

2023 I-195 Development Plan Revisions Memo

August 9, 2023

Introduction

This memo summarizes proposed revisions to the I-195 Redevelopment District's (District's) Development Plan. The current Development Plan was adopted in May 2020, in response to the 2019 Special Economic Development District Act (SED Act), which required the District to adopt its own zoning.

Overview of Proposed Revisions to Development Plan

General

- *Regulation of Projects Following Completion.* There is ambiguity in the current Development Plan as to whether the City or District has jurisdiction over projects following completion. The District's legal counsel has opined that, to be consistent with the SED Act, the District shall retain jurisdiction over zoning matters for projects within the District even after project completion. The current Development Plan does not include parcels that had been sold at the time the Development Plan was adopted (Parcels 22/25 Lot 1, Parcel 22 Lot 2, and Parcel 30), therefore those parcels are being included in this revision to comply with the legal opinion. The proposed dimensional requirements for these parcels are consistent with adjacent parcels.
- *Regulation of Projects Under Interim Development Plan.* The Development Plan currently makes mention in several places that "Development undertaken pursuant to the Interim Development Plan shall be governed by the height standards set forth therein." The project proposed by the Fane Organization on Parcel 42 is the only project that was subject to the Interim Development Plan. Legal counsel has determined that references to the Interim Development Plan can be stricken given that the Fane project is no longer moving forward.
- *Revisions to Parcels*
 - Parcel 2. Lot lines are updated to reflect District's purchase of adjacent parcel and subsequent administrative subdivision to combine the two parcels.
 - Parcel 9. Lot lines are updated to reflect subdivision of the parcel.
 - Parcel 14. Lot lines are updated to reflect District's purchase of adjacent parcel and subsequent administrative subdivision to combine the two parcels.
 - Parcel 42. A new configuration of the parcel boundaries of Parcel 42 is proposed to address the impacts of various easements and improve the developability of the parcel for a range of uses. The District is proposing adding a density bonus to this parcel if certain ground floor uses are provided, including a cultural use. The proposed parcel boundary contemplates a realignment of the adjacent pathway through the park (the "Elbow Street pathway"), which would likely be completed as part of the construction of the park pavilion project. The future RFP for the parcel would include guidance for the preferred location and design standards for on-site

parking access, loading, and ground floor mechanicals, given the unique characteristics of the site.

Section 2.0 Development Standards

- *View Corridors*. Added language to Section 2.1.C to clarify that trees, public art, columns, and canopies are allowed as of right within the view corridors.
- *Signage*. Several changes are proposed with the goal to clarify, improve ease of administration, and re-establish more discretionary leverage to address contextual and qualitative design considerations.
 - Consistent with the change noted above regarding ongoing jurisdiction, the Development Plan is updated to clarify that the District will retain review of all signage *except temporary signage within the public right of way (e.g., A-frame signs), which shall be regulated by the City*. All temporary signage that is affixed to a building (e.g., leasing banners) will be under the District's jurisdiction.
 - The overall approach is to modify the Development Plan to only include the materiality and illumination standards for signs and only some of the dimensional requirements so that the location and size of signs can be more discretionary, since every condition is unique.
 - The City of Providence definitions of "Marquee" vs. "Canopy" vs. "Awning" are added to clarify the distinctions and aid interpretation of associated design standards.
- *City Walk*. The current Development Plan mentions the "City Walk" path in several places. While the pathway concept remains relevant, the "City Walk" name is not in active use by the City of Providence and has been removed.
- *Open Space District & 195 District Park*
 - Allowed Uses. Added "ancillary uses to support park operations and maintenance."
 - Parking and Loading. Added under 2.2(F) Prohibited Uses "Parking is prohibited in open spaces with the exception of temporary event-related vehicles."
 - Park Signage. Added standards on signage.
- *Resiliency Requirements*. New section added to address resiliency requirements and additional guidance on resiliency strategies in the Appendix. Specific uses are prohibited below the Ground Floor Design Flood Elevation 1 (DFE-1), and critical mechanical and electrical systems in multi-story buildings are not permitted to be located at elevations below the Second-Floor Design Flood Elevation (DFE-2).
- *Ground-Floor Height Minimum*. Clarified the first-floor height measurement. The original Development Plan listed the requirement without nuance. It now requires the minimum ground floor height be maintained for at least 75% of the frontage on Primary Streets. Additionally, the minimum ground-floor heights themselves have been modified to meet use-based needs without putting undue financial burden on developers. The revised minimum ground-floor height requirements are:
 - 15' commercial (lowered from 18'), or
 - 12' residential (this is a new option)
- *Off-Street Vehicular Parking Optimization Requirements*. Developments with off-street vehicular parking (surface or structured) containing 20 or more spaces will now be required to meet new

requirements for parking optimization (shared, public access, with payment infrastructure):

- Unbundle parking (i.e., the cost to rent, lease, or purchase a dwelling or commercial space is separate from the cost to rent, lease, or purchase parking spaces)
 - Allow for shared use by multiple uses and/or developments.
 - Be publicly accessible with clear wayfinding, signage, and transparent market rate hourly and daily parking pricing.
 - Have infrastructure set up to allow for access card and payment
- *Bicycle Parking Standards.* Within the Development Plan, the wording of the bicycle parking standards section is revised to streamline the language without altering the standards, and the following minor refinements were added for improved safety and usability:
 - The bicycle parking area should be accessible without requiring moving bikes or other items to access the space.
 - Bicycle racks should be implemented in a way to require no to minimal lifting of a bike and should support bicycles in an upright and stable position.
 - The bicycle parking area shall be well lit at all hours of the day and night.
 - *Transparency/Fenestration.* Section 2.5.A.2 is amended to change the minimum transparency from 35% to 25% for residential ground floors and upper story facades if tied to industry-recognized energy efficiency targets or certifications such as Passive House. A clear method for how to calculate transparency is also added. This is also subject to administrative review and approval by the Executive Director.
 - *Mechanical Screening Requirements.* Section 2.5.A.7 is amended to require roof-mounted mechanical equipment to be screened so as to limit visibility to a pedestrian from adjacent public right-of-ways.

Fencing. Section 2.6.B is amended to provide that permanent chain link fences are prohibited, but that temporary chain link fencing is perm