



## Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

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

Date: June 4, 2026  
To: Members of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)  
From: Erik Cedarleaf Dahl, Executive Secretary, CAAPB  
Peter Musty, Principal Planner and Administrator of the Rules for Zoning and Design, CAAPB  
Ella Coon, Principal Planner and Administrator of the Rules for Zoning and Design, CAAPB

### Other Project Updates

#### Project Updates in this Memo:

- 1) Legislative Update (2026)
- 2) Commemorative Works Activities Fund: Public History Project RFP
- 3) Tree Planting and Prioritization
- 4) State Office Building
- 5) Cedar Street Bridge
- 6) Capitol View Mental Health Hospital
- 7) Rethinking I-94
- 8) **TRACKING TABLE:** Multiple Infrastructure Projects and Studies
  - a. NEW to table: Centennial Office Building Study, John Ireland Bridge Reconstruction

### Legislative Update

The 2026 Legislative Session came to a close at midnight on May 18, 2026. The 2026 session was a busy session and several items impact CAAPB. Staff will provide additional information and updates on these bills, including implementation progress and potential impacts to the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, at the June 4, 2026 Board meeting.

### Commemorative Works Activities Fund: Public History Project RFP

On April 16, 2026, the Request for Proposals (RFP) closed for a new public history project focused on the urban history of commemorative works within the Capitol Area. The project is funded through a portion of a one-time legislative appropriation for commemorative artwork activities available through June 30, 2027.

The selected consultant team will prepare a general audience narrative report on the Capitol Area's environmental, social, and urban development history; develop guided and self-guided tour programming; create an analytical report and dataset documenting commemorative works in the Capitol Area; and conduct public outreach activities to support ongoing dialogue about past and future commemoration practices.

The work will examine the relationship between the Capitol Mall’s memorial landscape, postwar urban renewal, interstate construction, and the evolution of the Capitol Area as a civic and commemorative space.

The project is funded through legislative language in H.F. 1830, which appropriated \$500,000 to the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board “to support commemorative artwork activities,” with funds available until June 30, 2027.

### **Tree Planting (2026-2027) and Prioritization**

CAAPB staff is developing a long-range landscape strategy for the Capitol Area to balance competing priorities including commemorative works, tree canopy expansion, civic gathering space, and preservation of open space and historic character. The proposed policy establishes “priority use zones” within the Capitol Mall and broader Capitol Area, assigning a principal use to different areas and ranking other compatible uses and design features to help prevent incremental loss of flexibility, capacity, and historic clarity.

The strategy is intended to complement the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Capitol Mall Design Framework by providing clearer guidance for long-term landscape planning and for reviewing future applications related to commemorative work additions, removals, and modifications. Staff will coordinate with the Department of Administration and other stakeholders in developing the prioritization policy for Board consideration.

### **State Office Building Update**

The State Office Building Renovation and Addition continues to progress. The addition is in progress with structural steel, roofing, and concrete block work underway. The original building construction continues with new roof systems, windows, and interior wall framing. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing system continue to advance.

## Bridge 9250: Cedar Street Bridge (over University Avenue)

### Summary shared by Ramsey County

Bridge 9250, a non-historic, three-span, closed-spandrel, reinforced concrete arch bridge, was constructed in 1922, and lies within the Minnesota State Capitol Mall Historic District, and is owned by Ramsey County. The original design of a live load vehicle is unknown. For reference, one of the heavier vehicles of the era, a WW I Liberty Truck, had a gross vehicle weight rating of about 20,000 lbs. Current road legal trucks are limited by the Federal Bridge Formula with a maximum gross weight of 80,000 lbs. The bridge has an overall rating of Fair (5, on a scale of 9 Brand New to 1 Imminent Failure

Condition). Recent bridge inspections have found the Reinforced Concrete Arch in 73% Fair condition and 27% in Poor condition, while the Reinforced Concrete Abutments have 45% in

Fair Condition and 55% in Poor Condition. The bridge has had minimal maintenance over its 104-year history. Realistically, the bridge is perhaps two to four years from being downgraded to an overall Poor (4) Condition and presents a risk to the public.

