

PROVIDENCE
INNOVATION & DESIGN
DISTRICT

Proposed Design Review Process Under New
Development Plan

July 2020

Agenda

- Overview of Changes
- Proposed Design Review Panel
- Overview of Proposed Design Review Process
 - RFP Selection Process
 - Concept Plan Review and Approval
 - Final Plan Review and Approval

Design Review Changes Under the Development Plan

- Design review was formerly jointly done by the on-call urban design consultant (currently Utile) and the City of Providence
- The City's review included design review by the Downtown Design Review Committee (DDRC)
- The DDRC is made up of local design and development professionals who do peer review of design proposals as part of the public permitting process
- Under the former process, the DDRC's recommendations were advisory and non-binding
- Under the new Development Plan, a new peer review process is being developed that will allow the District staff and on-call urban design consultant to bring additional local design professionals into the design review process

Proposed Design Review Panel

- On-call panel of architects, landscape architects, and other specialists
 - Contracted through primary on-call urban design consultant
 - Paid a lump sum honorarium for each development reviewed
 - Currently seeking recommendations from stakeholders and design industry groups on potential panelists
- Panelists must work, teach, and/or live in Providence or nearby communities (but cannot work for Rhode Island state agencies)
- The Executive Director and lead urban design consultant will select members from the pool of design reviewers as appropriate for each specific project under review
- Replaces the role that the DDRC used to play in reviewing projects within the District

Overview of the Proposed Design Review Process

Developer Selection Process

- On-call urban design consultant (currently Utile) reviews submissions on the following parameters:
 - Key metrics (GSF, unit count, parking count, height, etc.)
 - Experience of development team and architectural team
 - Waivers or variances needed
 - Urban design and architectural considerations
 - Potential red flags for market viability
- Comparison of proposals is presented to Commission to inform the selection of a preferred developer

Concept Plan Review

- Preferred Developer updates plans based on RFP phase feedback from the staff, Commissioners, and consultants, and submits a Concept Plan (more detail than the RFP submission)
- Preliminary review by State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to determine if there are any adverse impacts on historic resources
- Design Review Panel is convened by the on-call urban design consultant and District staff
- Design Review Panel reviews the proposal, with a focus on urban design; architectural considerations; market viability; and whether any waivers, variances, or special exceptions should be granted
- Urban design consultant (Utile) consolidates the feedback and presents it to the Commission

Concept Plan Approval

- Occurs at a public meeting
- Proponent presents plan
- Urban design consultant (Utile) synthesizes the concept plan feedback from the Design Review Panel (and SHPO if applicable) and presents to the Commission
- Public comment is taken
- Commission approval may occur at same meeting or a subsequent meeting

Final Plan Review

- Following Concept Plan approval by the Commission, the development team updates the proposal to address feedback from the Design Review Panel, SHPO, District staff, and Commissioners
- Final Plan submission constitutes a Design Development drawing set for both architecture and site/landscape design
- Final review by SHPO
- Design Review Panel is reconvened for a review of the updated and more detailed plans
- The urban design consultant (Utile) presents Design Review Panel findings to the Commission

Final Plan Approval

- Occurs at a public meeting
- Proponent presents updated plan
- Urban design consultant (Utile) synthesizes feedback from the Design Review Panel (and SHPO if relevant) and presents that to the Commission
- Public comment is taken
- Commission approval may occur at same meeting or a subsequent meeting

Certificate of Final Plan Approval

- Following Final Plan approval by the Commission, a Certificate of Final Plan Approval is prepared
- Certificate includes a detailed list of the defining features of the approved plan
- Any subsequent design changes may trigger re-approval by Commission and a reconvening of the Design Review Panel