

970089



# Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

Biennial Report  
1996 - 1997



**Board of State Capitol Commissioners  
1893 - 1905**

NA  
4412  
.M6  
M59  
1996/97

## *Acknowledgement*

*The Board of State Capitol Commissioners (cover picture) was established in 1893 by the Minnesota Legislature "to provide for a new capitol for the state of Minnesota." The Board's role set a precedent for the present role of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board; it selected a site for the new Capitol in 1894, held a design competition in 1895, and oversaw the building's construction, completed in 1905.*

*Known also as the Seabury Commission, the Board's members were (left to right):*

*Edgar Weaver, John De Laittre, Charles H. Graves,  
Channing Seabury, George A. Du Toit, Eben E. Corliss,  
and Henry W. Lamberton.*

This report was prepared by CAAPB staff at an approximate cost of \$2,315.



*"We built the state capitol on the theory that nothing was too good for Minnesota. Let us develop the city on the theory that nothing is too good for St. Paul."*

—Capitol architect Cass Gilbert, in remarks to the Saint Paul Municipal Art Association, Saint Paul Dispatch (January 11, 1909)

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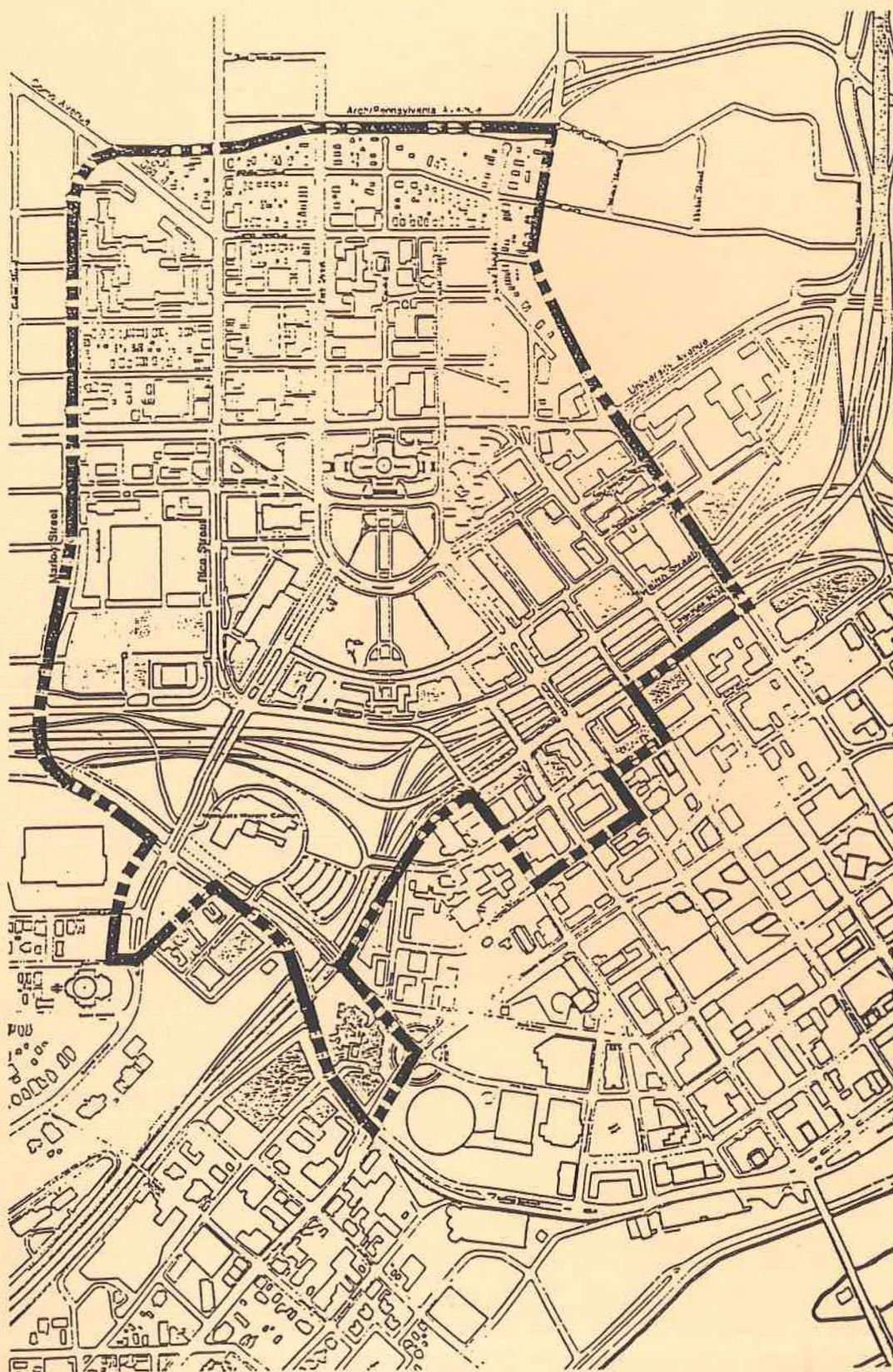
*"Growth of Minnesota's capitol area in Saint Paul never has been within the context of any overall plan. The result? Development has been haphazard. The capitol complex is too divided by streets and traffic to have a sense of unity. It contains a hodgepodge of architectural styles. It is becoming a sea of parking lots."*

