

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY
Mayor's Office of Capital Projects
Division of Real Estate

**Property Adoption Agreement for a Portion of Rockefeller Park for the
Jesse Owens Olympic Tree and Memorial Walk**

Ordinance No: 1080-2021

Legislative Purpose: To authorize the Director of Public Works to enter into a property adoption agreement with University Circle, Inc. to improve and maintain a portion of Rockefeller Park located immediately north of the Rockefeller Park Lagoon for the Jesse Owens Olympic Tree and Memorial Walk.

Project Summary: Olympic medalist and Clevelander Jesse Owens was given 4 Olympic (English) Oak Trees at the 1936 Berlin Olympics – one for each gold medal. He planted one at his mother's house in Cleveland, one at Rhodes High School, one at the Ohio State University, and one died before he could plant it.

The oak at Rhodes High School has been aging and in 2017 Holden Forest and Gardens completed a grafting technique to essentially clone the tree. In April 2021 in partnership with Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation, Holden Forest and Gardens, University Circle, Inc. and Holden Parks Trust, the first cloned tree from the original tree was planted in Rockefeller Park within the circular walking path just north of the Rockefeller Park Lagoon.

In spring 2022 University Circle, Inc. proposes to improve and maintain the grassy knoll where the oak is located with a seating wall, public art, and 4 memorial markers, as well as improve the surrounding 200 meter walking path with a new walking surface. Additional landscaping, a bike rack, and additional seating area may be added now or in the future if funding allows.

Permanent Parcel No.: Portion of PPN 107-01-001

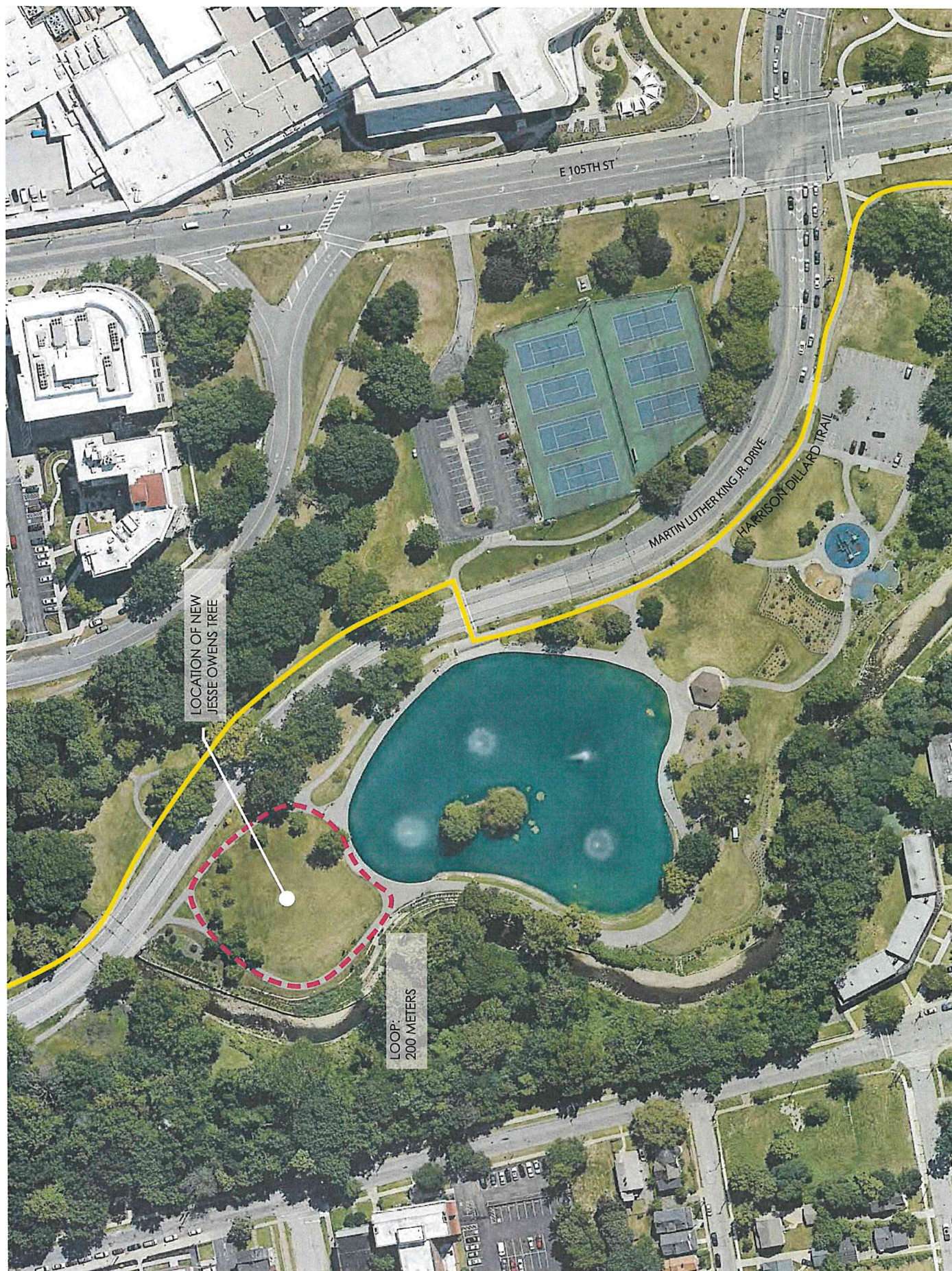
Location: The grassy knoll and walking path immediately north of Rockefeller Park Lagoon.

