Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
City Councillor

January 24, 2013

Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
One Cambridge Center, 4th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142

Dear Members of the Board,

As you are aware the City Council has examined a number of zoning petitions over the previous year and will be examining additional petitions in the coming months. During the hearing processes for these petitions, which ultimately make changes that bring more jobs and people to Cambridge, residents have voiced their doubts in existing transportation infrastructure and have emphasized the need to encourage transportation options that will nourish future development. At this moment, the City of Cambridge and the CRA have an opportunity to address these concerns by working together on a transportation project that could alleviate traffic, unite neighborhoods, and contribute to our city’s economic health.

The Grand Junction Rail with Trail is one such project. According to a feasibility study conducted by the City of Cambridge in 2006, a multi-use path constructed along the Grand Junction corridor would “create a major north-south bicycle and pedestrian linkage between Boston, the MIT Campus, several dense Cambridge neighborhoods (namely, Cambridgeport, Area 4, Kendall Square, Wellington-Harrington, and East Cambridge) and Somerville. By providing a vital urban component to the existing network of parkland-based trails, the trail would do much to encourage bicycling and walking to and from the area’s major employment and university centers.”

The feasibility study also identified two CRA parcels as components of the project’s first phase of construction. The City of Cambridge now owns the parcel located between Binney Street and Broadway, and the CRA recently lost funding for a redesign of the parcel between Broadway and Main Street. While the loss of funding is unfortunate, it presents a new opportunity for collaboration between the CRA and the City of Cambridge with the goal of accelerating design and construction of the Grand Junction path.

The Grand Junction multi-use path continues to be one of my top priorities as both a Cambridge City Councillor and a State Representative. I believe this path is one of the most important infrastructure improvements we can make within our neighborhoods and within the economic engine surrounding Kendall Square. It has the potential to become an important part of a comprehensive update to our transportation infrastructure, and will enhance the physical and economic health of our City. I will continue to advocate at the City and State level to move this project forward, and I encourage you to work with the City of Cambridge to help make this project a reality. It would be my pleasure to discuss this with you further at your own convenience.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Toomey Jr.
City Council

CC: Susan Glazer, Interim Executive Director of CRA
March 12, 2013

Cambridge City Council
c/o Cambridge City Clerk
City of Cambridge
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

Re: Redevelopment Authority Support for Rail with Trail

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Let me first congratulate Councilor Toomey for his leadership on the proposal to improve the Grand Junction rail corridor through the “Rail with Trail” proposal.

Please accept this letter as an expression of support for Councilor Toomey’s “Rail With Trail” proposal for the Grand Junction rail line through Cambridge as set forth in his January 24, 2013 letter to the Authority. This support was confirmed in a vote of the Authority taken at its meeting held on February 27, 2013, to be documented in the official minutes of the meeting which will be publicly available on the Authority’s website.

As the Council is aware, the Authority controls rights in land along the railroad line, which, of course, serves as the northerly border of the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Area. As we work to complete the redevelopment of the area, the Authority is most interested in expanding transit options for residents and businesses. The Authority is also actively supporting the City of Cambridge Community Development Department’s open space study for all of East Cambridge. While housing remains the most pressing priority for the area, we view additional transportation options and the provision of additional open space as two keys to its future. The Rail with Trail proposal advances both objectives.

We look forward to continue to work with Councilor Toomey, the entire Council, and City and state officials on this important project. Please do not hesitate to reach out me should you have any questions regarding the Authority’s support for the project.

Regards,
The Cambridge City Council  
March 12, 2013  
Page -2-  

[Signature]

Kathleen Leahy Born, AIA, LEED AP  
Chair

KLB/dm

Copies to:  
Mr. Robert Healy  
Mr. Richard Rossi  
Mr. Brian Murphy  
Ms. Susan Glazer  
Members of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority:  
Mr. Barry Zevin  
Ms. D. Margaret Drury  
Mr. Conrad Crawford  
Christopher Bator, Esquire
April 8, 2013

Mayor Henrietta Davis
Vice Mayor E. Denise Simmons
Ordinance Committee Chair David Maher
City Councilor Leland Cheung
City Councilor Marjorie C. Decker
City Councilor Craig A. Kelley
City Councilor Kenneth E. Reeves
City Councilor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
City Councilor Minka vanBeuzekom
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Re: Commitments and conditions accompanying the amended zoning petition for PUD-5 District attached hereto as Attachment A

Dear Mayor Davis, Vice Mayor Simmons, Ordinance Committee Chair Maher and Councilors Cheung, Decker, Kelley, Reeves, Toomey and vanBeuzekom:

The purpose of this letter is to describe commitments and benefits which the Massachusetts Institute of Technology ("MIT") is prepared to offer the City of Cambridge, to facilitate and enable MIT to revitalize and redevelop Kendall Square (the "Project") through the construction of new mixed-use buildings, subject to the satisfaction of the “Conditions” set forth below.

