

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM (Attachment D)

TO: Nilsa Zacarias — Chen Moore & Associates, City of Westlake Planning Consultant
CC: Osniel Leon, AICP — City of Westlake Planning Department
FROM: Donaldson E. Hearing, ASLA
Cotleur & Hearing
DATE: August 6, 2026
RE: Silver Lake at Westlake — Master Sign Plan Amendment (MSP-2026-01)
Design Framework, Sign Code Intent, and Consistency Analysis for the Main Entry Monument Sign
BASIS: Follow-up to Conference Call of July 23, 2026 between Cotleur & Hearing (Don Hearing, Donna Cesaro)
and Chen Moore & Associates / City of Westlake (Nilsa Zacarias, Osniel Leon)

1. Purpose of This Memorandum

This memorandum follows the July 23, 2026 conference call between our offices regarding the Silver Lake Master Sign Plan Amendment (MSP-2026-01). On that call, Nilsa Zacarias identified a productive analytic framework — describing the proposed Silver Lake main entry composition as a “deconstruction and evolution” of the standard Residential Pod Entry Monument Sign depicted in Figure 113-11-3 of the Westlake Sign Code. Osniel Leon agreed that the elevation of the Silver Lake composition, viewed from Persimmon Boulevard East, gives the impression of the same totem and base composition that is shown in Figure 113-11-3, executed in a more expansive architectural form. Cotleur & Hearing committed to prepare this memorandum before the September hearing so that the analytic framework is on the record and can be reflected in the staff report.

The memorandum has four purposes. First, to restate from the perspective of the professionals who helped draft the Westlake Sign Code in the first place what the Master Sign Plan process in Section 113-8 was created to do and why the codification of a picture in Section 113-11 was never intended to be the substantive standard of review. Second, to walk the team through the deconstruction and evolution reading of the proposed Silver Lake main entry composition, side-by-side against the codified Figure 113-11-3. Third, to demonstrate that on the substantive standards that matter; wall surface area, sign area, letter height, copy content, materials, and residential character; the Silver Lake sign component is compliant with Figure 113-11-3 (and, in the case of wall surface area, actually smaller than the codified prototype). Fourth, to place the request in its site-specific and community context of a 955-unit active-adult community with no other undeveloped residential pods to the east and a \$3-million-plus investment in the entry composition that distinguishes this application from any hypothetical future request.

Attached to this memorandum as Attachment A is the fabrication drawing for the Oaks of Westlake single-sided monument sign (Art Sign Co., Inc., November 1, 2024). That drawing reflects the approved sign that became the codified Figure 113-11-3 prototype and is provided here for direct dimensional comparison. The comparisons in Sections 3 and 5 below draw their standard-side dimensions directly from that fabrication drawing.

Our purpose is not to argue for something that departs from the code. Our purpose is to demonstrate that the Silver Lake proposal is exactly what the Master Sign Plan process in Section 113-8 was created to encourage — and that it is, on the substantive standards, more restrained than the codified prototype.

2. Intent of Section 113-8: A Master Sign Plan Program for Creativity, Not a Variance Procedure

Both of our offices worked together on the drafting of the Westlake Sign Code. It is worth stepping back and re-establishing what the Section 113-8 Master Sign Plan process was created to do. That original intent should govern the analysis of the Silver Lake proposal, and it is the framework in which staff should place its recommendation to City Council.

The Section 113-8 Master Sign Plan program was consciously modeled after the Master Sign Plan process used in the City of Palm Beach Gardens — a program with a long track record of producing coordinated, high-quality, distinctive sign programs across master-planned communities in northern Palm Beach County. The intent in adopting a Palm-Beach-Gardens-style Master Sign Plan process at Westlake was explicit: to give a growing master-planned community the flexibility to develop a coordinated sign identity for each pod, without forcing every pod into a single identical design template.

A Master Sign Plan is not a variance procedure. It is a proactive design-review process. It exists so that the applicant and the City together can develop a coordinated sign program that fits the specific parcel, the specific landscape, the specific architecture, and the specific community identity rather than duplicating a prototype across every parcel in the City.

That intent is embedded in the very structure of Section 113-8. The section expressly gives the City Council authority to vary sign size, setback, number of signs, and type of signs as part of a Master Sign Plan approval, provided the plan remains consistent with the general intent and purpose of Chapter 113. The words “size,” “setback,” “number,” and “type” are important — Council was given authority to vary all of them, not merely to make minor dimensional adjustments to an otherwise identical prototype. If the intent had been to require every sign to match the prototype figures, the Section 113-8 authority would be surplus.

