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Memo

Date: December 6th, 2023

To: Caroline Skuncik, Executive Director, I-195 Redevelopment District

cc: I-195 Redevelopment District

Via: Email

www.aro.net

From: Kim Yao

Re: Final Plan Review Memorandum

Document: 231 206 Final Plan Review Memo.pdf

Dear Caroline,

Architecture Research Office (ARO) is pleased to issue this memorandum for Final Plan review, discussing the key changes made to the design, including direct responses to the Design Review Panel's Concept Plan-level comments. We have appreciated the Panel's thoughtful feedback on our proposals throughout the design process. The Panel's comments were taken into close consideration throughout the Design Development phase of the project, and so we are issuing this update to previous responses shared at the Concept Plan meetings.

We believe that the pavilion design carefully addresses past feedback and concerns gathered from Providence community members and the Design Review Panel. With regards to the community, ARO feels the project will deliver on the positive reactions we experienced at the July 20th community outreach event, which we'll restate below:

- *"Having the pavilion will provide an excellent opportunity to gather with the community and enjoy."*
- *"Really beautiful. The shade features are much needed so thank you!"*
- *"It helps support the use of the park as a social destination..."*
- *"Looks very welcoming and open."*
- *"I love how this activates the park and fully claims this as a community space."*

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We look forward to receiving any further feedback from the Design Review Panel, Commission, and the public, and taking that under consideration for Construction Documents once we secure Final Approval for the design.

ARO Actions Since Issuance of Design Review Panel Recommended Conditions for Approval

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The Design Review Panel previously recommended the following issues be addressed during the development of the design and before final design approval. ARO issued responses prior to the start of Design Development at the Concept Plan 2 Commission presentation. We are providing clarified responses now that we have completed Design Development.

1. There needs to be more clarity about grading around the pavilion and how it is resolved as it interacts with:

- a. Building entrances and is coordinated with finish floor elevations.*
- b. Seat walls and other landscape features.*

ARO has worked closely with Agency and Fuss & O'Neill to develop a grading plan consistent with the project's resiliency goals. A key project goal is to provide a seamless transition from the outdoors to the building interior. The grading strategy makes the user experience feel natural as they move through the park into the building. Site water management around the pavilion and rehabilitation of surrounding park area drainage problems are also major considerations in the project grading. Agency thoughtfully developed a landscape strategy that envisioned the pavilion inhabiting a planted southern park edge, which has been further populated with features including topographical planters, benching, site walls, and site seating that are closely coordinated with drainage and circulation to provide an integrated and accessible visitor experience.

The grading strategy resolves itself such that the building sits with a uniform elevation around all sides. The grade falls gently away from the building to accommodate slopes suitable for fixed and moveable seating paving types such as stone dust. Grades between the interior building, new hardscapes, and existing hardscapes, will all be carefully coordinated in the construction drawings.

2. The design team should generate a detailed roof plan and cross-sections that identify all core-and-shell and potential tenant roof top equipment and other vertical

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penetrations, including plumbing vent pipes. The drawings should also show the location and height of screening solutions.

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Creating a low-profile building that highlights the pavilion's canopy and green roof is a priority for the project. ARO worked closely with our design team, including Hatfield Group our structural engineer and Collado Engineering our MEP engineer, to closely coordinate the pavilion's structure and building systems to consolidate systems within one recessed rooftop mechanical space. The building MEP systems are largely, though not fully, concealed from park-goers by surrounding the mechanical space behind a parapet and green roof. We feel that the visual presence of rooftop equipment has been minimized such that a supplemental screen will not be necessary.

3. Given the visibility of the dining space from the bridge, plaza, and surrounding paths, it needs more architectural definition. The floor and ceiling of the dining area should acknowledge the indoor/outdoor continuity of the space, both because it is wrapped by full-height glass on three sides, but also because two sides of the room can be fully opened. Future drawings should show:

- a. Floor material/patterns.*
- b. The ceiling, including sprinklers, lights, etc.*
- c. The interior elevation of the wall at the back of the space.*

The renderings now show various interior finishes which are in the Owner's scope of work, and how they relate to the exterior. Polished concrete floors in the front-of-house will transition to the hardscape noted in the landscape plan. The renderings also provide more clarity about ventilation and exposed ceiling elements, and the interior west wall is now more clearly conveyed. Additional finishes and furnishings will be provided by the tenant at a later date, and the current furnishings are placeholders. ARO will work closely with the District in providing guidance to their tenant in order to preserve a cohesive visual character for the pavilion. For the exterior, as highlighted in the Design Review Panel's introductory remarks, the main material palette of weathered natural cedar and untreated aluminum work well with the green park landscape setting. The articulation of the pavilion's roof structure and its relationship to the operable storefront system is an area that the design team has paid especially close attention to..

