

City of Aurora

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Legistar History Report

File Number: 25-0362

File ID: 25-0362 Type: Petition Status: ATS Review

Version: 3 General In Control: Building, Zoning,

and Economic
Development
Committee

File Created: 04/28/2025

Hearing Date:

File Name: Lydia Home Association / 998 Corporate Boulevard / Final Action:

Ledger #:

Plan Description Revision

Title: An Ordinance Approving a Revised Plan Description to amend a certain

section of the Farnsworth International Plan Description for the Property

located at 998 Corporate Boulevard, Aurora, Illinois

Notes:

Sponsors: Enactment Date:

Attachments: Exhibit "A" Legal Description - 2025-05-02 - Enactment Number:

2024.472, Exhibit "B" Plan Description Revision - 2025-04-07 - 2024.472.v2, Land Use Petition and Supporting Documents - 2024-10-24 - 2024.472, Updated Qualifying Statement - 2025-09-05 -

2024.472, Batavia School District Letter - 2025-05-05

- 2024.472, PZC Presentation - Lydia Home

Association - 2025-10-06 - 2024.472, Maps, Legistar

History Report - Revised Plan Description -

2025-10-09 - 2024.472

Planning Case #: AU02/4-24.472- PDD/R/CU

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Planning and Zoning Commission	05/07/2025	Held in Planning Commission		06/04/2025		Pass
		was made by N		conded by Mrs Martin	that this agonda itom	n ho Hold in	

Action Text: A motion was made by Mrs. Owusu-Safo, seconded by Mrs. Martinez, that this agenda item be Held in

Planning Commission. The motion carried.

Notes: Mr. Sieben announced that the Petitioner has requested a continuance for this hearing until the June

4, 2025, Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Chairman Pilmer asked for a vote to allow for the continuance to the June 4, 2025, Planning and

Zoning Commission meeting.

MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mrs. Owusu-Safo

Planning and Zoning

Commission

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mrs. Martinez

10/08/2025 Forwarded

AYES: Chairman Pilmer, Mr. Kuehl, Mrs. Martinez, Mrs. Owusu-Safo, and Mr. Pickens.

NAYS: 0 Motion carried.

Aye: 5 Chairperson Pilmer, At Large Owusu-Safo, At Large Pickens, At Large

Martinez and At Large Kuehl

Building, Zoning, 10/15/2025 Pass

and Economic Development Committee

Action Text: A motion was made by Mr. Kuehl, seconded by Mr. Lee, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the

Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee, on the agenda for 10/15/2025. The motion

carried.

Notes: See attached Court Reporter Transcript.

FINDINGS OF FACTS - REZONING:

1. Is the proposal in accordance with all applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

A similar use was located at this property previously, and the prior rezoning finding of facts used the same physical development policies with an emphasis on blight within this area. See the Petitioner's Updated Qualifying Statement on Page 7 for full response.

2. Does the proposal represent the logical establishment and/or consistent extension of the requested classification in consideration of the existing land uses, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area of the property in question?

The character of this area is more industrial / office uses, and the City's Comprehensive Plan designated this site as Office/Research/Light Industrial. Despite a lack of consistency with neighboring properties the prior rezoning finding of facts used the same physical development policies with an emphasis on blight within this area.

See the Petitioner's Updated Qualifying Statement on Page 7 for full response.

3. Is the proposal consistent with a desirable trend of development in the general area of the property in question, occurring since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification, desirability being defined as the trend's consistency with applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Since the development of this property as an autistic and special needs mental health facility in 2011, the trend of this area has swung to more industrial, office, and commercial uses.

See the Petitioner's Updated Qualifying Statement on Page 8 for full response.

4. Will the rezoning allow uses which are more suitable than uses permitted under the existing zoning classification?

The amendment to the Planned Development District will permit the reuse of the existing building without extensive remodeling or demolition. Despite a lack of consistency with neighboring properties, the prior rezoning finding of facts used the same physical development policies with an emphasis on blight, a possibility for this building if left unused.

See the Petitioner's Updated Qualifying Statement on Page 9 for full response.

5. Is the rezoning a consistent extension of the existing land uses, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area?

Same response as Number 4.

See the Petitioner's Updated Qualifying Statement on Page 9 for full response.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff acknowledges inconsistencies with neighboring uses; however, consistent with our past rezoning

at this location for a similar use, Staff recommends APPROVAL of the Revised Plan Description to permit the reuse of the existing building's highly specialized design for its current use and avoid the property becoming functionally obsolete and potentially blighted.

MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mr. Kuehl

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Lee

AYES: Chairman Pilmer, Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Kuehl, Mr. Lee, Mrs. Martinez, Mr. Pickens, and Mr.

Roberts NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

MOTION OF APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACTS WAS MADE BY: Mr. Roberts

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Gonzales

AYES: Chairman Pilmer, Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Kuehl, Mr. Lee, Mrs. Martinez, Mr. Pickens, and Mr.

Roberts NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Aye: 7 Chairperson Pilmer, At Large Lee, At Large Chambers, At Large Pickens, At Large Roberts, At Large Martinez and At Large Kuehl

Text of Legislative File 25-0362

1	CITY OF AURORA				
2	PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION				
3	October 8, 2025				
4					
5	Proceedings held before the following				
6	Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission:				
7					
8	CHAIRMAN DON PILMER				
9	COUNCIL MEMBER PEDRO GONZALEZ				
10	COUNCIL MEMBER BRUCE KUEHL				
11	COUNCIL MEMBER ANDERSON LEE				
12	COUNCIL MEMBER NANCY MARTINEZ				
13	COUNCIL MEMBER ROBERT PICKENS				
14	COUNCIL MEMBER BRENNEN ROBERTS				
15	STAFF MEMBERS: TRACEY VACEK and JILL MORGAN				
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CHAIRMAN PILMER: Good evening. I'd like to call to order the City of Aurora Planning and Zoning Commission for October 8, 2025. Please call the roll.

(Roll call.)

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Before you are the minutes from our last meeting held on September 24, 2025. Are there any additions or corrections? Hearing none, is there a motion?

COUNCIL MEMBER: Move to approve.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Second.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion has been made and seconded please call the roll.

(Roll call.)

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion carries. And before we begin tonight's agenda, in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, if anyone in the audience would like to address the Commission regarding an item that's relevant that's not on the agenda, they will have three minutes to do so. I'll just state for the record that no one has come forward. So we will move to our agenda items this evening.

The first three items I will read in

1 together as they are related. Agenda item number 2 25-0625, an ordinance establishing a conditional use 3 planned development and approving the Scooter's plan 4 description for the property located at 1329 North Lake Street by Koru Group, Ward 6. 5 Agenda item number 25-0626, a resolution 6 approving a revision to the final plat for Dolan 7 8

subdivision located at 1329 North Lake Street and establishing Scooter's resubdivision, again by Koru Group, Ward 6.

And agenda item number 25-0627, a resolution approving a final plan for Scooter's resubdivision located at 1329 North Lake Street, again, by Scooter's Coffee, Ward 6.

A STAFF MEMBER: Staff would ask that this be held for two weeks until the next planning commission.

Is there a motion to extend CHAIRMAN PILMER: these three items until October 22nd?

COUNCIL MEMBER: Motion to extend.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Second.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion has been made and seconded. Please call the roll.

(Roll call.)

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CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion carries. The next two agenda items will also read into the record together.

Item number 25-0362, an ordinance approving a revised plan description to amend a certain section of the Farnsworth International plan description for the property located at 998 Corporate Boulevard, Aurora, Illinois by Lydia Home Association, Ward 1. This is a public hearing.

And agenda item number 25-0363, an ordinance granting a conditional use permit for a mental health facility limited to residential treatment facility including educational services for children and adolescents who demonstrate mental health and behavioral difficulties on the property located at 998 Corporate Boulevard, Lydia Home Association, Ward 1. This is also a public hearing.

MS. VACEK: Good evening. Tracey Vacek,
Director of Zoning and Planning Division. The
subject property is located at 998 Corporate
Boulevard. It is currently a vacant building. This
was the building that was previously occupied by
Sequel Use and Family Services, LLC. The property
is within the Farnsworth International Plan

Development District.

