

## **Ottawa Landscapes**

Variance from Stormwater Drainage Manual  
4/3/2024

### **INTRODUCTION**

The following document provides information regarding a requested variance from the City of Columbus Stormwater Drainage Manual Section 1.3 Stream Corridor Protection Zone for the Ottawa Landscapes commercial property. The property is located on Scioto Parkway in Columbus. The overall development boundary consists of one parcel (560-208239) with an overall acreage of 3.18. The site development boundary is encroached by both the 133-foot-wide Roberts Millikin Ditch Stream Corridor Protection Zone (SCPZ) established under City of Columbus Storm Permit Plan CC16436 as well as an abandoned Roberts Millikin Ditch Stream SCPZ that has a 50' protection zone.

Based on a Preliminary Plat dated 5-15-1978 (See Exhibit 1), the original Roberts Millikin Ditch was relocated from the center of the property to approximately 30-feet from and parallel to the southern property line and railroad tracks. The relocated Roberts Millikin Ditch is continuous to the adjacent properties and is clearly seen both on site and in the Franklin County Auditor's aerial image (See Exhibit 2).

The abandoned Roberts Millikin Ditch was located approximately 250' from the southern property line and bisected the site. There is no evidence either on site or in the Franklin County Auditor's aerial image (See Exhibit 2) that the abandoned ditch exists on either of the immediately adjacent properties. During heavy rains, the ditch retains water but on site evidence suggests that this portion of the ditch serves only to collect local drainage and does not impact the relocated Roberts Millikin Ditch.

There is an eastern portion of the abandoned Roberts Millikin Ditch that is located 33' from the eastern property line. This eastern portion of the ditch may serve as an area to relieve flooding from the main Roberts Millikin Ditch but it is unclear how much of the area is actually used.

Per the Location Exhibit prepared by Benchmark Land Surveying, two easements that impact the site. There is a 25-foot easement centered along the east property line for a 'culvert' purportedly for property street drainage as well as a 20-foot easement along the southern property line for Conrail Railroad (See Exhibit 3).

Since the original Roberts Millikin Ditch location was abandoned and relocated, it is the applicant's opinion that the abandoned ditch should not have a 50' Stream Corridor Protection Zone and instead allow the entire center area of the site be used for development while following the applicable side yard setbacks and easements.

## **TYPE III VARIANCE REQUEST**

### **EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS**

The pie-shaped property is a vacant lot that has mowed lawn borders along the property lines while the center is unkept trees and shrubs. Commercial properties have been developed on each of the adjacent parcels (See Exhibit 2).

### **VARIANCE APPLICATION PURPOSE**

Ottawa Landscapes seeks to build a new site for its operational headquarters. The company is a commercial/residential landscape company focusing on installation and maintenance. They currently have 10 employees and will be expanding to 14 in 2024. To be successful, the company's physical requirements include a 40-foot by 80-foot (3,200 SF) building for office/garage, a 20-space parking lot for staff and visitors, 1-acre of outdoor storage/laydown space for materials and equipment, and 1/2-acre for future expansion of the laydown area. The storage/laydown area needs to be able to accommodate six trucks with trailers as well as have a 55-foot diameter turning radius clear of obstructions for almost daily semitruck deliveries. Six three-sided storage bins at 15-feet by 20-feet each are required for various materials such as gravel and mulch.

In order to meet the site requirement needs, a Type III variance regarding Section 1.3 Stream Corridor Protection Zone is needed to address the abandoned drainage ditch in the middle of the property in order to have a large enough contiguous area for the effective layout of the site.

### **SITE DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES**

Three alternatives have been explored to look at the most efficient use of the site. In all three options, the relocated Roberts Millikin Ditch SCPZ will be maintained and only modifications to the abandoned drainage ditch are explored. Additionally, it is assumed that a detention basin will be required and located somewhere on the property, but it cannot be located within the SCPZ. The exact size and location of the detention basin will be engineered once the final site plan is determined. For now, each exhibit shows a diagrammatic area for the detention basin.

### **FULL COMPLIANCE (NO IMPACT) – EXHIBIT 4**

#### **SCOPE**

Under full compliance, the protection zones for the Roberts Millikin Ditch SCPZ and abandoned drainage ditch SCPZ are maintained. Taking into account the SCPZs, the 50-foot parking setback, 125-foot outdoor storage setback, and the 25-foot side yard setbacks, the usable/developable area is 1.28 acres. The 1.28 acres is split into two potentially usable areas divided by the abandoned drainage ditch SCPZ - the first 0.46 acres closest to Scioto Parkway and the second 0.82 acres in the interior of the site.

