

DISCOVER



At a Glance

Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant

Amount of grant:

\$41,766,038

Proposed construction:

Realignment of CR 52 West with existing CR 52 East alignment & construction of a bridge over the two crossings.

Complete details:

[Visit this link](#) to see complete details of the project.

GRANT APPROVED

Crossing Elimination Will Improve Public Safety

The City of Pelham received word Monday, June 5, 2023, that it will receive \$41,766,038 to eliminate two existing at-grade railroad crossings on Shelby County Road 52. It is the largest individual grant in the nation to be awarded under the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Crossing Elimination Program. It is also the largest grant the City has ever received.

"This is unprecedented," said Mayor Gary W. Waters. "Staff spent months collecting the necessary data to put together a thorough and thoughtful application, and their work should be commended because a project no one thought would ever happen is now a reality and fully funded."

CSX supported the application and committed funding for the project very early on.

"CSX is proud of the longstanding partnership we have had with the City of Pelham and are very pleased that they were granted the largest award under the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program by the Federal Railroad Administration. The application was a joint effort, and CSX appreciated working in conjunction with the City of Pelham to devise a project that will improve safety, vehicular traffic flow, and train traffic flow through this rapidly growing area. We also want to express appreciation to the Federal Railroad Administration for choosing this

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project, given the number of worthy submissions they were tasked with reviewing, said CSX spokesperson Sheriee Bowman.

The project is designed to increase safety and mobility in the heart of Pelham and solve a longstanding and worsening problem with blocked crossings. Shelby County Road 52 currently cuts the city in half. When blocked by stalled or slow-moving trains, emergency, and HAZMAT responders are prevented from accessing half the city.

"Stalled or stopped trains have added several minutes to public safety response times in dozens of instances. We are grateful the FRA saw the merit in the City's application," said Fire Chief Mike Reid. "This is a great day for our residents, and it is a really great day for public safety."

The infrastructure improvements will establish a permanent, reliable route for emergency responders and decrease delays for the 24,000 drivers utilizing County Road 52 daily. The road carries the second-highest traffic volume of any east-to-west route in the area, connecting the City of Helena and other parts of unincorporated Shelby County to Interstate 65. The new bridge will increase capacity to five lanes with a multi-use path to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.

"The grant that the City of Pelham secured to eliminate the two at-grade railroad crossings benefit the City of Helena by allowing easier access in and out of Helena. This access is critical for emergency care and streamlines our residents' commutes," Helena Mayor Brian Puckett said.

"This is an example of several partners collaborating for the good of the people who live, work and visit Shelby County. Pelham took the lead on this and should be commended for taking the initiative to go after this grant," said Shelby County Commissioner Ward Williams. "The County is always willing to partner with its municipalities."

"The project this grant will help fund is a model of collaboration. The improvements from this project will result in a safer, more efficient travel corridor. ALDOT looks forward to helping advance these significant improvements," said ALDOT spokesman Tony Harris.

"Improving safety along our railroads for trains, cars, and pedestrians is critically important for communities across Alabama. This grant awarded to the City of Pelham is a perfect example of how a targeted federal investment can help address a vital need and improve the quality of life for residents. As a member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, I look forward to continuing to work with local leaders across Shelby County and our entire state to identify opportunities and work to advance our shared priorities," Senator Katie Britt said.

These safety improvements will also strengthen the State's supply chain, as more than 30 daily trains destined for the Port of the Mobile travel the CSX line through Pelham.

"The City of Pelham is a thriving intersection of recreation activity and economic growth for our state. Our supply chains depend on reliable transportation and infrastructure so that goods may arrive at their intended destinations on time. We never want to threaten Alabamians' safety or disrupt their mobility. I'm pleased to see Pelham awarded a grant to make much-needed infrastructure updates so that Shelby County residents can continue safely going about their daily routines with minimal disruption," said Senator Tommy Tuberville.

