



## Comstock - Days of Yore

It likely began with the streetcars. In 1888, the Montrose Electric Company or “Cook’s Line” started downtown and ended at the car house near 37th and Grand. Streetcars also ran to 33rd along Division. The streetcar era ended in 1936. But during that time, homes, schools and businesses were built in the vicinity of the north-south rails at Division and Grand while other parts of Comstock remained un-platted or undeveloped.



In 1906, Spokane College, a four year liberal arts school that included a law school, was built in the area that is now Manito Shopping Center. Amenities across the street included a library and drug store. Jefferson Elementary began as a two-room school house at 38th Avenue and Hatch Street in 1908 before moving to the two-story brick building at Grand and 37th in 1909.



Manito Boulevard was built in 1907 as part of Manito Addition (between 14th and 33rd and Division and Hatch). The boulevard stretched from Manito Park to approximately 35th Avenue where the developers had sold 50 acres to the Spokane Country Club in 1903, expecting that the presence of the golf course would help promote home sales in the surrounding area. The club built a clubhouse on the site, but the facility burned down in 1908 and the club moved in 1910. Next, Manito Golf & Country Club was founded on the same site in 1917. Then in 1922, the Club permanently moved to its current location, between 44th and 53rd. In 1925, Lewis & Clark’s Principal Hart secured the Hart Field property for the school and community.



In their 1913 report to the Spokane Park Board, the Olmsted Brothers recommended building High Drive Parkway and extending Manito Boulevard from 35th directly south to High Drive. These were among several roads recommended for the purpose of “pleasure driving and walking” and to connect parks.

By the second quarter of the twentieth century, residential development began to boom south of 35th Avenue (east of Bernard) and in post war 1947, the Manito Boulevard Extension was completed, curving west along 35th then south at Division to High Drive. To serve the growing neighborhood, an addition to Jefferson Elementary was made in 1948 and Manito Elementary was built on the west side of Hart Field (1952-1961).

Comstock Park, dedicated in 1938, was originally designed for recreation and youth activities. The swimming pool was state of the



The Comstock Neighborhood Council meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:00pm, at Sacajawea Middle School, 401 E. 33rd Ave.

[comstock.spokaneneighborhoods.org/](http://comstock.spokaneneighborhoods.org/)



art for its time and was large enough for a tournament. Originally surrounded by mostly vacant land, by 1958 there was a new residential neighborhood to the west and south along 33rd. The south side of the park is owned by the school district and was once the site of Comstock Elementary School (1956 – 1972).

In 1960, a portion of Hart Field at 33rd became the site of Sacajawea Middle School. In 1969, after being used by two colleges, World War II soldiers, and apartment dwellers, the Spokane College building at 29th and Grand was torn down to make way for Manito Shopping Center. Most recently, land tracts south and east of Comstock Park and along High Drive have filled in with mid to high-end residences.

## Life in Comstock - Today

Location, fun, and fitness. This is a neighborly place where people can walk or bike to destinations such as the South Hill Library, Manito Post Office, restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, banks, dry cleaners, schools, and churches or synagogues.

Weekday mornings in Comstock might include a morning jog through the neighborhood or to Manito Park. Neighborhood children can walk, bike or bus to Jefferson Elementary or Sacajawea Middle School. Getting to work in Downtown Spokane is easy by city bus or private automobile, and some prefer to bicycle.

Evenings and weekends might include a stop at Rocket Market to stock up for a picnic at Comstock or Manito Park, take a wine tasting class, or enjoy outdoor live music in the summer. For those seeking exercise or outdoor recreation there are private fitness centers, a private golf and country club, or community amenities. Comstock Park has a pool large enough for lap swimmers as well as tennis and basketball courts. Scenic High Drive overlooking the Latah Valley is a great place to bike, share a sunset, catch a lightning storm, walk close to nature, or simply take in some fresh air. The drive was recently upgraded to include dedicated bike lanes and just off High Drive, hikers and mountain bikers can enjoy breathtaking views while exploring 25 miles of South Hill Bluff Trails. Tree lined Manito Boulevard has been called a “walker’s haven” and the neighborhood takes pride in the fact that the street pavement is shared with people using all modes of transportation including bicycles, strollers, and wheelchairs. In the winter, cross country skiers make tracks through the boulevard from Hart Field to Manito Park.

