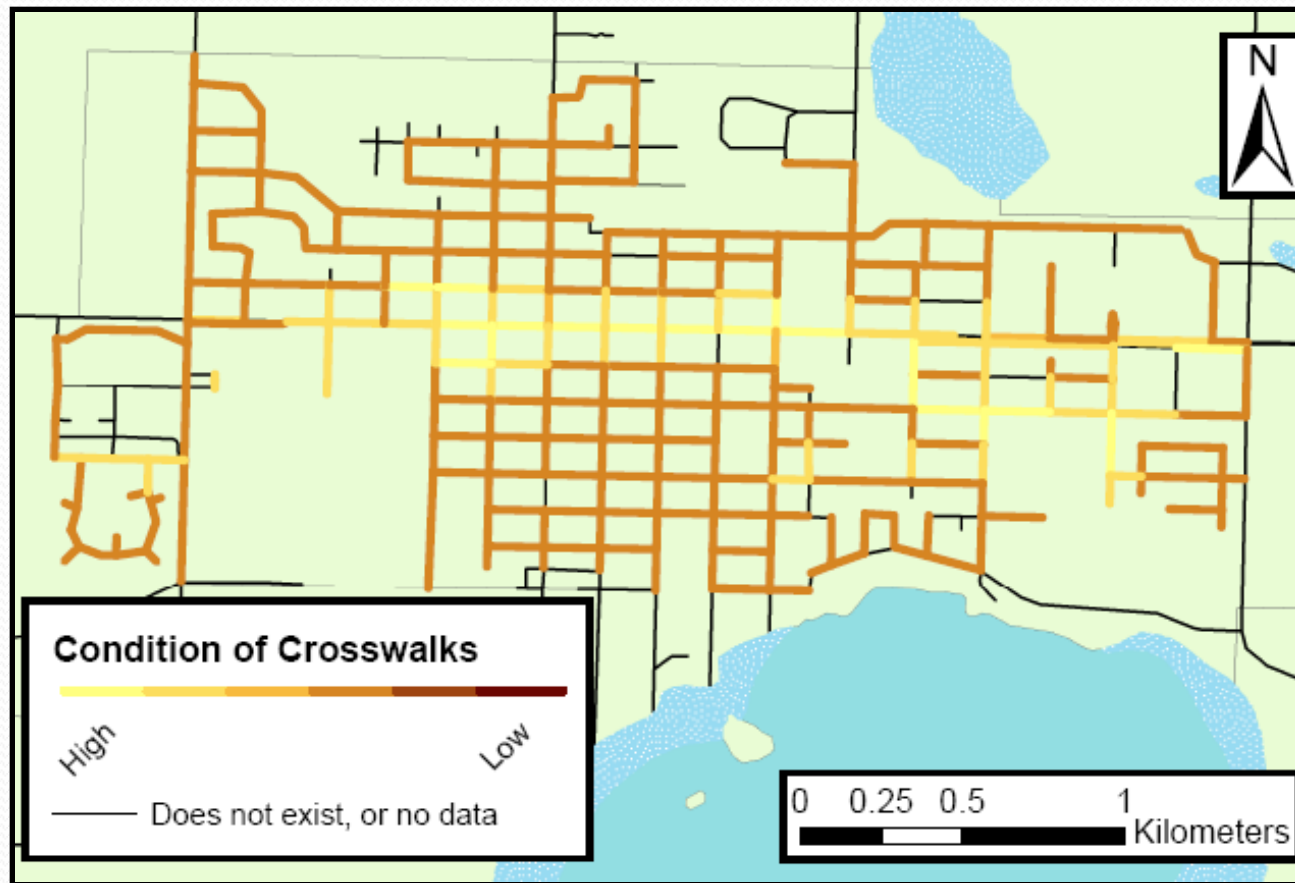
# Traffic Safety – Crossing

- Condition of Crosswalk Markings
- Sum of Curb Cuts
- Signs and Signal Systems



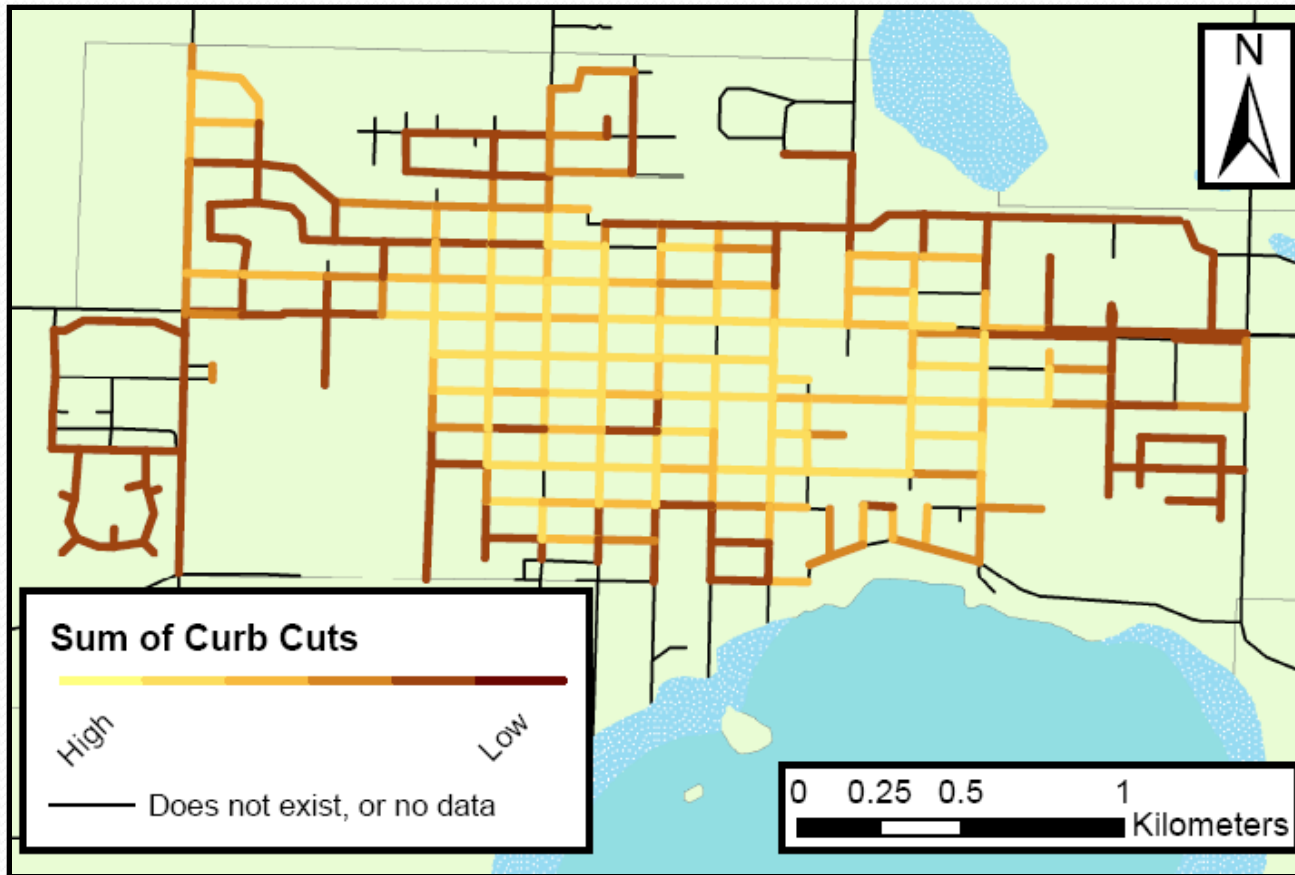
Areas with safer road crossings encourage pedestrian traffic.

# Condition of Crosswalks



Presence and condition of crosswalks indicate a higher level of traffic safety.

