

Spraygrounds Public Art Project

A privately-funded proposal
for adding splashes of art
to this community-friendly space!

The Proposal

The 6,000-square-foot Spraygrounds at Ralph Sampson Park opened July 1, 2025, with 36 spray features and interactive elements designed for various ages.

Last fall, Harrisonburg residents Steve and Chris Carpenter offered to provide \$100,000 for design and installation of three Spraygrounds public artworks.

Upon completion, ownership of the artworks will be conveyed to the City of Harrisonburg.



The Donors

Steve and Chris Carpenter have lived in Harrisonburg for 23 years, actively attending church on the 400 Kelley Street site of the City's historic segregated pool; and learning of the trauma the Northeast Neighborhood community experienced during 1950s-1960s Urban Renewal.

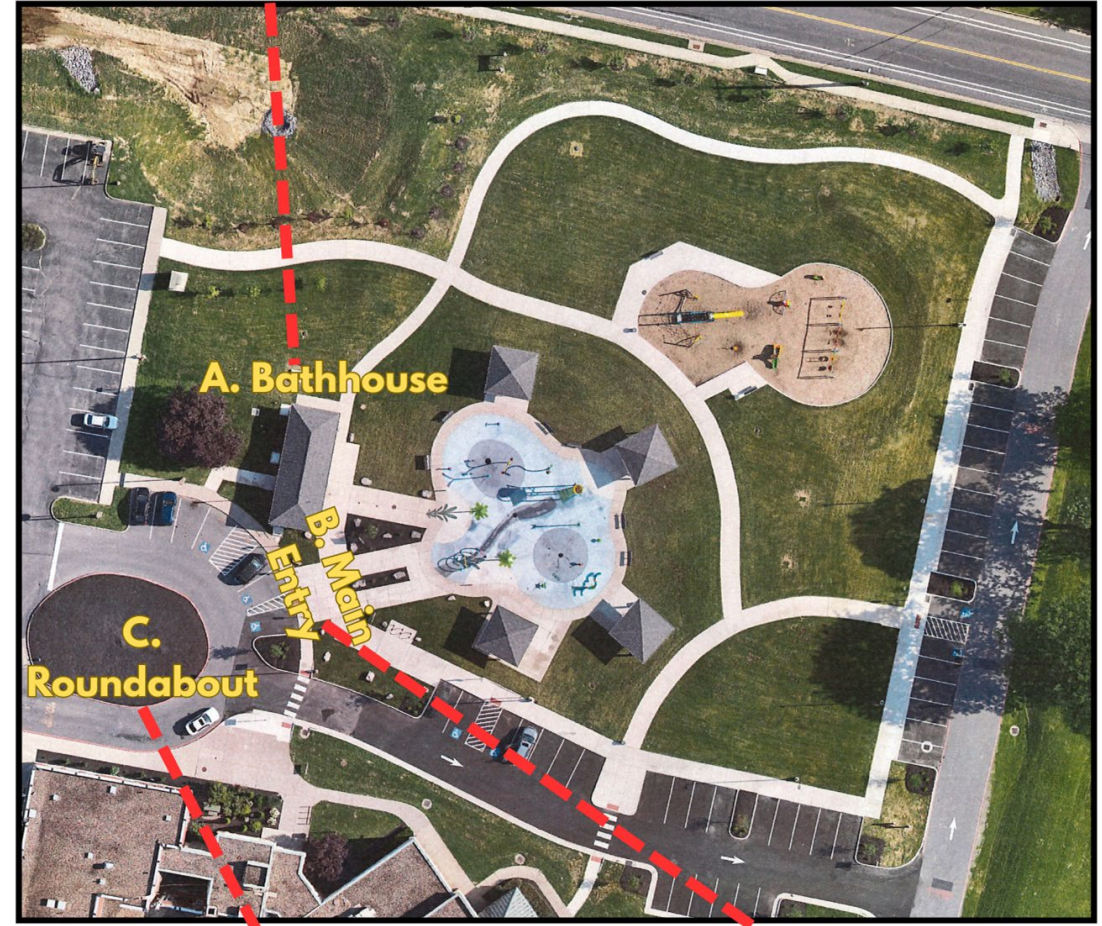
Their exuberant experience of public art during their travels led the Carpenters to propose a collaboration designed to add an extra touch of creativity and joy to the new Spraygrounds, while also recognizing the area's complicated history.



