



City of Cambridge
Department of Public Works

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April 23, 2026

TO: Planning Board

FROM: James Wilcox, PE
City Engineer

RE: Healthpeak PUD Master Plan: Preliminary Development Plan

We are in receipt of the PUD Special Permit Preliminary Unit Development Plan Documents for the Healthpeak proposal for the redevelopment in the Alewife Neighborhood, dated March 2026. We have reviewed the materials and have presented below some comments related to the interests of the Department of Public Works.

Generally, based on the preliminary planning level documentation provided, the DPW anticipates that the redevelopment will have the ability to achieve compliance with all our Department's standards and requirements. The Healthpeak team has engaged with the DPW on the topics discussed below and has demonstrated an understanding of the DPW's standards and has been a willing partner in supporting the advancement of the design to support our questions and concerns.

That said, with the PUD's long projected buildout and phased implementation proposal, as the project advances to the Final Development Plan the DPW respectfully requests that the Planning Board consider requesting that Healthpeak further advance the items below in the Final Development Plan:

- **Stormwater:** Provide additional understanding related to the Projects' ability to incorporate shared district stormwater infrastructure solutions to meet Stormwater Standards and the potential for those best management practices (BMPs) to provide additional benefits to the community.
- **Infrastructure Modeling:** Continue to support the advancement of the City's Infrastructure Model to identify specific opportunities for infrastructure improvements to meet the Project Mitigation requirements and confirm that the City's Infrastructure will have the ability to support the full buildout.
- **Private Utilities:** Advance discussions with private utility providers related to demands associated with the full buildout of the project, and start to identify regional needs and constraints anticipated for the demand.

- Flood Resilience: Work with the DPW to establish agreeable language associated with the Special Permit for the specific relief from the Flood Resiliency Standards that allow for reconsideration of each buildings ability to meet the Standards at time of Design Review.
- Urban Canopy: Provide requested clarification and specifics related to the Submitted Tree Study, and work with the DPW to establish protocols for confirming compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance as the project is built out.
- Public Right-of-way: Advance discussions with Cambridge Department of Transportation on the details and layout of the 40-scale road network plan to confirm limits of proposed roadway rights-of way.
- Land Conveyance: Continue discussions related to timing and process for all proposed land transfers with Law Department.
- Future DPW Site: Work with DPW to understand their feasibility study and due diligence efforts related to establishing a DPW facility on the lot to be provided as part of the PUD. Include adequate information in the PUD Application to support the City's future development of the site.

More detailed discussion is provided on the items above in the text below.

Project Phasing and Construction:

With any phased development of this kind, the Applicant should be aware that at the completion of any phase the project shall follow all DPW standards. The DPW is always willing to consider innovative shared infrastructure solutions, particularly if they can reduce the projects' impacts on the environment and community. That said, the phasing of the project shall allow for completion of these shared solutions in a manner that maintains the projects compliance with DPW regulations throughout the phasing of the PUD.

Public Utility Infrastructure:

Stormwater Management:

Under the City Land Disturbance Regulations, the Applicant will need to obtain a Stormwater Control Permit from the Department of Public Works, prior to the start of construction of each building or phase. The permit requirements cover the design standards and long-term operation and maintenance of a stormwater management system for the project site, as well as the construction phase erosion and sedimentation control plans.

The Application included acknowledgement of the City Standards and provided some discussion related to how these standards will be met. Some specific items of interest are noted below:

- The proposal and schematics for the stormwater management system appear to be provided on building-by-building basis, which would be typical for infill development proposals. As this is a PUD redevelopment, opportunities for shared district stormwater systems should be considered and the potential for these systems to provide some co-

benefits to the neighborhood or in advancing other City Objectives should be investigated. For example, nodes of development that are adjacent to areas of open space may have the opportunity to utilize the space to implementation of stormwater BMP's that can serve more than one building site. These opportunities will need to be considered in conjunction with an understanding of the project phasing and of other pressures for use and planning of the open space.

- The Preliminary Application also mentions the use of green stormwater infrastructure and creative stormwater management solutions, like rainwater harvesting and re-use, but does not provide any specific examples or plans for implementation as part of the PUD. The PUD planning phase should be advancing these considerations to make sure there are not missed opportunities.

Sanitary Sewer:

The Application has indicated that the project will result in an estimated net increase in sewer flow generation of approximately 700,000 gallons per day, at full build out. Consistent with previous comments, the phasing and duration of the buildout will bring this additional flow to the City's Infrastructure over a span of decades and will need to be evaluated at each building permit for localized impacts.

The PUD will trigger the requirement for Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) mitigation. The standard for this mitigation is for the project to remove 4 times the net increase in flow to the system by removing the extraneous I/I sources in the sewer network. The City is working with the Healthpeak team to identify the I/I sources in the system that can be removed to support this mitigation requirement.

In addition, as has been standard in this neighborhood, each building will be required to provide storage for the volume of the peak 8-hour sewer flow to provide some relief to downstream system constraints and to protect the building in the event of a surcharge in the system.

While local sewer capacity may not be an issue for the PUD buildout, downstream convergence points with regional interceptors' experience capacity issues as they convey networks of combined sewer systems. While the PUD will increase net sewer flows to the City Infrastructure, the mitigation requirements, sewer storage tanks for instances of surcharge and other potential mitigation measures and contributions, will provide for improvements to the City's system and will be in support of the regional efforts related to the Long Term CSO Control Plan.