And just to give you a little bit of background, in 2011 the City Council had approved a plan description amendment to allow an autistic and special needs mental health facility as a conditional use within the Farnsworth International PDD. At the same time, the City Council adopted the ordinance granting the special use for the autistic and special needs mental health facility. The City Council expressly limited that to the activities on the subject property to those that were outlined in their qualifying statement.

In 2016 the City Council also approved a revision to the special use allowing for the addition to the building. As this was an intensification of the previous special use but it did also preserve all of the previous conditions imposed by the previous special use and utilize the same qualifying statement.

In 2021 the City Council did rescind that special use as they determined that the conditions of the special use were violated warranting its revocation. And that with the closing of the facility, the special use was terminated by

operation of its own enabling that ordinance.

The Petitioner today that is before you is Lydia Home Association is now requesting an approval of the amendment to the planned description for the Farnsworth International Plan Development District. This amendment would allow for the application of a conditional use as it modifies the current conditional use language in the ORI West from autistic and special needs mental health facility to a mental health facility limited to residential treatment facility including educational services for children and adolescents who demonstrate mental health and behavioral difficulties.

Concurrently with this proposal the Petitioner is requesting approval of the condition use for the mental health facility limited to the residential treatment facility including the educational services for children and adolescents who demonstrate mental health and behavioral difficulties.

This request is to occupy the existing 49,320 square foot building as is for the use of the mental health facility serving children from ages 12 to 21 years old who have mental health and

behavioral challenges and difficulty living in a family setting. All the residents will be under supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services and placed at this facility by the DCFS.

I will let the Petitioner go into a little bit more detail about staffing, security, what services they will be providing at this location.

And then just lastly, they are doing some minor cosmetic interior improvements and some security upgrades as the existing building has already consists of bedrooms, classrooms, a gymnasium, dining room, and administrative offices.

I will turn it over to the Petitioner unless there is any questions for Staff.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Any questions of Staff at this time?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROBERTS: Can you explain what happened in 2021? You said the rescinding --

MS. VACEK: Yeah. So the City Council did rescind the special use that was on the property for the autistic and special needs mental health facility. At that time they were going -- they weren't meeting their conditions. Within the plan descriptions they had to have certain staffing

requirements. They had to have certain things that they had to meet and they were not meeting those.

So because of that, the City Council did rescind it. On top of all of that, they also closed their doors. So because they closed their doors, how the ordinance states, if you terminate that, we can go back and rescind the use. So that's what we did in 2021.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Anything else for Staff? Thank you.

Petitioner would like to come forward.

Anyone that is going to speak on behalf of

Petitioner, I'll swear everyone in at the same time.

(Participants sworn by

Commissioner.)

CHAIRMAN PILMER: State your name please.

ATTORNEY SANCHEZ: Yes. My name is Lindsay
Sanchez. I am here on behalf of the Petitioner.
Good evening, Mr. Chairman and Members of Planning
and Zoning Commission. As I said, my name is
Lindsay Sanchez and along with my co-counsel Andrew
Kolb. We are zoning counsel for Lydia Home
Association and a co-advocate and property owner
Corporate Technical Center, LLC.

On behalf of my client and our team, we first want to thank you guys for taking the time to review the application that my client has filed including all the exhibits we have submitted. We want to thank you for considering the request that we are making. I'd like to just give you an overview tonight of our team, the property, and then what it is that we are intending to do with the property.

So just introduce our team tonight. We do have David Anderson with us. He is the director of Lydia Home Association. And Elissa Garcia, she's the director of residential services for Lydia Home Association as well. In a few minutes, David and Elissa will get up and give you some more details on the actual organization and the operations as we intend to operate at that facility. We also have BrieAnne Rader. She is an educational advocate with Educational Advocacy and Consulting, and then Daniel Dolan as well who is the manager of the property owner.

So as I mentioned, applicant is Lydia Home
Association. There's our team, Lydia Home
Association. And it is a faith-based organization.

They're a nonprofit. They operate many different programs. But all of their programs are focussed on providing care and services to children and families in the area. Their mission is to strengthen families, to care for children, and to care for children when families cannot. Their programs aim to serve both the youth and be a blessing to their local community.

One of the programs that they do offer is a residential treatment facility for children who have mental health and behavioral difficulties.

They currently do operate two of these facilities.

One is located in Evanston and one is located in Chicago.

The property that is subject to our petition, this is just an overview of the property. Again, it was previously operated for a similar use. And the owner is Corporate Technical Center, LLC. It's approximately 8.96 acres. There's about a 49,000 square foot building.

As Staff has noted, the building is currently built out for this type of use. It includes one bedroom units, bathrooms, a commercial grade kitchen, a cafeteria, laundry and utility

rooms, classrooms, therapy rooms, gymnasium, gathering spaces, and then administrative offices.

Our client does not intend to make any major modifications. They would be cosmetic in nature to make the facility a very warm and welcoming environment for the children that would be living here.

The property is currently vacant and has been vacant for a few years. As just kind of a background, so the client does intend to acquire the property. They want to operate a residential and educational facility for children between the ages of 12 and 21. Again, these would be children that, due to some kind of mental health or behavioral issues, they experience difficulty living in family setting. The children will be under the custody of DCFS. Lydia Home will be under contract with DCFS to provide various services to these children.

In addition to just the housing itself,
Lydia Home would provide individual and group
therapy to these children, occupational therapy, and
then daily schooling as well. And the schooling
would be consistent with any IEPs that would be
necessary for those children.

The property itself would be licensed as a -- or the facility would be licensed as a childcare institution under the Department of Child and Family Services. It would also be licensed as a nonpublic special education program, slash, combined program under the Illinois State Board of Education.

Because of these two licensures, Lydia

Home would be subject to many administrative code

regulations. They would be subject to various types

of inspections as well from those agencies.

The property itself is currently zoned in a Planned Development District. It's the Farnsworth International PDD. The parcel itself is located in the ORI West parcel. I did note some of the administrative code provisions. There are several.

But some of the more important ones, there is one that governs the actual licensing standards, the facility itself, operations, supervision, and then facility standards. There's an entire chapter that deals with the storage and administration of psychotropic medications, discipline standards, and methodology, and things like that. So it will be a very, very regulated facility.

This is just an overview of the current

survey of the property as it exists today. And then an aerial photo as well. This is the internal layout. As I noted, the client does not intend to make any major modifications to the layout. It is laid out perfectly for this type of a use. So we have all of the necessary rooms and things like that. It would just be cosmetic modifications.

with respect to the application itself, we are seeking three requests today. The first would be the amendment to the Farnsworth PDD plan description to include as a conditional use a residential facility providing educational and treatment services to children experiencing mental health and behavioral issues.

The second would then be to obtain a conditional use permit to operate the subject property as a residential facility providing educational and treatment services to children experiencing mental health and behavioral issues.

Then the third one is a reasonable accommodation with respect to our proposed use of the subject property.

As will be discussed a little bit further, the children that would be living here are

considered individuals with disabilities who are protected under the federal Fair Housing Act and the ADA.

It is worth pointing out that the property is currently in the ORI West section. While this PDD was created in 1989, the plan description as it exists today states that properties within the PDD are intended to be developed for ORI or business uses.

While it's not specifically zoned ORI, because the PDD plan description does indicate an intent to develop the property consistent with uses that are permitted within an ORI zoning classification, I do think it's a little instructive to look at what's allowed under ORI districts. There are several uses that are kind of harmonious with what our client wants to do that would be either a permitted or a conditional use under n ORI district.

One of those is health and human services.

That one is permitted within an ORI district.

Educational services are a conditional use that would be allowed under ORI. Technical trade or other specialty schools, associations, nonprofit

organizations, and then social service agencies, charitable organizations, health-related facilities, and similar uses when not operated for pecuniary profit.

So, again, while we recognize that this is not actually zoned ORI, if you look at the intent of the underlying planned description, we do believe this use would fit in line with that.

