

I am opposed to the current MIT proposal as it now stands, without taking in to consideration the issues I am raising. This is NOT an ironic/on situation. I am not opposed to development & am delighted to have heard that at least 2 of the previous speakers plan to stay here for the next 35 years. However... 48

This is an open letter to residents, developers, students, friends here in Cambridge, all of which includes members of the City Council. As you know, Cambridge is in the midst of great change. I am afraid that the city as I have known and loved it for more than 45 years, is now about to change in ways that may be irreversible. In the process, we residents stand to lose some of the qualities of life that brought me here and have kept me living, working, volunteering and contributing to life in the city.

Among the things I most fear we are losing are:

- diversity
- affordable housing for families with children
- a sense of community
- an opportunity for true community involvement in decisions affecting the life of the city

If our current city council keeps supporting the developers that are proposing massive projects from MIT to Central Square and that are already constructing massive buildings along this corridor, here are a few of the things that deeply worry me. While MIT has proposed building some graduate student housing, it is a few thousand short of the number needed. As more MIT graduate students move in to Central Square, and surrounding areas, many are sharing apartments, which then allows landlords to raise the rents. One result: the rents will go too high for many families either currently living in this neighborhood or interested in living nearby. The neighborhoods most heavily affected are Area 4, Cambridgeport, Riverside.

While there has been language in some of the development proposals for affordable housing, there is no indication for whom these units will be affordable, nor that these new units will be

large enough to accommodate families. The result could be a dramatic impact on our schools. As a veteran of 30 years of teaching at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, I continue to feel committed to our schools. In 2005, according to the school data, for the previous 5 years, enrollment declined by 17 %. While I do not have current detailed data system wide, we know that one motivation for creating the upper school initiative was that the number of middle school aged students has declined, and the 2013 projection shows a net reduction of 6 regular education classrooms for grades 6, 7 and 8. The numbers will continue to shrink as less housing is available. Every young couple with children I know personally who wants to send their children to Cambridge Public Schools has told me that as their families grow, they have been looking for larger apartments or houses to rent or buy here in Cambridge- with no success. And, they have already begun looking for housing in neighboring communities. A dramatic case in point: As recently as last week, a small apartment across the street from my house needing a complete renovation was sold for more than \$100,000 over the asking price with no inspection, no contingencies and cash paid. This is crazy!!! We are losing our young people; we are losing our diversity; we are losing our middle class. And MIT is building labs and offices, not sufficient dorms or residences.

Finally, perhaps one of the most important issues contributing to my own quality of life here in the city has to do with a sense of community. However, as I have observed at recent meetings both here at City Council and a few neighborhood meetings, the general population attending and involved in meetings concerning the present and future life of the city are residents in their 40's, 50's and older. On one hand this makes total sense. The younger residents are fully engaged in their careers, and that is appropriate. So was I when I was younger. But, if the new

demographic as I see it in the evening in Central Square, or at the innovation coffee shops in Kendall Square cannot remain in the city because they see other job opportunities, because there is no housing in which they can raise families, or, as seems to be the current trend, they are looking for new jobs every few years, who will be here in 10 - 20 years to get involved? To run for school committee or city council, to volunteer on commissions, to bring their children to River Fest? How can we build a true community if young people are moving on/moving out?

It feels to me like Cambridge is for sale, and not to anyone I know or care about. Yes, some visually blighted areas are looking more beautiful; yes, more interesting restaurants are opening up. But, who can afford to live, buy and eat out in these areas? I can right now, but, dear friends, I am getting older (as much as I resist the notion), and I worry about the future of the city I have loved, lived in and called home for more than forty five years. And I am deeply worried that I am preaching to the choir. Beyond the people who share my concerns, is anyone listening? Is anyone creating a forum at which residents have more than 3 minutes to speak? Or that community representatives to committees or conversations will be chosen by their neighbors, not assigned or invited in by the City Manager? Or, people convening meetings are guaranteeing that votes will be taken **only after** residents who want to engage in conversation will be heard before a vote is taken? I hope so and thank you for your attention.


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