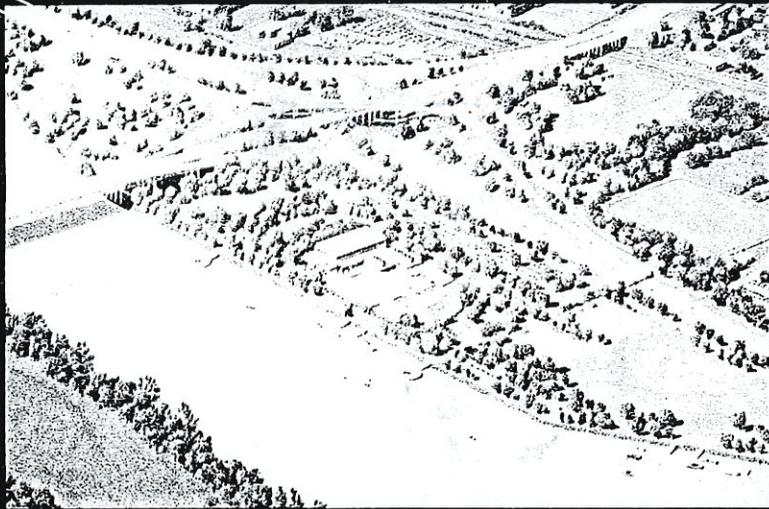


STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ALBANY



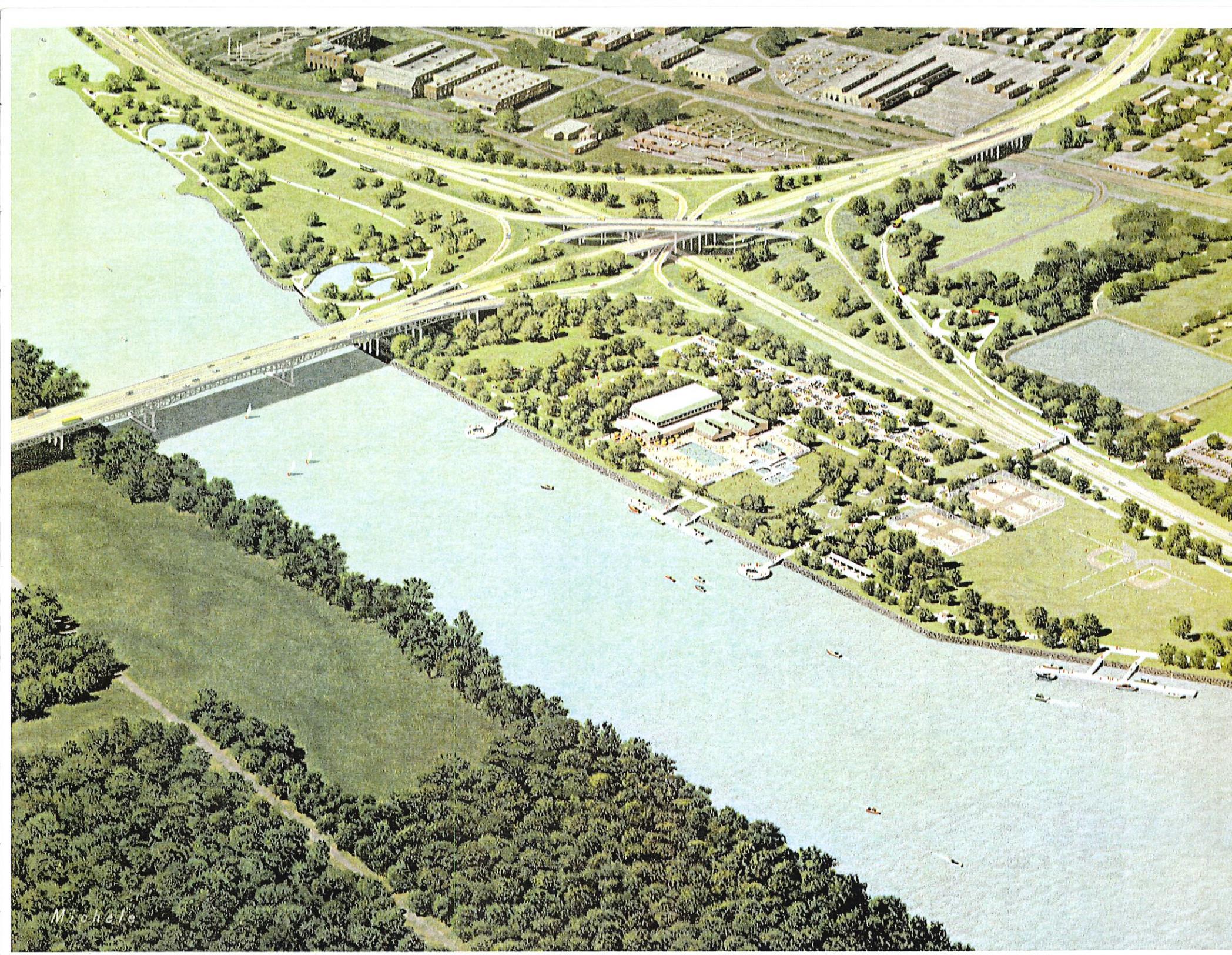
MENANDS

COLONIE

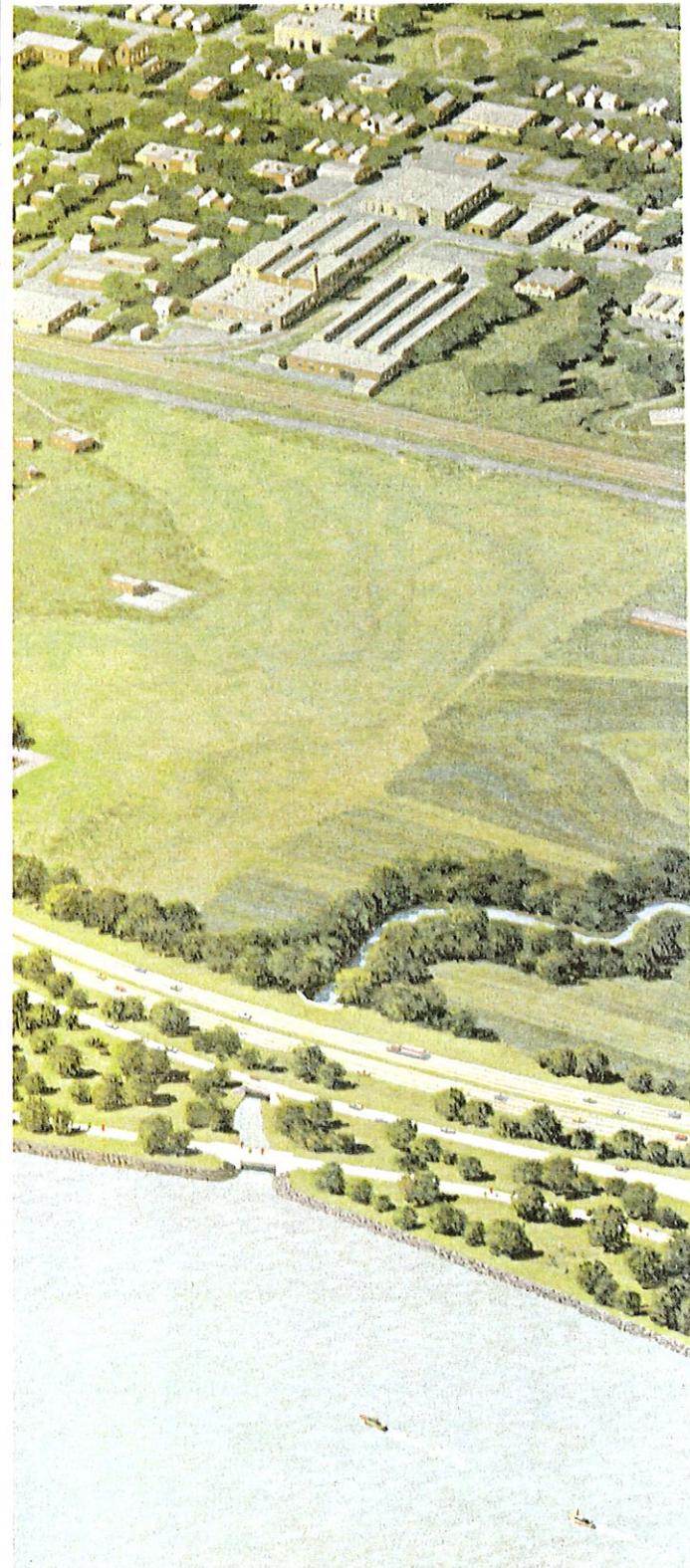
WATERVLĪET

Scenic and Recreational Development

HUDSON RIVER...RIVERFRONT ARTERIAL



M. Roncato



VOLLMER ASSOCIATES
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
PLANNERS
62 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10011

June 15, 1970

T. W. Parker, Commissioner
Department of Transportation, State of New York
State Campus, Albany, N. Y. 12226

Dear General Parker:

This report summarizes our recommendations for the development, for public recreational use, of some 200 acres of Hudson River waterfront land which, happily, have been restored to public ownership as an incidental but important result of land acquisition for Interstate Highway 787 between Albany and Watervliet.

Although the Capital District is blessed by its proximity to the Adirondack and Catskill preserves, there are clear and serious deficiencies in developed recreation resources near the urban core. To meet these needs, this report recommends that the waterfront lands acquired in connection with Interstate 787 be developed as a major riverfront park with facilities for swimming, ice-skating, boating, picnicking and fishing as well as for walking and bicycling. Over 8,000 people could be served each day in this primarily water-oriented park. It is suggested that much of the development which will provide regional service would appropriately be part of the State Park system; other elements will be of more local benefit and would best be administered by the municipalities served. Part of the cost of development would reasonably be borne as part of the Interstate Highway construction, with the more specialized elements requiring support from other sources.

This joint development of the waterfront is a logical extension of the State's objective of bringing all of its resources to bear on providing for the people's many and varied needs.

We believe that our recommendations are consistent with current Federal policy and the acknowledged needs of the municipalities and other agencies involved.

Very truly yours

Arnold H. Vollmer

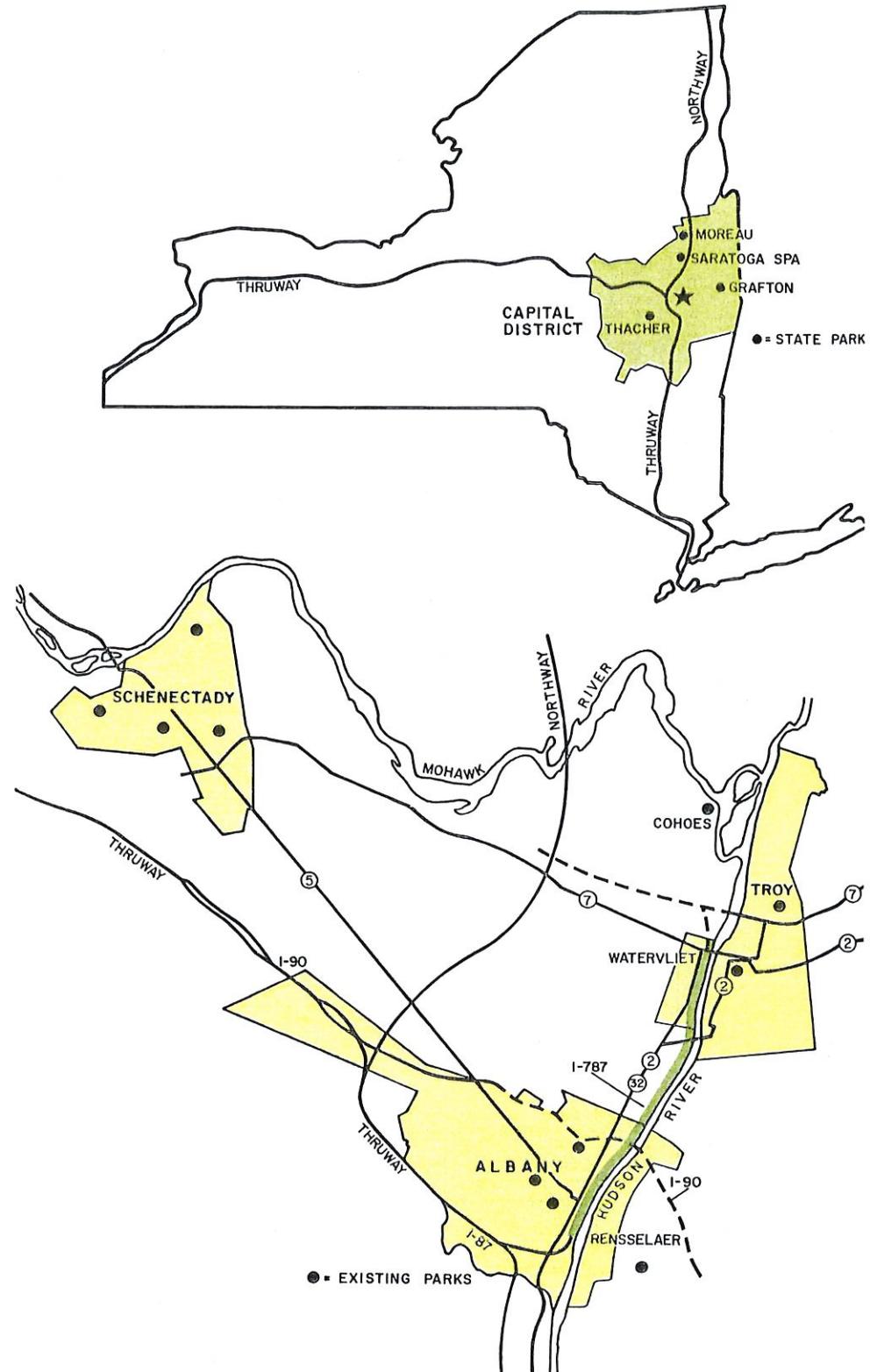
INTRODUCTION

New York State's highway planners have long recognized that transportation systems do not exist in a vacuum, that a highway is but one physical element of the complex social structure serving man's needs. Related facilities and development have been given thoughtful consideration and constitute an inseparable part of the State's modern highway systems. From the beginnings, parkways, as exemplified in the Westchester and Long Island systems and the most recent developments on the Niagara Frontier, have influenced the modern expressway planners who have expanded upon this concept and applied it most effectively.

