

March 29, 2023

Justin Blood, PE
Project Engineer
Korda/Nemeth Engineering, Inc.
1650 Watermark Drive, Suite 200
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Stormwater Drainage Manual (SWDM) Type II Variance Request – Operation Safewalks Grace Street, 3863-E, PID 113775

Mr. Blood:

This letter is in response to the subject variance request Type II (Non-Stream) to the 2022 SWDM Section 2 *Stormwater Control Practices*. More specifically, exemption is being sought from the SWDM Section 3.4.3.1.a. requirement that underground storage systems may not be placed in the public right-of-way unless the facility will be owned or operated by the City and the function of the facility is associated with a green infrastructure practice.

As part of the Operation Safewalks program, this federally and state-funded project needs to install new ADA-compliant sidewalks and associated curb ramps along Grace St. from Orel Avenue to the alley west of Roys Ave., and from Hague Ave. to Eureka Ave. in the Hilltop area of Columbus.

The SWDM variance application was submitted to the City on March 2, 2023. As part of the Variance review process, the subject Variance request was posted on the City website on March 7, 2023 to solicit public comments. No public comments were received by the posted due date. The Variance Review Committee has met and reviewed the subject variance application on March 22, 2023.

The submitted Variance Request was found by the Variance Review Committee to be in compliance with the SWDM 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 – Underground storage system with upstream rain gardens installed between the sidewalk and the roadway. This Alternative results in significant negative impacts to adjacent property owners as it would require extensive right-of-way acquisition plus retaining walls. Due to these considerations, this alternative was found to be unfeasible.
- Minimal Impact Alternative – Installation of vegetated filter strips upstream of vegetated swales leading to hydrodynamic separators and an underground storage system. This alternative results in



reduced right-of-way acquisition (only temporary takes), no retaining walls but some curb walls. Reduced maintenance requirements with low potential of damage.

- Preferred Alternative – Similar to the Minimal Impact Alternative, but without vegetated filter strips. The applicant stated that the DPS is willing to add vegetated filter strips to this alternative, making the Minimal Impact Alternative an acceptable option.


Upon reviewing and discussing the application, the Variance Review Committee agreed with the applicant that the Preferred Alternative supplemented with vegetated filter strips represents the most advantageous plan given the site limitations. The Committee further agreed with the applicant's argument that the Full Compliance Alternative would result in significant hardship for the project owner due to the existing site conditions.

In light of the above, the subject Variance Request, Preferred Alternative supplemented with vegetated filter strips is conditionally approved contingent upon the following stipulation:

- E-Plan and Stormwater Management Report compliant with the 2022 SWDM (with the approved variance) must be submitted and approved by the City of Columbus.
- The proposed vegetated filter strips to include three inch deep soil blend consisting of 50% topsoil and 50% bioretention soil per Supplemental Specification SS 1604.

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

ec: Variance Review Committee
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