



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Pelham City Hall
City Council Chambers
December 15, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.**

Proper notice of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Pelham City Council was given in advance of such a public meeting and the notice remained posted throughout the scheduled meeting.

Date: December 15, 2025
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Pelham City Hall – City Council Chambers
Present: President of the Council Chad Leverett
Councilmember Michelle Power
Councilmember Christine Townes
Councilmember Markus Hal Snowden
Councilmember Michael Harris
Mayor Rick Wash

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council President Leverett called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. Councilmember Snowden led the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Harris.

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

The City Clerk/Treasurer recorded the attendance of the elected officials and announced a quorum was present. City Manager Gretchen DiFante and City Attorney Josh Arnold were present.

CONSENT AGENDA

A consent agenda is presented by the presiding officer at the beginning of a council meeting. Items presented on the consent agenda are considered routine and/or non-controversial, are organized apart from the rest of the agenda, and are adopted by general consent and vote by the City Council without debate. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Removed items may be considered either immediately after the consent agenda is approved or placed on the agenda at the discretion of the presiding officer and City Council.

1. Approval of the December 15, 2025 City Council Agenda
2. Approval of the December 1, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes
3. **Resolution 2025-12-15-01** for consideration to authorize a License Agreement for non-exclusive parking in the City of Pelham Entertainment District
4. **Resolution 2025-12-15-02** for consideration to authorize the City of Pelham Department of Human Resources to provide the applicable pay plan step for an employee returning to work after suffering an on-duty injury
5. **Resolution 2025-12-15-03** for consideration to accept the proposal from and enter into an agreement with Professional Turfgrass Services for the Ballantrae Golf Club Driving Range Tee Box Renovations Project. This project was budgeted for FY2026.
6. **Resolution 2025-12-15-04** for consideration to affirm the Mayor's appointment for Municipal Judge

- 7. **Resolution 2025-12-15-05** for consideration to affirm the Mayor's appointment for Municipal Prosecutor
- 8. **Resolution 2025-12-15-06** for consideration to affirm the Mayor's appointment for Municipal Public Defender
- 9. **Resolution 2025-12-15-07** for consideration to accept a proposal from Jim House & Associates, Inc. for the replacement of two (2) existing pumps at Sewer Lift Station T. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

Council President Leverett stated the complete text of the agenda, minutes, ordinances, and resolutions are available at Pelham City Hall and online at www.pelhamalabama.gov.

Councilmember Harris made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented by Council President Leverett. Councilmember Power seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, Council President Leverett asked the City Clerk/Treasurer for a roll call vote. The vote to adopt the Consent Agenda was recorded as follows:

Chad Leverett, Council President	<u>Yes</u>
Michelle Power, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Christine Townes, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Markus Hal Snowden, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Michael Harris, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>

The motion to adopt the Consent Agenda passed unanimously by roll call vote of those members present and the President of the Council declared the same passed and adopted.

PUBLIC HEARING(S) – None

MAYOR'S REPORT/COMMENTS

Mayor Wash noted the Christmas Parade was a huge success this past weekend and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

PROCLAMATION(S) AND RESOLUTION(S) BY THE MAYOR AND OTHERS – None

REPORT BY THE CITY MANAGER

- 1. 2025 State of the City

City Manager Gretchen DiFante's presentation is attached for reference.

REPORT BY THE CITY ATTORNEY – None

REQUEST(S) TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL – None

OLD BUSINESS / RESOLUTIONS / ORDINANCES / ORDERS and OTHER BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS / RESOLUTIONS / ORDINANCES / ORDERS and OTHER BUSINESS

- 1. **Resolution 2025-12-15-08** for consideration to authorize the City Attorney to file on behalf of the City of Pelham regarding Simplified Sellers Use Tax (SSUT) was introduced by Council President Leverett.

Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-12-15-08. Councilmember Townes seconded the motion.

Assistant City Manager Justin Smith stated The Simplified Sellers Use Tax (SSUT) poses a financial risk to Alabama communities by diverting significant locally generated tax revenue away from essential services such as education, public safety, infrastructure, and economic development, while disproportionately benefiting large out-of-state corporations at the expense of local businesses. The impact is intensified by

the growth of e-commerce and the “DoorDash loophole,” which classifies delivery services—even for local purchases—under SSUT, further shifting local sales tax revenue to the state and distributing the local share on a population-based formula that disadvantages municipalities. As a result, cities like Pelham experience substantial net revenue losses that strain the ability to fund critical services. In response, the City of Tuscaloosa has filed litigation challenging the constitutionality and application of SSUT, and the City of Pelham has elected to join in that litigation.

There being no further discussion, the motion to adopt Resolution 2025-12-15-08 passed by a unanimous voice vote of those members present and the President of the Council declared the same passed and adopted.

- 2. **Resolution 2025-12-15-09** for consideration of an ABC License Application 011 – Lounge Retail Liquor – Class II (Package) and 990 – Tobacco Only for applicant Encore Franchises, LLC operating under the trade name Gallops Liquors and Spirits located at 3569 Pelham Parkway, Suite 10, Pelham, Alabama 35124 was introduced by Council President Leverett.

Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve and adopt Resolution 2025-12-15-09. Councilmember Power seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, the motion to approve and adopt Resolution 2025-12-15-09 passed by a unanimous voice vote of those members present and the President of the Council declared the same passed and adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. Individuals wishing to address the City Council may, after being recognized, approach the podium, and state their name and physical address prior to making their comments in a respectful manner.

Please note, the public comment period is intended for comments only. It is not a public hearing, nor is it a time for dialogue, debate, or questions to the City Council. Any questions or requests for additional information will be noted and may be addressed by the appropriate City staff or officials at a later time.

