

Cowen Park + Ravenna Blvd. originally were a deep ravine like Ravenna Park, having been cut by drainage from the post-Ice Age "Lake Russell" (formed by melt-off from the "Vashon Glacial Ice Sheet," 50,000 years ago). The glacial basin remaining is "Green Lake" which continued to drain through this ravine until about 1911; installation of sewer and first fill in Boulevard; most recent fill @ Cowen Park in 1961 w/dirt from Seattle Freeway. Stream is now mostly spring-fed (some are mineral). Drains into Union Bay; shoreline (until 1917) is indicated by big curve of railroad.

COWEN PARK: (west of 15th Ave.) named for Charles Cowen who gave the park believing that "Man does not live by bread alone"; gatepost inscript. Of English birth, spent childhood at family diamond mine in South Africa. Came to U.S. on business, remained as resident on San Juan estate; Haynes-Cowen Real Estate + Insurance. The present 15th Ave. Bridge built (1938), replacing wooden street car trestle; a spur track went along Service Drive til 1941.

RAVENNA PARK: named c. 1889 by the original owner and developer: W.W. Beck, because ravine reminded him of Ravenna, Italy, famed for its pine trees. [Ravenna, Italy, was a Roman naval base, seaport and capital of Italy under Byzantine Empire; scene of Battle of 1512] Other names used by Beck were "Big Tree Pk.", "Ravenna Springs", + "Twin Maple Lane." After purch. by Seattle, the name was changed in 1919 to honor Teddy Roosevelt who had died that January. However a popular petition in 1931 restored the name Ravenna. By then the huge trees had died + been removed. By another petition the southeast corner was filled for a playground + WPA (1931) built a large scenic wading pool fed by Ravenna Creek. It was abandoned in 1950, after a long stagnation caused by drain failure; filled in 1964 by Metro Sewer excavation. x F.O.R 1923-1945

sheet 1
COWEN/RAVENNA PK.
RAVENNA BLVD. sheet 3
(BECK PL.) ENGR.

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The melt-off of the Vashon Glacial Ice Sheet formed the huge Lake Russell - cut drainage ravines through the new glacial fill, one being the Ravenna Park ravine. Lake Russell disappeared when the Ice Sheet retreated north of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, but various features remained including the Green Lake drainage basin, which continued to empty thru the Ravenna ravine into Lake Washington. The deeper pockets of the basin became Bitter, Holler and Green Lakes. Many creeks & brooks - and springs - fed into Green Lake whose outlet was on the east side. The route of Ravenna Boulevard, in a deepening ravine becoming Cowen and B. Parks. The levels of Green Lake and Lake Washington were higher than: the Bay claimed the area from the U.W. Stadium thru the University Village. For centuries the Indian tribes had co-existed with forest, creeks & lakes and wildlife: settlers coming by wagon and ship brought sawmills and farm equipment - and cleared the wilderness. The Ravenna Creek dwindled in volume but still the Olmsted Plan 1904 recommended a boulevard on each bank of the Creek, from the Green Lake Boulevard to Cowen Park thence to connect with the 17th Avenue Blvd. south of the University Grounds (site of the proposed A-Y-P Exposition: 1909) to connect the proposed Lake Washington Blvd. at Washington Park. The Ravenna/Cowen Ravine with its magnificent Big Trees had been saved from the loggers (as had in Park) but other plotting by Realtors in the area did not always consider the natural contours or features with the result that route of the proposed Ravenna Blvd. side the Creek necessitated the Condemnation across property or the widening of platted street properties. Wm. Sarginson, et al, successfully petitioned the Council for curving portion of the boulevard from 15th Avenue to the southeast portion of B. Park.

Then came the development of Green Lake Park and the Engineering Dept. for a 48" diameter brick Trunk Sewer alongside the Ravenna Creek! The level of Green Lake was lowered by 7 feet (!) in order to increase the amount of shoreland for park purposes at Green Lake. Ravenna Creek bed went dry and the new outlet for Green Lake was into a 24" pipe to Cowen Park, but this was replaced by discharging into the Trunk Sewer. So the Ravenna Creek Ravine was filled in, from Green Lake to Cowen Park (half of Cowen was filled in 1960) and in 1912 the center strip of Boulevard route was improved with "Dolarway Paving" - 4 years later repaved with asphalt. The new plan for the Boulevard was the "New York Plan": a center strip with a traffic roadway on each side, separated by planting strips. The Engineering Dept. was to construct the two traffic roadways, which they began in 1912 and were complete until 1925. However, improvement of the planting strips included a sidewalk on one and a bridle path on the other.