MIT’s Commitments

A. Off-Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Adjacent to the Grand Junction. In connection with the City’s continued desire to construct off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities through Cambridge adjacent to the Grand Junction railroad branch and in furtherance of MIT’s previous granting of easements to the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (the “CRA”) over real estate it owns at Technology Square for the construction of a portion of such facilities, MIT shall contribute, within 90 days of MIT’s receipt of notification from the CRA that the CRA, its designee or successor, has commenced planning and or the construction of off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities on property adjacent to the Grand Junction now owned by the CRA between Binney Street and Main Street, an amount requested by the CRA, in its discretion, of up to $500,000, which funds shall be used for the construction of the facilities. In furtherance of providing appropriate off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities through Cambridge adjacent to the Grand Junction railroad branch, MIT will, jointly and in conjunction with the City, complete a
study of all parcels that it owns adjacent to the portion of the Grand Junction railroad branch situated between Main Street and Memorial Drive, in order to consider the feasibility of granting the City of Cambridge easements for the construction, now or in the future, of off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities adjacent to the railroad line. The study will be completed and a report submitted to the City Council within eighteen (18) months of the adoption of the PUD-5 zoning amendment.

B. Cherry Street Lot. MIT shall convey the parcel of real estate situated at 35 Cherry Street (Assessor’s Lot # 75-118) to the City of Cambridge or a third party to be designated by the City of Cambridge to be used, in perpetuity, for uses that directly benefit residents in the Area IV Neighborhood and surrounding communities. The transferee and use of the property shall be determined through a public process conducted by the City of Cambridge Community Development Department. MIT shall convey the lot immediately upon its receipt of notice from the City as to the identity of the transferee and the designation of the proposed use. The conveyance shall be made by MIT upon such terms and conditions as the City and MIT may reasonably agree.

C. Labor; Pathways Program; Jobs. MIT agrees that, in connection with construction of new commercial buildings within the PUD-5 District, it shall use or cause its contractors to use union labor for all building trades. In conjunction with this commitment, MIT will contribute up to $20,000 annually for a period of ten (10) years, commencing upon the Building Trade Council’s creation of an apprentice Pathways Program for Cambridge residents for such program. It is understood that this funding will create no less than fifteen (15) new apprentice opportunities annually for Cambridge residents within twelve (12) months of the creation of the pathway program. In addition, MIT agrees that it will include in new leases of commercial space situated within the PUD-5, a covenant requiring that tenants notify the City of Cambridge Office of Workforce Development of all new job opportunities as they become available.

D. Locally based and Independent Retail. MIT agrees that no more than fifty percent (50%) of new retail space in the PUD-5 District shall be occupied by retailers who own and operate retail establishments at more than five (5) locations in Massachusetts at the time the retailer’s lease is initially executed.

E. Open Space and Retail Advisory Committee. In order to ensure that the adjacent neighborhoods are involved in the programming of activities for the open spaces and the types of retailers for the retail space in the PUD-5 District, MIT will establish an advisory committee to provide input on the programming of these spaces. The advisory committee shall meet once annually for a period of 10 years. The advisory committee shall include representatives from the Community Development Department, adjacent neighborhoods
Date: 5/19/2014
Re: CRA coUrbanize Public Input Process

The Cambridge Development Authority recently conducted a public input process for several redevelopment projects through the online forum coUrbanize. CoUrbanize is a tool that allows governments and developers to post project materials online and receive written responses from community members online; it is meant to both disseminate information and allow public comments on projects.

- The CRA received a total of 51 written comments on the ten proposed projects that were available for comment on the site in addition to several comments with new project ideas. Of the written comments, 12 of them were about the Grand Junction Path. The responses to the proposed path were overwhelmingly positive.
- Nearly 200 others clicked on “support” for the project without providing a written comment.

