

WESTLAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
7/1/26

PART I GENERAL INFORMATION

Rowan Gate development and sign plan (6 cluster homes), 30395 Center Ridge Rd., PP#21722003 & 004, Ward 4

PART II PROJECT SUMMARY

On March 2, 2026, the Planning Commission recommended approval of Ordinance 2026-18 to rezone approximately 4.2 acres to R-1F-Cluster for a six-unit cluster development. City Council adopted the ordinance on March 19, 2026.

On May 11, 2026, the Planning Commission reviewed the conceptual development plans, which remained substantially consistent with the concept plan submitted during the rezoning process, with several minor revisions: the lot line between Units 4 and 5 was adjusted from a dogleg to a continuous angled line; three parking spaces and the mailbox were added within the cul-de-sac island; the entrance gate was removed; the ground sign was relocated from the island to the landscape mound at the Center Ridge Road entrance; privacy vegetation was added to screen Unit 6 from Center Ridge Road; buffering provisions were identified along the shared boundary with one-family residential properties; the stormwater basin fence continued to be shown, though the note specifying a 4-foot ornamental fence was omitted; and design guidelines were provided. The Planning Commission approved the conceptual development plans.

The development plan is the last step required by the Planning Commission and City Council and, if approved, will allow the developer to apply for building and engineering permits and begin construction, and also includes the design guidelines reviewed in May and the monument sign for the development.

PART III DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS

Fire	1. All fire hydrants required shall be installed, in working order, and accessible at all times before beginning construction on the above grade permanent structure. WCO 1371.02 (g) 2. All fire hydrants, new or replacements shall have a 5” Integral Storz Pumper Connection on the fire hydrant pumper nozzle and 2½” Cleveland Standard thread on the remaining ports. Hydrants shall be Mueller, Kennedy, or the equivalent. WCO 1371.04 3. Construction will not interfere with access for emergency vehicles and/or fire department personnel.
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PART IV GUIDE PLAN/ ZONING

Guide Plan – the Future Land Use Map designates this property for Single Family Residential (Low Density) and Multi-Family Residential (Medium Density), which supports this request.

Zoning Code Requirements

Box Score			
STANDARD	CODE	PLAN	DIFFERENCE
ZONING DISTRICT	R-1F-Cluster	Was rezoned for this purpose.	OK
NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS 1211.07	Yield Plan = 6	Same as yield plan	OK
LOT AREA 1211.09	1 acre	4.2 acres	OK

Box Score			
STANDARD	CODE	PLAN	DIFFERENCE
MINIMUM DWELLING UNIT AREA 1211.25	1,100 One Story 1,500 – Two Story	Unit footprints are over 2,000 s.f. and average over 2,400 SF (excluding garages)	OK
MINIMUM FRONTAGE	Building Line – 100’ Street Line – 60’	~284’ ~330’	OK
MAX. BUILDING HEIGHT 1211.09, 1211.23	2 stories	Design guidelines reviewed at the May meeting left building height standards unclear, so the applicant clarified at the meeting that the buildings will be two stories and approximately 35 feet in height.	Condition that the Design Guidelines be revised to state that building height shall not exceed two stories.
% LOT COVERAGE FOR MAIN BUILDING OR USE 1211.09	20%	<20%	OK
% LOT COVERAGE FOR ACCESSORY BUILDINGS 1211.09	10%	None	OK
% OPEN SPACE (AKA LANDSCAPING) 1211.09	50%	>50%	OK
MAIN BUILDING OR USE SETBACK 1211.09	Front	20 feet to common private driveway, roadway or back of integral sidewalk/50 feet to public street.	All units comply.
	Side, Rear	15 feet minimum between dwellings within the development parcel, and not less than an average of 30 feet between all dwellings; 30 feet minimum adjacent to all perimeter boundary lines of the development parcel; and 7.5’ minimum between the cluster dwelling and the fee simple title platted lot.	Min. distance ~25’, average distance ~41.25 Units are at least 30’ from perimeter.
ACCESSORY 1211.09 (j)	Front, Side, Rear	Location of common accessory uses to be approved by Planning Commission. For private accessory uses is same as Main Building or Use (see above)	Location of mailbox and parking is within the cul-de-sac island
TOTAL PARKING SPACES 1221.05	2 per unit with one in a garage and 1 visitor space per 4 units	Unit one – 2 in garage and two on driveway. All other units exceed this number. Two required off-street parking spaces are in the cul-de-sac island.	OK
DRIVEWAYS 1221.11	20’-24’ Cul-de-sac 100’ min.	Two 14.’ lanes at entrance Cul-de-sac 100’ min. A mountable sidewalk constructed to the same thickness as the roadway provides the required Fire Department access.	OK