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The Railroad Crossing Elimination Project on Shelby County Road 52 (the Project) proposes the realignment of CR-52 West with the existing CR-52 East alignment and the construction of a bridge over the two crossings. As part of the proposed realignment, the intersection of CR-52 and US Highway 31 will be reconfigured, and additional improvements will be implemented along Highway 31. The project will also widen and reconstruct CR-52 East of US Highway 31 to increase capacity and update the roadway to current design standards.

[View the project webpage.](#)

Freestanding ER Approved

Ascension St. Vincent's is moving forward to build a Freestanding Emergency Department in Pelham after receiving approval from a state regulatory board. The Certificate of Need Review Board, which regulates new healthcare facilities in Alabama, voted in April to approve the Pelham project. It issued the certificate of need to Ascension St. Vincent's on Wednesday, June 7, clearing the way for work at the site to begin.

"This facility will meet a significant need for people who live in and around Pelham," said Jason Alexander, CEO at Ascension St. Vincent's. "Our goal is to make sure residents have access to emergency medical care when they need it." Design and engineering work will begin soon on the site at the "tank farm" exit 242 on Interstate 65, and the facility is tentatively set to open by the summer of 2025.

"We are eager to make this resource available for our residents," said Pelham Mayor Gary W. Waters, a retired fire chief who was among more than 40 local officials and leaders who supported the project. "I know from experience that a Freestanding Emergency Department like this can make a difference when minutes matter, and lives are at stake."

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Numerous local officials in Shelby County supported the project, as did state senators, state representatives, economic development leaders, healthcare institutions, and several first responders. “The overwhelming response from the community indicates the need for improved services in this area of Shelby County,” Alexander said. “We are grateful to so many local supporters and to the Certificate of Need Review Board for clearing the way for us to proceed.”

In addition to emergency services, the new facility will also offer diagnostics, primary and specialty care services.



Park Improvements

The Pelham City Council recently approved some equipment upgrades for Coker Park and Pelham City Park.

Some exciting playground improvements are in store for Coker Park. The current aging play set will be replaced with a new modern swing set that features two traditional swings, one infant swing, and an expression swing, which allows a parent or child to swing opposite to a smaller child. The project is expected to be completed by early fall.

The Pelham City Council recently approved the purchase and installation of three new batting cage covers at Pelham City Park. This will provide protection from the sun and inclement weather. The equipment should be installed in time for the fall baseball and softball seasons.

Public Safety Employees Honored

Three City of Pelham first responders were honored by American Legion Post 555 for their service to the community. Dispatch Supervisor David Fuentes was named the 2023 Public Safety Telecommunicator of the Year, Police Officer Iliana Hayakahua was recognized as the Officer of the Year, and Fire Medic Brent Rejonis was named Firefighter of the Year.

Fuentes was honored by the American Legion at the state level as Alabama's Public Safety Telecommunicator of the Year. In April, he was named the City of Pelham's Dispatcher of the Year, making the American Legion award his third recognition of 2023. Fuentes joined Pelham's dispatch team in 2012 and became a Dispatch Supervisor in early 2022. According to his fellow dispatchers, Fuentes is always quick to lend a hand, and since he is bilingual, he provides much-needed translation services.

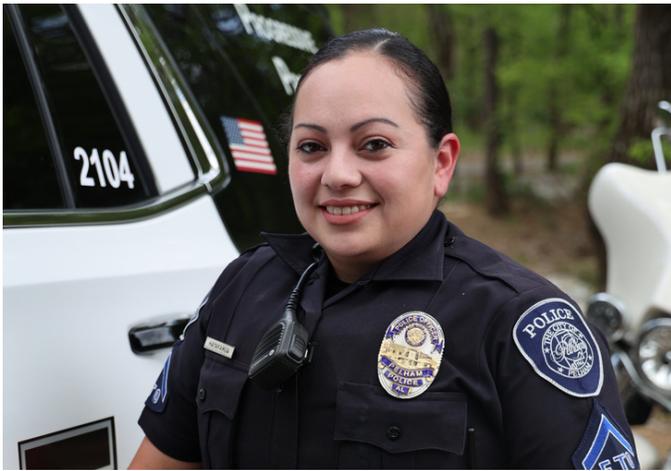
American Legion Post 555 selected Officer Hayakahua as Officer of the Year for her exceptional performance and dedication. She has demonstrated outstanding leadership and professionalism as a Field Training Officer and as a Crisis/Hostage Negotiator. She is a member of the Pelham Police Bike Unit and works with the Alabama Torch Run for Special Olympics.