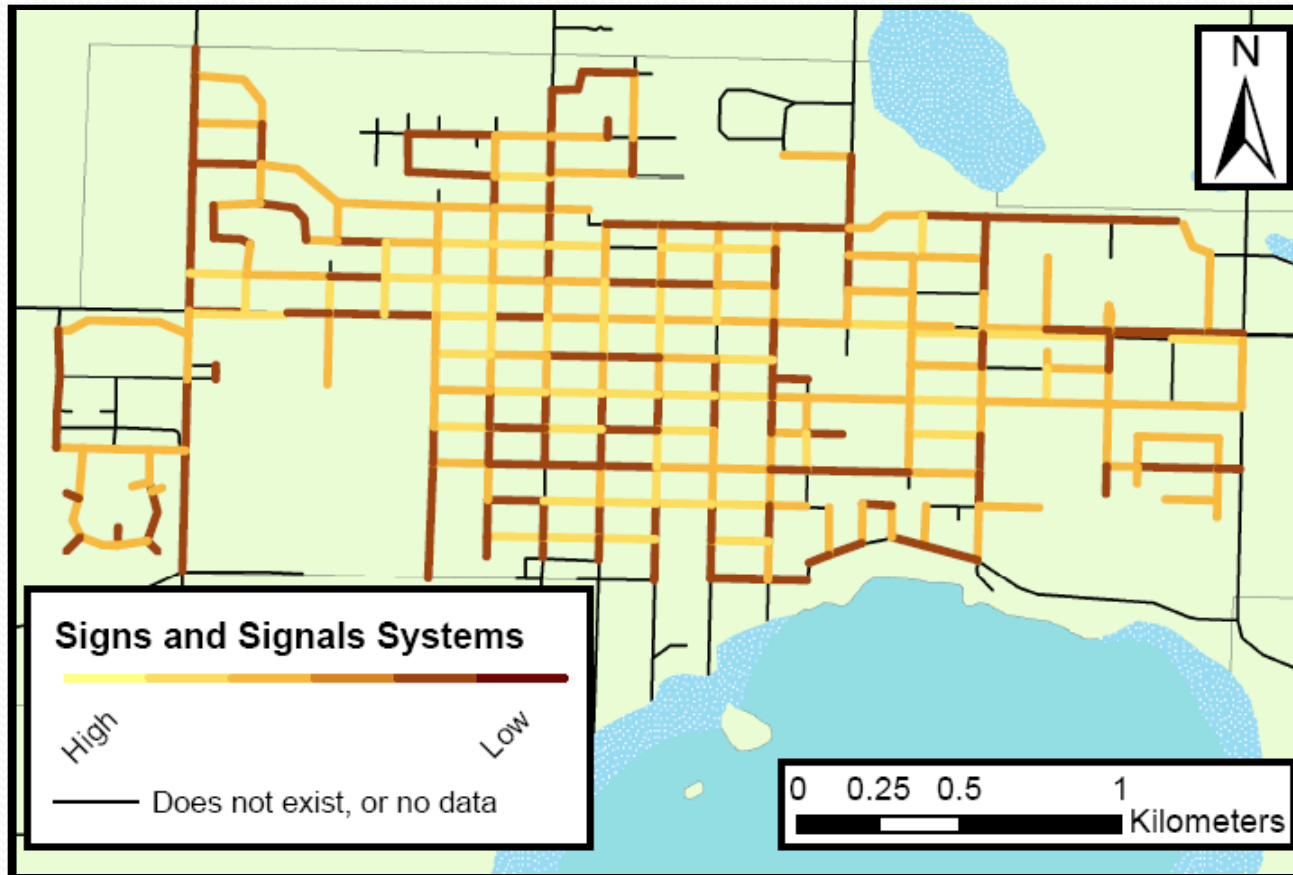
# Sum of Curb Cuts



A curb cut is a ramp that takes a sidewalk down to street level. Normally found at street corners, they make it easier for pedestrians to cross a street.

Presence of curb cuts at road crossings indicates a higher level of traffic safety.

# Signs and Signals Systems



Presence of traffic signs and signals indicates a higher level of traffic safety.