Increased travel demands within the Albany area, a direct result of regional growth, required the construction of an Interstate Highway spur, adjacent to the Hudson River, from Albany to Troy, to serve the state capital and other municipalities to the north.

To build Interstate 787, many acres of private riverfront land were needed and acquired. Fortunately, highway pavement has not claimed all the requisitioned land. A significant portion, 200 acres located on or near the riverfront, can appropriately be developed for other purposes. The land lends itself ideally to recreation and the enjoyment of nature.

The acreage under consideration is within the municipalities of Albany, Menands, Colonie and Watervliet in the County of Albany. Its development will necessarily involve the cooperation of a multiplicity of agencies and governmental bodies.



NEEDS

In a 1968 report the Capital District State Park Commission, which has jurisdiction over state parks in the counties of Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Saratoga as well as in portions of adjacent Washington, Fulton and Greene counties, recommended that ". . . By the target year 1990, an additional eight to ten intensively developed day-use facilities (major regional parks) will be needed in the Capital District State Park Region . . . these sites should be located near the urban centers of the region . . ."

In assessing the need for parks in the Albany area—or for any area—playing the numbers game with regard to actual acreage is meaningless. A park's usefulness must be measured as much in terms of its accessibility, location and diversity of facilities as its square footage. Residents of the Albany region are in fortunate proximity to the vast Adirondack Forest Preserve. And in addition to these 2,000,000 acres, the 250,000-acre Catskill Forest Preserve is within easy driving distance. Yet these vast expanses of open space do not serve the needs of the people for immediately accessible day-use recreational facilities.

Increases in income, mobility, leisure time, and desire to flee urban areas in search of

open space have augmented the need for recreational land in the Capital District. The anticipated population growth in the region from 720,000 to 1,000,000 by 1990 will place added burdens on the existing facilities. Yet the acquisition of additional acres of parkland will not serve the needs of the public unless they are adequately developed with sophisticated recreational facilities. Facilities for diversified recreation must be within easy access of a great majority of this region's populace.

Present facilities in the area include swimming pools open to the public at Saratoga Spa State Park, John Boyd Thacher State Park, Lincoln Park in Albany, Prospect Park in Troy, at Schodack, Tower Center and Cohoes. Cohoes also has an ice-skating rink. Albany has a covered rink with a capacity of 500 skaters. An ice-skating rink at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is open to the public at certain times.

According to the standards of the National Recreation and Park Association, three to five percent of a region's population want to go swimming on a warm day (35,000 in the Albany region). Even taking the turnover rate into consideration more than twice as many pools as now exist are needed. Skating on ar-

tificial ice has grown in popularity in recent years, as is evidenced by the number of rinks that are in operation in other areas. (Nassau County, with approximately the same population as that projected for the Albany-Troy-Schenectady metropolitan area in 1990, has six public artificial ice rinks.) The Albany-Troy-Schenectady area has only two rinks and part-time use of one.

Beyond the clear need for the physical facilities for active and organized recreation, there is for every city dweller a no less compelling need for large, beautiful and, most important, readily accessible breathing space.

The growth of our urban regions and the accelerating concentration of population within them is an inevitable result of the economic and social attractions of urban life; but the greater the concentration, the greater the need for the element of "rus in urbe"—the countryside within the city—which, exemplified by Central and Prospect Parks in New York, and Hyde and St. James Parks in London, has been a characteristic of great and enduring cities. Few urban regions can boast of having a more suitable or adaptable area to satisfy this need than the available Hudson River waterfront.

PROGRAM

To meet the present and future needs of the people of the metropolitan area, we recommend the development of a large recreational complex on the lands adjacent to Interstate 787. Over half of the riverfront from Albany to Watervliet would be restored to natural conditions for the enjoyment of passive recreation. Much of the remaining land would be more intensively developed, ranging from small downtown sitting parks to a recreation center with swimming, skating, boating and games areas.

Downtown Albany

Interstate Highway 787 extends fifteen miles north from Exit 23 of the Governor Thomas E. Dewey Thruway in Albany to Troy. The Albany waterfront section is a complex of two major interchanges, elevated highways, access roads, and railroad relocation. Since the route of the expressway runs inland, it is possible to build a 250-boat marina on a 14-acre site extending 2,500 feet along the Hudson. This is a project of the Capital District State Park Commission.

Just south of the marina a pumping station has been completed with park areas, a riverfront promenade and including a nighttime waterworks display. Further south, Quay St. extends about 1,400 feet along the river to connect with the inland street system south of the new Dunn Memorial Bridge. It is recommended that a sidewalk along the river bulkhead be continued from here to the pumping station and marina to provide a contin-

uous riverfront walk.

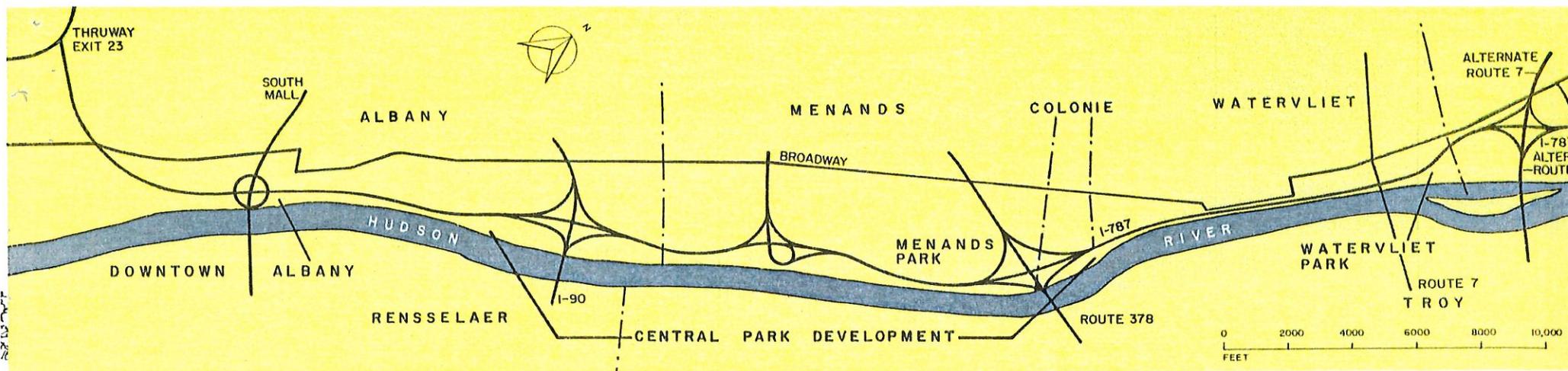
The Mall Arterial interchange with I-787 includes numerous parcels of land suitable for parking, parks and landscaping. Seven areas north and south of the viaducts could accommodate 1,400 cars. In addition, there are four areas along Frontage Street that will be suitable for parking pending future commercial, industrial, or residential development. Other areas adjacent to the expressway are recommended for parks.

Central Park Development

In the construction of the central four-mile section of Interstate 787 from the navigation light in Albany to the new access underpass in Watervliet, 200 acres of right-of-way were not needed for highway pavement and interchanges. The development of this land as a major riverfront park will go far to help fulfill the recreational demands of the Albany metropolitan area.

Most of the area would be developed with lawns, trees, walks and picnic areas. Small ponds of an acre or two in size would be located at several points along the site; tide gates at the river would control the water level and permit periodic water changes.

Just north of the Menands interchange and west of the expressway, a portion of Little River still remains as an inland body of water. This is connected to the Hudson by a large culvert under the expressway. Little River rises and falls with the Hudson's level. At the river side of the culvert, we propose a some-



what larger pond with a tide gate which would control the water level in both the pond and Little River. Walks, sitting areas, picnicking and a small rowboat landing would be installed. Nearby would be a boat launching ramp to the Hudson with a trailer and car parking area. A small comfort station would service both the pond area and the boat launching ramp.

Vehicular access to the proposed park would be from the Menands interchange. A 6,000-foot internal park road would connect the interchange to the launching ramp area and to the recreation complex to the south.

Two new connecting ramps and a new bridge under an existing ramp are needed to provide park access from Broadway. In the future, if it appeared desirable, direct access from the Interstate could be provided by the

construction of additional ramps. A control station and maintenance area would be located midway along the park road. Park maintenance vehicles and fire equipment would use walkways in other areas of the park.

Other access to the proposed park would be provided by two pedestrian overpasses, one located 4,000 feet north of the Menands interchange and the other at the recreation complex. Both overpasses would connect with parking fields having direct access to Broadway. The pedestrian bridge at the main recreation complex would cross the expressway and connect with an area reserved for bus parking for both scheduled and chartered buses. The City of Albany has offered the use of the land north of the filtration plant for parking.

The majority of activity in the park would

center on a recreation complex consisting of a 50-meter swimming pool, diving pool, bathhouses, ice- and roller-skating rink, food concession, picnicking, games areas and parking. The two main pools would be the principal features in an expansive deck overlooking the Hudson River. The deck area would include shallow pools with sprays, fountains and slides suitable for wading and aquatic play and low-rise sunning and observation platforms. Adjacent to the pool deck a large grass area with shelters has been designed for sunning and play. For control, the entire pool complex would be fenced, with access through the bathhouse. The complex could accommodate 2,000 persons at one time.

The major structure would include bathhouses, a skating rink, and food concession. One wing of the structure would house the

ice hockey and roller-skating rink with seating for a thousand spectators, skate changing areas, skate rental shop and refrigeration equipment. A food concession housed in another wing would be accessible from the skating rink, pool deck, and riverfront promenade; it would have indoor and outdoor eating areas. A central administration office and comfort station facilities would be provided.

These major features would occupy but a small percentage of the land of the complex; extensive areas to the west and south would provide parking for 870 cars. Part of the remaining space to the north and south would be utilized for picnic areas, with tables, fireplaces, shelters, and comfort stations. Tennis courts and two softball fields would be constructed north of the main area. A promenade the length of the complex would run parallel to the existing rip-rap that protects the Hudson River shoreline.

Soil tests will be required to determine precise foundation treatment—either excavation to solid ground or supporting of structures on piles.

The Hudson River is tidal up to the Troy lock with variation in water level from two feet to six feet above mean sea level at Sandy Hook. The river has a history of severe flooding with a high-water mark 25 feet above mean sea level in 1936. Since then, extensive channel dredging and control dams upstream have reduced the expected highwater mark to a much lower level. For most of the riverfront park area, the land averages about four feet