Fire Medic Rejonis is the American Legion Post 555 Firefighter of the Year. Rejonis joined the Pelham Fire Department in February 2015 and has 22 years of fire service experience. In April, he was also named the Pelham Fire Department's Firefighter of the Year. Pelham Fire Chief Mike Reid commended Rejonis for his dedication to improving the services provided by the Pelham Fire Department. Rejonis obtained his specialized dive instructor certifications and is a leader in the department's Underwater Search and Recovery Team. He also serves as a Tactical Medic for the Pelham Police Department's Tactical Team.

Fuentes, Hayakahua, and Rejonis will receive their American Legion Post 555 awards this month. Fuentes was presented with the state award in June at the American Legion Joint Session in Montgomery.



City of Pelham Dispatch Supervisor David Fuentes.



Pelham Police Officer Iliana Hayakahua.



Pelham Fire Medic Brent Rejonis.



Your City At Work

Here are some of the recent items approved by the Pelham City Council. For the complete text of the agendas, minutes, ordinances, and resolutions, please visit the [City of Pelham website](#).

- Approved the purchase of 88 utility pole-mounted Christmas decorations. The cost will include shipping, engineering, and installation at various locations within the city.
- Accepted a donation of real property from Campus No. 124.
- Approved the city's release of real property located at Campus No. 124.
- Voted on a three-year lease agreement for two greens mowers for Ballantrae Golf Club.
- Entered into a public works contract to provide and install a swing set at Coker Park.
- Approved a job description and pay ranges for the current inactive position of Field Manager with the Department of Development Services & Public Works.
- Approved a job description and pay ranges for a new position of Lead Well Operator within the Department of Development Services & Public Works.
- Accepted a bid for the replacement of the roof at the Police & Court Building.
- Entered into a public works contract to manufacture and install pole barn structures to cover the existing batting cages at City Park.
- Accepted responsibility for the electrical bill of one new streetlight on Bent Creek Drive at Shelby County Highway 36.
- Approved the final invoice for the remodel of the shower/bathroom at Fire Station No. 5.
- Authorized the release of street bond money and accepted the dedication of certain public streets and rights-of-way located in the Ballantrae Subdivision Dunrobin 1 (Dunrobin Lane), previously approved by the Pelham Planning Commission.

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- Authorized an additional professional services contract to provide land planning and conceptual design services for the Blueberry Hill Master Plan.
- Approved a public works contract for the installation of a sanitary sewer lateral to serve the Splash Pad at City Park.
- Authorized the acceptance of a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Grant for the Fire Department to purchase a Radionuclide Identification Detector and personal radiological detectors.
- Approved the sale of fire equipment that is no longer needed to the Bleckley County, Georgia Fire Department.
- Agreed to appoint a citizen to the Pelham Board of Adjustments & Appeals, Place No. 1 (At Large), effective immediately with the term of office ending September 30, 2023.
- Agreed to appoint a citizen to the Pelham Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, Place No. 5 effective October 1, 2023, with the term of office ending on September 30, 2026.
- Approved the city's Parks & Recreation Dedication Policy.
- Repealed Resolution 2016-03-21-01 in its entirety, which granted an annual weapons allowance benefitting all sworn officers of the Pelham Police Department who meet specific requirements.
- Accepted a bid for the Southgate Sewer Lift Station Pump Replacement Project.
- Approved a public works contract to repair the golf cart bridge on Hole #18 as part of the Ballantrae Hole No. 18 Bridge Repair Project.
- Amended the zone district boundaries of the City of Pelham changing the present zoning M-1 (Light Industrial District) to B-2 (General Commercial Business District) for Lot No. 2 in the Grande Vista subdivision.
- Several ABC licenses were approved.
- Approved adjusted water and sewer rates for customers effective October 1, 2023.
- Approved water and sewer fee structure for residential and commercial customers effective October 1, 2023.