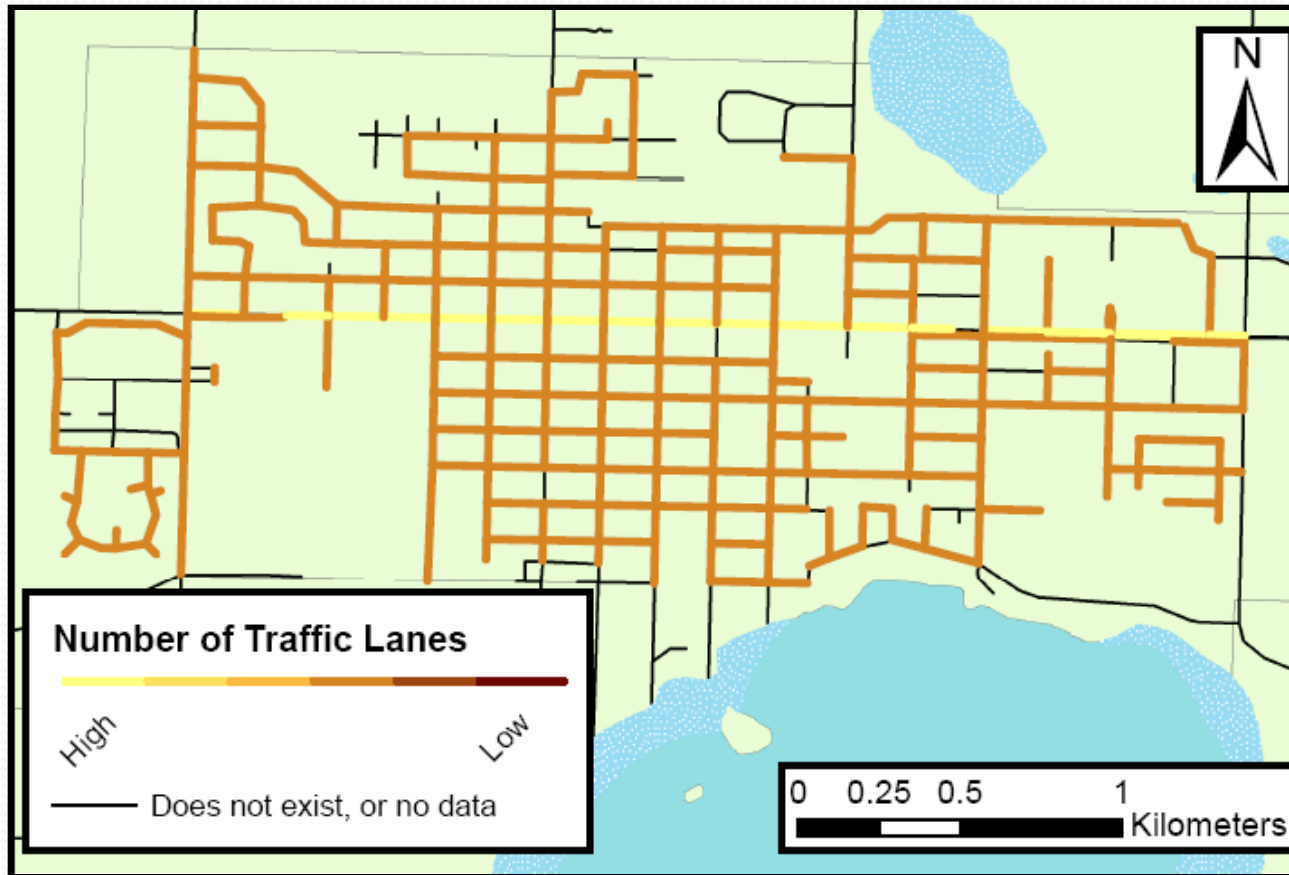
# Traffic Safety – Walking

- Number of Traffic Lanes
- Sidewalk Buffer
- On-Street Parking



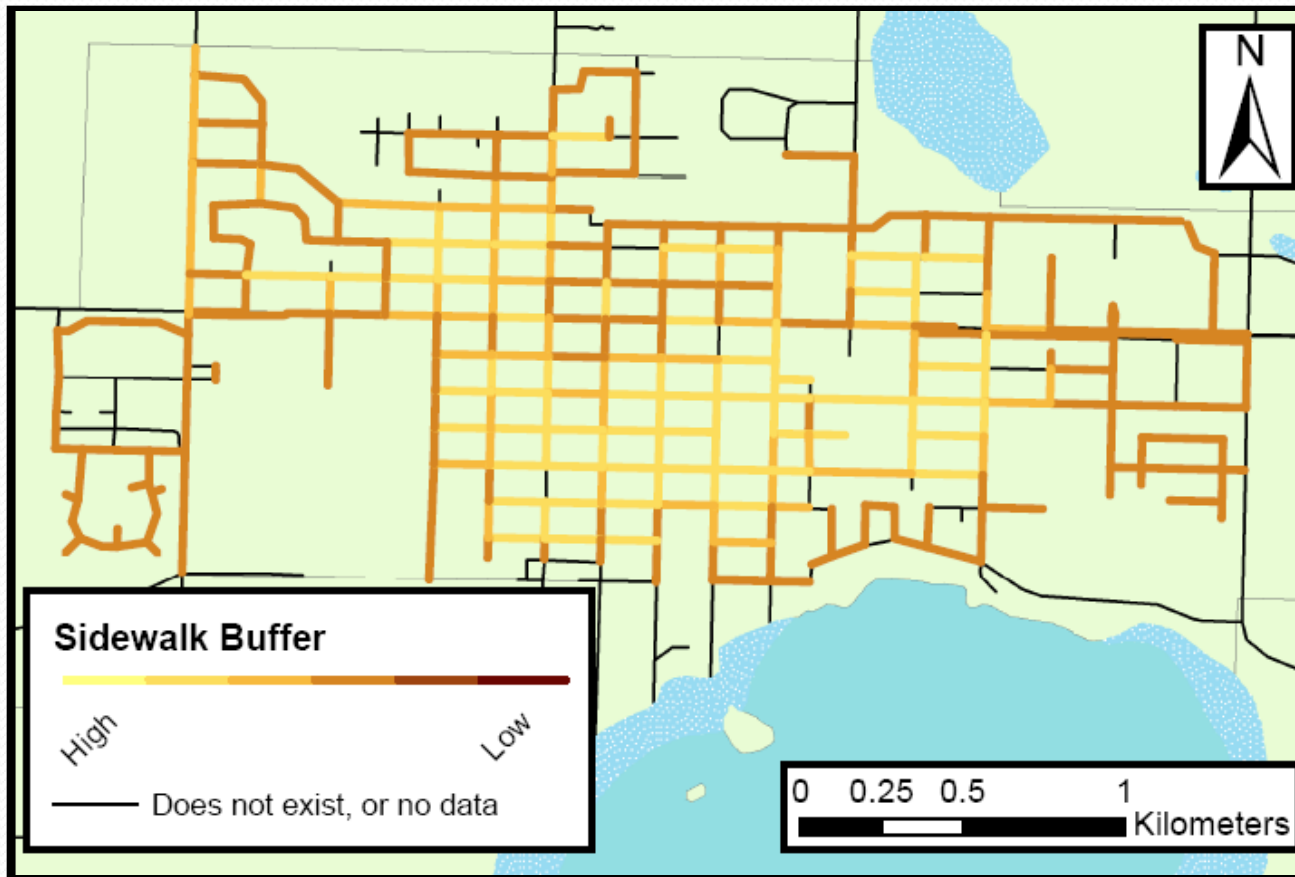
Areas with safer road crossings encourage pedestrian traffic.

# Number of Traffic Lanes



Fewer traffic lanes indicate a higher level of traffic safety.

