Cowen Park & Ravenna Blvd. original were a deep ravine-like Ravenna Park. Being a deep ravine-like Ravenna Park, having been cut by drainage into the post-Ice Age "Lake Russell" (formed by melt-off from the "Water Glacial Ice Sheet") 20,000 years ago. The glacial basin remaining is "Green Lake" which continues to drain through this ravine until about 1913 when installation of Korea and first fill in Boulevard, most recent fill by Cowen Park in 1961 west of Seattle Freeway. Stream is now mostly spring-fed (some are mineral). Drains into Union Bay; shoreline until 1913 is indicated by site of railroad.

**Cowen Park:** (west of 15th Ave.) named for Charles Cowen, who gave the park believing that "Men do not live by bread alone," and passed in the stream of the park. E. J. Cowen Real Estate Assurance, in 1889 by the original owners and developers in 1913 by W. W. Beck, because Ravenna.

**Ravenna Park:** named c. 1889 by the original owners and developers in 1913 by W. W. Beck, because Ravenna.

In 1921, the name was changed in 1919 to honor Teddy Roosevelt, who had died in January. However, a popular petition to have named the Ravenna. By then the huge trees had died and been removed. By another petition in 1921, a portion was filled for a playground with a playfield for the park. It was abandoned in 1980, after a long stagnation caused by drain failure, filled in 1946 by the local sewer district.
The melt-off of the Vashon Glacial Ice Sheet formed the huge Lake Russell cut drainage ravines through the new glacial till, one being the Revenna Park ravine. Lake Russell disappeared when the Ice Sheet retreated north of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, but various features remained including the Green Lake drainage basin, as continued to empty thru the Revenna ravine into Lake Washington. The deeper pockets of the basin became Bitter, Haller and Green Lakes. Many creeks breaks, and springs fed into Green Lake whose outlet was on the east side of the route of Revenna Boulevard, in a deepening ravine becoming Cowen and E Parks. The levels of Green Lake and Lake Washington were higher then 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 wilderness settlers coming by wagon and ship brought sawmills and farm equipment and the wilderness. The Revenna Creek dwindled in volume but still the Olmsted in 1904 recommended a boulevard on each bank of the Creek, from the Green Bay Boulevard to Cowen Park thence to connect with the 17th Ave Blvd. thru the University Grounds (site of the proposed A-Y-P Exposition; 1909) to connect the proposed Lake Washington Blvd at Washington Park. The Revenna/Cowen Ravine with its magnificent Big Trees had been saved from the loggers (as had Park) but other platting by Realtors in the area did not always consider the new contours or features with the result that route of the proposed Revenna Blvd. side the Creek necessitated the Condensation across property or the changing platted street properties. Wm. Sarpinson, etc. successfully petitioned the County, curving portion of the boulevard from 15th Ave to the southeast portion of the Park.

Then came the development of Green Lake Park and the Engineering Dept. the 5-foot diameter brick Trunk Sewer alongside the Revenna Creek! The level of Green Lake was lowered by 7 feet (7) in order to increase the amount of shoreline for the purposes of Green Lake. Revenna Creek bed went dry and the new outlet for Lake was into a 24" pipe to Cowen Park, but this was replaced by discharging into the Trunk Sewer. So the Revenna Creek Ravine was filled in, from Green to Cowen Park (half of Cowen was filled in 1906) and in 1912 the center strip 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 line 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 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 Pl., Meadow Blv., and Sarpinson Rd., so in 1908 an Ordinance established the name of RAVENNA BOULEVARD for the entire length (17th Ave. was established as University Blvd. 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 to Vancouver, B.C. to San Diego, Calif." (The Budget would permit only grading made.)

The Age of the Auto Tourist had come; the Seattle Auto Club was founded in 1904, the Auto Camp was established in Woodland Park in 1922 and the Transcontinental Auto Caravan passed memorated at Alki Beach in 1926. Except for gas rationing during WWII Auto Tourism 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 to be pressed and argued until 1933, following the tremendous rebirth of the bike on a national scale. The Boulevard between 15th-17th became the site of a spectacular show in Nov. 1933 a small section in the rear of the old 72 Trunk Sewer fell in and tunnelled an enormous hole in the boulevard. No homes were endangered. An emergency bypass sewer was surface routed Revenna Park.

Under discussion since 1950, the center paving was replaced with lawn under an End Contract in 1961, the side roadways widened. Construction of the Freeway over the 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 part @ Green Lake also filled about this time. Lake originally drained thru kettle Ravenna Pk. to Union Bay.  
Boulevard consists of center portions; trees, markers. Parking strips are maintained by abutting owners. Entire boulevard maintained by Engr. Dept. (1943)
Boulevard consists of center portions: grass, trees, sprinklers. Parking strips are maintained by abutting owners. Entire boulevard (to Ravenna Av.) main. by Engr. Dept. (1942).

Condemnation, transf. since 1907 (11,199 = 318 ft)
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 (1901) Exposition Grounds (now Uni. 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.)
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