

# Stratford Historic Commemoration

School Board, Weekly Meeting Briefing – April 9, 2018



## Background

The Superintendent appointed a special Historic Commemoration Committee (Committee) to discuss the most appropriate way to spend the \$250,000 set aside by the School Board for historic commemoration and interpretation at the Stratford site. The committee met several times in 2017.

## Interpretive Framework

The ***New Middle School at Stratford Proposed Interpretive Framework and Concept Design Summary*** (26 February 2018) documents the work of the Committee and includes its recommendation letter. The framework outlines six commemorative features (zones); three exterior and three interior.

Exterior Zones include:

- A series of ***Heroes' Welcome Gateways*** sited in four prominent entry locations throughout the school property, with images and quotes honoring the first four 7<sup>th</sup> grade African-American students who integrated the school (First Four): Michael Jones, Gloria Thompson, Lance Newman, and Ronald Deskins;
- An ***Historic Path Interpretive Trail*** along the pathway the First Four traveled that will: use up to seven linked interpretive installations to explain school desegregation as a national issue and the progressivism of Arlington County; present a timeline of events leading up to and following 2/2/59; feature profiles and memories of the First Four; and explore and affirm the universal human rights values of inclusion, respect, and equality of opportunity; and
- A ***Time and Place*** feature located outside the south facade of the original 1950 school and in a newly-designed student gathering area that will include touchable models and interpretive graphics tracing the evolution of the site and school building over time.

Interior Zones include:

- A ***Heart of School Heritage Wall*** within the new multi-story lobby that will feature a large-scale graphic element offering a dynamic timeline of the national Civil Rights era from approximately 1940-1980, interweaving both local and national events, perspectives, and recollections of those involved;
- A ***Celebration of Diversity Mobile*** that will rise through the new three-story lobby as a kinetic assemblage of images defining the vital place that the Stratford School occupies in the history of the national Civil Rights Movement and of the lasting importance of the ideals embodied by the Movement; and
- A ***Stratford Self-Portrait*** throughout the hallways of the school that will feature changeable displays of student artwork related to the themes of diversity and inclusiveness to remind us that the events of 2/2/59 remain a central part of the school's identity today and into the future.

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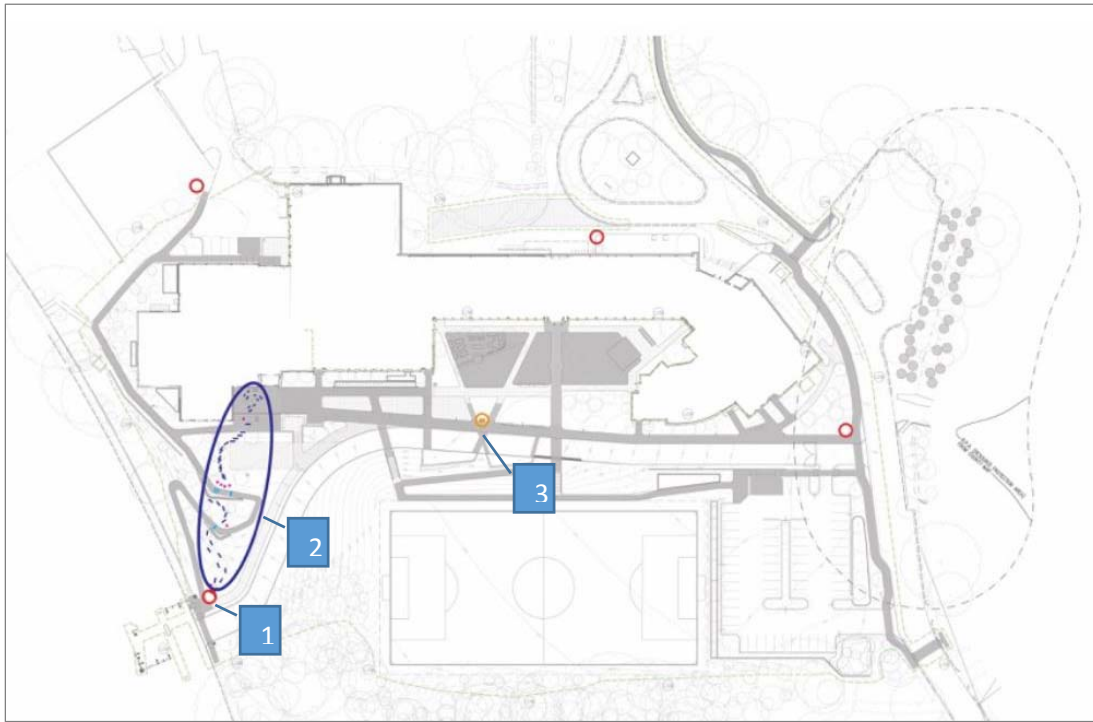
### Implementation Plan