In addition to communicating general support, the comments mentioned the following benefits of the path:

- The path will encourage alternative transportation, and this will be a benefit both the quality of life of area residents and the environment
- It will increase safety of cycling in the area and will help some people overcome their fear of using their bikes as a form of transportation
- The path will encourage healthy lifestyles and be a great resource of the community
- The path will be a crucial expansion to the bicycle and pedestrian network in the area

Additionally, the comments mentioned several concerns about the design of the path:

- The path should be well-lit
- The path design should include green infrastructure to help mitigate storm water runoff
- The Grand Junction Corridor should have space reserved for transit, as it presents a unique opportunity for expanded transit service.
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

To: Richard C. Rossi, City Manager
From: Brian P. Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development
Date: June 17, 2014
Re: Council Order O-17 dated May 19, 2014 regarding the proposed Grand
Junction Community Path

The Grand Junction Community Path will run alongside the existing tracks in the
Grand Junction corridor from the Boston University Bridge, connecting to the
planned extension of the Somerville Community Path being constructed as part of
the Green line Extension. It will provide a continuous pathway for residents,
schoolchildren, workers and visitors to stroll, jog, or bike along a linear park
connecting several neighborhoods with each other, with commercial areas, and
with regional resources such as the Charles River.

At the June 11, 2014 meeting of the Transportation and Public Utilities
Committee focused on the Grand Junction Path, Council heard from the
Community Development Department, MassDOT, MIT, Cambridge
Redevelopment Authority, and the Friends of the Grand Junction Path. A copy of
the Community Development Department’s presentation can be found online at

There are several planning issues that need to be resolved prior to allocating
consulting funds or design funds in the FY16 budget:

1. As part of MIT’s Letter of Agreement with the City related to Kendall Square
PUD-5 re-zoning in 2013, MIT committed to conduct a more detailed
feasibility analysis of the segment of the proposed path through MIT property
between Main Street and Memorial Drive. MIT has formed an advisory
committee for the feasibility study which includes staff from the Community
Development Department and members of the Cambridge Bicycle Committee.
The study is to be completed by October 2014.

2. MassDOT’s 2014 Capital Investment Plan introduced the idea of using
European-style Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) trains on the Grand Junction
corridor. This would provide urban rail service from a proposed new “West
Station” at Beacon Yards near the Allston-Brighton I-90 interchange along the
Grand Junction corridor to North Station, with a stop in Cambridge near
Kendall Square. MassDOT has expressed interest in not precluding
simultaneous 2-way rail service. It is not clear that the multi-use path could fit
alongside of two sets of rails in all segments of the corridor. Cambridge will
continue to work with MassDOT to address this question and work on
alternative scenarios if needed.
3. It is currently unknown how the connection will be made from the Grand Junction Path to the Somerville Community Path in Somerville. The Civil Engineering department at Northeastern University is providing assistance by conducting preliminary evaluations of various design options to connect the Grand Junction path to the planned Somerville Community Path extension. We expect this work to be completed by the end of the summer.

The outcomes of the above items are needed prior to determining next steps for allocating consulting and design funds to the project.

Council Order O-17 also requested additional information regarding the possibility of an east-west path from Danehy Park along the Fitchburg Line connecting to the Grand Junction Path. The 2009 MAPC Alewife Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Study identifies the potential for a "Minuteman South Extension to Porter Square" to connect Alewife Station to Sherman Street on the north side of the MBTA tracks, and "perhaps beyond to Porter Square." The feasibility of such a path that would extend east from Danehy Park has not been studied.
To: Richard C. Rossi, City Manager

From: Brian Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development Department;

Date: May 6, 2014

Re: Council Order O-11 dated April 7, 2014 regarding the proposed Grand Junction Community Path

The Grand Junction Community Path will run alongside the existing tracks in the Grand Junction corridor from the Boston University Bridge connecting to the planned extension of the Somerville Community Path being constructed as part of the Green line Extension. We believe the path can be created while maintaining current rail operations and accommodating a “bus rapid transit” alignment using a portion of the corridor. It will provide a continuous pathway for residents, schoolchildren, workers and visitors to stroll, jog, or bike along a linear park connecting several neighborhoods with each other, with commercial areas, and with regional resources such as the Charles River.

At the northern end the path will provide access, via the Community Path extension through North Point, to the Charles River pathways, Downtown Boston, and Charlestown to the east, and to Davis Square, Alewife, and the Minuteman Path to the west which serves Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford. At the southern end, connections to the Charles River Pathways and the BU Bridge serve Back Bay and the Longwood Medical and Academic Area, and provide regional access to Brighton, Watertown, Newton and Waltham.