—from an editorial, "Guiding Development at the Capitol," Minneapolis Tribune (July 6, 1970), urging adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Commission

*"The Capitol Area is a virtual sea of parking lots related poorly to destinations, inefficient in terms of land use and visually unacceptable as a foreground setting for the State Capitol Building. In fact, surface parking lots consume 25 percent of the total Capitol Area. ..."*

—1970 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area





REVISION: 10-1-88  
2-15-92  
2-17-92  
2-19-92  
2-20-92

# CAPITOL AREA BOUNDARY

May 1995

Capitol Area  
Architectural  
and Planning  
Board





## INTRODUCTION: THEN AND NOW

As the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) looks forward to observing its 30th year in 1997, it is instructive to look backward to the Board's first Comprehensive Plan (1970) and its earliest Biennial Report (1975) and assess what has been accomplished over nearly three decades.

The CAAPB—then a Commission—was established by the 1967 legislature; one of its statutory responsibilities is to prepare a comprehensive use plan for the Capitol Area. In 1974, legislation was enacted to require the CAAPB to prepare and submit biennial reports to the Legislature and Governor on the status of implementation of the comprehensive plan together with a program for capital improvements and site development.

The first Biennial Report noted completion of a traffic/parking study for the Capitol Area in 1973. One of the consultant's recommendations was to make Aurora Avenue in front of the Capitol one-way westbound. Apparently ignored at that time, the proposal resurfaced two decades later.

In 1993, the CAAPB approved temporary closure of Aurora to two-way traffic in order to test a one-way westbound configuration over a several month period. In 1994, after assessment of the new scheme, the Board voted to make the change permanent.

The 1975 report recommended a request to "remodel, air condition, and equip the Capitol Building Cafeteria, \$277,000. This request...would allow the restoration of the cafeteria to its original 'rathskeller' appearance." Funds for restoring the cafeteria were finally appropriated by the 1996 legislature.

Also recommended in 1975 was \$550,000 for "restoration and preservation of the exterior of the Capitol Building. Minnesota's priceless and irreplaceable monument has been as much the victim of the pollutants of industrial civilization as any other building its age. The funds requested would provide for the repair of severely damaged portions of the building's exterior and for the stabilization of the remainder. ..."

Since the mid-1980s the legislature has appropriated millions of dollars for exterior restoration and stabilization. In 1996, those projects totaled \$7.4 million for repairing the Capitol's dome and lantern, and for rebuilding exterior terraces on the north side of the building; funds for cafeteria restoration are included in this total.

The 1970 Comprehensive Plan decried existing conditions in the Capitol Area in these words:

"The Capitol Area has lost much of the original unity and vitality envisioned by past planners. The Area is a graphic example of the problems facing the urban community today. Remaining blighted structures, incompatible land uses, and unrestrained advertising rob the Capitol of the dignity befitting the governmental process."

The "visually disunified complex" pointed out in the 1970 plan has not entirely disappeared, but the Capitol Area's appearance has dramatically improved since 1970. Some of those changes include:

- elimination of several city streets which used to crisscross the Capitol Mall;
- redesign of all freeway bridges linking the Capitol Area with downtown Saint Paul;
- construction of the History Center and Judicial Center, designs for which were selected through CAAPB-sponsored competitions;
- reduction of most surface parking on the Mall, and redesign of lower Mall and all peripheral parking lots; and
- Capitol Mall development, including memorials that attract hundreds of visitors each year.