During the July 23 call, we were candid — and we repeat it in the memorandum — that the codification of a picture of what a Residential Pod Entry Monument Sign should look like (Figure 113-11-3) was a drafting choice we would likely not repeat today. In my career of drafting sign codes, we have not seen another municipal code that embeds a picture of a specific sign design and then measures innovation against the picture. Sign codes conventionally regulate the objective, measurable attributes that affect the public interest — sign area, letter height, setback, illumination, materials — and leave the specific look of the sign to design review. Westlake chose to include an illustrative image because the initial developer (Minto) wanted a design template that would be applied consistently across the initial residential pods.

That initial choice made sense, but it was never intended to convert every future residential pod into a copy of the picture. The Master Sign Plan process was expressly included in the code — in Section 113-8 — so that individual residential parcels with distinct identities could develop distinctive, context-appropriate sign programs. To read the picture in Figure 113-11-3 as the substantive standard, and to treat the Section 113-8 Master Sign Plan process merely as a variance procedure against that picture, would invert the intent of the code.

The best evidence that Section 113-8 was created to accommodate context-specific design innovation is the Cresswind of Palm Beach Alternate Residential Pod Entry Monument Sign — the sign now codified as Figure 113-11-4. That figure was itself a Section 113-8 Master Sign Plan waiver from Figure 113-11-3 for a specific residential pod, later codified into the Sign Code. It is a variation on the prototype, adopted precisely because the Cresswind community warranted a distinctive entry treatment that the prototype could not accommodate. City Council found that the Cresswind design was consistent with the intent and purpose of Chapter 113 and approved it under Section 113-8.

3. Deconstruction and Evolution

The insight Nilsa Zacarias offered on the July 23 call is exactly right, and we adopt it. The Residential Pod Entry Monument Sign shown in Figure 113-11-3 has two main components: a vertical totem element and a horizontal base element bearing the pod name. The Silver Lake main entry composition uses the same two components. It reads them into a more expansive, water-driven architectural form appropriate to the lake-themed identity of the community, but the two components are the same two components. This is not a departure from the code's design vocabulary. It is a deconstruction and evolution of it.

In Figure 113-11-3, the base is a horizontal ground sign bearing the pod name. In the Silver Lake main entry composition, the base is the low white stucco sign wall that bears the "SILVERLAKE" identification. The base has been kept intentionally simple, so that it reads cleanly and quietly as the community identifier.

On the substantive standards that Chapter 113 protects, the Silver Lake sign wall meets or is more restrained than the standard depicted in Figure 113-11-3. Two new rows have been added to the comparison table below to reflect the overall wall surface area of the codified prototype (drawn from the Oaks of Westlake fabrication drawing at Attachment A) and the more restrained overall wall surface area of the Silver Lake sign wall:

Standard	Figure 113-11-3 (per Oaks of Westlake, Attachment A)	Silver Lake Main Entry Sign Wall	Result
Copy area (per sign face)	60 SF maximum.	60 SF.	Compliant.
Wall surface area (excluding planter)	123 SF.	96 SF.	Silver Lake is approximately 27 SF (≈ 22%) smaller than the prototype wall.
Letter height	Per Figure 113-11-3 prototype.	24 inches (2 ft).	Consistent with the prototype.
Sign panel / wall height	Approximately 7–10 ft (per prototype).	4 ft (sign wall) — architectural totem elements integrated into the surrounding entry feature.	Silver Lake sign wall is shorter than the prototype.
Sign wall length	17 ft 4 in (sign wall + totem, excluding planter); 23 ft 6 in overall (including planter).	24 ft (Plan Sheet #17).	Modest additional length; offset by no planter footprint and significantly smaller wall surface area.
Number of sign faces	Up to 2 per entry.	2 (double-faced base).	Within prototype allowance.

Standard	Figure 113-11-3 (per Oaks of Westlake, Attachment A)	Silver Lake Main Entry Sign Wall	Result
Number of monuments per accessway	Up to 2 per accessway.	2 — mirrored pair, one each side of the entry drive.	Within prototype allowance.
Content	Pod name only. Logos/graphics ≤ 30% of copy area.	“SILVERLAKE” community identification. No commercial copy, no logos.	Compliant.
Materials	Per Figure 113-11-3 / community palette.	White stucco wall, freestanding metal letters, palette coordinated with the balance of Westlake.	Compliant.
Illumination	External / accent lighting.	External uplighting on sign wall and architectural columns; no internal illumination of letters.	Compliant.