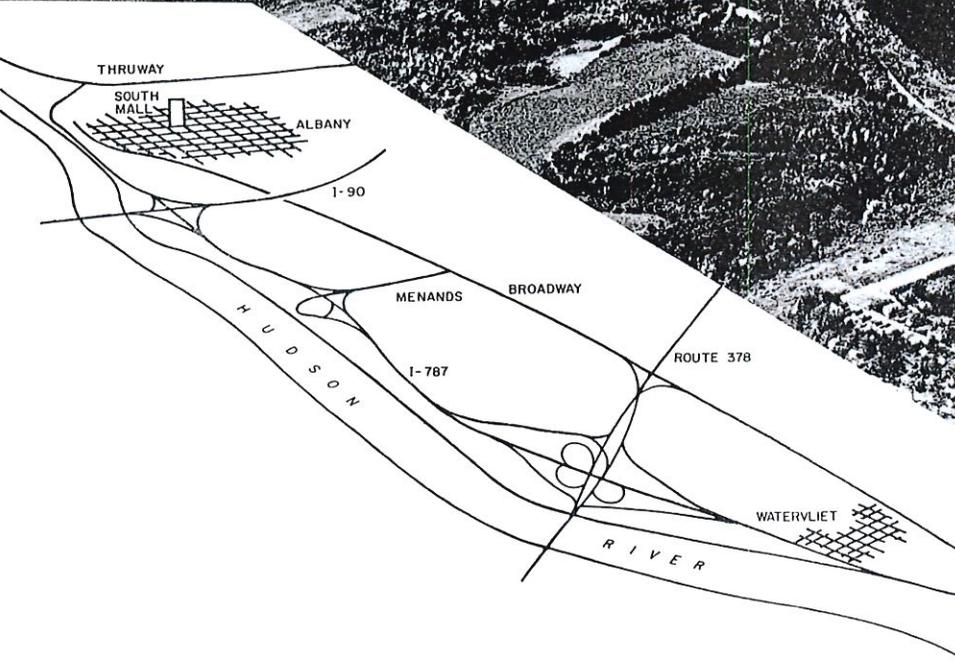
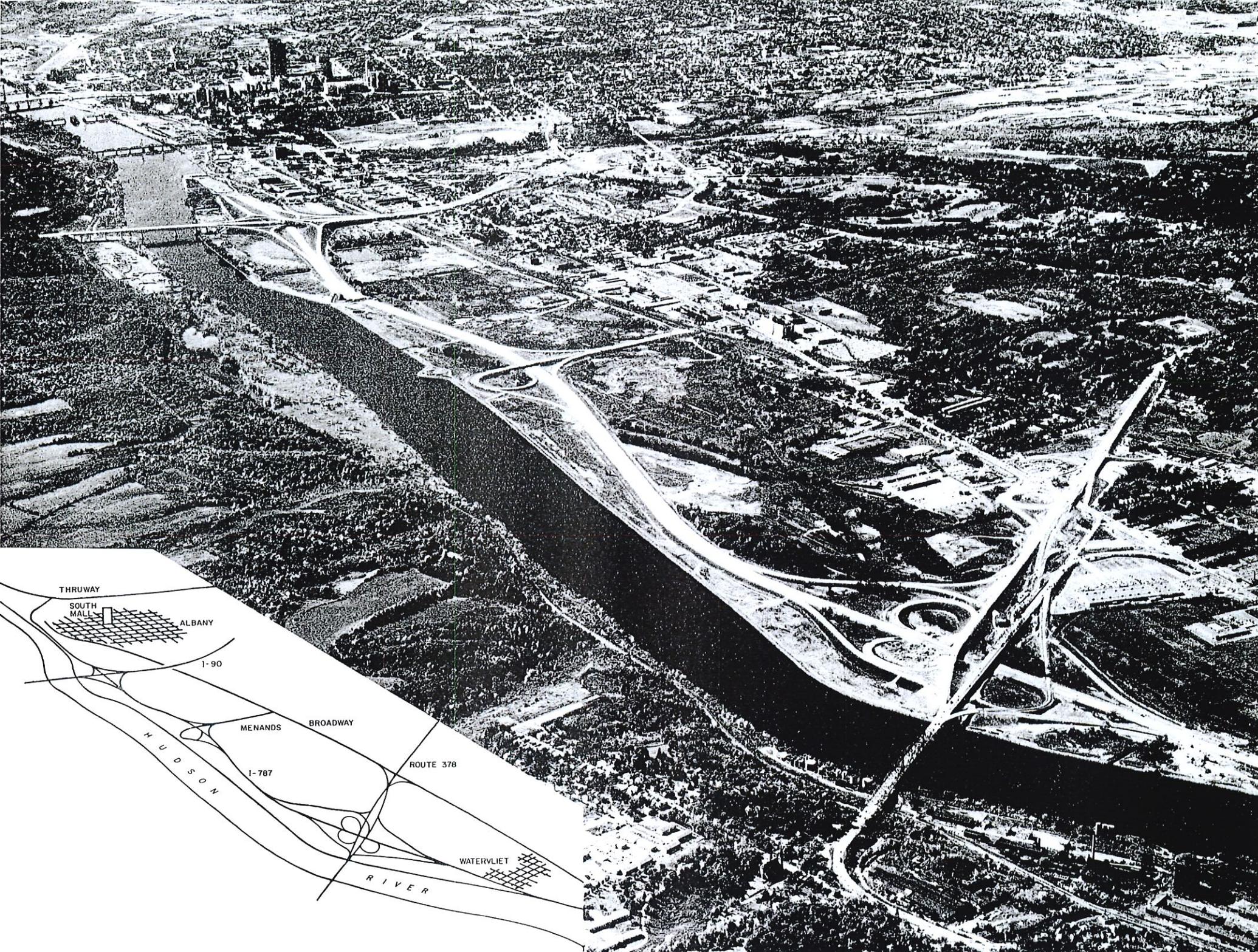
above high tide; at this level the recommended walks and planting, even if flooded on rare occasions, would suffer little damage. At the recreation complex area we recommend a minimum elevation ten feet above high tide so that even after a “fifty year” flood, cleanup would be the main problem.

Park users arriving by boat would be served by a float dock with a capacity of about 25 boats. Another dock, 600 feet to the north, would be convenient to picnic and games areas. Pier fishing floats would be located offshore at each end of the recreation complex. The floats would be removable for storage inland during the winter. Although the floats would be outside the U.S. Pierhead and Bulkhead Line, we understand that with a formal request, the Corps of Engineers would permit their construction.

A 75-boat marina, located north of the Route 378 interchange, would include a building with comfort station facilities, boat supplies and a snack bar. A boat launching ramp, wide enough for simultaneous launching of three boats, would adjoin a 45-car and trailer parking area. Parking facilities for 85 cars would surround the marina. Access to the area would be by means of an underpass at Fourth Street in Watervliet.

Menands Park

For some time, 95 acres in the Village of Menands have been under consideration for possible park development. Located southwest of the Route 378 interchange, 55 acres of



the tract are owned by the State of New York but are not under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation. The remaining land is the property of Hudson River Estates Inc. (35 acres) and the Niagara Mohawk and the Delaware and Hudson railroads (five acres of right-of-way).

Besides conserving open space for the region, such a park could also serve as a major and desirable recreational area for the Village of Menands. A prominent feature of the site is the 15-acre remaining portion of Little River, now a tidal body of water which is fairly shallow and would require dredging to maintain good water conditions; it could be enlarged to about 25 acres by additional excavation. The excavated material would be used to create a more interesting landscape in the flat area to the south. The tidal flow is carried through a large culvert under the expressway to the Hudson River. It is recommended that the State give consideration to the immediate dredging of the pond and planting on its shores to provide a much-needed wildlife refuge until development as a park becomes a reality.

Access to the park would be by means of a two-lane park road from Broadway, following the expressway access roads to a parking area at the proposed pedestrian overpass to the riverfront park. An athletic field would be located near Broadway. The remainder of the site, including the lake, would be developed as an area for conservation, nature study and wildlife with walks and nature trails. Accom-

modation for rowboating could be made with a small boat shed as the center of operation. Comfort stations would be provided at the athletic field and near the pedestrian overpass.

Watervliet Park

About 10 acres of land extending 2,500 feet along the Hudson River in downtown Watervliet should be developed as a riverfront park, including a marina. The proposed downtown marina and the one near Route 378 with access from Fourth Street in Watervliet would adequately replace the three small marinas taken in conjunction with the expressway right-of-way.

The marina would accommodate 25 boats, provide parking for 35 car trailers and parking for 30 cars. A ramp would permit the launching of two boats simultaneously. The remaining riverfront area would be developed with walks, and sitting and picnicking areas; it would include a two-lane road with parking areas to serve the area. It would be conveniently located to the central area of Watervliet; pedestrian and vehicular access to the park would be at the Hudson Avenue bridge under the riverfront arterial.

Other Development

There is considerable land along the expressway route not feasible for recreational development, principally the areas within the interchanges and on the slopes of the fill areas. Amounting to about 180 acres, these areas would be seeded, planted and land-

scaped. Along the route from the Albany navigation light to Watervliet, a 200-foot strip of land to the west of the expressway is being considered for acquisition for landscaping; it amounts to an additional 30 acres.

Utilities

By far the largest number of users in the proposed 200-acre riverfront park would be at the recreation complex. The estimated instant capacity of the pool area is 2,000 people, at the skating rink (assuming year-round use for ice- or roller-skating) 1,000, and at the adjacent picnic, games and boating facilities another 1,000 or a total of 4,000 persons at periods of peak activity.

The water demand for this population would be 40,000 gallons per day, based on a 10-hour park day, or 67 gallons per minute on the average. The generally accepted factor for peaking at noon and at closing times is 2½ times the average, or 170 gallons per minute maximum demand.

There is an eight-inch city water main 1,500 feet due west of the complex near the existing filtration plant, with a water pressure varying between 60 and 80 pounds per square inch. From this water source, a four-inch line would be required to serve the complex. We recommend that the supply line be carried over the expressway on the proposed pedestrian bridge.

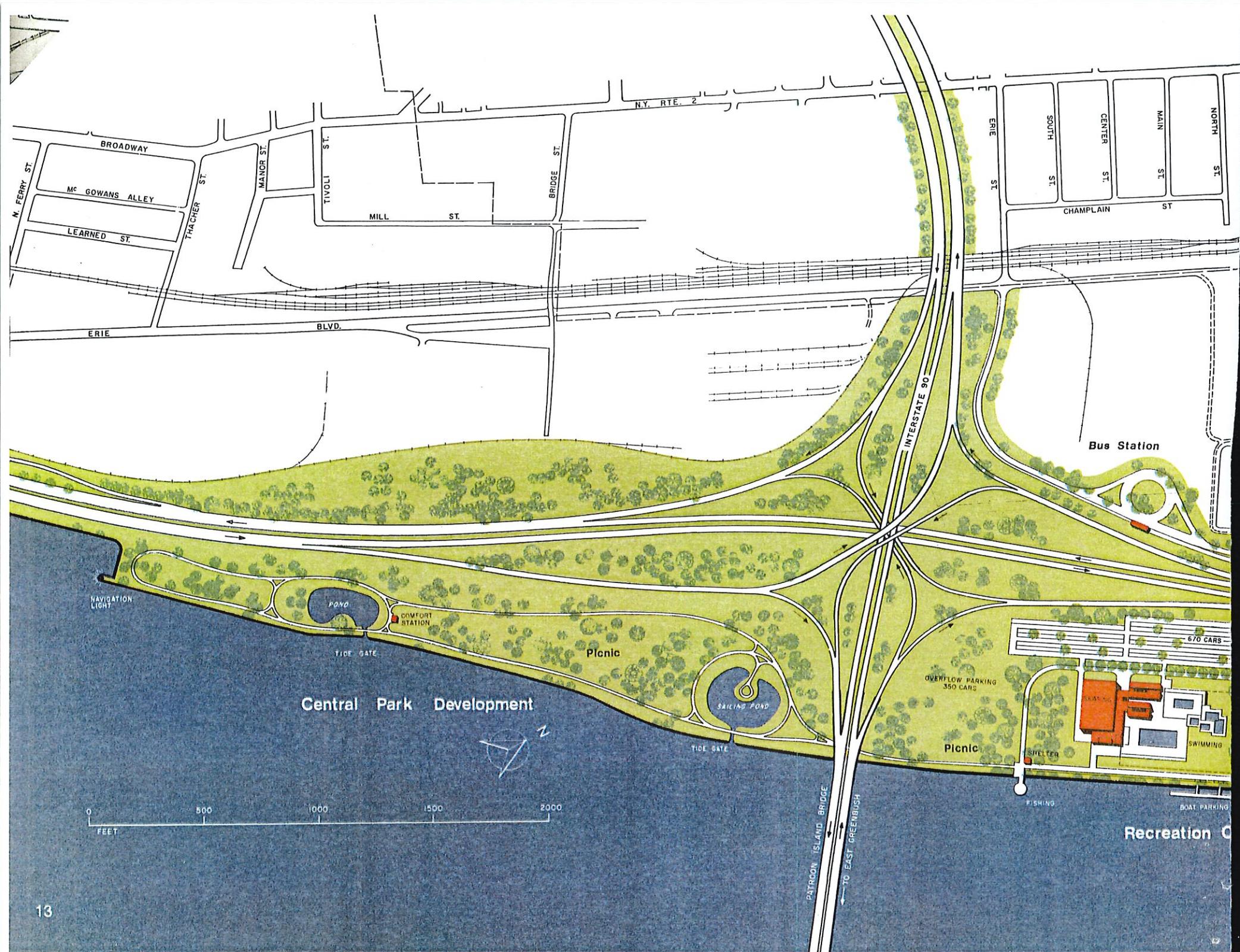
Since the proposed park is at no point wider than 800 feet, fire protection can be provided by pumping river water.

It is estimated that the amount of waste water to be disposed of from the complex, including pool operation, would total 30,000 gallons per day. A new county sewage system and waste water treatment plant is being constructed 2,500 feet to the north of the complex, on the west side of the expressway. We have been informed that the 30,000 gallons per day from the complex can readily be handled by the new plant. The waste flow from the complex would be collected in a sump and pumped to the new treatment plant through an existing culvert about 2,000 feet north of the complex.

The construction of five small comfort stations is envisioned, one in the area south of I-90, one at the boat launching ramp, one near Route 378, and two in the Menands Village Park. Water supply lines for the first two would come from the riverfront complex and for the other three from water mains in Broadway. Since all these structures are in a somewhat isolated area it is probable that health officials would permit septic tank-leaching field disposal of waste water. If not, small ejector stations would pump the waste to the nearest main line.

Water and waste at the two marinas near Watervliet would be handled by the city system, either through a sleeve to be installed under the expressway or through the existing underpasses.

Electric power is readily available and can be brought across the expressway on the pedestrian overpasses.