The City, we do believe, has the power and should relax the strict requirements of the code to allow Lydia Home's proposed use of the property as this proposed use would provide housing for a population of individuals with disabilities under the FHA and the ADA. Not only will it provide them housing, but it will also provide them with therapeutic and educational services that really, truly are necessary to assist these children succeed in life.

So with that, I'm going to turn it over to my co-counsel Andrew Kolb.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Andrew Kolb. Thank you, Lindsay.

If that was clear, incorporating the underlying similar uses from the ORI into the PDD is

the key here. I want to make sure everyone understood that concept because there are a lot of similar uses that were dredged up into the PDD by reference specifically codified.

So a couple of housekeeping measures.

This is a Klaeren hearing and we need to create our record. I just want to make it clear that we have established public notice. That was given to adjoining property owners. I have an affidavit of that notice that I'd like to move into evidence, as well as the affidavit that the sign was posted and the newspaper publication took place, and also there's a quorum of seven of the nine members here this evening to be able to adjudicate this matter.

Continuing on, I want to make sure that all our exhibits from our application are referenced. We have submitted extensive zoning application as part of our development request today. Exhibit A where the biographies curriculum vitae of our team. That would be Dr. Anderson, as well as Elissa Garcia and BrieAnne Rader as well. So those are referenced in your -- the exhibits to our application rider.

We also submitted an ALTA survey, an

aerial description, and depiction of the subject property. We submitted your PDD ordinance in case you wanted to reference that. We have the owner's consent filed by Mr. Dan Dolan on behalf of his LCC that owns real estate. We submitted an FHA position statement regarding the applicability of the federal Fair Housing Act.

I'll just touch on this briefly. Any individuals suffering from a disability is protected under the FHA from having equal housing opportunities in the community. The federal Fair Housing Act protects this particular use. It informs it in connection with our request for reasonable accommodation.

Federal law also mandates that certain zoning standards be relaxed in the context of providing reasonable accommodation to those with disabilities under the FHA. We believe the FHA and the Americans with Disabilities Act does inform this application and guide us through this process as mandated by federal law.

So that legal opinion is submitted as

Exhibit F which was our FHA provision statement. I

included several of the federal cases that are

applicable to the context there for your reference with the city attorney.

Exhibit G was relevant to property values trending in the area. As a result, one of the elements of the conditional use is diminution of property value. What we did was track the property value by pin in the surrounding pins that surround the existing Lydia facilities in Chicago and Evanston.

anniversary. We have plenty of information and data to show that surrounding property values did not diminish and in fact, increased significantly. The tax pin surrounding the actual developments that they have going, the actual facilities that they have. So we think that would inform you all. We put those together in a spreadsheet and submitted that as evidence. That's Exhibit G.

Then we have Exhibit H which was
BrieAnne's response to an objection by the school
district which we are happy to unpack that objection
letter word for word, if you guys would like us to
do that. I know there's some people here ready to
speak to that. And we can get into the specifics of

that if you like. But we have hired an education advocate to challenge a lot of the notions regarding funding and a lot of the misstatements made in that letter. That's Exhibit H.

Our floor plan was Exhibit I.

we also brought a couple of additional exhibits which is the landscape plan. We note that Staff recommended approval of our project, which is great. We were really excited to see that. But they did mandate as one of the conditions of approval that we adhere to a prior landscape plan. So we dug that up and I have it with me. I can certainly submit that. I brought copies for everyone, if you guys want us to put that forward. That would be an additional exhibit that wasn't in our application that we would like considered tonight. So I will pass that out.

Then the CV of Dr. Rader is not included as well. So we want to include that as well. She's our education advocate. I wanted you to know her educational qualifications and professional experience. I'll bring that as well.

So I think that does it. We'd like to move to admit all of these exhibits from our

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application and the supplemental exhibits into the record of tonight's proceeding barring objection from any of you on that point.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: No, we can note that we added to the package that was submitted.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Great. Okay. So with that, we'd like to take the opportunity to allow some of our team to speak a little bit further about the background. What I can do, if it's all right, I'd like to stand at that podium and maybe guide the conversation a bit as needed while we have some of our team members on this one.

with that, I'll ask Dr. Anderson to step up and tell you a little bit about the facility.

DR. ANDERSON: Good evening. Thanks for having me and considering our request. I would suggest I tell you a little bit about myself. I've been the CEO for Lydia Home for over 35 years. I have a doctorate in clinical psychology and have been working in the field of treating children with significant emotional and behavioral problems for all 35 years in a residential facility.

Prior to here I worked at Lutheran General Hospital. I ran their psychiatric unit in Park

Ridge. I have experienced that. I also worked at University of Chicago and Northwestern University evaluation parents and doing some pilot experience in evaluating children and adolescents at those locations.

Also I've won a number of awards. I've won a distinguished alumnae award for my school that I graduated my doctorate in, Chicago School of Professional Psychology. I won an award in 208 for being a global social movement leader by Ashoka which is an international agency that deals with facilitating social movements around the world.

I was a prime mover which is social innovation and movement with prime movers that I was elected in nationally as they considered some of the work we do as leading a social movement. And I won a citation for a humanitarian prize by the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice.

I want to just share Lydia Home, as mentioned, has been around 110 years. We've had children live with us for 110 years. We started off as an orphanage that was launched by a local church. And it's called Lydia because Lydia in Acts that welcomed strangers into her home and cared for them

when they were in need. We have been called Lydia ever since.

we shifted around in 1980 from an orphanage to a residential treatment facility. And we continue to serve kids solely who were wards of the Department of Children and Family Services. That's all we have ever served. That's all we plan to serve.

Then we are invited to take on a second facility in Evanston. That also provides treatment for kids who have emotional, behavior difficulties, and cannot live in foster homes until they receive treatment.

In addition to residential treatment -it's not at this facility -- but we also do foster
care. We do intact services. We do counseling
services. And we started something called Safe
Families For Children, which is interesting. Safe
Families is a movement of volunteers in the
community who are willing to take in children of
parents who are in trouble. And they're all
volunteers.

We have 150 of them in the Aurora area, although we have grown throughout the United States

and internationally. We're in 12 countries and throughout the whole Untied States. There is a strong presence of volunteers in Aurora. Some are actually on the Board of Education for Aurora School District, as well as school social workers in Aurora. And so we have a great deal of commitment to that.

Our passion is how we can keep kids out of foster care and together with their parents. If they can't stay with their parents and they go into foster care, our passion is to care for the most vulnerable in our society. Those are the children that we are talking about; children that have experienced trauma, have been separated from their parents. Many of them don't have family members that really even care about them or are willing to take them back in. That's who we're called to do.

I grew up -- My dad was a bricklayer. I grew up and I was going to be a bricklayer until he told me not to. One thing I noticed that he hired all these men that just got out of prison. Some of them from around here, Joliet and other areas. I said to my dad, why in the world would you give people like that a chance. He said to me he said,

Dave, if I don't do it, who will.

We have a responsibility as a society to come alongside people that desperately need our help. And I feel personally why my wife and I, who is here, has taken in over 100 children ourselves that we as a society have a responsibility to care for the most vulnerable. The ones that are the most vulnerable are the ones that end up in foster care, children that have been traumatized and have some type of psychological problem, and have no one else interested in caring for them.

That's who we are called to do. That's been our mission for 110 years. We do it exceptionally well in the two facilities we run. And our desire, as we are being asked to do more, is to do so in Aurora. The facility that we identified is perfect for the work that's needed.

So that's what our hope is. That's why we are here. We have extensive experience as a child psychologist, as one who has done this for 35 years and figuring out how to do it and how to do it well so that kids get better and become productive adults and give back to our society. That's our intent. So thank you so much.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Can you detail what services exactly will be at the facility in Aurora?

DR. ANDERSON: In our facility -- and it's similar to what we do in Chicago and Aurora -- is that they come and stay with us 24 hours a day. We in Aurora will be starting our own school to be able to house our -- to be able to provide education for the kids in our own setting.

In addition to that, we provide treatment, individual therapy, group therapy, occupational therapy as needed. We have a psychiatrist that will be on staff providing psychiatric medication and treatment for them as well. I am a psychologist so I will do all the psychological evaluations and all the things that are needed in that way.