The Boulevard route had included several "named" streets: Meadow Place, B. Blvd. and Sarginson Road; so in 1908 an Ordinance established the name of 22nd BOULEVARD for the entire length. [17th Ave. was established as University Blvd. in 1904 and developed and maintained by this Dept. until repealed by Ordinance in 1951.]

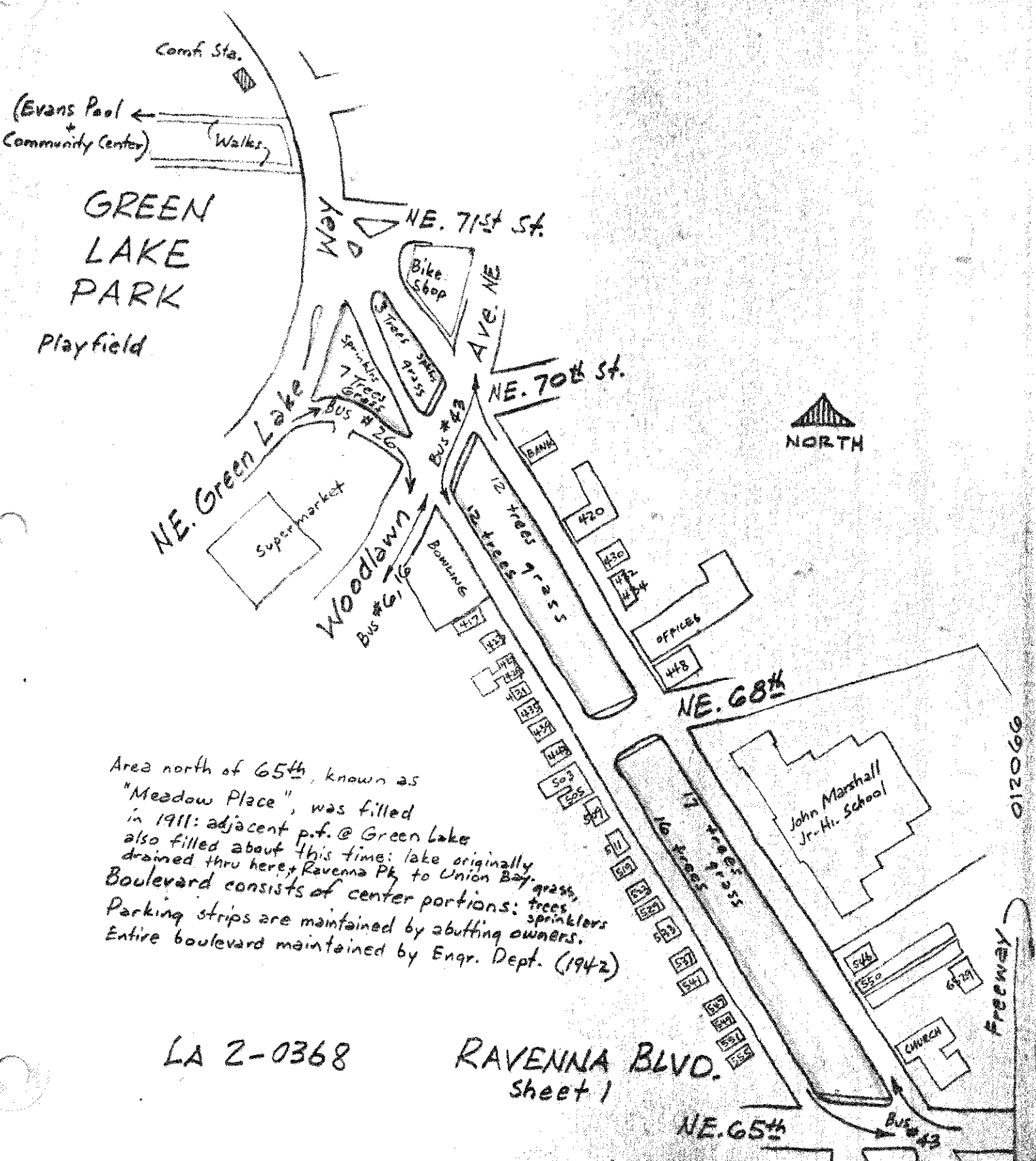
In 1915 letters from Chas. Cowen and the Seattle Automobile Club propose to improve boulevard paving because it is part of the "Great Road, the Pacific Hiway, leading from Vancouver, B.C. to San Diego, Calif." ("The Budget would permit only grading and paving. The Age of the Auto Tourist had come: the Seattle Auto Club was founded in 1904, the Auto Tourist Camp was established in Woodland Park in 1922 and the Transcontinental Auto Caravan was commemorated at Alki Beach in 1926. Except for gas rationing during WWII Auto Tourism rose to the peak of 1973 when faced with the Energy Crisis shortages.

