

## **Background on the Capitol View Corridors Issue**

The existing legal protections for State **Capitol View Corridors** were established in 1983 by then-State Senator Lloyd Doggett and State Representative Gerald Hill (Senate Bill 176; Acts 1983, 68<sup>th</sup> Leg., Ch. 50; Art. 6145-13, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes). These protections have weathered economic boom and bust, and currently may be found as Chapter 3151 of the Government Code (recodified by House Bill 2812; Acts 2001, 77<sup>th</sup> Leg., Ch. 1420). The protections have been revisited sparingly to address the unique revitalization of Austin's 11<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, the ongoing redevelopment of Mueller Airport, and now-completed addition to Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium.

The **City of Austin Downtown Commission** is an advisory body consisting of 20 members appointed by the City Council and representing various stakeholder groups. At the request of the Council, the Downtown Commission's Development Subcommittee has begun an evaluation of the sightlines, with the possibility of eliminating some of them.

**Craig Washington** was elected and served as Texas State Representative (*District 86-Houston*) from 1973 to 1982. He was then elected to serve as Texas State Senator (*Senatorial District 13-Houston*) in 1982, a position he held until 1989. Following, he was elected to the 101st United States Congress for Texas' 18th Congressional District by special election, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mickey Leland, and remained a congressman until 1995. Today, Washington practices law out of Houston and Bastrop, Texas.

The **Heritage Society of Austin, Inc.** has served the Central Texas community for over 50 years as the premier organization dedicated to the preservation of our historic treasures, working to ensure the connection between our collective past and future. HSA has contributed to the preservation of more than 300 valuable properties like the Driskill Hotel, the Paramount Theater, the Governor's Mansion and the Bremond Block.

**Timeline:** In **1888**, the Texas State Capitol building is completed, the centerpiece layout and then "skyline" of the City.

In **1931**, citing the height and prominence of the Capitol, the City of Austin established a zoning ordinance limiting building height to 200 ft., with a limited exception allowing for additional height with an increased setback.

In **1963**, the developers of the Westgate Building utilized this exception on the block directly west of the Capitol to build to 239 ft.

In **1968**, the exception is again employed to construct Dobie Mall to 299 ft.

In **1982**, approval was sought for a 298 ft. "wedding cake" tower at 6<sup>th</sup> and Congress again under the setback exception. The City permitted the project (now One American Center), which survived legal challenges and community opposition. See *Texans to Save*

*the Capitol, Inc, v. Board of Adjustment of the City of Austin*, 647 S.W.2d 733 (Tex.App.—Austin1983).

In **1983**, in response to the City's permissive development, Senator Doggett and Representative Hill enacted in state statute Capitol View Corridors to protect the most revered and cherished remaining views of the State Capitol.

In **1994**, the State Preservation Board completed a significant and unprecedented restoration of the State Capitol.

In **2001** and **2003**, the Capitol View Corridor provisions were amended by the Legislature to address limited and unique public development needs (revitalization of Austin's 11<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, the redevelopment of Mueller Airport, and an addition to Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium).

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