



CHAPTER 2

DESIGN FRAMEWORK

DESIGN FRAMEWORK PLAN

MINNESOTA CAPITOL MALL



FROGTOWN

SEARS AND RICE
BRT NODE

UNIVERSITY AND RICE
MOBILITY HUB

PROPOSED BUILDINGS

CATHEDRAL HILL

VISITOR AMENITY
BUILDING

IRVINE PARK

MISSISSIPPI RIVER
(Haháwakpa)



Figure 32: Design Framework Axon
Design Framework 65

DESIGN FRAMEWORK PLAN

CAPITOL AREA

THE CAPITOL AREA IS MORE WELCOMING FOR MORE MINNESOTANS. THE DESIGN FRAMEWORK LAYS OUT A MULTI-PHASE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND A SERIES OF DESIGN GUIDELINE RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE USED AS A DECISION MAKING TOOL MOVING FORWARD.

LEGEND

--- CAAPB Boundary

— CMDF Limit of Work

Proposed Building

Memorials

(A) MN State Capitol

(B) New State Office Building*

(C) MN Senate

(D) MN Judicial Branch

(A) Aurora Promenade

(B) Civic Plinth

(C) Open Glades

(D) Arboretum

(E) Native Prairies

(F) Sears & Rice BRT Node

(G) University & Rice Mobility Hub

(H) Cass Gilbert Memorial Park

(I) Robert Street Station Plaza

(J) Visitor Amenity Building (*other potential locations)

(K) Cedar and Wabasha Deck Node

(L) Minnesota History Center

(M) Western Sculpture Garden

(N) Atrium or Street Connection

* SOB Landscape to be Coordinated





**DOWNTOWN
SAINT PAUL**

Figure 33: Capitol Mall Design Framework
Design Framework 67

DESIGN FRAMEWORK PLAN

CAPITOL MALL

LEGEND

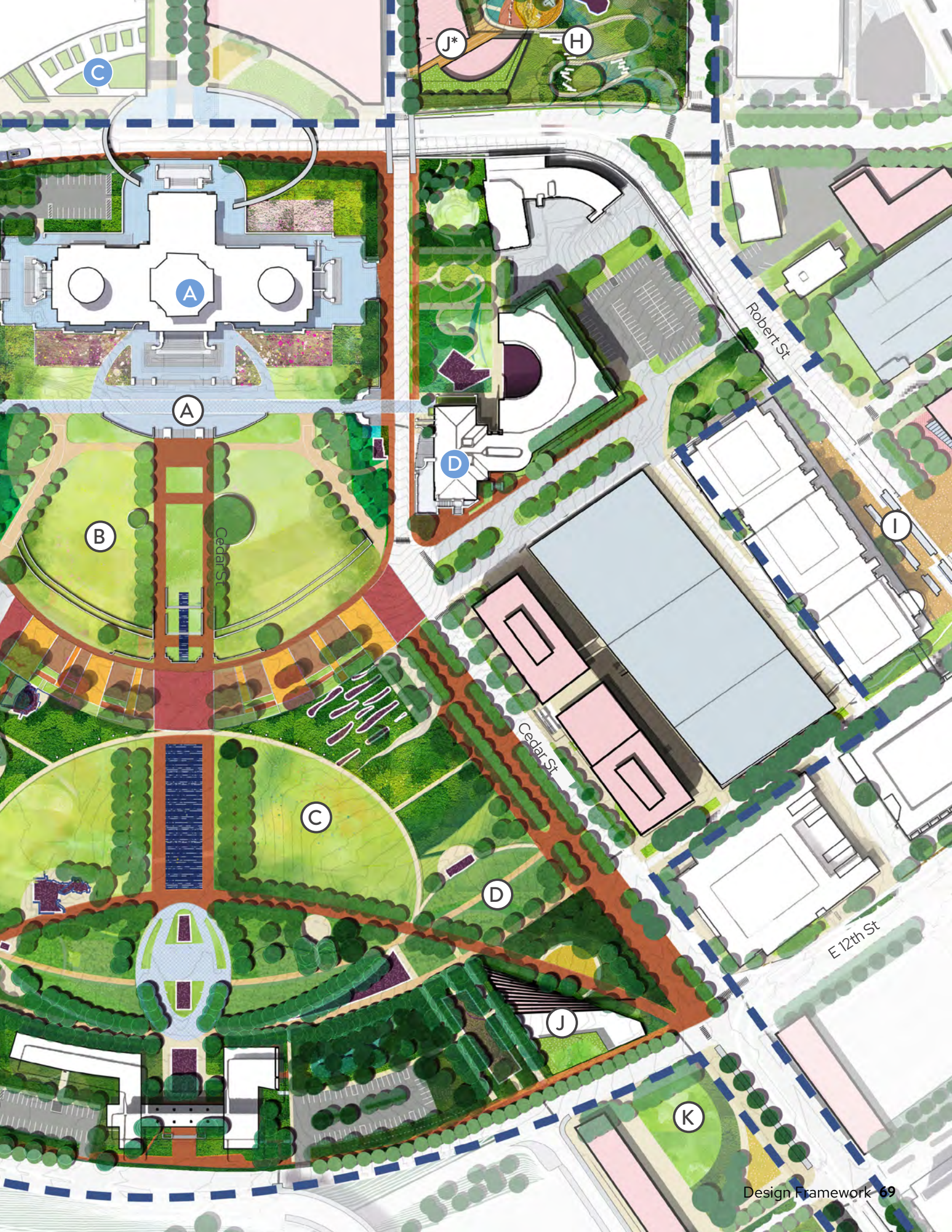
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- CMDF Limit of Work
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- (A) MN State Capitol
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- (F) Sears & Rice BRT Node
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- (H) Cass Gilbert Memorial Park
- (I) Robert Street Station Plaza
- (J) Visitor Amenity Building (*other potential locations)
- (K) Cedar and Wabasha Deck Node