And then we have social workers who work with family or foster family or some family for them to go to. That's our goal is to identify a family for them to step down to. If not, we help them move into independence and help them find work and learn to be a productive citizen.

In addition to that, one of the key things that we offer families -- we offer kids is what we call a mentor. A mentor is someone from the

community who commits to come alongside these kids and stay involved with them as long as they need and help them transition back into a foster family, transition back to their family, transition back to whatever situation the Lord has for them.

My wife and I do this. I have to say my foster son we met is 40 years old now. He has two kids. He calls us mom and dad, not because we adopted him, simply because we hung with him and helped him navigate the difficulties of moving into adulthood. We feel placing these treatments centers in communities that could come alongside of them and support them and befriend them and care for them is so important in helping them make the decisions and transitions that they need to make.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Do you have any measures of success you'd like to share?

DR. ANDERSON: Yeah, we have all sorts of measures of success. The biggest one is where do they go to when they're done. Over half our kids step down into a foster family or back with their family. Not all of them though. I want to make it very clear, which is why we look for other family and we help them move into independence as needed.

But that's our biggest success measure.

We have other success measures in terms of our being evaluated by DCFS, which we are evaluated monthly. They come in and do monitoring visits of us. We are part of council and accreditation which is like a JCAHO and accreditation body that provides some oversight of the work that we do. And we've been identified as extremely successful in all those evaluations that we have had.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Is there any questions for Dr. Anderson at this point?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROBERTS: How many kids will you serve?

DR. ANDERSON: Our max will be 40 that we're looking for at this time. That's our discussion with DCFS is that we would be able to care for 40 kids in that facility.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROBERTS: What's like the staff to student ratio?

DR. ANDERSON: During times when the kids are awake which is 7:00 until 11:00 at night, it's 1 to 3. Currently in our facilities in the evening at nighttime when the kids are sleeping, the DCFS requirements are 1 to 5.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Any other questions at this time?

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: A couple. So you have two facilities, one in Evanston and one in Chicago. The Aurora facility you're proposing, is it strictly for the Aurora area or is it going to become an overflow for Evanston and Chicago?

DR. ANDERSON: It's not going to become an overflow. All of our kids that are sent to us come to us by. DCFS so we don't go out and look for them. We don't go and develop that kind of work. DCFS identifies kids. Then we will make referrals for them to come and stay in one of our facilities.

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: Is there a priority of local community versus --

DR. ANDERSON: Sure, yeah. Because all the kids do better when they're close to home. All the research shows that. So I don't have DCFS here to be able to determine how they make the referrals. But that would be our intent.

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: Landscape plan seems to be missing a section I thought was going to be the playground area. Is there a playground area? Can these kids get out and have some fresh air?

DR. ANDERSON: Yeah, yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: I don't see any indication of that on this.

DR. ANDERSON: It's kind of interesting because this property is so much regarding play and space and things like that. There's so much more space for the kids to be able to participate in. There is big fenced in area. They can have a soccer area and basketball and a playground. And we are just anxious to be able to have that space to be able to give them some space to be kids.

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: But right now it's just an open area, not planned to be any type of swing sets?

DR. ANDERSON: No, it's all in. It's all fenced in, the play area. There's a playground in there. There's a basketball court in there. That's already established. That's why we are so interested in that.

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: You're a nonprofit. What's Aurora going to benefit besides someone occupying the building and you may be taking in local cases? What else does Aurora benefit from this?

DR. ANDERSON: I would say add two things to that. Currently Aurora is benefitting significantly from Lydia Home. We have over 150 volunteers who take in children from Aurora, from Aurora school district whose parents are in difficult situations. And we have a good 20 churches that are what we call Safe Family churches. Ones that you would be aware of, the Christ Community Church, all of the big churches you would be aware of are involved with Safe Families currently providing that. We are already providing that service.

The other benefit to us actually having this facility, I think, is what I shared about my father. That we have an opportunity to put kids in a community where they're loved and cared for by their neighbors and are willing to come alongside them helping them transition to some of the challenges they face. Because they don't just need --

I'm a psychologist. They don't just need a psychologist. They just don't need a psychiatrist. They need a human adult that is willing to befriend them, care for them, and mentor them, not because they're getting paid but because

that's what that child needs.

And we think that is what our experience -- So we are in 12 countries and Safe Families is in 40 states. And we have done hosting kids in host family homes 88,000 times. What I would say after all of that is that it's more beneficial for the volunteers than it actually is for the parents. But we're helping parents who are homeless, who have to go into drug treatment, who are victims of domestic violence. And they have nobody to come alongside and help them.

That's who the volunteers in Aurora and the churches in Aurora are doing, working with your existing homeless centers to provide these parents and their kids connections and people that are willing to befriend them and care for them simply because we're Americans, simply because we're called to live out --

The book I wrote -- I was going to bring you a copy. Someone told me not to. It's called Unleashing Radical Hospitality. The idea of a society being able to love and care for strangers including the kids in the home that we hope to have is radical and it will change both the people who

are serving, as well as the kids.

We have stories. We won an award here in Aurora. We get funding from foundations in Aurora. We have stories of people including the woman who is on the Board of Education for Aurora school district who is serving as a host family. I think she's taken in 15 children and supported their parents. That's the benefit that Lydia and Safe Families provides as we have the ability to expand our presence in Aurora.

ATTORNEY KOLB: What kind of jobs are you going to bring to the community?

DR. ANDERSON: We expect about 150 positions that we would be able to bring to the community. Many of them are what we call residential counselors which are people that will work directly with the kids all day and all night. That would be the majority of them.

We are going to have a psychiatry position. We are going to have probably about eight therapists. I'm a little worried that we would be able to find the people in the community but I'm hoping that's the case. We'll have a number of probably about six social workers that would be

present that we'll be hiring all to help run this facility.

regarding security within the facility. You're dealing with cases 12 years old to 21 years old and you've got the male and female sexes. How is that addressed inside the facility as far as separation or safety between the various ages?

DR. ANDERSON: Yep, yep. In Chicago where one of my offices are, we have the units that are separated by sex or by -- I'm not sure the correct term -- by gender. I'm not sure. We have a boys unit and a girls unit and we separate them.

In Illinois it's important that we are not allowed to lock kids up. And it's important. There are some kids that I think should be in that. But in Illinois we are not allowed to. I've been working with a number of attorneys for the state to be able to move in that direction but we are not able to do that.

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: Within their room. How about the building? Are they locked into the building?

DR. ANDERSON: No, nope. All the doors --

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COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: If there's an emergency, and out the door they go.

DR. ANDERSON: They call it -- All the doors have delayed egress. So if they push the panic bar to get out, it delays. An alarm goes off and it delays, I believe, for up to 15 seconds which allows us to then intervene. We do provide intervention in order to help maintain kids and help them control their behavior.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: When do you plan on beginning operations?

DR. ANDERSON: Well, depends on this. We hope by the first of the year to be able to begin hiring. It will take a little bit. 150 staff are our number. But we hope to open one unit at a time. It wouldn't be 40 all at once. It would be let's start with one unit maybe of nine kids and get that unit staffed. And when that's stable, let's do a second unit. And that's what we plan to do.

ATTORNEY KOLB: If there's nothing else for Dr. Anderson, I think we'd like to hear from Lisa Garcia.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you so much for your time.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Thank you. Ms. Garcia, maybe

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you can introduce yourself. Tell the Commission exactly maybe some of your background and your experiences and what you do for Lydia Home.

MS. GARCTA: Sure. Good evening. My name is Elissa Garcia. I am the director at our Evanston campus. I have been working there for almost ten I have a master's in social work from years now. the University of Chicago. I'm a licensed clinical social worker. I also have a master's in child development. It is my passion to help children in need. It's what I've spent my career doing and will continue to do.

In working with these kids and with their families is more than a job for me and it's more than a job for most of the folks who work for Lydia None of this are in this to get rich. think that's obvious. But we enjoy our children. We enjoy their family.

I am proud every day of my staff and of the people who come alongside these kids and work with them through difficult situations. We have great teams of people and we are ready to train up another great team of people here in Aurora.