Exciting Updates

Campus No. 124 Park

Construction on Campus No. 124 Park is coming along nicely. The park will be a nice complement to the new entertainment district planned for the area. Finishing touches are coming soon, including landscaping, construction of a pavilion, and signage.



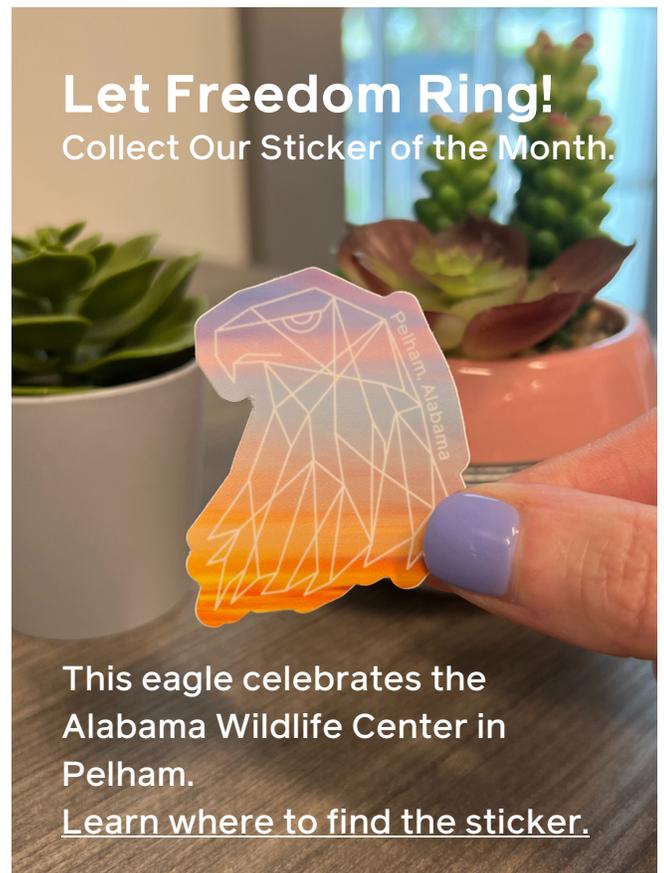
Outdoor Pickleball Courts

The foundation has been poured for two pickleball courts and a new pavilion adjacent to the Pelham Senior Center. The pavilion has a dual purpose. Not only will it be a nice space to gather between matches, but it will also provide expanded programming space for the Senior Center. The estimated completion date is the end of August or first of September.



Independence Day Closings & Special Hours

- Pelham City Hall & City Offices: CLOSED
- Pelham Public Library: Closing at 5:00 p.m. on July 3rd; CLOSED July 4th..
- Pelham Rec Center: Special hours on July 3rd: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; CLOSED July 4th.
- Pelham Senior Center: CLOSED
- Civic Complex & Ice Arena: CLOSED
- Racquet Club: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Ballantrae Golf Club: Holiday rates - July 3rd & 4th; Holiday hours July 4 ([click here](#) for hours)
- AmWaste: There will be NO trash pickup on July 4th. For Tuesday/Friday routes, trash will be collected Friday only.



Let Freedom Ring! Collect Our Sticker of the Month.

This eagle celebrates the Alabama Wildlife Center in Pelham.
[Learn where to find the sticker.](#)