Central Park Development



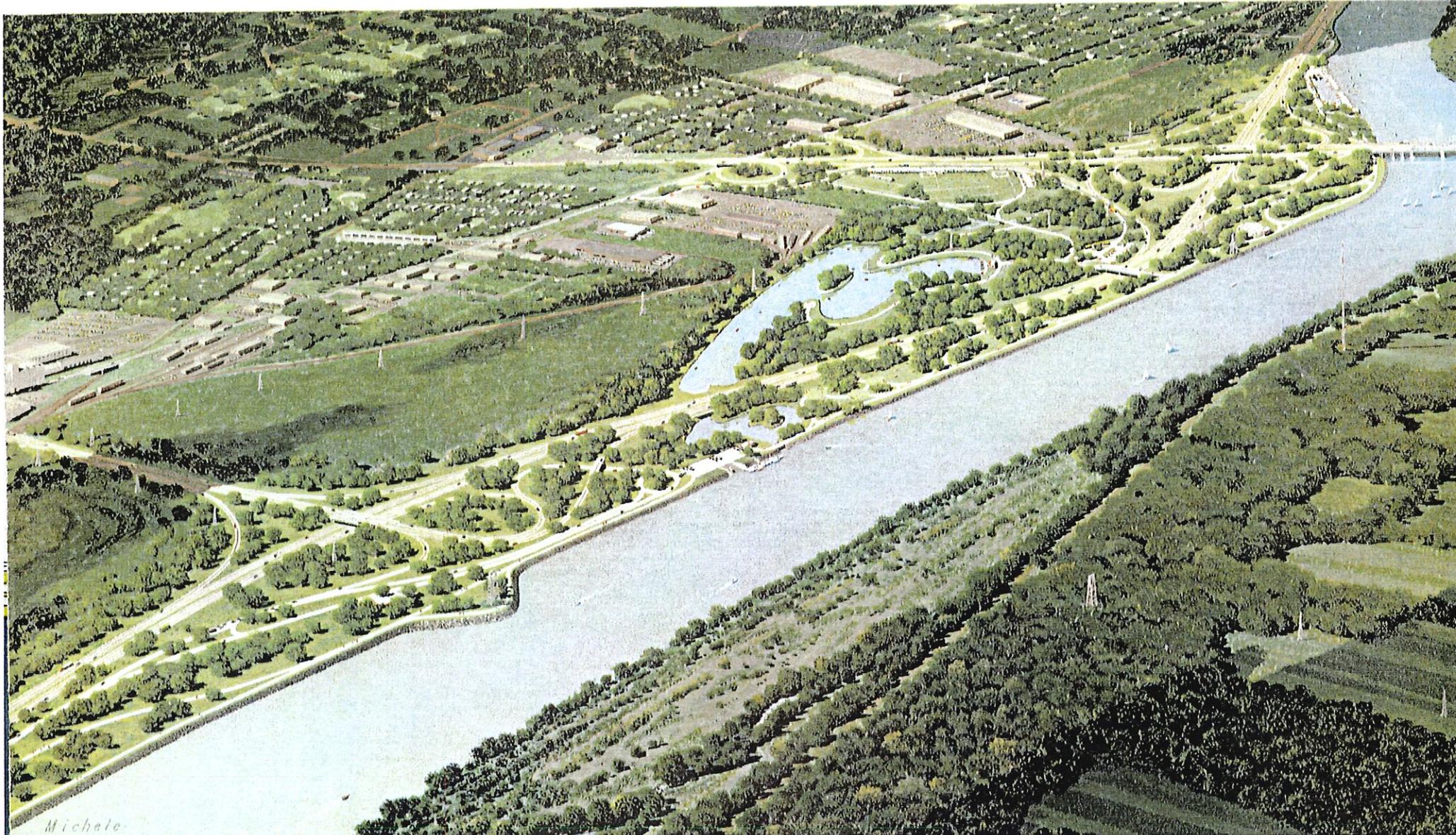
Recommended Development

-  RECOMMENDED PERMANENT PARKING (UNDER VIADUCTS)
-  RECOMMENDED TEMPORARY PARKING



Downtown Albany

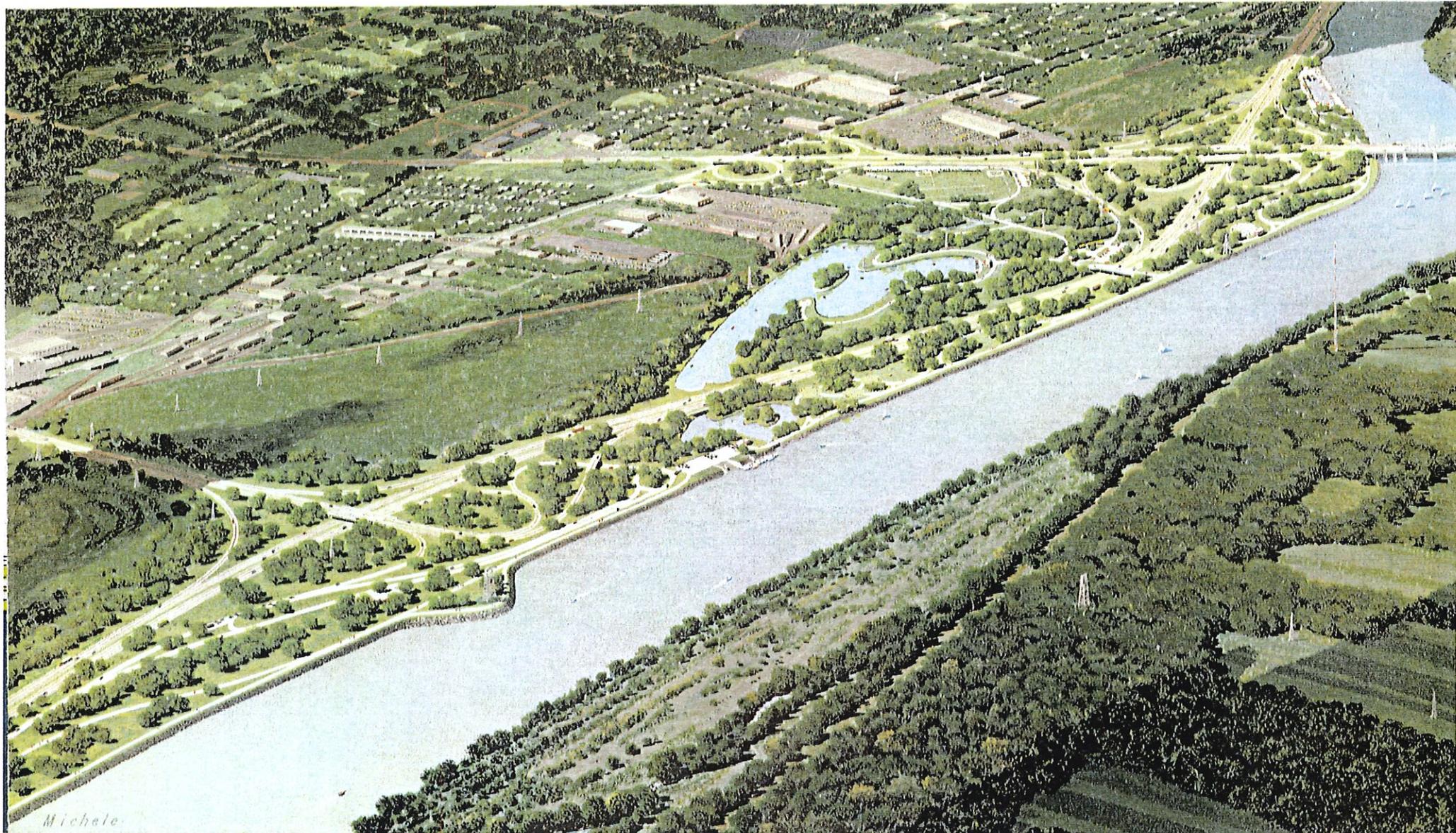
View north from Menands Interchange



Michale

11
11
11

View north from Menands Interchange



Michele



BROADWAY

SIMMONS LA

RAILROAD

HUDSON

HUDSON RIVER INTERCEPTOR SEWER AND LAWARE

VILLAGE OF MENANDS CITY OF ALBANY

SITE OF WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

FILTRATION PLANT

200 CARS

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

INTERSTATE 787

CONTROL

PROPOSED

EXISTING

Picnic

MAINTENANCE

RIE-RAP

EXISTING

NIAGARA MOHAWK TRANSMISSION LINE

Picnic

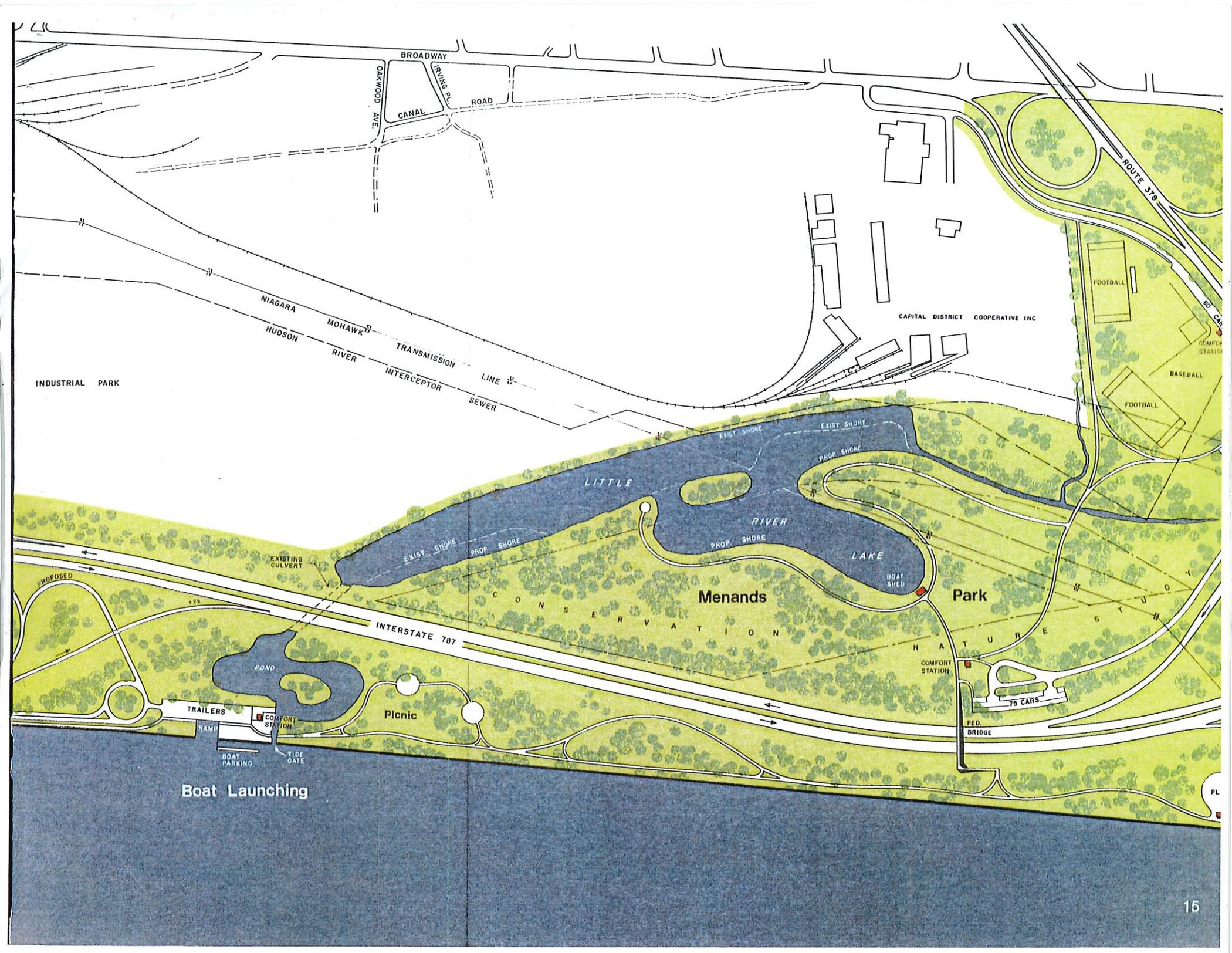
COATROOM STATION

BOAT PARKING

FISHING

HUDSON RIVER

Complex





VILLAGE OF MENANDS
TOWN OF COLONIE

CITY OF WATERVLIET
TOWN OF COLONIE

BROADWAY

3RD

AVE

FIFTH

2ND

AVE.

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

AVE.

