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Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

Biennial Report
2000 – 2001



Minnesota State Capitol Cafeteria – 1913

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THE VISION

The Vision is for a Capitol Area that is memorable as the symbolic heart of the State, and as a good and responsive neighbor to those who live and work nearby. As the centenary of the Capitol Building approaches, a clear consensus is emerging to reunite the Capitol Area and the Capital City, so they may enter the next millennium with a shared sense of pride and purpose.

An important difference between the new *Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area* and its predecessor is that it treats different parts of the Capitol Area differently, and in some respects, transcends formal boundaries. While the Capitol is acknowledged as a symbol and focus for the Capital City, the area in which it is located is recognized as an integral part of the city and its neighborhood structure.

The realization of this vision requires an understanding of issues that are rooted in past planning principles. The Comprehensive Plan builds upon these past efforts in providing a framework for action by the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board in its guidance of the area's development. It sets forth explicit purposes and objectives and emphasizes urban design and development guidelines that make it a useful and productive document.

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INTRODUCTION: THEN

As the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) observed its 30th year in 1997, it was 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 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 challenge of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan in these words:

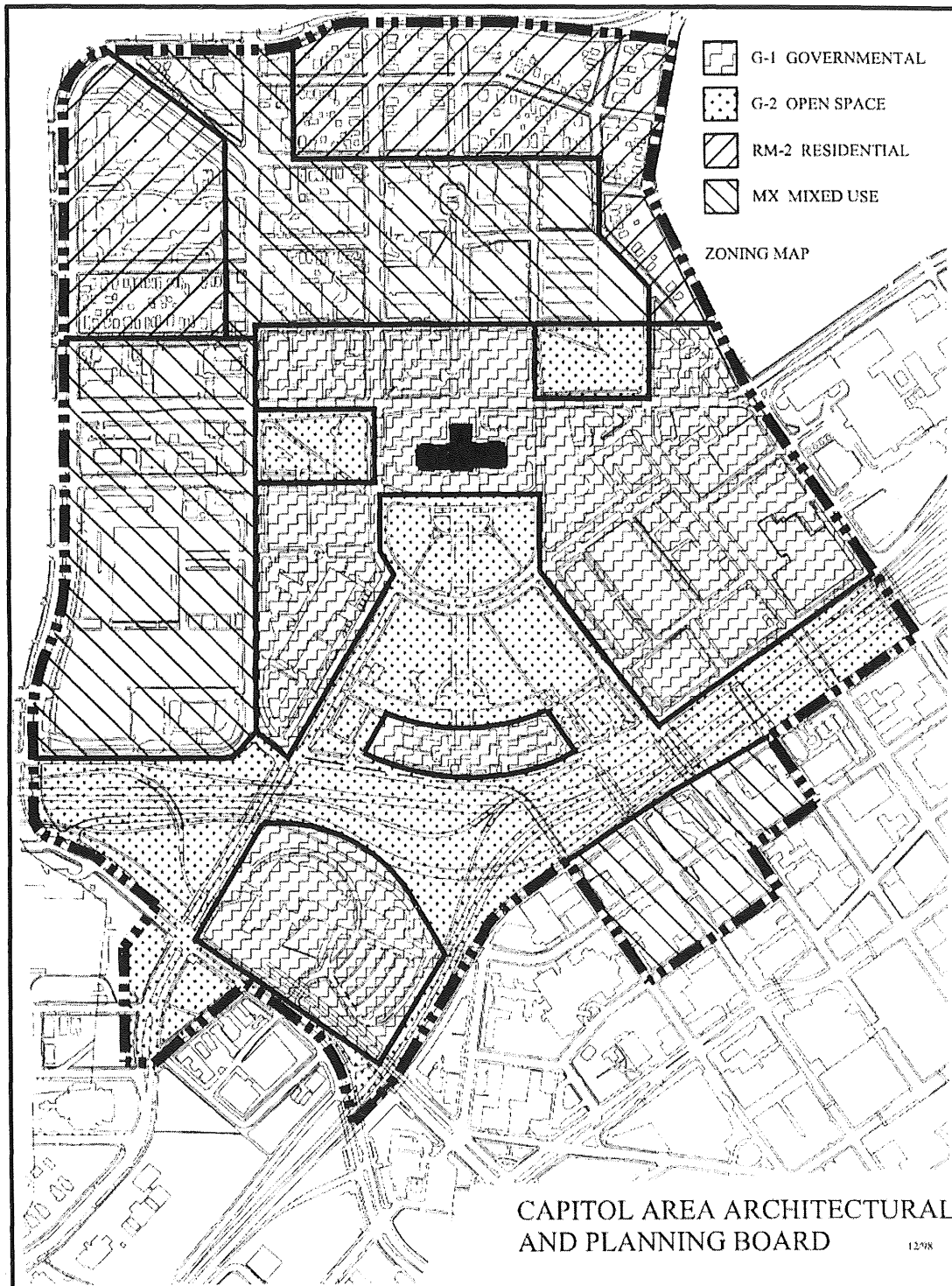
"This plan should build upon the historical role of Saint Paul as a river city and seat of state government. Cass Gilbert's original design for the Capitol Building approached this purpose with confidence and foresight."