On the substantive standards that protect community character — copy area, letter height, wall height, wall surface area, materials, content, and illumination — the Silver Lake sign wall meets or is more restrained than the codified Figure 113-11-3 prototype. The one measurable dimensional deviation is length — approximately 6 ft 8 in of additional wall length (24 ft proposed, versus 17 ft 4 in for the standard sign wall + totem, excluding planter). That additional length is more than offset by the 27 SF reduction in wall surface area, the absence of a planter footprint, and the relocation of the totem element into the surrounding architectural entry feature.

In Figure 113-11-3, the totem is a single vertical accent element rising above one end of the base. In the Silver Lake main entry composition, the totem vocabulary is reimagined and expanded into the surrounding architectural entry feature — a set of vertical stone-clad totem columns interspersed with the cascading water elements that flank and back the base sign wall. The elevation of the composition, viewed from Persimmon Boulevard East, gives the impression of the same base-plus-totem composition depicted in Figure 113-11-3, read into an architectural entry feature.

The totem columns and the water feature are the “architectural entry feature” portion of the design. They are the compatibility and place-making element — the same category of design tool the City’s Comprehensive Plan recognizes in Policies FLU 1.6.7 and FLU 1.6.8 (water features, architectural features, walls, landscape, and setbacks as tools for compatibility at neighborhood transitions and entrances). The columns and water feature are not sign copy. They do not carry a message. They are not included in the 60 SF copy area calculation of Figure 113-11-3. They are not being requested as part of the sign approval.

Comparative Chart

Component	Figure 113-11-3 (Standard Residential Pod Entry Monument)	Silver Lake Main Entry Composition
Horizontal base	A low horizontal ground sign bearing the pod name in dimensional letters. Wall surface area 123 SF (per Oaks fabrication drawing, Attachment A).	A low white stucco sign wall (24 ft × 4 ft) bearing “SILVERLAKE” in dimensional letters. Wall surface area 96 SF — 27 SF smaller than the prototype wall.

Component	Figure 113-11-3 (Standard Residential Pod Entry Monument)	Silver Lake Main Entry Composition
Vertical totem element	A single vertical accent totem rising above one end of the base.	A series of vertical stone-clad totem columns flanking the base sign wall, interspersed with cascading water elements. Not part of the regulated sign — part of the architectural entry feature.
Landscape and site context	Landscape planting at the base; typically flanked on both sides of the entry accessway.	Extensive royal-palm and tropical landscape, hardscape paving, and integrated cascading water elements framing the sign wall.
Number of monuments per accessway	Up to 2 (a mirrored pair, one each side of the entry drive).	2 (a mirrored pair, one each side of the entry drive).
Sign copy area	60 SF per sign face.	60 SF per sign face.
Design vocabulary	Two ingredients: base + totem.	The same two ingredients: base + totem, reimagined into an architectural entry feature scaled to a 955-unit active-adult community and the lake-themed identity of Silver Lake.

4. Site-Specific Context

Every Master Sign Plan lives or dies on context. The Silver Lake main entry composition is defensible and appropriate because of five site-specific and community-specific features that distinguish it from a generic request and eliminate the concern about setting a proliferation precedent.

Silver Lake is a 955-unit active-adult residential community — larger than Cresswind of Palm Beach in unit count. The community identity is anchored to the lake, and the water-driven entrance expresses that identity directly. This is not a generic residential pod entrance; it is the primary identification feature for a large, distinct residential community within Westlake Communities.

With the exception of Parcel F in the far northeast corner (which is separately entitled and predefined), every other residential pod on the east side of Westlake is already built out and its signs have already been approved. There is no other residential pod that could come forward and request a comparable entry composition on the east side of the City. Silver Lake is not the first of a series of similar requests — it is the last remaining east-side residential pod that will develop under the current Sign Code. Concerns about a proliferation of custom entry compositions on the east side of Westlake are not, respectfully, well-founded on the actual buildout of the community.

The entry composition represents a \$3-million-plus investment by the applicant in the community arrival experience. That level of investment is not marginal. It is a long-term, high-quality investment in the built environment that master-planned-community sign programs are designed to enable. The City's Comprehensive Plan compatibility policies (Objective FLU 1.6 and Policies FLU 1.6.7 and FLU 1.6.8) expressly recognize water features and architectural features as compatibility tools — this proposal delivers precisely that.

