

TO: Members of the Capitol Building Advisory Committee
FROM: Georgianna Contiguglia (GJContiguglia@aol.com)
DATE: June 6, 2025
RE: Concerns Regarding the Proposed 150-250 Bridge Project

This memorandum is respectfully submitted to the CBAC prior to a decision being made by the committee regarding the suitability of the safety, design, and location of the proposed 150-250 Bridge Project.

Pedestrian and Auto Safety and State Liability:

The bridge passes over Lincoln Street and has an open design with no pedestrian overhead cover. This provides access for projectiles to be dropped from the bridge on to oncoming traffic with potential to cause auto accidents and/or fatalities.

The bridge is designed with an incline to negotiate the differing geographical heights of Capitol grounds and Lincoln Park grounds. In wet, snowy, or icy weather, the incline will provide a hazard to pedestrians who may slip and fall. If deicer is used on the bridge, melting ice/snow include chemicals that may drip onto oncoming traffic. Closing the bridge to pedestrians will require consistent 24/7 vigilance on the part of Capitol maintenance staff or State Patrol, whoever is assigned the responsibility of maintaining safety on the bridge. Additionally, such staff will be required to shovel accumulated snow from the bridge, and appropriate equipment and places to deposit the removed snow will need to be identified. It would be useful to talk to State Park or City Park staff who maintain pedestrian bridges to ascertain what safety and maintenance procedures they have in place.

The bridge is designed to be ADA accessible, which means that there will be no speed bumps or protrusions on the bridge floor to inhibit access of wheelchairs. This means that nothing will inhibit the use of skateboards, scooters, or bicycles on the bridge.

During public protests in the area, the bridge will be "an attractive hazard". While the bridge may be cordoned off to public access at such times, it has been proven by previous events that the State Patrol is unable to prevent vandalism and serious damage such as the toppling of the First Volunteers Monument.

Design:

The Capitol grounds and Lincoln Park grounds are part of a National Historic District, the highest historic preservation designation. The area was designed in the Beaux Arts style, part of the City Beautiful movement that features symmetry and a rectilinear

layout. To accommodate geographical height differences between the Capitol grounds and the lower part of Lincoln Park to provide ADA access, the bridge snakes through the park areas, providing a jarring intrusion to the historic design of the area and interrupting the formality and elegance of the original design of the grounds.

The proposed bridge includes a section with a high stone wall that provides a visual, physical, and security barrier to the park space. While teachers have opined that a low wall would be convenient for school children to sit on while enjoying lunch, there are less intrusive ways to accommodate this request.

The design requires removal of 5 full-grown trees and the relocation of several sculptures. The sculptures will be removed to the southern section of Lincoln Park and installed along a ground-level snake-like walkway designed, I suppose, to balance the design of the bridge, but providing another curvilinear element into the original Beaux Arts layout of the district.

History Interpretation and Maintenance:

The bridge design calls for viewing areas where pedestrians may stop to interact with explanatory activities and the local environment. Any interpretation must also be ADA accessible and consider language selection, hearing and sight impairments. Who will develop the interpretation, edit the text, make ADA decisions, and maintain the interpretive elements after installation?

Other General Thoughts:

This bridge was introduced as a 150-250 celebration project. Although it has educational elements, it is an entertainment feature that does not appear to meet any pressing functional need. While school classes and tourists may use the bridge, people working in and around the Capitol area are likely to use the more direct path up 14th or Colfax Avenues across Lincoln Street rather than the meandering route of the bridge between the corner of Colfax/Broadway and the Capitol. While there are egress steps in Lincoln Park midway between the two primary entrance/egress points, the stairs are not ADA accessible.