

## EARLY AUTUMN 2021



Inclusive playground at the new Indian Creek Park

### PUBLIC SAFETY PROJECTS HELP KEEP OLATHE ONE OF THE SAFEST CITIES

Olathe residents are highly satisfied with Olathe’s overall quality of police, fire, and emergency medical services with a 95 percent satisfaction rating (2020 DirectionFinder® surveys). This rating is the highest among all communities included in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Because safety is a top priority of residents and businesses, the City continues public safety investments, including the new Olathe Fire Academy and two other facilities coming soon.

#### NEW OLATHE FIRE ACADEMY

Olathe first responders are receiving exceptional training offered at the new Fire Academy, which opened May 26 at Layton Drive and Hedge Lane. This fall, students in the Olathe Public Safety Academy will have the opportunity to train at the Fire Academy, and the facility will be open to other firefighters throughout the region.



Olathe firefighters at the new Olathe Fire Academy train for a house fire and victim rescue. The big ladder provides roof access to perform vertical ventilation for smoke and toxic gases release. The vertical ventilation must be well-coordinated with the fire attack for optimal results.

#### FIRE STATION 8 OPENS SOON

In September, a permanent Olathe Fire Station 8 will open near West 148th Street and Lakeshore Drive. Station 8 will serve the growing residential and commercial properties in the city’s southwest area.

Continued on page 3

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Mayor’s Message 2

---

- Police Headquarters Expansion 3

---

- New Mural Unveiled Downtown 4

---

- What’s Being Built in Olathe 5

---

- Extra Efforts Opened All City Pools 6

---

- Traffic Flow Improvements 7

Visit [OlatheKS.org](http://OlatheKS.org) and Click on **NEWS** for additional Olathe news.





## MAYOR'S MESSAGE



The City of Olathe's excellent bond rating means lower financing costs for capital projects, such as the current 119th Street and I-35 interchange improvements.

## CITY OF OLATHE'S FINANCIAL STRENGTH IMPACTS YOU

When the Olathe Civic Academy class of 2021 graduated earlier this summer, I heard numerous positive comments about the City's research, work, and careful decision-making. The graduates were impressed with the thought put into City projects — from the playground at our latest park, to the design of our new library, even about the timing of traffic signals across the city.

But the truth is, there's hard work that begins long before those projects even have a name to make services financially feasible.

This year, the City of Olathe once again earned one of the top bond ratings available: AA+. Practicing financial stewardship made this accomplishment possible, and it takes dedication and discipline every day to maintain it.

Our bond rating is not just something that makes us look good. This commitment to financial responsibility affects your City of Olathe services, their quality, and ultimately our community's quality of life.

A better bond rating means we can borrow money at a lower rate. Over time, this saves taxpayers millions of dollars in interest when we finance projects to improve traffic flow and safety, such as the 119th Street and I-35 interchange, or to build our newest fire station, and other capital projects.

This interest savings means we can do more for our community as long as we continue making prudent financial decisions.

City staff practices sound financial

management every day with careful and strategic processes. For example, City policy dictates we maintain a rainy-day fund valued at 30 percent of the General Fund. Bond rating agency Fitch acknowledges that percentage exceeds their expectations, and it's this very fund that played a critical role in managing the City's budget at the beginning of the pandemic.

### MAKING RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS

When COVID-19 hit in early 2020, the City made difficult and critical cost-saving decisions. We furloughed employees and froze hiring. We also delayed General Fund transfers to projects and debt payments by tapping into that rainy-day fund. All total, our financial position allowed \$18 million in savings, ensuring continued financial strength.

These decisions were not lost on the agencies that rate the financial strength of city governments. Standard & Poor's Global says Olathe has "very strong management, which has resulted in consistently strong operating performance," and Olathe's "financial priorities are strong, well embodied, and likely sustainable."

Fitch noted Olathe remains well prepared for the future. "The 'AA+' rating reflects Fitch's expectation that the city will maintain a superior level of fundamental financial flexibility in an economic downturn, including superior inherent budget flexibility."

