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To: Mayor Henrietta Davis  
Vice Mayor E. Denise Simmons  
Leland Cheung  
Marjorie C. Decker  
Craig A. Kelley  
David P. Maher  
Kenneth E. Reeves  
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.  
Minka vanBeuzekom

From: Frederick P Salvucci, Senior Lecturer and Research Associate  
Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, MIT  
Date: April 5, 2013

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to urge that you not act on the MITIMCo proposal, which is before you, and allow it to lapse, requiring MITIMCo to re-file. I believe that the MITIMCo proposal in its current form raises very serious threats to the affordability of housing for Cambridge residents, and exacerbates the congestion of the Cambridge street network and overcrowding of the transit system, all of which the proposals from MITIMCo do not begin to deal with adequately.

I urge you to not be distracted by the modest gestures made by MITIMCo, which are similar to the gestures a normal real estate developer would make: agreeing to use Union labor, higher requirements for affordable housing, contributing land for a park, contributing to the design of a bicycle path, and contributing to a community-benefit package. These are all reasonable gestures for a normal real estate developer, who has to spend top dollar to acquire land and hold down costs to attract tenants.

But MIT is not a normal real estate developer:

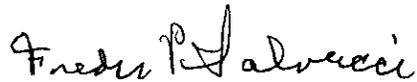
- Over the decades, MIT has acquired its land at low cost, using the competitive advantage it has over private parties because of its tax-exempt status. Allowing land acquired at low cost for educational purposes to be used at significantly increased density for commercial uses gives MIT a huge financial gift, with no assurance of how that money will be spent.
- MIT has done serious socio-economic damage to long-time Cambridge residents, by dumping its graduate student housing problem into the community. For decades, MIT pursued a goal of 50% on-campus housing for graduate students. By ending that policy within the last decade, MIT has dumped approximately 1,000 additional beds into competing for housing in the community. MIT claims that 80% of the graduate students who seek on-campus housing, get it. That means that 20% who ask are refused -- again, about 1,000 beds. But the graduate student interest in on-campus housing is substantially dampened by high cost and limits to tenancy. If a more realistic goal of 100% on- or near-campus housing were adopted, that would require construction of at least 5,000 new beds. But it will always be cheaper for MIT to dump that

demand into the community, so without binding commitments from MIT to build approximately 5,000 units of affordable on- or near-campus housing for graduate students, this situation will become increasingly severe in the near future.

- MIT has a moral obligation to mitigate the damage its change in housing policy has caused to the availability of affordable housing in Cambridge, by financing at least 1,000 units of affordable housing for the general community in Cambridge. The city should make this moral obligation a legal one, by requiring this financing as a condition of this plan. Increasing the percentage of affordable housing sounds nice, but is not very significant if the total commitment to housing is only 300 units, approximately 60 of which are proposed to be affordable.
- The new high-density commercial development will bring new traffic into an overloaded street system, unless the city requires serious restrictions on parking, and MIT becomes much more supportive of public transportation.

MIT has committed to review both its housing policies and its plan and design, in an open process with its faculty. But in view of the huge impact MIT policies have on the quality of life in Cambridge, it is prudent for the City Council to defer any action on the MITIMCo plan until it can see what new policies MIT develops.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fred R. Alvecci".