Term: Three (3) year initial term; renew automatically on a yearly basis thereafter unless terminated by either party.

Cost: No charge to City for improving or maintaining the park.

Ward: Ward 7 (Councilmember Basheer Jones)

Attachments: Location Map; Renderings of Improvements



E 105TH ST

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DRIVE

HARRISON DILLARD TRAIL

LOCATION OF NEW
JESSE OWENS TREE

LOOP:
200 METERS



Jesse Owens Olympic Tree & Memorial Walk

Rockefeller Park

University Circle, Inc.

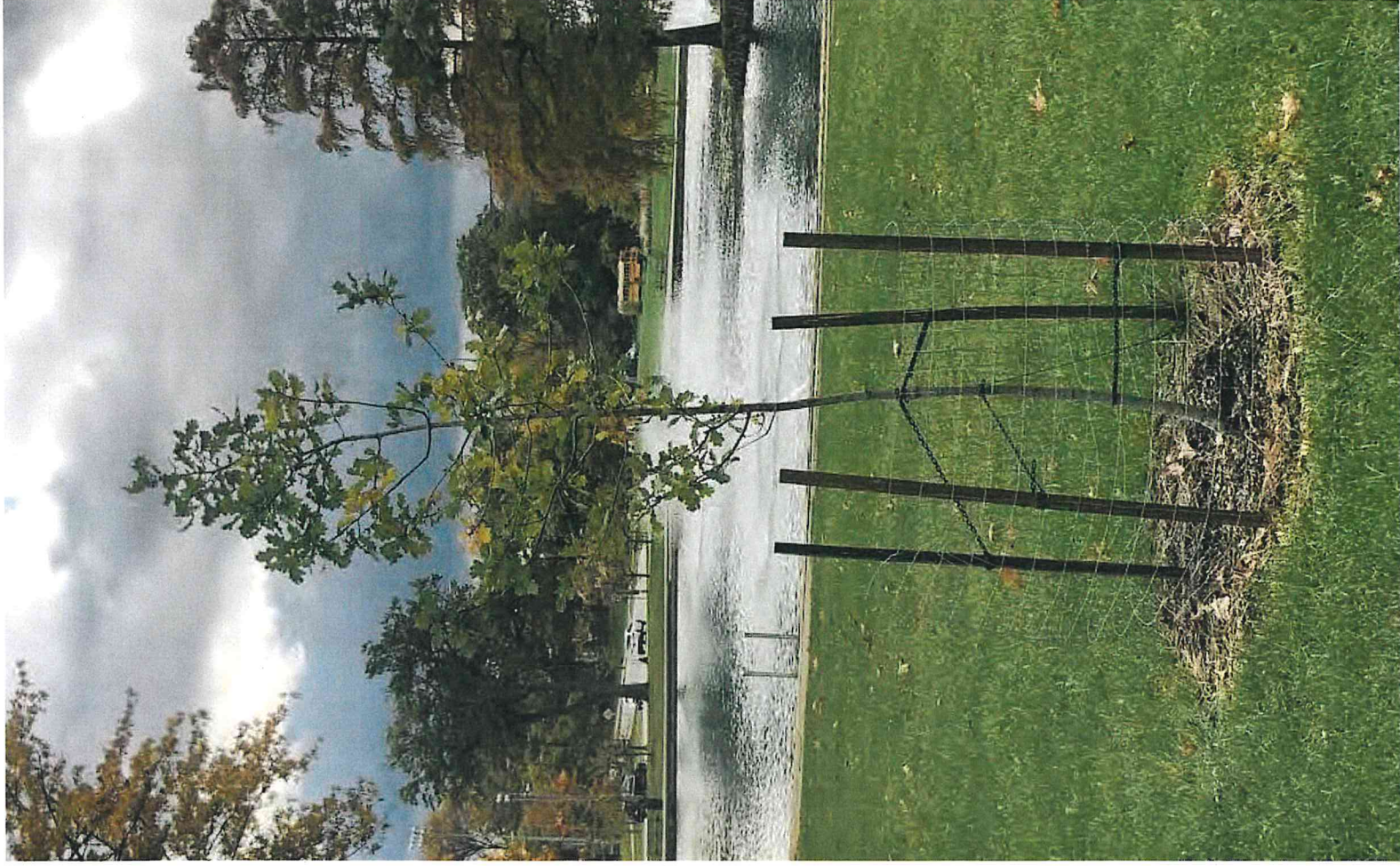
Angelica Pozo, Artist

DERUlandscape architecture
812 Huron Road E. #411 Cleveland, OH 44115 | 216.466.4355