In addition to the rainy-day fund, some of Olathe's other prudent fiscal policies include:


- Timing projects with long-range forecasting and planning
- Monitoring the market
- Refinancing outstanding bonds for lower interest rates
- Adhering to debt management guidelines, such as primarily using debt to finance capital projects with a relatively long life expectancy and issued without exceeding projects' useful lives.

As we prepare the 2022 budget, we continue to practice stewardship and prioritize City projects with residents' input. We are eager to resume key investments that ensure we remain stable into the future and ready for tomorrow's challenges. We expect Olathe's excellent financial position to continue. Now we need your input to help us determine future priorities.

You have an opportunity to help shape the City of Olathe 2022 budget at a public hearing at 7 p.m., Sept. 7, at Olathe City Hall, 100 E. Santa Fe. If you can't attend the hearing, please visit [OlatheKS.org/OlatheConnect](https://www.olatheks.org/OlatheConnect) to send your comments.

The City of Olathe takes great pride in being good stewards of your tax dollars. We are committed to maintaining our exceptional bond rating and sharing with you all of the benefits that come with it.

Sincerely,

  
John Bacon  
Mayor

Continued from page 1

Since 2017, the Fire Department has operated temporary station No. 8 at 2400 Dennis Ave.

The new station will house three firefighters, who also have emergency medical certifications, and a fire engine. Olathe leveraged funds for 12 firefighters with a three-year, federal SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) grant, which will assist in staffing Fire Station 8.

### POLICE HEADQUARTERS EXPANSION

Keeping Olatheans safe is supported with the public safety campus expansion's second phase. Construction is expected to begin in 2022 on a two-story building that will replace the Public Safety headquarters at 501 E. 56 Highway. The Police Department quickly outgrew the building, which opened in 1983 when Olathe's population was 43,962. For many years, the department has creatively found ways to incorporate more personnel and their services in the building.

Numerous Police Department support services will be housed in the new building, including records, property evidence, training, personnel, and purchasing. These functions will have workspace adjacencies for greater efficiency, and a hub entrance area will provide more interaction for Police employees. A secure parking area will also be part of the project.

Customer experience will be important in the new Police Headquarters design with a better defined public entrance and improved areas for customer contacts, such as private spaces to interact with officers.

In 2010, the Police Department opened a new building behind the current Public Safety headquarters. This building was part of the campus expansion's first phase to serve a fast-growing community. It houses patrol and police operations.

The Police facilities expansion is based on a 2040 space needs study that identifies an additional 65 police officers and up to 25 more vehicles in Olathe Police Department's future.

## REGISTER YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD TODAY!

Are you looking for a way to build up your community and get to know your neighbors better? Registered neighborhoods are eligible to apply for available neighborhood grant funding to help engage neighbors and enhance their communities. Organize a block party or event, implement a community garden, or coordinate a neighborhood cleanup, and more! Registering your neighborhood also ensures that you and your neighbors stay up to date and informed, providing opportunities to connect and comment on important projects that may affect your neighborhood.

Visit [OlatheKS.org/HealthyNeighborhoods](http://OlatheKS.org/HealthyNeighborhoods) or contact the Planning Division at 913-971-8750 for more information and to register your neighborhood today!



# Olathe Healthy Neighborhoods

PRESERVE | PROTECT | ENHANCE

## IMPORTANT CITY PHONE NUMBERS

Regular Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

[OlatheKS.org/ServicesDirectory](http://OlatheKS.org/ServicesDirectory)

**EMERGENCY** ..... 911

**Emergency TDD/TTY Calls** ..... 911

**GENERAL INFORMATION**  
(TDD/Voice) ..... 971-8600

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**  
(Billing, Trash, Water & Sewer)  
1385 S. Robinson ..... 971-9311

