

## PROPOSAL for an MIT CENTER in WASHINGTON, DC

### ORIGIN and SYNOPSIS of the PROPOSAL

This proposal is the result of considered discussions over a long period among the undersigned signatories: **Jay John Hellman, Roger K. Lewis, Malcolm D. Rivkin and Michael L. Telson.** All are MIT alumni with extensive professional and practical business experience in areas related to the key issues herein addressed. The proposal advances two key propositions.

- First, Washington, DC, is a hub of international as well as national power and policy-making. Therefore the national and global image, prestige and educational outreach of MIT would be greatly enhanced were it to establish a prominent, easily-accessed, permanent presence in the form of a technologically state-of-the-art, multipurpose MIT Center in Washington.
- Second, an exceptionally well-positioned, strategic site for the MIT Center is currently available, offering MIT a singular opportunity that warrants swift action. The site could be acquired at no cost to MIT if the project is promoted by an appropriately constituted committee of MIT alumni/ae, as outlined below.

### WHY an MIT CENTER in WASHINGTON, DC?

Public policies deliberated upon, adopted and implemented in the nation's capital affect the lives of citizens not only of America, but also of the entire world. **Science, technology and public policy are increasingly interdependent and complex.** The complexity is magnified by the growing number of issues facing the planet: energy, climate change, health care, biotechnology, nanotechnology, information technology, education, and the economic, social, political and ecological challenges of globalization.

Meeting these challenges is the essence of MIT's educational and research mission. Realizing this, MIT created the Engineering Systems Division (ESD.) **But missing are human-trust relationships that grow from personal interaction.** MIT's students would benefit significantly from their exposure to our Government and its processes for making science and engineering policy decisions. They will also benefit from their exposure to the many other institutions engaged in research, and policy formation that are based in Washington, DC. In fact, exposure to these issues increasingly will become a vital part of an MIT student's education; and having that as part of its curriculum will give MIT, and its students who participate in it, a significant comparative advantage. By the same token, policymakers in Washington, DC, would benefit from the kind of associations that only personal interaction can provide. In the 21st century, more than ever before, **successfully accomplishing MIT's mission will depend on strong relationships and dialogues between the MIT community and policymakers in government and industry.** Because these dialogues will be both national and global in scope, it is vital that MIT have a strong presence in Washington, DC, the national and global center of power and policy.

### WHY a SPECIAL KIND of CENTER and BUILDING?

Contact between the MIT community and policymakers means more than a few meetings, email exchanges, phone calls, visiting interactive web sites or downloading data. It requires **sustained, high-level, face-to-face interactions that nurture and reinforce trust.** Accordingly, the MIT Center in Washington must be a comfortable and facilitative venue for such interactions, as well as a great educational facility.

MIT can play a symbolic role in the nation's capital, among the most visited cities in the world. **The MIT center should be a visually memorable structure in a prestigious location,** and not just another assemblage

of well-appointed space on upper floors of a downtown or suburban office building. Washington, DC, is the showplace for iconic structures that powerfully embody and express the history of our democracy and symbolize our national purpose: the Smithsonian Institution and its many museums, the U.S. Capitol Building and Library of Congress, the White House and numerous other edifices at or near Washington's Monumental Core. MIT has the opportunity to take its place among these national symbols.

The MIT center should be an iconic embodiment of the spirit of pioneering scientific advance and cutting-edge technology, and of the progress and hope for humankind that these represent. It should publicly -- both nationally and internationally -- represent the apex of America's collective scientific and technological expertise in a manner analogous to the Smithsonian, the symbol of America's cultural heritage. By projecting this image through the location and design of its representative venue in Washington, MIT will accomplish two objectives. It will convey to government and private sector policymakers a powerful affirmation of MIT's pre-eminent leadership in American science and technology. And it will convey to the community of nations, whose citizens inhabit, visit or observe Washington, DC, from afar, an affirmation of the spirit of science and technology in the service of all humanity, and of the centrality of science and technology in the public affairs of individual nations and the world.

### **PROPOSED MIT CENTER PROGRAM and FUNCTIONS**

The multi-functional MIT Center in Washington, DC, would be a technologically "green" building, a state-of-the-art model of sustainability incorporating infrastructure for teaching, research, telecommunication, and energy management. The building will be a working demonstration of how an edifice can be at once operationally practical and aesthetically compelling, respectful of its local context and greatly enhancing the public's experience of place.