Presentation | 11.05.21

Rockefeller Park Jesse Owens Olympic Oak Timeline

- Summer 2020 – Rockefeller Park location identified
- Fall 2020 – Conceptual planning for tree location and plaza
- April 2021 – Jesse Owens Olympic Oak Tree planted
- June 2021 – Public engagement at Rockefeller Park Lagoon
- September 2021 – Base funding secured
- December 2021 – Public meeting and community engagement kick-off
- January 2022 – Project Bidding
- April 2022 – Arbor Day Plaza Groundbreaking



Jesse Owens

1913-1980

Born: James Cleveland 'J.C.' Owens
September 12, 1913 in Oakville, Alabama

Early life

Family moved to Cleveland, Ohio when Jesse was 9

Attended Fairmount Junior High and East Tech High School, but trained in track at Rhodes High School

- won all major track events, including the Ohio State Championship 3 consecutive years
- Set HS track world records in 220 yard dash, long jump, and tied a record in 100 yard dash

Ohio State University

1935 - At the Big Ten Championship in Ann Arbor, he broke 3 world records and tied a 4th within 45 minutes

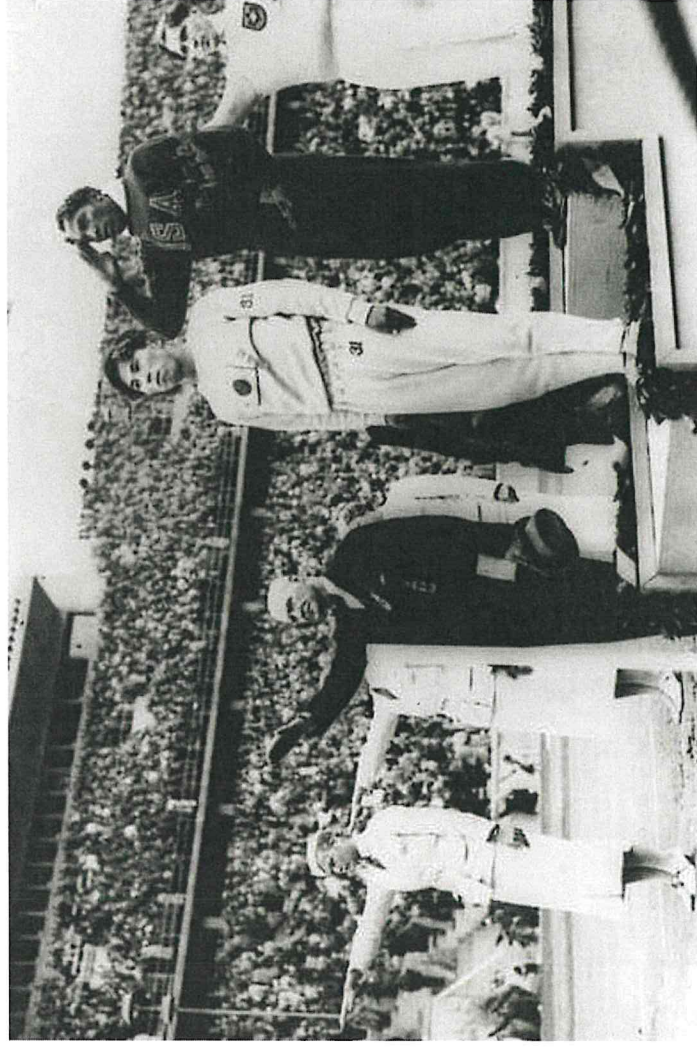
1936 Olympic Games in Berlin

Owens won four gold medals

- 100m,
- 200m,
- 4x100m relay
- long jump.

He managed to break or equal nine Olympic records and also set three world records.

Adolf Hitler hoped that the 1936 Berlin Games would prove his theory of Aryan racial superiority. Instead, Owens' achievements led the people of Berlin to hail him, an African-American, as a hero.



Life After the Olympics

After the Olympics, Owens went home to Cleveland and held many jobs:

- Playground instructor for underprivileged youth
- Bandleader
- Professional Entertainer (tap dancing with Bill "Bojangles" Robinson")
- Cleveland's Parks & Rec Department
- Started a dry cleaning business

1942 - During WWII, Owens was appointed as the director of a national fitness program for African Americans.

1943 - moved to Detroit to work for the Ford Motor Company

1949 - moved to Chicago, launched a public relations company, travels extensively and speaks about athletic competition and its ability to inspire race relations

1955 - named Ambassador of Sports by Eisenhower, serve's as the president's representative to the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne.

