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March 6, 2008

Mayor Will Wynn
City of Austin
Post Office Box 1088
Austin, TX78767-8865

Dear Mayor Wynn,

I write on behalf of the Heritage Society of Austin with regard to Phase Two of the Downtown Austin Plan. We respectfully urge you to build sufficient funding into the next phase of the plan to engage ROMA in the completion of a survey of historic and potentially historic downtown properties.

The Heritage Society supports the proposed creation of distinct Downtown Districts based on their varied uses and characteristics. We believe it is important to preserve the historic features and character of buildings and public spaces that give our downtown a sense of place and identity. Recognizing the uniqueness of these districts would enable our city to pursue long-term goals appropriate for development of each specific area.

The creation of meaningful and effective Districts is predicated on an understanding of their historic resources, character and uses. A thorough survey of existing and potential historic structures and places in downtown is essential to this process. A survey is needed for a proactive rather than reactive planning model by our City. Commission and Council members have repeatedly observed that such an inventory would forestall many contentious historic zoning cases. It would also be a valuable tool for the Austin Convention and Visitor's Bureau in creating walking tours and marketing Austin's historic resources to potential visitors.

We ask you to make this investment to preserve what is best about Austin as we work together to create a vibrant, appealing and prosperous downtown. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Philip Donisi
President

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