The multi-story MIT Center will be a showpiece of well-designed, vertically mixed use. Its upper floors will provide facilities for resident MIT undergraduate and graduate students, visiting or resident MIT faculty, teaching and research fellows, and visiting domestic and international scholars in an appropriate combination of dormitory rooms and small apartments. Dining options will include an informal cafe/cafeteria and a more upscale restaurant that would have a technology / science / public policy theme. These will serve Center residents and guests and will also be open to the public. When designed to be inviting and comfortable, dining venues can constructively enhance opportunities for social and intellectual discourse. The cultures of the world share a significant belief that the comfortable sharing of meals and refreshments is a universal key to good interpersonal communication and the building of trust.

To support instructional and research activities, the Center will contain classrooms, teaching laboratories, seminar and conference rooms, lecture and auditorium spaces, and a library. A major part of the lower, more public floors of the building will house the "Smithsonian wing" of the MIT Museum -- a technologically enhanced venue for changing exhibitions through which policymakers and visitors to the capital will be able to "visit" the MIT Museum in Cambridge virtually.

Other spaces in the Center could accommodate MIT-sponsored conferences and symposiums (the MIT Club of Washington is one of the most active in the world and would benefit greatly from such facilities, as would the MIT Enterprise Forum of Washington-Baltimore, both helping MIT improve its image in Washington), high school outreach facilities (locally in DC as a model, but globally as so many schools visit Washington, DC), and offices for the Center's administrative staff, faculty, teaching and research fellows, visiting scholars and MIT's Legislative Affairs representatives. There might also be a large, multi-purpose events room, informal lounges, a game room, a fitness facility, possibly with a swimming pool, and exterior areas for socializing, eating and limited recreation. (While Washington DC is not short of these amenities, it will be a substantial public relations asset to have them available at a high level of

service quality, convenience and security within a self-contained MIT habitat.)

## SITE LOCATION

The location of such a center is of paramount importance, and an essential reason for this proposal, and for its sense of urgency, is that **the ideal site is now available**. Given the small size of the District of Columbia and the severely limited availability of locations in its core area suitable for development of major symbolic structures, this is a unique and unusual opportunity.

The proposed site, **800 New Jersey Avenue, NW**, is ideally located for the purposes described above, being **within walking distance of the U.S. Capitol complex, the Mall, and the heart of downtown DC**. A free-standing city "block" owned by the District of Columbia at the intersection of New Jersey Avenue and H Street, NW, the site is three blocks from Union Station and enjoys excellent accessibility to both local and regional transit. MIT could create a center not only near the seats of national government, but also close to the many museums, institutes and organizations, both national and international, occupying the core of the nation's capital. **The MIT Center would thus take its place as another of these iconic structures.**

One of the undersigned MIT alumni, Dr. Hellman, has already paved the way for negotiations to be initiated with the DC government for acquisition of this property. Dr. Hellman's previous work in the area, well known to the city government, has generated a valuable repository of directly applicable design, city planning and regulatory processing experience, thanks to his efforts in fostering development of a mixed-use building on another site similar in size, location and shape. This experience will facilitate smooth negotiations for acquisition of the 800 New Jersey Avenue site for MIT.

Accordingly, **MIT has the opportunity to benefit from the gift of an ideally positioned site, at no cost to either the university OR the Government of the District**, and without an expensive and difficult location search in other areas of the capital (which, based upon the collective expertise of the four signatories here, would be fruitless and wasteful).

The signatories hereto believe that the presently available site for this project in the heart of the capital, **visually linked with** our nation's most beloved and emotionally charged structure -- **the U.S. Capitol building** -- lends itself to the design and construction of an MIT Center that will represent science and technology not just in the abstract, but with a human face. A landmark building in this prime location, on a L'Enfant vista street in sight of the U.S. Capitol Dome, would be easily accessible for occupants, visitors and the general public and, most important, would ensure MIT's visibility and visual identity.

## GIFTING STRATEGY

With sufficiently rapid response from MIT (the city is actively engaged in encouraging redevelopment of the area where this site is located,) **we plan to gift this site to MIT**. This will be spelled out in detail in a draft acquisition plan, which we propose now be created under the aegis of the undersigned at MIT's request.