- Russell Platt – 2233 Richmond Lane, Pelham, AL 35124 – thanked the city council for taking action on the Simplified Sellers Use Tax topic.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Power thanked City Manager Gretchen DiFante for all her hard work. She said since Mrs. DiFante’s arrival, the City has so much more to offer and is running smoothly. She said the Christmas Parade was fabulous, and the new route was a great improvement. She said the Pelham High School Boys Basketball Team is off to a great start this year, having beaten Hoover High School and Mountain Brook High School last week. She encouraged everyone to attend a game and support the team. Councilmember Power wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councilmember Townes thanked City Manager Gretchen DiFante for all she has done for the City of Pelham. She noted a lot of her personal concerns about the City are going away because she sees how hard the employees work to make the City great. She said she is excited to serve on this city council and to see the growth of Pelham continue. She said the Christmas Parade this past weekend was the best one yet. She thanked the team at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena for their hard work accommodating so many visitors throughout the day.

Council President Leverett read Psalm 118:24. He noted several of the projects City Manager Gretchen DiFante mentioned have all been allocated and budgeted using committed reserve funds. He thanked the Pelham Racquet Club and Pelham City Hall for their floats at the Christmas Parade. He said the hard work by the Pelham Police and Fire Departments made the day run smoothly. He added the employees at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena are the unsung heroes of the day, noting that they stayed late into the night.

Councilmember Snowden said he is already looking forward to the next Christmas Parade. He said he had a lot of fun tossing candy to the patrons. He thanked everyone involved for putting together a great parade and event. He thanked City Manager Gretchen DiFante for her hard work. He thanked the previous city council for laying the groundwork for success. He wished everyone a blessed and Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Councilmember Harris thanked City Manager Gretchen DiFante for her hard work and compiling all the data she presented tonight. He thanked the City employees for their hard work and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1. Pelham City Offices will be closed Wednesday and Thursday, December 24th and December 25th, for the Christmas Holidays and Thursday, January 1, 2026 for New Year's Day.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business before the city council, Councilmember Harris moved to adjourn the council meeting and Councilmember Snowden seconded the motion. By voice vote the motion passed unanimously by those members present and the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 15th day of December 2025.



Jonathan Seale, CMC, City Clerk/Treasurer



Chad Leverett, President of the Council

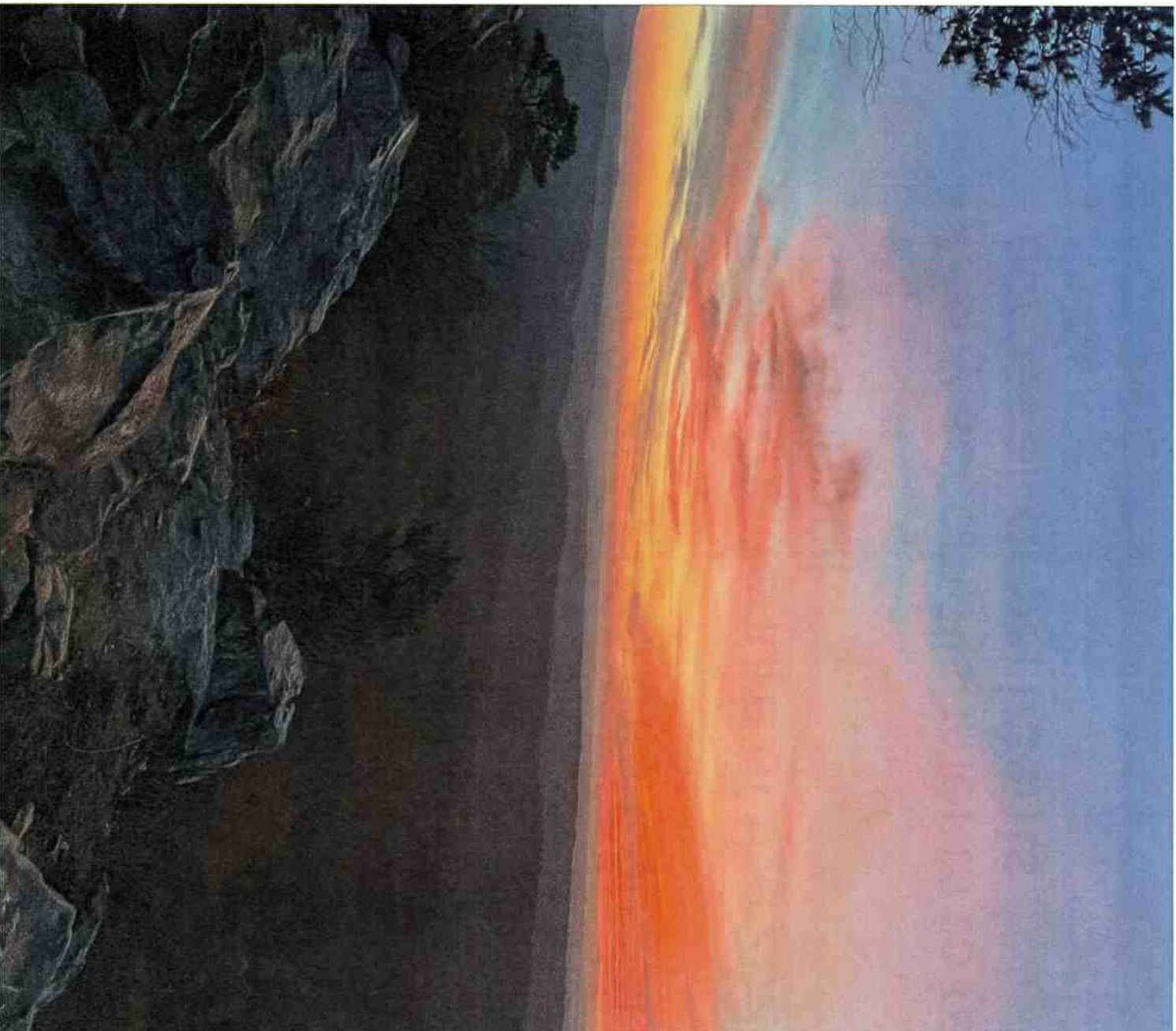




Pelham

Building a Better Pelham

State of the City 2025



Looking Back on 2025

- A year of significant progress and strong financial stewardship
- Successfully concluded the tenure of the 2020–2025 City Council
- Began the tenure of the 2025–2029 City Council
- Many accomplishments to reflect on across all departments