ST

1ST

ST

ST

ST

BROADWAY

UNDERPASS

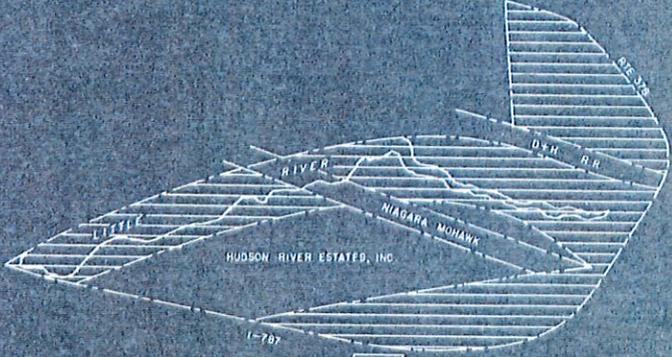
HUDSON RIVER INTERCEPTOR SEWER

Marina

Picnic

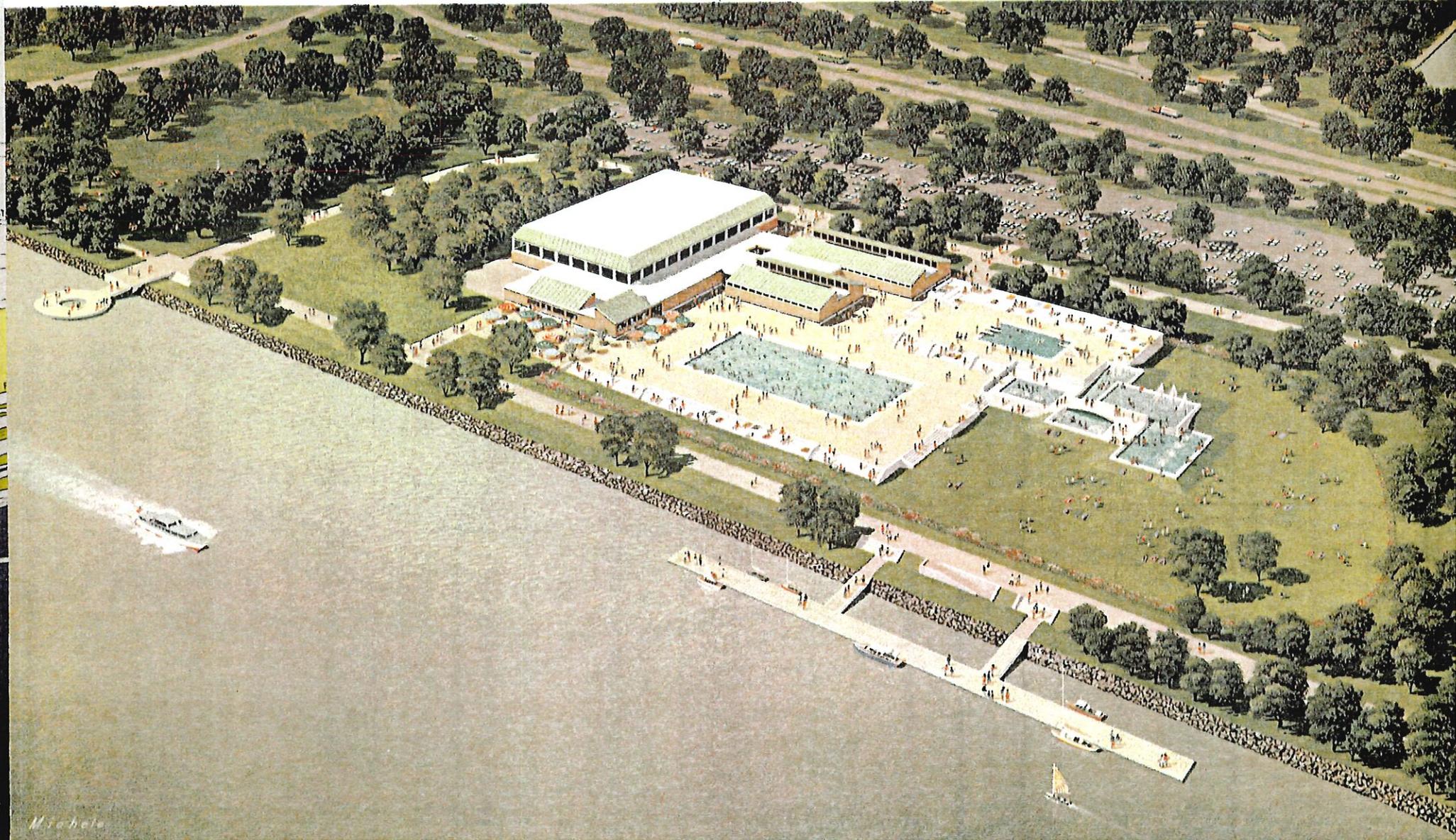
Picnic

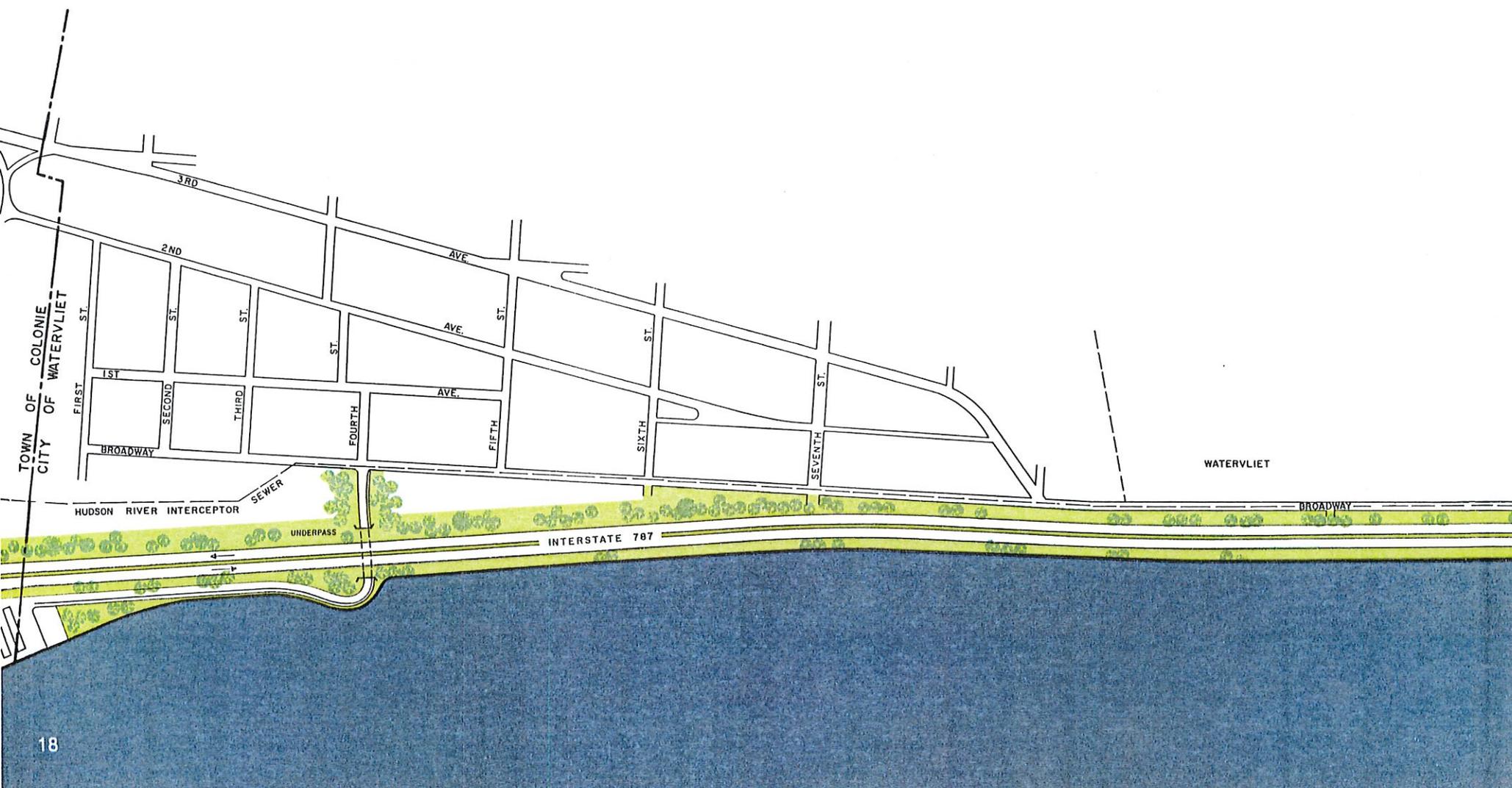
TO TROY
MENANDS BRIDGE



LAND OWNERSHIP AT MENANDS PARK

Recommended Recreation Complex





ARSENAL

13 TH ST.

1 ST

14 TH ST.

15 TH ST.

AVE.

16 TH ST.

17 TH ST.

2 ND

21 ST

BROADWAY

23 RD ST.

24 TH ST.

25 TH ST.

ROUTE 7

CONGRESS STREET BRIDGE
← TO TROY

WILSON

AVE.

