



STAFF REPORT

Planning Commission Meeting: April 27, 2026

Application:	PR26-0005: Preliminary Site Development Plan for Fire Station #4 Rebuild
Location:	13301 S. Mur-Len Road
Applicant/Owner:	Laura Gagliano, City of Olathe
Architect:	Ellen Foster, Finkle Williams
Engineer:	Josh Lipscomb, Wallace Design Collective
Staff Contact:	Nathan Jurey, Senior Planner

Site Area:	<u>1.66 ± acres</u>	Existing Zoning:	<u>CP-2 & CP-O Districts</u>
Building Area:	<u>16,303 sq. ft.</u>	Existing / Proposed Use:	<u>Fire Station</u>
Lots:	<u>1 lot</u>	Plat:	<u>Unplatted & Mur-Len Commercial Park 5th Plat</u>

1. Introduction

The City of Olathe is requesting approval of a preliminary site development plan for the Fire Station #4 Rebuild project. The 1.66-acre subject property is generally located northeast of Santa Fe Street and Mur-Len Road. This project will demolish the existing one-story fire station on site and construct a new two-story, 16,303 square foot fire station in its place. Fire Station #4 is one of the busiest stations in Johnson County and no longer meets the needs of the City. The new station increases the number of fire truck bays from two (2) to three (3) bays and adds living quarters to meet the staffing and apparatus needs for this area of the community. As required by Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Section 18.30.120.A, preliminary site development plan approval must be obtained prior to development.

2. History

The subject 1.66-acre property was annexed into the City in 1968 (Ord. 117-C) and zoned to the CP-2 (Planned General Business) District in 1970 (Ord. 353-C) as part of a larger 320-acre development, which included a mixture of office, commercial, and multifamily zoning (RZ-20-69). Fire Station #4 was built in 1971 and multiple renovations have occurred to extend the life of the building as it stands today.

In 1980, the southeast portion of the subject property was rezoned to the CP-O (Planned Office) District (Ord. 80-23) as part of the Mur-Len Commercial Park Shopping Center development (RZ-5-80). A final development plan (PR-1-83) was approved and the final plat

for Mur-Len Commercial Park (P-4-83) was recorded in 1983, with the shopping center being constructed in 1984. In 2024, a portion of Mur-Len Commercial Park was replatted to allow separate ownership of the shopping center building (FP24-0019) and the northern portion was deeded to the City to allow for the proposed fire station rebuild.



The subject property is outlined in yellow.

3. Existing Conditions

The subject property is home to Fire Station #4, a 5,965 square foot one-story building. The property is bound by Mur-Len Road to the west, a stream corridor and woodland areas to the north and east, and the Mur-Len Commercial Shopping Center to the south. The site slopes steeply down to the stream located along the east side of the property.



View of the subject property looking northeast from Mur-Len Road.

4. Zoning Standards

- a. **Land Use** – The Public Safety Services use is permitted within the CP-2 and CP-O Districts.
- b. **Building Height** – The standard building height allowed in the CP-2 District is three (3) stories and 40 feet tall and the proposed 2-story building is 33 feet tall at its peak.
- c. **Setbacks** – The proposed building and paved areas comply with a minimum building and paving setback of 40-feet and 15-feet from arterial roads, respectively. The development also complies with the minimum building and paving setback of 10-feet from commercially zoned property to the north, east and south.
- d. **Open Space** – At least 25% of the site must be open space and the proposal provides 60% open space.

5. Development Standards

- a. **Access/Streets** – The project shifts the existing access drive and associated traffic control cabinets, signs, and markings further south to line up with the new fire truck bays. The new fire station will also share access with the commercial shopping center to the south to allow for access to the proposed parking and trash service area.
- b. **Parking** – The development provides a total of 24 parking stalls, complying with the minimum of 21 stalls per the UDO standards of 1 stall per 800 square feet of building area for public safety service uses. There are 20 stalls for City personnel located north of the building and 4 public parking stalls in the southeast corner of the site for visitors.
- c. **Landscaping/Screening** – Nonresidential landscaping and perimeter parking lot landscaping is provided along Mur-Len Road as required by UDO 18.30.130. A Type 1 Buffer is provided to the south and a Type N (Natural) buffer is preserved along the north and east property lines. Internally, the development provides at least one (1) tree per landscape island and the required building foundation landscaping along the west façade. The trash service area will be screened as required and utility screening will be further refined with the final site development plan application.
- d. **Tree Preservation** – This project preserves 39% of existing trees, exceeding the requirement to preserve at least 30% of significant trees. In addition, UDO requires 50% of trees within the floodplain to be preserved and the proposal preserves 100% of these trees.
- e. **Stormwater/Detention** – Impervious area on this property will decrease by over 3,000 sq. ft., resulting in a corresponding decrease in stormwater runoff. Stormwater will continue to be conveyed to the adjacent stream corridor at two (2) locations with the required riprap installed at each.
- f. **Public Utilities** – The property is currently served by City of Olathe water and sewer and no utility extensions are required for this redevelopment. Several existing electric, gas, and other utility boxes along Mur-Len will be relocated to accommodate the proposed changes.