**FIRE ADMINISTRATION**  
(Non-Emergency)  
1225 S. Hamilton Circle ..... 971-7900

**OLATHE PUBLIC LIBRARY - Indian Creek**  
16100 W. 135th St. .... 971-6835

**OLATHE PUBLIC LIBRARY - Temporary Location**  
1078A W. Santa Fe ..... 971-6850

**OLATHE PARKS & RECREATION**  
**/COMMUNITY CENTER (TDD/Voice)**  
1205 E. Kansas City Rd ..... 971-8563

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
501 E. 56 Highway ..... 971-7500

**HUMAN RESOURCES**  
100 E. Santa Fe ..... 971-8735

### OLATHE CITY COUNCIL

**John Bacon**  
Mayor  
913-971-8500  
(City office)  
jbacon@olatheks.org

**Wes McCoy**  
At-Large  
913-269-1035  
rwmccoy@olatheks.org

**Karin Brownlee**  
At-Large  
913-484-3255  
kbrownlee@olatheks.org

**Larry Campbell**  
Ward 1  
Mayor Pro Tem  
913-488-7278  
lcampbell@olatheks.org

**Adam Mickelson**  
Ward 2  
913-538-1197  
amickelson@olatheks.org

**Kevin Gilmore**  
Ward 3  
913-768-8285  
kpgilmore@olatheks.org

**Marge Vogt**  
Ward 4  
913-269-0625  
mvogt@olatheks.org



## NEW MURAL BRIGHTENS DOWNTOWN OLATHE

Love. That's the message of a vibrant new mural affixed to the side of Cherry Place, 110 N. Cherry St., in historic downtown Olathe. The mural, attached to the oldest building in the district, is a collaboration between the City of Olathe and local artist Abby Yemm as part of the City's plan to revitalize the area.

Yemm came up with the bright patchwork design after she spoke with the City about what it would like to see happen with the space.

"I started looking at what makes Kansas special and how everyone is part of the same quilt," says Yemm. "So I thought it would be cool to do a quilt background but then make it look like you're going into a portal in outer space. So it's kind of crazy, fun and interactive, but still has meaning to it."

With the new Johnson County Courthouse completion and new projects like the Milhaus Apartments and a new downtown library, Senior Planner Emily Carrillo and her team saw a great opportunity to bring some new life to the busiest alley in the area.

"The idea of it was to bring some visibility to downtown," Carrillo says. "It's very 'Instagramable' and the love theme makes a good photo op for people who come down to the courthouse to get married."

Downtown Olathe's renaissance will continue over the next few years as the City looks for other ways to incorporate art into the space. In addition to more potential murals or sculptures, the new apartments plan to feature public art and the new downtown library will have a large retaining wall along one of its parking lots for a mural canvas.



**Share your pictures with the mural on social media with #OlatheArt for a chance to win a City of Olathe prize pack.**

## KEEP FROG (FATS, RAGS, OILS, AND GREASE) OUT OF YOUR DRAIN PIPES

### No FROG = No CLOG

Fats, rags (wipes), oils, and grease (FROG) are the leading causes of slow drains, backups, and overflows in the sanitary sewer. Grease from food waste builds up on the walls of pipes and sewer lines, eventually blocking wastewater flow. Baby wipes, cleaning wipes, and paper towels are not flushable (despite packaging claims). They cause blockages, make blockages harder to clear, and damage expensive wastewater pumps.

You can avoid the unpleasant experience of a backup with smart household practices:

- Never flush wipes or paper towels. Only the 3 Ps – Pee, Poop, and (toilet) Paper
- Dry wipe pots and pans with a paper towel before washing
- Keep fatty food scraps out of the kitchen sink and place them in the trash instead
- Recycle leftover cooking oil. Schedule an appointment with the Household Hazardous Waste staff at [OlatheKS.org/HHW](https://www.olatheks.org/HHW).

The Olathe sewer maintenance team is on-call 24/7/365. Despite other challenges in 2020, these unsung heroes cleaned more than 490,000 linear feet (90 miles) of City sewer lines, helping ensure that Olathe residents never experience a sewer backup caused by a blockage in the City's sewer lines.