The City Council found the Cresswind entry composition consistent with the intent of Chapter 113 and adopted it into the Sign Code as Figure 113-11-4. The Silver Lake sign wall, on the substantive standards that matter, is more restrained than Cresswind:

Item	Cresswind (Figure 113-11-4)	Silver Lake (Proposed)
Sign panel height	12 ft	4 ft
Overall monument height	19 ft 6 in	11 ft at waterfall backdrop (architectural feature; sign wall is 4 ft)
Setback from property line	80 ft (on a berm)	17 ft (at grade; ~68 ft from Persimmon Blvd. East ROW after the 50 ft Rural Parkway buffer)
Sign copy area (per face)	60 SF	60 SF
Berm placement	Yes, tall berm	No berm — at grade

5. Consolidated Waiver Table

Per the July 23, 2026 discussion, the City's July 22, 2026 Comment Memorandum #3, and subsequent direction to simplify the table to the six waivers actually being requested, the consolidated Waiver Table below identifies the six waivers requested for this application. Waivers #1 through #4 are deviations from Figure 113-11-3 (Standard Residential Pod Entry Monument Sign) applicable to the Main Entry and Secondary Entry monument signs. Waivers #5 and #6 apply to the Recreation Center Sign under § 113-11 (Directional Sign on Private Property). Codified prototype dimensions for Figure 113-11-3 are drawn directly from the Oaks of Westlake fabrication drawing (Attachment A).

No.	Sign	Code Citation & Standard	Silver Lake Proposed	Nature of Deviation
1	Main Entry Sign Wall — Wall Length	Figure 113-11-3: ~17 ft 4 in (sign wall + totem, excluding planter); 23 ft 6 in overall including planter.	24 ft wall length (MSP Plan Sheets 5 & 6). No planter footprint.	Approximately 6 ft 8 in additional wall length. Overall footprint is smaller (no planter).
2	Main Entry Sign Wall — Deviation from the Picture	Figure 113-11-3 image shows a single totem attached to the sign wall.	No totem attached to the sign wall. Totem vocabulary reimaged as vertical stone-clad columns integrated into the surrounding Architectural Entry Feature.	Deviation from the picture. Same base + totem design vocabulary, expressed as a deconstruction and evolution of the codified composition.
3	Secondary Entry Sign Wall — Wall Length	Figure 113-11-3 secondary standard: 22 ft +.	25 ft length (MSP Plan Sheet 9A).	Approximately 3 ft additional wall length.
4	Secondary Entry Sign Wall — Deviation from the Picture	Figure 113-11-3 image shows placement in a planter or atop a berm.	Placement in the median of the secondary residents-only entrance — same field condition used at The Meadows, The Hammocks, The Groves, The Orchards, and Sky Cove.	Deviation from the picture. Consistent with the median configuration approved at every prior Westlake secondary entry.

No.	Sign	Code Citation & Standard	Silver Lake Proposed	Nature of Deviation
5	Recreation Center Sign — Copy Area	§ 113-11 (Directional Sign on Private Property): standard copy area.	17.5 SF copy area per sign face; 100 SF total wall surface area.	Increased copy area appropriate for internal amenity identification.
6	Recreation Center Sign — Letter Height	§ 113-11 (Directional Sign on Private Property): standard letter height.	Letter height proportionate to the proposed copy area.	Proportionate increase supports legibility for the amenity function.

Reference note — surface area (not a numbered waiver): On wall surface area, the Silver Lake proposal is more restrained than the codified Figure 113-11-3 prototype: the main entry sign wall is 96 SF vs the 123 SF codified prototype wall (approximately 22% smaller), and the secondary entry sign wall is 90 SF vs the ~122 SF comparable prototype wall (approximately 26% smaller). These surface area comparisons are provided for context only — the proposed condition is smaller than the codified prototype and does not require a waiver. The two true measurable deviations from Figure 113-11-3 are approximately 6 ft 8 in of additional wall length on the main entry sign and approximately 3 ft on the secondary entry sign, both addressed under § 113-8 through the deconstruction and evolution framing developed with Nilsa Zacarias.

