



---

# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

---

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: April 24, 2024

Re: **PB-368 Amendment 4 (Minor), Volpe**

**IRAM FAROOQ**  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

**SANDRA CLARKE**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Administration

## Overview

---

Submission Type: Request for Minor Amendment to PUD Special Permit

---

Applicant: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

---

Zoning District(s): Business A (BA); Residence C-2B (C-2B); Office 2 (O-2); PUD-KS;  
PUD-7

---

Proposal Summary: Request to extend the date by which the development must  
commence construction by one year.

---

Other City Permits Needed: None

---

Planning Board Action: Approval of Minor Amendment with possible conditions

---

Memo Contents: CDD Zoning Report

---

Other Staff Reports: None

---

## Background

The Planning Board originally granted the Volpe Redevelopment Special Permit (PB-368) on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The special permit was granted to facilitate construction of eight new buildings with approximately three million square feet of residential and commercial uses, including approximately 1,400 dwelling units, 1.6 million square feet of office and laboratory uses, and ground-floor retail, as well as a standalone community center and retail pavilions.

Following the initial approval of the Special Permit, the Planning Board granted MIT three minor amendments related to the approved phasing plan and innovation space requirements, as follows:

1. A modification of the Phasing Plan was approved on January 17, 2023 to move the C3 commercial building to Phase 1 and the C2 commercial building to Phase 2.
2. A modification of the construction timeline was approved on May 16, 2023 to extend the date by which the development must commence construction by one year – from September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
3. A modification of the Innovation Space requirement was approved on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to remove maximum unit requirements, extend the maximum lease term, increase the allowable occupancy area per single business entity, and reduce requirements for shared resources among tenants.

## Requested Amendment

The Permittee is requesting a minor amendment to extend the date by which the development must commence construction by one year – from September 28, 2024 to September 28, 2025. The Permittee stated they have made progress towards site acquisition, design, and coordination of infrastructure for the development during the past year since their previous extension. They explained that they need the second extension to continue coordination with the City and Eversource to install required infrastructure.

## Criteria for Granting Minor Amendments

The Planning Board determines whether changes to the Final Development Plan may be approved as minor amendments per the general PUD provisions in Section 12.37 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (CZO) and conditions adopted in the original Special Permit approval.

The following guidance is provided in the CZO:

*(12.37.2) Minor amendments are changes which do not alter the concept of the PUD in terms of density, floor area ratio, land usage, height, provision of open space, or the physical relationship of elements of the development. Minor amendments shall include, but not be limited to, small changes in the location of buildings, open space, or parking; or realignment of minor streets.*

The original Special Permit approval (PB-368) includes Conditions 5(a) and 18(b) that further detail the amendment process:

5. Timing and Phasing

a. Commencement. This Special Permit shall be governed by the provisions of Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) and Section 10.46 of the CZO, which establish the time within which construction authorized by the Special Permit must commence. With respect to the requirements of Section 12.40, the Planning Board grants to the Permittee the right to start construction within two (2) years of the date of filing of this Decision with the City Clerk (not including the time required to pursue or await the final adjudication of an appeal under Section 17 of M.G.L. c. 40A), hereby granting the extension permitted under Section 12.41 for good cause, such good cause having been demonstrated by the Permittee because of the unusually large size and scope of the PUD and the need to obtain third party permits and approvals (including, without limitation, those for infrastructure and mitigation) for the project. The Planning Board may approve subsequent extensions of the time for commencement as Minor Amendments pursuant to Condition #18 of this Decision, not to exceed two (2) years per extension, upon determination of good cause by the Permittee.

18. Procedures for Granting Minor and Major Amendments to the Decision

b. Minor Amendments. A Minor Amendment to this Decision shall be approved by an affirmative vote of at least five (5) members of the Planning Board after consideration of the proposed change, enumerated on the Agenda, at an appropriately noticed meeting of the Planning Board. In approving a Minor Amendment, the Board shall issue a written determination that:

- i. The change is consistent with the standards for a Minor Amendment set forth in Section 12.37 of the CZO; and
- ii. The change does not violate applicable Sections of the CZO, or if the change requires relief pursuant to a special permit or variance, such relief has been granted; and
- iii. The change will not substantially alter the Findings upon which this Decision is based.

The Board may approve a minor amendment on the affirmative vote of five Planning Board members.