6. Site Design Standards

The property is subject to the Site Design Category 4 requirements based on the existing CP-2 (Planned General Business) District. The following is a summary of the applicable site design requirements:

- a. **Parking Pods** – The largest proposed parking pod includes 20 stalls, which complies with the maximum allowance of 80 stalls per pod.
- b. **Pedestrian Connectivity** – The development complies with the pedestrian connection requirement by creating a pedestrian gateway into the site using landscaping and limestone seating slabs.
- c. **Driveway Connectivity** – The project connects to the existing driveway to the south, sharing driveway connectivity as called for by UDO.
- d. **Drainage Feature** – The existing stream corridor will be preserved, creating a natural drainage feature as required by Site Design Category 4.
- e. **Increased Setback** – The building is at least 58 feet setback from the adjacent open space areas to the north and east, exceeding the minimum setback of 40 feet from designated open space.
- f. **Perimeter Landscaping** – A 40- to 50-foot-wide natural landscape buffer is preserved along the adjacent open space area to the north and east, meeting the requirement to provide the prescribed landscape buffer.

7. Building Design Standards

The proposed two-story fire station is subject to the Office and Civic Building design standards according to UDO Section 18.15.020.G.8. The west elevation is classified as a primary façade with all other elevations considered secondary façades. The following table lists the applicable building design standards and proposed design elements.

Building Design Standard	UDO Design Requirements Proposed Design
<i>Building Entryway</i>	<i>Each building entry along primary facades must be defined with a projection from the façade or a recessed area.</i> The main building entry is defined with a covered canopy projecting from the façade.
<i>Façade Articulation</i>	<i>Each primary façade must be divided into façade bays that are no greater than 75-feet in width through a combination of horizontal and vertical wall articulation.</i> The west primary façade exceeds the maximum façade bay width of 75-feet as the roofline is about 96-feet in width without the use of vertical articulation. A waiver is requested from this requirement. See Section 9 below for an analysis of this request.
<i>Special Articulation</i>	<i>Buildings less than 3-stories must include at least one (1) tower element or similar special articulation to anchor the main entry or building corner.</i> A glass wall tower element is included to anchor the main entry.
<i>Building Height</i>	<i>The minimum first floor height of all two-story or taller buildings must be eleven (11) feet.</i> The first floor of this two-story building is 18 feet.

<i>Façade Expression</i>	<p><i>The primary façade of all two-story or taller buildings must incorporate one (1) of the prescribed façade expression techniques.</i></p> <p>The primary façade exceeds this requirement by incorporating three (3) façade expression techniques; a change in material, a thicker extended roofline, and a canopy for at least 60% of the primary façade width.</p>
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Proposed Building Materials

The building is primarily clad in Class 1 glass and cream-colored brick, with Class 3 black batten-seam metal panels and Class 4 composite wood planks used as accent materials only. Both the brick and glass materials are used on the primary and all secondary façades, meeting the requirement to use at least two (2) different Class 1 and 2 materials on each façade.

The primary façade is clad with 80% Class 1 materials, exceeding the requirement to use 70% Class 1 and 2 materials. Secondary façades are clad with at least 63% Class 1 materials, exceeding the 50% Class 1 and 2 materials requirement. At least 25% and 15% glass is required on primary and secondary façades respectively and the proposed building exceeds this requirement with 40% and at least 17% glass on primary and secondary facades.

8. Neighborhood Meeting/Correspondence

The applicant mailed neighborhood notice to property owners within 500 feet of the subject property as required by UDO. A neighborhood meeting was held on April 6, 2026 with one (1) individual in attendance who was supportive of the project. The meeting minutes and sign-in sheet provided by the applicant are included in the Planning Commission packet. Staff has not received any additional correspondence from the public regarding this project.

9. Waiver Request

Section 18.40.240 of the UDO provides a mechanism for waivers to be considered when unnecessary hardships can be demonstrated or where the exception would result in superior design. The applicant has submitted a justification statement for the requested waiver, which is attached to this report. The applicant is requesting a waiver from the following section of the UDO:

1. UDO 18.15.020.G.8.a.2 (Office and Civic Building Design standards), which requires that each primary façade is divided into vertical bays that are no greater than 75 feet in width through a combination of horizontal and vertical wall articulation. The applicant is requesting a waiver to allow a façade bay that is 96 feet in width.

Staff is supportive of the requested waiver as the proposal results in a superior design than otherwise required. Staff is supportive of the request as the proposed floor to ceiling glass tower creates the illusion of horizontal and vertical articulation. In addition, the proposed building uses three (3) different façade expression techniques to further break-up the building walls where only one (1) technique is required. Lastly, the building exceeds minimum Class 1 material and glass requirements on all four (4) facades.

10. Staff Recommendation

A. Staff recommends approval of the preliminary site development plans for PR26-0005, Fire Station #4 Rebuild, with the following stipulation:

1. A waiver is granted from UDO 18.15.020.G.8.a.2 to increase the maximum façade bay width from 75 to 96 feet on the west primary façade.