



## STAFF REPORT

### Fire Station Parking Major Variance

File No. VAR25-1001

*Type III*

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<b>TO</b>	Hearings Examiner	<b>HEARING DATE</b>	<b>January 26, 2026</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Requested variance from the off-street parking requirements to allow a new fire station to be developed with no on-site parking.		
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Camas Washougal Fire Department Attn: Shaun Ford, Project Manager 616 NE 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Camas, WA 98607	<b>OWNER</b>	City of Camas 616 NE 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Camas, WA 98607
<b>APPLICATION SUBMITTED</b>	October 1, 2025	<b>APPLICATION COMPLETE</b>	December 3, 2025
<b>LOCATION</b>	The site is located at 528 NE 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue in Camas, WA, in the NE 1/4 Section 11, Township 1 North, Range 3 East, of the Willamette Meridian; and described as tax parcels 78100000, 78105000		
<b>ZONING</b>	Downtown Commercial (DC)		
<b>COMPREHENSIVE PLAN</b>	Commercial		
<b>ADJACENT USES</b>	North: DC zoning, hardware store South: DC zoning, offices and fast food drive thru East: DC zoning, City Hall West: DC zoning, offices/restaurant		
<b>PUBLIC NOTICES</b>	A consolidated Notice of Application and Public Hearing was mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the site and published in the Post Record on January 8, 2026. Legal publication #1059440.		

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**APPLICABLE LAW:** The application was submitted on 10/1/2025, and the applicable codes are those codes that were in effect at the date of the application's first submittal. Camas Municipal Code (CMC) Title 16 Environment, Title 17 Land Development, and Title 18 Zoning, specifically (but not limited to): Chapter 18.43 Variances and Chapter 18.55 Administrative Procedures. [Note: Citations from Camas Municipal Code (CMC) are indicated in **bold** type.]

## SUMMARY

### Project proposal

Fire Station 41 has plans to place their new fire station building on a 0.85-acre city owned parcel located at 528 NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Downtown Commercial (DC) zone. The existing uses on site include a vacant

building (also known as the old Bank of America building) and a parking lot currently utilized by City staff. The new fire station will consist of a two-story 23,280 square foot building designed to accommodate apparatus bays, administrative offices, training rooms, sleeping quarters, community facing spaces including landscaping and a public plaza area. Currently, the Fire Station services are located in two separate buildings in the downtown area. Consolidating them into one new fire station will maintain essential emergency operations to the immediate downtown area. The facility is designed to prioritize emergency response efficiency, public safety operations, and pedestrian-oriented public space.

#### Alternative Site Analysis

The applicant prepared an alternative site analysis evaluating eight (8) locations in the downtown area based on their impact to site, operational response time, and site development cost (See Exhibit 9). Several alternative sites were eliminated in part due to their inability to accommodate essential fire operations within the downtown response area without compromising response times or operational safety. The subject site was selected due to its central location, ownership by the City of Camas and its previously developed conditions, even though the site is constrained due to its downtown location.

To make the site viable, NE Everett Street to the east is needed to be vacated. The NE Everett Street, street vacation will result in the following:

#### [Public Parking Spaces]

- The elimination of ten (10) public on-street parking spaces on NE Everett Street between NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
- The elimination of seven (7) public off-street parking spaces on the west side of the existing BOA building.

#### [City Hall Staff Parking Spaces]

The proposed project will also result in the elimination of thirty-two (32) off-street parking spaces. The off-street parking spaces to be eliminated include:

- Twenty-seven (27) City of Camas staff parking spaces in the parking lot on the south side of the existing BOA building.
- Five (5) City of Camas staff parking spaces in the underground City Hall garage.

The proposed project is not proposing any off-street vehicular parking thus the variance request.

#### Variance request

A Major Variance is requested from the off-street parking standards in CMC Table 18.11-1 *Off- Street Parking Standards* due to the project site's limited size to accommodate the fire department's operational and site improvements needs, such as the fire apparatus circulation, and public plaza improvements.

CMC Table 18.11-1 *Off- Street Parking Standards* does not specifically list fire stations, but does list uses similar to the interior uses proposed within the fire station building. As such, staff requested the applicant to prepare a parking analysis to analyze similar uses listed in the CMC Table 18.11-1 with the proposed interior uses of the building (see table below). The applicant also noted that approximately 14 employees will be on site between the hours of 8am-5pm plus and an additional 9 employees will be on site at any given time. Based on this analysis, approximately 38 parking stalls are required.

