



1290 Williams St, Ste 102

Denver, CO 80218

720.355.1712

chun@chundenver.org

chundenver.org



Date: 06/02/2025

Dear Commissioners,

Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (CHUN) has been an integral part of the Capitol Hill community for 55 years. As Denver's oldest and largest Registered Neighborhood Organization, we are proud to base our operations at the historic Tears-McFarlane House, adjacent to Cheesman Park. Our members represent neighborhoods across Greater Capitol Hill.

CHUN previously expressed formal support for the Civic Center Park Next 100 plans before the Denver Landmark Commission. We believe a thoughtful renovation that honors the park's historic character is both timely and essential. Civic Center Park, once home to our beloved Capitol Hill People's Fair, is a cultural and civic treasure.

While we have supported the broader Civic Center Park renovation, we were surprised to learn about a major new element—the proposed 150-250 Pedestrian Walkway—which would dramatically alter the historic balance between the Capitol, Lincoln Veterans Memorial Park, and Civic Center Park. This project falls within CHUN's boundaries (Broadway to Colorado Blvd., 1st to 23rd Avenues), and we have serious concerns about its impact on one of Colorado's most iconic settings.

Below are our primary concerns:

1. Design Incompatibility

The Denver Civic Center Historic District embodies a formal, balanced layout. A winding, elevated walkway would disrupt this design and permanently alter the character of the space, rather than enhance or protect it.

2. Unrealistic Funding:

While design costs have already been incurred, no additional state funds are currently allocated. The project would reallocate \$8 million in federal funds and rely heavily on ambitious fundraising and sponsorships. Given the tight timeline, this financial plan appears unsustainable. This proposal also does not address the ongoing operational costs that would be incurred, nor does it specify which entity would fund these future expenses.

3. Safety Concerns:

The elevated walkway introduces numerous safety issues including dangers to pedestrians, motorists, and anyone who may use the bridge as shelter. Addressing these safety challenges will require medical personnel, street outreach workers, and community policing, all of which may not be enough to prevent tragic outcomes. It has already been redesigned to allow it to be closed when necessary, suggesting the designers are aware of these possibilities. A structure that raises ongoing policing, public health, and public safety concerns is not in the community's best interest.

4. Limited Functionality

The walkway's winding path—descending 28 feet and exiting at the congested corner of Colfax and Broadway—is not a practical or efficient route. Its grade and awkward layout make it unlikely to be used frequently, especially during inclement weather.

5. Accessibility Issues

Although the project claims to improve accessibility, we believe better solutions exist that would not detract from the setting. Pedestrian improvements that respect the historic landscape can and should serve all users more effectively. And in the last decade there has been a movement to remove skywalks in cities (e.g. Baltimore, Des Moines and Toledo) to activate the street level.

6. School Group Access

Currently, school groups load and unload safely on Grant Street, east of the Capitol. The proposed walkway would require groups to circle the entire Capitol complex, making their visit more complicated—not safer.

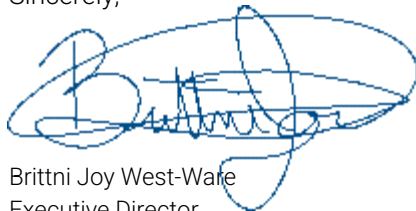
CHUN welcomes the opportunity to help commemorate Colorado's 150th anniversary. However, we believe a massive pedestrian bridge with commissioned art is not the right legacy. Mobile or regional programs could better engage communities statewide and offer broader impact.

CHUN fully supports celebrating Colorado's 150th birthday—especially alongside the nation's 250th anniversary. We believe the rich and diverse stories of our state should be honored in inclusive, community-minded ways. Constructing a massive and some would say “ugly” bridge from the Capitol to Colfax and Broadway does not achieve that goal.

We are disappointed that CHUN and other community voices were not included earlier in this process. It is our hope that it is not too late to bring community stakeholders into this important discussion.

CHUN remains committed to collaboration and inclusiveness. We welcome the opportunity to participate in further dialogue and help shape a plan that better reflects the needs and values of our city and its residents.

Sincerely,



Brittney Joy West-Ware
Executive Director
Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods



Bruce Caughy
Chairman of History Matters
Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods