

MINNEAPOLIS

Peavey Plaza reopens with a splash on Nicollet Mall

The plaza now has a shallow splash pad, wheelchair-accessible ramps and other new features.

By Miguel Otárola (<http://www.startribune.com/miguel-otarola/396828811/>) Star Tribune |

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Minneapolis' leaders rolled up their pant legs Thursday for the grand reopening of Peavey Plaza, a signature gathering space on Nicollet Mall that was closed for more than a year for renovation.

The sunken plaza, which was built in 1975 next to the Minnesota Orchestra Hall, had fallen into disrepair in recent years. The renovation was funded by \$4 million from the city, a \$2 million grant from the state and \$4 million in private donations raised by the Minneapolis Downtown Council and nonprofit Green Minneapolis.

The basin in the center of the plaza has been raised from 10 inches to a quarter of an inch. At Thursday's ribbon-cutting, people moved across the basin on foot and in wheelchairs.

Council Member Lisa Goodman, who represents part of downtown and has been a leading force behind the plaza's renovation, stood in front of the water before the ribbon-cutting.

"Very rarely am I at a loss for words," she said. "I think with this one, we hit a home run."

She teared up earlier after walking across the water, saying she had waited until Thursday to see the plaza for the "full reveal."

"The vision for the project was making this water feature accessible for everyone," she said. "I had to walk across the water, mainly because I didn't believe it myself."

Mayor Jacob Frey thanked the donors who funded the renovation, calling Thursday "a really proud day for this city."

"Downtowns are about having fun, losing yourself and wandering home a little bit later than you otherwise would," he said. "That's what ultimately Peavey Plaza helps us to do."

Frey, Goodman and others then rolled up their pant legs and took off their shoes to stand on the basin.

In addition to the raised basin, the plaza now features new ramps for wheelchairs and strollers, new trees and lighting and gender-neutral restrooms. It is also designed to include a ice-skating rink during the winter, Frey said.

Among the first to hit the water was Brenda Try, who is in town from Michigan for a ballroom dancing convention. Try pushed a stroller carrying her granddaughter down the new ramps to the plaza and across the basin.

"This is very relaxing," she said. "What a great place to convene with your friends and family."

After crossing herself, Goodman pointed to a young child skipping gleefully across the water.

"Look at that," she said. "That's the point."



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During the lunch hour on Tuesday, July 16, 2019, people were enjoying Peavey Plaza, which is set to have its grand re-opening, including the water

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