

Report of the Public Engagement Task Force on Commemorative Works



Prepared for the
**Capitol Area Architectural
and Planning Board**
regarding artworks at the
Minnesota Capitol

November 2021

CAAPB Public Engagement Task Force Report

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Preface: CAAPB Decision Public Engagement Task Force Formation

The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) is responsible for long-term planning and zoning decisions in the Capitol Area. It is also responsible for making decisions about changes or improvements in the Capitol Area and on the Capitol Mall. By Statute, the Board has twelve members and is chaired by the Lieutenant Governor. There are four members appointed by the Governor, three members appointed by the Mayor of Saint Paul, two members appointed by the President of the Senate, and two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. By law, an Advisory Committee of three architectural and/or landscape design professionals is required to advise the Board on all architectural, planning, and landscaping matters that affect the Capitol Area. There are three full-time staff who serve the Board. The Board typically meets every two to three months, or at the call of the chair.

In February 2012, the Board adopted a Policy for Commemorative Works in the Minnesota State Capitol Area, providing guidance for the consideration and design of statues, monuments, memorials, or other commemorative works within the Capitol Area. According to MN Statute 15B.08, Subd 3: “No substantial change or improvement may be made to public lands or public buildings in the Capitol Area without the written approval of the board.” “Substantial changes or improvement” includes both the addition and removal of public buildings and of statuary or other memorials or public art, as well as significant above ground alterations to public open spaces and roadways.

However, aside from MN Statute 15B.08, Subd. 3, there is no formal CAAPB process that addresses the potential removal of monuments and artwork from the Capitol Grounds. In response to the toppling of the Christopher Columbus Statue on the Capitol Grounds in June 2020, the CAAPB Chair convened a meeting focused on clarifying the existing statutory responsibilities of the CAAPB to provide a shared understanding of jurisdictional authority moving forward. In this meeting, the CAAPB passed a resolution creating two Advisory Task Forces—a Decision Process Advisory Task Force and a Public Engagement Advisory Task Force. The focus of these groups was to establish a proactive, transparent, and public process for evaluating the monuments and artwork displayed on the Capitol Grounds.

The CAAPB Public Engagement Task Force created space for members of the public to share experiences about what the Capitol means to them and provide feedback on the monuments, memorials, and works of art on the Capitol Grounds and in the interior of the State Capitol. The Public Engagement Task Force also addressed how the CAAPB can ensure proactive and meaningful public engagement in its decisions.

Task Force Members

The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board established a Public Engagement Task Force in June 2020, with members appointed by CAAPB Chair Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flannagan.

Chair

- Carl Crawford, Human Rights Officer, City of Duluth

Members:

- Alicia Belton, Founding Principal, Urban Design Perspectives
- Gita Ghei, Owner, Gita Patina
- Amy Koch, Political Strategist, Hylden Advocacy & Law
- Ted Lentz, President Emeritus, Cass Gilbert Society
- Ka Oskar Ly, Artist and Co-Founder, Ua Si Creative
- Honorable Anne K. McKeig, Associate Justice, Minnesota Supreme Court

- Maria Isa Pérez-Hedges, Artist and CEO, SotaRico
- Alice Roberts-Davis, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Administration
- Dr. Angel Smith, Communications and Community Engagement Manager, City of Brooklyn Center
- Tom Stiehm, former mayor, City of Austin
- Senator Patricia Torres Ray, District 63
- Representative Dean Urdahl, District 18A
- Christina Woods, Executive Director, Duluth Art Institute

Task Force Meetings

From October 2020 to May 2021, the Public Engagement Task Force met four times, hosted an online survey, and held 25 community listening sessions. The Task Force meetings were live-streamed and recorded and are available for viewing on the CAAPB web pages.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Public Engagement Task Force was to create space for members of the public to share experiences about what the Capitol means to them and provide feedback on the monuments, memorials, and works of art on the Capitol Grounds and in the interior of the State Capitol. The Public Engagement Task Force also addressed how the CAAPB can ensure proactive and meaningful public engagement in its decisions.

To summarize their work, the Public Engagement Task Force submits this report to the CAAPB that identifies trends in public opinion collected from February to May 2021. Total engagement includes 344 surveys and 25 community listening sessions with almost 200 people across Minnesota, amounting to over 6,500 datapoints.

Major Themes

The perspectives collected by the Task Force reflect the undercurrent of Minnesota's present reality: it is changing. The tension between what it has been and what it is now is evident in the responses to virtually every question posed to participants, with contradicting feedback on what is working and what is missing and an abundance of unrelated comments that show frustration, anger, and calls for recognition and respect. Despite the heightened cultural and partisan divide defining the time during which this work took place, several key themes are identifiable across the responses:

- **People are proud of the Capitol**, with a great quantity of comments referring to its awe-inspiring beauty and grandeur, excitement over meeting and interacting with legislators, and a love of showing it off to visitors from out of town.
- **People feel that their communities are not reflected in the art, monuments, and memorials at the Capitol.** They give an impression of being stuck in time, exclusive of women and Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, LGBTQ+, immigrant, and disability communities. As one participant stated in a community listening session:

"There is too little here that I can relate to. It is like being handed a few skittles instead of a meal. Feel like there is a rich meal being served but only small bits are available for me."

- **Most participants (57%) feel unwelcome at the Capitol** because of ongoing displays that perpetuate harmful stereotypes; the feeling they have when they enter or go into "combat" for their rights; or the sense that if they do not have legislative business, they should not be there.
- **Respondents are divided with regards to how to handle the art and statues currently on display**, with many asking for current works to be preserved with added context provided to create learning opportunities and show the progress the state has made. Others point to painful depictions, complete invisibility in representation, and exclusion from decision-making processes, and ask what could be the most powerful guiding questions for CAAPB:

How can we use the Capitol as a place to tell Minnesota's story more completely?

How do we ensure that all Minnesotans are better represented?

What commonalities do Minnesotans share that can make the Capitol truly the People's House?

What should the art, monuments, and memorials tell future generations?

Recommended Improvements

Throughout the survey and listening session data, many suggestions were made to create a more welcoming and dynamic space at the Capitol:

- **Bring life to the Capitol with non-legislative events year round on the outdoor grounds**, such as farmers' markets, concerts and music programs, live performances, open houses, cultural celebrations, festivals such as the Taste of Minnesota, celebratory outdoor installations, scavenger hunts, and art fairs. **Market that anyone can visit the Capitol.**
- In selecting new works to add to the Capitol, **think beyond war heroes, honor Native Americans, expand the genres of art offered, and commission with diverse artists.**
- **Invest in facilities improvements**, including soundproofing, wayfinding, parking, seating, and expanded dining spaces.
- **Enhance the experience of visiting the Capitol** with virtual tours, apps to support informative self-guided tours, creating better accessibility with Braille plaques describing the architecture, and hiring tour guides fluent in a variety of languages, including ASL. In fact, **conduct accessibility and equity audits** to hone in on how best to serve Minnesota's increasingly diverse communities.
- **Open CAAPB to ongoing public participation and ensure its membership is diverse.** The majority of survey responses indicate the public does not know who is making decisions around public art at the Capitol (68%) or how they are making those decisions (82%).

Detailed Report Narrative

Between February and May 2021, the Public Engagement Task Force collected 345 surveys asking 24 questions designed by State of Minnesota staff in consultation with the Task Force. Almost all surveys responses were in English, with only two received in Spanish and one in Hmong. The average time it took to complete the 24-question survey was 10 minutes and 57 seconds.

Additionally, the Public Engagement Task Force conducted 25 community listening sessions with almost 200 people in different parts of Minnesota. Total collected data amounted to over 6,500 comments.

Report Framework

The **survey data** is organized with an overall comment count and a percentage of comments representing major themes. The percentage of unrelated comments per survey question was relatively high and is also included. The count reflected in the raw survey data (Appendix A) is different from what is offered for each question because compound or complex comments were divided and sorted into respective categories. For instance, a comment that offered three completely different and unrelated suggestions for improvements to the Capitol building might have been split into three categories.

Contrasted feedback themes for each question are listed in order of response incidence. Percentages indicated in those tables (and in the graphs and charts throughout the report) do not always equal 100% because of rounding errors or exclusion of comments that are unrelated or do not offer feedback beyond “yes,” “no,” or similar remarks.

Input from **community listening sessions** has been incorporated into the survey data themes tables, but not in the comment counts because many participants provided input in both the sessions and via the survey. Any comments that did not fit into the themes tables (and would therefore skew the percentage representing the incidence of the comment theme) is offered in a separate report section following the survey data.

Important Considerations

The analysis of survey data has several limitations:

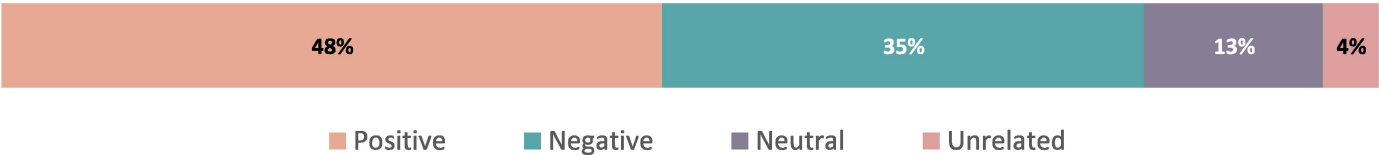
1. The survey did not include questions on demographic information or geographic location, making it impossible to estimate group representation rates and proportionality to the state population.
2. Comments reflect the timing of the report, and some are no longer relevant, such as repeated comments regarding fencing around the Capitol.
3. Without professional facilitation and survey administration, the listening sessions show some participation of Task Force members in the engagement they conducted, which could have influenced the input provided.

Finally, a total of eighteen comments were redacted due to expressions of profanity, racial slurs, or calls to violence.

Survey Results



What have your experiences at the Capitol been like for you? If you haven't been to the Capitol, what is your perception of the Capitol?



Total comments: 393

Generally Positive	Generally Negative	Neutral	Unrelated
<i>"My experiences at the Capitol have been very pleasant and productive"</i>	<i>"Blah"</i> <i>"Boring"</i>	<i>"I haven't been to the Capitol in years, but I think of it as a place for elected officials to work."</i>	Critiques of legislators, partisan comments, and complaints about artwork removal

Contrasted Feedback Themes

1. **Aesthetics** (17% of comments)

Positive: <u>81%</u>	Negative: 19%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appreciation and pride for the classic beauty of the building, design detail, and elegance.Appreciation of the restoration work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It looks like a jail while it's surrounded by fencing.The design is ostentatious, sterile, and businesslike.The presence of the Columbus statue was upsetting.

2. **Access** (13% of comments)

Positive: 10%	Negative: <u>92%</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Love the open access to the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Overwhelming negative response to fencing surrounding the Capitol.Desire for better parking and the availability of an ASL tour guide."It is a maze in there. Nothing is easy, it is not direct, not simple."

3. **Historical Significance** (11% of comments)

Positive: 72%

- “A historical place that represents all of our communities across the state and the shared history, good or bad.”
- The history displayed at the Capitol is rich, instructive, and inspiring.
- “We have one of the most beautiful [capitols] in the country, filled with history.”

Negative: 28%

- Anti-Indigenous and Euro-centric/Anglo-centered
- Stuck in time
- “Epitome of the colonial patriarchy. I dislike going there.”
- Reveres white, male history and does not acknowledge the history of other communities
- Stolen land and slave labor used to build the site are not acknowledged.
- “It represents old institutions and is an imposing force. If we are going to go there, it is going to be combative. We are going to take our rights. I would love to see more representation of people who look like me and who fought for my freedom and not people who likely fought against my freedom.”

4. **Feel of the building** (9% of comments)

Positive: 68%

- Formal, powerful, awe-inspiring
- Colossal, grand, majestic
- Magnificently grand
- Elegant, stately
- “A place where you can tell important things are happening.”

Negative: 32%

- Overwhelming
- Emotionally cold
- Intimidating
- Confusing
- Uncomfortable

5. **Experience with protests, rallies, and advocacy days** (7% of comments)

Positive: 24%

- Great experiences gathering with like-minded people and activists at this meeting ground.
- “I enjoyed personally visiting with my legislators when needed.”

Negative: 3%

- “I have only ever been to the Capitol for peaceful protests. It seems unwelcoming for BIPOC people.”
- Legislators can be inhospitable and not inclusive with first time citizen

Neutral: 73%

- Comments describing testifying in support of legislation, protesting, or rallying in neutral terms.

	lobbyists, particularly from BIPOC communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there are presentations happening indoors, the noise level can be unbearable for visitors viewing the art. • In community listening sessions, many comments were made about the presence of the National Guard during peaceful protests creating a violently unwelcoming space. 	
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6. Welcoming/safe environment (7% of comments)

Positive: 29% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approachable and welcoming environment, particularly when the fencing is not present. 	Negative: <u>71%</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Forbidding and uninviting. Meant to show, enforce, and preserve power.” • “Intimidating, like you had to have business there or you were not welcomed there.” • “It is a very dark and spooky place in some areas.” • Stuffy, elitist, imposing • Not fun or engaging
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7. School trip experiences (6% of comments)

Positive: <u>56%</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All of my experiences were good. I enjoyed the tour of the Capitol when I was in school.” 	Negative: 9% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyed the experience as a child, but not anymore as an adult. • Children may be learning inaccurate and incomplete history. • Felt “othered” and almost invisible because they are not white. 	Neutral: 35% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A childhood social studies trip. Not much of a memory apart from walking into the dome.”
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8. Other themes with less than 5% of total comments gathered

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent tours give visits an experiential quality. <i>100% positive</i>

- The Capitol does not feel representative: it is a political and exclusive place with elected officials that do not have an interest in their constituents. *93% negative / 7% positive*
- Never been to the Capitol. It seems unwelcoming or like a place where taxpayer money is wasted. *50% negative / 50% neutral*
- The grounds are beautiful, finely manicured, and offer an enjoyable walk. *100% positive*
- Most art, statues, and monuments are dedicated to war. *100% negative*

Q2:

Does the Capitol reflect your communities?



Yes No Somewhat Unsure/Don't know Not its purpose Unrelated

Total comments: 317

Yes	No	Somewhat	Not its purpose	Unrelated
Represents the history and communities of the state.	<p><i>"It did not seem to reflect all of Minnesota's vibrant communities. More the history of the 1800s."</i></p> <p><i>"There is very little reflection of the deaf, deafblind & hard of hearing communities in the Capitol."</i></p> <p>Does not reflect Indigenous, women, LGBTQ+, rural, Latinx, Asian (specifically Hmong), and BIPOC communities broadly, including in the composition of the staff.</p> <p>Reflects colonization and cultural negation.</p> <p>Mostly celebrates veterans and first responders.</p>	Reflects parts of community but not others, such as white but not female, Minnesotan but not cultural heritage.	<p><i>"It is a large beautiful functional building. I don't expect it to reflect any particular community."</i></p>	<p>Critiques of government and question posed.</p> <p>Unrelated partisan comments.</p>
<p><i>"It reflects my white, Anglo-Saxon heritage but not so much the other Minnesota communities."</i></p>				

"We are lucky to have so much diverse culture; would be nice if you walked into the Capitol and got a sense of that."