* SOB Landscape to be Coordinated

N 0' 60' 125' 250'

Figure 34: Capitol Mall Design Framework
Zoom In





LOWER CAPITOL MALL

MORE WELCOMING TO MORE MINNESOTANS





CONNECTION TO LARGER CONTEXTS

FILLING THE GAP

The Capitol Mall will become the central open space in Saint Paul as a critical link between various open spaces, Downtown, and the Mississippi River (Haháwakpa). Reference the Eight Bold Moves for more information regarding site-specific programming.

NEW PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS AT THE CAPITOL MALL THAT CATER TO DIVERSE NEIGHBORS



Art



Cultural Walks



Educational Garden



Festivals + Concert Venue



Monuments



Nature Play



Open Markets



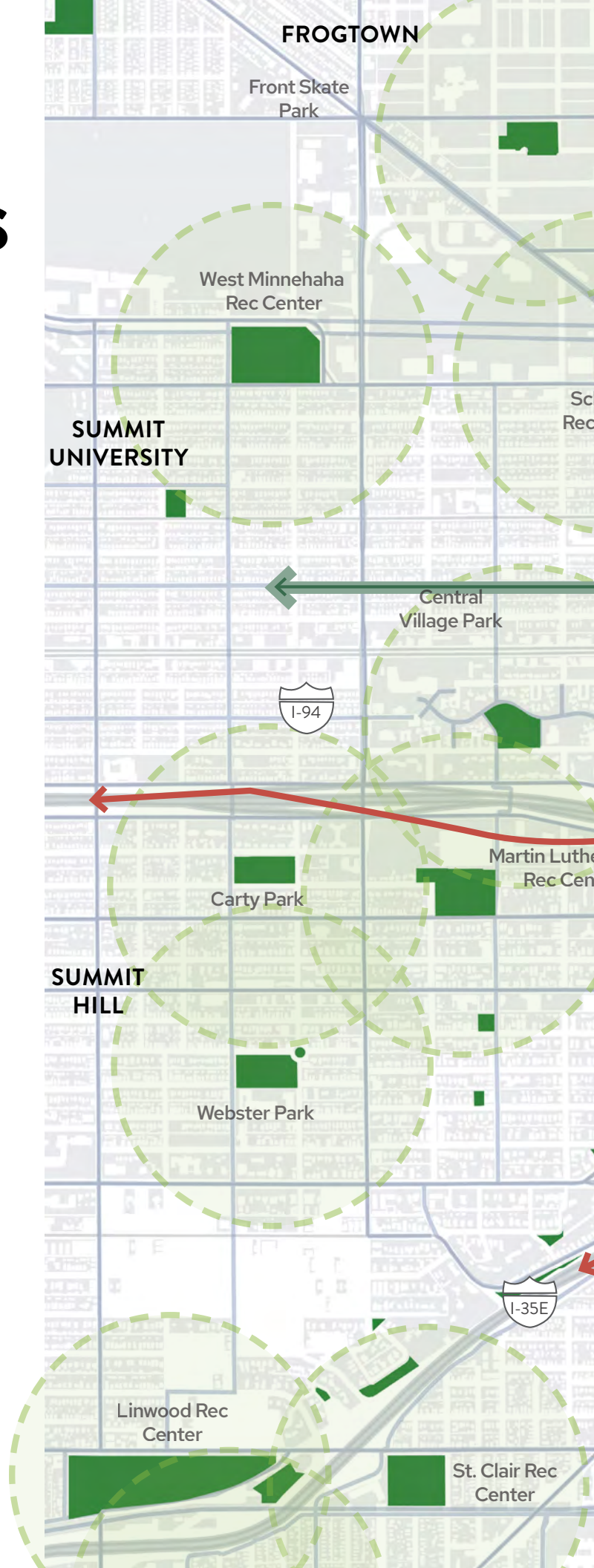
Outside Flexible Open Spaces



Figure 35: Connection to Larger Contexts

Source: *Saint Paul for All 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. City of Saint Paul, Nov 2020.

Source: *Transformation of the Saint Paul Park and Recreation System*. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, Dec. 2010.





