

January 4, 2023

Caroline Skuncik, Executive Director
I-195 Redevelopment District Commission
225 Dyer Street, 4th Floor
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 150 Richmond Street Final Plan Design Review

Dear Caroline,

Ancora, GRE and our design partners at HOK and VHB are pleased to provide this memo, and accompanying drawings & graphics, in connection with our Final Design application for the project at 150 Richmond Street in the I-195 Redevelopment District. This project will provide new facilities for the Rhode Island State Health Lab (“RISHL”) as well as for-lease lab space, associated office space, and a ground floor café that will support the commercial life-science ecosystem in Providence’s Jewelry District. The materials in this submission represent our consolidated response to comments offered by Commission Members, Utile, the Commission’s Design Review Panel, Neighborhood Design Review Panel Representatives and the general public throughout the Concept Design Review process. It also serves to document the project’s design evolution, taking into account our project budgets, cost estimates and subsequent discussions with your team and with Utile.

In addition to Final Design approval, we are seeking Commission action on one Special Exception and one Waiver to provisions of the Development Plan, as further described below. These are in addition to the previously-approved waivers identified in the Commission’s Resolution Regarding Approval of Waivers and Special Exception regarding Lot 3, dated November 9, 2022.

Design Update

Site, Parking and Loading:

As previously discussed with the Commission, and acknowledging the goals inherent in the Development Plan around the District being a pedestrian-focused environment with a centralized shared-parking strategy, a lab-intensive building of this nature does have an inherent need for more loading and service activity than other building types throughout the District. In addition, the public-health nature of the RISHL space comes with specific requirements for ensuring that samples of biological and chemical materials gathered from across the State can be delivered 24/7 to the Lab in a convenient, safe, and chain-of-custody-regulated manner. Our Final Plan therefore provides for six (6) vehicular parking spaces behind the building, the use of which will be limited to short-term, delivery-oriented activity, maintenance support, and provision of an accessible parking space. All Staff at the RISHL, as well as all employees of other companies, organizations or institutions located in the commercial side of the Building, will use the Garrahy Garage on Clifford Street for their routine daily parking needs.

In this context however, there are steps we can take to ameliorate the impact of these requirements. Our Final Design calls for mountable curbs at the Clifford Street service entrance that minimize the curb-cut dimension and enable us to eliminate one of the Deferred Waiver requests identified in the Commission’s Resolution of November 9, 2022. We have engaged with District Staff and Utile to develop logical, pedestrian-friendly walkways using differentiated materials that connect existing mid-

block pedestrian walks through our service area to Clifford Street, and we have relocated all of the previously-proposed patio areas adjacent to the loading and parking zone to an expanded seating area adjacent to the building café along Elbow Street, replacing them with landscape treatments that will more effectively shield the parking and loading activity from view both as seen from Clifford street, and from locations internal to Parcel 25.

As previously noted, the configuration of our parcel and the existence of the small triangular parking parcel that belongs to the adjacent property have impacted our site planning to some extent. We will continue to hold conversations with the owners of the adjacent property to explore whether there might be some way to aggregate the parcels together in a manner that would enable more efficient parking and enhanced pedestrian connectivity to Clifford St. If these conversations prove fruitful, we may return to the Commission to seek an amendment to the Final Plan approval that would enable such a modification.

Ground Floor and Public Realm:

Our Final Plan maintains and enhances the goal we established early on for enabling 150 Richmond Street to synergistically bring together different laboratory-focused communities who do not often interrelate – scientists and administrators whose focus rests in commercial product development, those focused on institutional research, and most uniquely, the scientists and lab technicians who are charged with overseeing public health in the State of Rhode Island. All building users and visitors will enter the building through a common lobby at the Richmond Street / Elbow Street corner of the site, oriented towards the plaza directly across the street and the expanding realm of health-sciences activity centered in the Jewelry District around the Warren Alpert Medical School. From that lobby, staff and visitors to the RISHL will have a branded, secured entry into their portion of the building, while commercial users will interface with a building concierge before passing through a separate entry and up to their floors. In a third direction, the lobby will flow into a café amenity space that promotes interaction, collaboration and relaxation. The café will also be open to the general public, with a dedicated entry off the street as well as through the lobby, and will feature an expanded outdoor seating area along the Elbow street sidewalk.