Not even the community that surrounds the Capitol is reflected or represented inside.

Q3:

What at the capitol needs to change? What should remain the same?



Total comments: 350

Change	Stay the Same	Unsure	Unrelated
<i>"Change: everything!"</i>	<i>"Leave everything the way it is. Nothing needs changing."</i>	<i>"Not sure anything should change in particular."</i>	Unclear if comment relates to an item that should change or stay the same, partisan comments, and criticism of government and policymakers.

Contrasted Feedback Themes

1. Art, monuments, and statues

Change: 70%

- Overwhelming support for more diverse, inclusive, and representative pieces

"We need more recognition of history of BIPOC, women, and LGBTQ communities."

"Please embrace our full diversity- not just in race but other aspects as well."

"More diversity of artists and the communities they represent inside."

"Showcase the full breadth of Minnesotans. Every person who walks through the doors should feel pride."

"We need representation from women, Native Americans, and POC. Not just white men and war memorials."

"History is learned through art."

"Having us represented shows that there are contributions of BIPOC that is more than what people in Greater Minnesota think we are – 'criminals.'"

- Calls to tell a more balanced, accurate, and anti-racist historical narrative, including 7 comments specifically naming the removal of the Columbus statue.

"History is very important to me but skewed when told/expressed from only one point of view."

"Eliminate racist paintings, sculptures, etc., or at least move them to a separate, museum-like space."

"EVERY single piece of artwork that portrays a European 'discovering' something, needs to be removed."

"The statue of Knut Nelson needs to go. As a Nelson myself, his legacy is shameful."

"Please do not reinstall a/the statue of Christopher Columbus."

"Follow the request of the 11 tribes of Minnesota who want the offensive paintings removed and put in a museum."

- Recommendations to modify the existing art collection, but not remove anything from it.

"Be inclusive. Do remove my history to make room for others - let's co-exist!"

"We should not destroy the History monuments there, but interpret them and add additional views."

"Artworks and/or their contextualization should change, with advice of historians & communities of color."

- Balance metro/rural representation, older/modern pieces, and genres.

"A revolving exhibit space to showcase communities or regions of MN would be innovative."

"Need current Minnesota art in all its forms, poetry, installation, sculpture inside and out-rural & urban."

- Recommendations on specific themes that should be memorialized:

- Rondo
- Peace, diplomacy, and the avoidance of war
- "Minority craftsmanship involved" in the making of the Capitol

Stay the Same: 30%

- Emotional statements about the needs to keep all pieces and restore any that have been removed.

"Please don't mess with history!"

"The history needs to stay. Teach about it, don't try & erase it."

"Nothing! Leave the art and statues alone! Shame on you!"

- Keep the Hmong Memorial.
- Keep the "stately" feel of the Capitol if any changes are made to the art.
- Eighteen (18) direct calls to return any removed statues, particularly the Columbus statue.

2. Fencing

Change: 100%

- Extensive and unanimous calls for the removal of all fencing around the Capitol. In fact, 19% of all comments received for this question are related to the fencing.

"No barbed wire, we're not a police state."

"There should never be fencing to keep people out."

"Get rid of the fences, we have the right to be able to observe those we elected in action or not."

"We should have full access to it, as it does belong to the people of this state."

"Open the Capitol. I was in Baghdad. My Capitol here shouldn't be locked up like it's Baghdad."

3. Physical and accessibility improvements

Change: 100%

- Free public parking near the Capitol.
- Expanded access to lower levels of the Capitol building currently not open to the public.
- Better signage indicating what is and isn't publicly accessible.
- Information provided in multiple languages on layout navigation and events taking place.
- Increased presence of security guards.
- More seating throughout the Capitol.
- Adding a coat room.
- Modern, energy efficient technology.
- Better connection to downtown St. Paul.
- Providing emergency alerts for the deaf, deaf blind, and hard of hearing.
- Trolley service from the light rail.

4. Other themes with less than 5% of total comments gathered

- Host more events to draw visitor interest.
- Build community by intentionally welcoming, inviting, and including diverse groups.
- The push button to request a security escort to the parking area has been a huge safety improvement.
- Limit spending to maintenance only.
- Add more paths to the main Capitol grounds and find more ways to use them such as for events, installing a "People's Garden," or growing native apple, pear, or cherry trees.

Q4:

What values would you like the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board to use when making decisions about monuments, memorials, and works of art at the Capitol?

Total comments: 420

Contrasted Feedback Themes

There were only two (2) categories of feedback for this question that garnered more than 5% of total comments. These categories were narrowly divided between keeping all artwork and monuments currently at the Capitol (with minor modifications) and doing a more extensive change or integration of diverse and inclusive artwork.

1. "History" 35%

- The history of Minnesota is not perfect, but it has significance, can be learned from, and demonstrates progress.

"Honor and reflect all history as much as possible, keep all art, monuments, and memorials undamaged"

- The history reflected at the Capitol should be preserved, restored if removed or damaged, and protected.

"Leave art, history and sculpture or statues alone. Stop sanitizing everything."

"Do not eliminate from one group to add to another. Represent everyone"

- While keeping what is there is important, it can be reinterpreted honestly, acknowledging past and present harms.

"Honor history-the good and the bad. Use unpleasant history to teach from."

"Interpretation that includes critical analysis of the messages that images and text send and reinforce."

2. "Diversity, equity, and inclusion" 33%

- In a state that is becoming increasingly diverse racially, Capitol artwork and monuments should include representation from women and underrepresented communities.

"Who is at the table/who is represented? Who is not & why?"

"Inclusivity of all people that contributed to Minnesota."

"Artwork by a variety of diverse artists."

- "Consult historians, communities of color, and other groups usually excluded."

"When you are doing something invite people of color in at the ground floor and not to just react."

- Adopt lenses of social justice, racial justice, and anti-racism.

"Use imagery/subjects that dismantle or avoid white supremacy ideologies and institutions."

"Remove known, serious offenders."

"Do NOT re-erect Columbus!"

- Honor the original Native communities.

"I would like to see more of our indigenous history included, and WAY WAY less Eurocentric history."

"They ought to begin with Native people who were here long before Minnesota was a state."

- Show basic respect in selecting Capitol pieces that maintains the dignity of the subject(s).

"Basic respect! Art with naked Native women is dehumanizing. Atrocious! Check your white supremacy."

3. Values with 6-10 comments, but less than 5% of total comments gathered

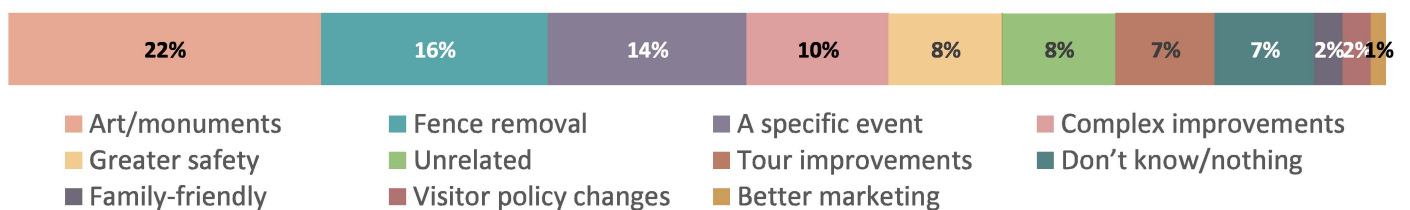
- Anything displayed at the Capitol should have specific relevance to Minnesotan history, movements, and communities as a whole.
- Adopt thorough and responsible vetting standards of people to be memorialized.
- Memorialize movements and significant elements (such as the military) instead of specific people.
- Practice good stewardship of public funds by balancing cost, quality, and necessity.
- Demonstrate kindness, compassion, collaboration, and empathy with selection of pieces.