Residents tend to describe the neighborhood as established, family friendly, safe and stable. Some neighbors keep in touch with one another through block parties and neighborhood meetings. Many see each other when out walking, jogging or biking. Housing ranges from small and affordable to large and expensive. Regardless of size, homes tend to be well maintained. Likewise the people who live here are diverse; they have varied interests, religious preferences, and professions. But many voice a shared appreciation for the location,







affordability, walkable tree lined streets, neighborhood shopping center, outdoor recreation opportunities, and healthy lifestyle.

### Comstock - Treasures

- Comstock Park
- Scenic High Drive
- The Bluff Trails off High Drive
- Rocket Market
- South Hill Library
- Manito Golf & Country Club
- Manito Boulevard
- Manito Shopping Center
- 31 acre Hart Sports Field



### Comstock - Natural & Built Identity

Manito Golf & Country Club, Comstock Park, Manito Boulevard, High Drive and Hart Field help establish a neighborhood character of rolling lawns and park-like stands of trees and ponderosa. There is a feeling of openness despite the fact that typical residential lots are relatively small and range from two to seven homes per acre. While buildings vary widely in terms of period, style, cost, and materials, most are relatively small scale and two stories or less. A few date to the early 1900s, but the majority of the existing neighborhood was built post World War II. Neighborhood services, retail and restaurants in the Manito Shopping Center help maintain a fresh vibe in this 1960s automobile strip mall. Within the neighborhood, the terrain is relatively level with occasional basalt outcrops and low basalt walls. Most streets are on a grid and some older sections of the neighborhood (generally in the vicinity of Grand Avenue) still have the original sidewalks and street trees. In post war and more recently developed areas, quiet streets wind through well-maintained lawns and front landscaping. At the far western edge along High Drive the residential patterns give way to native vegetation, dramatic topography, and expansive sunset views across the Latah Valley.



### Comstock - Neighborhood Tales

- *“Manito Golf and Country Club used to be on the west side of Hatch Road before the club house was moved to the east side and Quail Run gated community was developed. My girlfriends and I would pick up lost golf balls and sell them to her dad for 5 for 25 cents.*



- *“There were two ‘penny candy’ stores, one at 37th & Grand across from Sigman’s Grocery and one on Grand just south of 29th, before Manito Shopping Center was developed.*
- *“There was a gas station near the current post office on Grand that rented tandem bikes for 50 cents an hour.*
- *“Learning to swim at Comstock Swimming Pool.”*

