



Southgate - Days of Yore

The northern portion of Moran Prairie, which became the Southgate neighborhood, was used for a natural travel route by Native Americans between Latah Creek and the Spokane River. Later, the Mullan military road traversed the neighborhood near what is now Havana Street. It served as the main road for travelers through the region. These routes provided early access to white settlers.

The first settler to homestead in the area was Joe Jackson from Missouri, who offered a supply stop to traveling prospectors and trappers. He sold his farm to Joseph Morin, a French-Canadian bachelor, around 1870. The Morin property became known as the Morin Ranch. A mail station was established near the farm to serve mail carriers and their horses passing through prior to rail service through Spokane in 1877.



After Morin's death in 1889, caused by a loose bull, John J. Browne acquired the farm and nearby property northwest of 57th Avenue and Glenrose Road, where he and his sons farmed. The place names of Moran Prairie, with spelling altered, and nearby Browne's Mountain carry the names of these early residents.



Browne, a businessman described as Spokane's first millionaire, helped bring the electric Spokane & Inland Empire Railroad to his farm on Moran Prairie in 1908. The railroad was later known as the Spokane, Coeur d'Alene and Palouse Railway and the Inland Electric Railroad. This railroad served the Pine Grove Station in the Southgate neighborhood at the intersection of 37th Avenue and Havana Street, communities to the south, and several nearby stations until 1939, accommodating the development of fruit orchards on the prairie. Portions of this railroad bed are now part of the Ben Burr Trail.



The early hub of commercial activity was at the corner of Regal Street and Palouse Highway, where a series of stores were built and rebuilt after destruction by fires. Fruit growing ended due to regional surpluses following the formation of irrigation districts and loss of transportation viability. After a period of prosperity, many "acre-tract" dwellers along the railroad abandoned their homes and orchards in the 1930s, which were eventually destroyed by fire. A new wave of greenhouse and chicken farming arrived during the 1940s and 1950s. These forms of agriculture, in turn, were gradually replaced by commercial and housing development.



The area north of 44th Avenue and west of Havana Street was annexed in 1907, with several later annexations occurring after 1958 as Spokane expanded to the south. Ferris High School was built and opened in 1963.

Southgate - Today

The Southgate neighborhood is family-oriented and safe, established well-kept. It has some newer apartments and commercial development such as Regal Center. In addition to families, the neighborhood is mainly comprised of retirees and professionals. Much of the neighborhood is laid back and friendly, with kids playing. Many neighbors are quiet and respectful, drawn to the neighborhood by the character of the South Hill—its people and mid-century, wooded residential developments—or because they grew up here. People are proud to call the neighborhood home because of its good schools, low crime and well-maintained homes. Younger families live near Ferris High School and longtime residents live near the Manito Golf and Country Club adjacent to the west side of the neighborhood.



Southgate residents chat on the street and attend sporting events, block parties, dinners, barbecues and games at neighbors' houses. Most shopping can be done within the neighborhood, although downtown is close and easily accessible. Residents support small businesses such as local coffee shops, restaurants and markets.

People enjoy the ability to walk to schools, businesses, and parks. Bicycling on newer trails and long-established side streets is growing in popularity. Residents and recreationalists take pride in the neighborhood's location as a transition from the city onto the surrounding Palouse countryside. For fun, many neighbors walk and bike in the neighborhood and in the rural area just south of town, with popular destinations including the nearby Southside Aquatic Complex, Ben Burr Park and Trail, and the Hazel's Creek natural area. Residents continue to focus on achieving better connections to address pedestrian and bicycling needs.



Southgate - Treasures

- Ferris High School and its music department make residents proud.
- The Hazel's Creek wildlife area is a great natural feature in the center of the neighborhood. Its network of trails leads to area parks and is used by students accessing Ferris High School.
- The Moran Prairie Library is a favorite destination for lifelong learning, with books, movies, music, and programs for adults and children.





Southgate - Natural & Built Identity

- Southgate draws identity from wildlife, groves of conifer trees, fields, basalt rocks, parks, and neighborhood gardens. Migratory birds, deer, coyotes and occasional moose can be observed.
- The residential neighborhood next to the Southside Sports Complex features a nice greenspace, nearby public transit and streets that are bicycle-friendly.
- Typical houses are traditional ranchers or two-story homes with tidy lawns and landscaping. Multi-level homes with varying roof cuts are common.
- Hamblen Park boasts a natural area and a playground near Hamblen Elementary.
- The 44th Avenue walking trail between Freya and Havana Streets and the Ben Burr Trail south of Myrtle Street are daily destinations for neighbors to exercise or visit while strolling.
- The Ben Burr Loop features long road runs and rides south of town, with minimal traffic, great views and occasional sightings of wildlife. Runners and cyclists are surrounded by foothills, fields, deer, coyotes, hummingbirds, and spectacular sunsets.
- Ben Burr Park provides basketball, a walking/biking trail and play equipment for young children.
- The Southgate Shopping Center is home to large stores such as Target and ShopKo, with many other retail and recreational facilities, such as hardware stores, an exercise gymnasium, pet shops and fine restaurants and pubs.