4. Values and suggestions with 1-5 comments

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| • Selections should be non-partisan, non-political, and unbiased. | • Reflect the values written into the U.S. Constitution. | • Children/Consider future generations: will selections embarrass or inform them? |
| • Share decision-making power with more community members outside of CAAPB. | • Reflect “traditional American” values of patriotism and courage. | • Include contemporary pieces. Focus on experience: what does it represent? How does it feel? |
| • Conservative/Christian values | • Common sense | • Accessibility |
| • Open to all artists | • Welcoming | • Aesthetically appealing |
| • Dynamic and changing | • Minnesota’s resilience | • Playful |
| • Modesty, morality, and fairness | • Humbleness | • Accountability and integrity |
| • Intentionality | • Care for natural resources | • Non-violence/peace and dialogue |

Q5:

What would make you more likely to visit and enjoy the Capitol?



Total comments: 363

Feedback Themes

1. *Art, monuments, and statues* 22%

- More works that are fully representative in their diversity, meaning for different cultures, and creates a sense of belonging for everyone.

"Representation that offers mirrors and windows into the multiplicity of MN residents and history."

- Preserving the works that are already at the Capitol and restoring what has been removed.

"Preserving our history and showing multiple views, not censoring those now considered offensive."

- Creating a strong sense of Native presence and visibility by establishing a Department of Native law, exhibiting more tribal history, or including contemporary Indigenous art.

"A Indigenous medicinal garden with a water feature or sculpture would be great."

- Historically accurate/balanced works that reflect a more comprehensive state story.
- Offering a historically educational experience, such as adding a museum about Minnesota or more informative displays inside the Capitol and outside on the grounds.
- Art that challenges our way of thinking, raises questions, and is unique.
- Rotating exhibits and art installations that are interactive, engaging, and fun.
- Fresh, new works that make another visit worthwhile. Specifically suggested: a monument to peace activists, community days representing different cultural hubs in the corners of the state, an exhibit similar to the Tour of Justice at the Minnesota Supreme Court building.
- More contemporary art by diverse artists and more variety of art genres, including poetry, murals, and public readings.
- Removing outdated racist and offensive works.

"[I would be more likely to visit] if the story of white supremacy and colonial conquest was removed, don't want my children seeing it."

2. *Removal of the temporary fencing* 16%

"Well first off, no barricades keeping people out. Hard to enjoy the capitol when you're barred from."

"Fences need to come down, legislators need to be accessible. Open to the public and press."

"Make it more friendly and inviting - down with the fences!"

3. *Having a specific reason to visit the Capitol* 14%

- Holding a variety of non-legislative events year round, such as concerts and musical programs, live performances, cultural events, quarterly open houses, farmers markets, outdoor events celebrating Minnesota history, community conversations on charged topics, festivals such as the Taste of Minnesota, celebratory outdoor installations, scavenger hunts, and art fairs.
- Participating in the legislative process by having more interactions with legislators (perhaps by establishing open hours) and having more opportunities to observe during session.
- Receiving explicit and authentic invitations to visit from legislators, staff, or Capitol ambassadors to communities.
- Attending rallies, protests, or other political gatherings.
- Annual trips from Greater Minnesota hosted by the State.
- Attending a large private event, such as a wedding.

4. *Physical improvements to the Capitol complex* 10%

- Parking that is free, easy to find, and close to the building entrance.
- Numerous facility improvements:
 - More places to sit and rest
“More seating and opportunities where one can be reflective, while also protecting the open spaces.”
 - Drinking fountains
 - Coffee shops
 - Muslim-friendly prayer spaces
 - Better signage
 - Adding meeting places with tables and benches with arms where people can gather
 - Picnic areas
 - Soundproofing improvements to mitigate loud events held in the Rotunda
 - Capping the highway to reconnect to downtown
- Improvements to the external grounds, including having more native/botanical plants and less turf, explanations of the monuments, a plaza, more trees, and tables and benches with arms.
- Promoting the location of parking reserved for people with disabilities.

5. *A stronger sense of safety* 8%

- There were 20 comments indicating fear of visiting the Twin Cities due to a perception of high crime levels.

- Police/security that is visible and does not “let people get away with destruction and vandalism,” but also does not intimidate visitors.
- The end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. *Tour improvements* 7%

- Offering virtual tours online and on social media, as well as digital self-guided tours.
- Hiring more diverse tour staff.
- Bus tours that enable seniors to avoid driving in metro area traffic.
- Offering tours in ASL and other languages.
- Ensuring that tours tell a more comprehensive and accurate history.

“Could there be special days for language day tours? One or more days each month where tours would be given in Spanish, Hmong, Somali or even German, French or Italian.”

7. *Other themes with less than 5% of total comments gathered*

- Creating a family-friendly environment with events and exhibitions that are interesting and exciting for children and engaging sights for teenagers.
- Changes to specific Capitol complex policies.
 - No masking requirements
 - Not allowing guns carried onto the premises by civilians
- Marketing campaigns (potentially in partnership with Explore MN) that promote the new look of the Capitol interiors, services offered to the public, and upcoming events.

Q5a/b

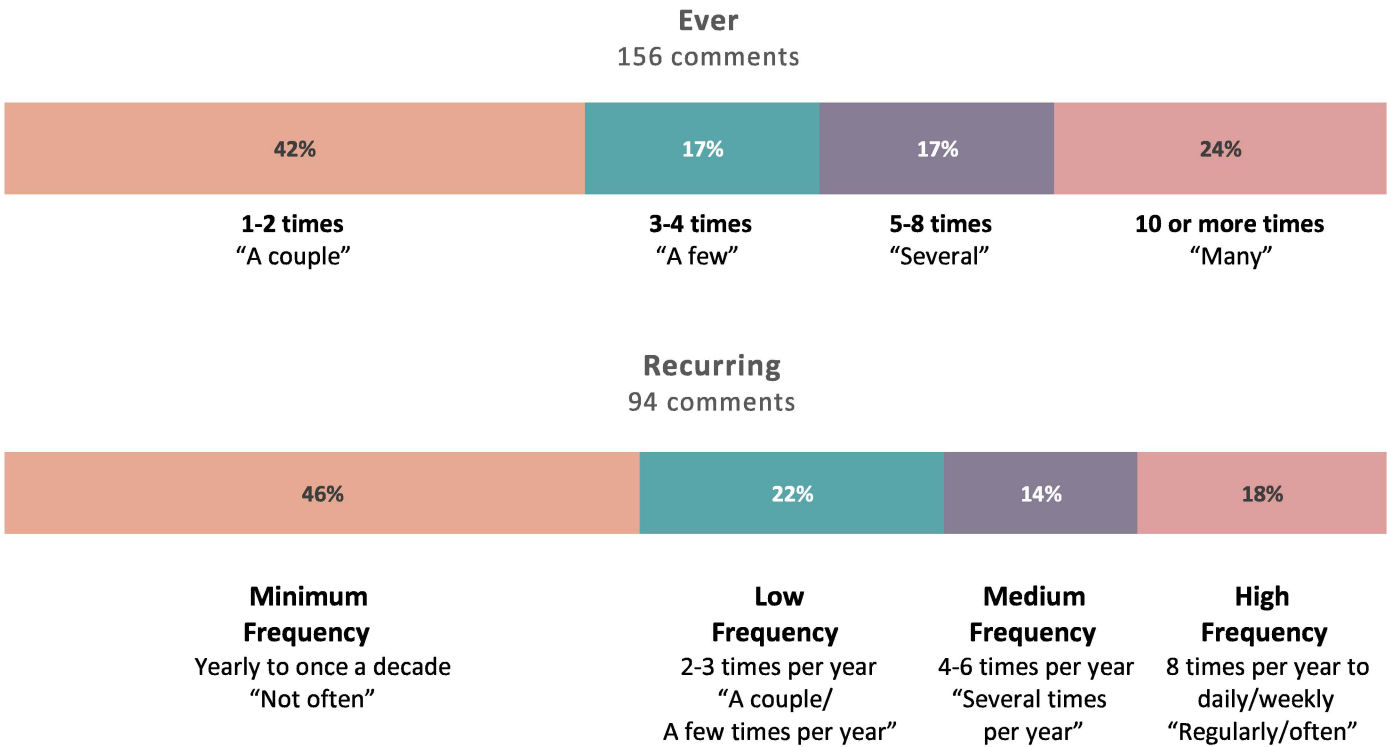
Have you ever been to the Capitol?