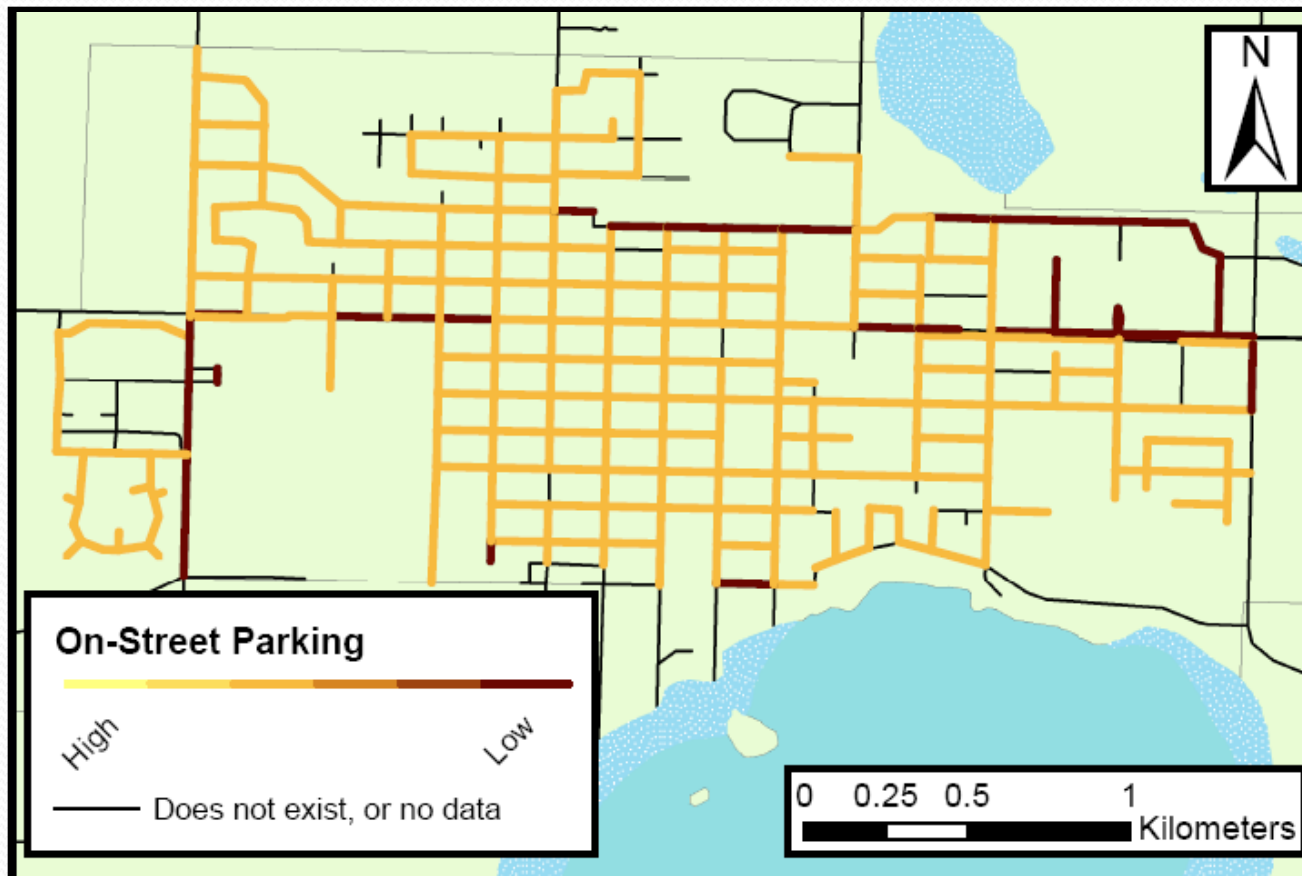
# Sidewalk Buffer



A sidewalk buffer is anything that creates a physical barrier between the sidewalk and the road, for example: a guard rail, or a landscaped strip.

