

Date: Friday, April 24, 2026

To: Members of the Cambridge Planning Board

From: Jackson Moore-Otto, Chair, Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

Re: TAC Review Priorities for Healthpeak PUD (Alewife Quad) PB-410

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

On behalf of the Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee, I write to share the Advisory Committee's perspective on the proposed Healthpeak Properties development in the Alewife Quad. The TAC is a city-run group that provides advice to City staff on issues that affect public transit. In addition, the TAC writes to invite the project proponent to attend an upcoming joint meeting of the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transit Advisory Committees in May or June to further understand the development proposal and how it will affect getting around Cambridge on foot, by bike, and using public transit.

This project represents a tremendous opportunity to transform a historically isolated, auto-centric district into a vibrant neighborhood. Consequently, sustained engagement with several key transit issues during the planning process is vital to ensure the final proposal yields a built environment truly aligned with the City's sustainable transportation and mode-shift goals.

To ensure this development serves as a catalyst for a transit-first Cambridge, we respectfully ask the Planning Board to prioritize the following three areas during its review:

1. Acceleration of the Pedestrian Bridge

First and foremost, we strongly encourage the Planning Board to use every regulatory mechanism and point of leverage at its disposal to accelerate the completion of the proposed pedestrian bridge over the Commuter Rail right-of-way.

The intra-neighborhood connectivity benefits of this bridge cannot be overstated. It is the linchpin for unlocking the Alewife Quad, providing a massive, immediate improvement in accessibility to the Alewife Red Line station and the broader active transportation network in the Triangle.

2. Proposed Parking & Shuttles

Second, we must express our concern regarding the sheer volume of parking currently proposed by Healthpeak.

We strongly encourage the Planning Board to take a hard look at these numbers. Building excessive parking inevitably induces vehicular demand, undermining investments both the

City and State are making in local transit and active mobility. Approving parking ratios that reflect the Alewife of the past, rather than the transit-oriented Alewife of the future, will lock in decades of unnecessary congestion on Cambridgepark Drive and Alewife Brook Parkway. We ask the Board to consider how shared parking models, adaptable architecture that allows future garages to be repurposed, and a greater reliance on Alewife TMA shuttles could reduce the initial parking requirements.

3. Alewife Commuter Rail As “Given”

The TAC also recognizes that, in many ways, Healthpeak’s parking plans hold up a mirror to the Alewife Quad’s current (and forecast) public infrastructure. At a time when the cost of capital is elevated, building new parking spaces is an incredibly expensive proposition for developers. When a sophisticated firm like Healthpeak commits to the massive upfront costs of building parking on this scale, it sends a clear signal about what they believe their future tenants will need to reach the site. Critically, it suggests that uncertainty surrounding a future Alewife Commuter Rail station and high-frequency regional rail service is driving the firm toward a lower-risk, more auto-centric transportation plan.

We understand that shifting the promise of frequent regional rail service and a new Alewife station from a “concept” to a “given” is a massive undertaking for both the City of Cambridge and the MBTA. However, we believe doing so is essential for the future of this district.

We ask the Planning Board to join us in this broader advocacy. If the City and the MBTA can establish a clear timeline and firm commitment for a regional rail hub at Alewife, Healthpeak will be uniquely positioned to plan for a denser, transit-oriented future. With the right commitments, the City of Cambridge and the MBTA can give Healthpeak the regulatory certainty needed to adjust its master plan—specifically by reducing parking and designing an infrastructure footprint that integrates seamlessly with modern rail.

We have a generational opportunity to get the Alewife Quad right, and we appreciate the Planning Board’s commitment to setting a high bar for what it means to build transit-oriented development in Cambridge.

Thank you for your time, your service to the City, and your rigorous review of this project.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jackson Moore-Otto on behalf of the Transit Advisory Committee