The broad approach we have in mind has two stages. In stage 1 Jay Hellman will create an LLC comprised of MIT alums that he will assemble to fund approximately \$4 million in acquisition and zoning costs (the "donor") who will buy the land from DC at appraised value. **Jay will then manage a rezoning process expected to repeat his extraordinary success on a substantially similar site three blocks south**. Once the rezoning is complete, the land will be donated to MIT. Ironically, Stage 1 will in fact be a very profitable action for the investor-members of the donor LLC (we turn a low cost investment into a much more valuable donation once it has been rezoned) because of federal tax laws respecting gifts of assets.

This is possible because it takes advantage of the almost 20 years of work Dr. Hellman has done in this immediate area in general, and on the 500 NJ building in particular.

Stage 2 is funding the building and its operations. This is a much larger number (\$100 to \$150 million) and will be a much more ordinary charitable write-off. Although we have several candidates to write this check, it is premature to begin those discussions until we are well along in securing the site.

## NEXT STEPS

Controlling this site is the necessary first step for the proposed Center. Therefore, we propose that the undersigned be authorized by MIT to initiate formal discussions with the Government of the District of Columbia and to proceed to create a draft acquisition plan whereby the site may be acquired for the above purpose at no cost to either MIT or the Government of the District of Columbia. We will proceed expeditiously to rezone the site once acquired and prior to formally donating it to MIT.

We also will work closely with MIT in developing and refining the building program, which we see as integral to raising the additional funds to pay for the building itself and fund its operating budget. As we all know, philanthropy today is "hands-on engaged," and an MIT Center next to the Capitol will generate considerable interest.

## SIGNATORIES

1. **Jay John Hellman**, SB EE, SM EE, SM Management (Sloan School), EE, PhD (Quantitative Policy / Systems Analysis / Planning) (all MIT), is an entrepreneur, researcher and real estate developer. For decades his work on the impact of technology on building design and the meaning of location has influenced the greater Washington, DC, skyline. He invented the term "virtual adjacency<sup>®</sup>" to describe our increasingly Internet-driven society. His DC developments include the four-building Lafayette Centre (original anchor occupant: AT&T), the Sears World Trade headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue and the landmark Capitol Hill tower of the National Association of Realtors, the US's biggest trade organization.

2. **Roger K. Lewis**, FAIA, B Arch, M Arch (both MIT), award-winning architect for some three decades, Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, which he helped establish, and veteran architectural and urban design columnist for *The Washington Post* (his "Shaping the City" column has run since 1984). The MIT Press published his first book, *ARCHITECT? A Candid Guide to the Profession*, in 1985 (revised edition 1998), which for over two decades has been a popular introductory text in architecture schools throughout North America and abroad (it's been translated into Japanese, Spanish and Korean). He also was co-author of the *Growth Management Handbook*, published in 1989. He serves regularly on regional and national design review boards, on design award juries, as a consultant to government and private organizations, and is a sought-after speaker. He has been a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects since 1986.

3. **Malcolm D. Rivkin**, AICP, AB (Harvard), MCP and PhD (MIT), is one of the US's foremost authorities on urban planning. Dr. Rivkin was the first Planning Officer of MIT (he wrote MIT's first plan) and has specialized in institutional planning. In the Washington area, he was a planning consultant to Georgetown and George Washington Universities. He is a former Commissioner of the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission. He was a Fulbright scholar at the University of Amsterdam and has worked for AID and other international agencies in more than a dozen developing countries. Dr Rivkin is a faculty member of the Graduate School of University of Maryland University College. He is

also an authority in TOD (Transit Oriented Development) – advising WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) and the TRB (Transportation Research Board.)

4. **Michael L. Telson**, SB EE, SM EE, EE, PhD EE, GM SM (Sloan School) (all MIT), is presently senior advisor to the University of California in its Washington Office of Federal Governmental Relations. He is a former Chief Financial Officer of the US Department of Energy (DOE) (annual budget approaching \$20 billion) and former senior analyst, Committee on the Budget, US House of Representatives, responsible for reviewing energy, science, and space issues in the Federal Budget including DOE, NSF and NASA. He is a Senior Fellow of the US Association for Energy Economics and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and of the American Physical Society (APS).