Total comments: 383

Q5a: If yes, how often?

Survey participants generally answered this question in two ways: how many times they had visited the Capitol altogether or how often they visit the Capitol on a recurring basis.



Q5b: If not, why not?

61 comments

18% Not interested or no reason to go	7% COVID-19 or other health concerns
15% Distance from home	7% Does not see representation or is offended by the art
13% Currently closed to the public	5% The Cities feel dangerous right now
11% Inaccessible/hard to park or navigate	5% Did not know the public could visit
10% Unhappy with political leadership	2% "No one has taken me."
8% Feels forbidding, stuffy, or unwelcoming	



Do you feel welcome at the Capitol?



Yes Somewhat No Neutral Don't know or N/A

Total comments: 439

Q5c: If yes, what makes you feel welcome?

133 comments with clear reasons

17%	Ease of access, with doors open to the public, freedom to explore the building, and open space
17%	Welcoming, professional, polite, and friendly staff
9%	Beautiful aesthetics: the lighting, architecture, and art
8%	Interacting with legislators, often by personal invitation
8%	The visible representation of Minnesota's history
8%	The tours that explain Minnesota's history and emphasize the Capitol as "The People's House"
7%	Being able to observe and/or participate in the democratic process
7%	It's an awe-inspiring place that feels important
6%	The green, park-like spaces outside
6%	Feeling safe and secure while on the grounds
5%	"It was designed for white people like me."
2%	Accessibility: easy to find parking, good directions/signage, ASL interpreters, captioning, and Braille
1%	"A republican Governor."

Q5d: If no, why do you not feel welcome?

189 comments with clear reasons

32%	Fencing and military/police presence.
19%	It is an intimidating, formal, and cold place that seems unwelcoming for visitors who are not there on business.
16%	Little to no representation of Indigenous people, women, people of color, or LGBTQ+ communities. It feels European/White-centric.
9%	Area around the Capitol feels unsafe.

7%	Partisan politics or politicians themselves do not represent my community.
5%	Political climate is too liberal.
4%	Wayfinding signage is insufficient, particularly in the basement and in being limited to English.
3%	Did not know it is open to the public or do not know what is going on there to warrant a trip.
2%	There are too many protests/protestors (of different ideologies).
2%	Staff is rude.
0.5%	The mask mandate makes it difficult to visit because of health issues.
0.5%	It is too far.
0.5%	Parking is too expensive.



Do you see yourself reflected in the monuments, memorials, and works of art at the Capitol?



Yes Somewhat No Unsure, unclear, or N/A Unrelated

Total comments: 364

Q5e: If yes, which ones make you feel that way?

122 comments

55% All of the pieces there reflect the different regions of our state and how we have progressed to this point. Specifically mentioned:

- Minnesota Woman Suffrage Memorial
- Minnesota's role in the civil war, particularly "The Battle of Gettysburg"
- Minnesota Memorial for the United States and Alliance Special Forces in Laos
- Minnesota Workers Memorial

11% The historical statues that were damaged or removed.

- The Columbus statue

9% Famous figures of Minnesota history.

- Leif Erickson Memorial
- Hubert H. Humphrey Memorial
- Governor portraits
- "Charles Lindbergh — The Boy and The Man"
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Bust

- Floyd B. Olson portrait
- "Spiral for Justice" (Roy Wilkins Memorial)

8% Any works representing the early settler experience, farm history, Scandinavian roots.

- "Attack on New Ulm"
- The restored murals in the chambers

5% The architecture and overall aesthetic makes me feel that way more than the monuments, memorials, and art.

- Rathskeller
- The Rotunda

5% My White identity or colonialist heritage is overrepresented in a negative way.

6% All other mentions that did not reach 5%:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • "The Progress of the State (Quadriga)" | • "Justice" |
| • "Courage" | • The American Flag |
| • "Freedom" | • Children's art displayed by Senator Rich Draheim |
| • "Equality" | |

Q5f: If no, what would help you see yourself there?

122 comments

58% A more diverse and inclusive collection of art and monuments. Specifically mentioned:

- More female leadership, including women over 60
- Indigenous history
- African American contributions to the state
- LGBTQ+ representation
- Immigrant Minnesota history
- Diversity of age
- Latinx history
- Deaf and deaf blind community arts
- Rondo history
- Art created by BIPOC artists

14% Removal of overrepresented or oppressive symbols.

- Fewer White, Christian males
- Less religious imagery
- Less colonialist imagery
- "Less aggrandizing of White supremacy/supremacists"

8% Modern art that represents current Minnesota a connects with experiences more directly.
Suggested:

- Local poetry
-

- “A strategically placed mirror (possibly aiding in ‘selfies’)!”

6% Great moments that made the state of Minnesota what it is, told honestly

4% Monuments to the ‘regular, common people,’ including:

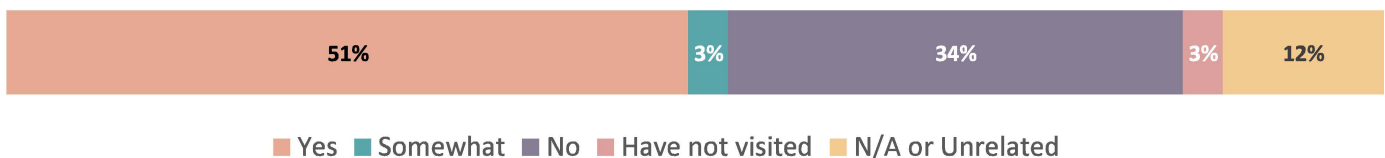
- Farmers/agriculture
 - The working middle class
 - Miners
 - Fishermen
 - Veterans
-

10% All other mentions that did not reach 4%:

- Memorializing artists
- Memorializing activists
- More politically neutral/not anti-conservative artwork
- Less war/military imagery
- Honoring land and nature
- More Swedish/Scandinavian history
- Memorializing philanthropists

Q5g/h:

Do you enjoy visiting the Capitol?



Total comments: 371

Q5g: If yes, why?

Q5h: If no, why not, and what would change your experience?