I wanted to -- Before I get into kind of

our operations which I wanted to go over a little bit with you all. I wanted to add another benefit to Aurora. One is monetary. We spend a lot of money with our children. They get allowances and we take them out to stores and they love to spend allowances. If you have a Five Below here in Aurora, their profits will increase with us. We have to buy food and clothing and entertainment for our 40 children. So we go out and spend money.

In addition our children need a lot from us but they give a lot to us as well. We work closely with our communities, with our neighbors. At our Evanston campus, we have neighbors who come by and garden with the kids, run with the kids, play sports with the kids. They're mentors. They're volunteers.

A lot of our local people who run art classes or movement classes, they come and volunteer their time with our children. And all the time I hear them reflect about how much these children give to them, how much the time they spend with these kids is valuable to them, how much they're benefitting personally.

So I think that it's important to remember

that the benefit that we have from reaching out and helping can't be measured just in money and in development, but it's about community and it's about us growing as people and becoming deeper and better for it.

So let's see. At both our Evanston and Chicago campuses, we serve between 40 and 50 kids a year at each campus. So collectively about a hundred kids annually come through our doors. The average length of stay is about 18 to 24 months. It can be as low as 5 or 6 months for some kids. It can be several years for some other kids.

Most of our children make really good progress within 6 to 9, maybe 12 months of being with us. So we are usually ready to send them out the door back to their families, to a foster home. Usually when kids are with us longer, it's because we have issues in the community in terms of identifying a suitable placement for them.

So we have a unit structure in our building. So we divide our children up into residential units. Those units function like a family. For each unit, which is usually nine children, we have a therapist, a case manager,

supervisor, and then a residential team that works with those kids. So we try to integrate the family work, the case management, the clinical work, and all that expertise together into the lives of the children to make it integrated and to raise the

6 quality of our work as much as possible.

So usually those nine children after they've been living together for a bit, they're functioning like siblings, loving each other, hating each other. Most of us know how siblings act. Our staff are highly trained in trauma and informed behavior management. They know how to manage our kids.

We use several therapeutic modalities in our training. And that includes therapeutic crisis intervention, ARC which stands for Attachment, Regulation, and Competency. We have different kinds of tools we use to train our families as well. We offer and will offer at Aurora family therapy, individual therapy, group therapy, psychiatric services, occupational therapy, education services, mentorship and more. Whatever our children need, we find a way to get them that service.

So for our children they have very

specialized needs. They need a highly structured milieu. They need a high ratio of staff to children. We try to build up their skills so they can have as normal a life as possible. We try to get them out as much as possible.

so we design our facilities so we can increase the structure and increase the safety when we need to when our kids are struggling. But when they're doing well, we get them outside onto the playground. We take them to the Y. We sign them up for art classes. We do whatever we can do to give them the normalcy that they deserve.

ATTORNEY KOLB: So can you touch a little bit on security, what happens if a student becomes difficult or challenging?

MS. GARCIA: Yes. So when we're having a situation where the kids are starting to get escalated, our staff are trained to deescalate the situation. They use their tools. If that's not working, then we have walkie-talkies. They can call for assistance so staff from other units can come and help them, keep it safe.

We do what we call five seconds. Where we say five seconds and the other kids have to go to

their bedrooms. They all know they have to do that.

And they are wonderful about it most of the time.

They're children. And then our staff are trained to do physical restraint if needed. And they manage the children that way.

There are rare occasions when emergency services are needed. But we don't use emergency services to manage the behavior of our children.

Our staff are trained to do so.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Can you talk a little bit about reunification and how successful you are with that in Evanston.

MS. GARCIA: Yes. So as Dave was saying, most of our children either go to their families. So reunification would be going back to their natural families. In a lot of cases that's not possible. For whatever reasons, their families are not able to take them back so we look for foster families for them.

As I said, there is a shortage of foster parents, especially foster parents suited to work with our kids. We've also started a treatment foster care program in our agency. In that program we are training foster parents to be able to meet

the needs of our most challenging kids.

So back to January 2025. Between our two programs, we discharged 27 kids and 26 of those discharges is what we would determine successful discharges which means the children went to a home environment. For the most part, we are able to get our kids in homes. We work really hard with the families, with the foster parents, training them up doing family therapy to try to set our kids up for success once they've completed treatment with us.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Can you talk a little about the revenue structure. How does Lydia Home operate from a revenue and expense standpoint?

MS. GARCIA: So we are entirely state funded. We have a daily rate that is set by DCFS for our residential program. And then for the school side, ISBE sets a daily rates for that. That's where our revenue comes from. We also work with a lot of private donors. We have a lot of generous people who contribute to our agency. And we use that to supplement what we get from the state.

So for example, we have donors that buy all of our children Christmas presents every year.

That's foster care, residential, people that buy all

the presents. Every year we have more presents than we know what to do with.

ATTORNEY KOLB: What licensure is applicable to your facility; and also when you're evaluated by DCFS to confirm that things are operating safely and smoothly, what types of things do they evaluate? What do they look at?

MS. GARCIA: So we are licensed by DCFS as a childcare institution. Then we are also accredited by COA. Then the school will be licensed through ISBE. We have residential monitors that work with us through DCFS. They make monthly site visits. They have a very detailed assessment that they fill out every month.

They evaluate everything from how clean the kids' bedrooms are to the food that we are serving the kids to the physical plan, the frequency of therapy sessions. Every detail. Very detailed evaluation. Our licensing worker comes monthly to check on things. And then we have oversight from the children's DCFS case workers. They come monthly as well.

So pretty much every aspect of our program is evaluated by at least two state holders. There's

a lot of overlap in the different oversight that people have over us. Does that answer your question?

ATTORNEY KOLB: It does, yes. Does anyone have any questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: Are the inspections typically scheduled or they just come in when they want?

MS. GARCIA: They come when they want. And they call all times. Our monitor will show up at the overnight shift sometimes, show up late at night, early in the morning. They also look at staffing ratio. So whenever we have any kind of unusual crisis, we have to notify our monitor. Then they follow-up with us how we handled it. We document everything that happens basically. And so at any time we can be expected to provide that documentation to DCFS. We are able to do so.

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: Just one other question on the resident that's there for a couple years.

Turn 21 years old, you just open the door and let him out or what's the transition there?

MS. GARCIA: No, never. So usually when children turn 18, we're working on transitioning out

to the community. When children are still with us at the age of 21, it means they have some more profound disabilities or more complex things going on with them. So we are working all the way along to build independence, making a plan with what they need to be in some kind of a facility support or if they need job training or assistance getting housing.

we would never just let our kids go like that. So we work closely with DCFS to make sure that their needs are going to be met. DCFS has a lot of programs and opportunities for the kids as well. So we hook them up with whatever resources are most relevant for them.

COUNCIL MEMBER PICKENS: Thank you.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Initially when we begin to operate, what resources do you anticipate needing from the Batavia School District?

MS. GARCIA: We will need to consult with them in terms of IEP development, make sure we're meeting their expectations. We work closely with the Evanston school district, Chicago school district too. Every time we admit a child, we review the IEP with them. We talk about placement.

But in terms of when we are operating our own school -- So let me back up. At the get-go, we are going to mostly be working with ISBE to make sure we meet all of their expectations. Then from the Batavia school district, their main function is going to be that IEP oversight.

ATTORNEY KOLB: But Lydia will employ its own teachers, occupational therapists, social workers, etc on staff, correct?

MS. GARCIA: Yes. We will employ the teachers, teacher's aides. We will have a full-time occupational therapist. We have social workers and therapists so all of the clinical and mental health needs will be met there. If any of our kids have other specialized services they need in their IEPs, we will take responsibility for making sure they have the services.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Is IEP administration by the school district a daily burden or is that periodic or what's your experience there? I know it varies per student.

MS. GARCIA: It varies per the student's level of need. It's usually an annual review.

ATTORNEY KOLB: How long does an annual review

like that take?

MS. GARCIA: Well, I started at Lydia Home at our residential as a case manager and attended a lot of IEP meetings. In my experience they usually were between 45 and 90 minutes depending on the complexity of the situation.