Building frontage along Richmond Street features “science on display” with the public-facing elements of the RISHL facility, enabling the Lab to display to those passing by educational graphics demonstrating its purpose and function, public art, and other materials of visual interest. Together with the lobby, this will activate the majority of the Richmond Street frontage.

On Elbow Street, beyond the café, building users who bicycle to work will have a dedicated entry into a bicycle storage and maintenance facility, with dedicated showers and lockers that will also be connected to the lobby/café/amenity space. Additional exterior bicycle racks are provided within 50 feet of the main entry on Richmond Street and adjacent to the café on Elbow Street.

Building Expression and Façade Design:

This may be the area where the design has evolved most substantially since the Concept Design stage. We took very seriously the comments offered by the Commission’s Design Review Panel, its Design Advisors at Utile, and representatives of the Neighborhood Design Panels, that the “rear” or northern facades of the building, as well as the necessarily-significant mechanical penthouse and screen at the top of the building, needed more attention. At the same time, along the more public-facing facades of the building, it has proven necessary to modify some of the material dimensionality previously featured

in our Concept Design in response to cost estimates received from a number of potential sub-contractors.

The design of the northern facades now achieves more variety and visual interest. Playful spacing now breaks down the previously strict repetition of the ribbon windows. The scale of the fiber cement panels has been increased to achieve greater cost efficiency and improve the visual texture, especially when viewed from a distance, while tighter spaced panels in the gaps between the ribbon windows enhance the façade detail from up close.

At the top of the building, the rooftop mechanical screening has been redesigned as a more appropriate visual cap to the building and with consideration of sightlines from a distance. The enclosure has been broken down into discreet volumes, each treated with radiused corners. This geometry, along with the perforated metal material, will serve to soften and lighten the appearance of this necessary building feature.

A series of design modifications have also been made to the public-facing southern facades to ensure the original design intent is achieved while bringing the project within budget. In lieu of deeper profiled panels, the red terracotta cladding is now planar, though provided with several different textures that will achieve an appropriate degree of variation and visual depth. The angular window surrounds have been revised to omit the tapered projections, while still expressing the depth and the visual weight of the wall. Finally, opaque portions of the ground floor have been modified to be a darker grey brick with a stone base. This cost-effective strategy closely relates to the pervasive use of brick throughout Providence.

Waiver and Special Exception Requests

With this request for Final Design approval, we are also seeking Commission approval for the following:

1. **Special Exception** with respect to limitations on and conditions for the provision of surface parking set forth in Section 2.4.B.6 of the Development Plan; and
2. **Waiver** with respect to limitations on and conditions for provision of exterior loading docks set forth in Section 2.5.E.3 of the Development Plan.

Per its resolution dated November 9, 2022, the Commission has already approved the following waivers:

- (a) *Section 2.3-1 with respect to street frontage;*
- (b) *Section 2.5.A.1.A with respect to massing and façade articulation;*
- (c) *Section 2.5.A.2.B with respect to fenestration;*
- (d) *Section 2.5.A.3.C with respect to building entries;*
- (e) *Section 2.5.A.5.D with respect to marque signage; and*
- (f) *Section 2.5.A.7.A with respect to mechanical equipment louvers.*

In said Resolution, the Commission also deferred a decision on two waivers (the “Deferred Waivers”), as follows

- (a) *Section 2.4.E.5 with respect to loading curb cut width; and*
- (b) *Section 2.5.E.3 with respect to exterior loading dock.*

It is our belief that the first of the two Deferred Waivers, regarding curb cut width, is no longer required because the dimension of the curb cut in our Final Design, which now employs mountable curbs, no longer exceeds the required maximum length.