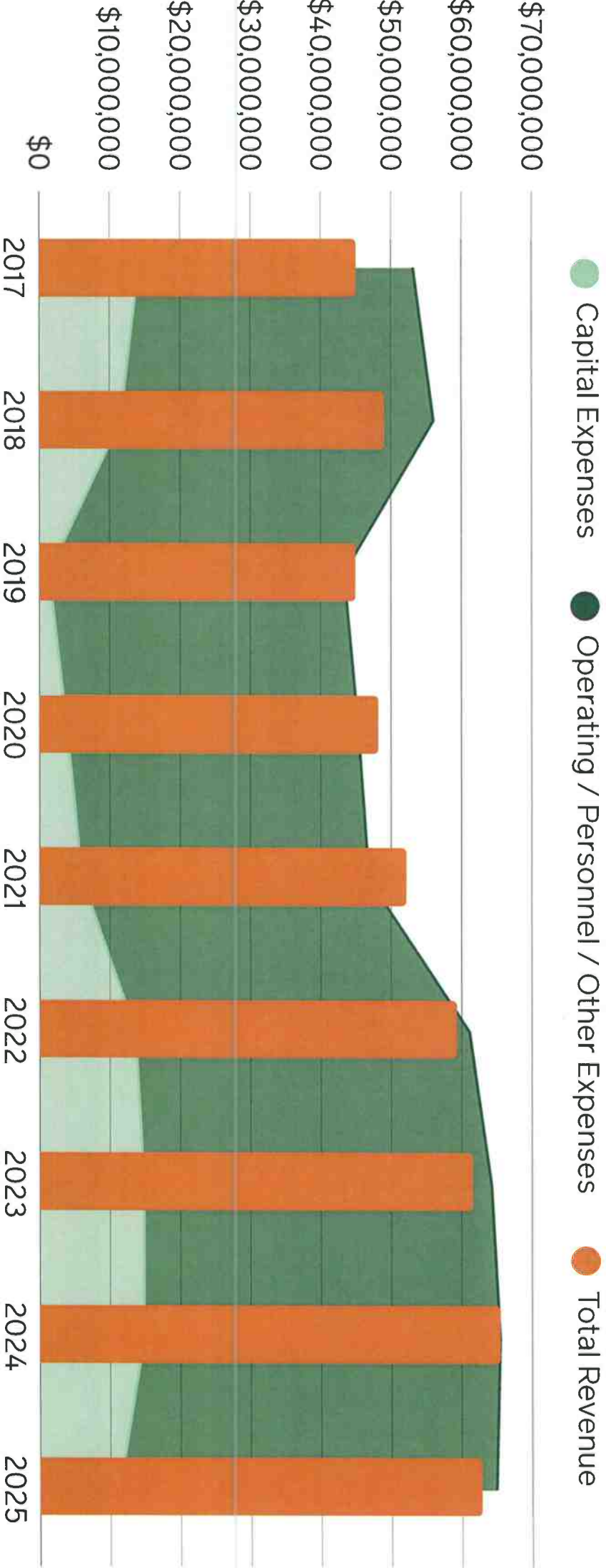
Financial Stewardship

Strong & Sustainable

- Consistent financial leadership
- Balanced budgets Year-Over-Year (YoY)
- Since 2017, an average YoY revenue growth of 4%*
 - *All 2025 figures are unaudited
- Since 2017, an average YoY expenditure growth of 3%*
 - *Includes capital investments
- Funds set aside for future local share of projects
- No audit findings

Financial Stewardship

Expenses Compared to Revenues



Financial Stewardship

- Sales tax revenues slightly down from 2024 to 2025
- Business license revenue is up and averaging 4% YoY growth
- Building permit revenue is up and averaging a 30% YoY growth





Pelham



Recreation,
Arts, & Culture

Ballantrae Golf Club

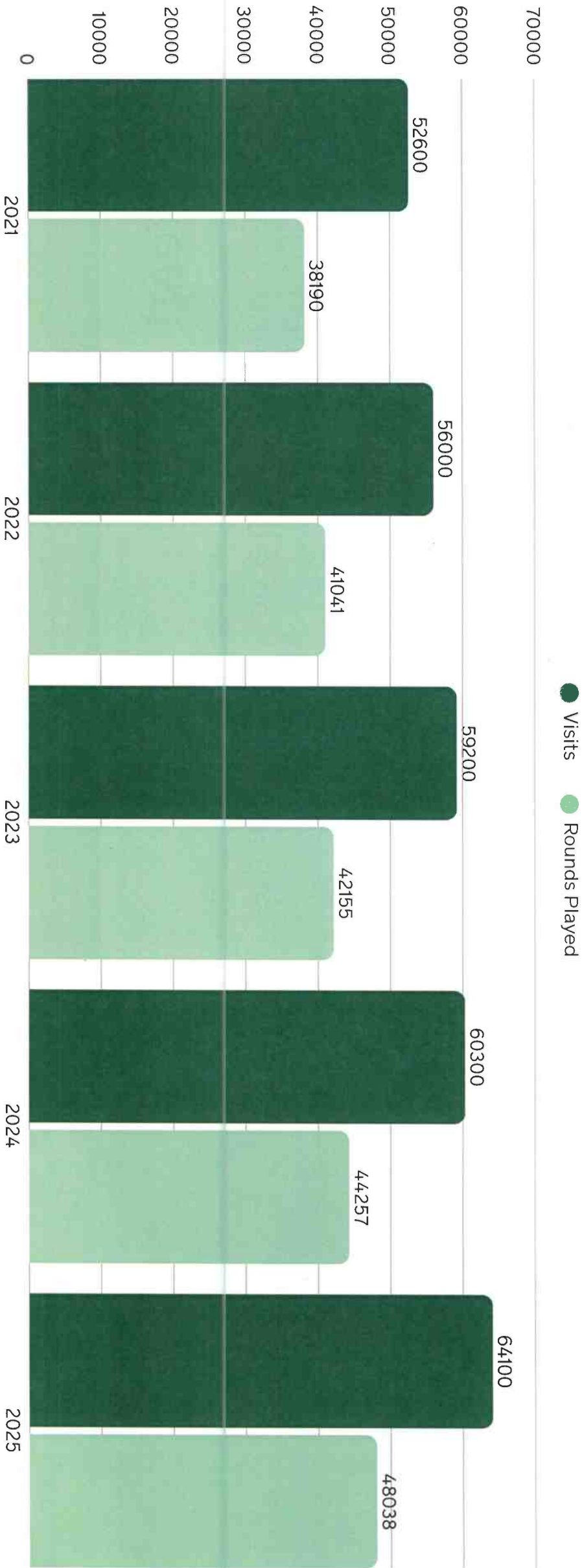
Record Year!