ATTORNEY KOLB: So 90 minutes per child approximately once a year?

MS. GARCIA: Yes.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Any questions regarding anything?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Yeah, I do. You said 90 minutes. However, I have a son in school and it's also countless hours of different other testing that has to go in, observation. Do you guys have the people to make those observations to keep track of all that? Is that what those teachers are?

MS. GARCIA: Yes, so the Special Ed teachers do a lot of observation. The occupational therapist will do the observation and reports for their field. Then if we needed to consult with or contract with like a psychologist to do a special evaluation or with a speech language pathologist to do a specific evaluation, we can contract with those privately or

find other ways to meet those needs. So we would make sure that we were following all ISBE regulations and that we are providing that in-house.

know so little. So I know that every student in the district has a right, like you said, to go to the district or to a school in the district and get those IEP services. How many of your students are currently doing that? Is there a percentage in the other schools?

MS. GARCIA: At our current facilities, our kids go to a variety of different kinds of schools. A lot of them go to therapeutic day schools. Then a lot of them also go to mainstream schools and have IEP supports. The majority of our children have IEPs. At Aurora the population that we're going to be serving will have IEPs that specify residential schools or therapeutic day schools. So they will go to school on campus.

We take our kids' educational rights seriously. And we'll make sure that IEP process is transparent and just and our kids are where they need to be in terms of education. Does that answer your question? You look uncertain.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: I guess it would be more a question for the school board, if they already have the faculty to be able to support the amount of students you guys will be bringing in. I know at first you mentioned it was nine students. Is there going to be conversations? I know there's public speaking coming up. So I don't know if that will be answered then.

MS. GARCIA: Yeah, and I think Ms. Radar can speak better to some of this than I can. Also the children at this place, their IEPs are going to say therapeutic day school. So if we have a referal from DCFS that doesn't meet that criteria, we would meet their needs in one of our other campuses.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Any other questions at this time? Thank you.

ATTORNEY KOLB: So Ms. Radar, we thought we would wait to present her until we needed to get into a discussion regarding those types of services and school board involvement, etc as far as resource allocation.

We did want to just briefly touch on the conditions that Staff recommended. There were a number of conditions in their Staff report when they

recommended approval of our project. We just wanted to clarify some of those conditions as we are prepared to accept them or some of them at this time.

First was the fence. We assumed the fencing requirement was to maintain the existing fencing or perhaps fence the rear yard of the premises. There are administrative code regulations and DCFS requirements regarding full enclosure. So with respect to the fence condition, we would respectfully indicate that we would agree to that condition subject, of course, to whatever limitations DCFS would put on us in terms of enclosure, if that makes sense. So we'd want to qualify that condition a bit.

With respect to the landscaping plan, the plan that we submitted to you all will adhere. Dan Dolan has indicated he'll get out there and weed this week if you need him to. All those landscape plans are installed currently. So we don't anticipate having to do a lot of work there, but we'll certainly dress it up as needed, whatever Staff recommends or whatever you guys would recommend to the board.

In terms of the number of residents, I believe we're inclined to accept 40. We would like the ability to increase that number subject to Staff approval at the administrative level if we could. If DCFS wants to put additional students or recommends additional students, we would hate to have to come back through the public hearing process.

What we'd suggest, if you all are inclined, would be to have that be an administrative review process up to -- you can put a ceiling on it of, let's say, 50 or 60. But it would be subject to Staff consent administratively in their sole discretion or whatever requirements they would agree to there.

You'd still be able to exercise control absolutely over the number of students. We would agree to 40. But we'd just like to be able to come back and talk to you all and amend that, if we could, administratively without more public hearings. So that would be the one caveat there.

As far as ancillary programs, there was a note in the conditions that services be provided only with respect to the residents themselves. Of

course we have designated caregivers, families, support programs for family members. So we want to make sure that the definition of rendering services to residents includes the families of residents who may need support and caregivers. We may have outreach programs or educational programs or caregiver programs or other programs that have been touched on by Dave and Elissa earlier.

As far as staffing, the staffing plan that we submitted does contain one change that's necessary. That is the overnight staffing was 1 to 5 as recommended by DCFS. So we want to stick to what the state agency recommends and mandates and what they're going to pay for in terms of budgets and revenues. We want to make sure the staffing plan reflects the 3 to 1 ratio that was in the staffing plan referenced by Staff won't be during the night hours. That was touched on earlier.

So with that I think we're prepared to accept all of the conditions that Staff recommended, if you all agree with them as well. We are happy to go through all of the conditions of both the amendment to the plan developmental district and the conditions of the conditional use. Although we took

care to write all of the narratives in the written application so we didn't have to go through them all and address them at the hearing. And Staff did point out that we adequately addressed those, but we are happy to do it again if you guys want. We will leave it up to you.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: I think you submitted it. I think it's part of the Staff's report. So I think we're covered.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Excellent. With that, we'll just turn it over. If anybody has any other questions for any of us or the public or however you guys want to proceed.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Any questions of the Petitioner at this time? Thank you.

So this is a public hearing. Anyone in the audience that would like to address the Commission will have the opportunity to do so. What we will do is we will hear all of the public testimony and then we will take notes here and then we'll either ask Staff or the Petitioner to address the questions. So if anyone would like to speak, I'll need you to come forward. Raise your right hand.

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(Sworn by Chairman.)

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CHAIRMAN PILMER: Thank you. If you'll just state your name.

MR. KIM: Absolutely. Good evening, everyone. My name is Tom Kim. I am the superintendent at the Batavia public school District 101. I also happen to be a member of the Aurora Education Commission. I serve within the city's committee.

So first of all, good evening. Thanks to everybody. I do want to say that was a great presentation. I want to just clarify one thing real quick. I realize that upon receipt of the letter, that counsel had noted that that was a letter of objection. I personally would not characterize it as a letter of objection.

For me as a school superintendent, our doors are open to any of the students that reside in our district's boundaries. That's what we do. That's our mission. That's our vision for our school district. There are some things that came as a question about the proposal as to what led to that letter. But, again, we're here for kids.

A little bit about me just real quick. You know, I've been an educator for about 26 years. This is my third year as superintendent of Batavia. It's first time as superintendent. I really appreciated the presentation because growing up as an immigrant with an immigrant mom raising three boys on her own, I get the mission. It's a close heart thing for me. If you talk to any of my former students that I've taught or any of the students in my district now or Staff or colleagues, they'll tell you that's good stuff there. My youngest brother, my little brother, is a school social worker. So we get it.

Just one of the things that comes to question for me. You know, as Lydia Home staff and counsel has acknowledged that they're going to be working on a school plan and school approved process. I have no idea where that process is at right now as they submit their plan to run an operational school alongside their residency therapeutic program.

But as they're gathering additional information to provide to the Committee and all the documentation that would go with it, I would just encourage the Committee to take a look at what that plan looks like wholistically side by side with what

has been presented.

Questions that would remain are looking at that non-public school facility application as part of the consideration for the plan. I personally have not seen any of it. That's why it's just a question.

The other component is I know there's been reference to the facility in Evanston. It actually does look like a really nice facility. I've done a little bit of homework on that. It goes to one of the things that I did point out in the past with the previous facility that occupied this property there was an unfortunate tragedy in it.

My point in recognizing that was I realized that Lydia Home is a totally separate entity than NIA. I understand that. But as we heard, there's going to be a similar mission in how we want to serve students and similar populations. And my purpose of that letter was to really come forward with a question about is that a safe and appropriate facility for staff and for students. As my letter noted, you know, there was unfortunately a tragedy where an employee was killed while a student eloped from the campus.

Again, looking at location, the Evanston location is located within a residential community, a neighborhood. I believe -- and correct me if I'm wrong please -- but I believe the Chicago location is also embedded within a neighborhood block, residential block. So that for me is just a different feel. Again, I'm not an expert. They have experience with this.

For me I just -- I'm familiar with the area. To the west is the opening to the corporate parkway. To the east is the build up of the casino. There's an industrial complex being constructed right now. That road directly accessing the facility's parking lot is under construction.

