



## Business Plan

September 2015

*Prepared for HOPE 4 Youth by:*



**strategic consulting & coaching**  
*creating new paths for growth & success*

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# HOPE 4 Youth Application for Use Flexibility

## Brief Overview for City of Coon Rapids

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### HOPE 4 Youth Transitional Housing Facility

- Facility will be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
  - Facility will be staffed with 2-4 staff during daytime, 1-2 staff overnights and weekends
  - Expected 12 studio units in phase 1. Units include bedroom, kitchenette and bath
  - Laundry facility on site
  - Snack kitchen
  - Common areas such as family room, dining room, work out facilities, studies with computers, outside living areas
  - Conference room and offices for outreach workers, paid staff and case workers
  - Donations room onsite for items such as linens, decorations, accessories furniture, etc. for personalizing each youth's room
  - "Intern" job training and placement services
  - Youth will sign leases, pay rent and have daily chores
  - Youth will be required to attend school and/or work to live here
  - Facility will have swipe key for access and cameras mounted interior and at each outside exit/entrance
  - Youth will meet with case worker bi-weekly graduating to a monthly basis when ready
  - Facility is drug and alcohol free
  - Facility bans weapons
  - Phase 1 will have closed off stairwells for future expansion to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors in Phase 2 & 3
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# Application for Use Flexibility

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Property Address: 80 Coon Rapids Blvd

Date of Application: 7/13/15

## Use Flexibility Stated Findings

### #1- 11-1003.16 (A) Finding

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The modification significantly advances the intent of this section (11-1003- River Rapids Overlay District)

As exhibited under 11-1003.1 Intent, “This section intends to protect the health, safety and public welfare through the adoption of official overlay controls that encourage compact, vigorous, mixed use development, tied to a common theme that encompasses the heritage and qualities of the Mississippi River along the Coon Rapids Boulevard corridor.”

Narrative- According to 6/23/15 Wilder Foundation stats 1055 youth were experiencing homelessness and 245 of them are unaccompanied. 43% of these students attend Coon Rapids elementary, middle school and high school.

As you can see the numbers are startling and overwhelming. And it is in our backyard.

Research from the Wilder Foundation on youth homelessness in Minnesota indicates:

- About 50% of them were physically abused,
- 1 in 3 was neglected,
- 1 in 4 was sexually abused as a child, and
- 58% of them have had at least one placement in a foster home, group home, or facility for persons with emotional, behavioral, or mental problems.

The goal for HOPE 4 Youth is to eliminate youth experiencing homelessness by 2026. It is a lofty goal but with the horsepower and momentum our 3+ year old organization has today, we feel confident with the City of Coon Rapids' help we make this goal become a reality.

In looking at the intent, protecting the health, safety and public welfare of our youth is a huge step in helping the City of Coon Rapids and Greater Anoka County revitalize and strengthen the

foundation of the next generations of Coon Rapids and Greater Anoka County residents. The youth are in our community today. They are very skilled at “flying under the radar”. They are couch hopping, sleeping in cars, sleeping under bridges and in parks. Our intent is to provide a facility where they can:

- Be in a safe and protected environment
- Have a roof over their heads and a bed to sleep in
- Get a warm meal and a shower
- Work individually with a case manager to help them with addictions, family challenges, abuses
- Get jobs and skills training in fields they want to learn in
- Get counseling and assistance in completing a GED, tech school job application
- Learn and grow in a HOPE 4 Youth sponsored job internship program with our local business partners

We have experienced great successes in our current drop in center in Anoka with giving our youth the tools to move from a day to day survival mode to becoming contributor's to society.

As for the intent of: “Mixed-use development tied to a common theme that encompasses the heritage and qualities of the Mississippi River along the Coon Rapids Boulevard corridor”; our proposal for a transitional housing facility would definitely fall under the category for mixed use. We are sure that it never was the intent of the City of Coon Rapids City Code to consider youth housing as part of the code. But in looking at what the City founders had envisioned for the heritage and qualities of the area, we are sure the health and welfare of the local youth is a huge part of their vision.

Youth homelessness is a huge problem in our world and our corner of the world today. It will not go away simply by ignoring it. Our proposal is to identify it, secure it, supervise it, better it and then eliminate it.