## CAAPB'S MISSION

The Board's statutory authority is to:

- 1) preserve and enhance the dignity, beauty, and architectural integrity of the Capitol, the buildings immediately adjacent to it, the Capitol grounds, and the Capitol Area;
- 2) protect, enhance, and increase the open spaces within the Capitol Area when deemed necessary and desirable for the improvement of the public enjoyment thereof;
- 3) develop proper approaches to the Capitol Area for pedestrian movement, the highway system, and mass transit system so that the area achieves its maximum importance and accessibility; and

- 4) establish a flexible framework for growth of the Capitol buildings that will be in keeping with the spirit of the original design.

Capitol Area design and development are guided not only by the Comprehensive Plan for the Capitol Area, but by the Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies (1993). The latter incorporates and expands urban design principles set forth in the CAAPB plan.

With a 1996 appropriation, the Board has undertaken revision of its Comprehensive Plan along with the zoning rules that ensure orderly development in the Capitol Area. These documents are expected to be completed in 1998.

## ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

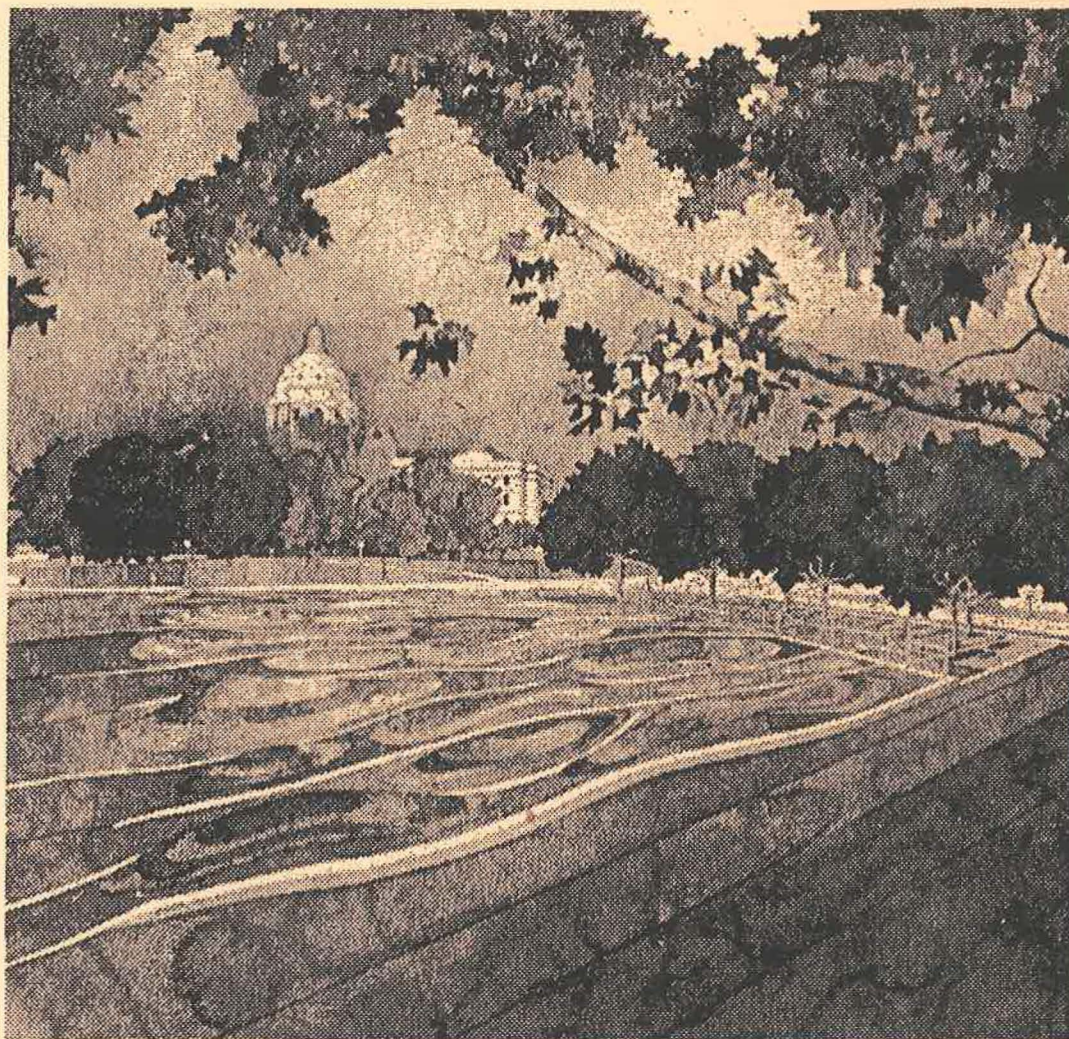
In March 1996, the CAAPB hired a new executive secretary, architect Nancy Stark, bringing the agency's number of staff to five full-time employees with varied expertise in architecture, planning, finance, and administrative assistance.

