

PRESERVE NEVADA

Department of History, UNLV, Box 455020, 4505 Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89154-5020

January 5, 2020

Dear Members of the Historical Resources Commission:

We at Preserve Nevada, the state's oldest statewide historic preservation organization, write to express our misgivings about and to offer our help regarding plans for Reno's historic Lear Theater and the surrounding area.

We are happy to work with any of the stakeholders, from Artown to developers to government agencies to historic preservation groups, in any way we can to help with the process of preserving the Lear, which we listed this year as one of Nevada's 11 Most Endangered Places. Saving the Lear, given its historical significance, is vital, and we are heartened that efforts are underway involving government and private entities. It is important not only for the sake of Reno's history, but for that of Paul Revere Williams, who designed the original building, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and whose architectural legacy throughout the U.S. is critical to preserve responsibly.

But we are concerned about the plans being discussed. One involves a danger to another place of historic significance: Riverside Drive along the Truckee. Closing part of it in this way presents potentially serious issues. It is the only street that enables one to drive along the river, and the street, the river, and the drive are historic in their own rights. Also, Bicentennial Park's creation was intended to stop exactly the kind of building now proposed in the middle of Ralston Street. More crucially, it would deprive those who do not or cannot walk or bicycle, especially those covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, from enjoying the drive and the scenic views of the river and the Lear that Riverside Drive affords. Additionally, the proposed outdoor amphitheater would duplicate what already exists in Wingfield Park, and would be difficult for some to access.

We urge all of those involved to do their best to protect the history and beauty of Riverside Drive along the Truckee River, and continue to work together on behalf of preserving the Lear Theater and its intrinsic value to the past and present to the Reno area.

If we can be of further assistance, you may reach Preserve Nevada's executive director, Michael Green, at michael.green@unlv.edu or at 702-895-3351. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Richard Bryan, U.S. Senate (Ret.),
Chairman of the Board, Preserve Nevada