



CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG: PHASE THREE REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Fredericksburg contracted with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (the Coalition) to complete an initiative that consisted of three phases. The first phase was an audit of the stories that the community was currently telling about African American History and the slave auction block and how community members felt about those stories. The second phase focused more specifically on the slave auction block through a series of public brainstorming sessions meant to imagine how the slave auction block might be further interpreted. The third phase focused on public dialogues that brought the community together to talk about major community themes previously revealed during the first two phases.

The Phase Three Report (below) details lessons learned during the final phase (October, November and December of 2018) as well as specific recommendations, made by the Coalition, based on findings from all three phases of the initiative.

INTRODUCTION:

Fredericksburg, located on the Rappahannock River, has a rich history and is known for its historical connections; many community members feel strongly about their connections to Fredericksburg's history. In 2017, the slave auction block was discussed in a number of public and private spaces. Some people advocated for the block's removal while others wished to have it preserved in place. As a result of the City-led efforts to conduct a town hall meeting and an online survey, the Fredericksburg City Council voted to keep the slave auction block in its current location by a 6-1 vote. They then signed a contract with the Coalition to work in collaboration with local elected officials, artists, activists and community members to collectively conceptualize and interpret the slave auction block for contemporary audiences and to tell a more complete story.

The Coalition is a dynamic global network of museums, historic sites and memory initiatives that inspire millions of people each year to explore the parallels between past and present, build bridges of understanding, and take action on pressing social issues. Since its founding in 1999, the Coalition has grown to include over 250 members in 65 countries, working across regional and thematic networks to facilitate collaboration, exchange and action. The Coalition is the only network of museums and sites that connects past and present to foster dialogue and action on contemporary issues.

The City of Fredericksburg contracted the Coalition to complete a three-phased initiative:

- An audit of the African American History stories the community is telling, and not telling, including those surrounding the slave auction block and how various community members felt about those stories.



- A series of public brainstorming sessions to collectively imagine how the slave auction block might be further interpreted.
- A series of public dialogues that brought the community together to talk about major themes that had been revealed during the first two sessions.

As a result of the initiative, the community of Fredericksburg will:

- more deeply recognize what historical narratives are currently being told and how they affect contemporary discussions in Fredericksburg;
- be able to reimagine the space (virtual and physical) that surrounds the slave auction block;
- and, come together in order to better recognize the varied perspectives of their fellow community members.

Phase One focused on participants' personal experiences and history with the block and Fredericksburg. Participants primarily talked within small groups with whom they shared experience, affinity, and/or identity, and often shared perspectives about the past and future of the block. Through the public gatherings and the Phase One Report, participants were able to hear the wide range of experiences and perspectives held about the slave auction block. Phase One revealed both a complex, and a multifaceted set of interests and desires that did not break down into neat, binary categories or groupings.

Phase Two began the process of melding participants' personal experiences and developing a shared vision for the space around the block. This phase focused on being collaborative in approach and, accordingly, moved from small groups of like-minded people to larger, more diverse groups that were drawn from across the city. Participants still shared and drew on their personal experiences to inform these collaborative efforts, but the products of these conversations shifted to being group ideas rather than individual ideas.

Phase Three continued the process of growing collaboration, focusing on the areas that continued to have no general consensus; this phase also began the process of planning for next steps. Phase Three occurred over six meetings in October, November, and December of 2018 and had 80 participants with a strong mix of new and returning individuals. October focused on deepening the group's definitions and understanding of the past and what participants meant (and still disagreed about) in terms of historical truth-telling. Then, November's meeting focused on participants' desires for the present and the nuances that surrounded the emerging consensus around having the site encourage reflection and convey dignity and respect. December asked participants to reflect on statements made during Phase One and Two and to think about what challenges they wanted to face next, including brainstorming some potential solutions.



ANALYSIS OF PHASE THREE:

The Phase Three Report summarizes what was shared during the meetings in October, November and December of 2018. In reflecting on statements made during Phase One, and how participants felt differently about them now, many participants recognized that people's past experiences do not change, but that their present capacity to work collaboratively on this topic had greatly expanded. This carries weight because many unresolved aspects persist, including: disagreement about location, what aspects of the story to focus on, who will have control of the process, and the need to continue developing trust in city government and the collective will. **The challenges of this process are direct echoes of the challenges found throughout the rest of the city, making the need to work on them in the context of the block all the more pressing. The block, and the process around it also mirror how collaboration and eventual consensus are possible with sustained, patient engagement from all involved.**

The below analysis shares where consensus has emerged and delves more deeply into where community members' perspectives continue to diverge. These points of divergence receive much of the report's focus because they are the points that will require the most future attention and work. These remaining challenges are significant and real, but they are not unexpected or unaddressable. They are also not problems that are unique to the block or can be confined to it. The block, as the best historical artifacts are able to do, helps make larger ongoing challenges from throughout the community more tangible and understandable.