Language in the bonding legislation of 1996 repealed the CAAPB's exemption from Chapters 16A and 16B. Thus, future operation of the agency will be more consistent with the rules and guidelines under which Administration and Finance currently are governed. This is seen as a positive step in strengthening the necessary relationship of the CAAPB with these two agencies.

In response to a 1995 legislative audit, the CAAPB has adopted a new policy for its Advisory Committee, currently consisting of three architects and planners. The policy statement addresses tenure, compensation, and overall responsibility of the advisors to the CAAPB.

The Board replaced one retiring member, A. William Sands, during the year, as well as one architectural advisor, Val Michelson, who resigned. Architect Thomas Blanck was selected for the CAAPB Advisory Committee, and M. Ann Buck was selected as a new member to the Board.





### **Proposed Minnesota Woman Suffrage Memorial Garden**

Design by LOOM partnership: principals Raveevarn Choksombatchai  
and Ralph Nelson; Martha McQuade, design associate.

Project Completion - 1998





Quadriga (restoration completed in mid-1995)

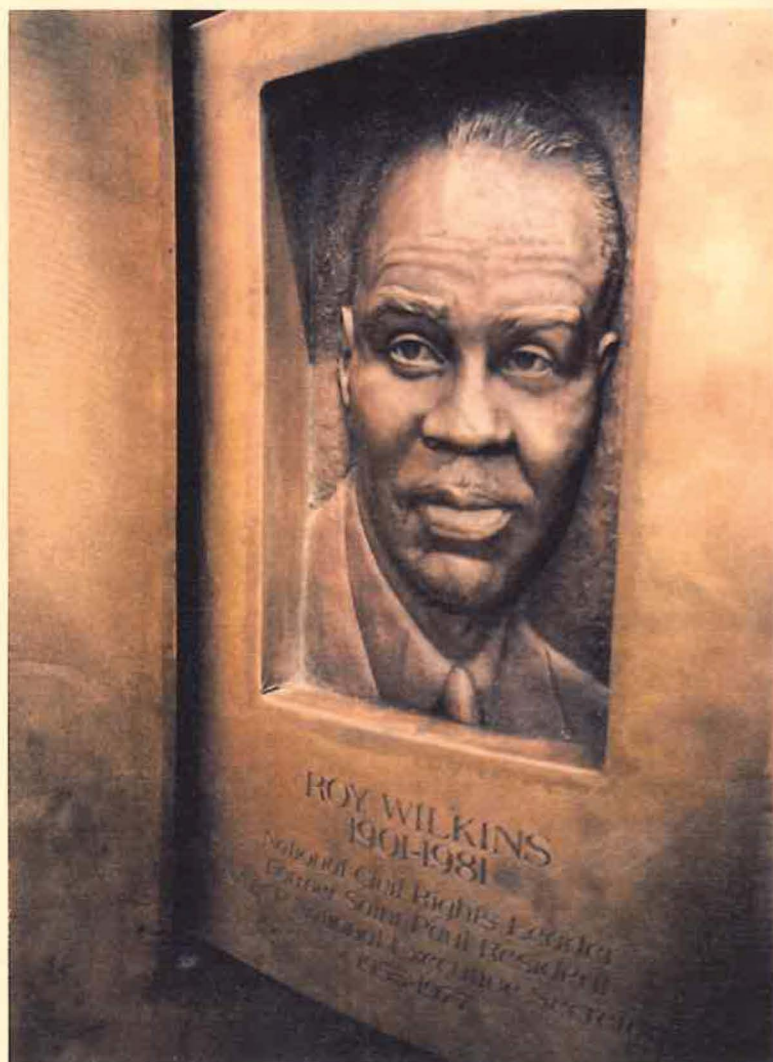


Leif Erikson statue (restored 1996)

