



Minnesota Council on Disability
1600 University Avenue W
Suite 8
Saint Paul, MN 55104
May 13, 2024

Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board
Freeman Building
625 Robert St N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear CAAP Board,

The Minnesota Council on Disability supports the proposed design for the new path in the Capitol Upper Mall, as shown in Phase 1A. The incorporation of universal design principles into this project takes into account more than just the bare minimum of access standards. This design centers on useability and activation from many design perspectives, not just accessibility. This represents progress toward a more inclusive and equitable use of public space at the heart of Minnesota's seat of government.

The Minnesota Council on Disability has been an important partner for many projects in Minnesota for several decades, including U.S. Bank Stadium, Target Field, Allianz Field, the Minnesota Senate Building, the Capitol tunnel remodel project, the State Office Building remodel, the Nicollet Mall redesign, and the Peavy Plaza redesign to ensure that people with disabilities have equitable access and experiences within these public spaces. In each instance, the design focused on using the space rather than checking the accessibility box. This resulted in going above and beyond the bare minimum requirements. With this experience partnering in public design to ensure accessibility in mind, we lend our support to the currently proposed Capitol Mall redesign proposal in Phase 1A.

Accessible design benefits everyone. Often, it is easy to discount using resources to improve a space if it is perceived as currently functional. This board has a unique opportunity to take a holistic approach to this space with amazing potential. It should be the priority of the Capitol Mall Design Framework Committee and the CAAP Board's redesign plans to maximize the overall useability of the grounds to bring everyone, no matter their disability or age, to one of Minnesota's most important public buildings.

The Minnesota Council on Disability urges the Committee to support the Capitol Mall redesign proposal.

Sincerely,

David Dively, Executive Director, Minnesota Council on Disability
David Fenley, ADA Director, Minnesota Council on Disability
Michele Severson, Access Consultant, Minnesota Council on Disability