So, again, that's just one of my concerns. I mean, we heard talk about a need for fence, possibly fencing in a certain part of the playground and park area which they have -- absolutely, there's an area for those kids to be able to go out and exercise and go out and play in the back.

So the other component that I heard,

Council Person Martinez, you had asked about

staffing. For us we take the responsibility of

supporting our students no matter who they are and

where they're coming from very seriously.

The example I'll provide you, with the previous location NIA, there are two students who we've recently been supporting. We do take care of them. They're our responsibility. We have been paying approximately \$1,600 a day for two of those students that were part of that system or program, and we're taking care of it. We take care of our responsibility.

It's come out to about \$548,000 per year because it's a 365 per day bill. For us there is reimbursements. I know there are avenues for reimbursements from the state that come back to BPS 101 through the Orphanage Act. Those come in arrears. For us the timing of those reimbursements and funds can be off for us sometimes. So it's difficult for us to financially plan in our budgeting.

Then with the needs for supporting IEPs, you heard a little bit about that already in the presentation. And for us, you know, it would be absolutely a partnership. I think the best success for the students that it would definitely need to be something that's done through a collaborative

process.

I heard really great staffing plan and outline and timeline that they are anticipating rolling out with. I'm impressed just given the nature of how much staff they're noting that they're going to acquire and try to launch by January 1 with the hiring process and then start rolling in students. I think there's a lot there for us.

Another example of we are not here to object to anything. We are here to ask questions and make sure that we feel really comfortable in supporting where the students are. And for us, for example, we have a .6 SLP who supports our parochial schools residing within our boundaries. So we meet our obligations there.

There was some discussion about funding.

The school side funding is actually, it flows through the school district. We are kind of the flow through. So we give a prorated amount of funds to some of the parochial schools who have students who need student services and needs. That comes through BPS to them. I imagine that's going to be a similar process here. Probably the DCFS funding is going directly to them. I'm not sure. That's not

my area of expertise.

But in highlighting all that, these are just some of the things we just wanted to make sure we were able to speak to tonight. Again, not here as a letter of objection. I mean, it's just me up here talking. As you can tell, I'm a little nervous. A part of it too is the core mission, supporting kids, especially kids who might need it, totally understand and support.

If you saw the work we are trying to do in my school district right now, that hits to heart of what we are trying to do as well. But at the end of it, there is a school side component that is one of my two questions, I suppose, if you were to phrase it that way. It's location and school size support and education and teaching and curriculum for the kids.

I did hear a lot about job creation through this organization coming and occupying that space. One thing I'll tell you right now the education commission is really actually -- I'm helping lead the voice on this with the other superintendents that are Aurora based schools. We're looking at focusing on kids getting jobs and

1 how they get student placed internships. 2 I heard about setting up our students for 3 success in life. You know, that's obviously one of 4 those things. Gainful employment helps build a way to break certain cycles. Anyway, sorry by my ramble 5 a little bit. That's all I have. 6 CHAIRMAN PILMER: Thank you. 7 8 MR. KIM: Do you have any questions for me? 9 CHAIRMAN PILMER: No. 10 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Have you guys talked, 11 like the organizations? Since the funding will be 12 coming through you like educational, have you guys had any conversations. 13 MR. KIM: So there were phone calls and some 14 email exchanges between some of my staff. I don't 15 16 think counsel was directly involved with that. 17 right? 18 ATTORNEY KOLB: No. 19 So it was more with, I think, Dr. --DR. ANDERSON. Dr. Anderson. 20

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Anything else? Thank you.
Would anyone else in the audience like to address

MR. KIM: Dr. Anderson. Sorry. And maybe the

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property owner.

the Commission regarding the setting? Showing no one has come forward, I'm going to close the public hearing and would ask the Petitioner to come back up on just a couple items, questions. Maybe the Petitioner can provide an update on ISBE licensing and the status of that. And if not received, the timing of opening the school and how that impacts.

ATTORNEY KOLB: We would like to address some of the comments of the superintendent if that's all right.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: You can. We're here to hear public testimony. So we are not here to get into a debate or argument between. We are just here to hear public testimony that's relevant to the amendment that we are looking at tonight but feel free to address.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Just a couple of points. If you'd like to hear from BrieAnne, we did bring an education expert and education advocate that can speak to a lot of what was said by the superintendent.

I'll just say, first off, that there is commercial and business and residential use surrounding both the Chicago and Evanston

facilities. They're not exclusively residential.

And in fact the next door neighbor to this facility 14 Hoops is run by Matt Miller who is a client of mine. Actually did the legal work to start that organization and fund it. Did all of the agreements with the City of Aurora to provide his funding for the basketball programs there. And I've been his lawyer for 15 years.

He is in full support of this. In fact, we have discussed some synergies and some programs allowing his facility to be utilized by these kids. I think when we talk about the area being appropriate for this use, I think there's a real opportunity with our next door neighbor to build a nice union and synergy there. I think you all should know the statement that this is not an appropriate area is somewhat misleading, especially since this conditional use has been granted in the past.

Regarding education, you know, I think when we talk about resources from the superintendent, any family moving into the district is entitled to these resources, whether they're disabled or not. We wouldn't be having this

discussion if this was just a group of families.

If Toll Brothers was opening a multi-family development, we wouldn't be having a discussion about whether or not the residents of Toll Brothers would be able to use resources of the school district. These are residents like any other residents of the community. Just because they're disabled, they shouldn't be more closely scrutinized in terms of resource allocation. To do so would violate the FHA.

I'll leave it up to you if you'd like to hear from our education advocate to address some of the things that the superintendent said or if you'd rather move along, that's fine too.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: My notes show really two questions. I think you answered one of them. It was just a concern about is the location safe and secure. I think there's information in our -- that Petitioner provided, as well as the city provided in their legislative text that addresses that as well. So I think the other question was regarding ISBE status.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Can you speak to that, Dr. Anderson?

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DR. ANDERSON: Yeah. So we currently have ISBE funded and approved therapeutic residential program on one of our units in Evanston. Our intent would be to transfer that to Aurora. All the work is done. It's just relocation of that in Aurora. And all the paperwork has been submitted. It's been accepted. Our plan would be to do that.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Can you begin with students residing at Lydia Home without that?

DR. ANDERSON: No, we would be -- the length of time it takes to transfer a school is -- I understand it's not as complex as starting a school from scratch. So that would be our intent that the school be set so that when kids start coming in, that they'd be able to be serviced in the school.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Thank you. I think that addressed couple questions unless Staff or Commissioners have another question. Thank you.

ATTORNEY KOLB: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: I'd ask Staff if you want to cover findings of fact.

MS. VACEK: So I'm going to do the findings for the first one and then we can do the recommendation, and then we will come back and do the findings for the second one.

For the re-zoning findings of fact which is the amendment to the PDD, number one, is the proposal in accordance with the applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies with the City of Aurora?

A similar use was located at this property previously. The prior re-zoning findings of fact used the same physical development policies with emphasis on blight within the area. There is also -- Petitioner has added in their updated statement, they have also responded to this on page 7.

Number two, does the proposal represent the logical establishment and/or consistent extension of the requested classification and consideration of the existing land uses, existing zoning classification, and essential character of the general area of the property in question?

The character of this area is more industrial/office uses and the comprehensive plan does need to say Office/Research/Light industrial. Despite a lack of consistency with the neighboring property, the prior re-zoning finding facts use the

same physical development policies and emphasized the blight within the area. The Petitioner also on page 7 of their updated qualifying statement had a full response to that also.

Number three, is the proposal consistent with a desirable trend of development in the general area of the property in question, occurring since the property in question was placed in the present zoning classification? Desirability being defined as the trend's consistency with the applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora.

Since the development of the property as an autistic and special needs mental health facility in 2011, the trend of the area has swung more industrial, office, and commercial uses. See the petition in their updated qualifying statement on page 8 for their full response.

Then number four, will the re-zoning allow uses which will be more suitable than the uses permitted under the existing zoning classification?

The amendment to the Planned Development

District will permit the reuse of the existing

building without extensive remodeling and demolition. Despite the lack of consistency with neighboring properties, the prior re-zoning and finding of fact used the same physical development policies with an emphasis on blight, a possibility for the building if left unused. Then, again, please see the Petitioner's updated qualifying statement on page 9 for the full response.

