



## For Immediate Release

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## Building a Memorial on the Auction Block Site

### *Public Input Sought on Proposed Plan*

**(Fredericksburg, VA) August 23, 2023** - Dr. Gaila Sims, Curator of African American History and Special Projects at the Fredericksburg Area Museum (FAM), presented a proposed plan to City Council for the former site of the Auction Block at the corner of William and Charles Streets. The proposed plan has been developed in collaboration with representatives from the Memorials Advisory Commission, the Architectural Review Board, the Fredericksburg Arts Commission, City officials, and many community members.

The public is invited to learn more about the proposed plan at:

- Central Rappahannock Regional Library's Lunch + Learn (Virtual): September 15 at 12 p.m.
- Fredericksburg Area Museum (In Person): October 5 at 7 p.m. in Historic Council Chambers

For those who wish to watch a recorded presentation, one will be available on [FredericksburgVA.gov](http://FredericksburgVA.gov) and [famva.org](http://famva.org) in mid-September. Public feedback is welcome, and is requested by October 16.

### **Auction Block Relocation Efforts**

Fredericksburg City Council voted on June 11, 2019 to approve the relocation of the Auction Block from its location at the corner of William and Charles Streets to the FAM. City staff's *Plan for Relocation* was approved on November 12, 2019 and outlined steps to relocate the Block and provide site interpretation on the corner of William and Charles Streets. The Auction Block was excavated on June 5, 2020 and moved to the FAM where it is now in an exhibit entitled *A Monumental Weight: The Auction Block in Fredericksburg, Virginia*.

The corner where the Block was formerly located is now the focus of this final phase of the City's *Plan for Relocation*. Earlier work, completed in October 2020, included placing a bronze medallion approximately the same diameter as the Block in the sidewalk to temporarily mark the location. Additionally, a wayside panel was installed to temporarily provide information to the public.

The City and FAM partnered to hire a Curator of African American History and Special Projects as a component of City Council's effort to tell a more complete Fredericksburg story. In 2022, Dr. Gaila Sims joined the team at FAM. Her work has been instrumental in developing the expanded Auction Block exhibit at FAM. Dr. Sims is now overseeing the final phase of the City's relocation plan, which is a permanent interpretation of the corner where the Auction Block once stood.

## **Next Steps**

Following the public presentations and community feedback, a Request for Proposals (RFP) on Memorial Designs is being planned for early 2024. Public input and City Council approval on a final design will be followed by installation of the new memorial, likely the following year.

Find out more information on the City's website at [www.FredericksburgVA.gov](http://www.FredericksburgVA.gov).

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