

WESTLAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
5/28/26

PART I GENERAL INFORMATION

Cahoon Nursery development plan (maintenance building), 27630 Detroit Rd., PP#21213071, Ward 3

PART II PROJECT SUMMARY

This request follows the 2025 Conditional Use Permit (Ordinance 2025-105), which converted the long-standing nonconforming nursery use, established in 1948, into a permitted conditional use. That approval anticipated phased site modernization, including a new maintenance building in the first phase, expanded parking, and a future two-story retail/office building to replace the existing store, all intended to improve site aesthetics, circulation, and operational efficiency while maintaining the nursery's community presence. There were no conditions of approval included with that CUP.

During the CUP review on October 21, 2025, the Planning Commission evaluated a concept plan for the proposed ~2,680-square-foot single-story maintenance building. Due to site constraints, including the Cahoon Creek slope and proximity to Cahoon Road, the required setbacks in the Office Building district cannot be met. The Commission acknowledged that a zoning modification would be necessary. Meeting the full setback would reduce the building to approximately 1,254 square feet, smaller than the existing 1,800-square-foot structure that also does not comply with setbacks, making the improvement impractical and inconsistent with the applicant's operational needs. The Commission further noted that the concept plan was intended only to illustrate feasibility and did not obligate the City to approve the design, as final approval requires submission and review of a formal development plan by both the Planning Commission and City Council, which is this request, and they also acknowledged the necessity of the modification and voiced no opposition at that time.

The proposed one-story, 2,680 square foot, building includes three overhead doors on the south elevation facing the driveway to Cahoon Road, one exterior door on the east elevation. Windows placed high on the side walls will allow natural light in while preserving privacy and reducing the potential for break-ins. Because of design review requirements and its proximity to the road and the resulting setback encroachment, the building has been designed with a pitched roof, stone and siding materials, and warm residential-quality colors to help offset the reduced setback. Lighting is limited to understated downcast fixtures above the doors.

PART III DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS

Fire	1. Type V construction is not allowed within the city of Westlake. WCO 1303.06. Planning Department response – building is not designed as Type V. 2. A Knox Box (approved locking key box) is required to be installed in an approved location determined by the Fire Department 2017 OFC Section 506. Order the box at www.knoxbox.com. 3. New and existing buildings shall have approved address numbers, building numbers or approved building identification placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. These numbers shall contrast with their background. Address numbers shall be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches (102mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch (12.7 mm). 2017 OFC Section 505.1
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PART IV GUIDE PLAN/ ZONING

Guide Plan – the Future Land Use Plan identifies this property as Office Building, supporting the request because landscape nurseries are a permitted conditional use in the Office Building district.

Zoning Code Requirements

1133.02 MODIFICATIONS.

Where the Planning Commission finds that the land involved in a subdivision or development plan is of such size or shape, is subject to such title limitations, is affected by such topographical conditions or is to be devoted to such usage that it is impossible or impracticable in the particular proposal for the developer to conform fully to a provision of these Land Planning and Subdivision Regulations, the Commission may accept such adjustments as may be reasonable, if within the general intent and purpose of these Regulations.

1220.05 PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW AND MODIFICATION (excerpt)

- a) The Commission, in reviewing the proposed development plans for conformity to the provisions of the Zoning Code, may make adjustments to certain yards, area and other dimensioned requirements based on the performance standards of Section 1220.06. If the applicant requests modifications or reductions to one standard, the Planning Commission may recommend and request modifications to increase other standards to offset the applicant's request.

1220.06 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (Excerpt)

Modifications to development plans in dimensioned and quantitative requirements for new development shall incorporate the following performance standards:

(a)	Modifications to setbacks, height, parking spaces or lot coverage shall not increase the overall amount of building square footage or intensity of use that could otherwise be developed on a parcel.
(c)	Modifications for dimensional standards in the Zoning Code should be designed to provide better utilization of the land and offset by greater standards in other areas of the Zoning Code.
(d)	Modifications may be considered due to unique conditions of the parcel, building, design, parcel size, parcel location, topography, adjacent uses of proposed use of the parcel.
(e)	Modifications shall be designed to protect the desirable characteristics of both existing and planned development as adjacent properties.
(f)	Modifications shall promote the desirable and beneficial use of the land and promote the economic development of the City.
(g)	Modification shall maintain convenient and safe access to properties and buildings.

Box Score			
STANDARD	CODE	PLAN	DIFFERENCE
ZONING DISTRICT	OB/Office Building	Maintenance buildings are permitted accessory use	OK
BUILDING AREA	No limit for maintenance buildings for landscape nurseries	2,680 SF	OK
MIN. LOT AREA 1216.04	1 acre	1.97 acres	OK
MIN. LOT WIDTH 1216.05	150'	~360'	OK
MAX. BUILDING HEIGHT 1216.08	50'	25'	OK
% LOT COVERAGE FOR MAIN BUILDING OR USE 1216.07	25%	~7% (includes existing buildings and proposed building)	OK
SETBACKS FOR MAIN/ACCESSORY USES 1216.06, Parking 1216.06	Cahoon Road – 30' parking, 40' Building North – 40' Building	Cahoon Rd. – ~7' parking, 10.2'-12.5' building. North 6.5'-9.4' building. The driveway is not a designated parking area, but it could function as parking, and most of it would encroach into the setback if used that way. The proposed building also	A modification is required, consistent with the setback modification discussed during the CUP review and approval.

Box Score			
STANDARD	CODE	PLAN	DIFFERENCE
		encroaches into both the Cahoon Road and north setbacks, with only a small portion remaining outside the required setback area.	
DRIVEWAYS 1221.11	20-24'	20'	OK
CURBING 1216.13	Not required for driveways	None shown	OK
LIGHTING 1230.03	Lighting Plan required	Downcast wall packs compliant with Section 1230.03	OK
DESIGN REVIEW REQUIREMENTS (MATERIALS) 1237	Brick, stone or masonry, maximum 4" X 12" size block	Hardie-Plank siding, thin natural stone veneer, aluminum gutters/downspouts, and decorative louvers, asphalt composition shingles	OK
	Colors in earthtone, white, red brick, etc.	Earthtone colors	OK

PART V DRAFT FINDINGS/MOTION

Draft Findings of Fact

1. The proposed maintenance building is consistent with the previously approved 2025 Conditional Use Permit and supports the continued operation and modernization of the permitted nursery use.
2. Zoning modifications are in accordance with Section 1220.05 and address the reduced setbacks, as site constraints make compliance with the setbacks impracticable.

Draft Motion¹

If the Planning Commission can make a recommendation, the following motion is advised:

Based upon the findings of fact, I move to recommend approval of the Cahoon Nursery Development Plan with the following:

1. A modification is granted to allow the proposed building and any parking use of the driveway to encroach into the required Cahoon Road (30' parking, 40' building) and north (40' building) setbacks.
2. Approval is subject to comments in Part III of the 5/28/26 staff report and approval of the final plans by the Building and Engineering Departments in compliance with the code and the ordinances of the City of Westlake; and, in the development process, should there be any changes necessitated by engineering requirements that visually alter the appearance of the development approved by the Planning Commission, the plan shall be re-submitted to the Planning Commission.

¹ This is suggested language only and not a recommendation for or against the approval of this request.