



STAFF REPORT

Planning Commission Meeting: May 11, 2026

Application:	PR26-0002: Preliminary Site Development Plan for the Downtown Civic Parking Garage
Location:	225 N. Chestnut Street
Property Owner:	City of Olathe
Applicant/Architect:	Kimball Hales; Finkle + Williams
Staff Contact:	Emily Carrillo; Senior Planner

Site Area:	<u>3.2 ± acres</u>	Current Use:	<u>Surface Parking, Accessory</u>
Zoning:	<u>D (Downtown, Core)</u>	Proposed Use:	<u>Structured Parking, Accessory</u>
Proposed Building Area:	<u>140, 140± sq.ft.</u>	Plat:	<u>Olathe</u>

1. Introduction

The City of Olathe is requesting approval of a preliminary site development plan for the Downtown Civic Parking Garage, intended as an accessory to the surrounding civic buildings, including the Johnson County Courthouse and downtown library, located within the Downtown Core District. The project is a joint collaboration between the City of Olathe and Johnson County.

The proposal includes the construction of a three-story structured parking facility with approximately 403 parking stalls, replacing the existing surface lot that provides 128 stalls. The garage is intended to address localized parking demand, particularly north of Santa Fe Street, where demand is highest during business hours and community events. While parking supply in the broader downtown area is generally adequate, the proposed facility will improve convenience and accessibility in this area and aligns with the Envision Olathe Downtown Plan and the Elevate Olathe Comprehensive Plan goals to increase density, enhance walkability, and promote a more human-scale environment by reducing reliance on expansive surface parking lots.

The proposal represents a significant change from the existing development, and Planning Commission review is required by the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) prior to the commencement of development.

2. History

The property was platted in 1866 as part of the original Town of Olathe subdivision. A surface lot was constructed in this location with the construction of the Patrons Bank Building in the 1970s. When the bank building was redesigned and repurposed for the current City Hall in 2002, the surface lot was adapted to serve the needs of the civic use and has remained since that time. The property was rezoned to the D (Downtown, Core) District in 2017 with the adjacent City Hall and Johnson County Courthouse (RZ17-0016).

3. Existing Conditions

The existing site consists of a surface parking lot with 128 parking stalls, including ADA-accessible spaces, electric vehicle charging stations and a limited number of dedicated parking stalls. A large trash enclosure is located at the southwest corner of the lot and serves City Hall. A large generator enclosure, which services City Hall, is located at the northeast corner of the property, which is proposed to remain and be reskinned to complement the new parking structure. The site is currently served by two access points, one from N. Chestnut Street and one from E. Poplar Street. Stormwater generally flows across the site from west to east and is conveyed into the existing public stormwater system.



Subject property highlighted in yellow.

4. Zoning Standards

- a. **Land Use** – The proposed structured parking facility is permitted by right within the D (Downtown, Core) District and supports surrounding civic uses and the adjacent downtown neighborhood. The structure is located to the rear of the site and incorporates architectural treatments complementary to the primary building and other adjacent civic structures, ensuring it remains visually and functionally secondary.

The site is designated as *Downtown Core* on the recently adopted Elevate Olathe Future Land Use Map. The proposed land use is consistent with the future land use designation and the Downtown subarea of the comprehensive plan.

- b. **Building Height** – The proposed building height is consistent with the standards of the Downtown District. The roof of the parking structure is 41’ feet in height, with a tower element located at the southwest corner containing the stairs and elevator core in this area which extends to a maximum height of 56’ feet. This tower feature is an architectural element intended to provide vertical articulation to the structure and may also accommodate public art, and ambient exterior lighting.
- c. **Setbacks** – Setbacks and frontage buildout requirements for Civic and Supportive uses within the Downtown Core District are not applicable, as identified in UDO Section 18.20.210.

5. Development Standards

- a. **Access/Streets** – The existing site is currently accessed from N. Chestnut Street and E. Poplar Street, and these access points will remain for the proposed parking structure. However, the northern access from Poplar Street will be shifted slightly to the west to accommodate internal circulation, traffic flow, and turning movements within the parking structure. This access configuration has been reviewed and is supported by the City Traffic Engineer and is consistent with the adopted Access Management Plan.
- b. **Parking** – Approximately 275 new parking stalls will be added with this proposal to serve adjacent civic uses and the surrounding downtown neighborhood.
- c. **Landscaping/Screening** – Parking areas will be screened in compliance with UDO Section 18.30.160 and applicable Downtown District standards. Screening along street rights-of-way will include landscaping and a 3-foot-tall concrete or masonry wall to limit visibility of parked vehicles from public view.