Then number five, is the re-zoning a consistent extension of the existing land use, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area?

Then my response would be that it would be the same as number four above. Then also see the Petitioner's updated qualifying statement on page 9 for their full response.

with that the Staff would acknowledge and inconsistencies with the neighboring uses; however, consistent with the past re-zoning at this location for a similar use. Staff recommends approval of the revised plan description to permit the reuse of the existing building's highly specialized design for its current use and avoid the property becoming functionally, obsolete, and potentially blighted.

1 CHAIRMAN PILMER: You've heard Staff's 2 recommendation, is there a motion? 3 COUNCIL MEMBER: I guess I'll move. 4 COUNCIL MEMBER: Second. CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion has been made and 5 seconded. Please call the roll. 6 7 (Roll call.) 8 CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion carries. Staff did read into the record five findings of fact. Are 9 there any additions or corrections? Hearing none, 10 11 is there a motion to accept the five findings of 12 fact as read into the record? 13 COUNCIL MEMBER: Move to accept the findings of fact. 14 COUNCIL MEMBER: Motion seconded. 15 16 CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion has been made and 17 seconded. Please call the roll. (Roll call.) 18 CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion carries. Do you want 19 to move to the conditional use? 20 21 MS. VACEK: Yes. The conditional use findings 22 of fact: Number one, will the establishment 23 maintain or operate of the conditional use be 24 unreasonably detrimental or endanger the public

health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare?

Lydia Home Association has been in operation for over 100 years with current locations in Evanston and Chicago. These are both located in residential neighborhoods. Per their qualifying statement, that's what they told me. And the Petitioner asserts neither of these have been detrimental and endangered those communities' the public health, safety, morals, comfort, and welfare. The Petitioner's updated qualifying statement on page 9 has their full response.

Number two, will the conditional use be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purpose already permitted or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood? Factors include but not limited to lighting, signage, outdoor amplification, hours of operation, refuse disposal areas, and architectural compatibility or orientation?

The Petitioner asserts this will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other properties as demonstrated by their two other facilities in residential neighborhoods. The

Petitioner further indicates that fencing and gates will be provided around the entire property to ensure the safety of their staff and residents.

Again, that was in their updated qualifying statement. Staff will evaluate the location and fencing once provided. See the Petitioner's updated qualifying statement on page 10 for the full response.

Number three, will the establishment of the conditional use impede the normal and orderly developmental and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district?

The conditional use will permit the reuse of the existing building without extensive remodeling or demolition. Despite the lack of consistency with the neighboring properties, the prior re-zoning findings of fact use the same physical development policies with an emphasis on blight, a possibility for this building if left unused. The Petitioner updated qualifying statement on page 12 has their full response.

And then number four, will the proposal provide for adequate utilities, access road drainage, and other necessary facilities as part of

this conditional use?

This is an existing building with adequate utilities, existing roads, and detention. Then the Petitioner's updated qualifying statement on page 12 for their full response.

Number five, does the proposal take adequate measures or will they be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed to minimize traffic and congestion in the public streets?

Automobile intensity uses including but not limited to gas stations, car washes, and drive through facility of a concentration or similar uses within 1,000 feet of said subject property should be given consideration as they impact for the concentration will have on traffic patterns and congestion area.

This is not a gas station, car wash, or drive-thru. So this is not applicable. See also see the Petitioner's updated qualifying statements on page 12 for their full response.

Then number six, that the conditional use and all other aspects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located except as such regulations may be in each instance

be modified by the City Council pursuant to the recommendations of the Commission?

My response would be the same as number three. All above restrictions are being met at this time. Then please see the Petitioner's updated qualifying statement on page 13 for their full response.

Then for number seven, it's for hotels. So I'm not going to read it in but it is not applicable.

With that I will give you the recommendations.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Tracey, can I just ask on the recommendations. So I know the Petitioner addressed the landscape plan which I believe is part of one of your recommendations. But can you provide or maybe a little clarity on three other items?

One, I know the fence is on the recommendations but it might need to work with DCFS recommendations, I think it was. That and the 1 to 5 ratio in the evenings, as well as services for I think it's family members or related, as well as the 40 students or staff.

MS. VACEK: Yep. So we did ask the Petitioner

if they were making any changes to the site plan. They said no, they weren't. However, their updated qualifying statement said that they were gating and fencing the entire property. So that is why that condition is on there. We just want them to give us the site plan that what they're doing with the property. Again, that's why that condition is on there.

As for the minimum staffing, we were fine with the 1 per 3 child to staff ratio and I believe they said 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Then the 1 to 5 between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Again, in their qualifying statement, they only told me one so that's what I put down.

As for the services provided at this location, we are fine with adding their families and their caretakers. What we don't want is that other social services being provided at this location that's not related to the residents of this location. That changes the parking requirements. That changes kind of the intensity of the use of this property. So that's why that was there.

And then as far as the 40 children residing, I would like to keep that as is and not

change it. This is the first time I'm hearing of it. The previous ones, they had 40 children. The updated qualifying statement they didn't really say anything. And I need to evaluate parking on that because I need to make sure that they have enough parking for employees and then now they're also asking for families and other caretakers coming into this facility. So I would just like to keep it at 40 at this time. Give me a little time to evaluate that just because I don't know how that changes the parking requirements.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Thank you. You want to cover your recommendation? I know you partially did there.

MS. VACEK: Staff acknowledges inconsistencies with the neighboring land uses; however, consistency with the past re-zoning at this location for similar uses, Staff recommends conditional approval as this will permit the reuse of an existing building highly specialized design as its current use preventing the property from becoming functionally obsolete and potentially blighted if that use discontinues with the following conditions:

Number one that no more than 40 children

shall reside at this location at a given time.

Number two, that a minimum of 1 per 3 children to staff ratio from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and 1 through 5 child to staff ratio between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. be maintained at all times at this location.

Number three, that services provided at this location shall be limited to residents and their families, slash, caregivers or caretakers of the facility and no outside individuals shall receive services at this location.

That a site plan showing the location of fencing/gate be submitted to and reviewed and approved by the Zoning and Planning Commission and Fire Prevention Bureau prior to submitting a building permit.

And then number five, that an applicant shall implement the previously approved landscape plan in its entirety and shall remove and replace all weeds, dead or dying landscaping prior to certificate of occupancy.

I will say with that one that I actually may attach the landscape plan and the date along with that.

CHAIRMAN PILMER: Thank you. You've heard 1 2 Staff's recommendation with the five conditions. ΙS 3 there a motion? 4 COUNCIL MEMBER: Move to approve the conditions. COUNCIL MEMBER: Second. 5 CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion has been made and 6 seconded. Please call the roll. 7 (Roll call.) 8 Motion carries. Staff did 9 CHAIRMAN PILMER: 10 read into the record seven findings of fact related 11 to the conditional use. Are there any additions or 12 corrections? Hearing none, is there a motion? 13 COUNCIL MEMBER: Motion to accept. 14 COUNCIL MEMBER: Second. 15 CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion has been made and 16 seconded. Please call the roll. 17 (Roll call.) 18 CHAIRMAN PILMER: Motion carries. Then I might 19 just ask Staff on these two agenda items, where they will next be heard. 20 21 A STAFF MEMBER: This will next be heard at our 22 Building Zoning and Economic Development Committee 23 at 4:00 p.m. on October 15th here at City Hall in

the Council chambers.

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1	CHAIRMAN PILMER: Good luck.
2	(End of hearing.)
3	(Whereupon further proceedings
4	were had and upon completion, the
5	meeting was adjourned.)
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2	I, MaryJo D'Avola, a Court Reporter for
3	the State of Illinois, do hereby certify that the
4	foregoing Report of Proceedings was reported in
5	machine shorthand by me and is a true, correct, and
6	complete transcript of my machine shorthand notes so
7	taken at the time and place hereinabove set forth to
8	the best of my ability.
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19	MARYJO D'AVOLA
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22	Dated October 10, 2025
23 24	
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