Southgate - Neighborhood Tales

"Waiting for a shuttle bus, an elderly woman asked if I needed a ride home since I was a veteran."

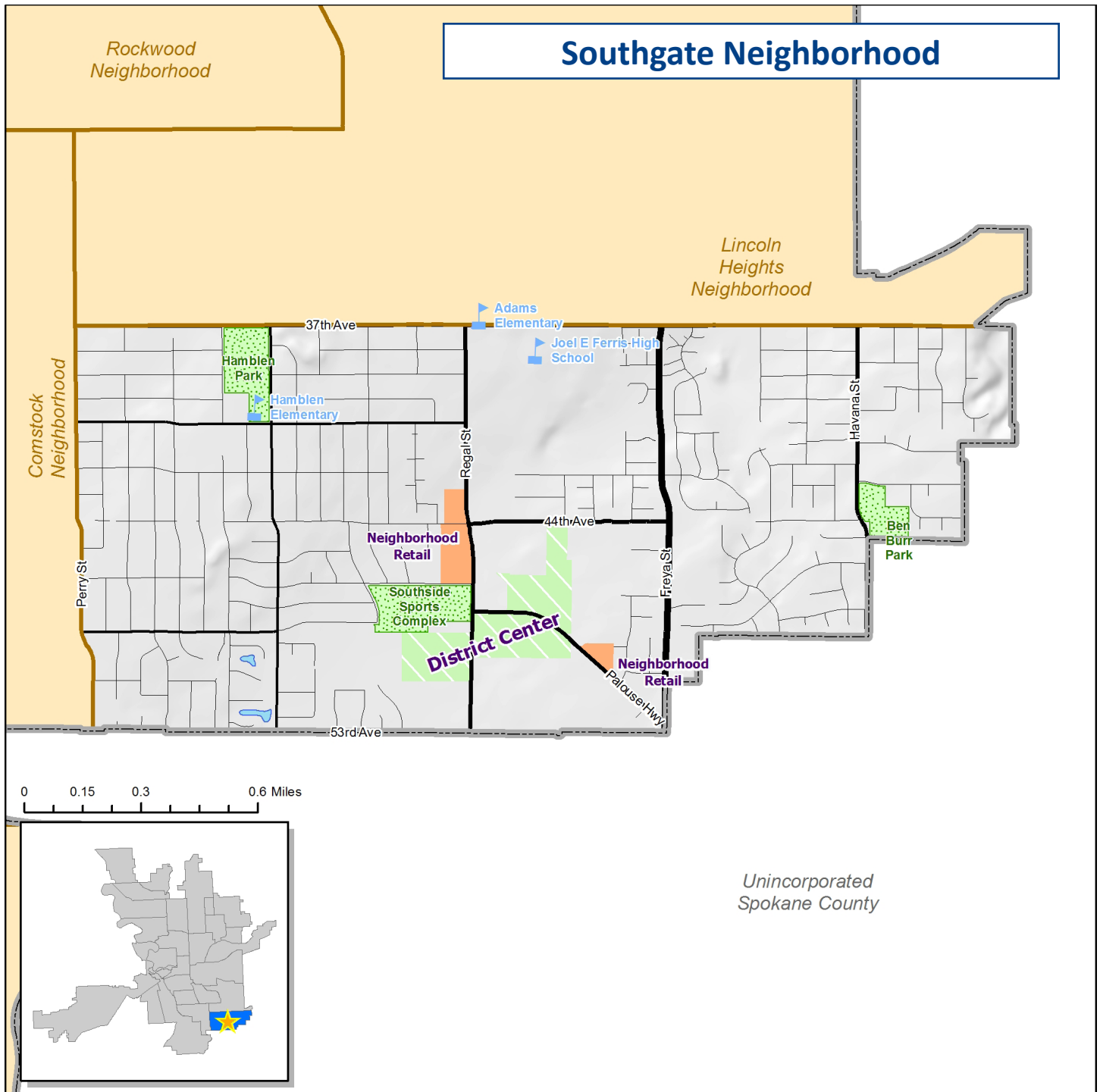
– David James Skjonsby

"There has been more than one occasion in the fall when we have seen moose in our neighborhood. One time we opened the garage door and a moose was standing in our yard eating off our willow tree."

– Resident



Southgate Neighborhood



Unincorporated
Spokane County

SOURCES

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Surveys of neighborhood residents conducted fall 2014.

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