NIAGARA
MOHAWK
TRANSMISSION
LINE

Watervliet Park

45 BOAT TRAILERS

80 CARS

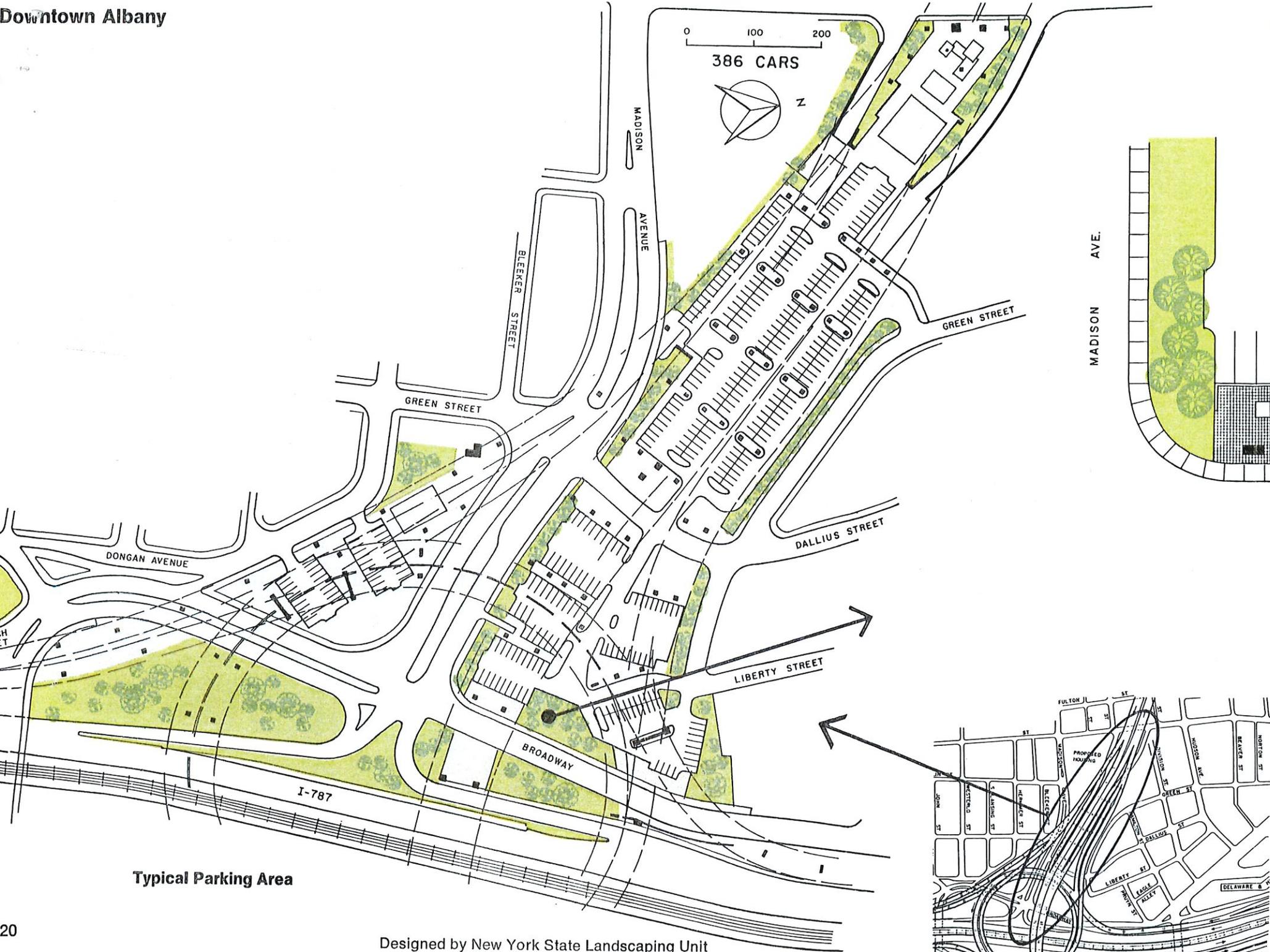
25 BOATS



Downtown Albany

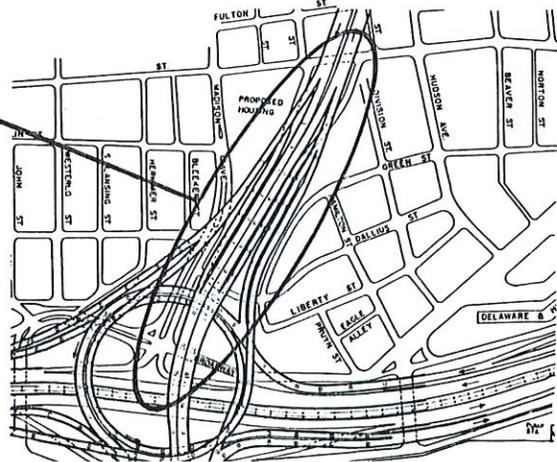
0 100 200

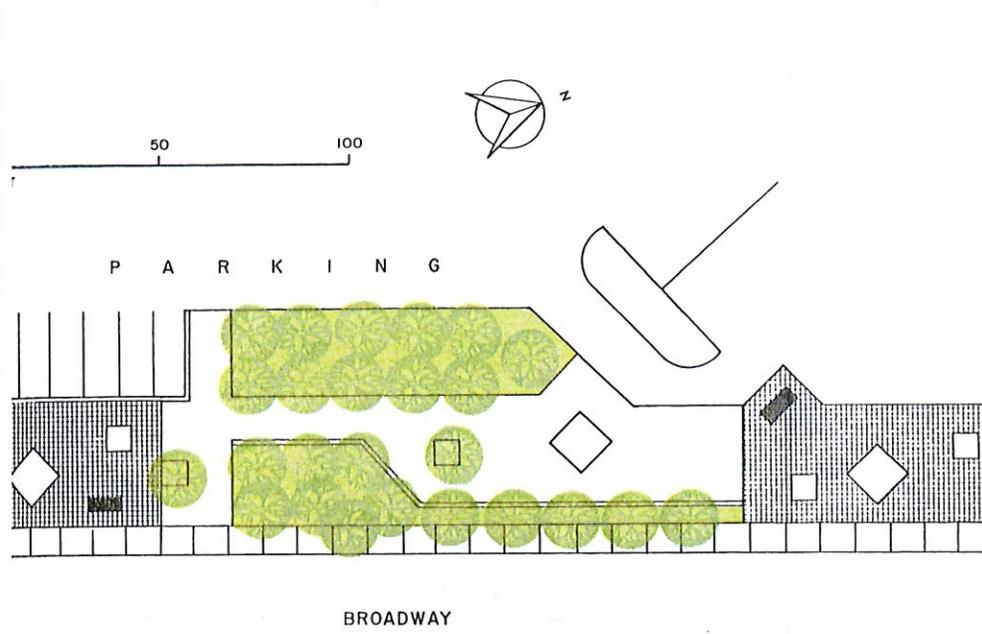
386 CARS



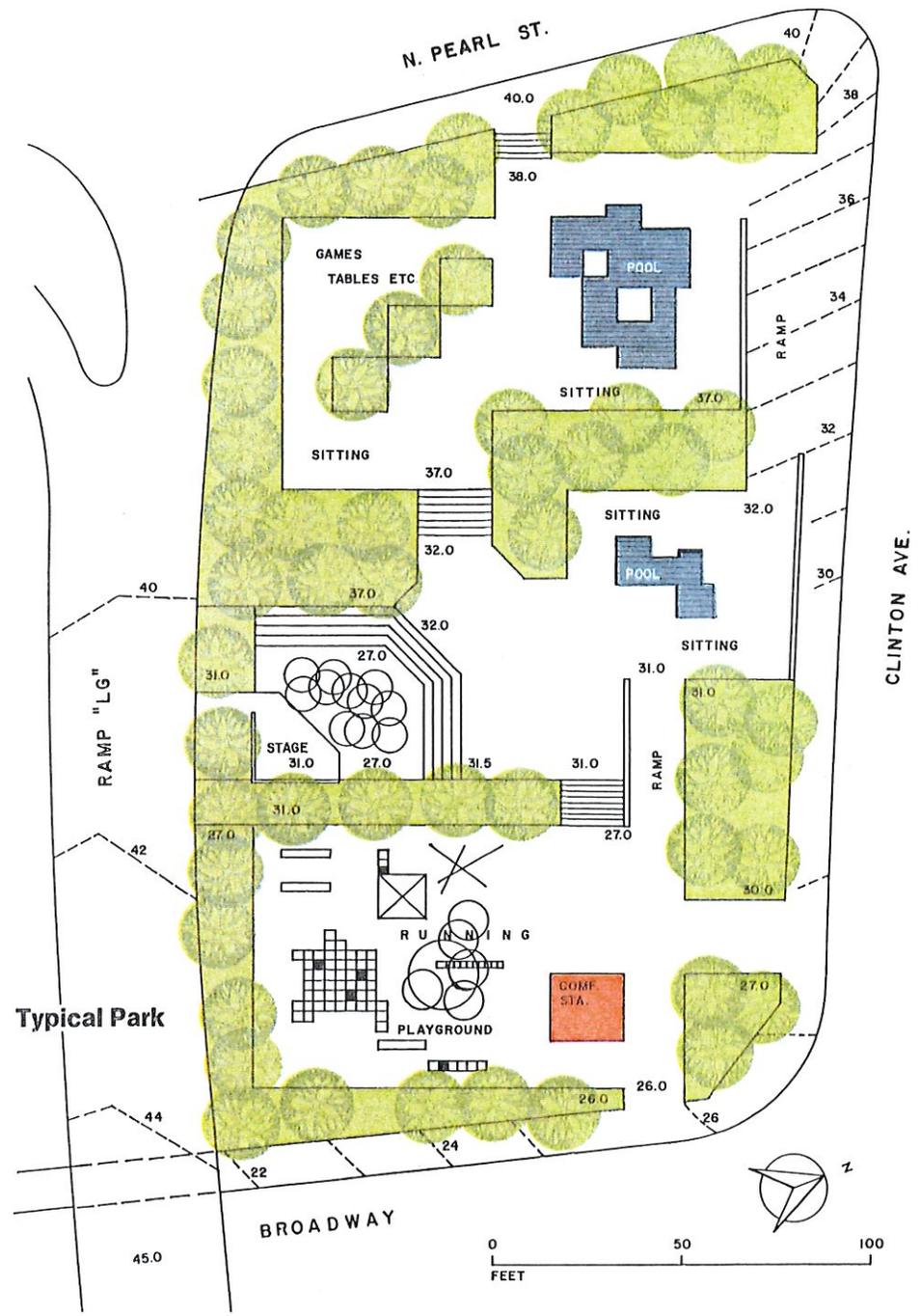
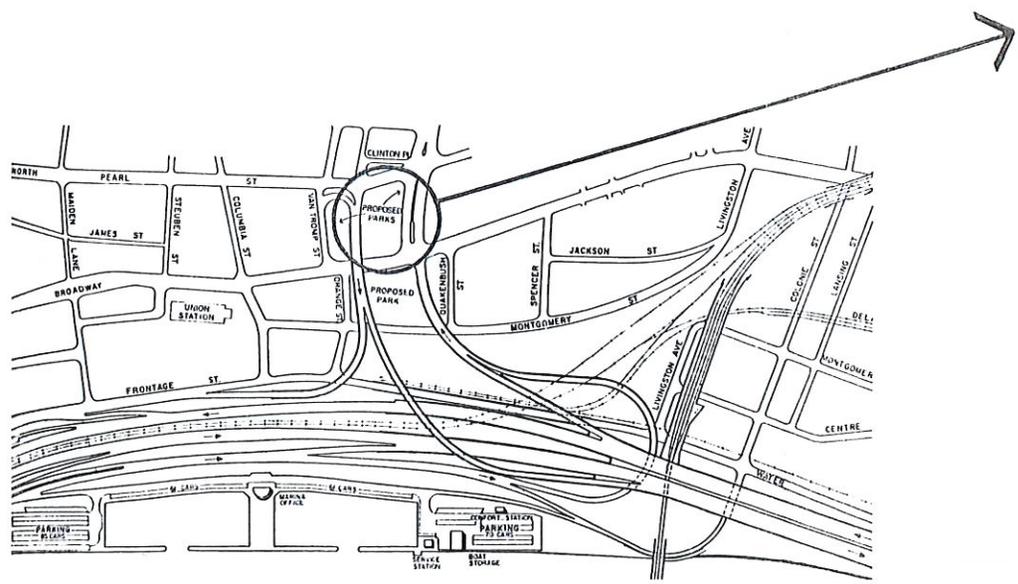
MADISON AVE.

Typical Parking Area



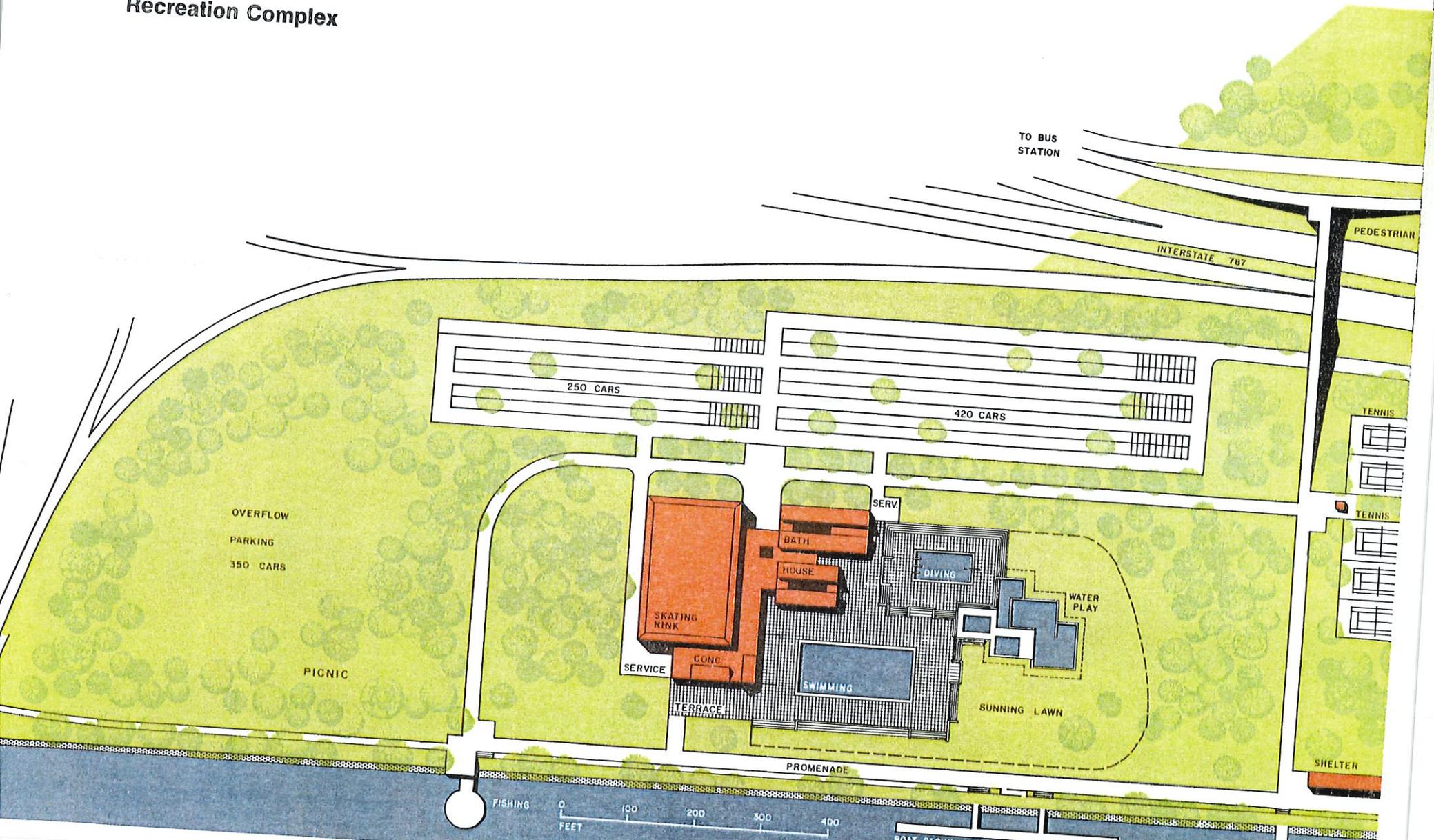


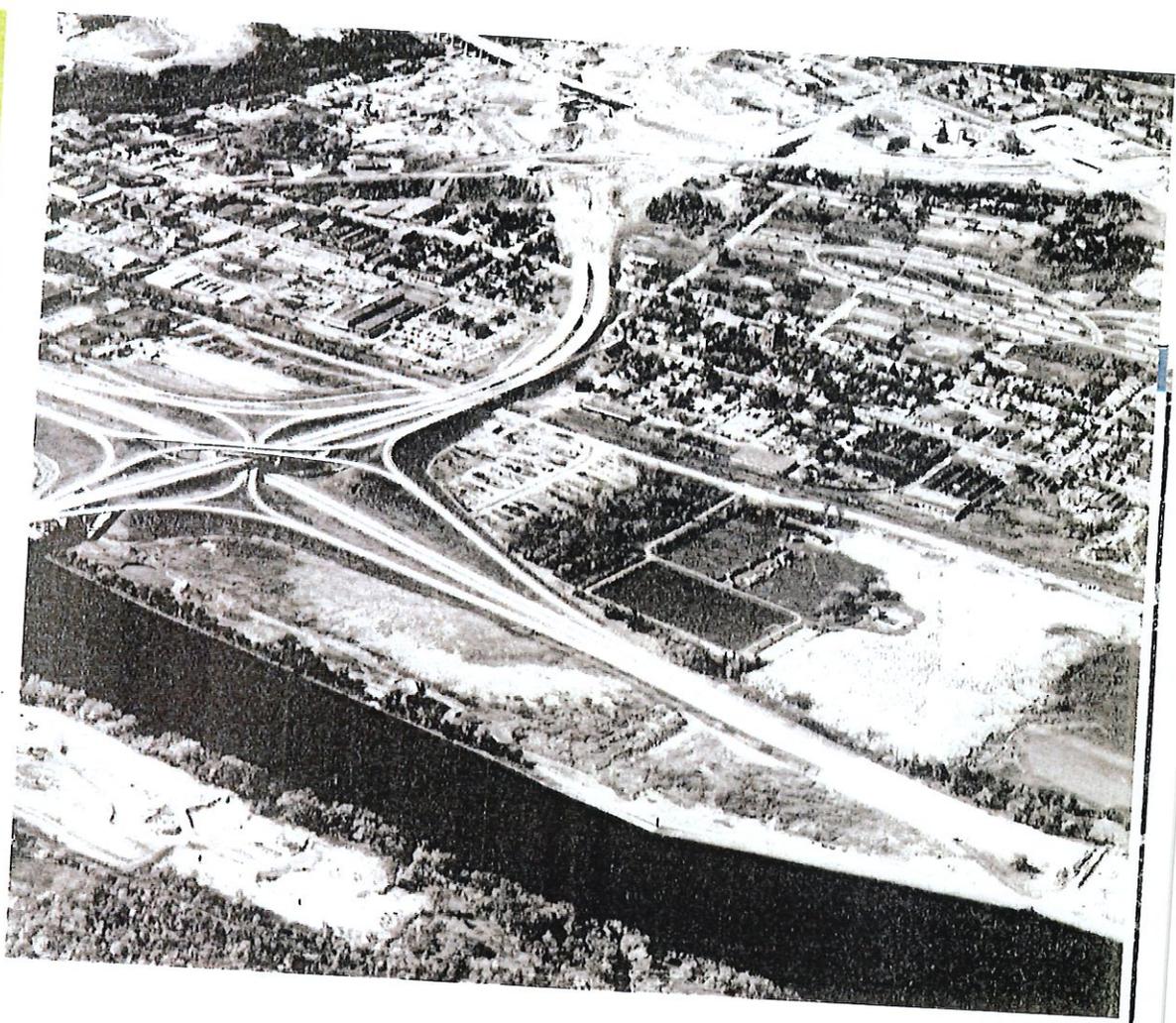
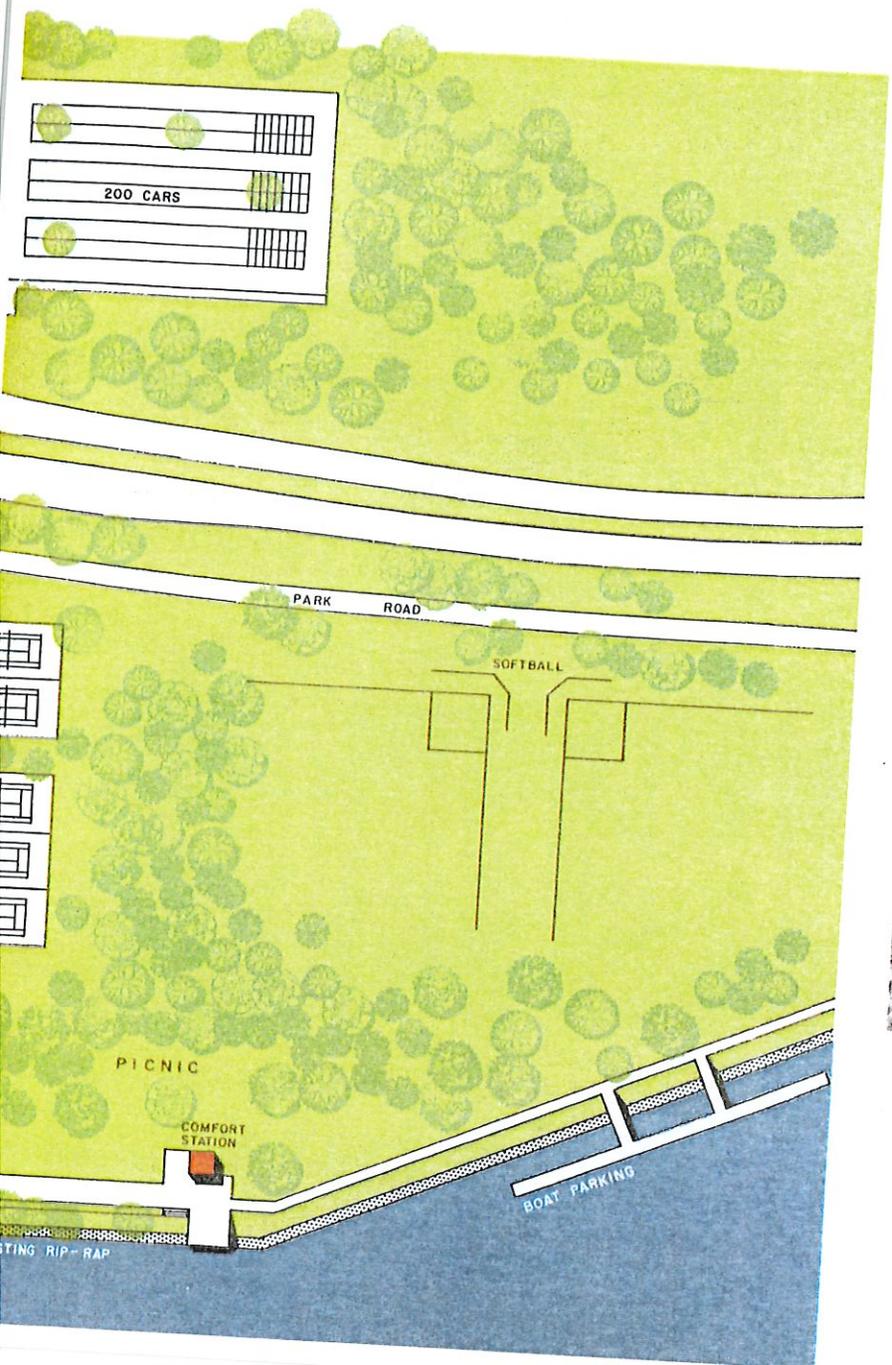
Typical Park at Parking Areas



