



History Colorado

June 9, 2025

Danielle Oliveto
Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 136
Denver, CO 80203

RE: State Register Act Consultation, Colorado 150 Pedestrian Walkway, Denver, Denver County
(HC #86303)

Dear Ms. Oliveto:

Thank you for your recent correspondence dated May 22, 2025, received by our office June 4, 2025, requesting review of the above referenced project under Colorado Revised Statutes 24-80.1-104. Our office has reviewed the submitted materials, and we offer the following comment.

Identification of Historic Properties

Denver Civic Center (5DV.161) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. A portion of the Park was listed as a National Historic Landmark Historic District in 2012. The Colorado State Capitol Building, its grounds, and Lincoln/Veterans Park are contributing features to both the National Register and National Historic Landmark districts.

Assessment of Adverse Effects

In 2019, the Colorado General Assembly published “Colorado State Capitol Grounds Cultural Landscape Report,” prepared by Mundus Bishop. This report was created to:

- Inform the design of all improvements or modifications proposed for the State Capitol grounds;
- Evaluate and determine the appropriateness of all improvements or modifications proposed for the State Capitol grounds;
- Inform the placement, mass, form, and scale of new memorials and ensure that they are compatible with the character of the State Capitol grounds

We examine these guidelines in further detail below.

The walkway as a monument

Although the Colorado 150 Pedestrian Walkway is, as its name suggests, a way to safely carry pedestrians across Lincoln Street between the State Capitol and Lincoln/Veterans Park, it is primarily envisioned as a monument, not a pedestrian bridge. We feel that this distinction is important. As a monument, the walkway adds to the long tradition of using Civic Center to celebrate Colorado and American history through the creation, erection, and display of artwork, statuary, memorials, and monuments. In addition, if the walkway is classified as a monument, it will be expected to meet the recommendations for “placement, mass, form, and scale of new memorials” as delineated in the 2019 Cultural Landscape Report.

Placement of monuments

Regarding placement of new monuments and memorials, the 2019 report recommended that all new memorials, statues, and other features:

- Do not imitate historic features;
- Are designed in a contemporary style, and are products of their own time;
- Avoid the conveyance of a false sense of history;
- Use appropriate materials, including granite, stainless steel, painted steel, aluminum, painted aluminum, bronze, copper, and concrete

We note that the proposed walkway does not attempt to imitate historic features, and avoids the creation of a false sense of history. Although modern, the design of the walkway is compatible with its setting. As a monument, it reflects contemporary trends and design while remaining subordinate to the overall historic district; as such, we believe that it meets the guidelines for the placement of new monuments and memorials. We do encourage your office to consider avoiding the use of non-historic materials that are not enumerated in the 2019 report, such as marble and weathering steel.

Orientation of the walkway

One of the defining characteristics of Civic Center is its well-defined and monumental spatial organization. A viewer standing on the west steps of the Capitol building is directly in line with the front steps of the City and County Building on Bannock Street, at the opposite end of Civic Center. Lincoln/Veterans Park, located between the two buildings, includes a formal paved walkway extending east-west in line with this same axis. In addition, a view plane ordinance enacted by the City and County of Denver protects and preserves the view from the State Capitol to the City and County Building and the mountains beyond.

We note that the proposed walkway is oriented in such a way as to avoid intruding into the historic axial orientation as well as the view plane from the Capitol steps. The walkway travels in a northwesterly direction from the Capitol bluff and returns to ground level in the northern portion of Lincoln/Veterans Park. This helps to preserve the important spatial organization of the space, both from an east-west axis (i.e., from the Capitol steps to the City-County Building) and from a north-south axis (e.g., the grouping of dense tree/vegetation growth on the north side of Lincoln/Veterans Park, with the southern half of the Park being left open).

The 2019 report declared that “(t)he greatest change to the (original design) plan’s organization occurred in 1990 with the addition of the Colorado Veterans Monument in Lincoln Park. This monumental addition alters Lincoln Park’s naturalistic experience and views.” In response, the report recommended that future memorials and monuments “respect established spatial organization.” We feel that the walkway meets these requirements.

Reversibility of the project action

Finally, we note that the proposed walkway is a reversible action. Its construction will not require the permanent destruction or alteration of any materials, buildings, or landscape features. Should it be removed in the future, the abutment on the Capitol bluff can be regraded to its current profile; the statue of Joe Martinez can be relocated to its current place; and the northern half of Lincoln/Veterans Park can be revegetated as needed with new trees and plantings. We also note that the elliptical steps that were added to the Capitol bluff in the 1990s also successfully follow this philosophy. Although they altered the historic bluff, they do not represent a permanent change; the stairs can be removed and the slope easily restored to its pre-1990s appearance at any time.

Accordingly, after careful review of the project, we believe that it will have no adverse effect on Denver Civic Center, Lincoln/Veterans Park, and the Colorado State Capitol. We look forward to working with your office as this project moves forward.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact Joseph Saldibar, Architectural Services Manager at (303) 842-5619 or by email at joseph.saldibar@state.co.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dawn DiPrince", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

(for) Dawn DiPrince
State Historic Preservation Officer