A large portion of the 0.46-acre area closest to Scioto Parkway is within the 125-foot outdoor storage setback so this area cannot be used for laydown area. While a parking lot

could be located in this area, it is too far for staff and visitors to walk to gain access to the building, which needs to be adjacent to the laydown which can only be located south of the abandoned drainage ditch SCPZ.

It is necessary to have the staff/visitor parking adjacent to the building for accessibility. Since a large portion of the building will include the garage function for vehicle/equipment repair, it is also necessary for the exterior laydown area to also be adjacent to the building. This means that only the 0.82 acres area is viable for development.

A drive off Scioto Parkway provides access to the development and an approximately 20-foot-long culvert would be required to cross the abandoned drainage ditch. This culvert would require mitigation on the site in the form of revegetation/reforestation.

In the usable 0.82 acres at the interior of the site, a 40-foot by 80-foot building is provided with 11 spaces for staff/visitor parking. The laydown area is approximately 0.47 acres and there is no additional room for contiguous expansion.

#### COMMERICAL/SOCIAL IMPACTS

Per this alternative, the northern part of the site is completely separated from the rest of the commercial property because of the abandoned drainage ditch SCPZ. The area of the property between the 50-foot parking setback and 125-foot outdoor storage setback is only 0.46 acres and is too small to accommodate the building, staff/visitor parking and the laydown area. Having just a parking lot here would be too far of a walk to the building. Using even a portion of the area for laydown area would be inefficient because of the distance from the main laydown area and its odd configuration of a curved outdoor storage setback line.

Only 11 parking spaces are provided instead of 20 and the 55-foot diameter semi-truck turning radius does not fit without coming dangerously close to the parking lot.

The usable area lost is 0.46 acres or 35% of the usable/developable site area of 1.28 acres. The reduction of the usable site area would create a hardship for the current business functionality of the site and the expansion goals. The Owner would be forced to look at relocating the business out of the City of Columbus to a more usable site which would create a strain on the current business model and financial investments to gain the needed operational area.

#### MITIGATION PLAN

In order to mitigate the 20-foot culvert, invasive species will be removed in a 25-foot zone on either side of the new access road as it passes through the SPCZ zone of the abandoned Roberts Millikin Ditch. New native vegetation that can help with erosion control, including trees and shrubs will be planted in this area.

## **MINIMAL IMPACT – EXHIBIT 5**

### **SCOPE**

Under the minimal impact alternative, the northern portion of the abandoned drainage ditch in the middle of the property would be fully removed. The majority of the eastern portion of the abandoned drainage ditch along with the associated 50-foot SCPZ would remain. The portion of the abandoned drainage ditch that occurs within the relocated Roberts Millikin Ditch SCPZ would remain as is. The Roberts Millikin Ditch SCPZ would remain as well as the easements and side yard setbacks. By removing a portion of the abandoned ditch, approximately 0.26 acres is captured as usable contiguous land in the interior of the site. This brings the usable/developable area to 1.54 acres. The 180-foot culvert would require mitigation on the site in the form of revegetation/reforestation. To accommodate this, invasive species would be removed from the SCPZ and native trees and shrubs would be planted throughout the site and SCPZ.

A dedicated 20-space staff/visitor parking lot would be located close to the entry off Scioto Parkway and be adjacent to the 40-foot by 80-foot building. The building and foundations are intentionally located north of the culvert to protect it. The laydown area is south of the culvert and is approximately 0.69 acres with the ability to expand an additional 0.17 acres for a total of 0.86 acres of laydown area. Its location minimized the time heavy equipment travels over the culvert and avoids the storage of any vehicles or materials over the culvert.

### **COMMERCIAL/SOCIAL IMPACTS**

Per this alternative, most of the company's site needs are met but placing the abandoned ditch in a culvert still limits the usability and full access of the interior of the site. The size of the laydown area is still too small. This creates a hardship for the Owner as they would need to look at relocating the business out of the City of Columbus to meet the expansion needs which would create a strain on the current business model and financial investments to gain the needed operational area.

There is also an additional financial hardship of providing a culvert when it appears that the drainage ditch is just a vestigial depression in the site and is not actually functioning to help with stormwater management. Neither of the adjoining properties appear to have a culvert to address the abandoned location of the Roberts Millikin Ditch. If the Roberts Millikin Ditch was indeed relocated per the 1978 Exhibit 1, it seems an undue hardship to make the Owner treat an abandoned stream as a live stream instead of being able to use the entire portion of the site and grade the land to provide proper drainage.