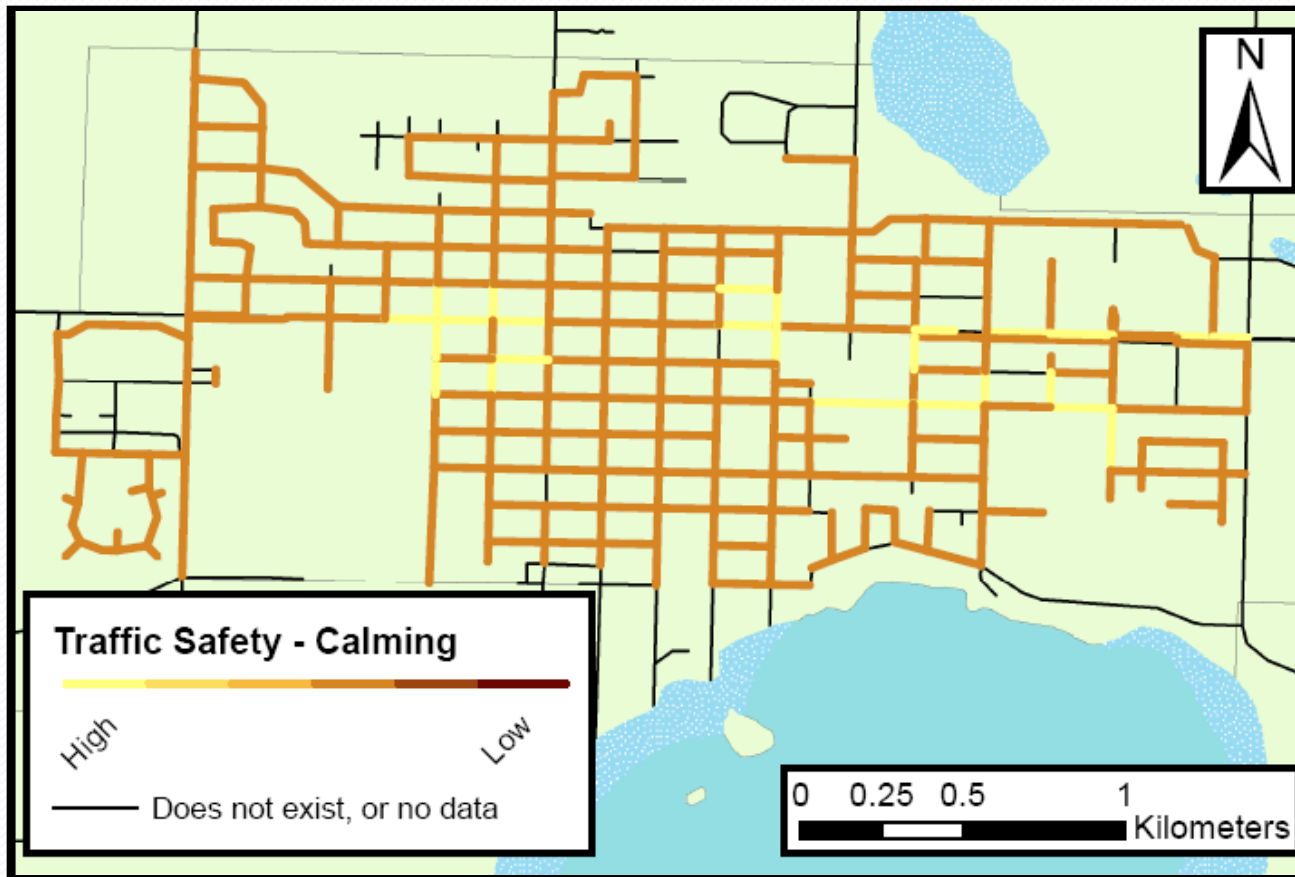
A barrier between the sidewalk and road indicates a higher level of traffic safety.

# On-Street Parking



On-street parking indicates a higher level of traffic safety.