6. Compliance with the Code

The answer is yes. The Silver Lake Master Sign Plan Amendment is in compliance with the Westlake Sign Code because:

- The regulated sign wall meets or is more restrained than Figure 113-11-3 on every substantive standard that Chapter 113 was written to protect — copy area, letter height, wall surface area, sign panel height, sign faces, number of monuments per accessway, content, materials, and illumination — with the single exception of a modest additional wall length that is more than offset by the substantially smaller wall surface area.
- Section 113-8 expressly authorizes City Council to vary sign size, setback, number, and type as part of a Master Sign Plan approval that remains consistent with the general intent and purpose of Chapter 113.
- The Silver Lake proposal serves the general intent and purpose of Chapter 113 by producing a coordinated, residential, low-copy, non-commercial sign program that is scaled to the community it identifies and integrated with the compatibility elements (water, landscape, architecture) that the Comprehensive Plan expressly recognizes.
- The proposal is directly analogous to the Cresswind Alternate Residential Pod Entry Monument that Council approved under Section 113-8 and later codified as Figure 113-11-4 — and is more restrained than Cresswind on the substantive standards.
- The architectural entry feature (water and totem-style columns) is a compatibility and place-making element — not sign copy — and is properly reviewed under the City's site plan and architectural framework, consistent with Objective FLU 1.6 and Policies FLU 1.6.7 and FLU 1.6.8 of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Section 113-8 Master Sign Plan program was created — with the direct involvement of both of our offices — to allow the City's residential communities to develop coordinated, context-appropriate sign programs, modeled after the successful Master Sign Plan program in Palm Beach Gardens. It was not created as a variance procedure to be measured against a picture. The Silver Lake main entry composition is exactly the kind of coordinated, context-appropriate, residential-in-character sign program the Master Sign Plan process was created to encourage. It reads as a deconstruction and evolution of the two-part base-plus-totem composition depicted in Figure 113-11-3, executed in a more expansive architectural form appropriate to a 955-unit active-adult community with a lake-themed identity.

The regulated sign wall is not merely compliant with the substantive standards of Figure 113-11-3 — on the two most measurable substantive standards (wall surface area on the main entry sign and wall surface area on the secondary entry sign), the Silver Lake sign wall is actually smaller than the codified prototype. The architectural entry feature is a compatibility element expressly endorsed by the Comprehensive Plan.

We appreciate the collaborative spirit of the July 23 call and the productive analytic framing Nilsa contributed. Thank you for your assistance and review of our application for Master Sign Plan.

Respectfully submitted,
Cotleur & Hearing

Donaldson E. Hearing, ASLA
Principal

Notes on Related Documents

The following note is provided for the internal record only. Following the August 6, 2026 harmonization pass and the August 6, 2026 full-consistency verification, the six-waiver structure (Waivers #1 through #6) is applied consistently across the v3 Justification Statement (Section 7 consolidated table and Section 8 individual justifications), the v3 Response Letter #3 (Comment 13 response and cross-references), this Technical Memorandum (Section 5 consolidated waiver table), and the v3 Master Sign Plan Booklet waiver tables (Sheets 7B, 8B, 9B, 10B, and Sheet 11). Sheet 8B is retained as reference only to reflect the shift from a Figure 113-11-4 comparison to the Figure 113-11-3 framing that governs this application.

- Sheet 7B (Standard Code Comparisons): the "(Waiver 2)" reference on the materials/composition row uses no "#" symbol, whereas the newly added "(Waiver #1)" reference on the sign wall length row does. Purely cosmetic. Preserved as-is per the team's prior edit; can be made consistent at team discretion before transmittal.

Attachments

Attachment A — Oaks of Westlake single-sided monument sign fabrication drawing (Art Sign Co., Inc., November 1, 2024), reflecting the approved sign that became the codified Figure 113-11-3 prototype. The drawing shows the standard prototype at 23 ft 6 in overall length (with planter), 17 ft 4 in for the sign wall plus totem (excluding the planter), and a sign-wall surface area of 123 SF.

Attachment B — Silver Lake Master Sign Plan Booklet (revised), including the consolidated Waiver Table (Figure 113-11-3 only), the Regulated Sign Component vs. Architectural Entry Feature exhibit, and the dimensioned plans for the Main Entry Sign (Sheet #17), the Secondary Entry Sign (Sheet #9), and the Recreation Center Sign (Sheet #15).

Attachment C — Silver Lake Entry Renderings (Cotleur & Hearing, April 14, 2026), conceptual and photorealistic elevations of the mirrored pair of main entry monument signs and the surrounding architectural entry feature.