INTRODUCTION: NOW

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

- Redesign of all freeway bridges linking the Capitol Area with downtown Saint Paul.
- Elimination of several city streets that used to crisscross the Capitol Mall.
- Construction of the History Center and the Judicial Center, designs for which were selected through CAAPB-sponsored competitions.
- Capitol Mall development, including memorials, such as the Korean War Veterans and the Woman Suffrage Memorial Garden, that attract hundreds of visitors each year.
- Reduction of most surface parking on the Mall, and redesign of the lower Mall and all peripheral parking lots.
- Extensive involvement in development and early implementation of *The Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework*.
- Construction of a new Revenue Department Building and an accompanying 900 car parking ramp, developed through a design-build method with extensive cooperation between the Department of Administration and the CAAPB, along with the client agency.
- Since the mid-1980s, the legislature has appropriated dollars for exterior restoration and stabilization of the Capitol Building. In 1996 and the ensuing years, those projects totaled \$15.8 million for repair of the dome and lantern, for rebuilding exterior terraces surrounding the building, and for cafeteria restoration.
- While rebuilding the deteriorating terraces surrounding the Capitol Building, major relandscaping is taking place. Recently completed was restoration to the north temporary parking lots and the expanded handicap parking in the northwest lot.
- As exterior restoration and stabilization is nearing completion (the southwest terrace will be completed in 2001), and Predesign of the Capitol's interior restoration has begun.
- Redesign of all campus lighting to replace or supplement street lighting with pedestrian-scale lighting along all walkways, and a completely new system of architectural lighting for the Capitol Building with improved effectiveness and efficiencies.

CAPITOL AREA ZONING



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

With a 1996 appropriation, the Board has now completed a rewrite of its Comprehensive Plan along with the Zoning and Design Rules that ensure orderly development in the Capitol Area.

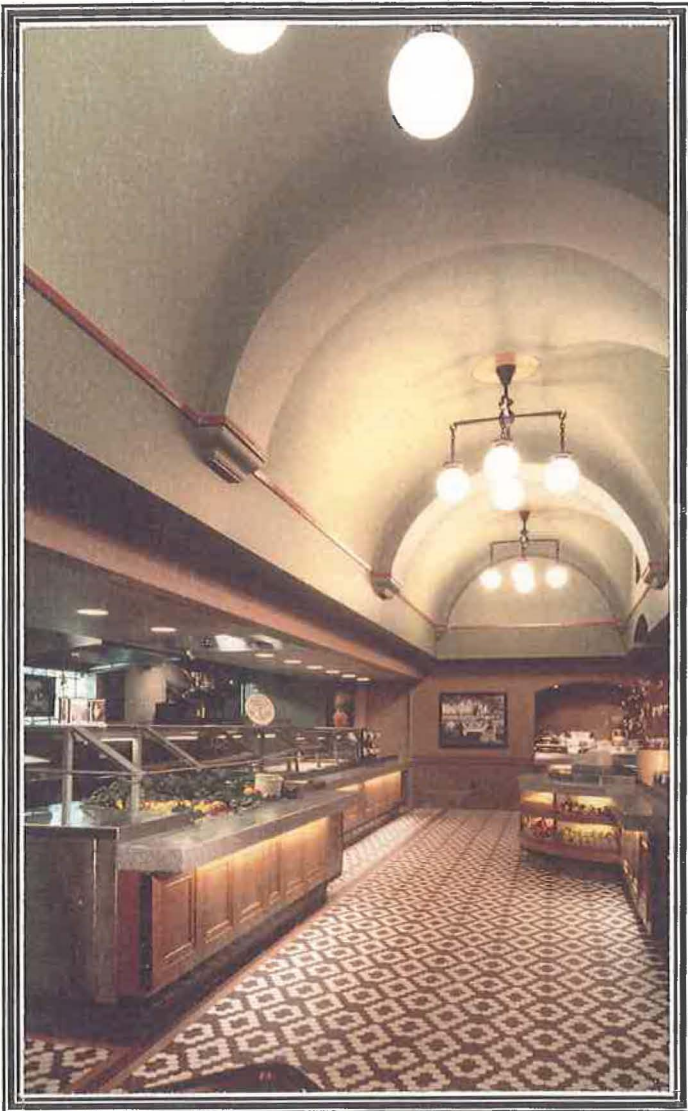
Capitol Area design and development are guided not only by the *Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*, but by the *Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies* (1993) and its Supplement (1995). The latter incorporates and expands urban design principles set forth in the CAAPB plan.