- Since 2009, there has been a 66% increase in the number of rounds played
- 26% increase in the number of rounds over the last 5 years alone
- 22.9% increase in visits over the last 5 years
- 68% increase in unique visitors over the last 5 years
- 95% increase in gross revenue since 2010
- Record-setting revenues and an operating profit over \$400,000



Ballantrae Golf Club

Ballantrae Visits & Rounds Played



Parks & Recreation Growth

- Expanded Recreation Options
 - 2018 – 2019 Beach Volleyball/Outdoor BB
 - 2023 – Splash Pad
 - 2023 – Pelham Senior Center Pickleball
 - 2024 – City Park Playground
 - 2025 – Coker Park Disc Golf
 - 2025 – City Park Soccer and Roller Sports Rink



Parks & Recreation Growth

Coming Soon!

- Baseball field upgrades, new bathrooms and concessions
- LED lighting improvements at the parking lot for the playground/splash pad/dog park
- Paving on Greenway Trail Phase III

➡ Expanding offerings have led to Recreation Center membership increase of nearly 200% since 2022, and...



Parks & Recreation Growth

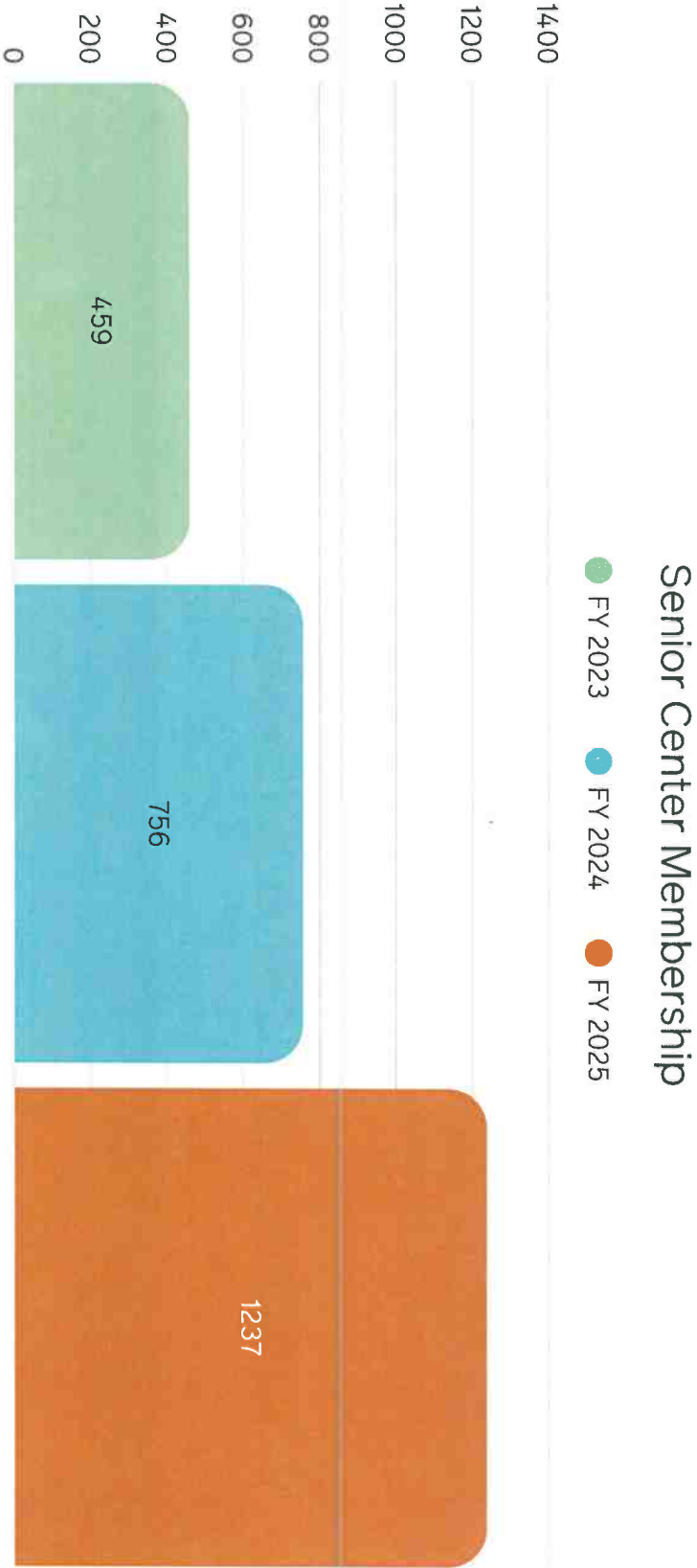
- 74% increase in special event attendance despite four rainouts



Parks & Recreation Growth

Senior Center

- 160% increase in Senior Center members since the pandemic



Racquet Club Momentum

- Gross revenues up 10% from 2022
- 12,308 lessons provided in 2025
- 6% increase over the last two years
- Ready, Set, Tennis program launched for beginners



