

May 27, 2026

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

**RE: Parcel 8/8A Pre-Selection Design Review Panel Comments**

Design Review Panel Contributors:

- Craig Barton, Design Review Panel
- Emily Vogler, Design Review Panel
- Jack Ryan, Design Review Panel
- Tim Love, Utile
- Jocelyn Chiou, Utile

Dear Caroline,

Utile and the I-195 Redevelopment District Design Review Panel convened on May 13th of 2026 to review and discuss the architectural drawings and building program information provided by the two development teams that submitted proposals for Parcels 8 & 8A. The Panel reviewed the designs that had been submitted by the two development teams to evaluate macro-level urban design issues for each. The reviewed proposals are listed below:

- Proposal by Marathon & The Kelsey
- Proposal by Churchill & Banks

This pre-selection review is not intended to replace the detailed design review process, which will be conducted in partnership with the selected developer. Instead, the goal of providing design feedback at this stage is to assist the Commission in identifying which development team demonstrates the greatest potential to deliver a compelling, context-sensitive design for the site that best aligns with the District's Development Plan objectives, based on the approach each team has taken thus far.

Each proposal represents a unique vision for the site. The Design Review Panel focused on comparing the teams' approaches to key elements such as building massing and materiality, ground floor activation, and parking design. We have provided detailed comments below to inform the Commission's selection of a preferred development team.

## Proposal by Marathon & The Kelsey

### Building Massing & Materiality

1. The simple six-story massing is appropriate given its relationship to the adjacent highway edge, and is preferred as compared to the Churchill @ Banks proposal (see below). While the massing articulation along South Water Street helps to break down the building's perceived scale, the Panel recommends that the changes in the facade planes be more intentional, and perhaps only focused at the north and south ends of the building.
2. The Panel noted that the north facade, facing the south elevation of Trader Joes, presents an opportunity to concentrate a change of facade planes in order to create more intentional articulation of the end of the building that faces the primary direction that pedestrians will be walking towards the building.
3. Relative to recommendations of the Panelists above, they discussed ways to enhance the termination of the massing at the Tockwotton St and St Main St corner as well.
4. Some panelists expressed reservations about the quality of execution achievable with the proposed Nichiha panel wood-series cladding system. The cladding strategy would benefit from further study with respect to trim detailing and how it is resolved at terminations. Alternative cladding systems that are in the price point should also be explored post-designation, if the Commission selects this proposal and team.

### Ground Floor Activation

1. The Panelists agreed that the retail space proposed at the corner of Pike and South Main Streets was well-located and right-sized,
2. The Panelist noted and appreciated the direct connection between the multipurpose room and lobby to the outdoor patio on the west side of the building.
3. Panelists mentioned that the circulation path between the trash room and the dumpster should be revisited in order to achieve greater efficiency. This may require the relocation of the trash room on the residential floors above.

### Parking

1. The below-grade parking configuration and reduced parking ratio frees the ground level to accommodate well-located active uses.
2. The parking ratio is consistent with what the District has seen in comparable developments in the area.

## Proposal by Churchill & Banks

### Building Massing & Materiality

1. The Panelists think the tall mansard roof and wide range of contrasting cladding materials are more appropriate in a suburban context than within the District's established urban context.
2. The architectural expression and materiality closely echo the existing building on South Water Street, resulting in an ensemble that reads as an insular enclave rather than an urban block.

### Ground Floor Activation

1. The middle of the block is dominated by a field of surface parking, rather than provide ground level outdoor amenity space and visual relief with landscape elements.
2. The panel strongly prefers retail or other commercial uses over a sidewalk-level leasing office, which is a comparatively weak activator of the surrounding streetscape.

### Parking

1. The proposal targets a parking ratio of 0.85 space/dwelling unit, which is slightly higher than the ratio seen in comparable District developments.
2. Sharing parking with the adjacent 580 South Water Street project is an efficient way to maximize parking available to residents. However, the shared parking arrangement, combined with the overall massing strategy, creates an inward-facing apartment complex rather than a building that engages productively with the public realm.

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

Regards,



Tim Love, Principal  
Utile  
115 Kingston Street  
Boston, MA 02111