<b>Proposed use:</b>	Quantity:	<b>Similar Use:</b>	Parking Standard:	<b>Estimated Parking requirement for project:</b>
Sleep Rooms	11 rooms	Studio Apartment	1 per unit	11 stalls
Fitness room	615 sf	Sports club, health, spa, karate club	1 space per 260 sf of gfa, plus 1 space per employee	2 stalls
Offices and meeting rooms	4,033 sf	General office (no customer service)	1 per 250 square feet of GFA	16 stalls
Shop	160sf	Repair shop	1 per 400sf of gfa	.5 stalls
Antique Rig Showcase and Decon/Clean room	829sf	Showroom/contractor's shop	1 per 900sf of gfa	1 stall
Storage rooms	2,542sf	Warehousing, Storage	1 per 1,000sf of gfa	2.5 stalls
Apparatus bays	5,270sf	Warehousing, Storage	1 per 1,000sf of gfa	5 stalls
<b>Total:</b>				<b>38 stalls</b>

CMC 18.11.010 recognizes the constraints of developing new off-street parking in the Downtown Commercial (DC) zone, and provides for a mechanism for the Community Development Director to waive off-street parking requirements in consultation with the City Engineer. However, this mechanism only applies to projects one-half block or less in size. While the 18,536 square foot footprint of the proposed fire station alone would qualify for this administrative parking modification, the total project footprint of 37,026 square feet includes a large concrete apron required for fire apparatus circulation as well as a new pedestrian corridor and public plaza area within the vacated right of way of NE Everett Street that exceeds the threshold. As a result, a major variance is the appropriate review mechanism for this request.

The proposal does not include any off-street parking. Instead, consistent with the purpose and intent of the City's parking standards, 38 new on-street parking spaces are proposed by converting existing parallel parking to new angled stalls within the downtown area. An example of how this may be accommodated is shown on Exhibit 5.

## Chapter 18.45 Major Variance

The applicant is seeking a major variance to the minimum 38 off-street parking stall requirement per CMC Table 18.11-1 *Off-Street Parking Standards*.

A. **CMC 18.45.040.B - Approval of a major variance must demonstrate with findings of compliance with all of the following criteria:**

- 1. The variance shall not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitation upon uses of other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the subject property is located;**

**DISCUSSION:**

The subject property and adjacent surrounding properties are zoned Downtown Commercial (DC). The development character of the downtown area is walkable with many buildings that encompass the entire property and do not provide off-street parking resulting in properties/businesses to utilize existing on-street parking. The new fire station improvements would be consistent with other properties utilizing on-street parking rather than off-street parking. Parking spaces are proposed to be reconfigured within the downtown area to accommodate for new additional on-street parking (See attached example Exhibit 5).

**FINDING:**

Staff finds no special privileges are being granted with this variance request.

- 2. That such variance is necessary, because of special circumstances or conditions relating to the size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings of the subject property, to provide it with use, rights, and privileges permitted to other properties in the vicinity and in the zone in which the subject property is located;**

**DISCUSSION:**

The variance is necessary due to the project's small (0.85-acre) size and downtown location, public plaza improvements, and required apparatus access. Providing 38 stalls on this small downtown parcel would consume the site, prevent safe fire department apparatus circulation and necessary fire operation needs, and eliminate public plaza improvements. Keeping the fire station in the downtown area is also consistent with Comprehensive Plan Goal OCF-3 *Ensure that the municipal building and primary services remain downtown, in the heart of the City*. These site constraints are not self-created but are inherent to the downtown location and the operational requirements of a modern fire station.

**FINDING:**

Due to the development character of the Downtown Commercial (DC) zone surrounding properties, the variance request will allow this project to enjoy the use, rights and privileges enjoyed by other downtown properties that utilize on-street parking.

- 3. The granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity and in the zone in which the subject property is located.**

**DISCUSSION:**

The vision of the City's Comprehensive Plan includes a vibrant walkable downtown and an attractive place to gather for public enjoyment. This is reinforced by Goal T-2.7 *Support enhanced pedestrian improvements in the downtown area* and Goal ED-2.4 *Fulfill the vision of a central gathering place in the heart of downtown, which will support community events*. The variance supports these goals by accommodating a public pedestrian plaza in the heart of downtown opposed to an auto-focused off-street parking lot. To mitigate for the lack of required off-street parking, an additional 38 on-street parking stalls will be required in the downtown area and conditioned as such.

**FINDING:**

Granting this variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements and in the Downtown Commercial (DC) zone as the project proposal focuses on providing a pedestrian oriented development consistent with the City's downtown goals by offering a public plaza and creating additional on-street public parking stalls within the downtown area.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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As of the writing of this staff report, staff has not received any comments.

**CONCLUSION**

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Based on the above findings and discussion provided in this staff report, staff concludes that Camas Fire Station 41 parking Major Variance (VAR25-1001) should be approved because it does comply with the applicable standards if all the conditions of approval are met.

**RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff recommends APPROVAL of the Camas Fire Station parking Major Variance (VAR25-1001) subject to the following conditions of approval:

1. The applicant shall work with the City to provide an additional 38 on-street parking stalls within the downtown area.
2. The approval of the Major Variance shall expire if all necessary building permits are not obtained within two years of the date of the final decision.
3. A copy of the Final Order approving the Major Variance shall be submitted with any city permits for this parcel.