Civic Complex & Ice Arena

A Record Year

- Data from Placer AI shows a record-setting year for unique visitors – 119,000 in 2025. A 78.6% increase.
- Over the last five years, there has been a nearly 50% increase in total visits from 201,900 in 2021 to 302,000 in 2025.
- First-ever net operating profit of > \$100,000
- Record-setting revenues and its first net operating profit of just over \$100,000.
- Consistent Year-Over-Year Growth



Pelham Public Library

A Year of Achievement

- 39,714 e-resource circulations in 2025
- Even as more people spend time online, the library grows strong with increased programs and attendance
- Named Family Favorite Library Branch by Birmingham Parent Magazine



Recreation, Arts, & Culture

Complementary Growth

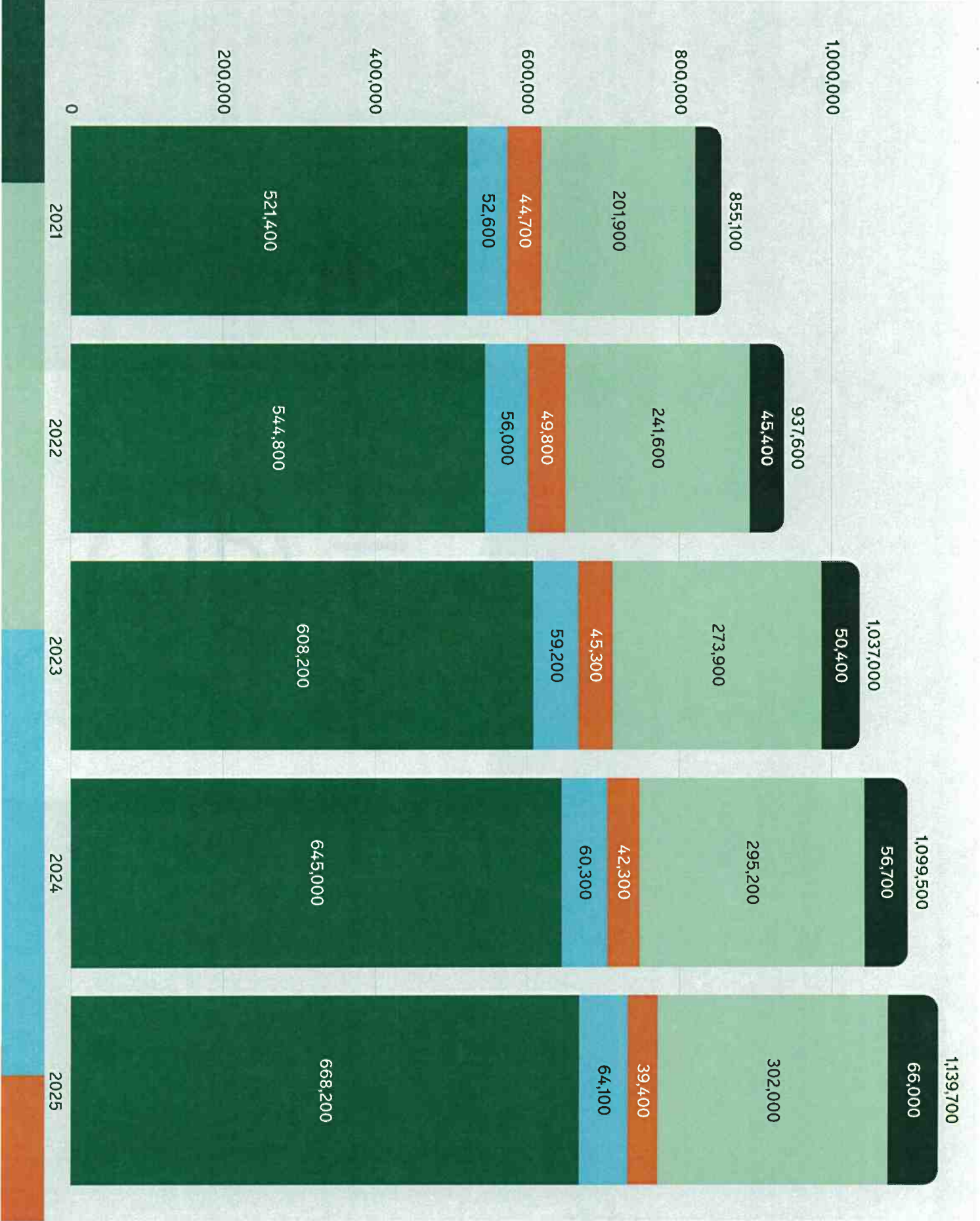
- Perspective: 1,139,700 total visits to these facilities in FY25
- 21% more than Oak Mountain State Park's 936,700



Visits to City-Owned Recreation, Art & Cultural Amenities

(Source: Placer AI)

- Pelham City Parks & Recreation
- Ballantrae Golf Club
- Pelham Raquet Club
- Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena
- Pelham Public Library