Street trees are provided where space and utilities allow along Poplar and Chestnut Streets. Existing deciduous trees are proposed to remain adjacent to the Johnson County Courthouse promenade area, and a majority of the existing deciduous trees around the exterior of the site are proposed to remain or will be replaced if disturbed during construction. Extensive landscaping and plantings are also provided internally on the site around the interior plaza and drop-off entry areas.

- d. **Tree Preservation** – Tree preservation standards are not applicable within the Downtown District per UDO Section 18.30.240. However, 11 existing trees along the perimeter of the site are proposed to be preserved and have been incorporated into the overall site design.
- e. **Stormwater/Detention** – As the site is currently fully impervious, no additional detention or water quality treatment is required. Existing storm sewer infrastructure along Chestnut Street may be utilized as a connection point for proposed stormwater and roof drainage associated with the parking structure.
- f. **Public Utilities** – The property is located within the City of Olathe water and sewer service area, and no utility extensions are required for this redevelopment. An existing 8-inch water main is located along the eastern property line and requires a minimum 10-foot will

be maintained. Additional on-site utilities, including fiber, electrical, and parking lot conduits, will be located and accommodated during construction. An existing generator at the northeast corner will remain and must maintain required access.

- g. **Signage** -- Signage is shown on the building elevations for illustrative purposes only. As required by UDO 18.50.190. All signage is reviewed and approved through a separate permit application.

6. Site Design Standards

The property is subject to Site Design Category 3 based on the D (Downtown) District zoning designation. Development in this category is intended to support a walkable, connected, and visually cohesive urban environment. The proposed civic parking garage incorporates a minimum ten (10)-foot landscaped perimeter along adjacent streets, including street trees and planted areas that soften the structure and contribute to the downtown streetscape. The site provides strong pedestrian connectivity to and throughout the property, including clearly defined, safe pedestrian pathways linking to City Hall and adjacent civic buildings, supporting connectivity and walkability within the D District.

7. Building Design Standards

Accessory buildings in all nonresidential zoning districts must comply with the building design requirements for the principal building on the lot per UDO Section 18.15.020. The primary structure and adjacent civic buildings are subject to the Civic and Office Building Design Standards (UDO 18.15.020.G.8) and also Downtown District Building Location and Design Standards (UDO 18.20.210.C).

The civic parking structure is designed in accordance with Downtown District standards, incorporating a defined base, middle, and top through changes in material, plane, and texture. Façade articulation and variation in form are used to reduce overall massing and achieve human-scale proportions, particularly along pedestrian-facing elevations.

The proposed material palette includes brick, limestone, cast-in-place concrete, glass, and a custom perforated metal screen. Drawing from the material character of adjacent civic buildings—including City Hall, the County Courthouse, and the Downtown Library—the design synthesizes these influences into a cohesive yet distinct architectural expression that is complementary while remaining unique. The cast-in-place structural system reduces perceived bulk compared to typical precast construction by minimizing heavy spandrels and increasing façade openness, contributing to a lighter overall expression.

Primary pedestrian-facing elements, including entrances and vertical circulation, are articulated in brick to establish a grounded, human-scale edge. Limestone accents reference surrounding civic architecture, reinforcing contextual continuity. A custom perforated metal screen material provides ventilation and screening while adding visual texture and warmth in contrast to the masonry.

Class 1 materials and high-quality architectural treatments are maintained on all façades to ensure uniform quality and compatibility with adjacent civic and residential properties. Overall, the design responds to surrounding civic architecture while remaining a distinct and civic structure.

8. Downtown Envision Olathe Plan

The proposed downtown parking structure is consistent with the goals and vision of the *Envision Olathe Downtown Plan (2018 Update)*, particularly as it relates to reinforcing a strong civic core, supporting walkability, and enabling long-term redevelopment. The plan emphasizes high-quality, context-sensitive civic investment that supports a vibrant, mixed-use downtown environment while strengthening connections between key public destinations.

The proposal supports these objectives by consolidating parking in a structured facility that reduces the reliance on surface lots, thereby freeing land for higher-value redevelopment and more active street-level uses. Its design prioritizes pedestrian-oriented edges along public streets, with articulated façades, clearly defined entrances, and human-scaled architectural elements that reinforce walkability and an active public space.

Generally, the project advances the Envision Olathe Downtown Plan vision by improving downtown functionality, supporting future redevelopment capacity, and reinforcing a cohesive and identifiable core district.

9. Neighborhood Meeting/Correspondence

Neighborhood notification was provided to property owners within 500 feet of the subject property, as required by the UDO. A neighborhood meeting was held on March 23, 2026, with 1 individual in attendance. Questions and discussion items included overall design, security, and construction timing. Neither staff nor the applicant has received any additional correspondence following the neighborhood meeting regarding the project.

10. Staff Recommendation

- A. Staff recommends approval of the preliminary site development plan, PR26-0002, Downtown Civic Garage, with no stipulations