### **MITIGATION PLAN**

In order to mitigate the removal of the northern portion of the abandoned Roberts Millikin Drainage Ditch, invasive species will be removed throughout the remaining 50-foot abandoned Roberts Millikin Ditch SPCZ at the eastern side of the property. New native vegetation that can help with erosion control, including trees and shrubs will be planted in this area.

## **PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT – EXHIBIT 6**

### **SCOPE**

In the preferred development alternative, the northern and most of the eastern portions of the abandoned drainage ditch are entirely removed along with the associated SCPZ. The usable/developable area is 1.67 acres – the largest of the three options. The portion of the abandoned drainage ditch that occurs within the relocated Roberts Millikin Ditch SCPZ would remain as is. The Roberts Milliken Ditch SCPZ would remain as well as the easements and side yard setbacks.

In this option, all the company's site needs are met. A dedicated 20-space staff/visitor parking lot is provided and aligned with the parking lot on the adjacent parcel. The 40-foot by 80-foot building is adjacent to both the staff/visitor parking lot and laydown area. The laydown area is 0.95 acres with the ability to expand and additional 0.23 acres. The removal of the northern and eastern portions of the abandoned Roberts Millikin Ditch allows for heavy vehicular traffic to occur throughout the usable/developable area. This site plan provides an efficient layout that maximizes the use of the area as well as aligns parking and the building similar to the adjacent properties for a more contextual design.

### **COMMERICAL/SOCIAL IMPACTS**

The preferred development alternative creates the least hardship. Per this alternative, all the company's site needs for current and future use are met so there would be no need to look for new properties outside of the City of Columbus to utilize. The removal of the ditch is a relatively inconsequential cost impact given that the entire site will need to be cleared and properly regraded and drained to meet stormwater requirements.

### **MITIGATION PLAN**

In order to mitigate the removal of the majority of the abandoned Roberts Millikin Ditch, invasive species will be removed throughout the relocated Roberts Millikin Ditch SPCZ zone at the southern end of the property. New native vegetation that can help with erosion control, including trees and shrubs will be planted in this area. For the proposed direct stream impacts, in-stream improvements of erosion protection of the banks with native plants as well as the introduction of pools and riffles will be provided.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The applicant is seeking approval of the Preferred Development Alternative as a Type III variance for the Ottawa Landscapes property. The variance would allow the full removal of the drainage ditch thereby maximizing the usable area of the site while maintaining the existing Roberts Millikin Ditch SCPZ, side yard setbacks, and easements.

