

DESIGN MEMO 1.01

To: Designers, Contractors, and City Departments
Date: January 10, 2023
Subject: Design Variance Process
Category: General

The intent is for all facilities within the public right-of-way to meet the requirements described within our published standards. Examples of Columbus standards that require variance when deviated from include Columbus Policies and Rules and Regulations, Design memos, City Code, Ohio Revised Code, Standard drawings where dimensions or instructions are intended not to vary, and outside design standards such as ODOT L&D and OMUTCD when more specific Columbus standards are not provided. Where the project has determined that there is no other feasible means to construct a fully compliant facility, specific design variances will need to be detailed. Approval process for a design variance will vary based on the type of project and when the design variance can be identified. Below are the approval options:

- CIP projects may identify design variance needs at the scoping stage. The Scope of Improvements (SOI) or DPS Scope Review Form for Outside Agency Projects, needs to identify the variance and limits in the scope along with referencing the standard to which the variance is being made. The DPS Scope Approval Committee approves the design variance by approving the SOI or Review Form.
 - Some examples include
 - 4' width sidewalk will be installed on specific blocks. Per DM 6.03 the minimum width of sidewalk is 5'.
 - SUP between 8'-10' in width will be installed for over 500' between X street and Y street. Per DM 6.02, section 4.1.2 SUP must be 10' and can be reduced to 8' for a maximum of 500'.
 - The reconstructed roadway width will be 23' for these 3 blocks. Per SCD 2100 & 2101, 26' is the minimum roadway width for a residential street
- For CIP projects that determine a need for a design variance after the scope is approved, during the design or construction phase, complete a Design Variance Form (see appendix) with relevant design details and exhibits to clearly document and justify the design variance. Submissions should be made to the DPS project manager. Approval authority for these design variances resides with the City Engineer or their designee.
- For private development project work in the ROW, the design consultant will identify design variances needed and submit a Design Variance Form with relevant design



details to clearly document the design variance to the DPS plan reviewer. Approval Authority resides with the DPS Design Section Manager.

Consideration to the original scope of the project will be given to the extent of effort needed to avoid a design variance. Constraints of existing conditions and improvement of existing conditions will also be considerations. If a Design Variance Form is approved, a written approval identifying the approver and date will be provided and shall be filed with the project documents to maintain the record. The project manager (for CIP projects) or lead DPS plan reviewer (for private projects) will email the variance approval or denial to the design consultant, plan reviewers, and any other involved parties. For variances approved via Scope of Improvements, no separate documentation is provided. This does not exclude following the ODOT design exception process when applicable.

Standard DPS locations to keep variance documentation:

DPS CIP projects: *T:\CIP Project Files\Project name\Design Phase\Design Variances*

Private E plans: *X:\BSD\Digital Review\Project Number\Design Variances*

Design Variance Form

Date - *[insert date of request]*

Project Name/Designation - *[insert official project name and number (E-plan, CC-plan, A-plan, etc.)]*

Road Name/Specific Location - *[insert road (or location) where variance is needed, include sheet numbers where this occurs.]*

Standard Not Met - *[insert SCD number or standard reference that will not be met]*

Description of Issue Causing Variance - *[insert a brief description of the reasons that the standard cannot be met for this portion of the project]*

Proposed Alternative - *[insert a description of the proposed alternative and include necessary plan sheets for reference]*

Alternatives Considered - *[insert any additional alternatives that were considered. These can also reference a plan sheet example]*

Justification for Variance - *[insert discrete reasons for justification]*

Example Plan Sheets - *[include plan sheet #'s and attach those sheets to this variance]*

Name of Design Professional/Firm Requesting Variance: *[insert name of firm]*