Box Score			
STANDARD	CODE	PLAN	DIFFERENCE
CURBING 1221.09	Type 6 curb	Rolled curbs are acceptable, as Engineering has approved this curbing type and will address it as part of their review of the construction plans,	OK
SIDEWALKS 1237.04(a)(4)(C)	5' clear on at least one side of street.	One sidewalk is provided in the location least impactful to front-yard landscaping, affecting only Unit 6.	OK
BUFFERING 1130.04, 1130.05	30' buffer required where abutting a single family residential use.	Green Giant Arborvitae hedges are provided where required to buffer the R-1F-80 zone, but buffering may be insufficient adjacent to Units 1 and 2, which rely on existing vegetation.	Condition that buffering be adjusted in the field during construction if needed.
TREE PRESERVATION PLAN 1137	84 trees, 420 Caliper inches. Front yard trees are not required for one-family cluster developments	49 remaining @ 748 caliper inches. 117 New @ 229 caliper inches. 166 total @ 977 caliper inches.	OK
SIGNS Ground Signs Permitted Height Setback Area Illumination	Up to two sign faces per entrance to street.	1 sign face	OK
	4'	5'	A modification is required to allow the sign to exceed the 4-foot height limit, which is reasonable because the sign's text is positioned approximately 3 feet above grade, with a condition that a sign permit application is submitted.
	10' driveway and ROW	10'	OK
	30 s.f.	7.5 SF	OK
	If Planning Commission approves	None	OK
LIGHTING 1230.03 for non-residential in res. zones	20' maximum height, downcast, shielded, 4000k or less, 5.0fc	First Energy "Colonial Top", residential lighting on homes.	OK
RETENTION	Required if over 1 acre	Indicated within the front setback, but a fountain has been added to make it a decorative feature.	Modification to allow the retention basin and fence to be located in the front setback, with a condition that it be a 4-foot-high black ornamental metal fence consistent with the design shown in Exhibit #7 of the Rowan Gate Design Guidelines.
TRASH ENCLOSURE	Unless pickup from unit – 6' masonry, 6' from building, landscaped, solid gates	Per note on site plan, is the homeowner's responsibility to store containers inside garage.	OK
DESIGN REVIEW REQUIREMENTS (MATERIALS) 1237	See chapter 1237 for building style and scale, garages, materials and colors.	Design Guidelines meet requirements but "Exhibit #1 Building Setback", "Exhibit #3 Fencing Diagram", "Exhibit #4 Fence Detail", "Exhibit #9 Mock Up" are	OK – to be formally adopted with the final development plan, with a condition that it be revised to include missing exhibits.

Box Score			
STANDARD	CODE	PLAN	DIFFERENCE
		blank.	

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 of applicable standards)

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.

PART V DRAFT FINDINGS/MOTIONS

Draft Findings of Fact

1. The final development plan is consistent with the rezoning approved by Council on March 19, 2026, is nearly identical to the conceptual plan approved by the Planning Commission on May 11, 2026, and meets most zoning and design requirements.
2. If the Planning Commission recommends approval of the requested zoning modifications, it is because they are supported by existing site conditions and the performance standards in Sections 1220.05, 1220.06 and 1223.13.

Draft Motions¹

If the Planning Commission can recommend approval, the following motion is advised:

Development Plan

Based upon the findings of fact, I move to recommend approval of the Rowan Gate development plan with the following:

1. Modification to allow the retention basin and fence to be located in the front setback.

2. Condition the Rowan Gate Design Guidelines submitted with the conceptual plan are approved, subject to revision to include the missing exhibits and state that building height shall not exceed two stories; that buffering be adjusted to meet opacity requirements in the field during construction if necessary; and that the retention basin's ornamental metal fence be consistent with the design shown in Exhibit #7 of the Rowan Gate Design Guidelines..
3. Approval is subject to comments in Part III of the 7/1/26 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.

Sign Plan

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

I move to approve the Rowan Gate sign plan with the following:

1. Modification to allow the sign to exceed the 4-foot height limit.
2. Condition that a sign permit application and construction drawings are submitted for administrative approval.

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