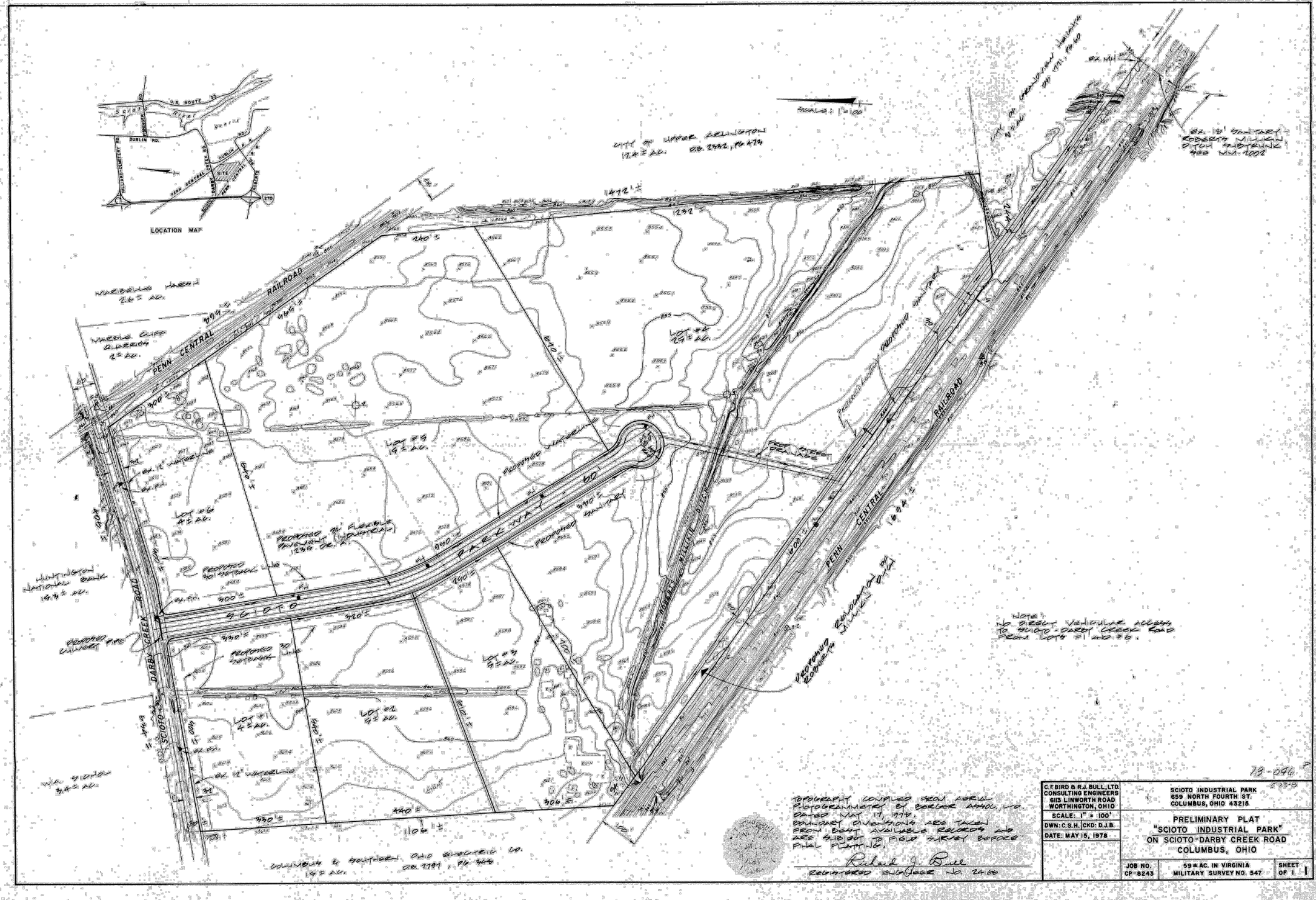


EXHIBIT 1 - 5-15-1978 PRELIMINARY PLAT

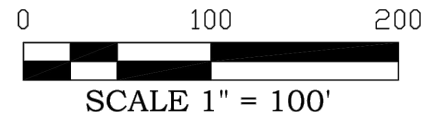
# OTTAWA LANDSCAPES

PREPARED FOR SCIOTO PARKWAY  
DATE: 4-3-24

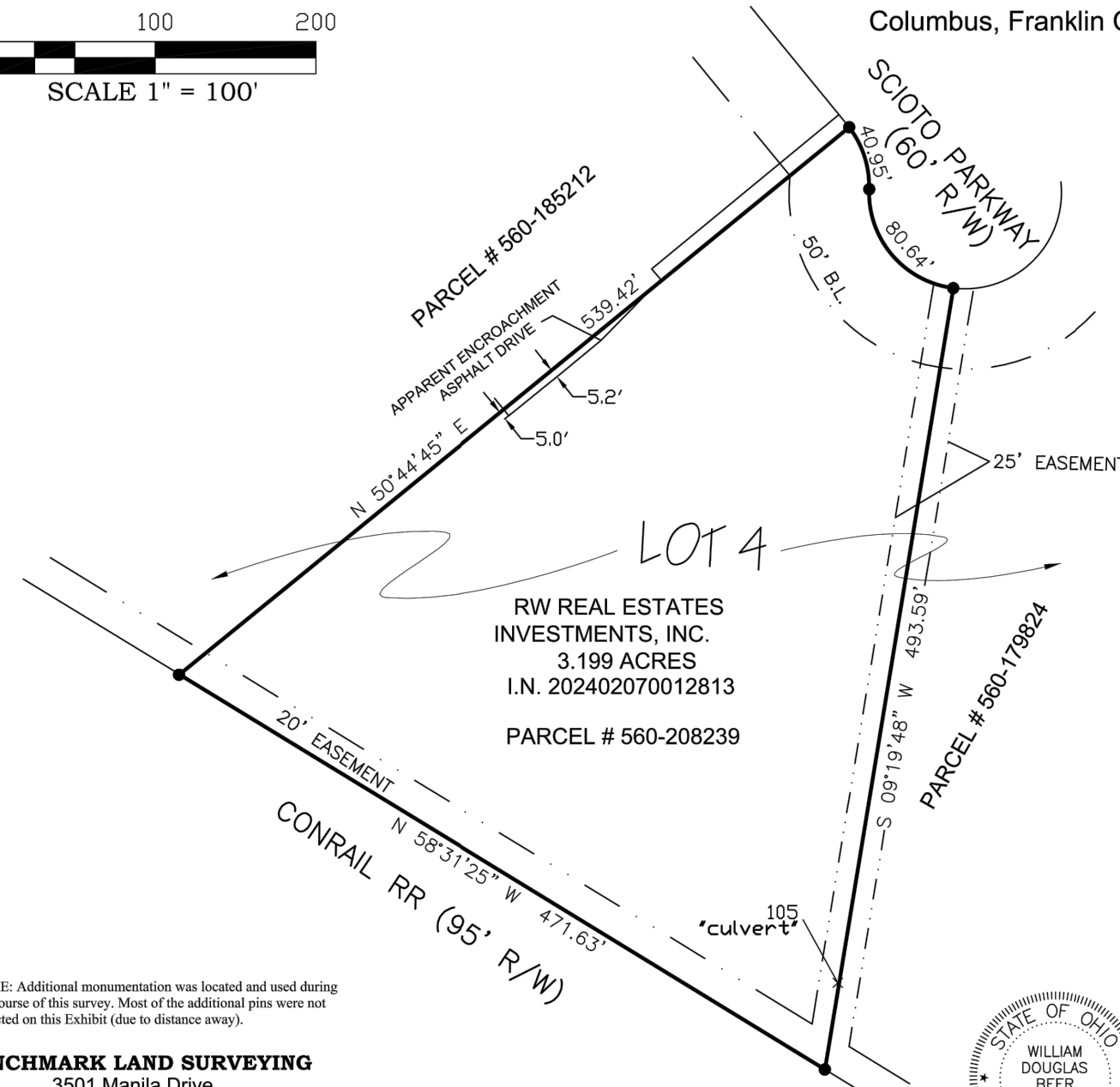
C. E. BIRD & R. J. BULL, LTD. CONSULTING ENGINEERS 615 LINWORTH ROAD WORTHINGTON, OHIO		SCIOTO INDUSTRIAL PARK 659 NORTH FOURTH ST. COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215	
SCALE: 1" = 100' DWN: C.S.H., CKD: D.J.B. DATE: MAY 15, 1978		PRELIMINARY PLAT "SCIOTO INDUSTRIAL PARK" ON SCIOTO-DARBY CREEK ROAD COLUMBUS, OHIO	
JOB NO. CP-8242		59 ± AC. IN VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVEY NO. 547	
		SHEET OF 1	



# LOCATION EXHIBIT



PARCEL # 560-208239, being a 3.199 acre portion of Lot 4 in SCIOTO INDUSTRIAL PARK (P.B. 54, PG. 41), as described in I.N. 202402070012813, being located in the City of Columbus, Franklin County, Ohio



- Legend**
- ⊙ = 5/8"x30"-REBAR SET (w/ "B.L. SURVEYING, P.S. #7980" red cap)
  - = 3/4"-INCH IRON PIPE FOUND (or as noted)

NOTE: This Survey was performed without the benefit of a Title Commitment listing Schedule B items / Easements which may or may not affect subject property.

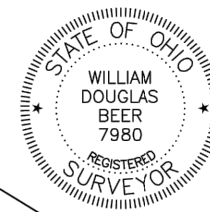
UTILITY NOTE: The Surveyor has not physically located the underground utilities as shown hereon. They have been plotted based on locations from a field survey and locations marked by both OUPS and the City of Westerville. The surveyor makes no guarantee that the underground utilities shown hereon comprise all such utilities in the area, either in service or abandoned. The surveyor further does not warrant that the underground utilities shown hereon are in the exact location indicated. Although we can state that they are located as accurately as possible from information provided.

According to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Index # 39049C0163K, dated 06/17/2008, the subject property is located in Zone X, designated as an area outside the 100 and 500 year flood zones and the flood potential for the subject property is minimal.

I hereby certify that this SURVEY EXHIBIT was prepared from an actual field survey and to the best of our knowledge and belief is correct and that this plat was prepared in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 4733-37 "Standards for Boundary Surveys". All monumentation is found or to be set as shown.

NOTE: Additional monumentation was located and used during the course of this survey. Most of the additional pins were not depicted on this Exhibit (due to distance away).

