



Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board



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To: Members of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)
From: Erik Cedarleaf Dahl and Peter Musty, CAAPB

RE: Capitol Mall Design Framework (CMDf): Statement from Advisory Committee (as referenced in Item 2 of memo to Board Members)

CAAPB Advisors have been participating at all steps in the CMDf process. As referenced in Item 2 Memo to Board Members prepared for March 1st meeting, the following is a joint statement from Advisors Joe Favour (Appointed by State Arts Board), Michael Bjornberg (Appointed by American Institute of Architects MN) and Denita Lemmon (Appointee of the Board):

February 29, 2024
MN Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

Advisor Statement on CMDf Draft

Madam Chair and Board Members,

The CAAPB Advisors welcome the opportunity to address the Board and state our assessment of the Draft Capitol Mall Development Framework. We collectively support the long range vision of the plan and are encouraged by the possibilities it presents to improve the public realms of the Capitol Mall and its surrounding areas. The plan demonstrates long range strategies to increase vitality, improve the visitor experience(s), foster a broader sense of belonging and community, and enhance the strengths of the historic fabric, while cultivating more flexibility to support resiliency, increased biodiversity, and human comfort.

Larger organizational concepts are critical to the plan's success and offer solutions to nagging issues. In particular we note the following important organizing ideas:

- A long-term planting strategy that addresses tree planting, landscape character, and maintenance throughout the Capitol Mall grounds that envisions a gradient of highly cultivated to naturalistic landscapes radiating from the Capitol outward.
- An organized cultural corridor, partially following MLK Boulevard, that provides opportunities for future commemoration and investment by a broader group of stakeholders and communities.
- A reduction in street widths and prominence, which allows for greater investment in human scale circulation and connection enhanced by integrated planting and stormwater solutions.
- Enhancements in support of both existing uses and imagined future uses, such as terracing the upper mall to function better as a democratic stage and adding a playground to Cass Gilbert Park to attract families from across our region.

Additional bold moves support these larger framework concepts as an integrated vision for the future. We want to stress the importance of these discretely described actions as an interdependent whole. No single one of these larger concepts stands as strongly by itself. We believe that success of this vision will only result from committing to a long term strategy of implementation throughout the Capitol Grounds and its surrounding areas. One project phase of implementation will only benefit the State if it is followed by additional steps to realize the overall vision. In addition, we feel strongly that a commitment to enhanced site management practices and integrated public safety and security measures are crucial to the health and vitality of this important public space. These include appropriately funded ongoing maintenance (grounds management, fixing things, etc.), improved day to day management of large gatherings and programmed events/visitation, and coordination with public safety. These details must be honored in each stage of implementation and given the resources to appropriately steward these landscapes moving forward. The great ideas embedded in this CMDF plan will result in better public spaces within and adjacent to the Capitol Mall. We look forward to the implementation of these concepts in the year ahead and in future phases over the next decade.

Michael Bjornberg, Denita Lemmon, Joe Favour, CAAPB Advisors