# Results from Session #1 (challenging assumptions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>MIT’s undergraduate student population will remain at roughly its current levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|   | Implications                                                               | • Amount of undergrad housing is definable and stable  
• Could be shifted if FSILGs change  
• Even with no change, good students will come to MIT |
|   | Counter-assumption                                                         | The size of MIT’s undergrad population will change substantially                                                                                  |
|   | Implications                                                               | • Less demand for undergrad housing  
• Possibly empty buildings  
• Less faculty  
• Less TAs  
• Less tuition $ |
|   | Resolution                                                                 | Assumption holds                                                                                                                                     |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>MIT’s graduate student population will continue to grow</th>
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|   | Implications                                                               | • Price of development will remain high  
• More demand for research space  
• More demand for flex space  
• More Cambridge housing crunch  
• More demand for parking  
• Decentralization  
• No relaxing of “search for better campus” |
|   | Counter-assumption                                                         | MIT’s grad student population will not increase                                                                                                 |
|   | Implications                                                               | • Demand for housing  
• Changes development scenarios for MIT-owned land (less uncertainty)                                                                            |
|   | Resolution                                                                 | Assumption holds                                                                                                                                     |

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<th>Assumption</th>
<th>MIT will locate its future development on or near its current campus in Cambridge</th>
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|   | Implications                                                               | • Price of development will remain high  
• Continuing need to maintain good town-gown relations  
• MIT needs an attractive Cambridge to bring students  
• MIT’s fate is tied to that of the Boston region |
|   | Counter-assumption                                                         | MIT will build a substantial portion of its future development away from its current campus                                                   |
|   | Implications                                                               | • Change in focus of residential campus  
• Sign of major change in MIT’s M.O.  
• Massive capital investment in land & buildings outside of Cambridge                                                                            |
<p>|   | Resolution                                                                 | Assumption holds                                                                                                                                     |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Implications</th>
<th>Counter-assumption</th>
<th>Implications</th>
<th>Resolution</th>
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| MIT will continue to guarantee housing for four years to all undergraduate students that request it | • Need for maintenance and upgrades (land, $, etc.) | MIT will no longer guarantee housing for four years to all undergraduate students that request it | • Possibility of shifting current undergrad housing to grad housing  
• Need for subsidy of off-campus undergrad housing  
• More pressure on local housing mkt./rents  
• Drastic change in MIT’s mission  
• Impact on admissions (particularly intl. students) | Assumption holds (though mechanics could change) |
| The FSILG system will remain viable and provide housing for some significant percentage of undergraduate students | • Pressure to provide sites for FSILGs on or near campus  
• Reduced need for undergrad dorm housing  
• MIT will continue to receive negative attention from the outside community (broadly defined) | The FSILG system will not provide housing for any substantial percentage of undergraduate students | • Need more on-campus undergrad housing  
• Less undergrad housing options  
• Need more structured academic support for undergrads  
• Loss of strong campus social force | FSILGs are valuable and studio’s design interventions should take them into account |
| A sizable percentage of graduate students – particularly those with families – will continue to seek housing on or near campus | • Need for some provision of quality education/child care for children of grad students  
• Demand for more on- or near-campus grad housing, particularly for families  
• Need for more amenities (grocery store, parks, play spaces, transportation, etc.) | Far fewer graduate students will seek on- or near-campus housing | • Less demand for on-campus housing  
• More pressure on local housing market  
• More commuting, traffic, and parking issues  
• Less probability of interaction (harder to build community) | Assumption holds / take into account |
### Assumption 9

**Assumption**: Both home sales prices and apartment rental rates in Cambridge will remain high, continuing Cambridge’s affordable housing crisis

**Implications**
- Incoming MIT students, faculty, and staff will have difficulty in affording to live near campus
- Strong demand for MIT-subsidized housing
- MIT in better negotiating position w/ city re: housing development
- Strong outside pressure for more affordable housing and MIT-built student housing