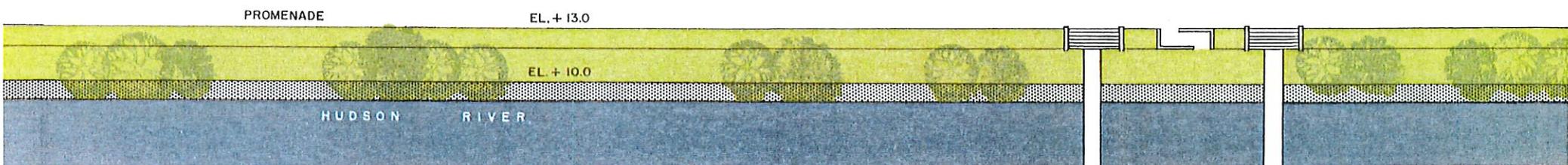
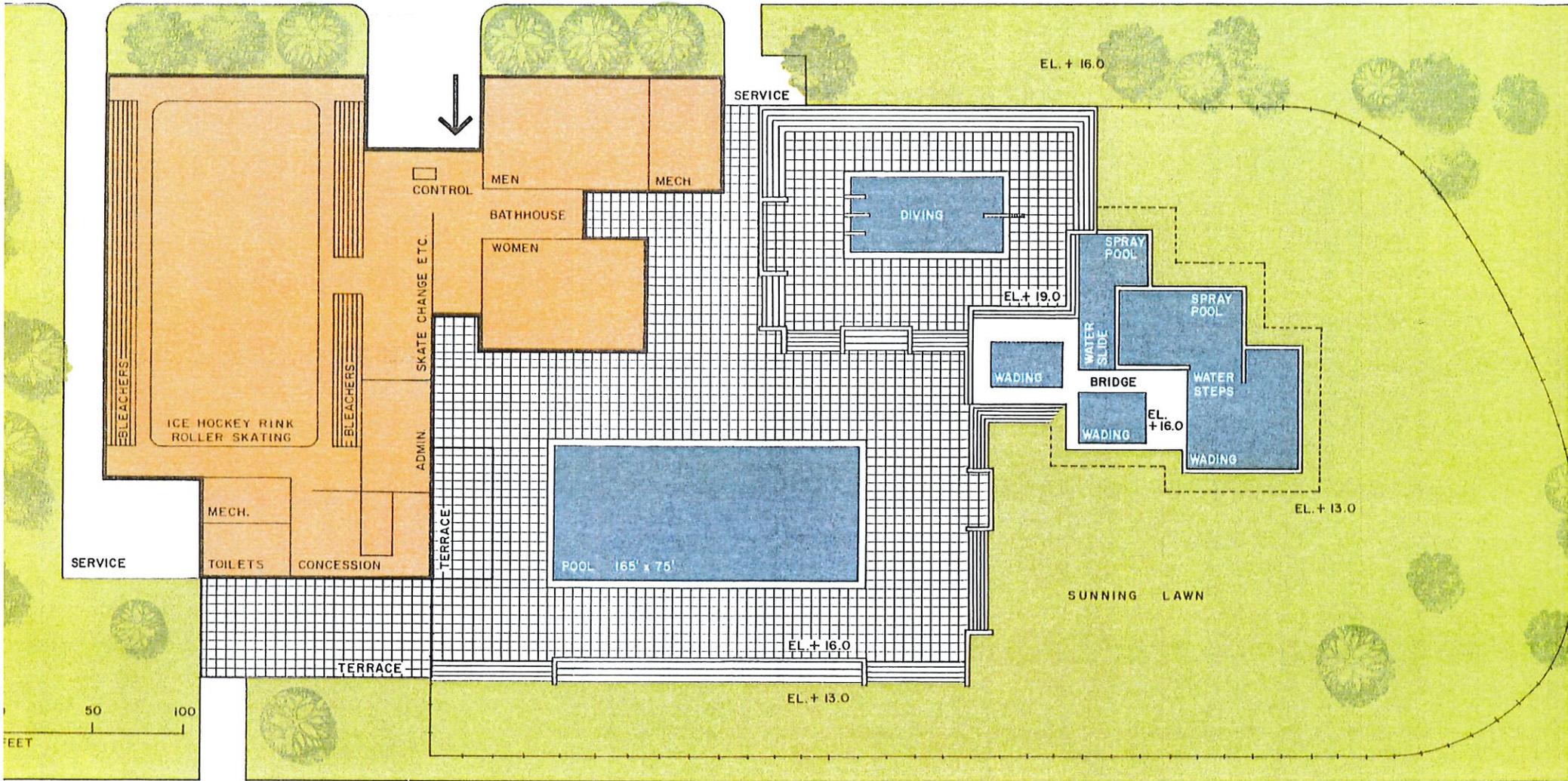
Typical Park

Recreation Complex

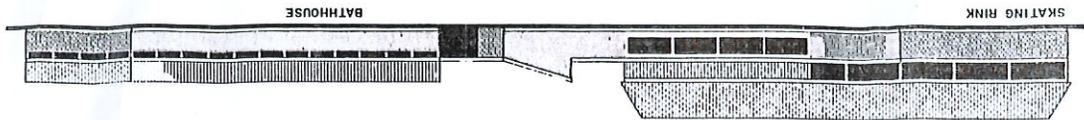




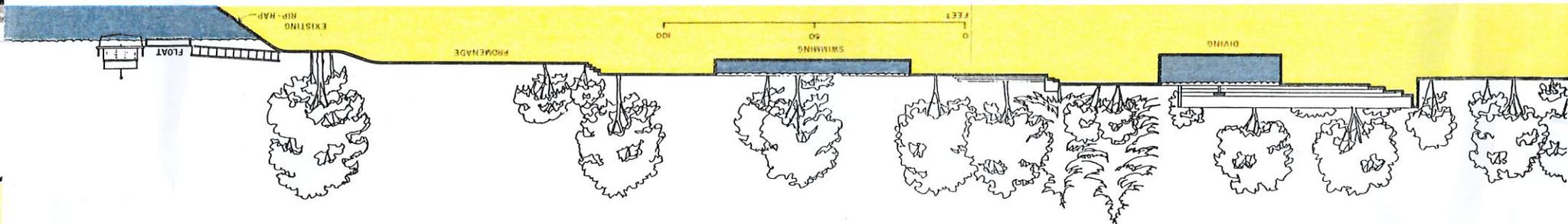
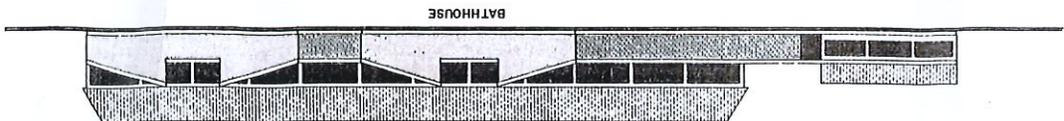
Recreation Complex Details

