

March 4, 2024

Justin Blood, PE Design Engineer
Chris Fleming, PE Partner
Korda/Nemeth Engineering, Inc.
1650 Watermark Drive, Suite 200
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Stormwater Drainage Manual (SWDM) Type II Variance Request – Ohio Exposition Center 2050 Phase 1, CC-20123

Messrs. Blood and Fleming:

This letter is in response to the subject variance request Type II (Non-Stream) to the 2022 SWDM Section 3 *Stormwater Control Practices*. More specifically, an exemption is being sought from the City of Columbus Stormwater Drainage Manual (SWDM) Section 3.4.1.5 requirement of side slopes being 4(H) to 1(V) or flatter for wet detention basins above the permanent pool, and Section 3.4.1.10 of the SWDM to allow existing trees to remain within the dry detention basin slopes and on top of embankment.

The project includes Phase 1 of a multi-phase master plan to rework and renovate the Ohio Exposition Center campus in order to improve the state fair and other OEC event experiences. The full build-out of the project is planned to be complete by 2050, while Phase 1 is expected to be constructed by July of 2026. Phase 1 of this project consists of the demolition of the existing Taste of Ohio, Ag/Hort, Buckeye, and Maintenance Office buildings. Proposed with Phase 1 are two new buildings, consisting of a new two-story Ohio Showcase Building and Multipurpose Ag Building.

The SWDM variance application was submitted to the City on December 12, 2023. As part of the Variance review process, the subject Variance request was posted on the City website on December 21, 2023 to solicit public comments. Public comments were received from FLOW. The Variance Review Committee (VRC) has met and reviewed the subject variance application and the public comments on January 10, 2024. Comments were provided to the applicant following the meeting, and the revised application received on February 8, 2024, and posted on February 12, 2024, along with City's responses to the public comments. No additional public comments were received following this second posting.

The VRC has met again on February 26 to review the revised application. The submitted revised Variance Request was found by the Variance Review Committee to be in compliance with the SWDM Type II Non-Stream Protection Variance application requirements.

Three alternatives were considered within the application - Full Compliance, Minimal Impact and the Preferred Alternative.



- Full Compliance Alternative – A site plan has been provided to show a basin design that would meet the 4 (H) to 1 (V) slopes. This option greatly increases the footprint of the basin and removes additional parking, storage area for the maintenance buildings and utilities from the site. This option includes removal of all trees within the tree boundary shown on the plan to comply with Section 3.4.1.10 of the SWDM. For these reasons, this alternative was stated to be unfeasible.
- Minimal Impact Alternative – An alternative site plan has been provided showing a basin design that would meet the 4 (H) to 1 (V) slope requirement while keeping the existing parking, storage area for the maintenance buildings and utilities from the site. For the additional stormwater volume required, an underground detention system has been provided. This alternate greatly increases the amount of hardscape and utilities to be removed outside of the scope of this project. This option includes removal of all trees within the tree boundary shown on the plan to comply with Section 3.4.1.10 of the SWDM. For these reasons, this alternative was stated to be unfeasible.
- Preferred Alternative – Preferred Site Plan 3 (H) to 1 (V) and Underground Detention. The preferred site plan has been shown using 3 (H) to 1 (V) side slopes. For the additional stormwater volume required, an underground detention system has been provided. The preferred basin / underground detention site plan would result in the least impact on site hardscape and utilities while conforming to the requirements of the City of Columbus Stormwater Drainage Manual. This option only includes removal of trees impacted by grading operations or pipe/structure installations. All other trees within the tree boundary will remain in place; however, no new trees will be placed within the tree boundary. The Preferred Alternative is the most cost-efficient option with minimal impact to the site as a whole. On an existing site with non-compliant conditions while trying to minimize site impact, the 3 (H) to 1 (V) basin and underground detention would provide the least impact on site hardscape and utilities.

The applicant presented the alternatives for the Basin C, but the request is also stated to be applicable for Basins H and F, having the same issues/constraints.

Upon reviewing and discussing the application, the Variance Review Committee agreed with the applicant that the Preferred Alternative is reasonable given the current conditions and site limitations. The Committee further agreed with the applicant’s argument that the Full Compliance and Minimal Impact Alternatives would result in significant hardship for the project owner.

In light of the above, the subject Variance Request, Preferred Alternative is conditionally approved contingent upon the following stipulations:

- Storm CC plan and Stormwater Management Report reflecting the subject conditionally approved variance, Preferred Alternative must be submitted and approved by the City of Columbus.

No approval contained herein relieves or absolves the applicant of any provisions of applicable state or federal laws. Please contact PR/SRM Section Manager Greg Fedner, P.E. at 614-645-8072 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'R. Priestas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert S. Priestas, P.E., Administrator
Division of Sewerage and Drainage

pc: Variance Review Committee
File

