

Good News for Pelham!



Railroad Crossing Elimination Project Moves Forward

A long-awaited infrastructure project designed to improve traffic flow and emergency response in Pelham is officially moving forward. At a recent City Council meeting, City Manager Gretchen DiFante announced that federal funding for the Railroad Crossing Elimination Project on Shelby County Road 52 has been fully obligated, allowing the City to begin the next phase of work.

The project is supported by a \$41.7 million Federal Railroad Administration grant, covering 80 percent of the estimated \$52.4 million total cost. The remaining 20 percent will be funded by the City of Pelham, the City of Helena, Shelby County, and CSX. The project will permanently eliminate two CSX railroad crossings at County Road 52 and Lee Street, locations that frequently cause traffic delays and block emergency vehicles.

"This is an exciting day for Pelham," DiFante said. "With the funds now obligated, we can officially begin moving the project forward."

Development Services & Public Works Director André Bittas said the project will significantly improve safety and mobility along one of the area's busiest corridors. "This is going to improve traffic flow and give public safety reliable access across the tracks," he said.

Work will begin with environmental assessments, engineering, and design, followed by right-of-way acquisition and utility coordination. Construction is expected later in the project timeline, with completion required by 2031. The City plans to provide regular updates through its website and City Council reports as the project progresses.



Property Acquisition Begins on the Last Phase of Greenway Trail

Property acquisition is underway for Phase III of the Pelham Greenway Trail, the final and one of the longest segments of the city's trail system. This phase will extend from the north end of Pelham City Park, connecting nearby neighborhoods along Cahaba Valley Creek (Bishop Creek) to Pelham's Entertainment District at Campus 124.

Mayor Rick Wash is currently meeting with property owners to acquire land needed for construction. The \$4 million project is part of the larger 6.5-mile Pelham Greenway Trail, which will ultimately connect the sidewalks of Bearden Road to the entrance of Oak Mountain State Park. Construction is set to begin later this year.

Although Phase III is the last section of five phases to be built, the construction order shifted due to access challenges and other development projects. Phases III and IV were temporarily placed on hold. At the same time, work progressed on Phase V. Portions of the trail were completed in 2022 during the widening of Oak Mountain State Park Road and again in 2024 as part of the Amphitheater Road widening project. Phase III was completed in January. The Pelham Greenway Trail will provide a continuous, scenic connection through the heart of the city.

Pelham Parks & Recreation Named ARPA Agency of the Year

A year of growth, connection, and community pride Pelham has always been a city that values community, and in 2025, that spirit was on full display through the work of Pelham Parks & Recreation. From packed community festivals and youth sports seasons to facility upgrades, growth in senior programming, and new partnerships, Pelham Parks & Recreation helped create a year full of meaningful experiences for residents of all ages.

That dedication has now been recognized statewide. Pelham Parks & Recreation was honored with the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) Agency of the Year Award, celebrating the department's exemplary service, leadership, and impact across the community.

This award reflects more than one successful program or event: it recognizes a department that consistently delivers high-quality recreation services, listens to its community, and continues to invest in Pelham's future. Over the past year, the department delivered meaningful experiences for residents of all ages through festivals and concerts, youth sports seasons, growth in senior programming, facility upgrades, and new partnerships that strengthened community connections.

Pelham Parks & Recreation maintains more than 120 acres of parkland across the city, with facilities that support everyday recreation, tournaments, and large-scale events.

The Pelham Recreation Center continues to serve as a hub for indoor wellness and activity, offering courts, fitness areas, studios, and multipurpose spaces, with membership now exceeding 3,000 members. In 2025, the department also celebrated major progress with new facility investments, including breaking ground on a new ballpark, opening an outdoor court for the NHL Street Hockey league, and adding a new disc golf course.

The department's success is guided by thoughtful, long-range planning, using tools such as Plan Pelham, the Parks & Connectivity Master Plan, and the Clemson University Needs Assessment, ensuring growth is driven by community input and data-driven decisions. Residents experienced this impact through a full calendar of community events, youth athletics serving more than 2,300 participants, and a thriving Senior Center that saw record growth in participation, membership, and program offerings in 2025.

Pelham Parks & Recreation is proud to serve its community and honored to be recognized as ARPA's Agency of the Year, reflecting a year defined by connection, innovation, and service.



New Council Meeting Schedule Proposed

The Pelham City Council is considering a change to its regular meeting schedule that would separate City Council work sessions and formal Council meetings onto different days. Currently, both meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of each month, with work sessions typically beginning around 5:30 p.m. and Council meetings starting at 7:00 p.m.