Peace Officers Memorial (dedicated in June 1995)



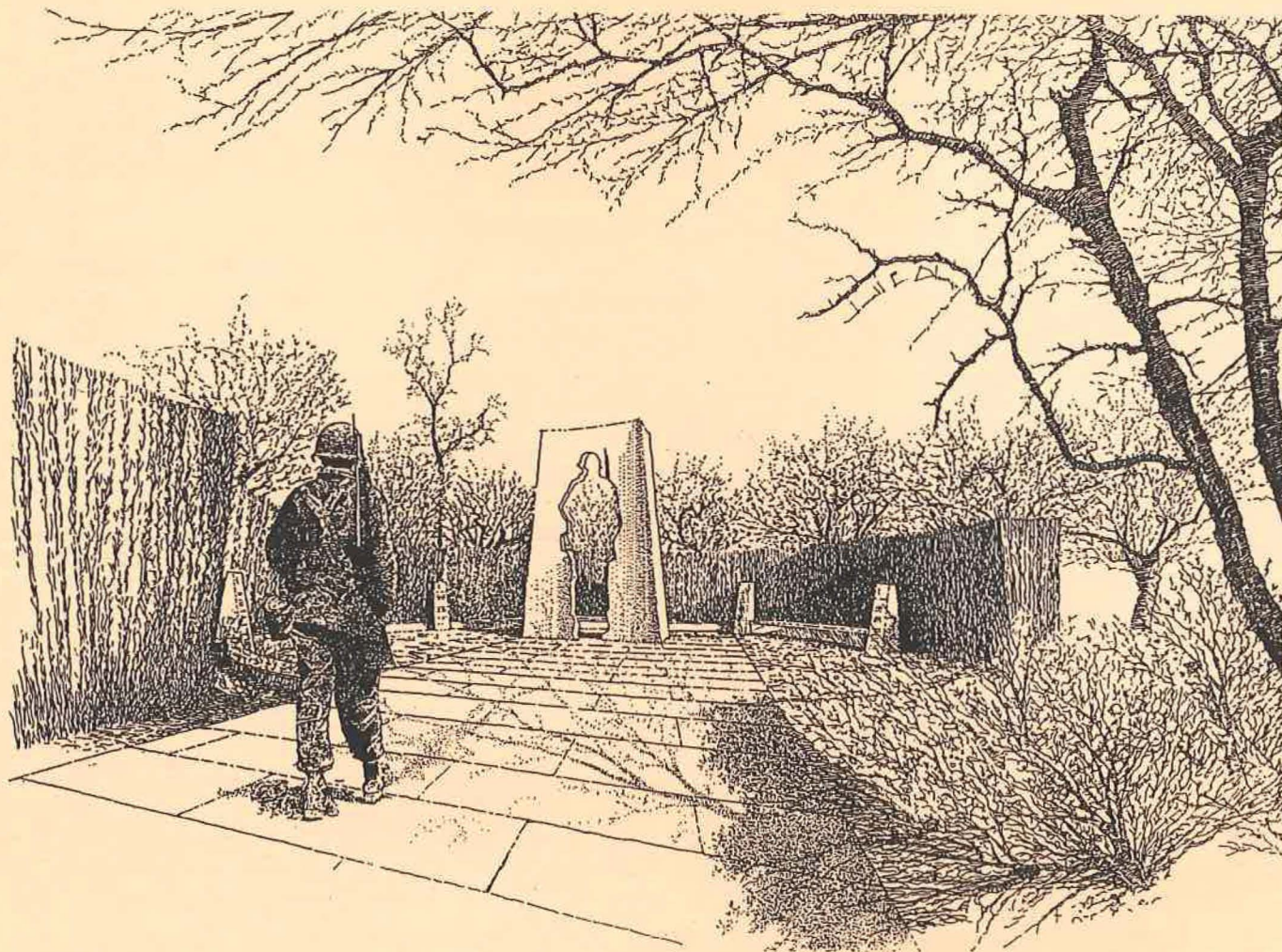




Roy Wilkins Memorial (dedicated in November 1995)







**Proposed Minnesota Korean War Veterans Memorial**

Design by sculptor, Arthur Norby, with Robert Kost and  
Dean Olson of BRW Architects; sketch by Jerry Ohm.