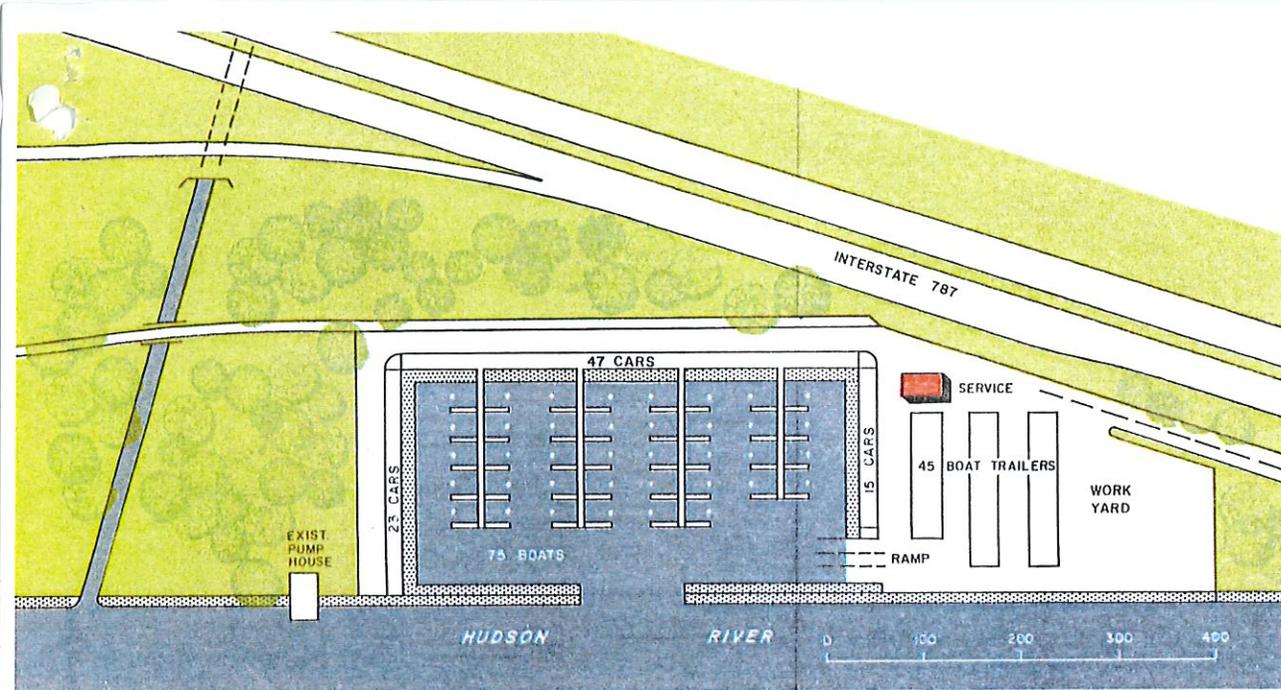


ELEVATION FROM RIVER

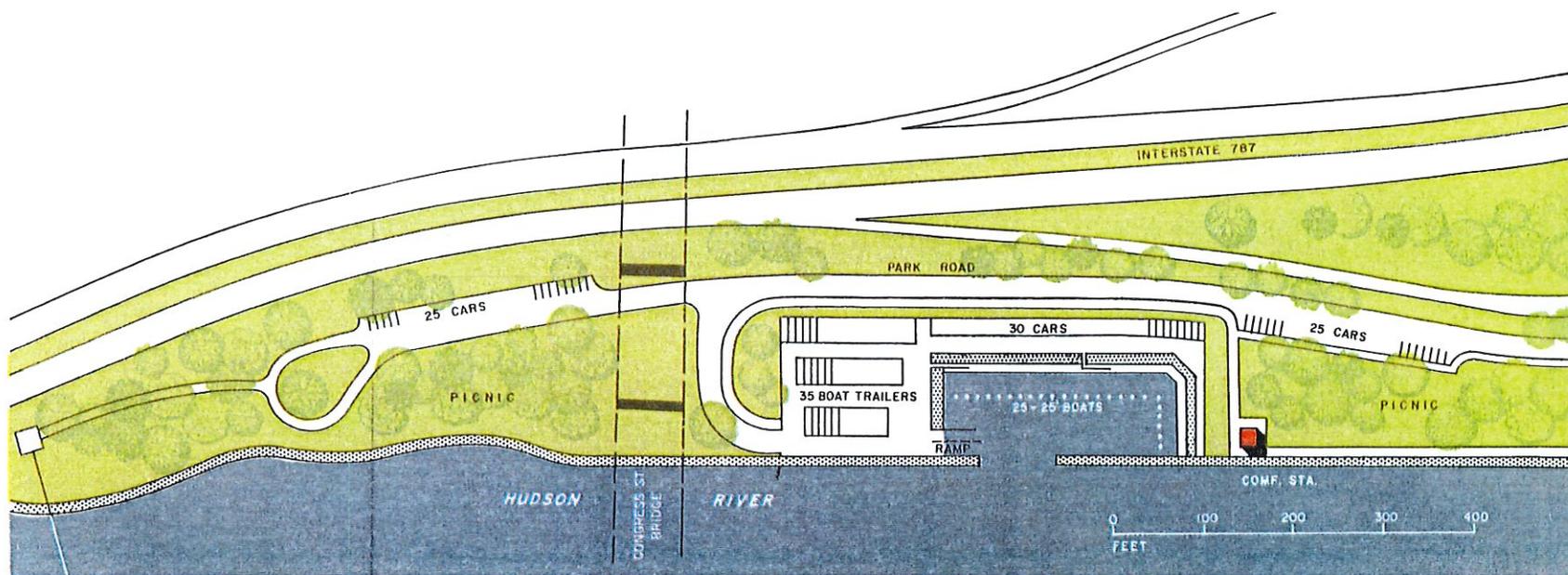


ELEVATION FROM POOL DECK

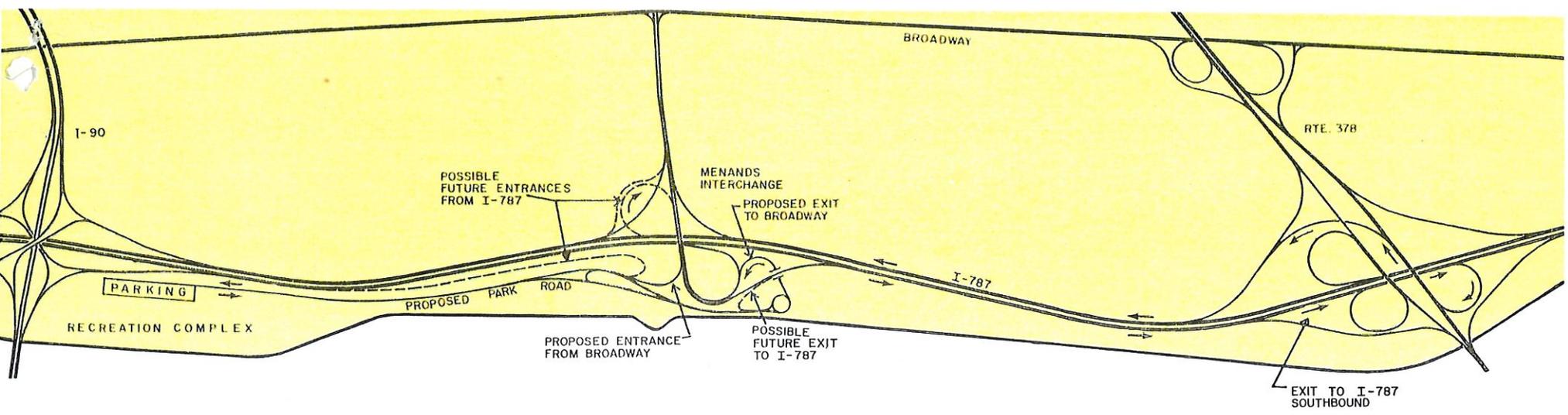




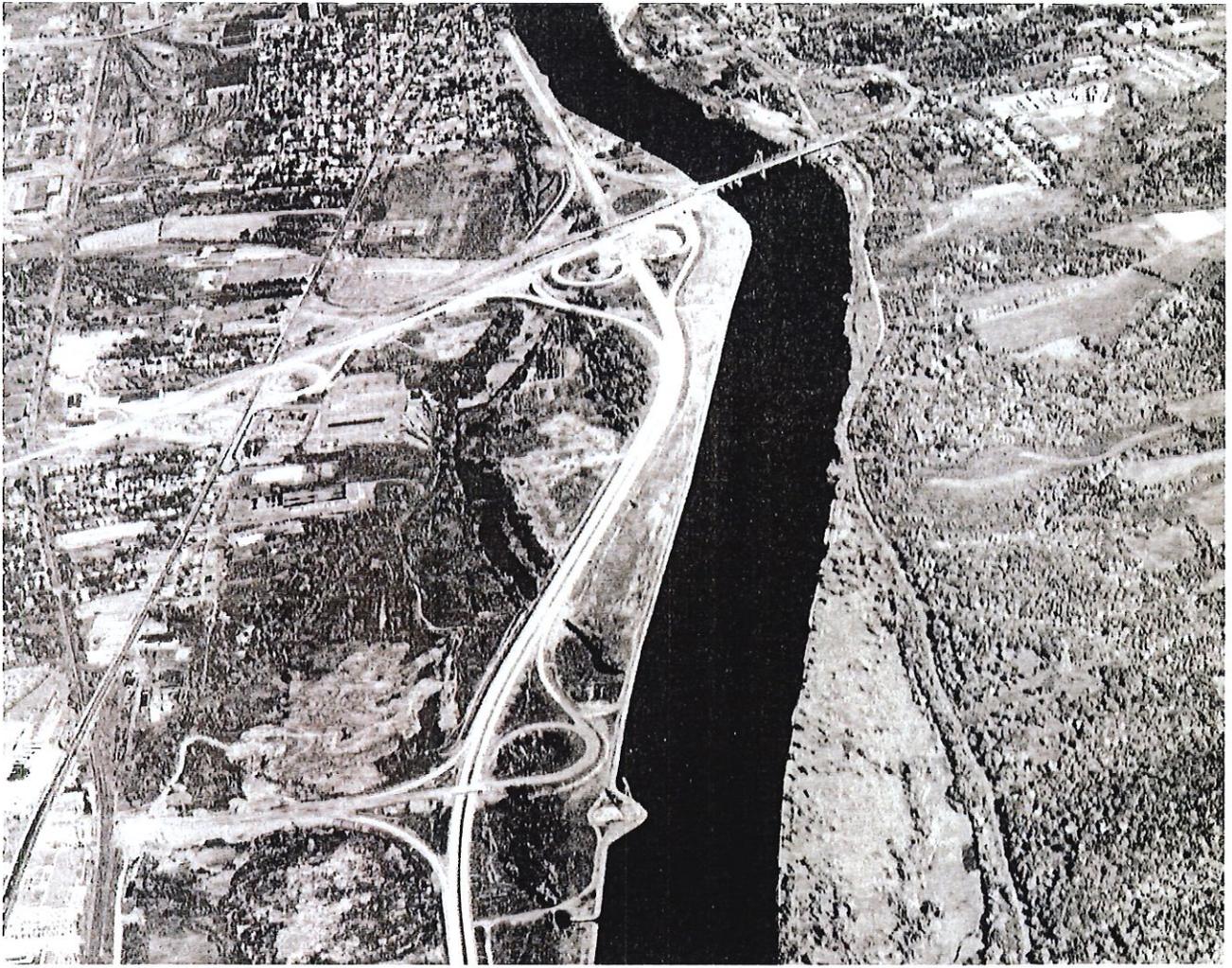
Marina at Route 378



Watervliet Park



Vehicular Access



IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

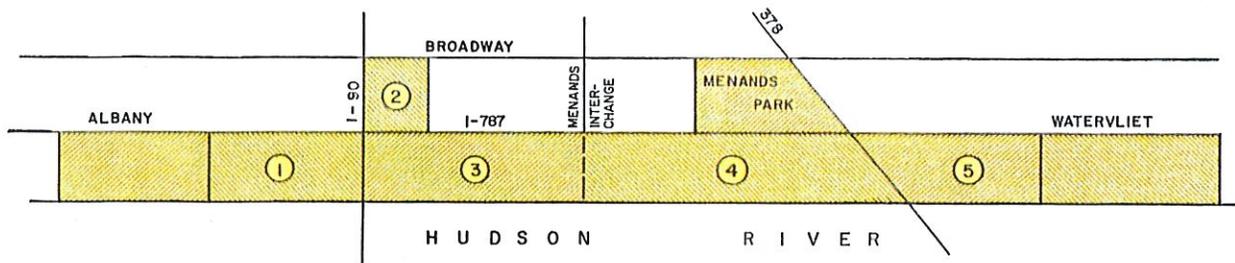
Construction

Even though two cannot live quite as cheaply as the adage promises, there are undeniable benefits of cooperation—in current economic jargon, a “spin-off”. There was no gain from the jealous restriction on use of Interstate rights-of-way which was formerly almost mandatory under Federal regulations. Much of what will permit the attainment of the full potential of the I-787 right-of-way—earthwork, bulkheading, landscaping, major drainage, certain of the utilities—will be part of the highway construction and the service it will perform is a dividend of an expanded concept of “highway purpose” and is achieved at no added cost. For example, the areas under the viaduct in downtown Albany must in any event be paved to avoid creating a public nuisance; use of these pavements for parking or play areas involves no additional construction or cost.

Other basic elements of the development, required for even minimal public use and relating primarily to access and to public safety and health are clearly within the definition of appropriateness for Federal cooperation which has been publicly enunciated by the Secretary of Transportation and the Director of Public Roads. Pedestrian bridges, some paths, fencing, lighting and comfort facilities would seem reasonably within the area of Federal responsibility.

On the other hand it is obvious that the more sophisticated public user facilities—ice-skating rink, swimming pools, marina floats, maintenance buildings and the like—are the responsibility of agencies other than the Department of Transportation. The central park development would serve users from not only all of the several nearby communities but

ESTIMATES



Key map to estimate areas

	Site Development	Recreation Development	Totals
CENTRAL PARK DEVELOPMENT			
Area 1 Navigation light to I-90	\$ 180,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 340,000
Area 2 NW of I-90—I-787 Interchange.	290,000	30,000	320,000
Area 3 I-90 to Menands Interchange	1,000,000	3,800,000	4,800,000
Area 4 Menands Interchange to Route 378	270,000	310,000	580,000
Area 5 Route 378 to underpass	360,000	500,000	860,000
Totals	\$2,100,000	\$4,800,000	\$6,900,000
MENANDS PARK	870,000	260,000	1,130,000
WATERVLIET PARK	250,000	190,000	440,000
ALBANY PARKING	670,000	—	670,000
ALBANY PARKS	50,000	550,000	600,000
Grand Totals	\$3,940,000	\$5,800,000	\$9,740,000

from distant parts of the State; it would clearly conform to current standards for state parks and the Capital District State Park Commission has indicated that it is consistent with the recreational needs and with the Commission's long-range program for development. We recommend that this be developed by the Capital District State Park Commission.

Similarly, for the vest pocket parks in Albany and the 10-acre Watervliet Park, Interstate funds could be used for appropriate landscape development including planting, pavement, lawns and benches with the purely recreational facilities such as wading pools and boat docking and landing facilities the obvious responsibility of the two municipalities. The Menands Park, west of and outside the Interstate right-of-way, would presumably be a local undertaking.

Maintenance and Operation

With the possible exception of painting and repairs for the pedestrian overpasses and the maintenance of major utilities under the highway, the maintenance and operation of the proposed parks would seem to be unquestionably and solely the responsibility of the Capital District State Park Commission and of the cognizant agencies of the municipalities involved.

STATE OF NEW YORK

Nelson A. Rockefeller, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

T. W. Parker, Commissioner

E. Burton Hughes, Executive Deputy Commissioner

Report prepared under the direction of
Frank J. Fuller, Regional Director

The preparation of this report has been aided by the following public agencies:

CAPITAL DISTRICT STATE PARK COMMISSION

John F. Forner, Jr., Chairman

P. J. Drury, Regional Park Manager

TEMPORARY STATE COMMISSION ON THE CAPITAL CITY

Lt. Gov. Malcolm Wilson, Chairman

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY COMMISSION

Carl J. Mays, Executive Director

CITY OF ALBANY

Erastus Corning II, Mayor

VILLAGE OF MENANDS

John F. Forner, Jr., Mayor

TOWN OF COLONIE

William K. Sanford, Supervisor

CITY OF WATERVLIET

James F. Cavanaugh, Sr., Mayor