Arlington Arkwright Park

PAYNE -
PHALEN

PLANNED GOLD BRT
LINE CONNECTING
DOWNTOWN TO NORTH
NEIGHBORHOODS

PLANNED PURPLE BRT
LINE CONNECTING
DOWNTOWN
TO NORTHEAST
NEIGHBORHOODS

BRIDGE CONNECTING
NORTH OF CAPITOL

INCREASE IN
GREEN SPACE FOR
PROGRAMMING AND
COMMUNITY



STATE CAPITOL

BIKE LANES
CONNECTING TO MN
HISTORY CENTER

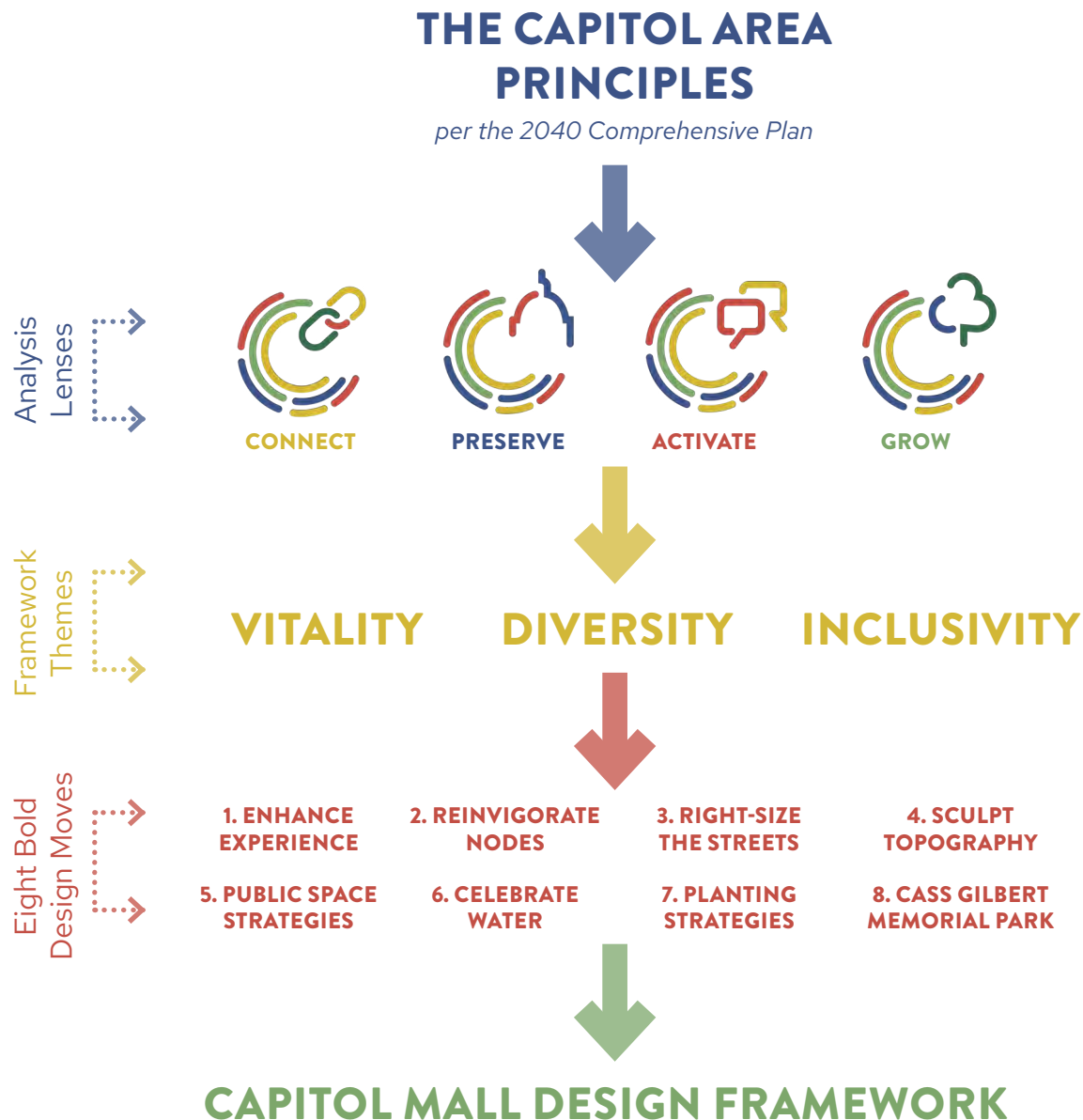
LAND BRIDGE
CONNECTING SOUTH
OF CAPITOL

DOWNTOWN
SAINT PAUL

APPROACH AND THEMES

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

THE EIGHT BOLD DESIGN MOVES WERE BORN OUT OF EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT. THEY COLLECTIVELY MAKE UP THE CULMINATING CAPITOL MALL DESIGN FRAMEWORK.





FRAMEWORK THEMES

Informed by the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and extensive community and stakeholder engagement, the following themes or values guide the Design Framework:

- **Vitality** speaks to a Capitol Mall that is lively, engaging, and memorable. The public realm is full of people who want to spend time in and around the Capitol Mall, whether that is to simply eat lunch, walk from one building to another, enjoy a picnic with friends, learn about Minnesota history and ecology, or attend a large event. This increased activity supports nearby businesses and even encourages new businesses to open. People feel safe because the Capitol Mall is busy and there are constant eyes on all streets and open spaces. Lastly, people feel an overwhelming sense of well-being on the Capitol Mall. They are enjoying the fresh air and connecting with the land, protected from the elements by sweeping tree canopies and various native plant species.
- **Diversity** supports a Capitol Mall that is resilient to environmental and economic change through a wide variety of landscapes, uses, arts and representations. Various landscape typologies ebb and flow, embodying stories of the land and educating passersby on local ecologies. Many distinct land uses prosper within and around the Capitol Campus, including the more obvious government offices but also retail and commercial, food and beverage, housing and new civic spaces. Minnesota's history is told from multiple lenses that represent the many diverse peoples and cultures within the state.
- Like Diversity but more direct, **Inclusivity** sends a clear message that the Capitol is open to all. All Minnesotans feel seen and heard on the Capitol Mall, both in their ability to protest and in the many distinct histories told throughout the Capitol Campus. Regardless of season or one's physical abilities, workers and visitors know they can experience the Capitol Mall comfortably and with ease. People feel a sense of pride and ownership because the Capitol Mall is their Capitol Mall.

The three themes collectively create a Capitol Campus that is more welcoming to more Minnesotans. Each design move is carefully vetted and measured against these three themes to ensure all interventions, regardless of scale, align with and support the original vision outlined by the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and people of Minnesota.

