

KRISTEN ATHA
Director



August 17, 2026

Ryan B. Grassly, P.E.
Project Engineer
Kimley-Horn
7965 N. High Street, Suite 200
Columbus, OH 43235

RE: Stormwater Drainage Manual (SWDM) Type II Variance Request – American Self-Storage Phase II

Mr. Grassly:

This letter is in response to the subject variance request Type II (Non-Stream) to the SWDM Section 1.4 *Floodplain Preservation and Developments within Special Flood Hazard Areas* of the 2025 City of Columbus Stormwater Drainage Manual (SWDM) for the proposed American Self-Storage project located at 1701 Refugee Road in Columbus, Ohio. More specifically, the SWDM Section 1.4 requires an unrestricted hydraulic connection from proposed compensatory storage area to the affected stream. A variance is required as such unrestricted hydraulic connection is unfeasible on this project due to its topographical limitations.

The request was submitted to the City on June 26, 2026. As part of the Variance review process, the subject Variance request was posted on the City website on June 30, 2026 to solicit public comments. No public comments were received by the posted due date.

The Variance Review Committee has met and reviewed the initial submittal of the subject Variance Request on August 14, 2026.

The submitted Variance Request was found by the Variance Review Committee to be in general compliance with the SWDM Non-Stream Protection Type II Variance application requirements.

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

- **Full Compliance Alternative:** Full compliance alternative would entail creating a hydraulic connection to Blacklick Creek via a 1,225 linear foot graded ditch through City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department (CRPD) property to the west of the site. As CRPD indicated their unwillingness to allow this work on their property, this Alternative was found to be unfeasible.
- **Minimal Impact Alternative:** The minimal impact alternative would build the compensatory storage basin and rely on soil infiltration to outlet the basin. The soils that would support the necessary infiltration are within the floodway and would require a basin extension to the floodway on the applicant's property. An Infiltration Testing Report was prepared by Geotechnical Consultants, Inc. on



September 9, 2024. This report shows high infiltration rates in the existing soils within the floodway, but not within the area where the applicant proposes to build the compensatory storage basin.

- Preferred Alternative: The preferred alternative proposes to build the compensatory storage basin outside of the floodway and outlet it via pump to the property west of the site. This would allow the floodplain to fill naturally and overtop the high point between Blacklick Creek and the compensatory storage basin. The pump would not be utilized until the flood levels drop below the high point and it is necessary to outlet the proposed compensatory storage basin.

Upon reviewing and discussing the application submitted by the applicant, the Variance Review Committee agreed with the applicant that the Preferred Alternative for both exemptions being sought represents a viable development plan showing the development team's good faith effort to comply with the applicable SWDM requirements. However, the Committee also felt that it would be important to promote groundwater recharge by enabling the proposed basin to utilize infiltration to the maximum practical extent.

After considering pros and cons of the above alternatives, and based on the recommendation of the Variance Review Committee, the modified Preferred Alternative is conditionally approved contingent upon the following stipulations:

- CC- plan and the corresponding Stormwater Management Report must be submitted and approved by the City of Columbus.
- The proposed floodplain compensatory storage basin and its outlet to be located to provide an opportunity for the water stored during floodplain activation to infiltrate into the ground to the maximum practical extent.

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,

Signed by:

Rob Priestas by Paul W. Wilson

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Robert S. Priestas, P.E., Administrator
Division of Water Reclamation

ec: Variance Review Committee
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