**BENCHMARK LAND SURVEYING**  
 3501 Manila Drive  
 Westerville, Ohio 43081  
 (614) 794-9609 ~ Office  
 E-mail: bmlsurveying@yahoo.com



*William D. Beer* 02/17/2024  
 WILLIAM D. BEER DATE  
 Registered Surveyor No. 7980

EXHIBIT 2 - 2-17-2024 SURVEY

# OTTAWA LANDSCAPES

PREPARED FOR SCIOTO PARKWAY  
 DATE: 4-3-24

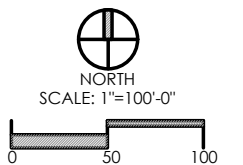
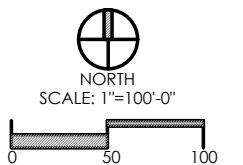




EXHIBIT 3 - FRANKLIN COUNTY AUDITOR AERIAL IMAGE

# OTTAWA LANDSCAPES

PREPARED FOR SCIOTO PARKWAY  
DATE: 4-3-24





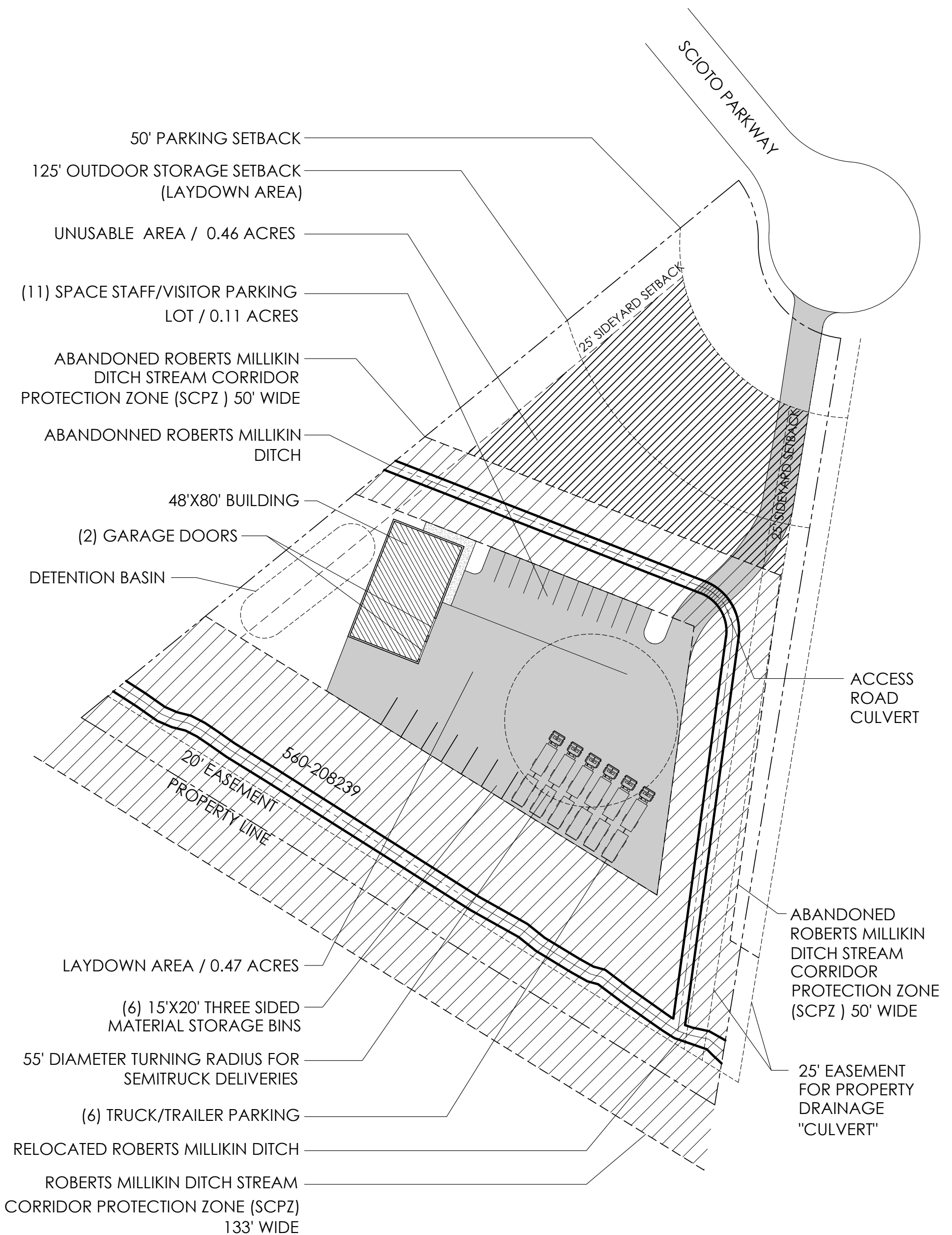
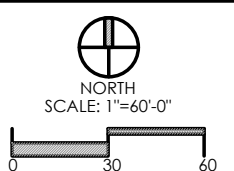