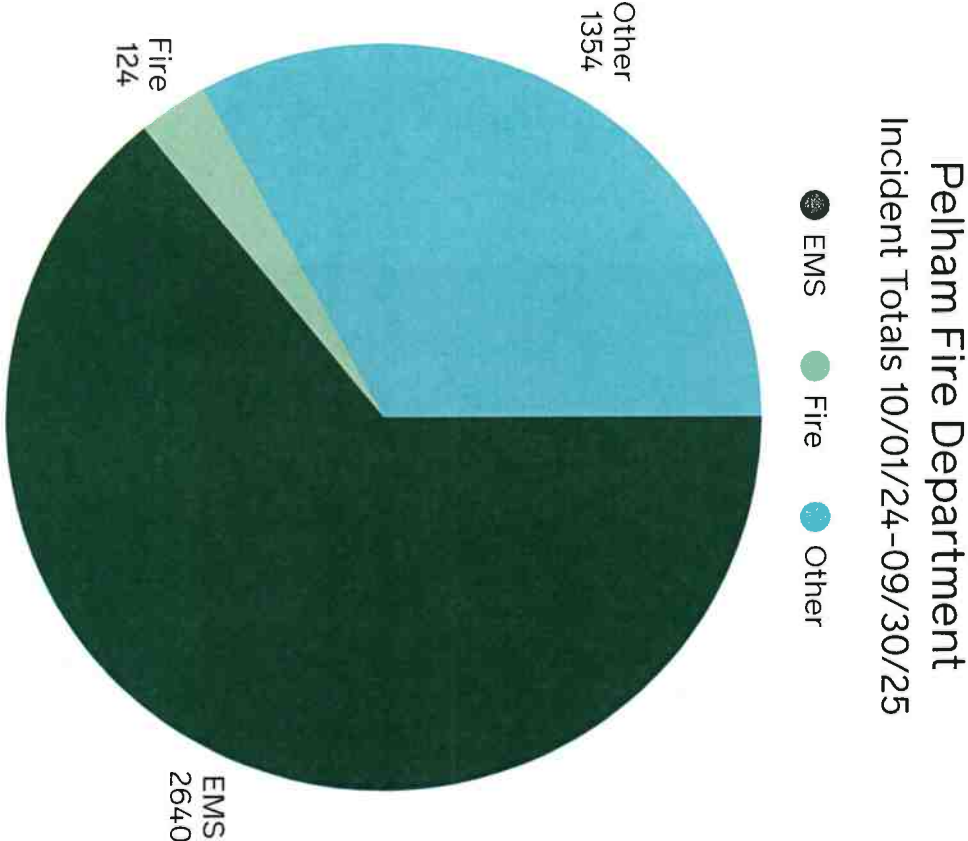
Pelham

Public Safety

Pelham Fire Department

A Transformational Year

- 1,896 EMS responses and 1083 transports through September 8, 2025
- Average response time of just over 8 minutes.
- Enhanced the regional network of EMS services by providing 47 mutual aid transports to neighboring jurisdictions – a net gain of +16 against those received by Pelham.
- Responded to 4,118 calls in fiscal year 2025



Pelham Police Department

Strengthening Service & Leadership

- Modernizing Hiring and Promotions
 - Streamlined officer hiring process
 - Introduced a professional assessment center for promotions
- Created a Master Sergeant rank to enhance leadership development



Pelham Police Department

Strengthening Service & Leadership

Expanding Training & Regional Leadership

- Increased advanced training opportunities
- Became a regional host for multiple law enforcement courses
- Added VR firearms simulator for modern, realistic training
- Other agencies have taken notice and are sending personnel to Pelham



Pelham Police Department

Strengthening Service & Leadership

Community Engagement & Partnerships

- Officers embedded in Storm Lake, Iowa, to study Hispanic Community Engagement
- Bilingual social media posts introduced
- Officers assigned to county, state, and federal task forces
- Planning underway for 2026 Police Youth Academy



Pelham Police Department

Strengthening Service & Leadership

Operational Enhancements

- Added a second motor unit for traffic enforcement
- Added a drug-detection K-9
- Filled key command positions; appointed Acting Deputy Chief
- Culture shift towards more proactive self-initiated policing