Project Completion - 1998



## CAPITOL BUILDING RESTORATION

Restoration of the Capitol Building has been a high priority for the CAAPB since the Board's inception. A sense of urgency in completion of Capitol restoration—both interior and exterior projects—seems appropriate as the CAAPB, the Department of Administration and other agencies plan for celebration of the Capitol's centennial in the year 2005.

Reflecting that urgency, the CAAPB and Administration officials have worked for the past two years with the consulting architect for the Capitol, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., to develop a strategic long-range plan for Capitol projects to be done over the next decade. In order of priority, the needed projects fall into three general categories: exterior stabilization, updating the building's electrical/mechanical/fire and life safety systems, and completion of restoration of interior public areas.

A 1996 appropriation of \$7.4 million was a first step toward accomplishing these long-range objectives. It includes rebuilding the deteriorated terraces surrounding the north side of the Capitol; renovating the lantern structure atop the Capitol dome; and restoring the Capitol cafeteria to its original appearance.

Capitol reroofing was completed in mid-1995, as was restoration of the Quadriga (Golden Horses statuary group), which had been removed for repairs/renovation by a conservator during the roof reconstruction. Also completed in 1995 was the porte-cochere accessible entrance beneath the Capitol's grand stairway, a long-awaited front door entrance for the disabled. Prior to the porte-cochere project, the only accessible entrance to the Capitol was at the northwest door, adjacent to Parking Lot N.

It was renovation of the carriage entrance in 1994 that alerted state officials to the perilous condition of the Capitol's exterior terraces. Rusted support beams beneath the south portico were discovered when workmen were renovating the carriage entrance ceiling underneath the portico. Construction was put on hold; the carriage entrance ceiling shored up; and emergency plans developed to rebuild the Capitol's front entrance porch in mid-1995.

Alarmed that moisture seepage had so weakened the major substructure at one side of the Capitol, consulting engineers surveyed structures beneath all the exterior terraces and discovered similar, although less severe, deterioration on all sides of the Capitol. The 1996 appropriation will replace structural systems and terraces on the north side of the building; additional funds will be sought in 1998 to rebuild the south side terraces.

Restoration of the Capitol cafeteria will be coordinated with replacement of the northwest terrace. Water seepage has caused damage over the years to the kitchen area adjacent to the cafeteria and just below the terrace. This project is scheduled for 1997. So, also, is repair/renovation of the lantern, the pillared structure that tops the Capitol dome.

**Cyclical Maintenance Manual:** Much of the deterioration of the Capitol might have been avoided, or delayed, had a preventive maintenance program been implemented several decades ago. With funds made available in 1994 by the legislature, the CAAPB and Administration sponsored preparation of an exterior maintenance manual for the Capitol.

The manual, completed in 1996, provides guidelines for setting up a comprehensive preventive exterior maintenance program. An appropriation to implement and sustain the program will be requested in 1997.

**Capitol Building Working Group:** In mid-1996, representatives of eight state agencies pledged support of a Capitol Building Working Group policy to limit employee smoking to the building's exterior west ground floor entrance area.

The change was instigated by public complaints that the Capitol's south portico, the entrance most used by visitors, was frequently clouded by cigarette smoke and endangered the health of schoolchildren and others coming to the Capitol. A survey of Capitol users by the CAAPB showed strong support for establishing a designated employee smoking area; the Capitol Building Working Group action followed the survey.



## CAPITOL AREA ARTWORK

The Capitol Area Board's long-term policy of developing the Capitol Mall as a public park attractive to many visitors has provided the impetus for construction of two new memorials over the past biennium.