KEY DESIGN ISSUES

INFORMING BOLD DESIGN MOVES



Figure 36: Proposed Capitol Mall Design Framework

KEY ISSUE OVERVIEW

Throughout the Design Framework process, three key issues emerged that demanded innovative and multifaceted solutions or strategies: urban tree canopy, human comfort and public safety and security. These issues transcend the eight bold design moves in that they require consideration on multiple fronts. They are of high importance to various governing bodies (including the Lieutenant Governor) and the public, having bubbled to the surface as key concerns during almost every

community and stakeholder engagement outreach effort. Furthermore, their solutions and strategies are complex, interwoven, and cannot be conclusively addressed by one single design move. The Design Framework calls attention to and summarizes these issues here, but their solutions and strategies are embedded within the eight bold design moves.

URBAN TREE CANOPY

Urban tree canopy includes all of the trees within the Capitol Campus. Tree canopy enhances streetscapes and slows traffic. It also improves environmental and ecological services by reducing urban heat island effect, supporting stormwater and contributing to biodiversity. To address urban tree canopy, the Design Framework proposes multiple strategies that include, but are not limited to, lining the streets with more trees; diversifying tree species throughout the Capitol Campus; strategically locating trees within the Upper and Lower Malls that maintain views while providing more human comfort; and much more.



Figure 37: Increased tree canopy in the Upper Mall

HUMAN COMFORT

Human comfort in the physical environment refers to a state of physical ease or relaxation. It is created or inhibited through the thermal environment (temperature), visual ambiance, acoustics, air quality, and more abstract factors like security. To address human comfort, the Design Framework introduces numerous strategies that include, but are not limited to, increasing tree canopy and vegetation for shade as well as sound and wind buffer; providing more pedestrian amenities like benches and public restrooms for people to sit, rest and refresh; employing multiple security measures to ensure everyone feels safe and secure while on or around the Capitol Mall; and much more.



Figure 38: Increased seating opportunities under expanded tree canopy

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

Public safety and security refers to both physical protection as well as the feeling or sense of being protected. It can take the form of physical interventions in the landscape like knee walls or integrated security barriers to prevent vehicles from driving on the Capitol Mall. It can also include other factors like workers and community members feeling safe strolling through the Capitol Mall after work or sunset. Activation through more people, liveliness, and amenities supports the notion that the Mall is a welcoming public space—safe to explore at all times of day.



Figure 39: Integrated security features in a welcoming public realm

GUIDANCE FROM CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

GENERAL TREATMENT GUIDELINES

The strategies below are intended to guide the preservation of the Capitol Mall Historic District's landscape character and sense of place as a forecourt to the Saint Paul Capitol Building; as a civic space available to all residents; as a place to practice First Amendment Rights; and as a landscape which is evolving with climate change.

Reference the 2024 Cultural Landscape Report (Damon Farber, 2024) for more information. In addition to the Cultural Landscape Report, the State of Minnesota should formalize a consultation process between the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), State Archaeologist, and CAAPB, as well as determine the responsible governmental unit (RGU) status.

- (A) **Retain the volumes and spatial definition created by the three main approaches to the Capitol Mall intended by the original designers.**
- (B) **Continue to allow the Mall to serve its cultural purpose as a civic gathering space, open to all.**
- (C) **Maintain a deliberate and impactful design intent for the positioning of canopy trees within the Mall, respecting the historical viewsheds and spatial delineation.**
- (D) **Retain extant contributing resources within the district.**
- (E) **Enhance district-wide Universal Access**
- (F) **Respect the distinct character of the ground plane as a verdant open space.**
- (G) **Plan for future commemorative spaces.**
- (H) **Reinforce urban connections as historically intended.**
- (I) **Establish guidelines for a cohesive family of site furnishings, wayfinding elements, and educational interpretive features to ensure district-wide continuity.**
- (J) **Foster resiliency within the campus.**





**DOWNTOWN
SAINT PAUL**

Figure 41: Capitol Mall Design Framework

UPPER CAPITOL MALL

MORE WELCOMING TO MORE MINNESOTANS





Before



JOHN IRELAND BOULEVARD

MORE WELCOMING TO MORE MINNESOTANS





Before

CASS GILBERT MEMORIAL PARK

MORE WELCOMING TO MORE MINNESOTANS





NEXT STEPS

REFER TO APPENDIX C FOR MORE INFORMATION

CAPITOL MALL DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Capitol Mall Design Framework represents a comprehensive approach to understanding the needs of Minnesotans in the Capitol Mall area. Through extensive engagement efforts, the framework has pinpointed crucial bold moves necessary for near term and long term development.