Pelham



Public Works &
Infrastructure

Physical Character

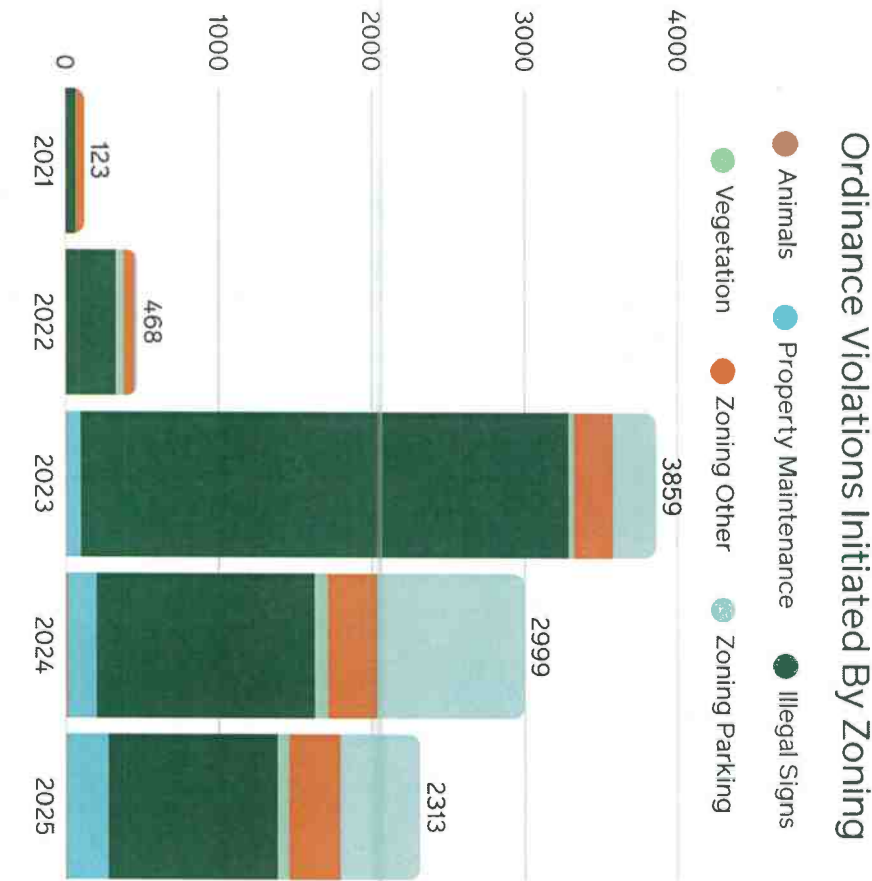
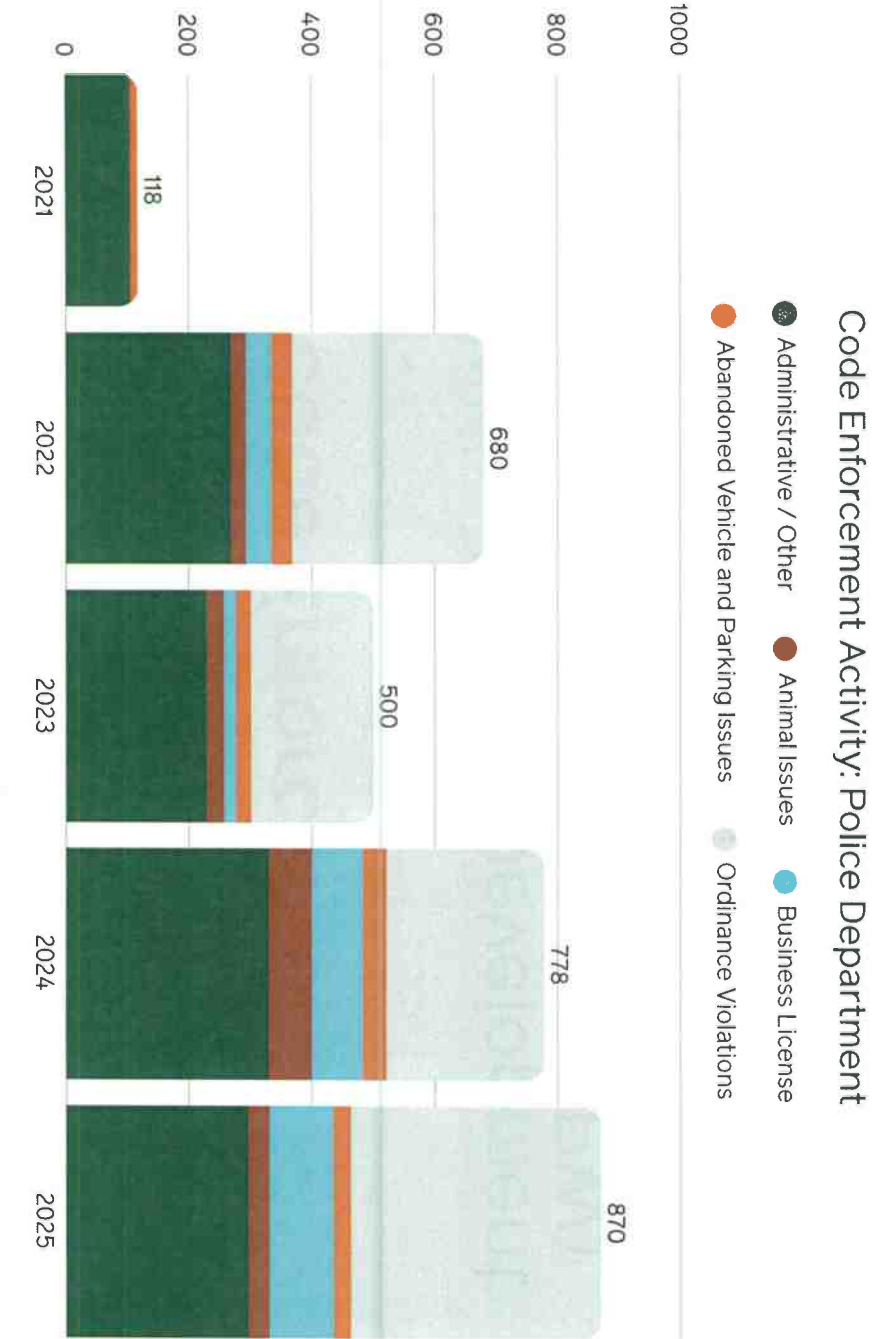
Zoning & Code Enforcement

- The Pelham PD and Development Services & Public Works (DSPW) proactively enforce ordinances to maintain the physical character of the community. A key resident priority



Physical Character

Zoning & Code Enforcement



Pelham 311: Closure Rates

- Between 10/1/24 and 9/30/25, 10,802 total requests were entered into the 311 system.
- Filtering out internal requests such as Communications and Finance brings this to 10,161 requests. Of these, 10,048 have a status of “closed” or “canceled”. This represents a 93% closure rate for requests received in the 2025 fiscal year.
- The most common broad category of requests were requests related to waste collection, with a total of 8,860 (87.19%) requests.



Water & Wastewater

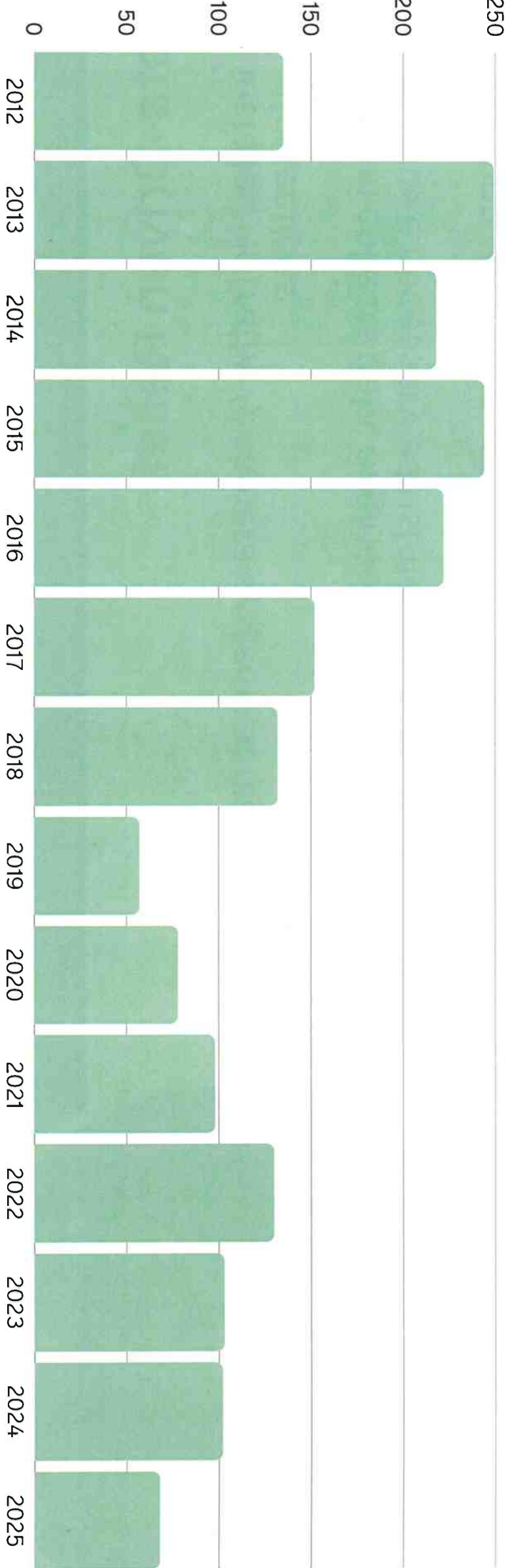
Improvements:

