



BRIDGE TO SUCCESS

Hastings Public Schools

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 200
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Applicant's Narrative

The Applicant, Hastings Public Schools (Independent School District No. 200)(the "District") is the owner of 53.7 acres of property in the Town located on 180th Street East between Fischer Avenue and Goodwin Avenue (the "Property").

About the Property

The Property is encumbered by a permanent natural area conservation easement that is held by Dakota County. The Property contains a wildlife habitat that includes an open water pond and wetland area. Many species of migrating birds can be found on the Property.

Zoning of the Property

The Property is zoned Agricultural Preservation. "Institutional Use" is a conditional use in the Agricultural Preservation District. The definition of an "Institutional Use" in the Code is the use of land under public or semi-public ownership which provides a benefit of service to the public. Institutional uses include schools.

The District's Use of the Property

The District plans to use the Property as follows:

- The District's students will visit the Property for educational purposes.
- The students will be on the Property no earlier than 7:00 a.m. and no later than 3:00 p.m. on weekdays.
- The students will only be on the Property during the months of September, October, April and May.
- The maximum number of visits by the students will be approximately 12 in the fall and 12 in the spring.
- The maximum number of buses on-site will be one at any given time.
- If the students are able to drive, there may be cars instead of a bus.

Some of the learning opportunities available to the students on the Property are:

Grades K-4 - field trips to support grade level science standards (there would be two grade school classes on the Property at a time).

Grades 5-8 – field trips for students for a variety of learning opportunities, including students learning to be "outdoors" without leaving a trace, preserving the natural beauty for future students to enjoy; students learning to utilize the natural environment for hands-on learning experiences / field trips; students collecting data on weather patterns, water quality, wildlife populations; and students using the natural environment to foster nature themed art projects.

Grades 9-12 – field trips for students taking the District's Wildlife Biology course or the Natural Resource course.

The District's Request

Prior to COVID, the District did have some groups of high school students visiting the Property as part of the District's educational programs. They were carpooling and parking on the street. The District would like to add a small gravel parking lot on the Property that would allow space for one bus to park. This is for safety reasons so that the students coming to the Property do not need to exit the bus on the road, park their vehicles on the road, or cross the road in order to access the Property.

In addition to adding the parking lot, the District would like to add an “interpretive sign” for students to learn about the Property. The sign would include information about the persons who donated the Property to the District and what wildlife can be seen on the Property.

Because a parking area and a sign are considered to be accessory uses, they must be accessory to a principal use. In this case, the principal use would be the “Institutional Use” which the District would obtain through receiving a conditional use permit from the Town.

As previously stated, the Property is subject to a “permanent natural area conservation easement” that is held by Dakota County. The terms of the easement require the Property to permanently remain in its natural state as natural open space. In order to install a parking area or a sign, the District would need to obtain permission from the County. The District has discussed these improvements with the County and the County is supportive of these improvements.