During recent discussions, the newly seated City Council raised the possibility of holding work sessions and Council meetings on separate days, citing meeting efficiency, workload management, and best practices in municipal governance. Under Alabama law and long-established municipal practice, each city council has the authority to set its own meeting dates and times.

Several operational considerations were discussed, including giving Council members adequate time to review and research agenda items before votes are taken, allowing staff time to respond to questions that arise during work sessions, reducing the length and intensity of meeting nights for all involved, and clearly separating discussion-focused meetings from action-focused meetings to enhance transparency and deliberation.

In a memo to the Council, City Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale noted, "While no meeting schedule will fully eliminate challenges or public concern,

separating these meetings will allow for more thoughtful decision-making and better serve the long-term interests of the City and its residents." He also acknowledged that changes to long-standing schedules can raise concerns related to accessibility, convenience, and tradition, emphasizing the importance of clearly communicating the rationale and maintaining the City's commitment to open and effective governance.

A first reading of the proposed ordinance was held during the City Council meeting on Monday, February 2, 2026. A vote is anticipated at the next meeting on Monday, February 16. Based on initial discussion, the general consensus is to hold work sessions on Mondays and City Council meetings on Thursdays during the first and third weeks of each month. Potential meeting times are still under consideration, and updates will be shared as decisions are finalized.



Officer Elizabeth Lamar Honored with Blue Heart Award

Pelham Police Officer Elizabeth (Minter) Lamar was recently honored by The Wounded Blue, a national nonprofit supporting injured and disabled law enforcement officers, during a Pelham City Council meeting. She received the organization's Order of the Blue Heart Award, recognizing officers seriously injured in the line of duty.

Officer Lamar was critically injured in 2023 while assisting with traffic control following a DUI-related crash on Interstate 65. Despite sustaining life-altering injuries, she has since returned to serve the Pelham community in a new role with the Pelham Police Department.

Pelham Police Chief Ed Delmore praised Officer Lamar's strength and perseverance, and Officer Lamar expressed gratitude for the support she received from her family, the department, City leadership, and the community throughout her recovery.

The City of Pelham is proud to recognize Officer Lamar's courage, resilience, and continued commitment to public service.



New Play Features Planned for Pelham Dog Park

Pet lovers will soon see improvements at the Pelham Dog Park at City Park, where several aging play structures are set to be replaced with new, commercial-grade amenities. The current wooden features have deteriorated over time and are being upgraded to provide a safer, more durable experience for dogs and their owners.

To fund the improvements, the Pelham City Council approved reallocating \$30,000 originally budgeted for a proposed disc golf course. After further evaluation, City staff determined City Park was not an ideal location for disc golf due to consistently high pedestrian traffic. The updated plan allows the City to reinvest those funds into enhancing an already popular park amenity that serves Pelham's four-legged residents.



CITY PARK BENCH TO HONOR JUNE FLETCHER

A new bench will soon be installed at Pelham City Park to honor the memory of June Fletcher, a longtime resident and dedicated community advocate. The bench is being donated by Jack LaRosa, with support from Danny Berry, as a lasting tribute to Fletcher's impact on the Pelham community.

The Pelham City Council gratefully accepted the private donation, and the Parks and Recreation Department will coordinate the installation. The bench will match existing City Park seating and provide a meaningful place for reflection in honor of a woman who cared deeply about Pelham.

June Fletcher passed away on January 30, 2025, at age 82. She was a very civic-minded individual, and often volunteered her time and talents for the betterment of Pelham.

SPRING SHRED & E-RECYCLE EVENT ANNOUNCED

Pelham's semi-annual Shred and E-Recycling Event will be held on Saturday, April 4, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in front of Pelham City Hall.

Complete details for the event, including items accepted, and prohibited, can be found on the City of Pelham website.

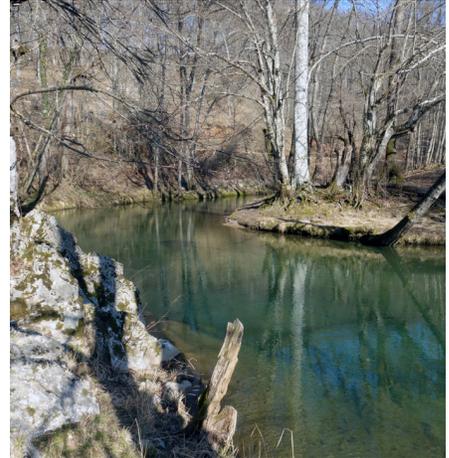
An additional event will be held on October 3, 2026.



Your City At Work

Here are some of the recent items approved by the Pelham City Council. Please visit the City of Pelham website for the complete text of the agendas, minutes, ordinances, and resolutions.

