

December 6, 2023

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

Dear Caroline,

Urbanica is pleased to provide this memo and accompanying materials for Final Design Review to the I-195 Commission.

**Design Development Documentation:** See attached DD documentation

**1. Final Program Summary:** See attached updated Development Program Summary - Exhibit I

**Affordability:** We are proposing to designate all 12 live-work units on the ground floor as affordable at 65% AMI in order to dramatically increase our ability to attract and retain local artists and artisans that may have traditionally been priced out of this type of offering. We believe this program will activate the ground floor of the project and add to the vibrancy of the neighborhood. However, the ability to designate these units as affordable is heavily dependent on receiving a grant requested from the Providence Housing Trust Fund (PHTF). We submitted our application for grant on October 31, 2023.

**2. Waiver Request:** We will be requesting one (1) waiver for consideration by the Commission. This has not changed since our second Concept Plan Meeting.

- a. **Minimum Ground Floor Height:** The I-195 Development Plan states that the Minimum Ground Floor Height must be 18' for non-residential use. In Building B (building that corners Dollar Street) our ground floor height is 16'. We reduced the height of the ground floor in our redesign with SHPO to reduce overall height of the building, while still maintaining the 6 stories to maximize unit count and help with project feasibility.
- b. We followed the Public Hearing Notice Requirement, as specified in Appendix 2 of the Design Approval Application. The public notice hearing was sent by first class mail to the owner addresses of the abutters within 200' of the Site and sent to Providence Journal to be published in the December 6<sup>th</sup> paper.

**3. An update of the deliverables required for Concept Design approval, clearly stating which elements have changed:** Our team has made the following changes in response to the comments offered by Utile and the Commission's Design Review Panel in their memo, dated July 13, 2023, as well as those voiced at our second Concept Plan Meeting, on July 19, 2023, by Commission Members, the Neighborhood Design Panel Representatives, and the general public.

a. Facade Design and Materials

We replaced the terra cotta shingles with traditional brick. We believe the brick is contextually familiar and the concern for the in and out detailing on the shingles is alleviated since brick is a thicker material.

The composition of the façade has also been made simpler. The inset detailing will be a wood look alike fiber cement panel and the vertical battens will be matching stock trim pieces.

Lastly, we have introduced standing seam metal cladding in some areas. We propose to use this material as an accent, for some penthouses, and also for party wall.

b. Accessible Ramp

The location of the accessible ramp has been updated to be immediately adjacent to the main stair for convenience. The design of the ramp has also been updated so it is integrated with the landscape plan.

c. Landscape Design

We further progressed the landscape design and reduced the amount of paving and replaced with more green spaces. We advanced design further with curvilinear geometry that softens the hard edges of the architecture. We propose “mounds”, which will create enough bedding to plant some larger trees on the plaza.

We also updated various elements along South Water Street with the intent to reduce the “wall-like” effect we had in previous iterations. We stepped the concrete retaining walls to create surfaces for planting and also to provide some informal seating areas.

d. Corner of James Street and South Water Street

We shifted the public stair at the corner southward in order to create a transparent corner at the café. This shift will give the café more visibility coming from the pedestrian bridge and the street and create a more welcoming presence.

For the areas where we have taller walks, we plan to plant ivy over the surfaces. We also added some access points so the residents have alternative ways to enter the bike room and parking garage from the street, if desired.

The café terrace is now defined by a brick wall and tall planting. The brick wall also screens the drop off area and driveway into the garage. The planting provides a visual screen to the loading dock and trash areas for the abutters, but is also more permeable than a solid wall and will feel connected to the sidewalk and pedestrian life. The overhead trellis was removed because it extended past one of the property lines and would potentially create a permitting challenge.

e. Additional Comments

Some additional developments that have been made to the design since our second Concept Plan meeting are:

- i. The addition of trash chutes on every floor and trash room on garage level of Building 1 and Building 2.
- ii. Bike rooms have been further developed in garage level of Building 1 and ground floor of Building 2. We have capacity for 104 bikes indoors.

**4. Rendered Elevations:** See page 12-13 of attached DD documentation

**5. Material samples of exterior cladding:** See page 17 of attached DD Documentation