DEFINING THE PAST:

From the beginning, some of the strongest consensus has existed around the past's role in the future of the auction block. Almost universally, participants have wanted "true history" and "the whole story" to be told; they want to see the block grounded in accurate history and they want interaction with the block to impart that history to those interacting with it. **Moving forward it will be important for participants to remember that everyone involved believes in telling the truth.** A second convergent value is that nearly all participants want to feel that core parts of their identities are respected in the decision-making process about the block and in the history that is told through the block. This takes many forms, including respect for: ancestors, self, lived memories, community, race, etc. Participants have regularly expressed fear and anxiety when they are concerned that core parts of their identities that intersect with the block may not be respected. **The conflict between the first consensus about truth-telling and second consensus about respecting identity comes into play when one participant's truth is perceived as being disrespectful towards another participant's identity or community.**



Everyone wants the truth, but each person has a slightly different understanding of what the truth is and what parts of it to prioritize. As was initially discussed in the Phase One Report, strong divergence between participants usually occurred (and continued to occur throughout the initiative) along the lines of scope, agency, and voice. In regards to scope, some selection process must occur as no single location can hold all of the facts, life story, and perspective of Fredericksburg since the 19th century. Questions along these lines include: should “the whole story” of the auction block include the private and personal lives of the enslaved, or just focus on the act of sale and enslavement? Does the whole story include enslavers, or is it properly focused on the enslaved? Is it about the enslaved people who left or those who stayed? Does the interpretation begin with Africa or only focus on the U.S.? What time frame should be included? **Defining scope is often determined by what people feel has been problematically left out of the current/past telling.** Scope for future interpretation remains an unresolved conversation.

Divergence in terms of agency expresses itself in two primary ways, the agency of those who were enslaved and the agency of those who were enslavers. One approach of telling “the whole story” is about showing how the system of slavery limited or extinguished enslaved people’s agency. The other approach acknowledges that, while brutality is an important part of the narrative, slavery is a story of resistance and survival in the face of that system. **National trends on telling the history of slavery lean towards the second of these two approaches.** The less frequent, and often more fraught divergence is over the agency of enslavers. One commonly expressed sentiment in conversations so far strips enslavers’ agency through a statement similar to “they were a product of their time and must be judged as such.” In this narrative, the society of their time prevents any agency or active choice in participation in enslavement; it releases responsibility. The competing perspective invests enslavers with the agency of choice, and then holds them accountable for the decisions that they made. **Again, national trends lean toward acknowledging the choices that enslavers had and made.**

Voice is the third main point of divergence on “the whole story.” Questions about voice include: Who decides which facts and what truth become the whole story for the slave auction block? Is this primarily an African American story? Both an African American and a white story? Is it focused solely on Fredericksburg? Or, focused on the local context of a national experience? **Central to each of these questions is the idea of who is controlling the story and what that means for others.** If it is a Fredericksburg story, does that mean there are some things left unsaid about the national context? If it is an American story, how much emphasis is placed on African American ancestors and residents? If it is an African American story, what is the place of white residents and ancestors?

Each of these points of divergence is about power and control. What is important for all participants to acknowledge going forward is that any final installation will be a series of choices about scope, agency, and voice. Having agreed on the desire for the whole truth, participants must now be



open with each other about the choices they want to make in selecting which parts of history to share in the limited space available while recognizing that disagreement can come from a genuine desire to tell multiple parts of “the whole truth.” Fortunately, there is a broad desire to connect the slave auction block to other historic spaces in Fredericksburg and to make sure that the whole story is told over a wider geographic space, giving the possibility of a broader scope than is possible on the corner of Charles and Williams Streets.