The Grand Junction was one of the first north-south rail links in the Boston metropolitan area. Opened in 1855 by the Grand Junction & Depot Company, the line followed a serpentine alignment weaving through the newly industrialized areas of Cambridgeport, East Cambridge, Charlestown, Everett, and Chelsea, ending at the piers of East Boston. The closing of industrial and manufacturing uses along the corridor in the twentieth century reduced the importance of the line for freight. Presently, two to four trains a day run on the Grand Junction through Cambridge, as this corridor remains the only north-south rail connection east of Framingham and Worcester.

The use of the Grand Junction corridor as a multi-use path was first formally envisioned by the 2000 Cambridge Green Ribbon Open Space Committee in its study of possible new parks and open space in the city and was identified as a top priority. The 2001 Eastern Cambridge Planning Study (ECAPS) also recommended the creation of the path along the Grand Junction corridor as an infrastructure project to enhance non-auto mobility. In August 2001, the Cambridge Bicycle Committee completed a concept proposal for the path. In
October 2006, the city completed a feasibility study of the corridor. A 2013 report by the Boston Green Routes Initiative, currently spearheaded by LivableStreets Alliance, has the Grand Junction Path as part of the vision for an interconnected network of paths in the Boston region.

The Metropolitan District Commission (now the Department of Conservation and Recreation) 1997 Charles River Basin Master Plan recommended that the Grand Junction Railroad Bridge, a double-barreled crossing with active tracks on one side and an abandoned roadbed on the other, be used to connect bicycle/pedestrian paths on both sides of the river.

Interest in the Grand Junction Community Path project was reinvigorated in 2010 when MassDOT proposed introducing commuter rail service from Worcester to North Station with about 20 trains per day along the corridor, a project that was cancelled after further analysis. Additionally, the 2013 MassDOT Healthy Transportation Policy Order clarified the state’s willingness to accommodate shared-use paths along railroad rights-of-way.

MassDOT’s 2014 Capital Investment Plan introduced the idea of using European-style Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) trains on the Grand Junction corridor. This would provide urban rail service from a proposed new “West Station” at Beacon Yards near the Allston-Brighton I-90 interchange along the Grand Junction corridor to North Station with a stop in Cambridge near Kendall Square. It is unclear whether both this rail service and a community path can both utilize the corridor.

As part of MIT’s Letter of Agreement with the City related to Kendall Square PUD-5 re-zoning in 2013, MIT committed to conduct a more detailed feasibility analysis of the segment of the proposed path through MIT property between Main Street and Memorial Drive. MIT has formed an advisory committee for the feasibility study, composed of a representative of the Community Development Department, a representative of the Charles River Transportation Management Association, the President of the Friends of the Grand Junction Community Path, a representative from MIT Facilities, two MIT faculty members, and the Executive Director of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA). In April 2014, MIT awarded a consulting contract for a study of the feasibility of the multi-use path on the section of the Grand Junction owned by MIT. The study is to be completed by October 2014.

In addition, as part of MIT’s Letter of Agreement, MIT has agreed to provide $500,000 in construction funds to the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority for construction of a segment of the path between Binney and Main Street. The CRA has committed over $60,000 to developing construction documents for this segment, and hopes to put the construction project out to bid later this year. The Community Development Department and Department of Public Works are closely coordinating with the CRA on the design.
Starting in 2013, the Community Development Department has allocated staff time to accelerate the planning process for the Grand Junction Community path project, with monthly internal planning meetings and regular coordination with stakeholders, including the newly-formed Friends of the Grand Junction Community Path organization. Connectivity to the Grand Junction Path and its role as a connector in the public space network will also be an important element of the upcoming Eastern Cambridge Kendall Square Open Space Planning Competition.

In addition, CDD has engaged the Civil Engineering department at Northeastern University to obtain assistance from a graduate student in conducting preliminary evaluations of various design options to connect the Grand Junction path to the planned Somerville Community Path extension.
O-11

COUNCILLOR MCGOVERN
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
COUNCILLOR MAZEN
COUNCILLOR CARLONE

WHEREAS: The Grand Junction Path presents a tremendous opportunity to offer additional green space for Cambridge residents; and

WHEREAS: Many departments have been working hard over the last several years to make the Grand Junction Path a reality; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council on the status of the Grand Junction Path project.

http://www2.cambridgema.gov/cityclerk/PolicyOrder.cfm?item_id=42442