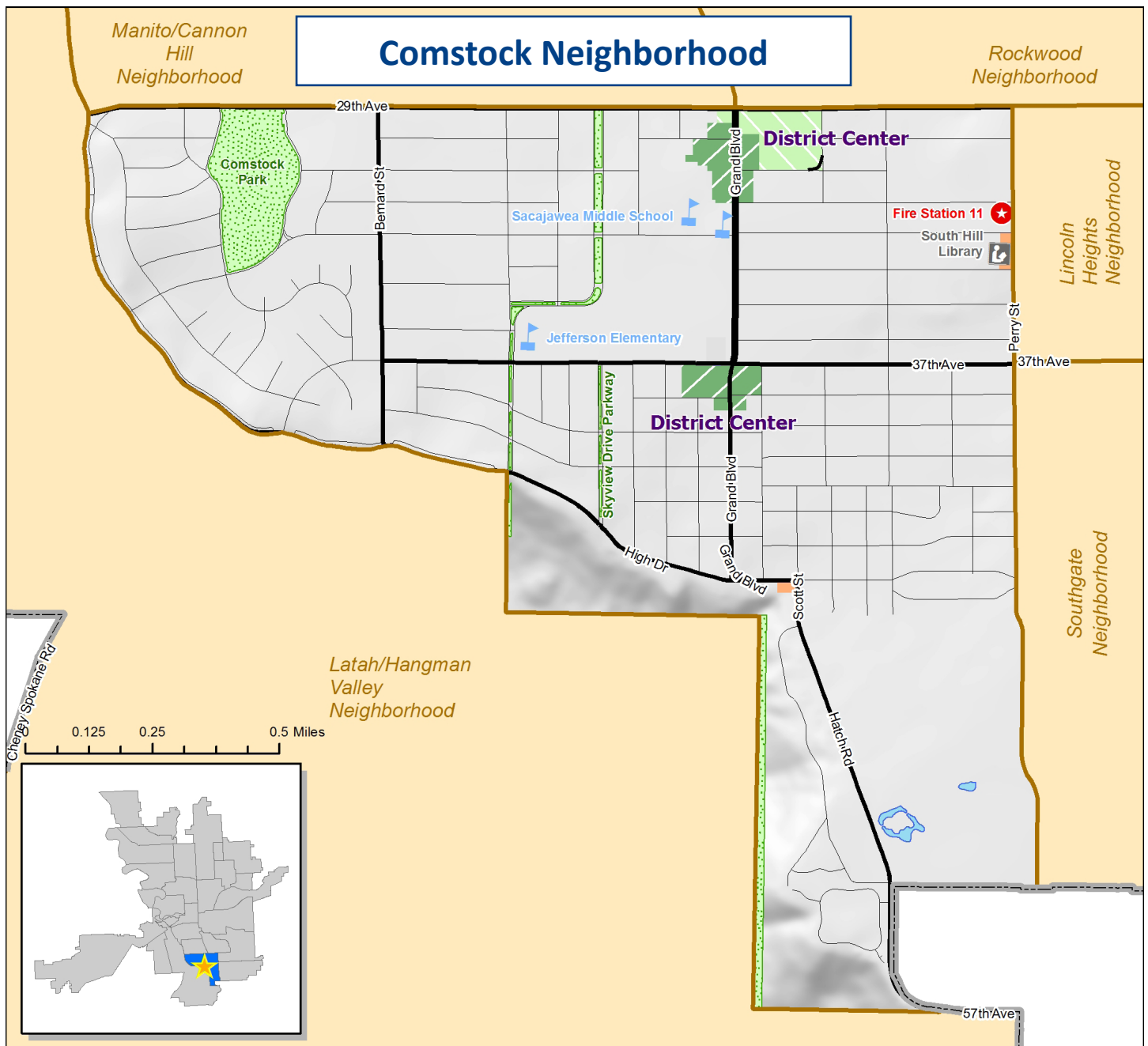
-M. Wittstruck

*“We were feeling more than a little apprehensive about the decision to move to Spokane to be closer to family. It was late October 2002 and moving day from West Seattle into a vintage craftsman home on Manito Boulevard. The boulevard was vivid gold in the sunshine and our new neighbors were raking up knee high piles of leaves. As the day unfolded, there was a steady stream of foot and bike traffic on the boulevard, children played in giant mounds of leaves, and the few cars that passed were obviously there to enjoy the fall colors. Soon afterwards, a group of neighbors invited my husband and me to dinner. At Halloween we were pleasantly surprised by the steady stream of trick-or-treaters. In early December, there was a knock on the door and our neighbors invited us to walk with them to a holiday party a few blocks away. We protested, not wanting to barge in on the hosts and were assured that they wouldn’t mind. We were met with genuine warmth at a small, very crowded house and were excited to meet some of the amazing people who call Spokane home. By the night of that party we were confident that the move was a great decision.”*

-J. Neff

### **Comstock - Annual Events or Activities**

- Annual Labor Day Concert at Comstock Park
- Summer Parkways – Manito/Comstock Neighborhoods
- Doggy Dip at Comstock Pool



#### SOURCES

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