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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: Planning Board  
From: CDD Staff  
Date: September 27, 2011  
Re: MIT-Kendall Zoning Petition

**Update**

Since the prior public hearing was held on July 12, City staff have met multiple times with representatives of MIT and Goody Clancy (the City's consultant for the Kendall Square / Central Square Study) to consider issues raised at the Planning Board and Ordinance Committee hearings and in internal staff discussions.

At the October 4 meeting, representatives from MIT will discuss the alignment of MIT's academic and investment activities in the Kendall Square area, and will address some of the other general questions and issues raised during prior hearings.

In addition, staff have reviewed and discussed with MIT the proposed zoning language, and have identified a number of issues for further discussion. These issues are summarized in the chart on the following two pages. The "Future Work" column explains how those issues will be further discussed among MIT, City staff and Goody Clancy, in some cases through the ongoing work of the K2C2 study.

Staff will be available to answer questions and respond to comments from the Board at the October 4 meeting.

Topic	Issues	Future Work
<b>FAR limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of allowing increased commercial development in an area currently zoned for residential/institutional use needs further study</li> <li>• Regulations restricting FAR should be consistent with citywide policy – exemptions should be allowed only where they are consistent with the City’s goals for the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K2C2 study will investigate the impacts of additional commercial development</li> <li>• CDD working w/MIT on zoning language</li> </ul>
<b>Height</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed heights require further review to study their impact on the existing and future character of the area (<i>see map</i>)</li> <li>• Allowed heights along Memorial Drive deserve specific attention</li> <li>• Proposed smaller-floorplate provision above a certain height is helpful, but should consider alternatives to 22,000 SF floorplate</li> <li>• Proposed step-back provision is helpful, but should consider step-backs greater than 10’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K2C2 study will investigate appropriateness of different height limits throughout the Kendall area</li> <li>• Goody Clancy will help analyze floorplate limitations; will work with MIT on alternatives to zoning language (including design review criteria)</li> </ul>
<b>Active Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of a PUD should include a retail plan for the entire area that anticipates future locations and uses (but not exact tenants)</li> <li>• A range of “active uses” is appropriate, but retail should make up a significant portion of the mix</li> <li>• Consider requirements for location and placement of active uses – possibly more flexibility on required floor area</li> <li>• “<i>Reduction in Required Active Uses</i>” should not be a blanket exemption; some flexibility may be appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K2C2 study will investigate criteria or guidelines for PB approval of a retail/active use plan</li> <li>• CDD working w/MIT on language revisions</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing is a significant need for the city and the area, and the scale of the proposed zoning change suggests that a greater contribution of housing would be appropriate</li> <li>• Exempting all housing from FAR limitations may not be an appropriate incentive – some limits should be considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K2C2 study will investigate the need for housing and what contribution would be appropriate in this case; MIT examining possible opportunities</li> <li>• CDD working w/MIT on potential language revisions</li> </ul>
<b>Setbacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum sidewalk width is appropriate, but 15’ may not be the right number to achieve the area’s urban design goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goody Clancy will help analyze sidewalk widths; CDD will work w/MIT to consider alternatives</li> </ul>

Topic	Issues	Future Work
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed concept for auto parking requirements is consistent with city goals – setting a “hard maximum” and incentivizing developers to reduce commercial parking as much as possible</li> <li>• Auto parking numbers might be lower given parking trends in the area and traffic reduction goals</li> <li>• Minimum auto parking may be appropriate for residential uses – but could be reduced through shared parking</li> <li>• Minimum bicycle parking requirements should be included</li> <li>• Shared parking should be encouraged between commercial and residential uses with different peak demand times</li> <li>• Institutional parking should remain separate from commercial and residential parking</li> <li>• Parking design/layout requirements should not be waived</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDD and TPT working w/MIT to consider alternate auto/bike parking requirements, based on available data and City goals for traffic and parking in the area</li> <li>• CDD working on revised language for shared parking</li> </ul>
<b>Allowed Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed allowed uses are generally consistent with goals for the area – however, language needs clarification in some places</li> <li>• Open-air retail may be appropriate, but not drive-in or auto-related</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDD working w/MIT on revising list of uses to be clearer and more consistent with other parts of the ordinance</li> </ul>
<b>Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show on a map how proposed 15% publicly beneficial open space requirement compares to what is existing in petition area</li> <li>• Design review criteria should be considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing work w/CDD, MIT</li> </ul>
<b>Signage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blanket waiver of signage requirements not appropriate – could consider specific relief in areas such as proposed plaza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MIT will change proposal</li> </ul>
<b>Noise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider language to require monitoring and reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing work w/CDD, MIT</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Purpose” mentions sustainability but there are no specific sustainability-related requirements in proposed language</li> <li>• Given the location and the significant increase in development activity proposed, development should meet a high standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be considered in K2C2 study and future conversations w/MIT</li> </ul>