As exhibited under 11-1003.2 Intent- “Especially between the Ports, uses should serve the needs of nearby neighborhoods. Development throughout the district should foster a sense of community, that is, the opportunity for people to travel comfortably throughout the District, conduct business and meet neighbors.”

Narrative- It is our intent and plan to create an environment at our transitional housing facility whereby the local businesses and residential neighborhoods become entwined with the youth and feel welcome to become a part of the family at our facility.

We envision working with the retail, restaurant and industrial businesses around the facility. We have a team of 25 volunteers in the Public Relations Subcommittee that will be knocking on doors

looking for businesses in need of employees that want to become part of the solution of youth homelessness. We will be developing an “intern” job training program whereby the youth will actually be paid by a private grant instead of the employer during a preset intern training period. Once this term has expired it is up to the intern and the employer if the intern continues on in an employer/employee working relationship.

Each of our studio units will be complete with a full size bed, nightstand, dresser, full bath and a kitchenette complete with stove, sink, microwave, cabinets and countertop. The youth will be required to sign and execute a lease, pay rent, provide chores and tasks around the facility. There will be common areas such as a family room, kitchen, dining, work out facility and a donations room.

We plan on having a garden where the youth can grow fruit and vegetables to learn self-sufficiency and independence by planting, harvesting and preparing a culture of “living off the land”.

Our Public Relations Subcommittee will also be knocking on the doors of the neighboring residences explaining who we are and what our transitional housing facility will look like. They are there to answer questions and eliminate fears. The residents will be invited to tour our drop in center and attend the planning commission meeting.

One of the goals for HOPE 4 Youth is for the organization to “partner” with Coon Rapids City Leaders by fostering an environment of solutions and problem solving. As we said earlier, the problem is in our community today. By partnering with Coon Rapids leaders and staff we hope to work together to eliminate youth homelessness in our community by 2026. HOPE 4 Youth wants to become the #1 resource when the Law Enforcement Community, City Workers, Staff, City Council members, etc. become aware of youth occupying a tent camp, or vacant home occupancy, or an individual simply seen as sleeping in a car, porta-potty or other. HOPE 4 Youth would like to work together in holding seminars, panel discussions, employee training and the like. We envision working with staff and leaders to foster an community whereby other Cities come to us to see how we did what we did and learn from us. HOPE 4 Youth wants to team with City leaders and staff in developing phase 2 and phase 3.

So as the intent says: “Should foster a sense of community, that is, the opportunity for people to travel comfortably throughout the District, conduct business and meet neighbors.” We feel very confidently with proper awareness and education, the community will embrace our organization and our cause. To date we have over 1100 volunteers at HOPE 4 Youth and have raised over 1.5 million dollars of private funds. We have been featured on the Anoka Union, Mpls. Star Tribune, St Paul Pioneer Press, KARE 11, KSTP, WCCO, and FOX 9 News. The awareness and education has started, we feel it is our time to move forward with the facility, systems, people and passion to “fix” the problem of youth homelessness in our community.

## #2- 11-1003.16 (B) Finding

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The modification is necessary to develop the property in an efficient, well-organized way.

## #3- 11-1003.16 (C) Finding

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The plan provides significant site amenities, buffers, and other elements to offset any potential harmful effects that could be caused by the use.

Narrative- As per section 11-1003.6- “Site plans must demonstrate compatibility with applicable improvement, amenity, or design elements as adopted by the resolution of the City Council. Such elements include, but are not limited to, sculpture, fountains, benches, lighting, signage, fencing, pavement and landscape materials”.

We have attached renderings of various ideas for taking the facility from current state to a proposed finished state of trees, plantings, mulch, benches, lighting and more. Keeping in mind the facility will need a complete gutting and rebuild on the inside we wanted to make the exterior be one that “blended” in while “beautifying”. Our goal will be to use our funds in a responsible manner by spending the monies in providing the best level of services and amenities on the inside of the facility.

The current facility is one that most people don’t even know is there. There is nothing to draw attention to it. The current facility has been on the market for upwards of 3 years. The vacancy rate in the Northtown area is high with several big box stores like Sports Authority, K-Mart, and Circuit City pulling up roots and closing stores. All these facilities are within several hundred feet of our proposed facility.

