MIT with the poor

The elections are over, but the political question clause to the heart of many Cambridge residents' neighbors still hasn't been resolved. Nobody seems to be sure where or even if the Inner Belt is going to go.

It's easy to sympathize with the residents of the Brookline-Elm Street region, whose street has not likely stand in the road's way. Their sentimentally sickening about the sight of citizens forced to leave their homes by road-graders and bulldozers.

Unfortunately, nobody has yet devised a manner of building a major highway through a densely populated city without creating disruption. Equally unfortunate is the fact that both the Cambridge and the metropolitan area's police forces have made it clear that the traffic experts agree that without it, presently bad traffic conditions will degenerate to the point that traffic will chance on the other stream of traffic trying to move through it.

Over the past twenty years, engineering study after study has been made, by the Department of Public Works, by interested MIT engineers, and by private firms, all attempting to find some feasible solution to the problem. The reluctant consensus of these studies is that a Brookline-Elm Street route would do the least harm to the city.

Three alternate routes have been proposed by residents of the threatened area. The first was a "railroad" route. Along the tracks just north of MIT main campus, which seemed the DPW might consider until MIT pointed out the irreparable harm it would do to the Institute, the number of jobs it would destroy, and its projected $80 million price tag. Since the DPW officially chose the Brookline-Elm Street route last spring, two more routes have been offered as potential highways. These die along Portland and Albany Streets and along Memorial Drive.

With the proposal of these two alternate routes pressure has been brought to bear on the Institute by Brookline-Elm Street residents hoping that if MIT backs one of their routes, their homes will be saved. To pursue this goal, the local residents have accepted the aid of several well-meaning, but naive groups of MIT students, notably the MIT chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society, and a well-meaning but naive group of MIT residents. Mit and publicly support an Inner Belt route, realizing is that by asking MIT to choose an alternate route their homes will be saved an alternate route the Brookline-Elm Street residents hoping that if MIT backs one of their routes, their homes will be saved.

As engineering study continues, the Portland-Albany Street route recently proposed by the DPW officially becomes almost identical to the Portland-Albany Street route rejected by the DPW last year because it took 4,000 more homes and two more jobs as the proposed Brookline-Elm Street route.

At the same time, studies show that merely adding six or eight lanes to Memorial Drive or to either of the above proposals merely adding six or eight lanes to Memorial Drive or to either of the above proposals will merely add six or eight lanes to Memorial Drive or to either of the above proposals mean merely adding six or eight lanes to Memorial Drive or to either of the above proposals.

As a corporate citizen, MIT has the right to protest any route which might harm its facilities. This is what the Institute did when a "railroad" route was proposed. It cannot otherwise participate in choosing the highway's route without abusing the rights of some of its neighbors. It cannot decree or even try to decree where the Belt should go.

However, the Institute can and should do all it can to ease the burden placed on those who are eventually going to be displaced. As a citizen of Cambridge it has a moral responsibility to aid those who will be seeking new homes in Cambridge for their families, particularly since the constant pressure of MIT students seeking places of their own to live will force the city government to take this responsibility. To this end, the Institute is joining with the DPW and the city government in an effort to work out a solution to the problem, as well as those problems caused from Belt relocation.

Hopefully, the combined resources of the city and its two universities will be strained in time to help provide for the good citizens of Cambridge the Belt will uproot.