The Peace Officers Memorial, funded entirely by private sources, was dedicated in June 1995. The work is situated at the lower edge of the Mall on what had been a short segment of Wabasha Street. It serves as a gateway to the Capitol Mall, welcoming pedestrians crossing over the freeway on Wabasha from downtown Saint Paul.

The national president of the NAACP spoke at the dedication of the Roy Wilkins Memorial in November 1995; the site itself (adjacent to John Ireland Boulevard, just south of the Lindbergh statue) was dedicated in mid-July by hundreds of delegates to the national NAACP Convention being held in downtown Minneapolis.

In addition to the two artworks on the Capitol Mall, "Minnesota Profiles," a percent-for-art-funded courtyard was dedicated in August 1995 at the Minnesota History Center. The courtyard was designed by Minneapolis artist Andrew Leicester.

Two additional memorials were funded by the 1996 legislature and are expected to be constructed in 1997-98. Both legislative appropriations will be supplemented by nonstate funds.

The Woman Suffrage Memorial Garden will be the first of three terraced gardens along the Cedar Street side of the Mall as envisioned in the Mall redevelopment plan. Design

for the garden—the first memorial on the Mall to honor the accomplishments of women—was chosen by a CAAPB competition in August 1996.

The Korean War Veterans Memorial will be constructed east of the Court of Honor, just north of the Columbus walkway. A competition to choose the design was conducted by the CAAPB during the fall of 1996.

While applauding the legislative support and hundreds of Minnesota citizens whose gifts have enhanced the attractiveness of the Mall, the Capitol Area Board continues to be concerned about the lack of funding for maintenance of existing artwork.

Private contributions were used for restoration of the Christopher Columbus statue in 1992. The Leif Erikson statue in the small park adjacent to the State Office Building was restored in 1996, financed by private donations and a legislative appropriation.

Continuing legislative support will be required over the next several years to renovate/restore other artworks on the Capitol Mall: the Court of Honor, the "Promise of Youth" fountain and pool near the Veterans Service Building, and the statues and plazas surrounding the statues of Floyd B. Olson, Knute Nelson, John Johnson, and Charles Lindbergh. The relocation of Clara Barton's plaque to a more visible location also would be appropriate.

The CAAPB expects to request funds for a continuing program of memorial maintenance in 1998.

## THE CAPITAL CITY AND THE CAPITOL AREA

In the spring of 1996, the Capital City Partnership was formed in Saint Paul. Sponsored by more than 30 Twin Cities corporations and their CEOs (at \$75,000 each over three years), it is a dynamic step to revitalize the Capital City's urban core and take Saint Paul into the next century.

Through the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, and representing one of Saint Paul's many neighborhoods, the CAAPB was asked to participate with other city leaders and agencies in a task force to guide the Capital City Partnership in establishing its mission, goals, and integral priorities. The CAAPB's interface with the task force provides a timely opportunity to promote its upcoming Comprehensive Plan visions with those of the partnership, and strengthen the revitalizing of the Capital City's urban core and the Capitol Complex.

Over the past summer, the CAAPB staff have participated in the Saint Paul Foundation's study *Strengthening Vitality West of Wabasha: Ideas from the Community*, and is continuing involvement with the City of Saint Paul in reviewing the Saint Paul Downtown River Corridor Development Framework Study to be completed by the end of 1996.

**Public Art Saint Paul:** Public Art Saint Paul included the CAAPB in its summer 1996 Downtown Placemaking Workshops. In a series of focus groups, CAAPB staff have been able to share their knowledge about memorials and monuments, and assist in identifying appropriate areas for public art in Saint Paul. Public funds are being sought for 20 new works of art by the year 2000.



## PLANNING FOR NEW BUILDINGS

The Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies involved a close cooperative working relationship between Finance, Administration, and the CAAPB. First released in 1993, the plan was updated in 1995. The plan addresses not only the location of state facilities, but also the connections of the Capitol Area with downtown Saint Paul; it has provided much of the background information for decision makers in the Legislative and Executive branches on development of new state buildings.

The 1995 supplement to the Strategic Plan was issued to provide current facility development information reflecting changes in agency needs and economic conditions.

Among these changes has been an ongoing reassessment of the Revenue Department's facility needs; Revenue is now located in a leased building across the river from Saint Paul's central business district.

The 1995 legislature provided funding for a predesign study of Revenue's facility needs, including options that do not require construction of a new building such as buying its current building or another existing building.