However, translating this vision into reality will be a long-term process spanning several years to decades. The implementation process involves a substantial amount of work, guided by the principles outlined in the framework. Identifying and prioritizing these tasks will be pivotal in ensuring the successful realization of the envisioned improvements to the Capitol Mall area.

NEAR TERM IMPLEMENTATION

NEXT STEP TASK PIPELINES

TO ENSURE THE CAPITOL MALL AREA CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AS A WHOLE SYSTEM, A SERIES OF

For effective progress, CAAPB should provide recommendations, backed by legislative support, while the state administration carries out the tasks outlined in the Capitol Mall Design Framework. This collaborative effort ensures a streamlined approach to realizing the envisioned enhancements.

FUNDING DATABASE

A funding database for the Capitol Area implementation is crucial for transparent resource allocation and informed decision-making. It centralizes financial information, enabling efficient budgeting and monitoring of expenditures to ensure responsible management and prioritize projects effectively.

FINANCIAL MODEL AND EXPLORING POTENTIAL P3 PARTNERSHIP

A financial model and study on potential Public-Private Partnerships (P3) for undeveloped state-owned land are essential for the Capitol Mall project's implementation to assess the feasibility of alternative funding mechanisms and leverage private sector expertise and resources.

EXISTING VISITOR INFORMATION

Access to existing visitor information provides insights into the community and office worker's needs, preferences, and usage patterns. This data ensures that development initiatives align with the requirements and expectations of those who utilize the area regularly.

FULL SITE SURVEY

A full site survey and an as-built database are crucial for the Capitol

TASKS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED PARALLEL TO THE NEAR TERM IMPLEMENTATION. THESE TASKS CAN ENSURE WE CONSOLIDATE RESOURCES AND HAVE DETAILED GUIDELINES FOR EVERY ASPECT OF THE AREA.

LONG TERM IMPLEMENTATION

Mall project's implementation to provide accurate, up-to-date information about the existing infrastructure, topography, and utilities. This data ensures that construction plans are aligned with the site's realities, minimizing potential conflicts and facilitating efficient project execution.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY

In a more detailed resolution, an archaeological study for the Capitol Mall is essential for understanding and preserving the area's historical significance. It ensures that development plans respect and protect any culturally significant artifacts as well as release areas that could be used for new landscapes.

PARKING DATABASE

A thorough parking database for the entire district, such as parking space amount, condition and need analysis, will be helpful to effectively manage parking resources and alleviate congestion.

WAYFINDING MASTERPLAN AND STANDARDS

By providing clear signage and guidance, it facilitates uniform visual clues for the entire site, improving accessibility and enhancing visitor experience.

LANDSCAPE STANDARDS

The landscape standards through site furniture, paving, lighting, and other site components guide the design and maintenance of all landscape within the Capitol Area, promoting a clear visual clue of the district, together with the wayfinding standards.

The long-term implementation has a lot of uncertainties, including funding resources, collaboration levels, and community priorities at the time. However, there are general guidelines to develop a robust implementation plan to achieve overarching goals. In terms of funding, we need to understand project-specific revenue sources for each individual project, such as public funding, earned income, value capture, or contributed income. We also need to understand the cost breakdowns, including site preparation, utilities/ infrastructure, parking, roads, site furnishings, special elements, hardscape, landscape, operations, and maintenance. In the following pages, we've identified key actors and funding avenues for different kinds of projects within the Capitol Area, and this could serve as a starting point for future implementation conversations.

Additionally, the State of Minnesota should formalize a consultation process between the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), State Archaeologist, and CAAPB, as well as determine the responsible governmental unit (RGU) status for all projects.