



BUILDING TRADES

December 18, 2024

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Marc Crisafulli
Chairman
I-195 Redevelopment District Commission
District Hall
225 Dyer Street, Second Floor
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Bluedog Capital Partners proposed development of Parcel 5

Dear Chairman Crisafulli:

The Rhode Island Building and Construction Trades Council is comprised of seventeen (17) Local Trade Unions and approximately 10,000 members. On behalf of the officers and members, I am writing in SUPPORT of Bluedog Capital Partners' proposed development of Parcel 5 within the I-195 redevelopment district.

The Rhode Island Building and Construction Trades Council (RIBCTC) is in full support of Bluedog Capital Partners' proposed plan. The district, and the city of Providence, would greatly benefit from the mix-use development proposed, which would incorporate needed housing units, additional workspace for growing businesses, while supporting our hospitality industry through hotel and restaurant space. This proposal will help support Providence and Rhode Island's economy through these long-term investments, while committing to developing this proposed project utilizing local union tradesmen and women. Bluedog Capital Partners has agreed to build their project under an all-union agreement.

By committing to an all-union workforce, the RIBCTC will work to complete Bluedog's project on-time and on-budget. Employing local Providence and Rhode Island tradesmen and women who will be paid a middle-class wage which in turn they will use at local grocery stores, businesses, and restaurant.

Projects like this should ensure all Rhode Islanders benefit from the developments, including the workers. The Bluedog Capital Partners' proposed project will be the economic engine this commission is tasked with creating.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Sabitoni
President

cc: RI Building and Construction Trades Council; I-195 Redevelopment District Commission

From: Lorenzo Apicella <apicella@apicellastudio.com>

Date: Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 6:38 PM

To: Caroline Skuncik <cskuncik@195district.com>

Cc: Amber Ilcisko <ailcisko@195district.com>, Peter Erhartic <perhartic@195district.com>, Marc Crisafulli <17motick@comcast.net>, Sharon Steele <sharon@sharonsteele.com>

Subject: Dec 18 I-195 Meeting - Parcel 5 Public Comments

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Dear Caroline,

Here are the comments I made at the I-195 meeting last night regarding the three teams shortlisted to develop Parcel 5. Please post them on your website for public access and forward them to the commissioners:

Congratulations again to the three design teams that have made it thus far. I'm sure they're looking forward to progressing their designs in light of Utile's Design Review Panel observations. From previous experience however, I hope they will hold on to the courage of their convictions that have brought them this far. I say that because it's for them to assess how they could take those observations into account, *or not*. And it's not Utile's or anyone else's place to tell them what they should do. Utile's reports on each scheme are peppered with 'could,' observations, which I think are okay, they expand the conversation. But they are also peppered with 'should,' which I think are not okay. 'Should' is prescriptive, and closes down the conversation.

When each team returns here next month, it is for them to assert for themselves — and their audience the I-195 Commission, its advisors, nearby communities like the JDA, and the general public — why and how *their* design (not theirs including a little bit of everyone else's) has achieved the harmonic balance that, to quote Leon Battista Alberti, 'is so perfect there is nothing to add or take away that could make it better.' That's a high bar, I know, But it's what any self respecting architect should aim for.

To explain my point I'll refer to just one of Utile's notes for each team:

Blue Dog and ZDS: Utiles report says your design 'does not seem compatible with the character of the existing neighborhood.' I agree. But aren't you arguing that that's its strength?! If so, when you return please tell us more about why that's a positive thing, rather than something you would compromise about.

Providence Art & Design Center: per Utile's report your inner pedestrian street is 'narrow'. Maybe so. But in proposing it you decided that that's part of its charm. If you remain convinced of that, then tell us clearly why so.

And, **Transom with Howeler & Yoon**: Utile questions aspects of your elegant curved courtyards that float above an activated base reinstating every corner of this site's historic morphology. But you are engaging the street while gesturing to/drawing in your wider surroundings at the same time. Your courtyards are the way they are because they allow you to both respect and transform your context!

I would implore all three of you therefore, please don't lose sight of what got you here. You are the authors of your designs, and it's for you to tell us why they're 'perfect'!

Finally, the court of public opinion will likely deliver its verdict on the best of these schemes on the evidence of a visual of each that someone will publish. To better allow comparison of them therefore, I would encourage the commission to require from each a visual taken across the road from Parcel 5's four corners plus one aerial view. It's important, because for instance, my points on Howeler and Yoon's design are easily explained by reference to their concept sketches, plans and sections, but not so much by their current visuals. Along with plans, sections, and elevations, like for like comparison visuals will be key for professional and lay audiences alike to fairly assess all three of these schemes fully on their merits.

Thank you.

Lorenzo Apicella, AIA RIBA FRSA
Architectural Representative, Jewellery District Association