



May 8, 2024

Caroline Skuncik
Executive Director
I-195 Redevelopment District
225 Dyer Street, Fourth Floor,
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Parcels 14 & 15 Concept Plan Proposal Design Review Panel Comments

Design Review Panel Contributors:

- Emily Vogler, Design Review Panel
- Jack Ryan, Design Review Panel
- Tim Love, Utile
- Kevin Chong, Utile

Dear Caroline,

A meeting was convened on May 6, 2024 that included Emily Vogler and Jack Ryan from the Design Review Panel, and Kevin Chong from Utile. Craig Barton from the Design Review Panel has recused himself from reviewing this project due to his affiliation with Brown University (a portion of the project is on a site owned by Brown that will be ground-leased by the developer). The goal of the meeting was to review the concept plan design proposal for Parcels 14 and 15 and generate comments that could be shared with the development team. The design submission was prepared by SGA, an architecture firm, and Copley Wolff, a landscape architecture firm, on behalf of CV Properties, the developer.

Preceding this Design Review Panel session, the District and Utile provided informal feedback to the development team during several prior meetings. The Design Review Panel appreciates the development team's responsiveness to the feedback thus far and looks forward to working with the design team further on the next phase of Concept Design, taking into consideration the recommendations outlined below.

1. Building Form and Expression

- a. Massing: The Design Review Panel is supportive of the high-level strategies to break down the 11-story tall bent bar massing, including stepping down the building towards the park and segmenting the building into a two- to three-story top, six- to eight-story middle, and two-story base portions.

- b. Materiality and Texture: While the differentiation between blue and gray metal panels helps soften the impact of the massing, the visual uniformity of each modular frame, accentuated by the 45-degree joints between the undifferentiated vertical and horizontal metal panels, renders the facade rather flat and suggests a scale more comparable to commercial or life science buildings rather than a residential building.

Setting up further relief and exploring textural contrasts between the horizontal and vertical elements of the frame will be important next steps as the project advances. For example, instead of repeating the same frame expression throughout the three facade sections, incorporating a tartan or plaid pattern with pilasters and spandrels for the middle section in blue could help introduce more textural variety and enrich the overall facade composition.

- c. Windows: Similarly, the windows depicted in the drawings appear oversized for a residential building and the single large panes of glass are more typical for a commercial building than a residential building. The Design Review Panel recommends subdividing the windows into smaller panels with mullions to align with residential norms and set the project apart from the commercial buildings that are planned for future phases. In addition, the glazed vertical “slots” present an opportunity to provide more depth and relief. Setting these slots back at least 6-8” will introduce shadows that will help further mitigate the visual impact of the massing.

2. Site Plan

- a. Clarification on Activation of Outdoor Spaces: The Design Review Panel would like to see more detail on the activated outdoor spaces surrounding the proposed building, including proposed uses and dimensions for the moments where the sidewalk or resiliency platform expands. Furthermore, the development team should clarify the vision for the inner courtyard and suggest how the users in each building will access the space and benefit from the shared space upon full buildout.

- 3. **Clarification of Phasing Vision**: The submitted plans included a site plan and parking plan depicting the vision for Phase 2 of the project. In order to evaluate how the project fits within the urban design vision for the full build out, the Design Review Panel would need clarification on the following aspects:

utile

- a. Ground Floor Uses: The site plan should indicate the proposed uses along the Dyer St and Dorrance St frontages beyond a loading court and parking garage entrance. The Design Review Panel understands that these site diagrams are depicting high-level massing concepts for future phases rather than fully designed buildings, but delineating the ground floor uses of the future phases will enable the Design Review Panel to effectively assess the urban design implications of the Phase 1 building.
- b. Parking: While the parking plan indicates that parking spaces are provided on the second floor of a podium during Phase 2, the render titled "Aerial View from across Providence River" does not depict a parking use on the second floor. Furthermore, it is unclear how vehicles could navigate from the parking garage entrance to the parking ramp while ensuring sufficient height clearance for the loading dock. It will be important to clarify the Phase 2 parking strategy in future iterations of this diagram.
- c. Typical Level Plan for Phase 2 Building(s): The development team should submit typical conceptual floor plans of the Phase 2 building(s) that show the locations of the building cores and better illustrate the spatial relationship between the residential building and future phases of the development.

In short, the Design Review Panel acknowledges the initial steps the development team made to address the visual impact of the building's scale in the current proposal. Delving into finer-grained details of the façade expression, adding depth and dimension, refining outdoor uses and programming, and clarifying how the first phase fits the urban design of the full master plan build out will be critical next steps for the project.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or would like additional information on any of these comments.

Regards,



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