Design funds were appropriated in 1996 for Revenue, to be made available only after extensive evaluation by the Legislative Coordinating Commission of costs/benefits for building in downtown Saint Paul versus in the Capitol Complex.

The Legislature passed language that allows a new Revenue facility, if located in the Capitol Area, to be exempted from CAAPB's statutory requirement for a design competition, due to legislative decision to expedite the project and its evaluations.

Two other future building projects in the Capitol Area are currently on hold. (See following.)

**Labor Interpretive Center:** In 1993, the legislature approved the site recommended by the Capitol Area Board for the Labor Interpretive Center (LIC) on the western edge of downtown Saint Paul at Kellogg Boulevard and Seventh Street. The CAAPB boundaries were changed by statute to include the site chosen.

The following year, funds were appropriated for design of the Center; CAAPB announced a design competition in late 1994. Negotiations continued with the city of Saint Paul for the site, which was only partially owned by the state.

The city proposed an alternate site, which would be made available for the LIC but would need extensive renovation—the Arts and Science Building at Tenth Street and Exchange. It is expected to be vacated by the Science Museum when the new museum is completed in 1998-99.

In May 1995, the Board approved the alternative site, and the design competition was put on hold. The legislature once again expanded the Capitol Area boundaries to include the current Science Museum site.

**Military Affairs/Training Center:** Predesign funds were appropriated in 1994 for a Military Affairs/National Guard facility to replace the Armory on Cedar Street. It would be located at the southwest corner of the University-Rice intersection, and would replace several old and deteriorating commercial buildings.

The proposed building, with the new League of Minnesota Cities building on the opposite side of the street, will serve as gateway markers to the Capitol Complex. Design funding may be sought in 1998; construction funds are partially dependent on a federal appropriation.

## NORTH CAPITOL AREA DEVELOPMENT

The League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) completed its new office building at Rice Street and University in 1995. Redesign of the White Castle site adjacent to LMC, including resiting the restaurant and providing walkways and landscaping, has improved the appearance of the Rice-University business area.

CAAPB staff continue to work with the local district council and the North End Revitalization Area organization to improve the appearance of this small commercial corridor adjacent to the Capitol Complex. The changes that have

been implemented include new awnings and signage, as well as streetscape amenities.

Further north on Rice Street, HealthEast is building a small clinic at the intersection of Rice and Como to serve residents of the area. The clinic will be operated by the University of Minnesota physicians and used for training medical students. Additionally, Holiday has bought and cleared land on the triangular block bordered by Rice, Como, and Marion, with plans looking to a new facility to be developed as part of a small strip mall.



## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

By law, the CAAPB is required to submit a program for capital improvements and site development as a part of its Biennial Report to the governor and legislature. The following list focuses on improving accessibility, safety, and security in the Capitol Complex, and stabilization of the Capitol Building. The following are cost estimates for proposed work:

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Capitol Building Stabilization</b>   | <b>\$ 15,800,000</b> |
| Includes completion of exterior terrace reconstruction (\$3.2 million); cleaning, tuck pointing, and stone preservation of the building's exterior (\$3.2 million); ornamental and security lighting (\$1 million); upgrade of mechanical and electrical systems (\$8.4 million). |                      |
| <b>Capitol Building Signage</b>   | <b>\$ 1,000,000</b>  |
| Includes completion of design and implementation of exterior sign system, and interior signage for the Capitol and State Office Building.   |                      |
| <b>Aurora Avenue Improvements</b>   | <b>\$ 260,000</b>    |
| Includes redesign and rebuilding Aurora to make permanent the "temporary" devices used to reconfigure the roadway since 1993-94: new curbing, gutters, drainage, landscape improvements, gateway bollards, and redesigned traffic monitor booths.                                 |                      |
| <b>Capitol Mall Safety and Security Improvements</b>  | <b>\$ 1,000,000</b>  |
| Includes renovation of the Court of Honor and the Lindbergh and Floyd B. Olson plazas, and completion of security lighting along all the major walkways on the Capitol Mall.  |                      |
| <b>Statuary Restoration</b>   | <b>\$ 155,000</b>    |
| Includes cleaning and restoration of major outdoor statuary on the Capitol grounds.   |                      |