EXHIBIT 4 - FULL COMPLIANCE

OTTAWA LANDSCAPES

PREPARED FOR SCIOTO PARKWAY

DATE: 4-3-24



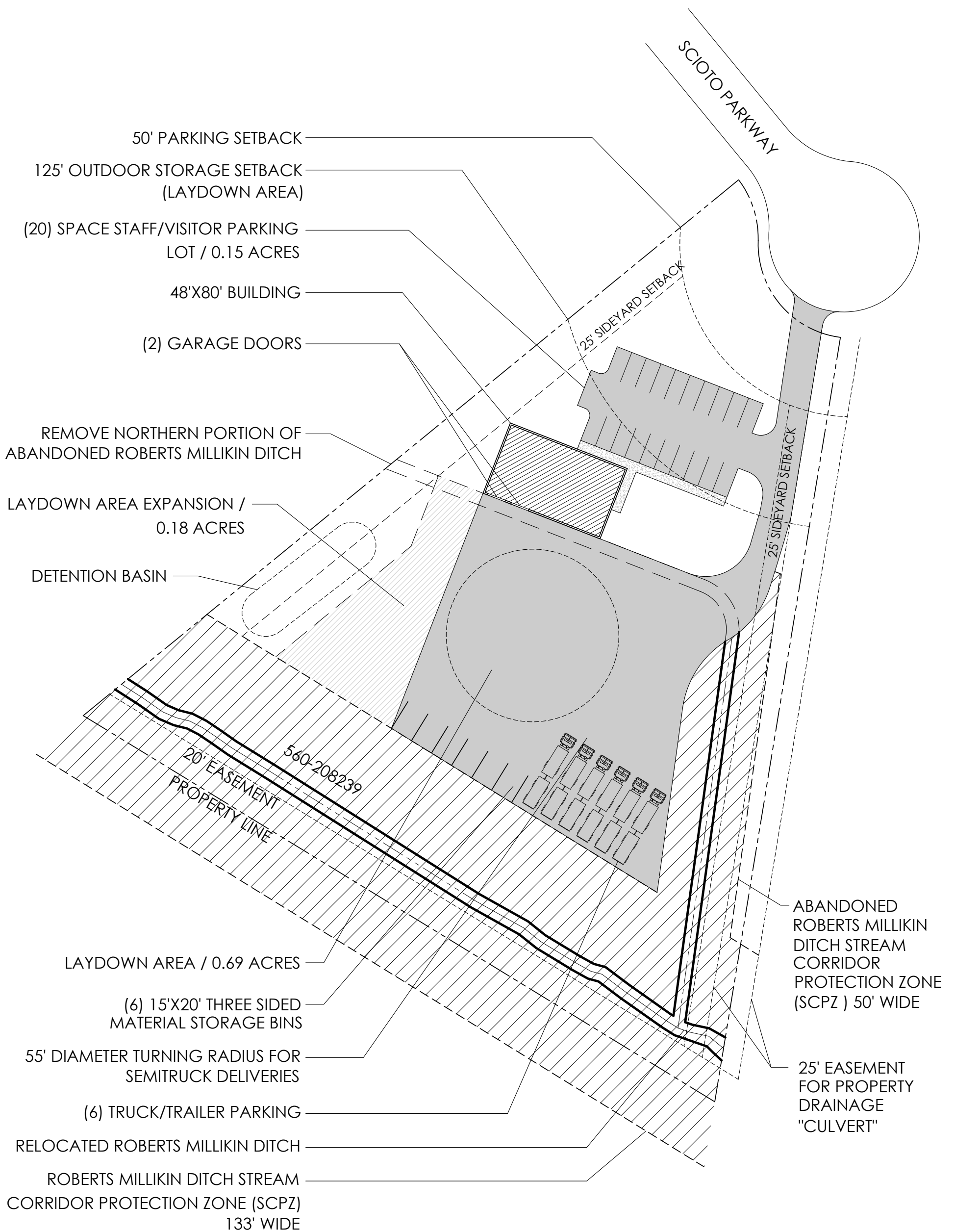
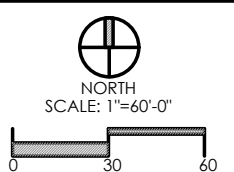