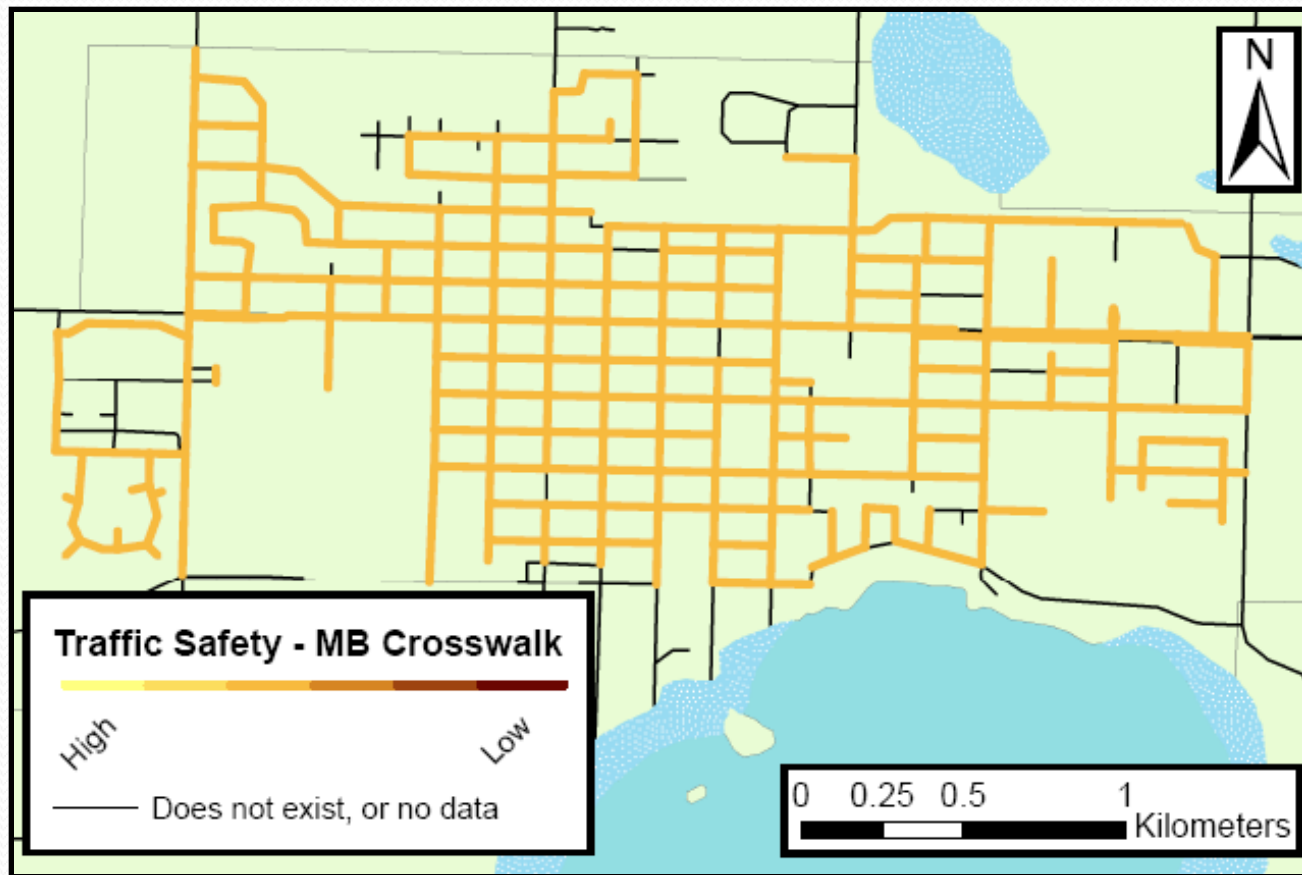
# Traffic Safety – Calming



Traffic calming features can include: speed bumps, rumble strips, curb extensions, medians and school zone signs.

Presence of traffic calming features indicates a higher level of traffic safety.

# Traffic Safety – Mid-block Crosswalk



No mid-block crosswalks were observed in St. Paul.



# How this Information can Help

- This analysis identifies **opportunities** and **barriers** for community residents choosing to be physically active.
  - **Opportunities** can be promoted.
    - For example: The creation of walking and cycling routes where segments are identified as being safe and accessible.
  - **Barriers** can be broken down.
    - For example: The installation of benches where there are curb cuts and crosswalks to make areas more accessible for seniors.

# Key Lessons Learned to Support the Creation of Healthy Community Environments

- Need to look at **built** and **social environments** in **combination** to better understand how to support community health.
- **Engage community** in all aspects of initiatives to foster local action.
- **Small, incremental changes** can have a large impact.
- **Share information** and **create connections** with multiple levels of stakeholders.
- **Collaborate around shared goals** to increase success.

# Thank you for your interest!

For more information, please contact:

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