1965 - running coach for the NY Mets

1970 - publishes Blackthink: My Life as a Black Man and White Man

1980 - Dies of lung cancer March 31

Honors and awards

- 1970 - Alabama Sports Hall of Fame
- 1972 - Honorary Doctorate of Athletic Arts from OSU
- 1976 - Medal of Freedom
- 1979 - Living Legend Award
- 1980 - Jesse Owens Foundation created
- 1984 - OSU dedicated Jesse Owens Memorial Plaza outside the Ohio Stadium
- 1988 - Congressional Gold Medal (posthumous)
- 1996 - Jesse Owens Memorial Park and Museum opens in Oakville, Alabama



Portrait of Jesse Owens (from Jesse Owens Memorial Park)

Olympic Oak Trees

Owens was given 4 Olympic Oak trees at the 1936 Olympics – one for each gold medal. He planted one at his mother's house in Cleveland, one at Rhodes High School, one at OSU, and he claimed that one died before he could plant it.

The tree at Rhodes High School is the only confirmed surviving Olympic Oak Tree.

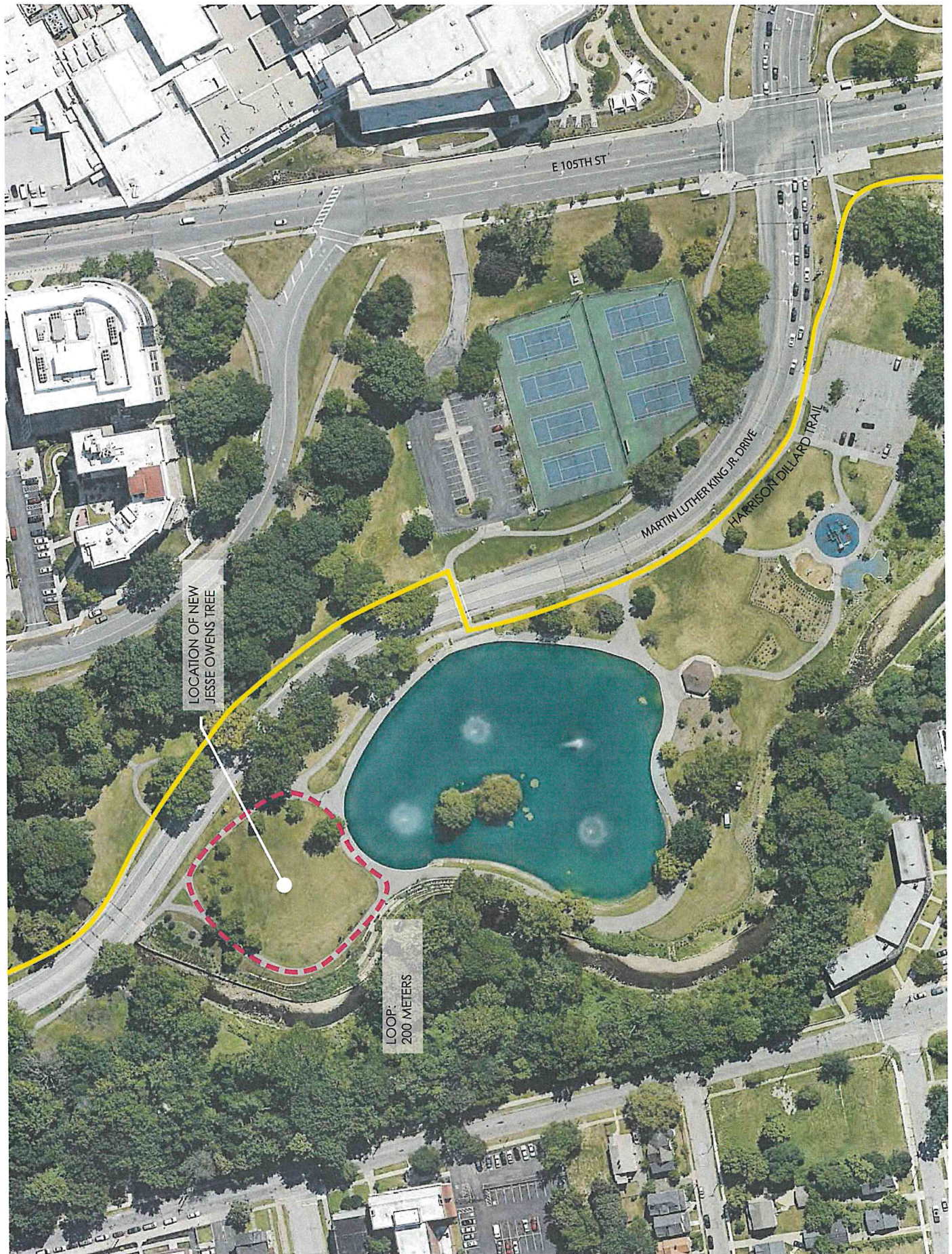
The English Oak at Rhodes High School has been aging, and in 2017 the tree was cloned and propagated at the Holden Arboretum, where it currently resides.

New clone from original tree planted in Rockefeller Park April 2021.