Ramsey County is investigating this bridge to determine a path forward, of which current options include full rehabilitation and full removal with a new, context-sensitive bridge so a plan is in place, somewhere in the 2030/2031 timeframe, before the bridge enters this "Poor" condition state. Both options will have a substantial effect on Light Rail Transit (Green Line) service, which, realistically, could see a loss of service during an entire construction season.



**BRIDGE 9250 - 1961**



**BRIDGE 9250 - 2024**



## Capitol View Mental Health Hospital

Staff recommends that if you haven't, that you please walk or drive by the site when you are on campus. Construction is finishing up on Capitol View Mental Health Hospital

<https://www.capitolparkmentalhealth.com/>.

The following update was provided Sept 19 to CAAPB staff by Garrett Smith of the Acadia/Fairview team:

*"The hospital is scheduled to start taking patients in October. I have attached a couple pictures of the completed facility ...they showcase the beautiful building sitting perfectly downtown adjacent to the Capitol!"*

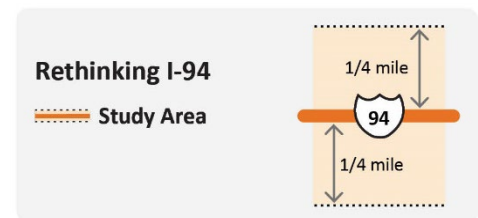
May 2026: The Hospital leadership has met with CAAPB and the Vitality team and has expressed hopes to nurture improvements to the park space in the future.





## Rethinking I-94

CAAPB Staff continues to attend occasional project meetings to provide input on evolving concepts, as participating agency monitoring the project, and have been working on the best timing to invite Rethinking project leads to update the Board directly. For now, here is an update published at [MnDOT website](#):



“We are in the process of reviewing and preparing responses to all comments that were submitted on the [Scoping Document / Draft Scoping Decision Document \(SD/DSDD\)\(External link\)](#) and the state [Environmental Assessment Worksheet \(EAW\)\(External link\)](#) during the public comment period. We expect to post the final Scoping Decision Document and Findings of Fact and Conclusions (FOFC) document for the EAW, including responses to comments received, on the project website later in 2026.

In September 2025, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) received feedback and concurrence (support) from Cooperating Agencies on the Alternatives Evaluation Memo. Cooperating Agencies are federal agencies that assist with the environmental review process. The memo was also shared with Participating Agencies — other federal, state, and local agencies with an interest in the project — for their information.

The Alternatives Evaluation Memo identifies recommended alternatives to move forward for further study in the next phase of the project, the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Alternatives recommended to advance include: No Build, Maintenance B, Reduced Freeway and Reconfigured Freeway.

MnDOT prepared a draft of the SD/DSDD and shared it with Cooperating and Participating agencies for review and comment. An Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) was prepared and shared with Participating agencies for comment. MnDOT incorporated their comments into the documents and provided an update on these documents to Community Leaders and the Policy Advisory Committee.

The SD/DSDD and EAW were released for official public comment from January 6 – March 23, 2026. MnDOT hosted official [public meetings](#) (in-person and virtual) to collect comments on the documents.