EFFECT ON THE PRESENT:

In terms of consensus, Phase Three continued along the same path as Phase Two when it came to using the slave auction block to spark reflection, build a more inclusive city, and connect the experience of the auction block to a range of other sites across Fredericksburg. Each of these convergent views share a core thread of belief in Fredericksburg and in its residents - that the people of Fredericksburg have the agency to shape their lives and community when spurred by empathy and space to reflect; that the city is capable of building a community that is more welcome, diverse and just; and, that everyone’s history in the city matters and should be shared.

Like all shared visions, there is divergence here as well. Where the block is when it sparks reflection and connects to the wider community remains a point of disagreement. Some who advocate for its staying see doing so as a line of defense for keeping confederate memorials in place while others want to keep it as the greatest condemnation of the Confederacy. Some who advocate moving it do so because they want the pain of the block to be forgotten while others want it to be moved to a location where it can be better remembered or better experienced. **The ultimate location will continue to be an ongoing conversation because discussions about the “best” location are actually a stand-in for all of the other desires people have in regards to the block, including a thinly veiled battle over scope, agency, voice and control of the narrative.**

Connected to this is the discussion of how this story is told, or not told, elsewhere in town. **As primarily noted in the Phase One Report, there is significant room for growth in how the community of Fredericksburg utilizes brochures, tours, podcasts, websites, films, etc. in regards to sharing the histories of African Americans in Fredericksburg.** During this process several different proposals have been brought forward to the City for work to happen elsewhere in town. While outside the scope of this report, it is hoped that the process around the auction block can support those future conversations by giving residents shared relationships, language, and understanding to move more easily through the potentially less fraught locations of other stories.

Finally, in regards to discussions of the present, there is a widespread and genuine desire among all of



the participants to create a community that is more just and more inclusive than in the past. While that general direction is broadly agreed to, the final destination or even the road to get there are less universally shared. **One particular point of divergence that continues to challenge this process is the difference between equality and equity.** In brief, within the context of the slave auction block, equality seeks to allow all people to have an equal say while equity seeks to allow people who have been previously disenfranchised to have more than an equal say (in acknowledgement of an unequal past). Discomfort about equality and equity can be seen in auction block discussions over process and power - whose voice should be heard, whose stories told, who makes decisions, and whose fears and concerns are given more attention/validity.

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE:

As participants imagined the Fredericksburg of the future there was agreement that it should be healthy, just, inclusive, connected to the arts, and filled with affordable housing. More specific to the slave auction block, **there was strong consensus that the process around the auction block will not be finished following the conclusion of the Coalition staff's time in Fredericksburg; and, that both community and city work should continue.** In continuing the process, there continues to be a widespread desire to include more people in the process, particularly younger people. With this desire then comes the continued discussion of agency within inclusion - What does inclusion look like? Does inclusion mean being present? A chance to speak - for how long and in what ways? Who are the decision makers? Where do decisions happen? These are the same questions that are interwoven with the shared desire for the continuation of this project. Who decides that process? When are others consulted? How will people know what is going on? As noted throughout the previous sections of the Phase Three Report, Fredericksburg continues to grapple with what scope, agency, and voice mean when talking about how the history of Fredericksburg should be presented.

This grappling aligns with a final piece that has woven itself through all three phases of the initiative, but which has not always been called out directly - trust. There is a shared desire to build trust; and, many participants hold trust in personal relationships. However, there is simultaneously a shared mistrust of larger processes, a mistrust that collective actions will occur and occur in inclusive ways. When will people be able to participate? What are the restrictions on participation? How will they be informed? Will decisions be made in the open or in private? These are basic questions of inclusion. **Inclusion, here, refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of the initiative, including decision-making processes. Inclusion is also about the ways in which the diverse of participants are valued as respected members of the ongoing efforts.** Being inclusive will lead to sustained trust among community members and city-affiliated members.



Another way to build trust is through providing more ways to consistently encourage community communication and feedback. For example, both of these things can be true at the same time - that city staff members are sending out mailers, taking out advertisements in the newspaper, and genuinely trying to inform the community as broadly as possible while at the same time community members may not be using the same types of communication or that communication may not be easily accessible; this may leave everyone feeling frustrated and less trustful. Taking extra steps to find the ways in which various community groups best communicate and then communicating with each in that manner will make people feel heard and appreciated. Additionally, in the future, ensuring that communication is truly a cycle is essential; it is not just about releasing information. The city and the community need to be able to respond to each other and then respond to others' responses.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are made to help Fredericksburg meet its goals and are based off of information gathered during Phase One, Phase Two, and Phase Three. Provided, below, there are immediate, short-term, and long-term recommendations. They are suggested in these categories in order to provide support for recommendations to build upon each other for more sustainable change.

