

January 27, 2025

Jessica Chouteau, PE  
Senior Engineer  
EMH&T  
5500 New Albany Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43054

RE: Stormwater Drainage Manual (SWDM) Type II Variance Request – Brice Road Widening,  
4070-E (Winchester Reserve)

Jessica Chouteau:

This letter is in response to the subject variance request Type II (Non-Stream) to the SWDM Section 3.1 *Stormwater Control Practices - General Criteria*. More specifically, exemption is being sought from the SWDM Section 3.1 requirements prohibiting placement of Stormwater Control Practices (quantity) within the FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain.

The request was submitted to the City on January 6, 2025. As part of the Variance review process, the subject Variance request was posted on the City website on January 7, 2025 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 January 24, 2025.

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

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

- Full Compliance Alternative – Stormwater runoff from the public Brice Rd. R/W widening only to be pumped uphill to the on-site detention basin within the proposed Winchester Reserve development. This alternative was deemed to be unfeasible due to high initial and O&M costs of the required pump station and force main, which would have to be Columbus-owned and operated. Additionally, the on-site basin would need to be a joint ownership basin, with Columbus having the right to maintain the basin if/as required due to co-mingling of private and public water.
- Minimal Impact Alternative – Fill the floodplain within the proposed R/W basin above the BFE, obtain the LOMR-R with FEMA to remove the area from the floodplain boundaries, and then excavate the basin within this area. This Alternative has also been found to be not viable due



to economic hardship, in addition to potential regulatory issues with FEMA floodplain regulations.

- Preferred Alternative – the proposed detention basin needed for providing water quantity controls for the R/W portion of the development will be placed within the regulatory 100-year FEMA floodplain. A backwater valve will be provided at the basin's outlet to protect the volume of the basin between the OHWM and BFE. Basin's embankment is proposed to be elevated above the BFE.

Upon reviewing and discussing the application submitted by the applicant, the Variance Review Committee agreed with the applicant that the Preferred Alternative represents a viable development plan showing the development team's good faith effort to comply with the applicable SWDM requirements. The Committee further agreed with the applicant's argument that both the Full Compliance and the Minimal Impact Alternatives would impact functional and economic viability of the proposed residential community project to a point of making it infeasible.

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

- E-4070 plan and corresponding Stormwater Management Report must be submitted and approved by the City of Columbus.
- The proposed detention basin top of bank elevation to be 12 inches above the BFE, with a backwater prevention device at the basin's outlet.

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,



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

cc: Variance Review Committee  
File