



STATE PRESERVATION BOARD

The Honorable Greg Abbott, Governor, Chairman
The Honorable Dan Patrick, Lieutenant Governor, Co-Vice Chairman
The Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the House, Co-Vice Chairman
The Honorable Kelly Hancock, Texas Senate
The Honorable Charlie Geren, Texas House of Representatives
Iris H. Moore, Citizen Board Member
John Sneed, Executive Director

August 31, 2016

The Honorable Kirk Watson
Texas State Senate
Capitol Extension Room E1.804
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Senator Watson,

This is to follow up on our conversation regarding the integrity of the Capitol View Corridors and concerns I have over any plan to modify the corridors.

From the time the Capitol was completed in 1888, it has stood as a prominent landmark visible from most all of Austin. The Capitol View Corridors, established more than thirty years ago, were created by both the Texas Legislature and the Austin City Council. Their purpose has been to maintain public line-of-sight views of the Texas Capitol dome for historic and cultural preservation. At the time of the statutes' inception, views of the iconic landmark were disappearing as buildings and towers in central Austin grew up around the Capitol.

The Preservation Board has repeatedly opposed compromising the view corridors as have representatives of the local and state preservation community. The City, the State and the development community have abided by the Capitol View Corridor ordinances for over three decades - all making allowances in their construction projects to respect Capitol views. For example, the State made certain the Robert E. Johnson State Office Building, the UT Dell Medical School, and the new teaching hospital did not impinge on the view corridor. The City rejected plans and work done by its contractor on the Waller Creek Bypass Tunnel Project due to view corridor infractions, and a private developer had to remove a part of a parking structure that erred into the view corridor. The Legislature has added to the protections of the view corridor as recently as 2013, which was welcomed by the Preservation Board. The Preservation Board will continue to oppose any effort to alter an existing view corridor.

It is my opinion that any exemption to a view corridor would be met with strong opposition from the preservation community, state leadership and the Legislature.

Sincerely,

John Sneed

cc: State Preservation Board