What we like and feel The City will like also is the placement of the facility on the land. The building is closer to Hwy 47 than it is Coon Rapids Blvd. Hwy 47 is shielded by several large trees giving it seclusion from the drive-by traffic on Hwy 47. The distance and placement of the building from Coon Rapids Blvd keeps it fairly well hidden from drive-by traffic on the Blvd. While we feel this is ideal for our type of business, it is quite less than ideal for a retail type business. Hence the reason the facility has gone unsold in 3 years.

As you will be able to see on the renderings for our proposed exterior changes, the facility will be upgraded significantly but will not necessarily be standing out saying “look at me”. Our youth will be so excited to have a place they call home. But our youth are also embarrassed by their living situation. We want a place that does not “advertise” or “appear” to be a homeless shelter. This is not what we are. What we are offering is a home for our youth to get on track, learn, clean up, and eventually become contributing members of society. “Flying under the radar” is what they do today

so staying in that same theme all the while helping to “fix” their current situation is what we are about.

As per section 11-1003.11 (12)- “Include compatible street furniture and amenities, such as benches, litter receptacles, pedestrian lighting, and bicycle racks, to enhance the pedestrian environment”.

Narrative- Our youth mostly travel on bikes so bike racks will be plenty with an urban design. As stated before we envision a garden on the west side of the facility. Currently there is 91 parking spots which we will only need approximately 20. The large common park like area you see on the rendering at the front of the facility will take up several of the current parking spots. On the south side you will see another common park area. This will be designed as a “hang out” type area for the youth to enjoy for themselves. An area to just be kids like our kids get to do in their own backyards.

As for signage we wanted to keep with our current logo and colors. HOPE stands for housing, outreach, prevention and education. The front façade will be done with an urban, contemporary theme creating a welcoming, updated feel as everyone arrives. On the north side we will have a similar sign with the H4Y logo and the urban, contemporary feel. This will be the main signage for Coon Rapids Blvd traffic identification.

We would be willing to listen to the Planning Commission and City Council if they would like to see more significant changes to the exterior of the facility to meet this finding. Please advise us in areas where we can make the changes to meet different conditions.

As for meeting the finding efficient and well-organized, we feel our proposal does just that. The exterior is clean, organized, beautiful yet not flashy. The gardens, park areas, lighting, benches, plantings, etc. all create an environment welcoming and safe to our visitors yet homey and comfortable for our youth.

#4- 11-1003.16 (D) Finding

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The use does not detract from uses in Port Districts.

Narrative- As per intent 11-903.1 Port Districts- “This section enables the creation of Port Districts to promote the unified development and revitalization of designated areas. Port Districts should direct development consistent with the goals of Coon Rapids Boulevard Frame work plan including: Housing serving community needs”.

As we identified in the first section the needs for housing for youth experiencing homelessness in Coon Rapids is huge. Coon Rapids has the highest % of youth in Anoka County experiencing homelessness. Having a facility that gets the youth off the street and under direct supervision is the

first step in not only identifying the problem it also creates a better sense of community for the residents. They feel safer, know youth are protected, crime rates go down, and they sleep better at night.

As for supporting the Port Districts, hopefully we proved that on the other areas of our narratives. The business, industrial, residential communities will all be served better when they become part of the solution instead of part of the problem. Every volunteer for H4Y will tell you that it makes themselves better people by helping such a great cause.

This is a community problem. From all of us at HOPE 4 Youth we have made a commitment to help stop this problem and face it head on. All of us, excluding paid staff, are volunteers. I personally work in Coon Rapids.

Here is what we are asking:

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"Approve our facility. We have the resources, knowledge, people, processes to take the youth off Coon Rapids streets and work with them. We will identify why they are in the situation they are. We will get them the help they need. We will give them the resources, training, skills, support they need to get back on their feet. It doesn't happen overnight. It will take 18-24 months but we are committed to make sure everyone has the tools and support they need to become self-sufficient. Coon Rapids will be proud to say that they support ending youth homelessness in their community. Coon Rapids will be proud to say they are a partner in this with HOPE 4 Youth. We are committed to do the work, we just need your approval to get started today."

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