

Date: September 9, 2026
To: Cambridge Planning Board
From: Cambridge Bicycle Committee
Re HealthPeak proposed PUD in Alewife

After viewing HealthPeak's presentation to the Cambridge Joint Meeting of the Transportation Committees in July 2026, the Cambridge Bicycle Committee, an advisory committee to the City Manager, is submitting these recommendations to the Planning Board.

Key points that the Planning Board should require for the PUD to proceed:

- Prioritize building the bike and pedestrian bridge during Phase 1 of the project
- Proceed with Complete Streets through the development
- Include protected intersections in the complete streets design
- Accelerate the transportation elements of the PUD plan to assure safety

The Bicycle Committee generally supports the transportation plan envisioned for the PUD area. We support the complete streets approach as presented, with raised separated bicycle lanes, and a vegetation buffer between the bike lanes and pedestrian sidewalks, on both Smith Place and on Fawcett Street (see the sketch from the HealthPeak presentation, Exhibit 1 below.) We would recommend that this approach be extended to all major streets within the PUD. We also look positively on the PUD design taking into account bicycle and pedestrian connections from both the Smith Place and Fawcett Street intersections with Concord Ave. to portions of Alewife beyond the railroad tracks on the north side of the development. And very importantly, we are delighted to see the inclusion of a bicycle and pedestrian overpass over the tracks.

We strongly believe that the Planning Board should mandate that the development prioritize design and construction of the bike/ped overpass of the train tracks to be built during Phase 1 of the project. This would enable bike/ped connectivity benefits to be gained as the project begins, and not just when the build out is complete, potentially after many years. This bridge has the potential to significantly increase ease of access to northern Alewife from West Cambridge and Belmont, as well as access in the opposite direction from residential portions of northern Alewife to both Fresh Pond and to businesses on Concord Ave, and further west to Belmont.

The complete streets design should also be extended to intersections. Fully protected intersections (similar to the city's design at the northeast corner of Broadway and Galileo Galilei Way in Cambridge), with protective elements at the corners and reduced turning radii should be added at the intersections along Smith Place and Fawcett Street, and especially at their intersection. This aligns with the City's policy (POR 2024 #82) to audit and design intersections to the highest safety standards. These are the safest designs for both cyclists and pedestrians, and along with the raised cycle tracks envisioned for the complete streets, would significantly enhance safety at intersections. As Concord Ave. is the busiest road in the neighborhood, protected intersections at the intersections of both Smith Place and Fawcett Street with Concord

Ave. are of particular importance for the safety of all road users. The Bicycle Committee would be happy to provide more information on the design and benefits of protected intersections.

The Bicycle Committee recommends that the Planning Board mandate that the transportation elements of the PUD be built in an early phase of the project, concurrent with any development that requires access. First, we believe that this is most likely to result in these elements being fully constructed, and not skipped for some reason that evolves during the course of the project. Second, the safe transportation network will be very important as construction proceeds, so that cyclists and pedestrians can safely transit the area during construction. Third, by including high quality alternatives to driving from the start of the project, new residents and employees will choose non-driving modes, preventing increases in motor vehicle usage along the already congested Concord Ave. The safe cyclist and pedestrian network should be maintained for continuous access throughout the development process, with any necessary detours being equally safe and protected from motor vehicle traffic and construction vehicles.

We would also like to ask that the project team identify specific individuals to the city's transportation committees – with contact information – who will be responsible for responding to street safety issues throughout the project. This will help assure that construction issues that impede cyclist and pedestrian safety can be quickly addressed.

We also recommend that the Planning Board request that the project team provide an update to the city and advisory committees on the status and implementation of the transportation plan every 6 months once the project is begun.

Finally, we wish to comment on the proposed width of curb cuts. The Planning Board can grant waivers to exceed the max allowed width of 30 feet, but 50-55 feet for commercial and 32-35 feet for residential seems excessive. A memo from Cambridge DOT indicated that the curb cuts can be addressed administratively through the design review process for each building. We would generally be in support of that, rather than the Planning Board granting blanket approval of the requested waivers. In general, shorter curb cuts are safer and more comfortable for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Thank you for listening to these concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Stern". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randy" and last name "Stern" clearly distinguishable.

Randy Stern
Chair, Cambridge Bicycle Committee

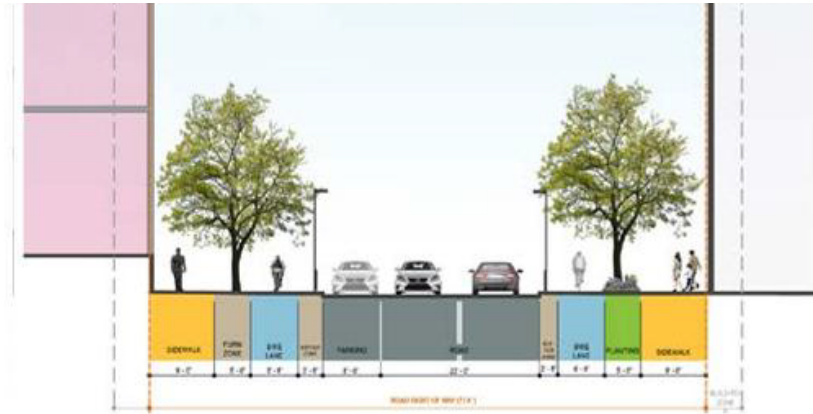


Exhibit 1 - Complete streets design, as presented by Health Peak