



May 24, 2023

Dear Dr. Pedro Ferraz de Abreu,

This letter provides details regarding our invitation to host you at MIT as a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning for the Fall 2023 semester. I have attached below a letter from my Department Head, Prof. P. Christopher Zegras, confirming the invitation.

Your on-campus presence during the Fall will greatly facilitate our ability to collaborate on the seminar series and academic symposium that my Department is hosting for the 20th anniversary of our 2003 e-Planning symposium. The Fall semester begins in September but you should arrive on or soon after August 25, 2023, so that we have a week on campus to finalize plans for the seminar class and academic symposium before the semester starts. We will provide office space, MIT internet access, and the like. My Department will also provide student assistance with seminar and symposium logistics and with summaries of key presentations and discussion that can help us with subsequent curriculum development.

Fall, 2023, will be the 20th anniversary of the first ‘e-Planning’ Symposium that you and I organized, the "International Conference on Information Technologies and Public Participation" (ICPPIT03). That symposium was linked to the semester-long seminar series that you moderated with guest presentations and panel discussion by MIT faculty and external experts. I have discussed your proposal with my MIT colleagues Prof. Lawrence Vale and Prof. Bish Sanyal, who participated in the symposium 20 years ago. Both are enthusiastic about your visit and will participate in the Fall 2023 events. We will have a unique opportunity to reflect on changes over the twenty years in perspectives on ‘e-Planning’ and ‘urban science,’ and to anticipate, and debate, where the future is headed and our curricula need to adapt.

As a faculty member in Portugal, you have been quite active over the past two decades in organizing a cross-university e-Planning program that engages social science as well as technology and data science in efforts (primarily in Portugal and Brazil) to improve community life and governance through technology. Your own teaching and research experience nicely complements my own. You bring more of a political science and community engagement dimension to ‘technology and the city’ issues. You also have experience in Portugal and Brazil in addressing the methodological and institutional hurdles of building a joint PhD program with several universities that have different scientific cultures and administrative procedures. During the past two decades, I have continued to head our Urban Information Systems group, which had been called, Planning Support Systems, when you were at MIT. More recently, I have been involved in the development of MIT’s new undergraduate major, “Urban Science and Planning with Computer Science.”

Collaborating with us at MIT for the Fall 2023 events would be a unique opportunity to build on our complementary academic development paths, allow a younger generation of faculty and advanced students in both of our countries to make the most of this 20 year joint legacy,

P. Christopher Zegras

Professor of Mobility and Urban Planning
Department Head

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24 May 2023

Dear Dr. Pedro Ferraz de Abreu,

This letter confirms our invitation to you to join the MIT community as a Visiting Scholar for the Fall 2023 semester. This will provide a good opportunity to carry out your proposal, "Digital Transition and Urban Planning: e-Planning twenty years later." Prof. Joseph Ferreira will serve as your MIT Faculty host and your visit will enable collaboration with Prof. Ferreira on a seminar series examining the impact of information technologies on community life and governance. This will be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the MIT e-Planning symposium that both of you organized twenty years ago and the events will provide a welcome opportunity to engage a cross-section of our on-campus community in further discussion and debate about next steps in the digital transformation of urban planning and local governance.

Sincerely,



P. Christopher Zegras, Professor of Mobility and Urban Planning
Head, Dept of Urban Studies and Planning