Photos of Owens' Olympic Oak Tree (from Associated Press, Freshwater Cleveland

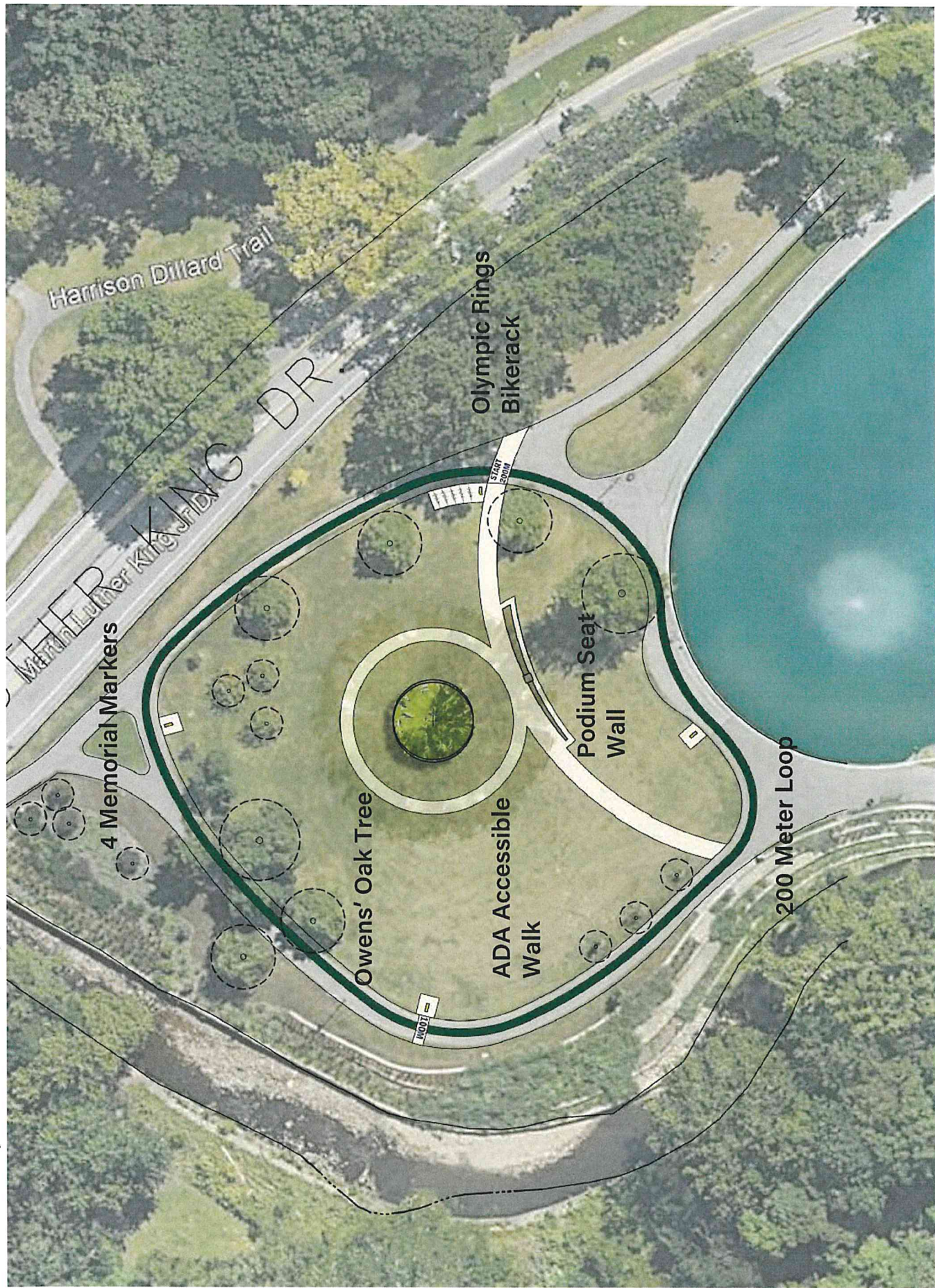




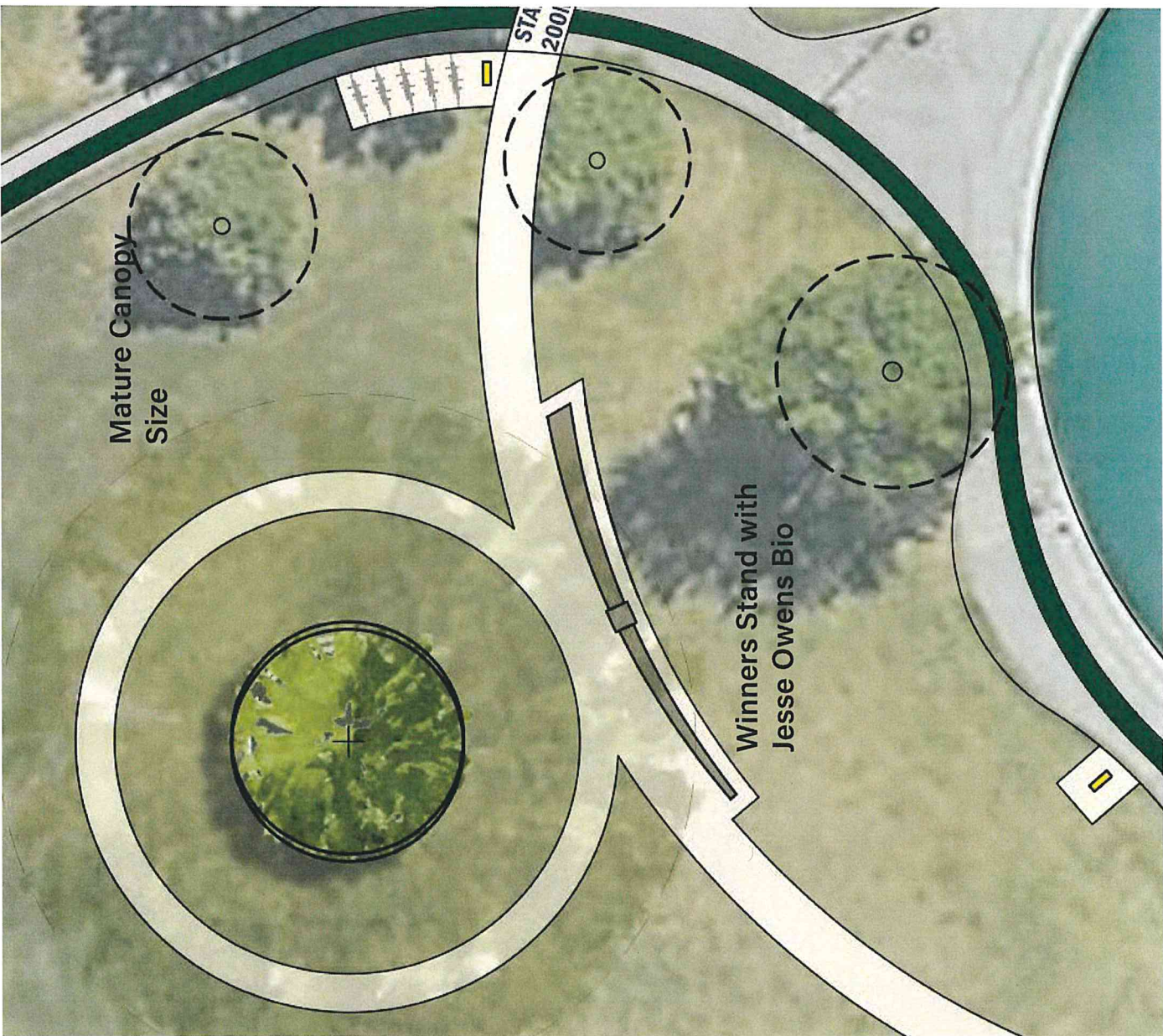
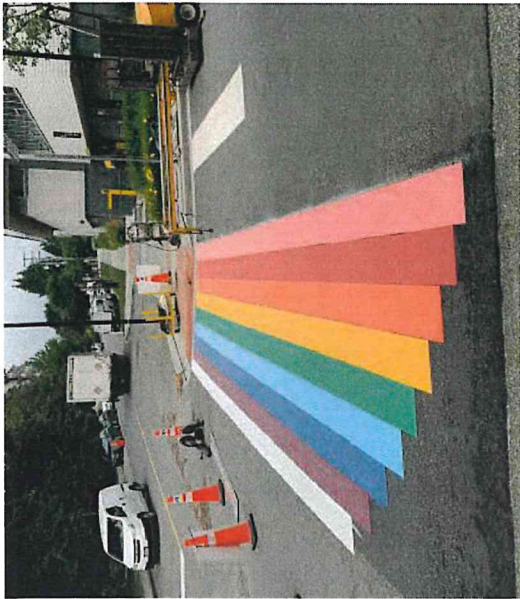
LOCATION OF NEW
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LOOP:
200 METERS