Keeping just one tablespoon of fat, oil, or grease out of your drains daily would amount to 12 pounds of fat, oil, or grease a year not running through your pipes, the sewer system, and the Olathe wastewater treatment plants!

**ONE  
TABLESPOON  
DAILY  
EQUALS**

12 pounds of fat a year going into your sewer system and a wastewater treatment plant



# WHAT'S BEING BUILT IN OLATHE

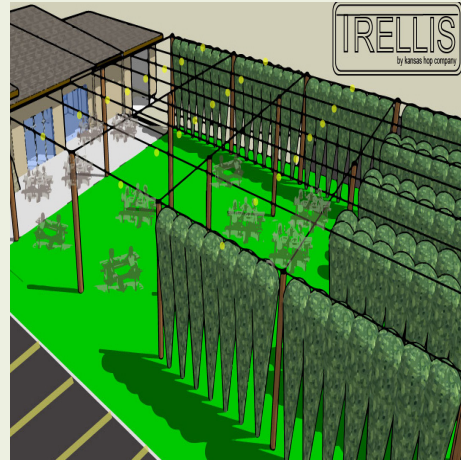
## FIRST WATCH RESTAURANT

Work is underway on Olathe's second First Watch restaurant at 1177 W. Santa Fe St. in the West Market shopping center. The restaurant is expected to open in early October.



## TALL TRELLIS TAPROOM AND COFFEE SHOP

Kansas Hop Company is opening a coffee shop and taproom at 25600 W. Valley Parkway with outdoor seating enclosed by decorative hop trellises and space for yard games. The taproom will feature beverages from hops grown on the company's farm in Ottawa, Kansas.



## BACH HOMES OLATHE

A new mixed-use development will be constructed at the southwest corner of 127th Street and Mur-Len Road. The 17-acre development includes 328 apartment units, 55 townhouse units, and 28,000 square feet of commercial space, including a Casey's gas station. The mixed-use buildings will feature ground-floor retail and restaurants with residential units on the top floors.



Find more projects at [OlatheKS.org/WhatsBeingBuilt](http://OlatheKS.org/WhatsBeingBuilt)

## NEW GATHERING PLACE COMING TO DOWNTOWN

The excitement continues in downtown Olathe with proposed redevelopment plans for the Johnson County Square. A new public gathering place is planned in the former Courthouse space. In the first phase of the downtown square's transformation, look for open green space, landscaping, and curved walkways. Work is expected to start in fall 2021.

Later features will include lighting, enhancements to the water feature, pedestrian plazas, and seating. Additional on-street parking will be available along Cherry Street between Santa Fe and Park Streets.



## VISION



## Preferred Concept





## EXTRA EFFORT OPENS ALL OLATHE POOLS IN 2021



First, there was the challenge to hire enough lifeguards to staff City swimming pools and the Lake Olathe Beach. If that wasn't enough, add several broken underground pool pipes to the mix. This year, Parks and Rec staff had extra challenges to open City pools, but they persisted and didn't give up.

"We pushed hard for the community," says

Olathe Aquatics Manager Shelby Duncan. "We really wanted to get the pools open."

Each year, Olathe hires 200-250 seasonal aquatic staff, including around 100 returning lifeguards. Duncan says Parks and Rec didn't have the base number of lifeguards from the 2020 season, impacting the number of available carryover employees. This year's

lifeguard shortage likely started in 2020 when COVID-19 impacted the season. The City initially opened only two outdoor pools, Lake Olathe Beach, and later in the summer, the Olathe Community Center pool.

Parks and Rec got creative and planned a special lifeguard hiring event in early June this year. Once applicants demonstrated their swimming skills they were given the opportunity to apply, interview, and get hired at the event. The City covered training costs and the American Red Cross lifeguard certification fee. The hiring event produced an additional 20 lifeguards, enough to staff all pools, even Frontier Pool, which still hadn't opened. That was another challenge.

There was a leak in one of the underground pipes serving Frontier Pool. The leak first had to be located, then repaired. Parks and Rec teamed up with Olathe's Street Division. They brought in their heavy equipment to get the job done.

