

Public Comment Opposing Conditional Use Permit
Property: 114 Pohl Road, Mankato, MN
Applicant: Mankato Chemical Health
To the Members of the Mankato Planning Commission:

Dear Mankato Planning Commission,

We are writing to respectfully oppose the request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow Mankato Chemical Health to operate an intensive outpatient substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health concerns treatment center at 114 Pohl Road. We are submitting a written letter to the Mankato Planning Commission as we are unable to attend the public hearing due to previously scheduled engagements.

While we strongly support access to substance use disorder and mental health treatment services—and actively contribute time and financial support annually toward those efforts in our community—we believe the proposed location is not appropriate for the reasons outlined below.

1. Incompatibility with Residential Zoning

The subject property is situated within an established residential neighborhood consisting of retirees, young professionals, working families, families with young children, and places of worship. Introducing a commercial healthcare operation, specifically consisting of an intensive outpatient substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health concerns treatment center, into this setting is not consistent with the intended residential character of the area and represents a significant departure from its current use.

2. Nature of the Proposed Use and Neighborhood Fit

This proposal is not simply for a general office or low-impact business. It is specifically for a substance use disorder treatment center serving individuals with co-occurring mental health concerns, which by its nature involves a higher level of sensitivity, oversight, and operational complexity. While these services are necessary and valuable to the broader community, this type of operation is more appropriately located in areas designed to accommodate healthcare services—where there is proper infrastructure, separation from dense residential living, and proximity to other medical or support resources.

Even beyond general commercial use concerns, the presence of a facility serving individuals dealing with active substance use and co-occurring mental health challenges introduces heightened considerations related to safety, supervision, and neighborhood stability. These factors are not consistent with the expectations residents reasonably have for a residential neighborhood environment.

3. Traffic and Safety Concerns

Pohl Road already experiences notable traffic volume, and the proposed operating hours of approximately 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. (current listed hours on their website) extend well beyond typical residential activity patterns. The nature of the proposed services suggests a steady flow of clients throughout the day and evening, increasing traffic at an already busy intersection. Increased traffic, combined with the intensity of the proposed use, raises concerns about overall neighborhood safety—particularly for families with young children.

4. Change in Neighborhood Character

The current use of the property generates minimal traffic and only occasional, small gatherings.

Transitioning to a professional healthcare facility of this type would significantly increase activity levels and materially alter the character of the neighborhood.

Residents chose this neighborhood with the expectation of a residential environment, not one that includes daily operations of a specialized treatment center.

5. Availability of More Appropriate Locations

There are numerous vacant and available commercial spaces throughout Mankato and North Mankato that are specifically zoned and designed for professional healthcare services. These locations offer appropriate infrastructure, parking, accessibility, and separation from residential homes.

6. Limited Expansion of Community Benefit

The application notes that the proposed use would “promote public health and safety by expanding access to treatment and recovery services.” However, Mankato Chemical Health already operates within the Greater Mankato area. This appears to be a relocation rather than an expansion, and therefore does not meaningfully increase overall access to services within the community.

7. Impact on Property Values and Neighborhood Appeal

The introduction of a commercial treatment facility—particularly one addressing substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health concerns—may negatively influence property values and deter prospective buyers. For many, the presence of such a facility in a residential neighborhood may be a significant factor when considering whether to move into the area.

8. Appropriateness of Location

We respectfully question why a residential neighborhood has been selected for this type of operation when more suitable, commercially zoned locations exist.

We want to reiterate our strong support for substance use disorder and mental health treatment services and the important role they play in the community. However, not every location is appropriate for every type of use.

For the reasons outlined above—particularly the mismatch between the intensity and nature of this specific service and the surrounding residential environment—we respectfully request that the Planning Commission deny the Conditional Use Permit for 114 Pohl Road.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Devon and Rebecca Soule
201 Pohl Rd