Immediate Recommendations:

- There is still a significant amount of discussion with the community about the slave auction block remaining or being removed; many participants are still specifically grappling with thoughts about the slave auction block's location.
 - There are two options regarding an exact location: a decision could be made following this report (and before sending out a Request for Proposal) or a decision could be made after artists have presented their designs in whatever location they believe would be best. Based on current data, the Coalition has concerns that the present location, as currently constructed, would be extraordinarily difficult to provide the "whole story" and context that the community wants. If the block is moved, the Coalition recommends that there still be an acknowledgement plaque at that location.
- While participants may see the slave auction block from many different viewpoints, they all generally have concerns about the preservation, protection, and interpretation connected to the slave auction block.
 - This concern is not only about the physical protection of the auction block. It speaks to the value/importance being placed on the auction block; we take measures to protect what we value. Based on current data, the Coalition recommends that a clear plexi case be temporarily placed over the auction block (in its current location) until further decisions are made.



- Participants had many things to say about what their greatest disappointments and/or greatest aspirations would be for the process; most often, participants feared that nothing would end up being done.
 - This concern continued throughout the entire initiative. It will be important to show that the process will continue following this report. Based on current data, the Coalition recommends immediately scheduling several conversations to discuss how the community feels about the report and to gather ideas about what next steps the community wants to pursue (and how they envision pursuing them). Additionally, in line with best practice, committees should be formed to champion various aspects of the future steps of the initiative. For example, a committee should be formed to agree to, shape, and shepherd the Request for Proposal to its completion.
- Discussions of “dignity” and “resilience” represented a specific desire that the truth be conveyed in a respectful way and that the truth should emphasize the resilience of the individuals, families, and communities most negatively affected by the auction block.
 - Based on current data, the Coalition recommends that the community works together to develop “guiding principles” or “ground rules” for the process of working together in the future. These guiding principles/ ground rules should be physically visible during all future discussions. Additionally, in line with best practices, any product (exhibit, video, marker, etc.) should seek to give agency and emphasis not just to the negative impact of slavery, but also to the efforts of individuals to resist and survive.
- One area very much on participants’ minds was the degree to which the horror of historic events should be a part of the space; how important it is to identify those responsible for enacting that horror; and, how people, through the inclusion of these ideas at the block, would impact the (mental and emotional) accessibility of the site.
 - Based on national trends, the Coalition recommends that the interpretation be direct in its language without being egregiously provocative. The horrific nature of slavery is inescapable, but that doesn’t mean that it needs to overshadow all other aspects of the space. Also, based on national trends, the Coalition recommends that the community weigh specifically identifying those historically responsible and the impact that will have on contemporary community members. In some cases, naming brings communities together through healing; in other cases, it causes wider divides.
- Participants are still grappling with whose stories and whose voices are given prominence; this arises around whether the story will be understood primarily as an African American story, a white story, or an equally shared story and if the process of making decisions around interpretation will be controlled by and/or give prominence to the view and voices of African American or white community members.



- Based on what historical narratives are currently being told in the city, the Coalition recommends that African American voices be given prominence here. However, prominence does not mean the exclusion of all other stories.
- While strong individual relationships exist across the city, trust in an inclusive and committed process continues to be weak.
 - It is essential that the people of Fredericksburg consciously work to build trust consistently and among identity-affiliated groups (rather than continuing to rely on individual relationships). Specifically, there are varying levels of distrust between city-affiliated members and community members and between white community members and African American community members. First, and foremost, the Coalition recommends that people should assume good intentions and amplify good intentions with positive actions.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- For those who participated, there were a variety of reasons for why they attended the focus groups/ gatherings.
 - This is completely normal; not everyone has to agree or compromise on their motivations for participating. However, it will become increasingly important that individual motivations are at least in agreement with a shared, collective direction. The Coalition recommends that all involved be transparent about their motivations in order to more efficiently and effectively build trust and move forward in a constructive manner.
- “Young people” were referenced quite often by participants; a frequently repeated desire was that reinterpretation of the slave auction block would support young African Americans (specifically) in reimagining what they are capable of and encourage them to pursue great futures for themselves and their communities.
 - While there were young people involved in each of the phases of the initiative, there was more talk about young people than actively ensuring that young people were consistently involved and heard. The Coalition recommends that multiple committees be considered: a committee of high school students; a committee of college-aged students; and, committees that include a mixture of high school students, college-aged students, and adults.
- Participants often referenced the need to tell the “whole story” and many spoke about the importance of whose voice will be elevated in the narrative.



