

Dear Shakopee City Planning Commission,

SouthWest Metro Intermediate School District #288 (“SWMetro”) has entered into a purchase agreement to purchase the property located at 4601 Dean Lakes Boulevard in Shakopee, MN (“Dean Lakes”). We understand that SWMetro’s intended uses at the property are permitted pursuant to City Zoning as adopted in Ordinance No. 02020-008, but that certain intended uses may require the approval of a conditional use permit. As such, we have submitted an application for a conditional use permit. In conjunction with the application, we are providing below an overview of SWMetro, our intended uses for Dean Lakes and a related overview of the property.

SWMetro Overview

Mission: Everyone has value, potential, and ability.

Vission: SWMetro empowers all learners to realize their self-worth through personalized educational instruction, connection to resources, and access to a supportive learning environment.

SWMetro is a Minnesota intermediate school district that serves students in 11 member public school districts and 5 associate member school districts across the southwestern Twin Cities metropolitan area with programs in Special Education, Career and Technical Education, Care & Treatment, Adult Basic Education, and Alternative Education. Shakopee Public Schools has been a member school district of SWMetro and its predecessor for over 50 years.

Intermediate school districts are specialty school districts that provide defined student services to a group of regular “member” school districts. Minnesota has four intermediate districts (916, 917, 287, and 288) that serve more than 20,000 students annually in the areas of special education, area learning centers, career technical programs, and online learning. Intermediates offer more than 120 specialized educational programs and services to school districts in Minnesota with an emphasis on meeting the needs of its member districts. These are often specialized services that the member districts individually find difficult or too costly to provide on a smaller scale. For some services, students are referred by a traditional school district. For others, students and parents can choose to enroll directly.

SWMetro currently owns, leases or operates in 14 facilities in Minnesota including two locations in Shakopee. SWMetro owns a portion, approx. 9,235 SF, of the Valley Green Workforce Center located at 792 Canterbury Road, Shakopee, MN (“VGWC”) and leases approximately 22,133 SF at Shakopee Town Square located at 1100 Shakopee Town Square, Shakopee, MN (“STS”).

The need for the services that SWMetro provides the community have outgrown the level that can be provided in these existing facilities. SWMetro believes it can meet the growing demands of the community and improve the quality of the education and services it provides by consolidating these services and its administrative offices at Dean Lakes.

Intended Uses at 4601 Dean Lakes Boulevard

The primary initial uses would be as follows:

1. District Office. This function is currently located in the VGWC and would move in full to Dean Lakes. This is a traditional business office function including our fiscal, human resources, technology, and leadership teams. The District Office currently has a staff of 14. The hours of operations would typically be 7 AM to 4 PM.
2. Adult Basic Education. This function is also currently located in the VGWC with some additional programs provided in Chaska. This program is for adult learners working to obtain their GED while also obtaining pre-employment and employment skills for jobs available within our community. This program currently serves 150 students annually with 10 staff. The hours of operations would typically be 9 AM to Noon and 5 PM to 8 PM.
3. Special Education Transition. This function is currently located in STS. This program serves adults with disabilities ages 18 to 21 who have not yet earned a traditional high school diploma. The program provides skill training with key focus on independent living and work experience. The program currently serves 65 students with 15 staff. The hours of operations would typically be 8 M to 3 PM.
4. Day Treatment. For several years, SWMetro has partnered with Scott County Human Services to jointly provide a program known as Reflections Day Treatment. This function is also currently located in STS. This program serves students in middle and high school grades who are experiencing challenges with mental health that are interfering with their education. Therapy is provided by Scott County Staff while the academic support is provided by SWMetro. This program currently serves 35 students with 6 staff. The hours of operations would typically be 8 AM to 3 PM.

In the near future, we would also seek to bring career and technical education offerings to Dean Lakes. These programs would be available to area high school students and adults and would done in partnership with area public and private colleges and universities.

Relatedly, we may consider making a portion of the building available space to local colleges and universities that would like to offer college level classes in the Scott County area.

Finally, while not part of our initial plan and design, we know from experience that a barrier to some young parents seeking to obtain higher education and training is child care while the parent attends classes. Ideally, we would like to be able to offer child care within the building to facilitate access to higher and technical education for some young parents in our community.

Property Overview

The above uses can be accommodated without any modifications to the existing site (see Alta Survey attached as Exhibit A for existing site), exterior structure of the building, parking lot or property entrances.

Busing:

Small school buses and/or vans would drop off and pick up students in the Special Education Transition and Day Treatment programs on a daily basis. Bus arrivals and departures are staggered over several minutes such that only some buses/vans are present at any given time. Generally speaking, students would be dropped off by bus/van a few minutes either side of 8 AM and would be picked up between 2:30 and 3:00 PM.

It should be noted that students are not allowed to drive personal vehicles to these programs. Further, parents only provide transportation in unique circumstances when school district provided transportation is not available. For example, when a student has a morning dental appointment and is brought to school by his/her parent following the appointment.

All buses/vans would enter a single drive area and would drop students off at one of two doors as noted in the Bus Flow Plan attached as Exhibit B. A total of approximately 65 students transported each day to Special Education Transition and approximately 35 students transported each day to Day Treatment. Students are all between the ages of 12 and 21.

Interior Floorplan:

The current interior layout of the building provides a combination of offices, open space, labs and training rooms. Many of these components already work well for SWMetro's District Office, and the programming it provides with the lab spaces and training rooms lending themselves well to a classroom setting. As such, minimal interior improvements will be required as illustrated by the Preliminary Plans attached as Exhibit C.

We appreciate the City Planning's consideration of our application for a conditional use permit and look to its approval to aid SWMetro in its efforts to continue to serve our community.

Sincerely,

**Brian
Fell**

Digitally signed
by Brian Fell
Date: 2020.10.29
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Brian Fell
Executive Director of Business Services
SouthWest Metro Intermediate District