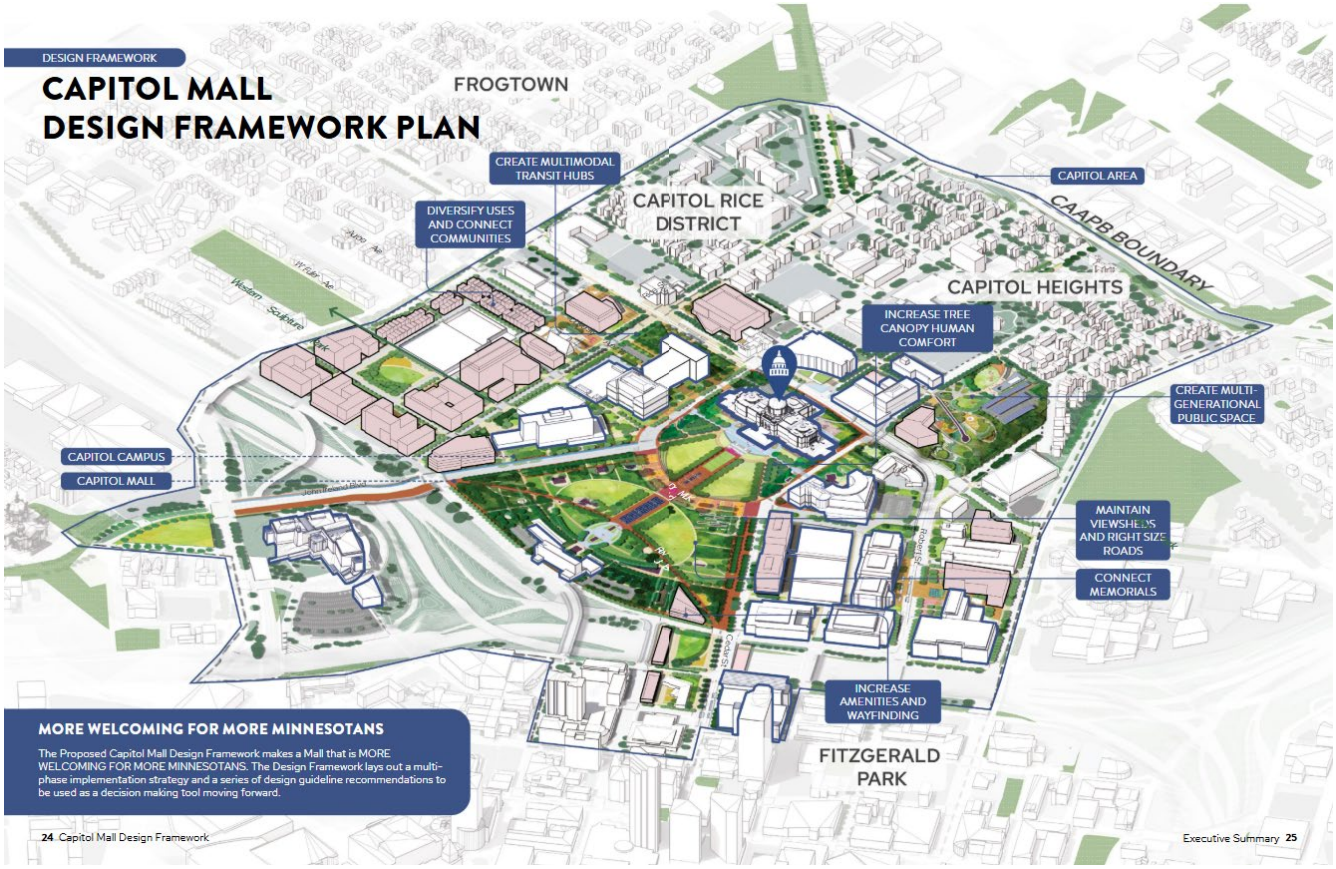
Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

Freeman Building
625 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55155
651-757-1500
https://mn.gov/caapb/

Date: December 7, 2026
To: Members of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)
From: Erik Cedarleaf Dahl, Executive Secretary
Peter Musty, Principal Planner and Administrator of Zoning and Design Rules

Formal Attachment of the Capitol Mall Design Framework (Approved 2024) to the *2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*

The Capitol Mall Design Framework ("CMDF") was approved by the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board on September 15, 2024. It is the Board's latest binding policy guiding decisions – a document that will be used to guide the future of the Minnesota State Capitol Mall and its immediate urban context for years to come. The core motto of the plan is "*Making the Mall More Welcoming to More Minnesotans."*



The action before the Board is to formally attach the CMDF (dated 12/20/2024) by reference to the *2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area* ("2040 Comp Plan"), amending it. It will exist as the second framework plan attached to the 2040 Comp Plan that serves to guide location-specific investments in the

Capitol Area. The CMDF outlines and illustrates board policy and aspirations for improvements from landscape design and plantings to wayfinding, stormwater management, public space design, commemorative works, public art, and landscape design. As an attachment by reference to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, it will be referenced for compliance in future board approvals and will guide decisions about maintenance, memorials, ecological systems, and security improvements by the stewarding agencies of the State Capitol Campus.



Updates to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan require a Board vote subsequent to a comment period following Board Approval, exceeding 90 days, provided to the City of Saint Paul and Minnesota Department of Economic Development. The City of Saint Paul was involved throughout the plan process. Both partners provided no further comment following approval in 2024.

Background and Timeline

June 2021 **2040 Comp Plan approval.** Adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area, including the Capitol Rice Development Framework, attached by reference in Chapter 7A.

June 2023 **Legislative provisions.** $37M in legislative provisions funding the Capitol Mall Design Framework and Phase One of CMDF Implementation, Rice Street redesign and reconstruction (with mobility hub), community vitality funding, and two new green spaces replacing portions at University and Rice (portions of State Lot AA and Lot C replacing green space lost in Leif Erickson Park).

Sept 2024 **CMDF approval with instructions.** The Board approved the CMDF and provided instructions to the Executive Secretary to proceed with documentation and publishing and return for later attachment to the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. See the September 15, 2024, memo for more details regarding the planning process and instructions provided to the Executive Secretary.

2024-2026 **CMDF Phase 1 implementation.** CAAPB has partnered with the Department of Administration to implement initial projects. The work has focused on increasing the tree canopy throughout the Capitol campus and mall, adding benches, and the implementation of the first arc of the new Lower Mall Commemorative Circle – the Tribal Flag Plaza.

Nov 2026 **CMDF returning for attachment by reference to the Comprehensive Plan.** CAAPB staff and advisors support attachment of the Plan as published and forward the suggested language below for Board consideration in alignment with the 2040 Comp Plan's Chapter 2, (policy 2.39, 2.40, 2.41, 2.42, and 2.43), and Chapter 7 (policy 7.4.d.)

CAPITOL MALL DESIGN FRAMEWORK

MORE WELCOMING FOR MORE MINNESOTANS

Attachment A

The Capitol Mall Design Framework

Published December 20, 2024

The full document currently published in its entirety at CAAPB website and PDF:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L3HbvvrhuJs4yscyai1WlzHdyuXWSYFt/view
CMDF Executive Summary:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yWxqb3WXxgZEMLI5IEOp2hIUbjHqiDyy/view

---

Suggested Board Resolution

"The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board 'The Board', having previously approved the Capitol Mall Design Framework on September 15, 2024, hereby attaches by reference the entirety of the Capitol Mall Design Framework, dated December 20, 2024 (399 pages), to the *2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area* (originally adopted June 2021 and now amended)."