- The Coalition has already made recommendations about voice (above). Additionally, the Coalition recommends that a content committee be created that further researches facts and stories once the scope has been determined. This committee should include both academics as well as community experts; and, it should not be led by an academician.
- There is a broadly shared desire across participants that truth and truth-telling be central to all aspects of the process moving forward; this spoken desire for the truth in the future implies an unspoken belief that some truths have been left out of the past.
 - In considering the data collected during Phase One about the current deficiencies in the visibility of African American History in Fredericksburg, the Coalition recommends revision of previously noted brochures, tours, websites, films, etc. for the city. Further, the Coalition recommends intentional promotion of African American History, both in specialized and general tours, historical markers, and programming. Finally, this point lends support to previous comments about why the Coalition recommends elevating African American voices specifically in regards to the auction block initiative.
- Currently, histories of African Americans often require intentional work to find and hear; participants cited an interest in increasing the quantity and quality of stories that are focused on African Americans as central figures, not just as people mentioned.
 - The Coalition recommends that historical markers focused on African American contributions should be expanded, that information on African American History should be more easily found, and that the community should work with African American community members to further determine locations and information of significance.
- Present throughout all of the conversations has been a keen awareness of whose voices are heard and whose are silenced in spaces, both now and in the past.
 - This commentary, again, supports the reasons for various Coalition recommendations above.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- The majority of participants felt it was very important to emphasize their generational connections to Fredericksburg.



- While it was nice for the Coalition to see a range of personal connections to Fredericksburg throughout the initiative, participants often used how far their ties went back in Fredericksburg as a way to validate or invalidate their opinions as well as others' opinions. It was a way of calling out whose voices "mattered" more than others. The Coalition recommends that community members consciously celebrate the diversity of ties and what positives this brings to future conversations rather than allowing it to be something that divides the community.
- Participants often brought up three different words in reference to the slave auction block (memorial, artifact, and monument).
 - Words are important. There is a difference between artifact, memorial and monument. It is entirely possible that the slave auction block can be more than one of these simultaneously. The Coalition recommends that the community develops a common understanding of what these words mean for the community and then use the words from a yes/and perspective rather than an either/or perspective.
- Though the auction block is central to this initiative, telling the "whole story" is a task that must involve utilizing brochures, tours, podcasts, websites, films, and more.
 - There is no way to tell the "whole story" on Charles and Williams Streets - or in any singular space. Throughout the initiative, the Coalition has helped the community better communicate where they see other locations that tie to the auction block. The Coalition recommends that a list be developed for current and future locations (digital and physical) that may tell these stories and then develop a plan for how the content of all of these locations can complement each other.
- The desire to tell the truth was not limited or confined by the space around the slave auction block and participants frequently shared an interest in wanting to connect the auction block to other relevant spaces in Fredericksburg.
 - As noted in previous sections, community members have continuously desired more attention be paid to scope, agency, and voice across a number of locations. While the Coalition used the slave auction block as its grounding, it was recognized early on in the initiative that the auction block was being used to talk about bigger/broader issues in the community. This commentary supports the reasons for various Coalition recommendations above.
- Participants want the space to encourage reflection in the present; for some, the impact of the site began with and focused on information leading to reflection while for others the point of reflection moved into actively making a just society.



- Similar to previous comments, the space can be *both* a place for reflection in the present and a space to inspire future positive action. The first will be determined by the final digital/physical products created for the space. For the second, the Coalition recommends something that annually reaffirms the community's commitment to the lessons learned from the stories of the slave auction block; for example, this could be an annual vigil, performance, art competition, etc.

CONCLUSIONS:

Throughout this initiative, the Coalition has held up a “mirror” for the community. Fredericksburg has already begun the process of telling a more complete story; and, it is important to remember that telling that story is not the sole responsibility of the city government. However, when and how those appointed or elected choose to use (or not use) their voices carry significant influence and impacts how the rest of the community acts and reacts to inclusive storytelling and the process as it moves forward. The Coalition encourages city leaders (both formal and informal leaders) to truly lead the way in striving to expand and deepen not only the storytelling, but the continuation of authentic and inclusive collaboration in the community by visibly and consistently participating in future activities. The Coalition is calling on all Fredericksburg leaders to accept responsibility, which means acknowledging when decisions are theirs to make and when responsiveness comes in the form of building and maintaining processes for others to make decisions.

