

1894
 Wetmore Cove was, in pioneer days, the mouth of a slough that extended south to the present Genesee Street, westerly across the present Rainier Playfield becoming a ravine that is now Columbia Park and Columbia School; Columbia City was founded almost on its shore. The big plan for the town was to make it into a port by dredging the slough.

(The slough was named for a pioneer farm family: Birsey Wetmore. Seymour Wetmore founded Seattle's first tannery and shoe making business in 1855; insufficient business forced his partner to relocate - M. D. Woodin, founder of Woodinville. One of the founders of Everett was named Wetmore; one of two whaleboats operating in Pacific waters in 1891 was named Chas. W. Wetmore.)

The name GENESEE appeared in 1904 on a plat filed by W. C. Squire of The Union Trust Company; an area just west of the playfield. Genesee is a Seneca Indian word - "geneseo" meaning "beautiful valley" and was descriptive of a river valley in New York State. It indicates the quality of the slough in pioneer days. ("Genesee" is now the name of that New York County; also the geologic rock outcropping found

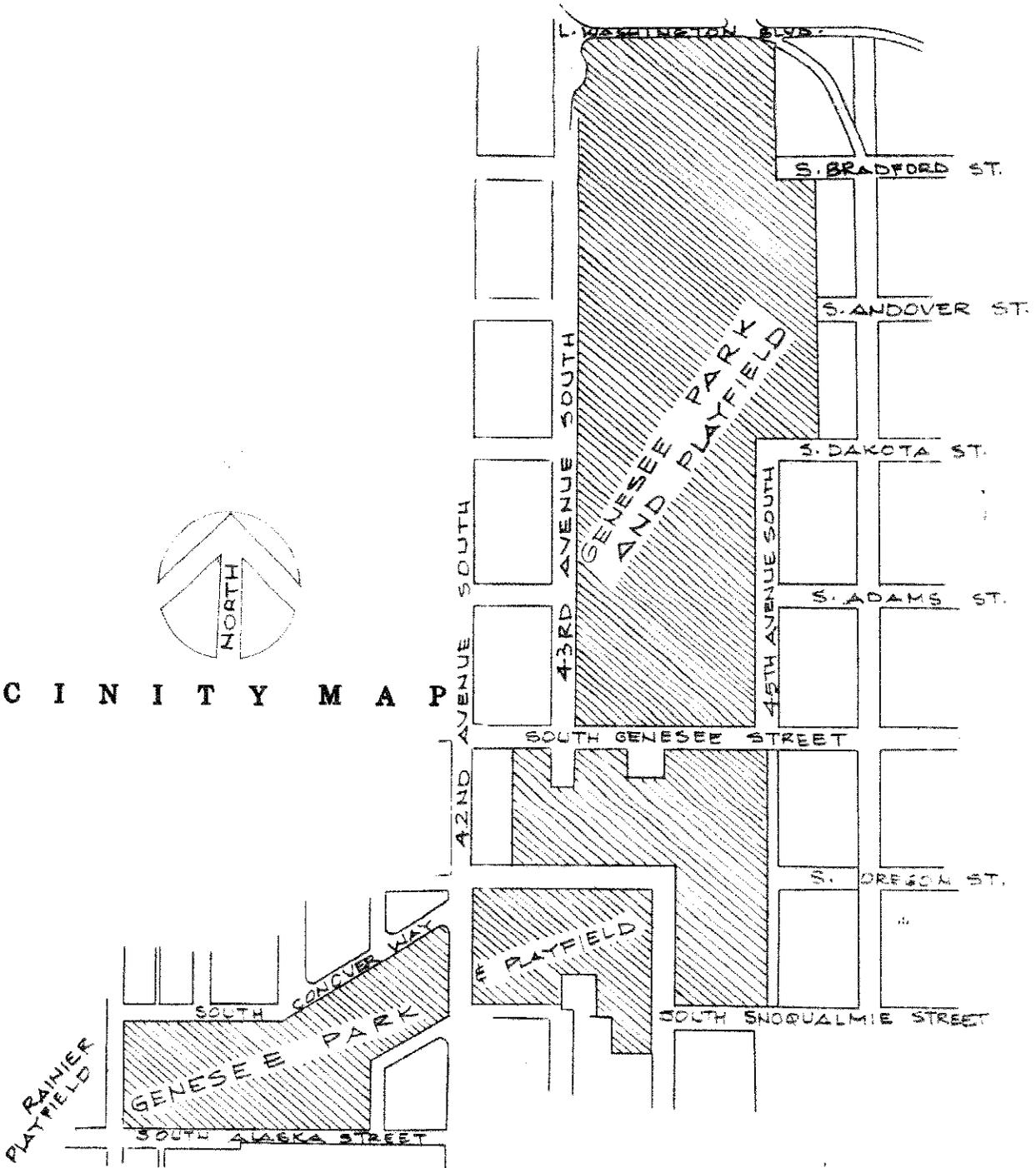
there.) This playfield was so identified in 1963; in 1957 it had been included with Sayres Park; petition of Greater Seattle.