**Counter-assumption**: Cambridge rents/housing prices start to decline

**Implications**
- More students looking for off-campus housing
- Easier to find affordable housing

**Resolution**: Assumption holds

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### Assumption 10

**Assumption**: The existing small-grain housing will continue in its current amount and density

**Implications**
- Little room to meet market demand for housing within Cambridgeport
- Land values kept artificially low
- Objections to dramatic differences in scale between neighboring properties
- Continuity of neighborhood character

**Counter-assumption**: Changes in the density and character of Cambridgeport housing

**Implications**
- If density goes up
  - Property values would soar; business would move in
  - Change in character of neighborhood
  - Possibility of more housing through incremental infill development
  - Heavy local opposition to “institutional encroachment”
- If density goes down
  - Possible “suburbanization of city”

**Resolution**: If zoning holds, this assumption holds

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### Assumption 11

**Assumption**: Research industries will continue to grow and seek lab space in the vicinity of MIT

**Implications**
- Land values in area will be high and increase
- Housing crunch will get worse
- More econ. Development (jobs, workers, etc.)
- Difficulties for start-ups in area; big companies take over

**Counter-assumption**: Less demand for lab space around MIT

**Implications**
- If vacancy goes up, prices go down
- Huge blow to Cambridge economy
  - Taxes go down, services go down
- Damage to MIT’s rep. and research endeavors
- Opportunities for other types of development
- Effect on housing market?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Assumption holds for our studio</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assumption</strong> The urban ring will come to Cambridge by 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Implications | - Retail activity becomes much more economically feasible (near Ft. Washington)  
- Densities near Ft. Washington increase  
- Land values go up -> zoning changes  
- Stealing business from Central Sq. (?)  
- New stakeholder group: region/commuters |
| Counter-assumption | No urban ring |
| Implications | - If MIT expands, it will have to provide services (recreation, dining, etc.)  
- Increased demand for parking will lead to increases in congestion  
- Difficulty to get enough density to support much retail |
| Resolution | Develop interventions that will work w/ or w/o urban ring (but hope it comes) |
| **14**    | **Assumption** The CSX railroad right-of-way must be preserved in some fashion to accommodate future commercial and/or commuter rail traffic |
| Implications | - Circus can keep coming to town  
- “Track as barrier” issues will continue  
- Hard to develop on or over track  
- Limited # of at-grade crossings (w/o creative design solutions) |
| Counter-assumption | Don’t preserve railroad right-of-way |
| Implications | - Harder to build urban ring  
- Potential for another street or greenway  
- More connection to MIT and the river  
- Lots more development potential for MIT (more land, bigger parcels, etc.)  
- More fear of encroachment for Cambridgeport  
- Less potential for freight transport  
- Potential increase in area truck traffic  
- Land values near track would increase |
| Resolution | Assume strip will remain transportation-oriented |
| **15**    | **Assumption** To meet its future athletic needs, MIT will require an amount of playing fields equal to or greater than its current facilities |
| Implications | - Any development on current fields will spur a need for new fields  
- Potential for shared facilities (BU, neighborhood, etc.)  
- Pressure/tendency for MIT to build out, rather than in  
- Potential to use current fields more intensively  
- Difficult to connect ends of campus or build community |
| Counter-assumption | Could get by with less fields |
| Implications | - Loss of large space and its versatility  
- Greater potential to connect campus and build community |
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<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Challenge assumption</th>
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<th>Assumption</th>
<th>The parkland adjacent to the Charles River is reserved for open space and complimentary recreational uses</th>
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| Implications | - Another reason to build in Cambridgeport  
- Continuous green space is maintained  
- Easier to maintain running/bike path  
- Geese stay happy  
- Potential for recreation activity ctr. (community gardens, etc.)  
- More room for viewing Head of Charles, etc. |

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<tr>
<th>Counter-assumption</th>
<th>Parkland could be used for other types of development</th>
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</table>
| Implications | - More development space (high $ value, unique draw)  
- Loss of water view for MIT dorms  
- Could fundamentally alter public character of river  
- Ecological impact |

| Resolution | Keep it green, but potentially program |