No single project will create an entirely fresh page for the community, and an impact project never truly ends, but successfully being inclusive, responsive, clear in communication, and effective in follow-through, with this initiative will enable future projects to begin from a stronger place. While listening to each other does not guarantee changing minds, it is rooted in creating empathy. And, empathy will take the community far.



APPENDIX A - Sample Request for Proposal:

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is the first step in the process of an open call for ideas. It allows those involved to define what it is they want to see from applicants and to set the criteria for evaluation. The process of developing an RFP is an important conversation to have prior to making the request officially public. Below is a sample RFP for the initiative. That said, this sample should be amended and agreed to based on affirmed community interests and relevant city, state or federal regulations.

The sections of an RFP include:

Introduction: What is the project and why is it happening?

Project Goals and Scope of Services: What are the desired outcomes and what will contractors be expected to accomplish?

Due Date of Proposals: When are submissions due and how should they be submitted?

Anticipated Selection Schedule: When will decisions be made?

Project Timeline: On what general timeline (milestones) should the project be completed?

Elements of Proposal: What do contractors need to include in the proposal?

Evaluation Criteria: How will submissions be judged?

Opportunities and Challenges: What may influence the project?

Budget: How much funding is available?

Sample Request for Proposal

Introduction:

The City of Fredericksburg, VA, is invested in an ongoing community-wide process to better address the slave auction block that has stood on a downtown street corner since sometime in the first half of the 19th century. A source of long running community conversation, it came to prominence most recently in the summer of 2017 when a group strongly advocated for its removal. Following an online survey and a city council meeting, the City Council voted to keep the block in place, but include further interpretation of the space. The City Council then engaged the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience to begin a process of community consultation, listening, and planning about the block and the wider story of African American History, race, and slavery in Fredericksburg. That process led to hundreds of residents engaging in several dozen meetings over the course of 2018. The Coalition produced three reports, including the basis for this RFP. More information and all of the reports are available at www.fredericksburgva.gov/auctionblock.



Project Goals and Scope of Services:

The City of Fredericksburg seeks an individual, company, or organization to develop an initial concept for the redesign of the area surrounding the slave auction block and to work with the city and community in a process of finalizing that design. We strongly recommend reviewing the three reports written by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience to gather more insight into what the community has already done. Currently, there is consensus that the community wants the space around the auction block to:

- More completely convey the history surrounding the slave auction block.
- Provide a place for reflection.
- Treat the story with dignity and respect.
- Connect to other locations in Fredericksburg.
- Provide protection for the slave auction block.

The final location of the slave auction block is still being discussed within the community. The City Council vote to leave the block in place stands, but there has been a formal request from the Fredericksburg Branch NAACP for City Council to reconsider its position. As such, and as part of aiding the community in the ongoing conversation about location, the City of Fredericksburg is accepting proposals for the auction block at its current location (on the corner of Charles and Williams Streets) as well as elsewhere in the community. Candidates may submit a proposal for any or all of these locations. If chosen, the contractor will be responsible for:

- Providing an initial concept design for one or more of the proposed locations.
- Working with the City of Fredericksburg to lead up to six community design/feedback sessions in order to gain community buy-in and make adjustments to the initial concept design.
- Produce a final plan for the redesigned area.
- Manufacture and install (in coordination with the City) all elements of the final design.

Due Date of Proposals:

- To be determined.

Anticipated Selection Schedule:

Following final submission of proposals, all proposals will be made available to the public (in multiple locations) for sixty (60) days. At the end of that period, and based on community input, the Selection Committee will select up to six (6) candidates to interview. Following these interviews, the Selection Committee will select three (3) candidates to make two public presentations about their initial concept and approach to collaboration. The two presentations (where each of the three candidates will be provided time to speak) should be scheduled for different days, times, and places to encourage broad community participation. Following these presentations, and based on community input, the Selection Committee will decide on a finalist and the City of Fredericksburg will offer a contract to the finalist.