CAAPB'S RESPONSIBILITY

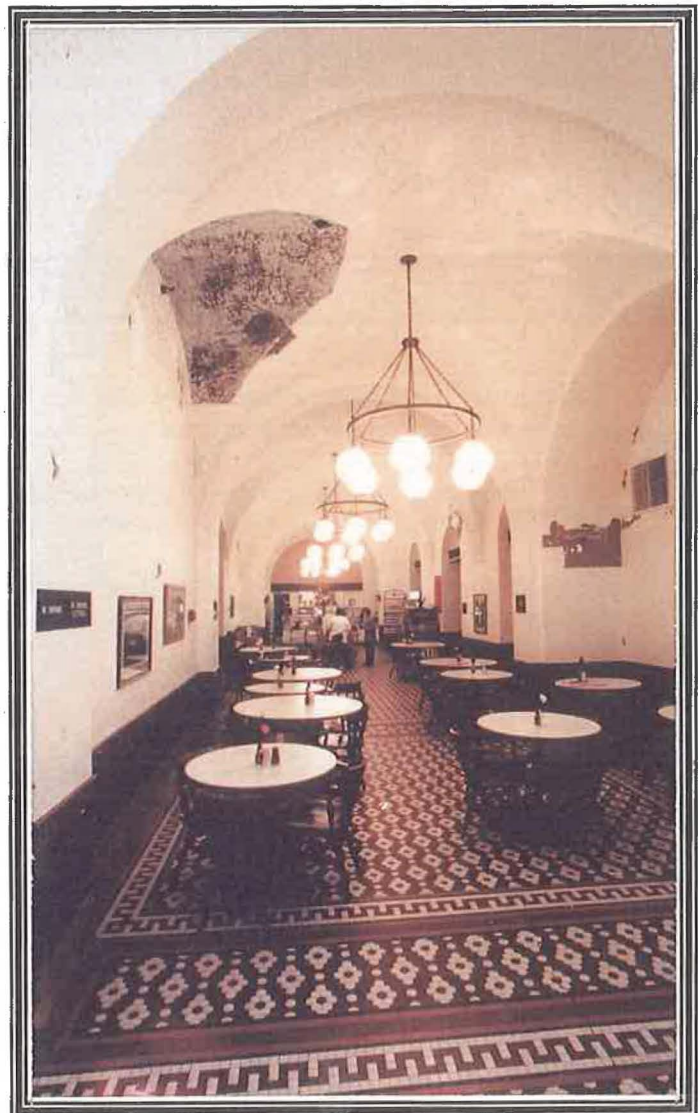
The CAAPB's responsibility can be described as a critical but often missing piece in project design and development. These responsibilities include:

- Providing design context and architectural guidelines to individual projects so each project is a step towards making the Capitol a more vibrant, architecturally cohesive and well-planned area.
- Ensuring future buildings contribute to the streetscape and neighborhood, rather than serve themselves only.
- Encourage public awareness of the Capitol Area as a district unique in the State and an asset to its host city.
- Shaping public space as a critical element of the urban infrastructure.
- Outlining the major features that constitute the public environment in such a manner as to create a whole that is more than the sum of individual projects.