Contrasted Feedback Themes

1. *The Capitol as a representative and critical part of our democracy* (22% of comments)

Yes: <u>51%</u>	No: 45%	Neutral: 5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s the seat of government and a place of power. Our state’s most important business takes place [there].” • “It’s the People’s House.” • It can feel like a new experience/adventure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I wish there was something that represented me there instead of just white men’s law and artwork.” • There is not much to do and no reason to visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If one does not have a business or lobbying purpose, there is no reason to visit.

- Can access and interact with legislators, giving the sense that once can participate and positively affect the legislative process.

- The fencing keeps people from accessing the building.

2. **The art, monuments, and architecture** (15% of comments)

Yes: 85%

- The Capitol, the art within it, and its architecture are described as awe-inspiring, majestic, grand, beautiful, interesting, and inspiring.

"Despite its flaws, it is still a remarkable place to be. Most beautiful architectural space in MN."

No: 15%

- The art should be more engaging and reflective of BIPOC experiences in Minnesota.

"I am reminded each time that these walls were not built for me as depicted by the non-inclusive art."

- Few calls for the return/restoration of removed art and statues.
- One critique of the grandeur of the Capitol being a waste of money.

3. **Historical Significance** (12% of comments)

Yes: 80%

- The history displayed at the Capitol is rich, instructive, and fascinating.

"It's hallowed space - there is a weight of history felt there."

"I love history and find the historical stuff there, even if it needs more diversity."

No: 20%

- There is either invisibility or painful portrayals of Native people.

"Do away with the genocidal history and focus on Indigenous and Immigrant communities."

- "It does not reflect the evolution of our state population."
- Two complaints about the perception of history being "removed."

4. **A sense of community** (7% of comments)

Yes: 48%

- The Capitol is a proud symbol of a beloved state and its accomplishments.
- "I feel welcome here."

No: 52%

- The Capitol feels cold, unwelcoming, and uninviting, especially for BIPOC communities.

"It's a symbol of oppression."

- More marketing is needed to make it widely known that the public can visit.

5. *The grounds and the location of the Capitol* (6% of comments)

Yes: 26%

No: 74%

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Capitol grounds are beautiful, well kept, and provide a nice area to walk around.• “Yes, it’s a great location.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That part of town is too far or feels unsafe.• Two comments described feeling harassed by activists.• Parking is difficult to find. Shuttle access would be great.• Necessary improvements: more seating and better wayfinding. |
|---|--|

6. *Other themes with less than 5% of total comments gathered*

- Agreement on positive and negative comments about enjoying visiting to advocate or protest.
- One commenter enjoyed the guided tours, while another described a tour where the guide shared “his disdain towards certain political candidates.”
- One commenter enjoys the sense of freedom while visiting the Capitol, while another decried masking requirements without medical exemptions.



Do you have suggestions for the people that make decisions about monuments, memorials, and works of art at the Capitol?

Total comments: 316

Feedback Themes

1. *Make significant and permanent changes to the art, monuments, and statues at the Capitol and the process by which they are selected for display. 50%*

- More works that are fully representative in their diversity, meaning for different cultures, and creates a sense of belonging for:
 - Everyone

“Work toward making it a Capital reflecting all “people” of Minnesota, past and present.”
“Please include a piece about the Rondo neighborhood and about the importance of diversity.”
 - Native communities

“THIS IS NATIVE LAND AND THERE SHOULD BE RECOGNITION AND JUSTICE TO THIS FACT !!!!”
“More origins: the primitive plants, animals, wild landscape, Native Americans.”
 - People with disabilities

- Share decision-making power by ensuring historically underrepresented communities are included and there is diversity of thought, background, experience, race, age, gender, sexual orientation.

"Contact and compensate cultural artist for their contributions in focus groups."

"Who is at the table making decisions with you? How are you making space for people who don't look like you?"

"Yes, always ask the indigenous people first and foremost their opinion especially the Dakota people."

"If you are going to provide diversity in the capital, also include it in the decision making process."

- Remove offensive works that are racist, oppressive, or honor someone of poor personal character. If those works are already gone, do not bring them back.

"Yes, please understand as a black Mother with Black children"

"They should not celebrate the southern confederacy or show disrespect to Native Americans."

"The offensive "murals" are painted on canvas out of state and sent here, they can be removed."

"Remove the anti-indigenous racists Columbus & Nelson, and the anti-Semite Lindbergh."

"Ensure limited Capitol spaces are used for honoring SIGNIFICANT contributions to the state."

"Removing offensive depictions of Native Americans should be top priority."

- It is possible to honor Minnesota's past and present by keeping some depictions of settler history, while adding new works to offer a more inclusive collection.

"Be respectful of others without ignoring significant events that have shaped our state's history."

- Works presented at the Capitol should offer a more complete, truthful, and accurate depiction of history.

"Yes. Stop with the exceptional America propaganda. Reflect history accurately."

"Our history and what the Capitol represents is more than what happened from 1800-1900."

- Rotate the art regularly, consulting with historians and communities of color to reflect present day.

"History is dynamic."

- Create engaging experiences, including events, performances, and festivals, as well as interactive historical experiences such as audio walking tours via an app or kiosks with information.

"All My Relations Gallery, East Side Freedom Library have had engaging artwork reflecting Minnesota history."

- Other elements to include in a new decision-making policy that did not garner 5% comments under this theme:
 - Ensure that there is a diversity of artists.
 - "Re-create all videos about art/monuments/memorials in ASL."
 - Develop strong responses for why offensive arts must be removed.
 - Maintain a nonpartisan process.
 - Conduct an equity analysis.

- Use other measures of diversity in addition to race.

2. **Do not remove old works; preserve them and use them educationally.** 33%

“Keep the old stuff but explain the times in which they were made.”

“Know that Italians embraced Columbus and Columbus Day to be seen as real Americans.”

“Protect them. Allow people to learn from the history that they provide. But do so in a fair way.”

“Try hard not to wipe out history needlessly or sanitize it only for political correctness.”

3. **Other themes with less than 5% of total comments gathered**

- Engagement efforts and spending on more changes to art, monuments, and statues are a waste of taxpayer money.
- Take this feedback to heart and use it to generate innovative changes.

*Unrelated comments constituted 7% of data collected for this question.

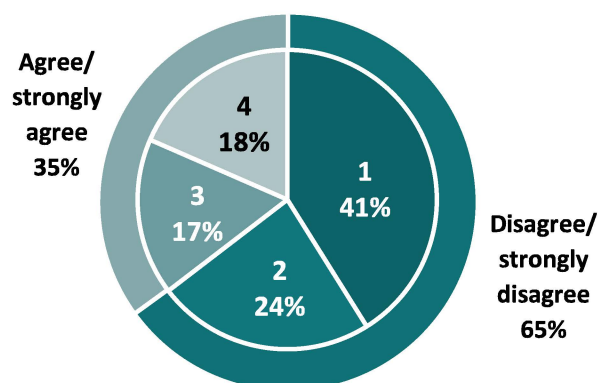
Q6:

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with various statements.

Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)

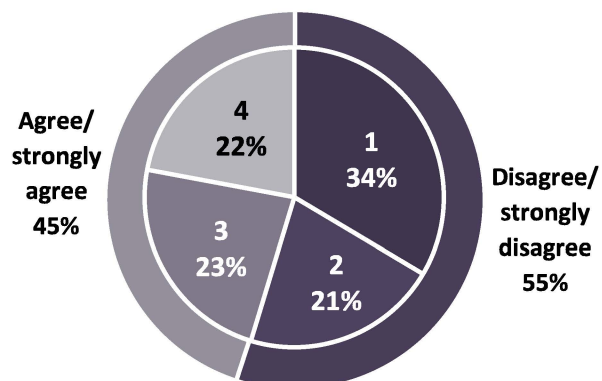
Q6a: The Capitol feels like the People’s House to me.