By 1934 requests for a Bicycle Route along the Boulevard had become organized and had to be pressured and argued until 1973, following the tremendous rebirth of the bike on a world-wide scale.

The Boulevard, between 16th & 17th, became the site of a spectacular show in Nov. 1954 when a small section in the roof of the old 72" Trunk Sewer fell in and funneled an enormous hole into the boulevard: no homes were endangered. An emergency by-pass sewer was surface routed through Ravenna Park.

Under discussion since 1950, the center paving was replaced with lawn under an Easement Contract in 1961: the side roadways widened. Construction of the Freeway over the Boulevard seemed to present an ideal cover for Tennis Courts but the "pilot" court was not popular.

history: RAVENNA BLVD



Area north of 65th, known as "Meadow Place", was filled in 1911; adjacent p.f. @ Green Lake also filled about this time; lake originally drained thru here, Ravenna Pk. to Union Bay. Boulevard consists of center portions; trees, grass, sprinklers. Parking strips are maintained by abutting owners. Entire boulevard maintained by Engr. Dept. (1942)

LA 2-0368

RAVENNA BLVD.
sheet 1

NE. 65th

6th Av. NE

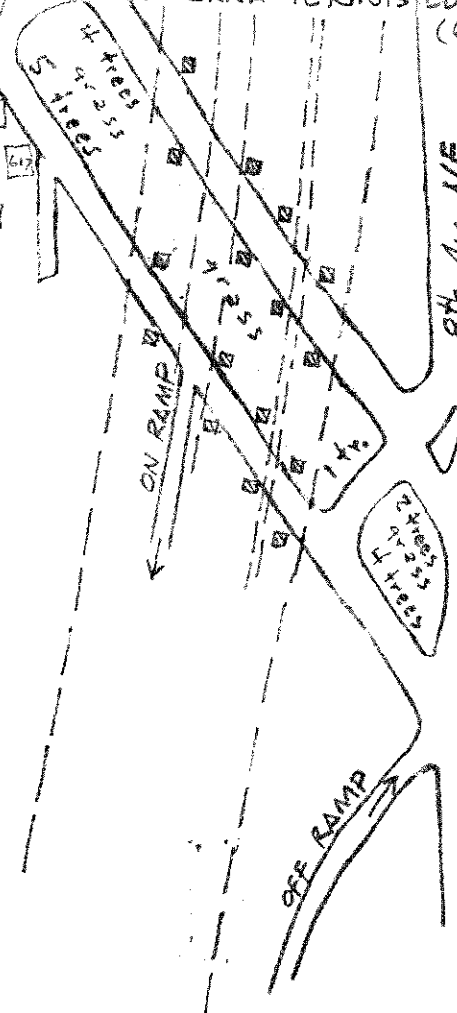
FREEWAY PARK:
RAVENNA TENNIS COURTS
(6421-8th Av. NE)

Boulevard consists of center portions: grass, trees, sprinklers.
Parking strips are maintained by abutting owners.
Entire boulevard (to Ravenna Av.) maint. by Engr. Dept. (1942)