Project Timeline:

All community design/feedback meetings will be completed within six (6) months of the signing of the finalist's contract with the City of Fredericksburg. All final plans will be submitted to the City of Fredericksburg within ninety (90) days of the completion of the community meetings. And, the installation must be completed within six (6) months of the approval of the contractor's final plans unless an amended agreement is made in the contract between the contractor and the City of Fredericksburg.

Elements of Proposal:

Proposals will consist of:

- A written section not to exceed five (5) pages including:
 - The name, contact information, and background of candidate/ company
 - Experience with similar projects
 - Detailed description of initial concept for the slave auction block space
 - Experience with and approach to how the candidate leads community design and consultation processes
- As many visual images as necessary to convey the initial concept
- Both a digital copy and three sets of physical copies of all materials submitted

Evaluation Criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Candidate's submission by the deadline
- Candidate's previous experience as related to the needs of the proposal
- Candidate's ability to address all requirements outlined in the RFP
- Candidate's evidence of capacity and capability to successfully complete the project
- Candidate's evidence of ability to work effectively with community feedback

Preference will be given to:

- Candidates who are minorities and/or who have diverse teams, specifically in regards to race and gender
- Candidates who have prior experience working with the topics of race and slavery
- Candidates who have a connection to the history of Fredericksburg and/or Virginia

Opportunities and Challenges:

Please read the following reports from the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience:

- Phase One Report
- Phase Two Report
- Phase Three Report

Budget:

To be determined.



APPENDIX B - Images from Phase Three Gatherings:

Select images aligned with “Defining the Past”:

-telling all ~~true~~ stories in truth
-Telling full stories of people + involved (humanizing)

-recognizing faults (good + bad)

The victors in a conflict always write the history.
Sounds like something someone in power would say.
I want to wrest this kind of power out of those hands and into mine.

Select images aligned with “Effect on the Present”:

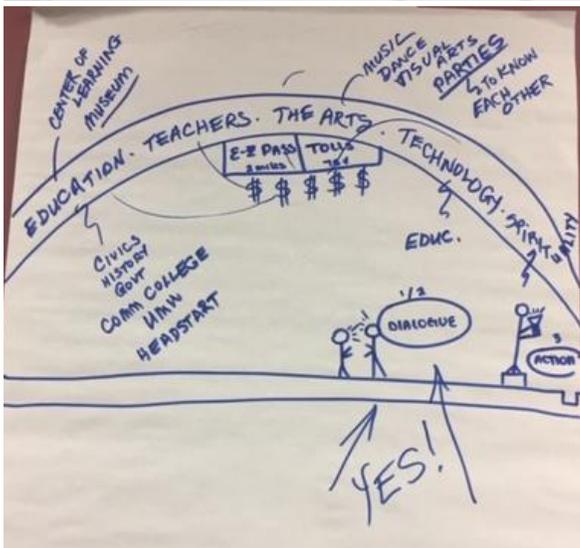
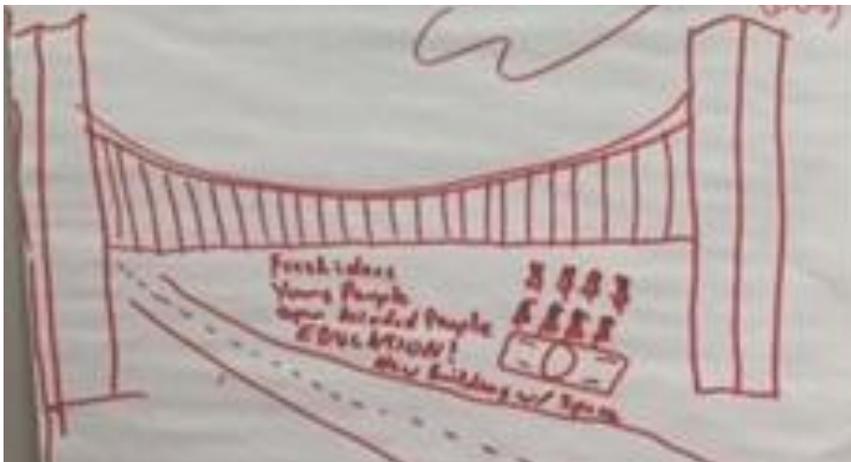
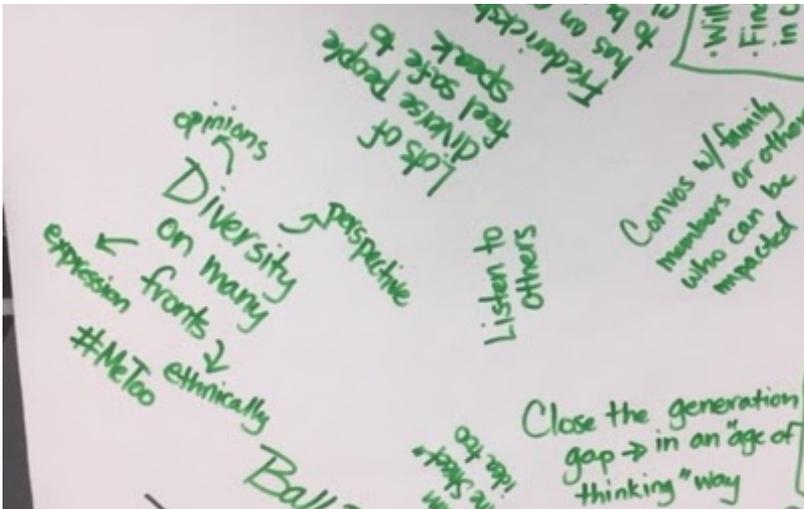