- Declared certain items as surplus personal property and authorized disposal of the property.
- Approved the FY2025 Carry-Forward Capital Project Funding.
- Authorized a Property Listing Agreement for property owned by the City of Pelham.
- Accepted the lowest responsive and responsible bid from Temple J Electric, LLC for the Pelham Greenway Phase IV Trail Lighting Project.
- Accepted the lowest responsive and responsible bid from Preferred Sandblasting and Painting, LLC for the High Ridge Water Tank Painting Project.
- Accepted a proposal from and entered into an agreement with Video Industrial Services, Inc. for storm sewer repairs along Royal Lane.
- Amended the FY2026 Parks & Recreation Departmental Budget for amenity upgrades at the Pelham Dog Park.
- Voted to allow for a one-time membership allowance for certain existing members of the Pelham Recreation Center.
- Accepted the donation of private funds to be used exclusively for the purchase and installation of a bench at Pelham City Park in memory of Ms. June Fletcher.
- Amended the FY2026 Mayor and City Manager Departmental Budgets.
- Approved an ABC License Application 050-Retail Beer (off-premises only) and 070 - Retail Table Wine (off-premises only) for applicant SKAL USA, Inc., operating under the trade name Mama's Country Cooking, located at 3350 Pelham Parkway, Suite A.
- Approved an ABC License Application 011 - Lounge Retail Liquor - Class II (Package) and 990-tobacco only for applicant SKAL USA, Inc., operating under the trade name Toast Trends located at 3350 Pelham Parkway, Suite B.
- Approved a final summary change order for the Lift Station B Dry Prime Pump Addition Project.
- Approved a final summary change order for the Wastewater Treatment Plan RAS Pumps Replacement Project.
- Adopted revised language regarding the City of Pelham's Floodplain Development Ordinance consistent with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements.
- Amended Chapter 2, Article 1, Section 2-4 of the Code of Ordinance of the City of Pelham to employ the Mayor as Utility Superintendent.
- Declared certain items (vehicles and equipment as surplus personal property and authorized disposal. This included two vehicles from the water department, three vehicles from public works, and a pull-behind aerator.
- Voted to establish an AMERICA250 Committee to commemorate the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.



City Updates Floodplain Development Ordinance

The Pelham City Council recently adopted revised language for the City's Floodplain Development Ordinance to ensure compliance with requirements set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

City Manager Gretchen DiFante explained that the update does not introduce new regulations, describing the changes as "housekeeping" to align the City's ordinance with current federal language. Maintaining compliance with FEMA and NFIP standards is essential to preserving Pelham residents' eligibility for federal flood insurance and disaster assistance programs.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PELHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Safety Starts at Home

Fire safety begins with simple steps taken every day at home. According to Pelham Fire Inspector Scott Lee, many house fires are preventable with proper planning, routine maintenance, and awareness. "Protecting your family starts with being prepared," Lee said. "A few small actions can make a big difference when it comes to fire safety."

Lee emphasizes the importance of working smoke alarms, noting they should be installed on every level of the home and inside and outside sleeping areas. Alarms should be tested monthly, with batteries replaced at least annually. Cooking safety is another major focus, as unattended cooking remains a leading cause of house fires. Residents are encouraged to stay in the kitchen while cooking, keep flammable items away from stoves, and turn pot handles inward to prevent spills. Electrical safety also plays a key role. Avoid overloading outlets, replace damaged cords promptly, and unplug appliances when they're not in use.

Using candles and space heaters requires extra caution, especially during the colder months. Lee recommends keeping open flames and heaters at least three feet away from anything flammable and turning them off before leaving a room or going to sleep. Being prepared is just as important as prevention. Homes should have fire extinguishers in key areas such as the kitchen and garage, and everyone in the household should know how to use them. Families are also encouraged to develop and practice a fire escape plan, identifying two ways out of each room and choosing a safe meeting place outside.

"Planning ahead saves lives," Lee said. "If a fire does start, remember to get out, stay out, and call 911 from outside." The Pelham Fire Department remains committed to helping residents stay safe and encourages everyone to review their home fire safety plans.



Did you know?

The Pelham Fire Department offers free smoke detector installation for homes within the city limits. Homeowners may receive up to three smoke detectors at no cost, along with information to help create a family fire escape plan. Detectors are provided through the State of Alabama as part of an effort to reduce fire-related injuries and loss of life.

To request an installation, call 205-620-6500. Installations are typically scheduled Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., with weekend appointments available upon request. Remember, smoke detectors older than 10 years should be replaced, and all alarms should be tested monthly. Please note: The smoke detectors we install are battery-powered. We're unable to install wired smoke detectors or any devices that require interconnectivity.

