

## **MEMO DESCRIBING HOW THE FEEDBACK WAS ADDRESSED**

This memo describes how the feedback from Utile posted on the I-195 Commission website January 13, and the Public commentary was addressed in the revised plans being submitted.

### **I. Feedback From Utile**

#### **1. Potential Wind Impacts:**

The Fane Organization was already considering the potential for wind impacts issue that was raised by Utile and in 2021 had engaged the internationally-recognized wind engineering company RWDI to perform a Pedestrian Wind Study to analyze and make recommendations for amelioration of wind impacts. The RWDI recommendations are part of the current revised design presentation submitted for the February 15 hearing. A copy of the study is also being submitted to the Commission.

Utile raised the question of whether removing balconies would affect the wind patterns, suggesting that a smoother façade might increase wind speeds at ground level. In response, our wind consultants explained that wind impact is primarily caused by the height, shape or general massing of the proposed building. For the proposed Fane Tower, the revised design has the same height and shape as the previous design, and therefore, is expected to have a similar wind impact as the initial design.

The RWDI study tested the potential wind impact of the building for pedestrians at a series of locations, and determined that while conditions for sitting, standing and strolling would be comfortable in most locations, there were a few particular spots that needed to be addressed by wind remediation measures including landscaping and screening. Our new design includes these landscaping and screening measures, and also includes many shelves perpendicular to the main facades and vertical window protecting areas just outside entrance doors to help protect pedestrians from wind. The drawings being submitted to the commission incorporate these features.

#### **2. Podium Design**

a. Utile's memo noted that our new podium is simpler than the original proposal. That is intentional and results in consistent design themes for the entire building and the softer rounding of faceted corners rather than the harsh angular corners of the original. In response to Utile's critique that the podium required greater interest at an intermediate scale, our architects have prepared a revised podium with added complexity and animation. A mixture of horizontal and vertical panels present an interplay of texturing that creates interest and complexity. Added lighting from behind the panels will create a more welcoming residential feel to the podium.

b. Utile's memo suggested that the original proposal had a more successful relationship to the 225 Dyer building across the street and the larger urban context because of the rhythm of the facade elements and rich interplay of materials and colors. We note that this comment does not contain a specific suggestion to address and/or respond to. Our design team views the reduction in height to a 4-story podium as preferable in scale that better relates to the pedestrian on the street and to the adjacent park.

In terms of the relationship to the 225 Dyer building across the street, as new buildings are built in the neighborhood, they will each have their own look. The juxtaposition of the variety of buildings creates

the urban streetscape, without all buildings being required to relate to the façade materials of the earlier construction in that neighborhood. The Fane Tower should be viewed as a stand-alone modern entity.

### 3. Tower Design

a. Utile addresses the removal of the sculptural balconies lamenting the loss of this “distinguishing feature” and its “unique form” as a landmark on the skyline. While some people saw the sculptural balconies and their “river” pattern as more attractive, others criticized it as belonging in Miami or Dubai. Ultimately, construction costs of this detail proved prohibitive, requiring a redesign. The balconies negatively impacted the economic feasibility and ability to finance the project. The new tower design presents a more harmonious form with greater symmetry that creates an equally iconic landmark on the skyline.

### 4. Site Plan and Park Activation

#### a and b. Garage Doors

In (a.) the Utile memo is critical of the three garage doors of Dorrance Street, and in (b.) suggests that the Fane design team should return to the single access door that served both the loading and parking functions. The single access door for loading, parking and trash removal was abandoned for both safety concerns and to improve traffic flow.

#### c. Transformers

The Utile memo describes the transformers as an “unsightly façade facing the park,” and suggest that they should either be sited out of view in a vault underground, or be screened with more sensitive materials and plantings to ensure a better interface with the park.” Siting the transformers underground is not practical due to ventilation, concerns with underground vaults, particularly near the river, and compliance with Rhode Island Electric’s standards.

Therefore, we followed Utile’s second suggestion to create a better interface with the park by hiding the transformers with a combination of screens and plantings. We are submitting conceptual drawings showing a plan for these screens and plantings. The drawing shows both what is possible with plantings that are all within the Tower’s property line, and the possibility of even greater screening by means of planting a grotto of trees on park land on the other side of our screened fence separating the transformers from the park, should the I-195 Commission chose to do so on its park land. Further improvements to the interaction between the building and the park are indicated in the architect’s drawings.

## **II. Feedback From The Public**

After listening to the public comments at the January 18 hearing, and reading all of the comments posted on the website, it is immediately clear that the public does not speak with one voice. Some members of the public supported the project design as it is, while other members of the public would prefer the park with no building on it at all.

That said, we read through the online commentary carefully, but found mostly personal opinions with few specific design recommendations to consider. One of the comments we are considering related to the merits of clear glass vs. tinted glass. Several people commented on the height of the building, referring

to the Comprehensive Plan. We note that this issue of height was resolved when approved by the City Council and later upheld by the Rhode Island Supreme Court. We believe that once completed, the project will become an iconic landmark of Providence, and those who are discussing it now, will come to appreciate it as the gateway to the future. More importantly, it will provide much-needed housing, jobs, taxes and other benefits to Rhode Island.