Utility Infrastructure Model:

Prior to the submission of the Preliminary PUD Application, the Healthpeak team engaged with the DPW and asked to undertake in a flow metering program of the City owned Drain and Sewer Infrastructure. The team worked with the Engineering Division Staff and our modeling consultants to establish flow meter locations. The data from this completed program has been used to update and calibrate the City's already robust model of the infrastructure in the neighborhood of the proposed development and some critical downstream locations. This model, along with video

inspections of pipe conditions, will be used to better understand the current condition and capacity of the city's systems in the project area and what impact the Redevelopment and the added flows to the system will have. As the project moves toward the Final PUD Application this on-going analysis shall advance and provide the following:

- Identify existing condition deficiencies and/or capacity constraints in the infrastructure
- Identify volume and rate of existing I/I in the sewer network
- Identify impacts and potential constraints, by proposed development phase, of additional flows

These identified items will support the DPW in scoping projects and flagging areas of concern for the project as they will look to meet regulatory requirements (I/I) and mitigate the projects demands on the infrastructure.

Private Utilities:

The Application provides some narrative related to what will be required at the site to support the private utility connections. It is typical of PUDs of this size to need a utility enabling project to provide for the needs of the development. The Narrative does not include any specific information related to the scope of the utility work required within the Public Right of Way. The DPW will look to understand the scope of this work for each phase and the entire buildout prior to any construction commencing, as it will be critical for us to evaluate sequencing, construction impacts and surface mitigation requirements.

Resiliency to Flooding:

The Application presents a discussion related to how the project proposes to meet the Flood Resiliency Zoning Standards. At this planning level, the Applicant indicated that the PUD will be able to meet all the Standards associated with the protection required from the 1% LTFE and many of the Standards associated with the 10% LTFE. The Application is requesting a Special Permit for relief from the Standards, as is allowed by Zoning with a positive recommendation from the City Engineer. The specific request for relief is for some occupiable spaces (dog washrooms and bike storage) not to be passively protected to the elevation of the 10% LTFE.

The DPW has reviewed this information and has discussed the specific request for relief with both the Healthpeak team and the City Zoning Staff. The DPW continues to advocate for all developments to meet the Flood Resiliency Standards, but also acknowledges the challenges associated with doing so. The DPW, with careful consideration of the very specific uses being identified in the Special Permit request, may be in support of granting the relief. The DPW will require, should the Board agree to grant the Special Permit, that a condition of this approval be that these specific areas be revisited at time of Design Review to more carefully evaluate the hardships associated with meeting the Standards for all spaces and identify design options for making the spaces, if they cannot meet the Standard, more resilient.

Urban Forest:

The Applicant has submitted a Tree Study that is in general conformance with the current Tree Protection Ordinance. Based on the PUD's complex land transfers that include both existing public

ways becoming private land and existing private land being convey to the City as Public Right of Way, the DPW, through the Urban Forestry Division, has asked for some clarification and additional breakdown on the proposed removals and mitigation plantings from the Healthpeak Team.

The DPW is also reviewing, with the Healthpeak Team, ways for the Tree Study to be reviewed, updated and confirmed throughout the projects projected buildout. Trees are not a stagnant resource and reconsideration of trees' condition and size may be warranted through the duration of the project. We also will look to understand how and when the long-term buildout will trigger tree removals and if controls associated with existing trees remaining until such time they will be impacted by construction are warranted.

Proposed Road Street Sections / 40-Scale Plans:

The Applicant provided detailed roadway sections and 40-scale plans that have been the subject of a thorough interdepartmental review. Comments have been conveyed to the Healthpeak Team and continue to be discussed. The DPW will work with the Cambridge Department of Transportation as they engage with the Healthpeak team on the road network.

Under our preview, the DPW will be looking to ensure that proposed right-of-ways are established to include all road section elements that are intended to support public mobility, space for vehicle, bike and pedestrian travel and other spaces as outlined in the area planning and zoning documents (like tree planting zones and green stormwater infrastructure). As space for these uses is allocated on new and existing roadways, as part of the review of the submitted 40-scale plans, the DPW can confirm that right-of-way widths are acceptable to the City.

As the project advances and the details of road layout are agreed upon, the City, with the guidance of the Law Department, will need to start to understand how and when the new and widened rights-of-way are established.

Infrastructure and Public Benefits:

DPW Lot:

The PUD proposes to deed a 1.2-acre lot to the City that is intended to serve as a DPW Municipal Facility. Concurrently with the Healthpeak Team advancing their PUD planning, the DPW has been evaluating the proposed lot, its current condition and how it would be utilized by the Department to support our needs. The DPW anticipates continued engagement with the Healthpeak PUD as our feasibility analysis for the site is further developed. It would be the DPW's expectations that the Final Development Plan for the PUD would include a massing and layout of the site that supports our intentions for use and provides for future access and establishment of the site under the provisions of this PUD Application.

Pedestrian Bridge:

The DPW supports the Healthpeak proposal for the eventual establishment of a bridge crossing over the MBTA Tracks to provide for pedestrian and bike connections. We acknowledge that the

details of the agreement with the MBTA and coordination with the other transportation networks will take time and significant engagement between all parties involved. The DPW respectfully requests that the DPW be included in all relevant discussions as they relate to the design of the bridge. It is likely that the City will take on ownership and maintenance of the bridge, so would like to have a say in the details of the design to ensure our ability to operate and maintain the structure long term.

We look forward to working with the Healthpeak team on the advancement of this PUD project as they have already demonstrated a willingness to engage with the City on the details of the project. DPW review of the engineering specifics will continue through the building permit phases of each proposed structure but hope to have considered and advanced the items noted above to allow for clarity in the expectations and process as the project is built out.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns related to the comments or information provided above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James J. Wilcox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized "J" and "W".

James Wilcox, P.E.
City Engineer