Responses	336
Average of all comment scores	2.1
Middle point of all comment scores	2
Most frequent comment given	1



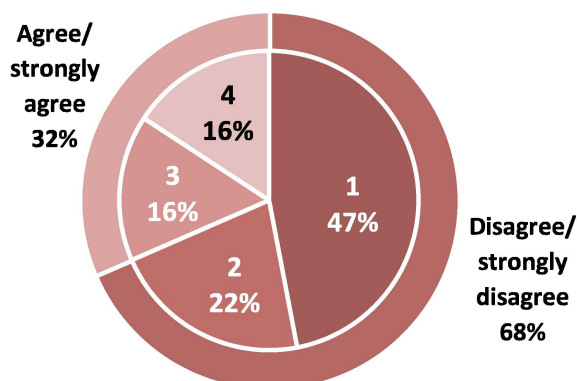
Q6b: The monuments, memorials, and works of art at the Capitol reflect a full picture of Minnesota's people and shared history.

<i>Responses</i>	331
<i>Average of all comment scores</i>	2.3
<i>Middle point of all comment scores</i>	2
<i>Most frequent comment given</i>	1



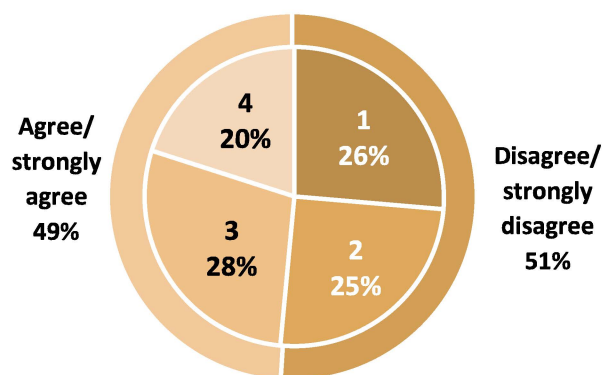
Q6c: I understand who makes decisions about monuments, memorials, and works of art at the Capitol.

<i>Responses</i>	330
<i>Average of all comment scores</i>	2.0
<i>Middle point of all comment scores</i>	2
<i>Most frequent comment given</i>	1



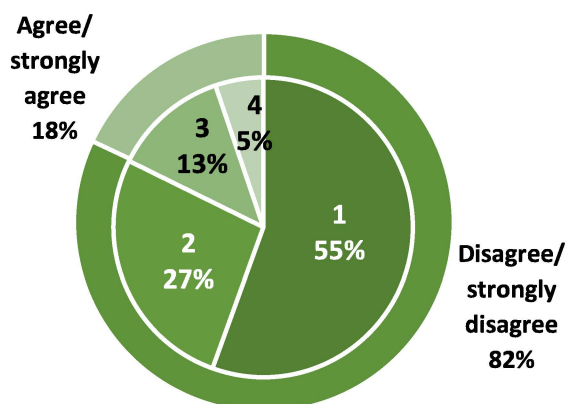
Q6d: I have a positive association with the Capitol.

<i>Responses</i>	334
<i>Average of all comment scores</i>	2.4
<i>Middle point of all comment scores</i>	2
<i>Most frequent comment given</i>	3



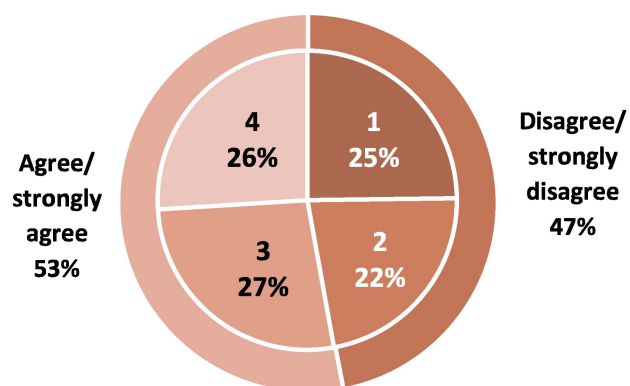
Q6e: I understand why decision makers about monuments, memorials, and works of art make the decisions that they do.

<i>Responses</i>	328
<i>Average of all comment scores</i>	1.7
<i>Middle point of all comment scores</i>	1
<i>Most frequent comment given</i>	1



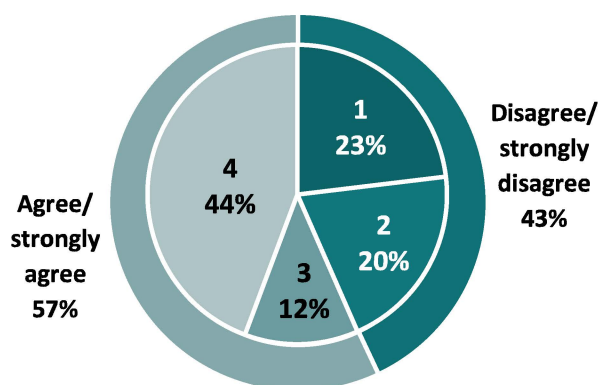
Q6f: I look forward to visits to the Capitol.

<i>Responses</i>	331
<i>Average of all comment scores</i>	2.5
<i>Middle point of all comment scores</i>	3
<i>Most frequent comment given</i>	3

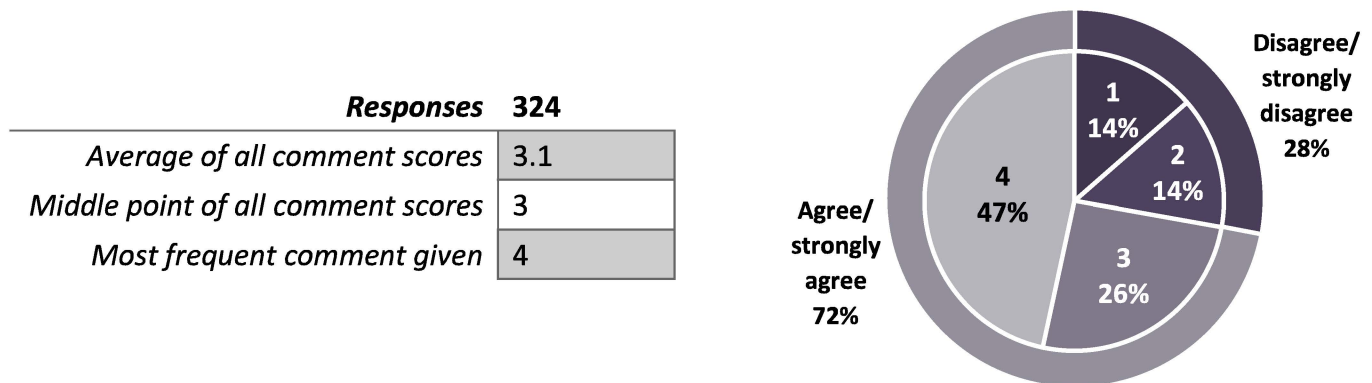


Q6g: The monuments, memorials, and works of art at the Capitol should reflect a broader and more diverse vision of Minnesota's people and shared history.

<i>Responses</i>	325
<i>Average of all comment scores</i>	2.8
<i>Middle point of all comment scores</i>	3
<i>Most frequent comment given</i>	4



Q6h: I would like to have the opportunity to comment on decisions that the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board makes about monuments, memorials, and works of art at the Capitol.