Not necessarily not remembering but how WE remember

3) Because the black slaves had NO VOICE back then, please LISTEN most closely, and REALLY create comfortable spaces, to encourage + HEAR Black Voices MOST LOUDLY, NOW.



Select images aligned with “Thinking About the Future”:





APPENDIX C - Summary of Coalition Recommendations:

Immediate Recommendations

- The Coalition has found that the corner of Williams and Charles streets, as presently arranged, make it immensely difficult to provide the “whole story” and context that the community wants. To accomplish their widespread goals, the community must be willing to: a) shrink the story, b) change the corner to provide greater room for both informational and experiential installations, or c) move the block to a space that will better accommodate the community’s shared goals.
- The Coalition recommends a Request for Proposal process that allows for designers to submit proposals that alter the space at Charles and Williams streets or are for alternate locations so that the community can gauge which options will best meet the community’s shared goals.
- Based on current data, and community concerns about protection, the Coalition recommends that a clear plexi case be temporarily placed over the auction block (in its current location) until further decisions are made.
- The Coalition recommends scheduling conversations to discuss how the community feels about the Phase Three Report and to gather ideas about what next steps the community wants to pursue.
- In line with best practices, committees should be formed to champion various aspects of the future steps of the initiative. The first of these should be a committee that will shape and shepherd the Request for Proposal process.
- Based on current data, the Coalition recommends that the community works together to develop “guiding principles” or “ground rules” for the process of working together in the future. And, that these be visibly displayed at future meetings.
- Based on national trends, the Coalition recommends that the future interpretation be direct in its language without being egregiously provocative.
- The Coalition recognizes that questions around specifically identifying those historically responsible, and the impact that identification will have on contemporary community members, remain unresolved. We recommend that the community continues to discuss this intersection and how it should be resolved in this project and in future projects.



- Based on what historical narratives are currently being told in the city, the Coalition recommends that African American voices be given prominence at the auction block.
- The Coalition recommends that people should assume good intentions and amplify good intentions with positive actions.

Short-Term Recommendations

- The Coalition recommends that all involved be transparent about their motivations in order to more efficiently and effectively build trust and move forward in a constructive manner.
- The Coalition recommends that multiple committees are developed to focus on future programming and interpretation; these committees should be sure to include high school and college students.
- The Coalition recommends that a content committee be created, specifically to revise the brochures, tours, websites, films, etc. that the City develops; this committee should include both academics as well as community experts. Further, the Coalition recommends intentional expansion and promotion of African American history, both in specialized and general tours, historical markers, and programming.
- If the community ever chooses to move the slave auction block, the space it left should be marked in some way.

Long-Term Recommendations

- The Coalition recommends that community members consciously celebrate the diversity of ties to the community and what positives this brings to future conversations.
- The Coalition recommends that the community develops a common understanding of what “artifact,” “memorial,” and “monument” mean for the community; and, then, recognize how the words may complement each other.
- The Coalition recommends that a list be developed for current and future locations (digital and physical) that may tell additional stories and then develop a plan for how the content of these locations can complement each other.
- The Coalition recommends something that annually reaffirms the community’s commitment to the lessons learned from the stories of the slave auction block; for example, this could be an annual vigil, performance, art competition, etc.