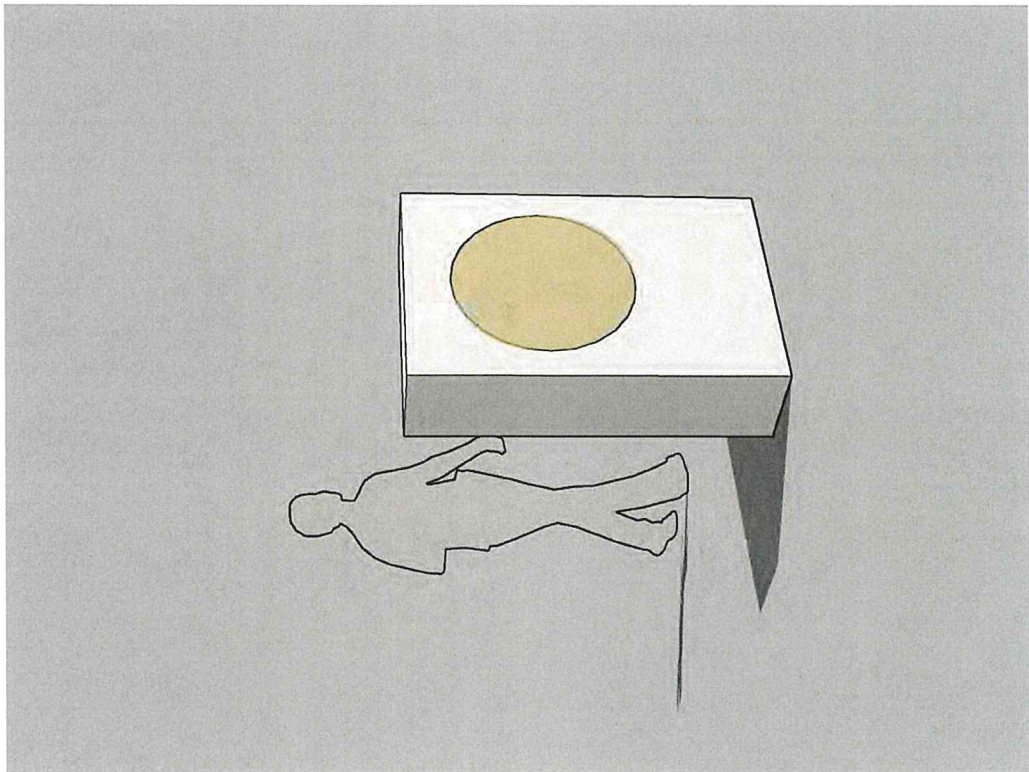
Revised Amphitheater Concept



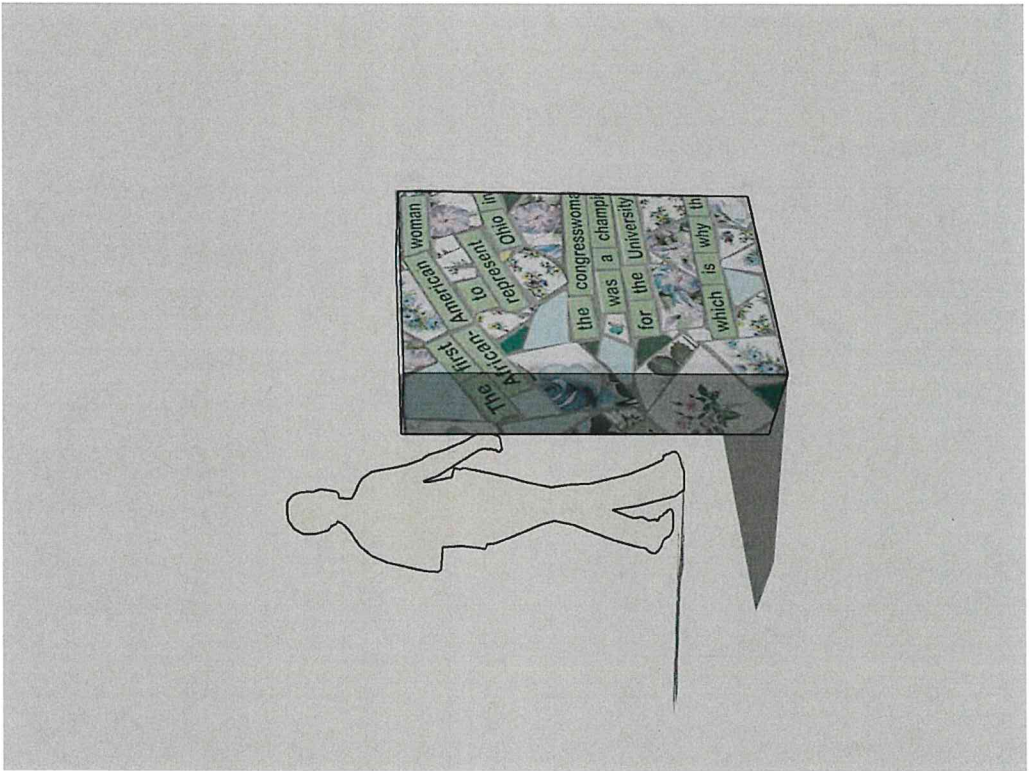
Amphitheater Details



Memorial Markers

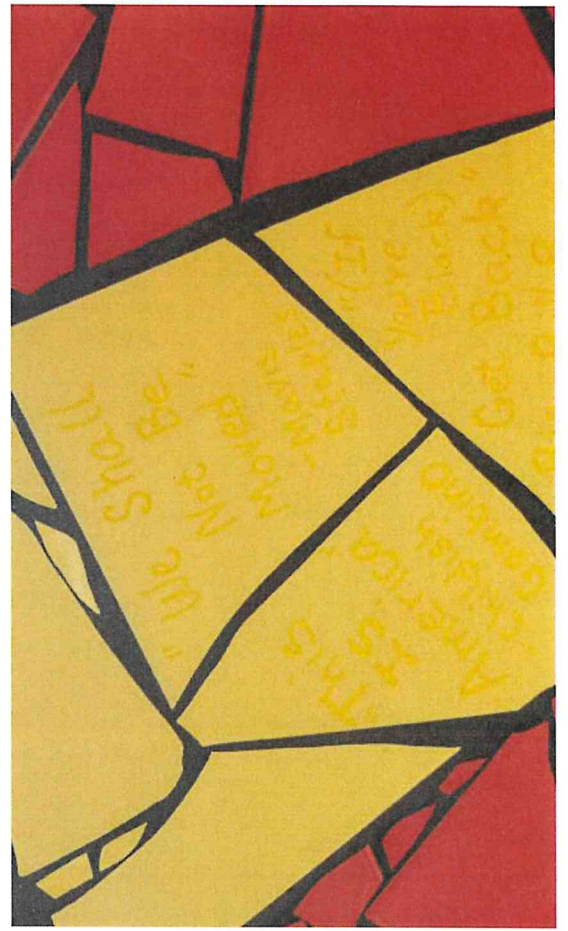
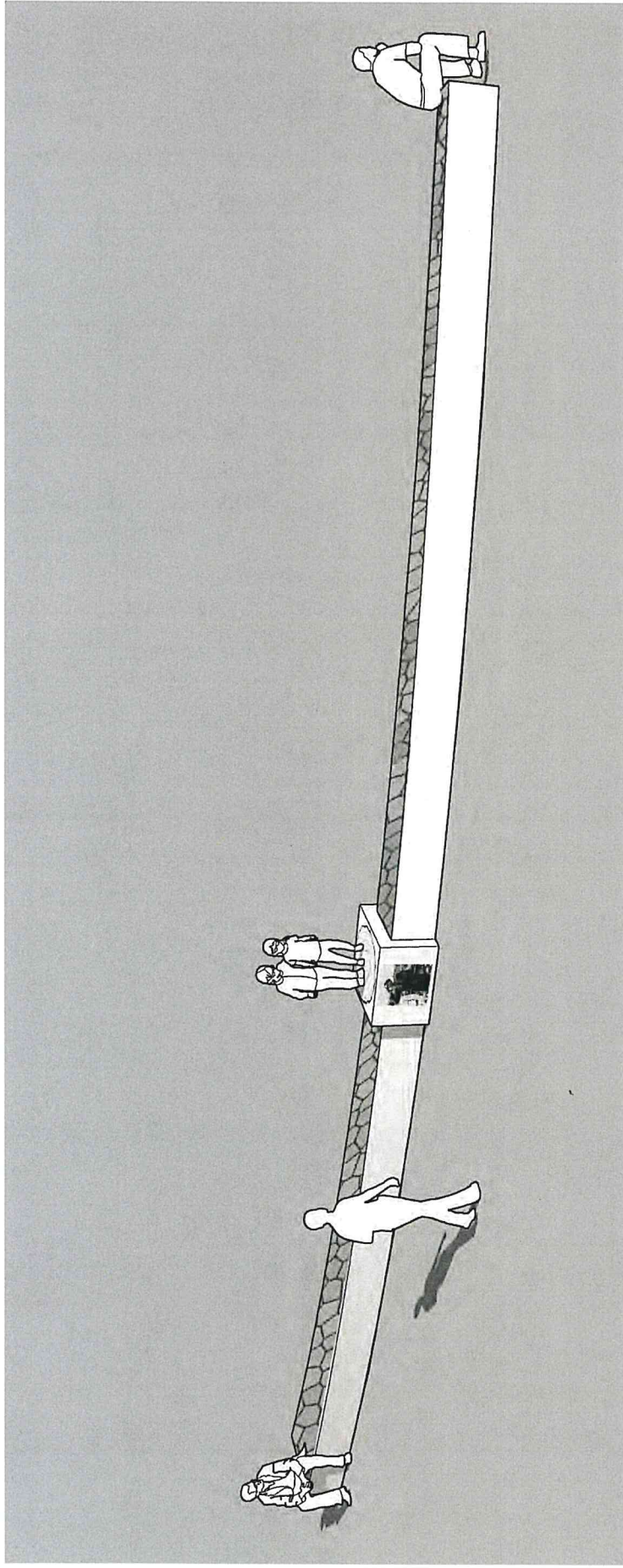


Front



Back

Winners Stand







Jesse Owens Quotes

"I let my feet spend as little time on the ground as possible. From the air, fast down, and from the ground, fast up."

"Find the good. It's all around you. Find it, showcase it and you'll start believing in it."

"It certainly behooves a man with God-given ability to stand ten feet tall. You never know how many youngsters may be watching."