To learn more about the alternatives, the evaluation of alternatives, and recommendations for further study in the Tier 1 EIS, visit the project [StoryMap\(External link\).](#)”

## Multiple Infrastructure Planning and Construction Projects Ongoing in Capitol Area

CAAPB planning activity is in full swing following Board adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area in June 2021, structured by The Capitol Area Principles. See table on next page for updated status. (Questions: contact Peter Musty)

Planning	Sponsor/Lead Agency	CAAPB role	Timing
<b>Commemorative Works Rules (2022 Update to Rules) Funded \$500K, one time sending, available thru FY27</b>	CAAPB (working with MNHS, Administration under new Rules)	Staff receives inquiries under Rules, looking to improve process with Lindsey Dyer of MNHS	CAAPB Commemorative Works Fellows Tina Chimuzu (2024) and Ella Coon (2025-26) have led process and are providing updates to Board/Advisors
<a href="#">Capitol Area Stormwater Management Study</a>	Capitol Region Watershed District	co-lead	Complete, CAAPB accepted in March 2025
<a href="#">Rethinking I-94</a>	MnDOT	policy and planning committee(s)	Ongoing, alternatives have narrowed
<b>Downtown Commons Planning (off-shoot of Rethinking 1-94)</b>	MnDOT	Steering role w/ staff of several partner agencies	Study completed Fall 2023, multi-jurisdictional staff team continues to meet. 2026: scoping a study to set priorities for projects in Downtown Commons.
<b>Capitol Heights Development Framework</b>	CAAPB (leveraging Station Area Planning)	lead	On hold. (see Station Area Planning)
BRT Station Area Planning: METRO Bronze Purple-Line (Robert to Jackson)	Ramsey County and Metro Transit	Staff is on Technical Advisory Committee, Design Review Team, updates Admin and Capitol Heights reps	Two station area plans will be brought forward by the County team - June 2026 Board Meeting .
BRT Station Design: METRO G-Line	Ramsey County and Metro Transit	Staff on Technical Advisory Committee, CAAPB approved station location and design in Capitol Area, approved design and location of stations is integrated into 30% Rice Street plan under consideration by Board.	Station locations approved by CAAPB in March 2025. Metro Transit participating in Rice Street planning and design led by Ramsey County, City and CAAPB plus partners

<b>DESIGN UNDERWAY: \$25M Capitol Rice Corridor (Rice Street Redesign/Rebuild)</b>	funds held by MnDOT for City/County/ CAAPB leads design coordination	partner, CAAPB approvals	See staff memo: community process near completion, community preferred alternative has been released and is under review
<b>Jackson Street Rebuild</b> (Northeastern boundary of Capitol Area)	City	Staff on PMT	Approved by CAAPB in March 2025, undergoing implementation
<b>DESIGN UNDERWAY: 12<sup>th</sup> Street Redo</b> (downtown across St Peter bridge, up 12 <sup>th</sup> to John Ireland)	City	Staff on PMT	Design team and engagement underway, options in vetting
<b>UNDERWAY: \$185K Mandatory Update to Rules for Zoning and Design</b>	CAAPB	Opticos lead consultant	ongoing in 2025, review process ongoing
<b>COMPLETE: \$1 mil. Capitol Mall Design Framework</b> (Admin. w/ \$5 mil. for implementation)	CAAPB	lead	Approved in 2024, trees planted in upper mall, tribal flag plaza open
<b>Capitol Mall Design Framework Implementation</b>	CAAPB (w/ Dept of Administration)	Co-lead	Funding extension by Legislature (June 30, 2027)
Capitol Area Community Vitality Task Force	Task Force completed work in 2024, legislature authorized funding in 2025 session	lead	\$4M Legislation approved, Update provided in separately.
<b>NEW:</b> John Ireland Boulevard Bridge	MnDOT	CAAPB has approved bridge design, will study entire JIB end to end in 2026 with MnDOT funding commitment	Construction about to begin following Twin Cities Marathon (October 3-5).
<b>NEW:</b> Centennial Office Building Study	Dept of Administration	CAAPB Guidance, Review/Study, Approvals	Predesign study by Administration near completion; identifying cost, design and technical parameters

**We continue to be VERY Busy!** Staff is implementing the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Capitol Mall Design Framework. For many items, Board Members may be offered chances to observe, participate in, or advise steering committees or community discussions.

Questions? **Please contact CAAPB Staff directly.**