

MIT

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MIT

MIT picks urban design team, seeks feedback for plan to redevelop Kendall Square, east campus

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 1, 2013 01:47 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

MIT has selected an urban-design team to help plan the college's redevelopment of 26 acres of property it owns in Kendall Square and on its East Campus.

Administrators announced they will hold three community forums for Cambridge residents and three others for the MIT community over the next three months "to gather feedback on the process, goals, planning principles, and early concepts of the urban design effort."

The multidisciplinary urban-design team, selected by MIT's East Campus Steering Committee, will consist of: Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects of Atlanta; Michael Van Valkenburgh Landscape Architects of Cambridge and New York; urban designer Ken Greenberg of Toronto; Vanasse Hangen Brustlin for transportation analysis; Atelier Ten for environmental design planning; and HR+A Advisors for strategic advisory services.

The team will help lead a study "to create a long-range development framework to accommodate future academic, commercial, and residential uses on MIT property in Kendall Square, as well as a gateway to the East Campus area," the institute said in a statement.

"The team will build upon the work of Elkus Manfredi Architects, which led to the adoption of new zoning regulations in the district, as well as the work of a faculty design group led by the School of Architecture and Planning, which recently developed design typologies for the Institute's property in the Kendall Square area," the institute said.

MIT has scheduled forums for Cambridge residents on: Thursday, Nov. 14, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in Room 4-153; Thursday, Dec. 12, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in Room 56-154; and Wednesday, Jan. 22, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in a to-be-determined location TBD.

Forums for the MIT community will be held on: Thursday, Nov. 7, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in Room 3-270; Wednesday, Dec. 11, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in Room 32-155; and Tuesday, Jan. 21, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in a to-be-determined location.

At each of the six meetings MIT officials will provide the most up-to-date information at the time:

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“A critical component of the work ahead will be to collect valuable input from the MIT and Cambridge communities,” said a statement from MIT executive vice president and treasurer Israel Ruiz. “I’m delighted that an undergraduate student and a graduate student are serving on the steering committee that is guiding the east campus/Kendall gateway study.”

Like Ruiz, associate provost Martin Schmidt has been actively involved in redevelopment study and planning processes.

“The work to reimagine the east campus/Kendall Square area of MIT will benefit from the collective wisdom of the broader community,” he said in a statement. “I encourage members of the MIT and Cambridge communities to attend these sessions. Our shared creative thinking can converge to propel forward one of the most important innovation hubs in the world, and help to create a vibrant and welcoming gathering place for visitors to Cambridge, as well as the residents, students, and employees of the greater Kendall Square environs.”

Along with the meetings, MIT said it will post updates and other resources throughout the design process on [this website](#).

Members of the MIT and Cambridge communities can share ideas, questions, and comments on that site or by emailing mit2030ideas@mit.edu.

MIT first introduced a redevelopment proposal for Kendall Square and east campus areas in 2011. Earlier this year, the institute announced [some changes](#) to the proposal.

In April, the Cambridge City Council [approved](#) those changes, which altered zoning rules to allow buildings in parts of Kendall Square to be more than twice as tall more than double the maximum height for buildings in parts of Kendall Square and on MIT’s east campus.

MIT has said that the zoning changes will allow it to build more than 2 million square feet of office, lab, retail, housing, and academic space on land now used as parking lots.

The [massive redevelopment plan](#) has [come under fire](#) by some professors who say the plan for up to 300 new graduate student housing units is not enough.

Critics have said if the institute would house more of its students, it would help reduce the heavy demand and high prices for rental housing in the neighborhood.

In the 1980s, the institute set a goal to house half of its graduate students, but only about 38 percent of the 6,200 graduates students are currently housed by the institute. The rest live off campus, and the majority off the off-campus graduate students reside in Cambridge.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at mjrochele@gmail.com. Looking for more coverage of area colleges and universities? Go to our [Your Campus pages](#).

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