



Public Works Department – Engineering

March 3, 2025

SEHOA
Attn: Executive Board
PO Box 621
Niwot CO 80544

SENT VIA EMAIL: info@somersetstates-hoa.com

Subject: Somerset Estates Blocks 2, 3, 4 & 5 Drainage

Dear Executive Board:

The Boulder County Public Works Department (Public Works) has received multiple inquiries in recent months from the Somerset Estates Homeowners Association (HOA) regarding the existence of several wet ponds in Somerset Estates Blocks 4 & 5, and on Outlots B, C & D. The ponds were constructed in the 1990s when Blocks 2 through 5 were being developed. For reference, these ponds are numbered 2 through 11 and are identified in the attached diagram as Exhibit A. This letter is in response to the HOA's inquiries

The following documents were found in Public Works' files and were researched in order to respond accurately to the HOA.

- Final Drainage Report and Plans, Somerset Estates, Blocks 2, 3, 4 & 5, by JR Engineering, dated January 4, 1993
- Subdivision Improvement Plans, Somerset Estates, Blocks 2 through 5, hand marked "As-Built Storm Drainage Improvements 1-25-1997", 30 Sheets
- Subdivision Improvement Plans, Somerset Estates, Blocks 2 through 5, hand marked "As-Built Storm Drainage Improvements 1-25-1997", 16 Sheets
- Final Drainage Report, Somerset Estates, by JR Engineering, dated March 14, 1989

Two sets of As-Built Storm Drainage Improvements plans are referenced above and exist as separate documents in Public Works' files. The 30 sheet set appears to be the most complete since it refers to having a total number of 30 sheets. The 16 sheet set appears to be an assorted version of the 30 sheet set and includes a selection sheets that are included in the 30 sheet set. Both documents are valid, however, the 30 sheet set should be considered the official document for final drainage improvements for Blocks 2 – 5.

In regard to ponds 2 & 3 on Outlot D, ponds 4-7 between blocks 4 & 5 (and situated along private lot lines of building lots), and ponds 8-11 on Outlots B & C, Public Works did not

Commissioner Claire Levy • Commissioner Marta Loachamin • Commissioner Ashley Stolzmann

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have individual drawings, designs, or application materials in any of its files for any of those ponds. Unless the Community Planning & Permitting Department (CP&P) can verify that applications were submitted for the construction of those ponds, it is assumed they were either approved for construction with the original Subdivision Improvement Plans or they were not permitted by Boulder County. Information included in the subdivision and drainage plans indicate the ponds were added primarily for aesthetic and/or irrigation purposes with labels noting “Decorative Pond” (pond 7) and “Ornamental/Irrigation Pond” (ponds 8 & 9).

A replat of Block 5 in 1994 that added wider Drainage, Utility & Landscape Easements between lots 1-4 and lots 8-11 of Block 4 does not affect the 1993 Final Drainage Report. In general, drainage easements are specified in locations where local drainage must be conveyed. Final grades should not be modified within drainage easements in order to prevent obstruction of runoff from reaching designated outfall points. Reducing or removing any of ponds 2 – 11 that fall within drainage easements may be permissible without need for developing a new drainage report and plan, assuming the reduced or removed ponds provide continued drainage conveyance within the drainage easements.

The HOA asked Public Works if a 10-inch pipe that extends from the base of a waterfall on Outlot D under Somerset Drive and to a small pond on Lot 1, Block 5 constitutes a required storm drainage pathway. Public Works views this configuration as an irrigation utility and not part of the subdivision’s drainage system.

In conclusion, there are two ponds that Public Works views as essential to the final drainage plan: (1) a detention pond adjacent to Outlot H (very west end of Block 2) and (2) another detention pond designed by Drexel Barrell in the 1980s and constructed in open space as part of an earlier Hillside Estates development. Ponds 2 – 11 are not considered integral to the final drainage plan for Blocks 2 – 5 and could be removed as part of an application process to CP&P and subject to maintaining conveyance of local runoff in their place (i.e., implementation of grass lined channels or swales). There would be no associated increased risk of flooding to private properties with the removals of these ponds given that their drainage benefits were not designed or evaluated with the final drainage report. Any future proposals that increase imperviousness will require an updated drainage report and plan that meets the county’s Storm Drainage Criteria Manual.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D.C. Webster".

David C. Webster, P.E.
County Engineer

C: Anita Riley, Principal Planner, Access & Engineering Group, Community Planning & Permitting Department

Attachment: Exhibit A

**EXHIBIT A
POND DIAGRAM**