EXHIBIT 5 - MINIMAL IMPACT

OTTAWA LANDSCAPES

PREPARED FOR SCIOTO PARKWAY

DATE: 4-3-24



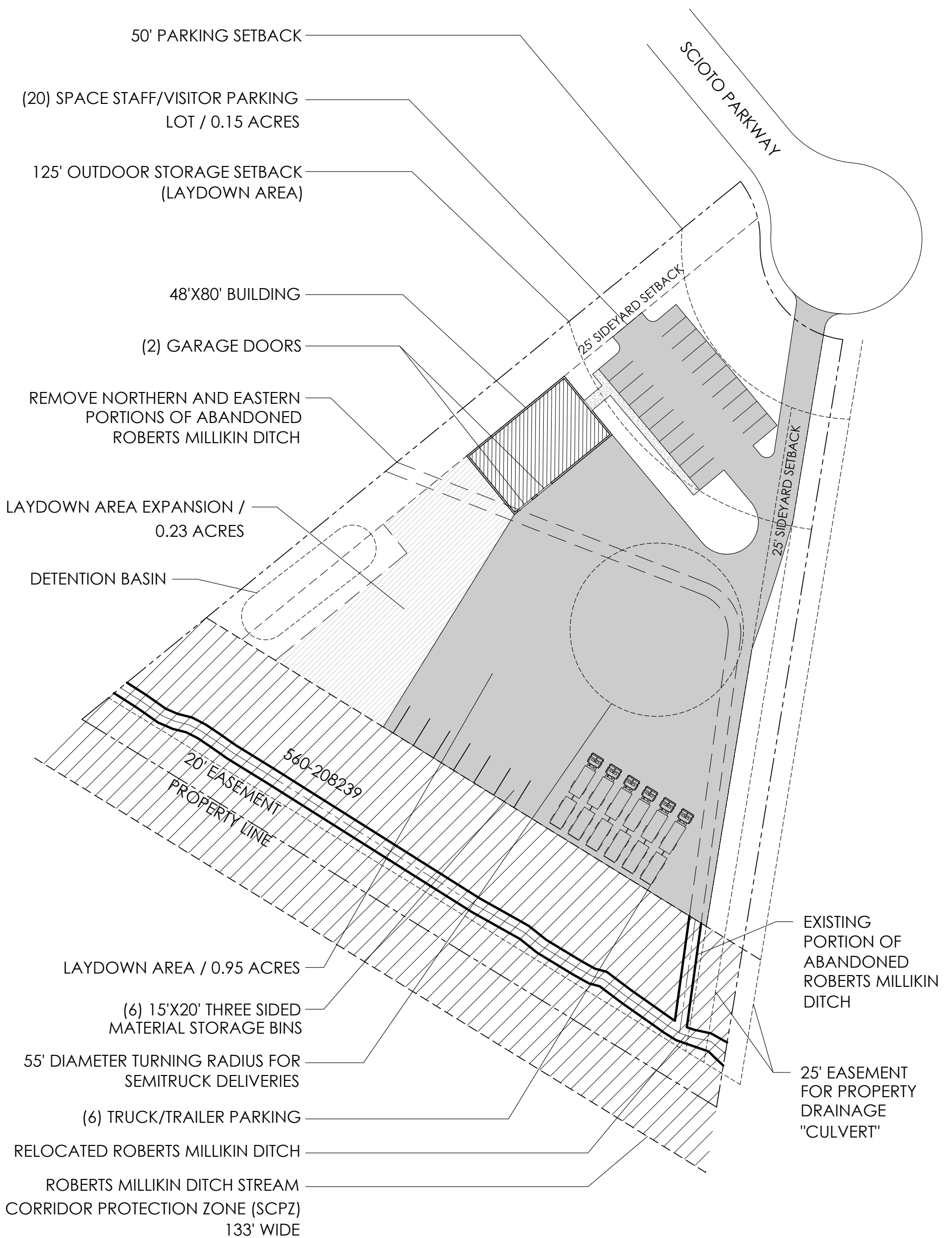


EXHIBIT 6 - PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT

OTTAWA LANDSCAPES

PREPARED FOR SCIOTO PARKWAY

DATE: 4-3-24