The current estimated total cost for the entire framework is \$560,000. Since the value exceeds the \$250,000 set aside by the School Board, staff propose the following phased implementation plan, which is consistent with Committee recommendations.

- **Phase 1:** install the *Historic Path Interpretive Trail* focusing on the week of integration and the four students who successfully integrated Stratford. This effort will use the \$250,000 School Board funding and will be completed concurrent with the new middle school construction project.
- **Phase 2:** expand the *Historic Path Interpretive Trail* to include installations that explain school desegregation as a national issue and present a timeline of events leading up to and following 2/2/59. Complete all *Heroes' Welcome Gateways* elements. The current estimated cost for this phase is \$130,000. APS is pursuing a grant funding for this phase to be completed concurrent with the construction provided the grant is awarded and funding available in time. We were recently notified that our application for a grant through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, African-American Cultural Heritage Action Fund was unsuccessful.
- **Phase 3:** install the *Celebration of Diversity Mobile*. The current estimated cost for this phase is \$50,000. APS is pursuing a grant for this funding through the National Endowment for the Arts. The grant would support an artist-in-residence program to implement this phase after the school opens so that students can participate in the work.
- **Phase 4:** install the remaining zones, in order of priority - *Heart of School Heritage Wall*, *Stratford Self-Portrait*, and *Time and Place*. At this time no specific opportunities for grant funding are identified, though APS will continue to look for viable options. These features are independent of the construction project and easily be added at any point in the future.

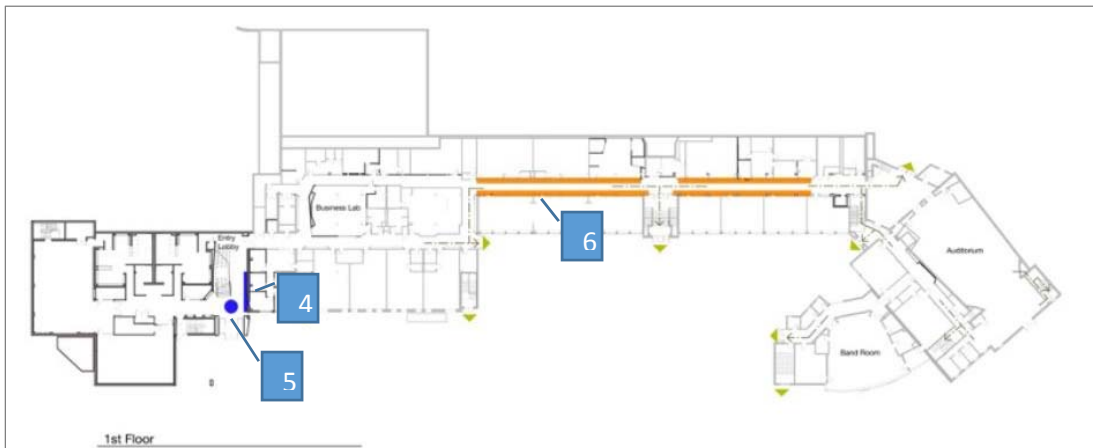


### Exterior Interpretive Zones



1. ***Heroes' Welcome Gateways***
2. ***Historic Path Interpretive Trail***
3. ***Time and Place***

### Interior Interpretive Zones



4. ***Heart of School Heritage Wall***
5. ***Celebration of Diversity Mobile***
6. ***Stratford Self-Portrait***