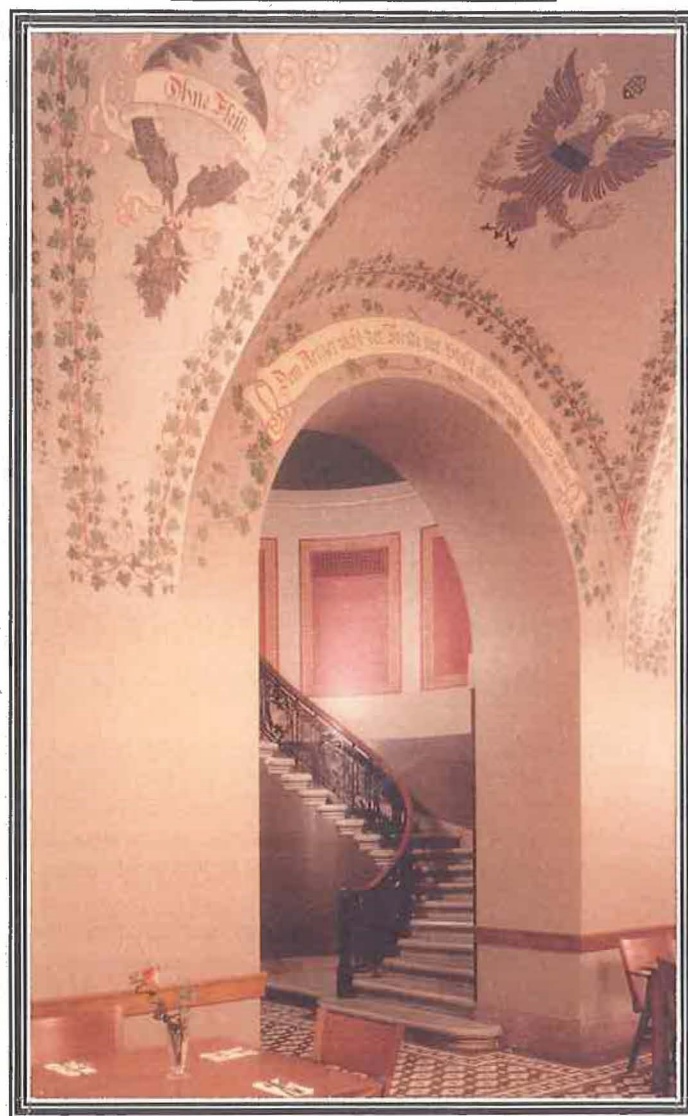
New Cafeteria – servery area



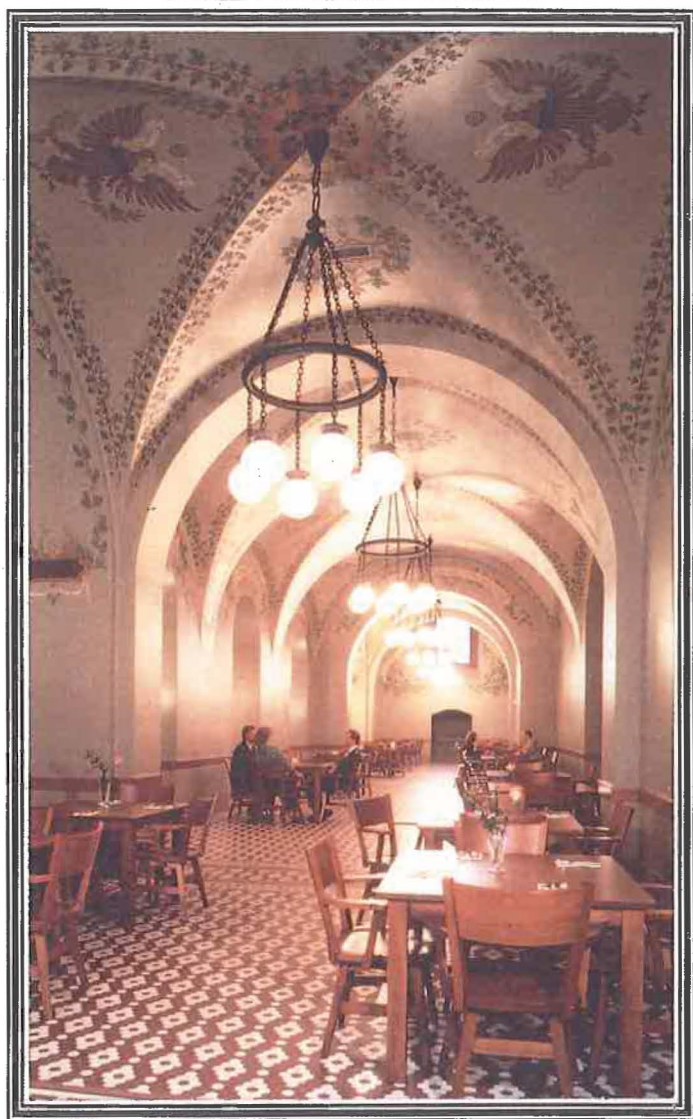
Old Cafeteria – looking west toward servery