Artwork Locations

Three Spraygrounds locations are proposed for this project:

- A) East exterior wall of the bathhouse/pumphouse, facing the Spraygrounds, for a mosaic installation.
- B) Main entry to the Spraygrounds, to provide a welcoming archway over the sidewalk, similar to arches at A Dream Come True playground and the new Kids Castle.
- C) Roundabout near the entrance to the Spraygrounds, for sculptural work(s) depicting children at play.



Roundabout: Artist Maxwell Emcays

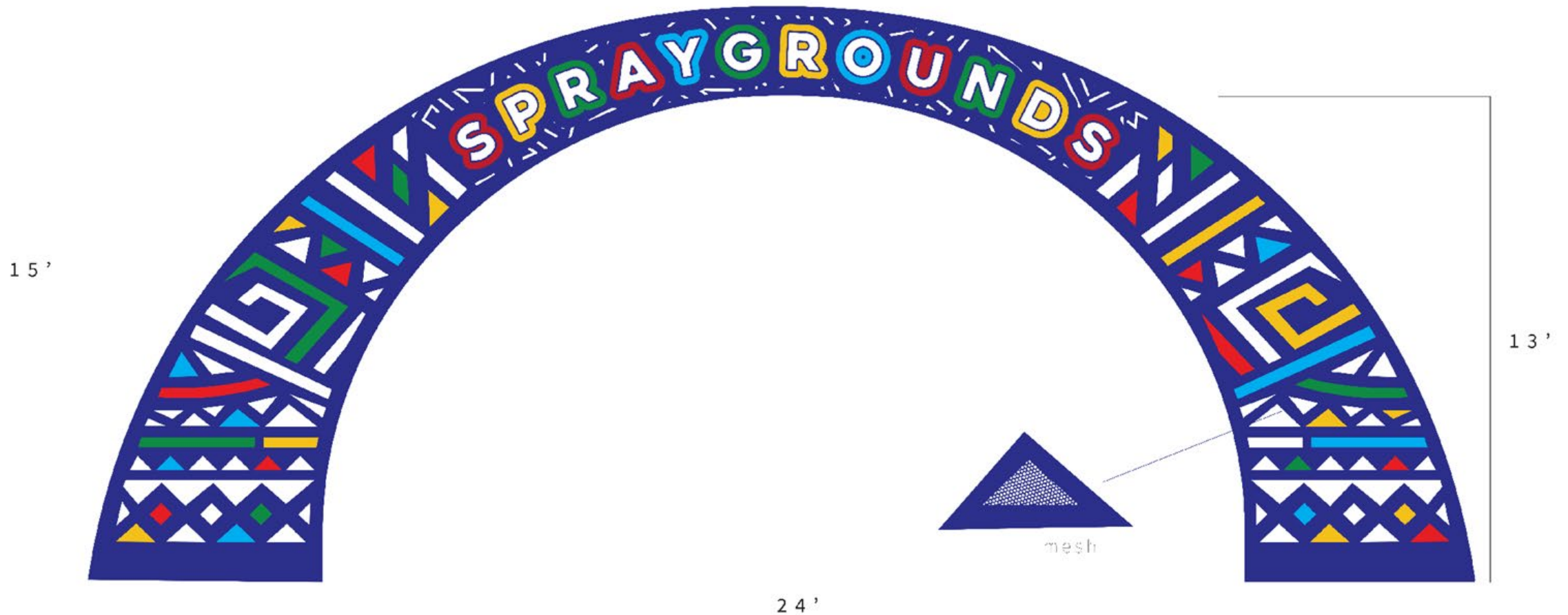
Roundabout Sculpture

*Updated 3D image of design
approved by City Council
April 14, 2026.*

Actual sculpture
will feature bright colors.



Archway Design: Artist Maxwell Emcays



Main Entry Archway Location



Harris Pool Sign & Mosaic Locations





Harris Pool

Diving into Harris Pool, photograph by Howard Curry (circa 1960), James Madison University, Celebrating Simms Collection. Pictured: Alfred Howard, Jr. (diver), Charles Byrd, Sr. (left); James Brown, Ardell Curry, Ronald Madden, and others look on.

Harris Pool was an important community gathering place for the Northeast Neighborhood. Residents recall Friday night splash parties, swim lessons, and “a place where everyone was welcome and people made sure you were safe.” Named for Professor (“Fessa”) William Nelson Pendleton Harris in recognition of his 36 years of service within the Harrisonburg public schools, Harris Pool operated from 1959 to 1979. Today, Immanuel Mennonite Church, 400 Kelley Street, is located on the former pool site.

Questions?