Filling of the slough began about 1890 with the development of Rainier Avenue, alongside the trolley car ("interurban") from the Pioneer Square "hub" to the town of Rainier Beach. The opening of the Ship Canal in 1917 lowered the level of Lake Washington by some 9', draining the slough and the townfolk hopes for a "seaport"; the shallow waters at the mouth of the slough emerged as an island - the basis for the later Sayres Park. By 1920 both Columbia Park and Rainier Playfield were filled and Genesee Street was "filled" across it. The 1910 trestle that crossed the slough and turned southward along the shoreline (Lake Washington Boulevard) left high and dry was replaced with a fill by WPA (1937). In 1945 the community petitioned for a much-needed playfield in the old slough. Two years later the City bought the slough property in compliance with the request of the Congress for a nationwide plan of possible small craft airports to meet the anticipated needs of the next 20 years. The acquisition ordinance specified the alternate purpose for park and recreation. Then began a long period of "sanitary" (garbage) filling between Genesee Street and the boulevard - the smell, rats and seagulls being of great annoyance to the community until it was completed in 1963. Compaction of the fill was somewhat hastened when parking was permitted after the development in 1957 of the Sayres hydro pits for the Gold Cup races during Seafair.

The abandonment of the "Mount Baker" District Foreman's service quarters (+ bathhouse) in the old Pumping Station in Colman Park, together with the acquisition of "WING" buildings on the site of Soundview Playfield resulted in the relocation of the District headquarters to this site in 1961, using two of the WING buildings: bolted, pre-fab metal because the zoning variance permit from Council was conditioned on this being a temporary location, and subject to future development. Planning had been in progress since about 1955, even though the Planning Commission advised against the need for a major athletic field: they anticipated the (20 years hence) need for a playground with elementary school plus picnic areas - portions of which would be suitable for "Seafair Race" parking (1959 report based upon the 1954 "Planning for Recreation"). However, the 1960 bond issue promised "Park and Playfield Development" when the fill has sufficiently settled. In 1965 the unstable fill thwarted efforts to build four tennis courts; only two completed. The fill also developed a seepage problem, polluting Lake Washington. Meanwhile most of the remaining slough had been acquired and the filling completed in 1968; and became a Forward Thrust project. In a 1970 letter, a "13-year" resident pleaded the cause of duck, geese, pheasant, squirrel and raccoon who no longer had a place to rest, scamper or hide.

History: GENESEE PLAYFIELD
 WETMORE SLOUGH

V I C I N I T Y M A P



DEVELOPMENT:

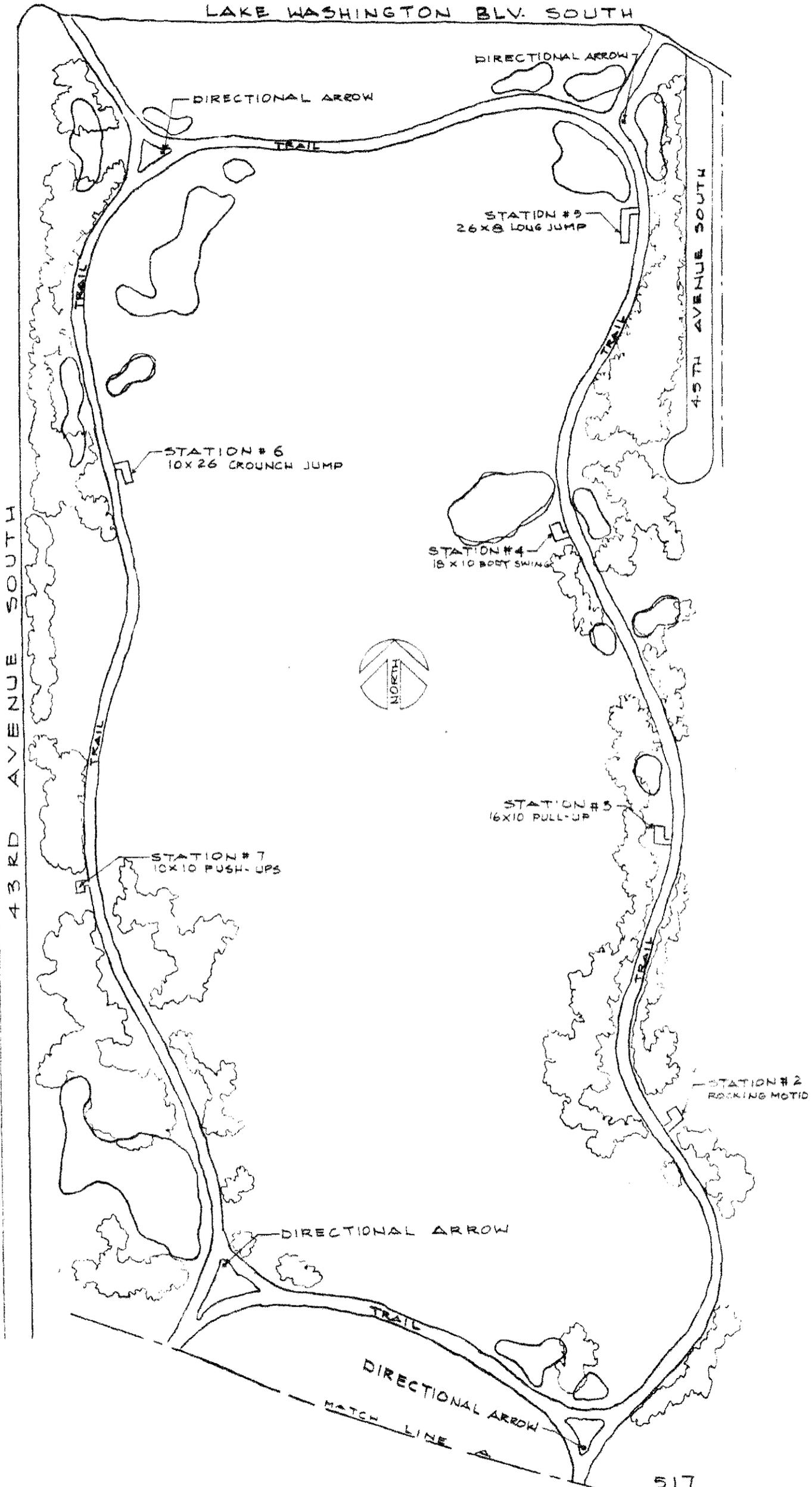
YEAR OF IMPROVEMENT: 1980-82
 COST OF IMPROVEMENT: \$ 817,736
 DESIGNER:
 CONTRACTOR: SUN UP, INC.