New Cafeteria – entry stairway



New Cafeteria – looking east



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 completing the Capitol restoration—both interior and exterior projects—seems appropriate as the CAAPB, the Department of Administration (DOA), the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), 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 with the consulting architect for the Capitol, Miller-Dunwiddie Architects, to develop a strategic long-range plan for Capitol Building 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 infrastructure systems, and completion of restoration of interior public/ceremonial areas. Greatly influencing all future restoration work is the advance of technology in a 100-year-old building.

A 1996 and 1998 appropriation of \$15.8 million was a first step toward accomplishing these long-range objectives. It included rebuilding the deteriorated terraces surrounding the Capitol; renovating the lantern structure atop the Capitol dome; and restoring the Capitol cafeteria to its original appearance. By the end of 2001, all work on the terraces, lantern, and tuckpointing, will be complete. Nearing this completion of exterior restoration, efforts can and must then proceed on updating mechanical and electrical infrastructure within the building, after which a thorough interior restoration of the building, focused on tenant and public space needs, can occur.

This endeavor is not small...to postpone is irresponsible...

Nationally, as state capitol buildings continue to age, sometimes not so gracefully, they continue to serve the need of the citizens and their governments, and many are finding that the bill for deferred maintenance and upkeep has finally come due. A 1999 article in Saint Paul's Legal Ledger (9/7/99 by Glenn Adams) cited over one billion dollars in expenditures or commitments spent nationwide, with millions more to come. Some recent restoration projects to our nation's state Capitol buildings include:

- \$20 million in Nebraska (just for the exterior stabilization)
- \$80 million in Kansas
- \$75 million in Wisconsin
- \$121 million in Ohio
- \$187 million in Texas...and

in some cases tapping state surpluses and saving millions in interest or inflationary costs.

In the last fifteen years, Minnesota has spent approximately \$25.0 million in improvements. However, the balance of phased work to be done has been hampered by denial of adequate funding or lack of commitment to the urgent needs of a 100-year-old building. Unfortunately, the building's infrastructure is being taxed to its limits, along with visible architectural restoration needs, and the price tag is ever increasing as the building ages. Sixty-five million is today's estimate for restoration, and while this represents a great deal of money, it pales in comparison to the cost of replacing the State's magnificent Capitol Building, which is estimated to cost \$800 million if it could ever be replaced.

The longer the wait...the more demanding the needs...the larger the bill.

A Predesign Study report, addressing the building's needs for interior restoration, will be published by June 2001. It will look at bringing the Capitol into the 21st Century and preparing it for a second century of use, looking at mechanical, electrical, and technology needs as well as all related restoration work, establishing priorities and recommendations for sequential phasing to the least disruption of the building's occupants, and the benefit of all Minnesota citizens.

Its value will depend on the willingness of the state's political leadership to commit the funds needed to restore and maintain the people's Capitol Building to the grandeur that the citizens deserve and have a right to expect.

CAPITOL AREA ARTWORK

The Woman Suffrage Memorial Garden is the first of three terraced gardens along the Cedar Street side of the Mall as envisioned in the Mall redevelopment plan of 1986. 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 was 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, as well as for replacement of landscape materials now in decline.

Legislative support was secured in 1998 to renovate/restore other artworks on the Capitol Mall: 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.

In December 1998, the CAAPB approved a new *Policy for Works of Art in the Minnesota State Capitol*. Based on the authority of the CAAPB's statutes and the Minnesota Historical Society's (MHS) Historic Features of State Capitol, the new policy provides standards and design guidelines for proposed works of art inside the building. The policy establishes a process by which the CAAPB and MHS will review proposed art and determine its compatibility with the existing architectural design and decorative framework of the Capitol.