Are there any additional comments you would like to share?

Total comments: 188

33% Art & monuments

- Bring in new pieces to diversify the art and monuments at the Capitol, but do not remove anything that is already there. Revisionism feels like erasure.
- Specifically regarding the Columbus statute:
 - 12 comments express gratitude about its removal, demand that it is not reinstated, and remind everyone that this is Dakota land and the statue dishonors Natives.
 - 5 comments ask for its reinstatement, calling its removal shameful and calling this a teaching moment.
- The Capitol needs art and monuments that reflect people of color in a positive light, give them a place in the building, and demonstrate Minnesota's push toward equity.
- Include Greater Minnesota in what is represented in the arts and monuments, as well as in decision-making.

19% This engagement work

- Appreciation for the opportunity to provide feedback.
 - The character limitation in the survey response boxes was insufficient.
 - Encouragement of the project team to be brave in making changes and think big.
-

- Skepticism of the engagement efforts, including thoughts that comments will not matter or will be contorted to fit a pre-planned narrative.

10% CAAPB's process

- Open CAAPB to more public participation/input by adding more members, involving youth, holding public hearings, or holding a vote on pending decisions. Keep financial and political pressures out of decision-making.
- Find middle ground through more discussion and reflection over dismantling and violence.
- Be honest and transparent about proposed art and monuments.
- Commission with local artists only, not with outside groups.
- If people destroy statues/monuments, there should be more serious consequences.

9% Other changes to the Capitol

- Create more of a destination by promoting that people can visit it, improving wayfinding, planting more trees and gardens, building a play area for children, and making cafeteria prices more reasonable.
- Make the Capitol more accessible by:
 - Adding emergency alerts for the deaf/deaf blind/hard of hearing community.
 - Accommodating handicapped visitors with parking closer to the main entrance.
- Specific mention of having enjoyed the Plein Air Exhibit in the upstairs gallery in 2020.

3% Poor use of taxpayer money

3% Open the building/take down the fence

24% No comment or unrelated

- Complaints about the masking and Stay Home mandates and unrelated criticism of policy-makers.

Additional Input from Community Listening Sessions

The Public Engagement Task Force conducted 25 listening sessions between February and May 2021 with targeted communities across the state to collect a broader and more inclusive set of perspectives. Approximately 200 community members participated in the listening sessions. Several feedback themes emerged from various organizations, while some feedback reflected the unique shared identities of specific community groups.

General feedback

- Uphold the Constitutional separation of church and state in what is displayed at the Capitol.
- Add a visible land acknowledgement within the building and/or the grounds.
- Consider the distinct differences and relationship between the Capitol and the MN Historical society. The Capitol does not have to be another history museum.
- It is possible to tell the story of Minnesota through the constant updating of the Capitol building itself with the latest of all available technologies rather than utilizing story art, which becomes outdated almost immediately after its creation.
- Military narratives in the majority of memorials further notions of “us” versus “them” that fuel our cultural divides.
- Columbus statue—One task force member defended the monument in more than one community listening session by explaining that it was erected to promote the identity of Italian immigrants as Americans during a time where they were violently marginalized or excluded. However, what does the Columbus statue symbolize to people who are against it? One AIM leader provided a poignant account of its effect on his family and the pervasive presence of Columbus beyond government buildings, such as in children’s school textbooks.

Feedback from specific communities

Artists in public art

- Public art can offer small and subconscious messaging. When people see art often, they can refer back to it during times of conflict to make sense of events and seek deeper meaning.
- “Monuments are something of a time stamp. [They] represent an idea or meaning that people give to them. It's a consensus of thought. As a musician, when prince died [I] instinctively knew that first avenue would be a place to go because of the meaning assigned to the place. Public art in the Capitol holds the gravity and pulls people in based on a way to embrace a group. It goes on for a multitude of viewpoints across the nation. Paradigms are shifting as monuments are taken down.”
- Alter existing memorials to turn them into larger frameworks or art interventions.
- “They call the Grounds of the Capitol “the front yard of the state.” But there is nothing to commemorate the Black folks who built it. They could reach out to the descendants of those people, some of whom settled here after they built it.”

Beltrami/Itasca Historical Societies

- There are 87 counties, each with its own historical society that could contribute to public engagement as new/future works are considered.
- The Mississippi River is representative of the Beltrami area, but it is also what combines us all together as Minnesotans—the “Common bond to every society—from Native Americans to today.”
- Honor the nature in future works: rolling hills and valleys, lakes, wild rice.
- Partner with Explore MN to promote opportunities to visit and host events.
- Open the State of the State address to the public to emphasize that the Capitol is open to everyone.
- Use the Capitol for large private events, like weddings.

BIPOC artists at Vivid Black Paint

- “[The Capitol] represents old institutions and is an imposing force. If we are going to go there, it is going to be combative. We are going to take our rights. [I] would love to see more representation of people who look like me and fought *for* my freedom, not people who likely fought *against* my freedom.”

The Brooklyns, primarily youth workers

- Heavy, armed police presence while BIPOC youth are visiting is wrong. They ask, “What does it look like to provide safe spaces to people to peacefully protest?”

Brown County Historical Society

- Removal of Anton Gag painting was a major disappointment for the New Ulm community because it had been an important source of pride. People from New Ulm requested that one of the 2015 community engagement meetings held across the state on arts at the Capitol be held in New Ulm and that did not happen.

Cass Gilbert Society

- Place statutes and monuments throughout St. Paul, not just at the Capitol, to create a larger experience for visitors and allow for more inclusion.

Minnesota Board on Aging

- Add benches with arms, railings throughout the building, mark accessibility entrances clearly (indicate them in a brochure, as well), and make the main front entrance accessible.
- Focus on experiences and cultural commonalities to truly make the Capitol the “People’s House.”
- Exhibits on the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs Park could be good things to feature at the Capitol, as it took legislative collaborations to make them happen.

Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, Deaf Blind & Hard of Hearing

- “How do deaf blind [people] navigate the building?” Create a disability advisory group that can look at access for all disabled people.
- Reflect our language: deaf, deaf blind, and hard of hearing (not “hearing impaired”).
- Use Braille plaques to describe the architectural spaces along with the art and monuments on display.

Minnesota Supreme Court Law Clerks

- Among tapestries provide an example of how to represent people and cultures without highlighting just one person’s sole accomplishment. CAAPB can partner with other museums or cultural orgs that have a rich collection of artifacts that can be lent.

Queer & Trans Community

- “Don’t make marginalized communities pay for monuments that should honor them - they are already disadvantaged with less access to resources.”
- Stop glorifying individuals that inflicted harm upon Native and BIPOC people. Instead, honor stories that invoke joy and create space for marginalized communities.

Tribal members

- Stereotyped images of Native Americans as savages are everywhere, not just in the art, but even engraved in the stairs.
- There are many ways to engage Native people:
 - Have them open meetings and share their perspectives on bills and legislation.
 - Raise the standard on finding out how to support Native concerns by assigning a staffer to each elected official that works with Native communities at large.
- “We are living in a time where the collective actions of many do not back up the needs of a community; the collective action of many is creating division. It’s that division that is becoming the [guiding] value of the Capitol.”
- “We live here and many are shocked at the lies still being told.”

Additional communities engaged whose feedback is incorporated in survey themes:

- African American youth
- African American women business owners
- Military veterans
- Osseo Senior High School students
- Red Wing community

- Rondo Community Library staff and volunteers
- Southeast Minnesota and Austin communities
- Ujamaa place staff and service recipients
- West Saint Paul Latinx community
- 1666 Coffman Condominium community