

Presented by Tom Dillard & Cathie Matthews, April 19th, 2016

To Mayor Stodola and Little Rock's Board of Directors

We come to you as former directors of the Department of Arkansas Heritage and as State Historic Preservation Officers. From these state-appointed positions, for a cumulative 42 years we have protected the built history of Arkansas's towns and cities while guiding their economic growth.

A tactic to reach both of these goals has been to partner in privately and publicly funded preservation projects. Not only do cities receive a restored treasure, but, inevitably, private developers and families are inspired to invest their own dollars in their city centers and neighborhoods.

Little Rock's River Market district and Quapaw Quarter are such places. Investors have preserved the old, incorporated the new, and transformed the heart of our capital city. The developers and families making this happen have invested not only their dollars, but their hearts. They, and all who benefit from the area, want it protected. That is why they seek to work with you — to save their homes, businesses, investments and thriving environment while, at the same time, to help you address the I-30 traffic challenges you must address.

We join these Little Rock citizens, residents, and business owners to encourage you to bring them and others to your table of decision makers.

Under federal law (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act), AHTD also has an obligation to consider the impact of their actions on historic resources.....of which there are MANY in the area of concern. And that obligation extends to historically significant communities as well. That would certainly include the minority population of the area that will be negatively impacted, once again (i.e. I-630), by the division of their neighborhood with a huge freeway project. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has the obligation in AR to make sure that these concerns are addressed. Section 106 is administered by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which is in DC. (Cathy Slater was chairman of this Council for 8 years)

You have the means to alleviate traffic challenges while preserving the decades of growth in downtown Little Rock that these citizens have made possible. Please heed the latest scholarship about freeways in the hearts of cities and follow the example of other urban areas that have solved similar traffic problems with successful alternative solutions. Please do not repeat the mistakes of administrations that have ignored the evidence of induced traffic effects.

You sit on the possibility of making Little Rock and Arkansas a place that, faced

with a problem, paused, listened, invited the best and brightest to the table and, collectively, created a 21st century, textbook solution for Americans on highways. Chester Street could be made a state highway with the signing of a few documents and AHTD could design a new bridge across the Arkansas River there that would greatly improve existing and future commuter traffic issues.

This problem you are facing could in actuality be an opportunity to make Arkansas shine. We urge you to be leaders of that caliber. Say "NO" to the 10 lanes plan . The I-30 bridge needs to be replaced with a safe 6 lane roadway . We ask you to deeply look into the traffic and transit options for a safer, economically healthy, downtown Little Rock.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Anne Bartley, Tom Dillard, Cathie Matthews

Anne Bartley, the first Director, Department of Arkansas Heritage/SHPO, 1975-1979

Tom Dillard, Director/Arkansas Heritage, 1981- 1986

Wilson Stiles, State Historic Preservation Officer, SHPO, 1981-1987

Joan Baldrige, Director/Arkansas Heritage 1989-1992

Beverly Lindsey, Director/ Arkansas Heritage, 1993-1996

Cathy Slater, State Historic Preservation Officer, 1988- 2000

Cathie Matthews, Director/ Arkansas Heritage / SHPO, 2000-2012

Martha Miller, Director/Arkansas Heritage / SHPO 2013-2014