Recent legislative action increased the funding of a memorial to Hubert Humphrey. Also being considered for the Mall is a new World War II Memorial, and a Firefighters Memorial that would include the existing statue to be relocated from the Minneapolis/Saint Paul airport.

NORTH CAPITOL AREA DEVELOPMENT

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 along Rice Street. The changes that have been implemented include new awnings and signage, as well as streetscape amenities.

Building off the new Comprehensive Plan and working with Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development, the State, and others, the residents and others of the North Capitol Area produced a new *Plan for Capitol Heights*. This document will help guide public and private investments in future years, the first of which may be seen in the redevelopment of up to 25 new market-rate townhomes on the city property at Como Avenue and Cedar Street, formerly known as "Lot V".

This new urban development, due to start construction in June 2001, will provide a number of new housing units, which will include three affordable units to be finished by Habitat for Humanity as a hybrid form application of "inclusionary housing". It will also help boost reinvestment in the residential neighborhood surrounding the Capitol Campus, and as such, it represents a wonderful collaboration of the state, city, and local neighborhood in guiding infill redevelopment.

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.

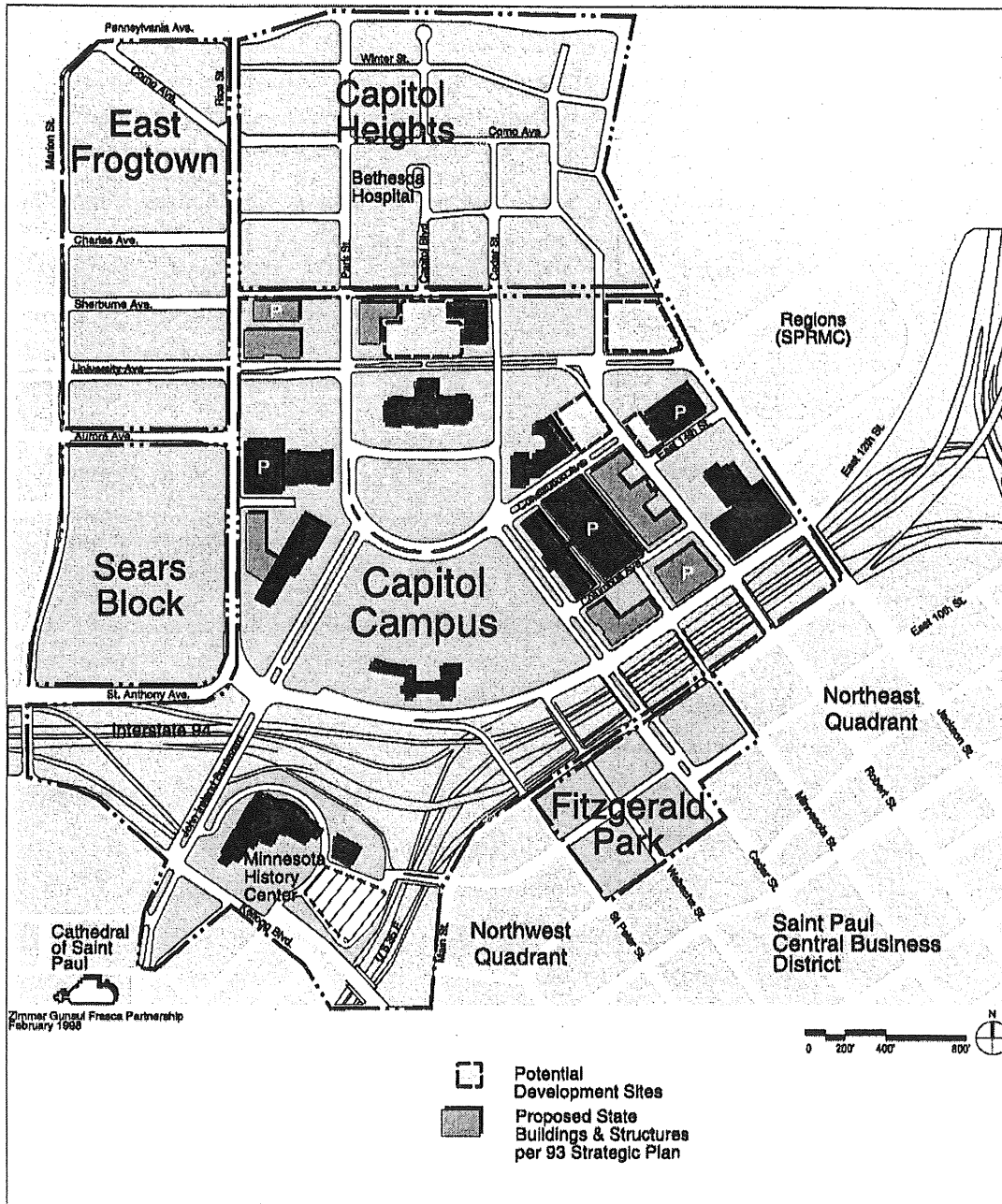
Among these changes has been an ongoing reassessment of the Revenue Department's facility needs. Revenue has now moved to its new headquarters on the southeast edge of the Capitol Campus, just north of Saint Paul's central business district, and its current development of housing in the Northeast Quadrant.

Future building projects in the Capitol Area that are currently on hold, but that would be guided by this plan and the more recent *Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area* might include:

- A new headquarters for Departments of Health and Human Services on the east side of the campus.
- A new legislative building and an underground parking ramp north of University Avenue.
- A new headquarters for one of the commerce/business-oriented state departments at the south end of Cedar Street across the freeway.
- A new headquarters for education agencies at the current Armory site.

CAPITOL AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Capitol Campus Potential Development Sites



This plan shows potential development sites on the Capitol Campus. The east campus has much development potential.

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 are possible considerations for proposed work to be requested in the future:

Upgrade Capitol Building Electrical and Technology Data Systems	\$ 6,800,000
Upgrade Capitol Building Mechanical Systems	\$ 12,500,000
Restoration of Capitol Building Rotunda	\$ 5,500,000
Restoration of Capitol Building Public Corridors	\$ 15,800,000
Rehab of Capitol Building East Wing and Upgrade of Fire and Life Safety Systems	\$ 12,000,000
New Signage in Capitol Building, Grounds and Tunnel System	\$ 900,000

2005

In 1995 the Department of Administration, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board developed an internal plan to restore the Capitol for its centennial celebration in 2005. This group also identified a need to look beyond 2005 as to how the Capitol will function in the next 100 years. The type and amount of work performed to get the Capitol in shape for 2005 will depend upon how the Capitol is used in the future, whether the use is essentially as it is now, or whether other alternatives are pursued. Hence, it was timely that the CAAPB secured funding in 1999 to begin Predesign for the Capitol's interior restoration.

It is important for the Legislature to participate in the planning to identify the long-term use of the Capitol, to understand the shortcomings of the Capitol as it exists, to develop an orderly approach to solving serious Capitol deficiencies, and to appropriately restore the Capitol for the next century. It is imperative that all tenants of the Capitol participate in this planning effort.

In the fall of 1997, in preparation for the Centennial anniversary of the Capitol, the CAAPB brought together people and institutions with interests in the life and work of the architect Cass Gilbert, the designer of Minnesota's State Capitol. The meeting was prompted by a rising national and east coast scholarship on the subject of Gilbert's work, and a strong presence and interest in Gilbert's work in Minnesota, that is continuing to gain momentum.

With the founding of the *Cass Gilbert Society* in Saint Paul in the fall of 1998, the CAAPB is most interested in maintaining a presence in this outstanding project developing on the east coast. **The Minnesota State Capitol is recognized nationally as one of Gilbert's most significant buildings.**

In 1999, the above state bodies greatly intensified their planning for the Capitol Building, focusing on 2005 and beyond. The agencies worked to establish a coordinated plan to generate more public support for the needed efforts, looking at ways to publicize the ever increasing needs that have resulted from a general failure to commit the necessary resources to maintain the building properly while also exploring possibilities to seek direct support from the private sector and the general public. This work would be directed by the results of the 2000 Predesign Study discussed earlier in this report.

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"Minnesotans deserve to be proud of their state capitol, which has throughout this century been considered one of the nation's finest. They should be proud too that during the past decade alert citizens and concerned officials have worked together to preserve this outstanding historical monument."

— The Minnesota Legislative Manual, 1973-1974
(Saint Paul: State of Minnesota, 1973)