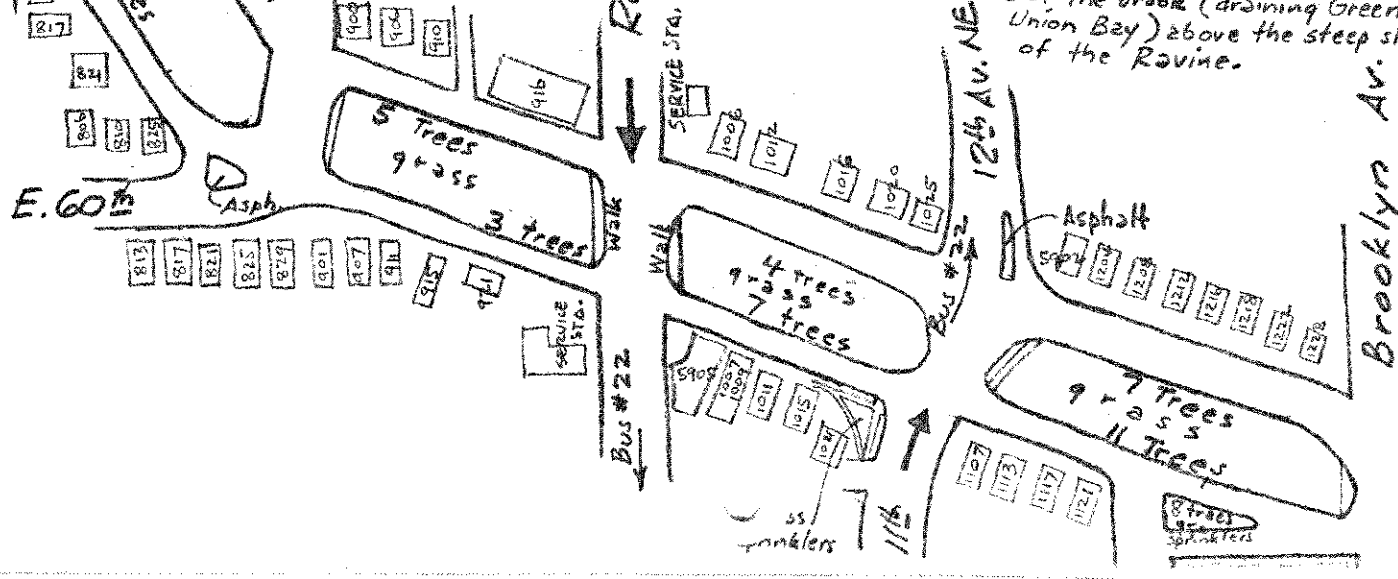
LA 2-0368

RAVENNA BLVD.
Sheet 2



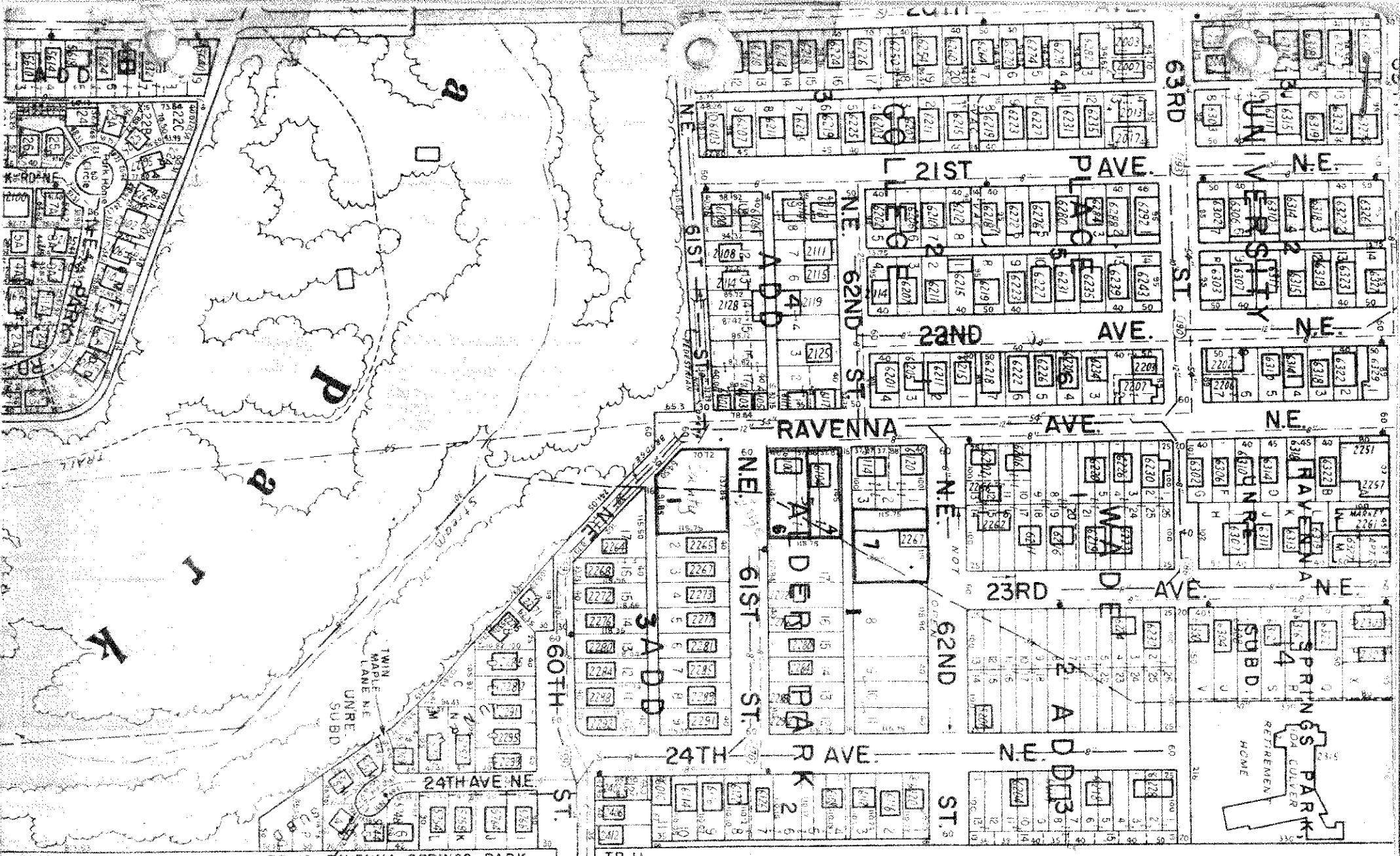
Condemnation, transf. since 1907 (\$1,199 = '08 BF)
29.3 Ac. total (1.2 miles)
Name taken from adjacent Park.
Was intended as part of a boulevard system from Seward Park to Green Lake, passing by the A-Y-P (1907) Exposition Grounds (now Univ. of Wash.) and connecting with this portion by way of 17th Av. (University Blvd.) Was part of the "Pacific Highway" extending from Vancouver, B.C. to San Diego, Calif. (1915) The "Olmsted Report" (1903) recommended the boulevard to be on each side of the brook (draining Green Lake into Union Bay) above the steep slopes of the Ravine.

Until 1962 the boulevard had consisted of 3 roadways, the center one being the "boulevard." By Engr. Dept. contract in '62 the center road was removed, curbs realigned and outer roads repaved (see above: Engr. maint.)



Brooklyn Av.
COWEN PARK

for a ()
tion see) COWEN/RAVENNA PK.



11/29/68 DNS

Ravenna Park

LOT 1 BLOCK 3 ALDER PARK ADD.	OWNED : KING CO.	ASSESSED VALUE = \$ 200 =
LOT 4 + 1/2 5 BLK 1	" " "	OWNED : SPARKMAN + MCLEAN / D.W. COOK A.V. = 1750 / 13,500 =
LOT 6 + 1/2 5 BLK 1	" " "	OWNED : PAC. 1ST FED. S+L / B.M. RICE A.V. = 2300 / 13,500 =
LOT 7 (E. 34') BLK. 1	" " "	OWNED : UNION FED. S+L / J.F. MCGARRY A.V. = 3200 /
LOT 7 (W. 35') BLK. 1	" " "	OWNED : J.F. MCGARRY