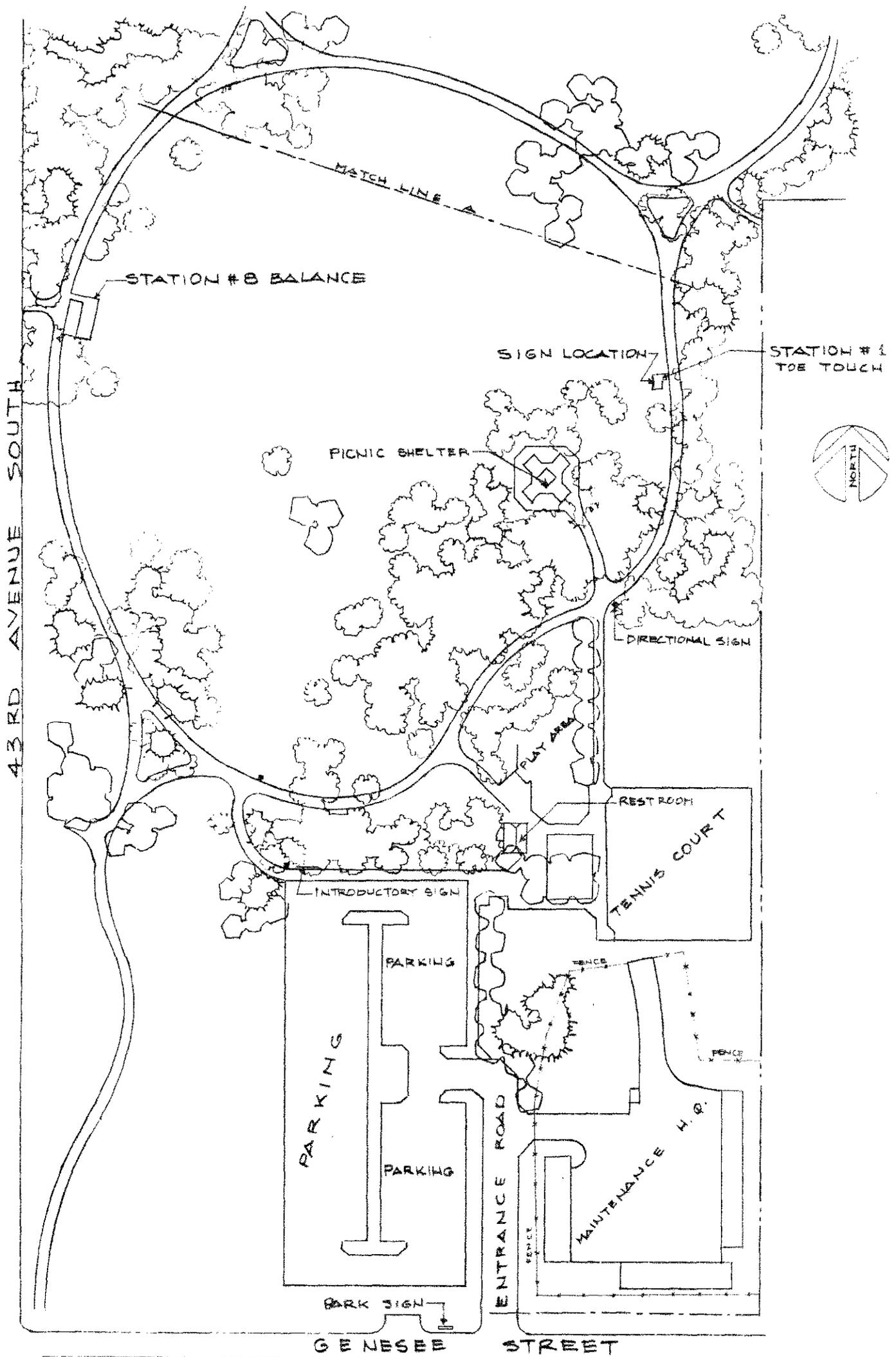
PROPERTY:

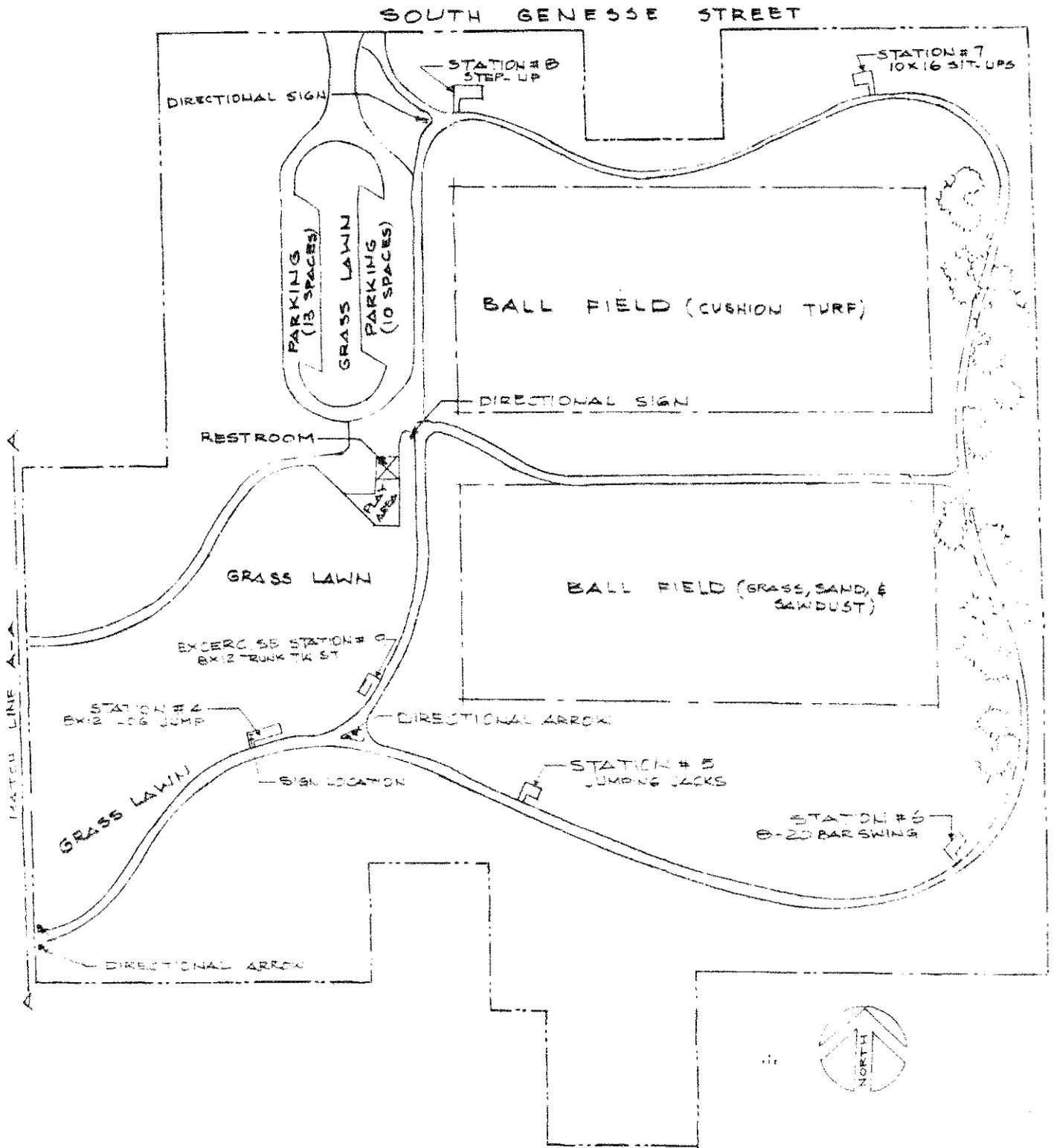
DATE OF PURCHASE: 1947 (AIRPORT SITE(S): 17,152' CR) = \$8,400 =
 + 15 = (\$ 22,023 = 60 BF)
 TRANSF. JURISD. 1963 (NORTH OF S. GENESEE ST.) = 36.2 AC.
 1969 (SOUTH OF S. GENESEE ST.) = 15.7 AC.

