

WESTLAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
9/11/26

PART I GENERAL INFORMATION

Rise School conceptual development plan, 1299 Columbia Rd., PP#21324030, Ward 1

PART II PROJECT SUMMARY

Background

On April 6, 2026, the Planning Commission recommended approval of a conditional use permit (Ordinance 2026-25, adopted June 18, 2026) for the Rise School preschool at this location for the West Cleveland Muslim Association, including a condition requiring consolidation of the parcels.

On June 1, 2026, the Planning Commission recommended approval of a companion zoning text amendment (Ordinance 2026-52, adopted June 18, 2026) allowing a preschool to operate as a conditional accessory use to a place of worship within the Shopping Center or General Business districts. This amendment accommodated the required parcel assembly while maintaining the preschool as an accessory use to the principal place-of-worship use.

At the time these ordinances were adopted, the proposal involved converting the former 2,283-square-foot Citizens Bank building into a preschool facility that would later expand into a private school serving preschool through middle-school grades, with an addition increasing the total building size to approximately 6,929 square feet.

Request

Since approval of the CUP and companion text amendment, the applicant determined that replacing the existing structure is preferable to renovating it. The former bank building will be demolished and replaced with a new 7,462-square-foot single-story educational building constructed with brick veneer, CERACLAD panels, storefront glazing, architectural signage, and decorative lighting. The accompanying site plan provides a reconfigured parking lot with increased capacity, new accessible walkways, and extensive landscaping designed to meet all applicable City requirements.

PART III DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS

Building	Per the architect, the building will be type IIB construction and fully sprinklered, therefore negating the need for individual egress out of classrooms.
Engineering	Submit demolition and site drawings for review.
Fire	Construction will not interfere with access for emergency vehicle and/or fire department personnel. 2025 OFC Section 504.1 2. A Knox Box (approved locking key box) is required to be installed in an approved location determined by the Fire Department 2025 OFC Section 506.1 Order the box at www.knoxbox.com . Minimum requirement for existing structures is the Surface Mount, Model 3261. For new construction the Recessed Box, Model 3270, plus the mounting kit Model 3290, is recommended. Contact the Westlake Fire Department at 440-835-6422 for more information or to determine the approved location. • Front entry door 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). 2025 OFC Section 505.1 4. Vehicle impact protection required by this code shall be provided by posts that comply with Section 312.2 or by other approved physical barriers that comply with Section 312.3. 2025 OFC 312.1 • Show Vehicle Impact protection for the playground from the parking spots 5. Where required by the fire code official, approved signs or other approved notices or markings that include the words “NO PARKING—FIRE LANE” shall be provided for fire apparatus access roads to identify such roads or prohibit the obstruction thereof. The means by which fire lanes are designated shall be maintained in a clean and legible condition at all times and be replaced or repaired when necessary to provide adequate visibility. 2025 OFC 503.3 • Maintain fire lane marking along the south side, assure the tree height is above 13.6ft. 6. Type 5 construction is not allowed within the city of Westlake. WCO 1303.06 7. Fire hydrants are required on private property, in conformity with the WCO/Building Code, and shall be installed and in working order before beginning construction on the permanent structure for which the building permit has been issued. WCO 1371.02 8. The building and hydrant locations shall comply with Westlake Codified Ordinance 1371.03. “All buildings and structures shall be so located that all parts thereof are not more than 250 feet from at least two readily accessible public or private Fire Department hydrants. Such distance shall be measured along the centerline of the streets, roadways or driveways.” • Show the distances from hydrants to all parts of the building are compliant with WCO1371.03. • this new building may require an additional fire hydrant.
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PART IV GUIDE PLAN/ ZONING

Guide Plan – Retail/Commercial uses in the Future Land Use Plan correspond to the General Business and Shopping Center zoning districts. The proposed preschool use is permitted in both districts as a Conditional Use Permit.

Zoning Code Requirements

1220.05 PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW AND MODIFICATION (excerpt)

- a) The Planning Commission shall review the plans taking into account the spirit and intent of the Zoning Code, the standards and requirements of the Zoning Code, the location of the proposal, the effect on the surrounding properties and the relationship of the proposal to the Guide Plan.
- b) 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:

<u>(c)</u>	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.
<u>(d)</u>	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.
<u>(f)</u>	Modifications shall promote the desirable and beneficial use of the land and promote the economic development of the City.

Box Score				
STANDARD	CODE	PLAN	DIFFERENCE	
ZONING DISTRICT	SC/Shopping Center	CUP approved	OK	
BUILDING AREA	None	7,462	OK	
MIN. LOT AREA 1216.04	Any other permitted use – 3 acres	3.14 acres when consolidated	OK with condition of approval for lot consolidation plat	
MIN. LOT WIDTH 1216.05	Any permitted use – 300’	~525’ when consolidated	OK with condition of approval for lot consolidation plat	
MAX. BUILDING HEIGHT 1216.08	50’	14’	OK	
% LOT COVERAGE FOR MAIN BUILDING OR USE 1216.07	15%	5.5%	OK with condition of approval for lot consolidation plat	
% LANDSCAPING 1216.07 (b) (not buildings or parking)	Not less than 25%	Calculated for new school area only: ~28%.	OK	
SETBACKS FOR MAIN/ACCESSORY USES 1216.06	Front	100’	51'-4" same as existing.	Modification required.
	Side	20’	S: 48’	OK
SETBACKS FOR PARKING 1216.06	Front	30’	~41’	OK
	Side	10’	S: ~21.5’	OK for setback but parking requires 24’ for lane so will not work.
TOTAL PARKING SPACES 1221.05	According to applicant's calculation based on largest area of assembly and staff = 23	23	OK	
DRIVEWAYS 1221.11	24’ max	~31.5’ – existing condition	OK if Engineering approves	
CURBING 1216.13	Required	Final development plan	Final development plan	
SIDEWALKS 1237.04(a)(4)(C)	5’ clear	5’ clear	OK	
TREE PRESERVATION PLAN 1137	Required	Calculated for new school area only = 9 trees and 36 caliper inches; with 4 being front yard trees	Revise for additional trees. Currently there are no front yard trees.	
SIGNS	Sign Plan	Final development plan	Final development plan	
LIGHTING 1230.03 HVAC LOCATION & SCREENING 1237.04(a)(9)	Lighting Plan required	Final development plan	Final development plan	
	Not in front of the building and fully screened with fencing, landscaping, or a compatible enclosure.	Final development plan	Final development plan	
DESIGN Review requirements (MATERIALS) 1237	Brick, stone, or other masonry in earth-tone, white, or red-brick colors; EIFS, concrete block, and colored metal panels are discouraged.	Black aluminum storefront system; black aluminum awning vent window; CERACLAD fiber-cement panels, Cashmere Smooth “Hint of Vanilla”, prefinished black aluminum wall coping and Belden face brick, “Seal Brown Velour”	OK	

PART V DRAFT FINDINGS/MOTION

Draft Findings of Fact

1. The proposal is consistent with the previously approved Conditional Use Permit and companion text amendment adopted for this use.
2. The proposal meets most applicable zoning standards, with remaining items to be addressed at the final development plan stage, including HVAC screening, signage, lighting, landscaping, curbing, and parking layout.

Draft Motion¹

If the Planning Commission can approve, the following motion is advised:

Based upon the findings of fact, I move to approve the Rise School conceptual development plan with the following:

1. Condition that a lot consolidation plat is included with the final development plan submittal.
2. The final development plan will address any outstanding items outlined in this report and discussed at the meeting.

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