The second Deferred Waiver, for the provision of an external loading dock(s), is hereby re-submitted for consideration. We have mitigated the need to utilize exterior loading docks through the use of an overhead coiling door system , which will close the dock openings from view when not in use. We are also providing landscaping and screening to shield the loading area from view, particularly as seen from locations internal to the block, and the use of differing paving materials to sensitively break up the surface area devoted to loading activities. Plantings have also been included along the northern site boundary to provide visual buffer of the loading area from Clifford Street.

Finally, we request approval of a Special Exception related to the provision of a limited amount of surface parking specifically to support the RISHL public-health component of the project. Attached herewith is a memo from RISHL documenting their on-site parking requirements. The memo concludes with the statement that 6-8 parking spaces would be the “bare minimum” requirement, and our Final Plan provides six (6) spaces, so we are effectively at the lower end of their minimum need. Our design for the surface parking area addresses the conditions set forth in Section 2.4.B.6 to the extent practical. While not accessed from a Secondary Street, the parking area shares a curb cut with the loading use, effectively eliminating a need for a second access point. The design also utilizes a number of low-impact development practices, as follows:

- Shade trees are provided 15 feet on-center with additional shrubs within a landscape buffer that is up to 14.5 feet wide along the northern property boundary with the existing triangular parking area on the adjacent parcel (AP 20, Lot 343).
- All stormwater from the parking area is pretreated with a Stormceptor water quality unit prior to conveyance to the existing underground sand filter system on Parcel 400, promoting infiltration of stormwater.

Materials Submitted for This Application

3. This Memo, describing design updates and Waiver and Special Exception requests
 - a. Memo from RISHL defining adjacent parking requirements
4. Application for Final Design Approval
5. Final Program Summary (Exhibit to Application)
6. Design Development Documentation
7. Draft Presentation Deck depicting updates and Final Design
 - a. Graphic Information on proposed exterior cladding materials

Note: We will return at a future time with a specific Signage Plan.

-----END OF MEMORANDUM -----

RHODE ISLAND STATE HEALTH LABORATORY
PROPOSED BUILDING AT 150 RICHMOND ST., PROVIDENCE
ON-SITE PARKING INFORMATION
12-9-22-DM, rev. 12-12-22-RQ

NUMBER OF LAB EMPLOYEES: 94, including seasonal and temporary employees

Normal business hours are 8:30-4:30pm Monday -Friday. But staff with shifted schedules routinely begin arriving at 7am and others may stay through 6pm-Maybe later.

During outbreak response events, smaller numbers of staff (5-10) may be on site during the day on Weekends/Holidays and late at night during the week.

PUBLIC UTILIZING TEMPORARY PARKING SPACES:

Five to fifteen minutes:

Hospital/health center couriers
Public dropping off environmental samples (well water, bats)
Municipalities – rabies testing

Fifteen to thirty minutes:

RIDOH Food protection – food testing
RIDOH Water Quality – water testing
DEM water testing
Police officers

Half-day to all day:

Instrument repair/maintenance technicians – will encourage garage use

NUMBER OF SPACES NEEDED:

- **Forensics-** 1-2 spots per hour , typically mornings only.
- **Environmental-** 3-4 spots per hour, submissions all day. Beaches, Bay Run, Dairy, Food, Rabies, Water Samplers.
- **Clinical-** 1-2 spots per hour, varies depending on outbreaks.
- **Public-** 1-2 spots per hour, private well & rabies submissions (public and commercial)

On an average day in July, we would need an 8-10 spots hourly average.

6-8 spots would be the bare minimum needed.

Delivery trucks: panel vans, UPS/Fed Ex, 18-wheeler delivery trucks – assume not in this request, will be using loading dock.