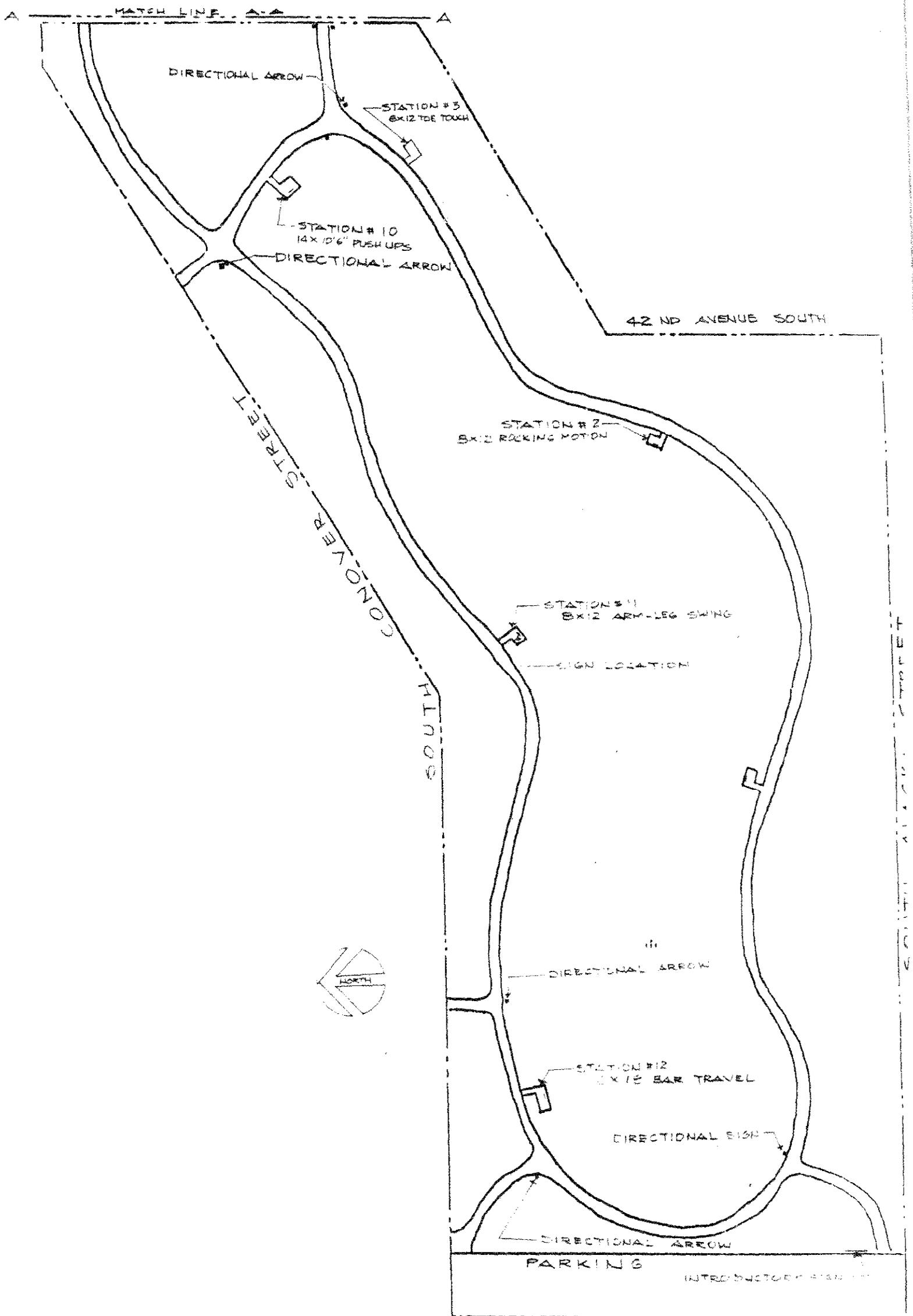
517
 03 20 86
 GENESEE PARK
 (FORMER WETMORE SLOUGH)
 SHEET 1 OF 5

LAKE WASHINGTON BLV. SOUTH









SAYRES PARK

Lake Washington



42ND AVE. SO.

S. Bradford

43RD AVE. SO.

S. Andover St.

S. Dakota St.

S. Adams St.

S. Genesee St. Bus # 39

"WETMORE" Fill Area

Transf. Sta.

S. Adams St.

Genesee is the name of a river + county in N.Y.; from Seneca word - "geneseo" meaning "beautiful valley"; also designates geologic rock formation that area (Paleozoic - Devonian). First used on plat to west by W.C. Swine, Union Trust Co., 1908

Proposed 4 Softball + 2 Hardball fields
(Must wait until fill settles properly - 1973±)
(Developments Funds in 1960 Bond Fund)

Flying of model planes by permit only

(Used for public parking during "Seefair Races")

Proposed Blacktop Parking

Proposed: Picnic Area

Proposed: Shelter Hse. Children Play Area

Lighted 2 Tennis Ct.

S.E. Dist. H.Q.

Garbage Truck Yard

S.E. DISTRICT H.Q. - 4420 S. Genesee

PA 5-3204

36.5 Ac. (Incl. Sewer Easement)

Purch. 1947 (w/ Interbay, etc. total \$17,132 CR) = \$8,400 + 1961 (\$22,023 = 60 BF)

Jurisdic. withhold until completion of sanitary fill - 1963

HQ area built 1961 - old WNG bldgs. from Soundview Pk

Includes Arnold Sadler Physical Fitness Course.

GENESEE P.F.

Park