"It was a huge collaboration," says Duncan.

Frontier Pool opened on June 19, thanks to the teamwork from City departments. All other City pools and the beach opened by May 29.

## CAUSE NO HARM WHEN DRAINING SWIMMING POOLS

Treated swimming pool water contains chemicals that can be unsafe for aquatic life and damage our local streams and lakes. Discharging swimming pool water directly into the street or closest storm drain allows that water to flow directly into these water bodies without treatment. To prevent damage to local waterways and aquatic ecosystems, follow guidelines for proper disposal.

The City of Olathe allows pool owners to discharge only de-chlorinated pool water, except the filter backwash. It is best to allow the water to drain slowly and over a large, grassy area to help disperse the water.

Please remember to make sure the water is:

- Discharged at least four feet from all property lines and sidewalks
- Not flowing directly into a stream corridor
- Not causing erosion from the force of water
- Not causing a drainage issue for a neighboring property.

For more information, please contact Michele Silsbee, [MLSilsbee@olatheks.org](mailto:MLSilsbee@olatheks.org) or 913-971-9311.







**PROGRESS  
AS PROMISED**

## TRAFFIC FLOW IMPROVEMENTS CONTINUE

### IMPROVED 159TH STREET AND BLACK BOB ROAD INTERSECTION OPENS

Motorists using the 159th Street and Black Bob Road intersection now experience traffic flow enhancements, including traffic signals, added right and left-turn lanes in all directions, and sight distance improvements. All legs of the intersection taper back to match existing street conditions. This project received \$1 million in federal funding and Johnson County Public Works also contributed funding.



### MAHAFFIE STREET PROJECT RECOGNIZED

The Mahaffie Street extension project recently won the Kansas City Metro Chapter - American Public Works Association Transportation Project of the Year in the \$5 to \$20 million category. The project provides alternative access to and from the 151st corridor, the I-35 interchange, and surrounding neighborhoods. Construction lengthened Mahaffie Street from its terminus north of 151st Street to Old 56 Highway. Extending the I-35 bridge over the BNSF rail tracks made room for Mahaffie Street's new route under the interstate highway.



### STREET MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT OLATHE IN 2021

Work to keep Olathe streets in good condition is evident this year as crews resurface asphalt pavement that has aged to its usable life cycle. You've likely encountered the mill and pavement overlay equipment on main arterial roadways or neighborhood streets.

Funding for street preservation is from the voter-approved Street

Maintenance Sales Tax.

Arterial street pavement locations, underway or recently completed in July and August, total more than 25 lane miles.

- Old 56 Highway, from Lone Elm west to 151st Street
- 119th Street, from Ridgeview Road east to Renner, and Strang Line Road

east to Black Bob Road

- 159th Street, from U.S. 169 Highway east to Brougham Drive
- Cedar Creek Parkway, from K-10 Highway to street's end south of 103rd Street
- Ridgeview Road, from Sheridan Street north to Park Street.







P.O. Box 768  
Olathe, Kansas 66051-0768  
913-971-8700

**OlatheConnect**  
Look up information or submit a service request 24/7.  
[OlatheKS.org/OlatheConnect](http://OlatheKS.org/OlatheConnect)

**Stay Informed**  
Receive Olathe news and updates by email or text message. **Click on e-notification or the envelope icon at [OlatheKS.org](http://OlatheKS.org).**

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 323  
Olathe, KS

CONNECT WITH US



Apps available on the App Store and Google Play



## EXPLORE YOUR OLATHE PARKS

A dose of outdoors is waiting for you.

Olathe's 41 parks offer nearly 1,700 acres of developed park land with natural beauty and recreation opportunities. Our 40 miles of pedestrian and bicycle trails can take you to quiet spots, and neighborhood and community parks. They can even connect you to commercial areas and other communities. For a list of parks and trails, visit [OlatheKS.org/ParksRec](http://OlatheKS.org/ParksRec) or the Olathe Active App.



Waterfall at Cedar Lake Park