



Maura Healey, Governor
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Phillip Eng, Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager & CEO



September 9, 2026

From: Phillip Eng, Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager & CEO

To: City of Cambridge Planning Board

Re: Healthpeak Alewife Quadrangle PUD Master Plan and Proposed Bike/Ped Crossing Investment

Dear members of the City of Cambridge Planning Board:

The MBTA is supportive of transit-oriented development, and we acknowledge the opportunities the full buildout of the Healthpeak PUD Master Plan could realize for the City of Cambridge, the region, and the MBTA. We are excited to support the vision for growth in the Alewife Quadrangle proposed by the Healthpeak OP, LLC team. This mixed-use development will bring new residents, businesses, employees, and visitors to the area and will help ease the housing crisis our region faces. This investment is not without opportunity, and we are excited to support the concept of infrastructure investments – whether a singular bridge or one that is integrated into an MBTA facility, to help residents, employees, and visitors access public transportation and cross the Fitchburg track Right-of-Way.

The proposal of a bicycle and pedestrian bridge in the Healthpeak PUD Master Plan has generated positive and productive conversation between the MBTA, the City of Cambridge, and the Development Team. However, ongoing MBTA operations, support facilities and activities, and future MBTA investment opportunities must continue to be evaluated.

The Fitchburg track at this location is critical to existing operations, operations support, and future investments. The West Cambridge commuter rail maintenance facility that supports all Fitchburg line track operations and maintenance of way equipment is located within the conceptual Healthpeak Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge area. The facility itself – as well as access into and out of the Right-of-Way for maintenance vehicle access to the facility – will need to be accommodated in any future plans. Additionally, this location along the Fitchburg Right-of-Way is key for advancement of the MBTA's Rail Vision and Urban Rail concepts. Urban Rail could bring higher frequency, more rapid transit like service to the area in the long-term, but infrastructure needs related to tracks and power



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infrastructure are still in preliminary evaluation and planning stages. These needs require physical space and will need to be coordinated with the bridge design.

The MBTA also wants to ensure opportunities for even greater connectivity through the region are not missed. Commuter Rail station connectivity in this location has been a long-term desire of the community and could beneficially support the large growth the Healthpeak PUD Master Plan represents. To ensure we are not missing opportunities to efficiently and strategically invest public and private dollars into transportation infrastructure, we must evaluate the feasibility of Commuter Rail station access at this location and how high-quality bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure could be incorporated if a station is deemed appropriate. Finally, as a major land and air-rights holder in this area, the MBTA has a duty to evaluate our own joint development opportunities, which could help financially support much needed capital investments at the Alewife Station Complex, any future Commuter Rail station, and parking garage facility and access.

The evaluation of these both individually and collectively important infrastructure developments will take time. Over the next three years, the MBTA commits to working with all parties – the Healthpeak Development Team, the City of Cambridge, and internal MBTA departments and stakeholders – to evaluate the proposed bridge in coordination with these projects from a technical feasibility, financially responsible, and operationally sound perspective. The MBTA is committed to undertaking the necessary studies needed to determine whether a facility that includes a combined bridge/station or a stand-alone bike/ped bridge is the appropriate direction to pursue. A high-quality connection from the Alewife Quadrangle over the Fitchburg Line will happen, and we look forward to structuring agreements, advancing MBTA infrastructure studies/designs, and reporting back to the Cambridge Planning Board no later than 3 years from the date of final PUD Master Plan approval on the status of studies and decision making.

Sincerely,

Signed by:


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Phillip Eng,

Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager & CEO