4. Thresholds between back-of-house areas and the dining area need to be better defined and resolved, including the door to the restrooms and the door to the kitchen. Ideally,

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doors should not face the dining room, in the same plane as the wall, but instead be located at right angles to the room in recessed vestibules.

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Circulation between front of house and back of house areas has been refined to include a small anteroom to minimize the visual impact of restroom circulation from the dining space. Design strategies for access to and from the kitchen and the ancillary vendor space have been developed by ARO to guide tenant design implementation. These will be coordinated with the building tenant(s) and their design team(s) to optimize public experience of the pavilion and park.

5. The change in ground plane materials between the existing park paths and new materials introduced as part of the pavilion project are successful, both in terms of their curvilinear geometry and slight contrasts in color and texture. The change in material helps to distinguish between public seating and restaurant seating in subtle and equitable ways since the pavement change extends under the canopy of the pavilion. In future incarnations of the design, the curved boundary between the stabilized crushed granite and unit pavers under the canopy should include sleeves that can accept poles that support temporary low fences. This boundary will be required if the tenant of the dining space wants to serve alcohol.

We appreciate this thoughtful feedback and ARO has worked Agency and Fuss & O'Neill to refine the paving design further as visible in the accompanying presentation deck. The integration of site access control has been a conversation with the District and its tenant(s) as there is more than one way to provide a barrier to define a service zone for alcoholic beverages. ARO and the District have been sensitive to how this is addressed in a manner that maintains the welcoming character of the pavilion. The updated deck represents a solution, designed in coordination with Agency, to provide moveable planters to define a closed or porous fence line to demarcate the boundary of the alcohol service zone.

6. Future incarnations of the project should include information about lighting sources and evening renderings that show the lighting effects. This is especially important under the canopy.

ARO has collaborated with our lighting designer, Lighting Workshop, to develop a building lighting strategy for the building exterior, including beneath the canopy, and in public park spaces within the pavilion. The revised presentation materials represent the lighting

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proposal. The solid walls of the pavilion are lit by a continuous linear wall grazers concealed in the canopy, and the open areas beneath the canopy are lit by a constellation of concealed point lights mounted into the canopy. The overall effect is that the pavilion is a beacon in the park that complements the lighting effects of the Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Bridge. Existing light poles around the building will be relocated to coordinate with modifications to the existing path, and will be on the side of paths away from the pavilion. The final interior lighting of the food and beverage tenant spaces are the responsibility of the tenant. We will work with the District to provide guidance on how the tenant lighting plan can be designed in a way that is complimentary with the park and pavilion lighting strategy.

7. The design team should evaluate if some portion of the canopy can be made non-porous in order to shelter the exterior seating from precipitation.

ARO and the District have explored options for incorporating sheltered exterior seating areas in our design process to date. The project is making a real investment in providing an expansive and fully operable glazed enclosure for the dining area, which functionally create a covered area open to the outside. Between the covered indoor dining space that can be opened to the exterior and the ample exterior seating area covered with a shade structure, we feel the project supplies a successful mix of seating options for outdoor dining.

8. The design team should provide drawings that show how the tenants for both the dining space and pass-through window will add signs, environmental graphics, and color that makes their businesses legible and identify their visual brands. The drawings should include renderings and sign guidelines.

ARO has reviewed this question with the District and the proposed guideline for primary tenant identification signage has been included in the revised design presentation. The proposal is for tenants to have a reserved though visible sign suspended from the canopy. The final sign graphics and implementation will be completed by the tenant following guidelines established by the District.

The above comments are issued alongside a revised design presentation deck and Final Plan application.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Yao". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Yao
Principle, ARO

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