

## News Release

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### **City of Fredericksburg Honors the Importance of a More Inclusive History at the Former Site of the Slave Auction Block**

**(Fredericksburg, VA) October 27, 2020** – Today, the City of Fredericksburg recognized the importance of honoring all voices in history at the former site of the Slave Auction Block. A new wayside panel display with brick renovations and a circular medallion have been installed to appropriately memorialize the site in the interim while a permanent interpretation is being developed. This marks an important step in the City's efforts to tell an inclusive history, reflective of a more diverse lens and voice.

The City removed the 1,200-pound auction block from the corner of Charles and William Streets, in downtown Fredericksburg, in June 2020. These improvements complete phase one of a multi-phased process to interpret this site of importance. Within the next 18-24 months the City will design a permanent interpretation for this site. In the block's place, a wayside panel display has been installed to mark the location and share information about the process with all audiences. It is not intended to be comprehensive, but to ensure that the site remains visible and that information is readily available to the public.

The City's Vision Statement, *Sharing Our Past, Embracing the Future*, conveys the future that the City aspires to and guided it in the decision to relocate the auction block: "Fredericksburg is the hub of regional economic activity, a city with a multicultural population, a thriving cultural scene, a place that works for everyone, and a community where the people are writing the next chapters of Fredericksburg's history." This vision, combined with the City's history of successfully and peacefully working through difficult issues, including those related to race, led to the commitment to greater equitable change starting with the Slave Auction Block.

"Our community has led our City to be more purposeful in its decisions, to lead future generations to take pride in engaging in important and sometimes challenging conversations that guide us to a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse place for all. The City of Fredericksburg is grateful to all who have contributed and continue to contribute to this process and the many necessary steps ahead," said Fredericksburg Vice-Mayor Charlie Frye, Jr.

The brickwork and placement of the circular medallion were completed at the site and a brief moment of recognition took place to provide closure. Mayor Greenlaw and Vice-Mayor Frye gathered as an homage of respect, with the purpose of reflecting as a City organization and how the City has honored its commitment to the community. Phase 1 has been completed, as reported in the [Plan for Relocation](#) to City Council on November 12, 2019. Important next steps continue to advance through the City's Racial Equity Plan development and implementation.

The Slave Auction Block has been transported to the Fredericksburg Area Museum, where it will be displayed later this year. Additional details about the planned FAM exhibit will be released at a later time.

The City continues to seek public feedback input on matters of racial equity. A public survey and limited public virtual sessions will be hosted this October and November. People may express their interest by visiting [Fredericksburgva.gov/553/Get-Involved](https://fredericksburgva.gov/553/Get-Involved). The City will continue to seek public input.

For more information on the Slave Auction Block relocation and reinterpretation, visit [fredericksburgva.gov/1680/Slave-Auction-Block](https://fredericksburgva.gov/1680/Slave-Auction-Block).

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