- 72% reduction in water leaks over the last decade
- 31% decrease in monthly water loss over the last 2 years
- Approximately \$250,000 in annual savings from reduced water loss
- Wastewater pumps now run 40 fewer minutes daily
- Avoided \$240,000 plant capacity upgrade



Water & Wastewater Improvements

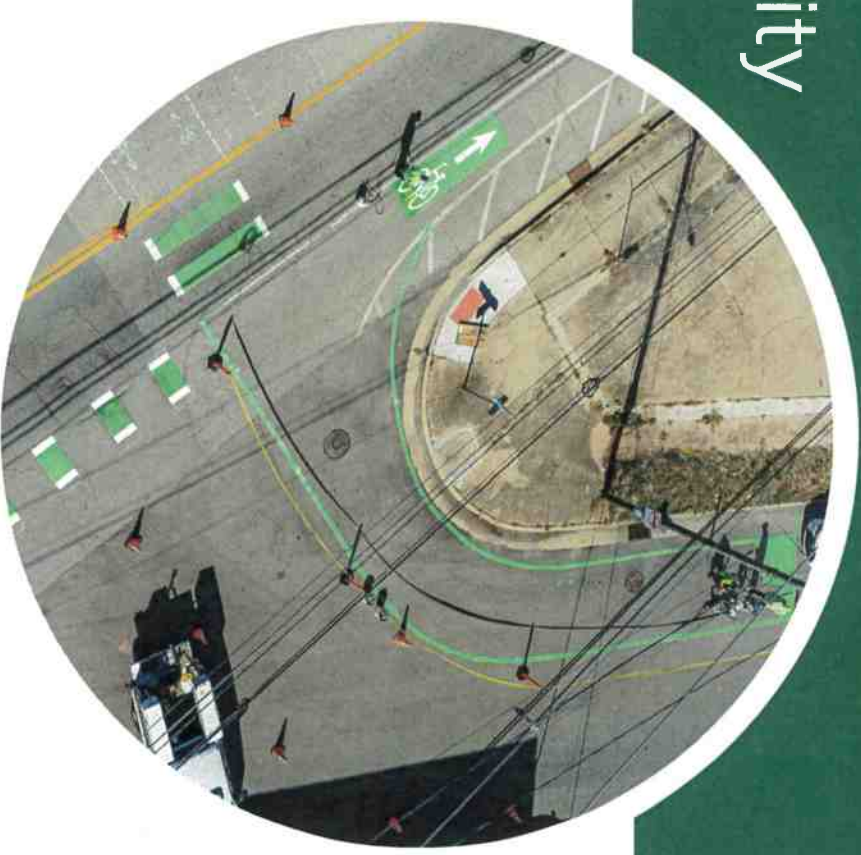
Water System Main Leak History



Traffic Improvements - Key Resident Priority

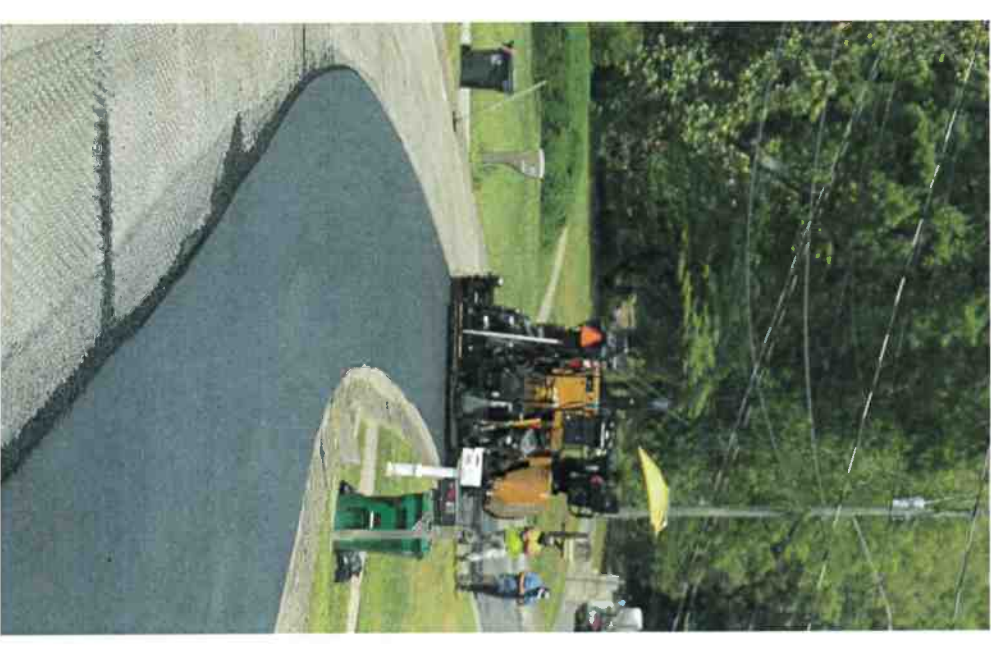
Data-Driven Relief:

- Installed NoTraffic AI camera systems at major intersections
- System collects data, engineers review and analyze and make necessary adjustments
- 10% improvement in vehicles arriving on green at AL-119/I-65 (since May 2024)
- Wait time at northbound ramp reduced from 26s → 16s
- Chandalar/US-31: 48% improvement in arrival-on-green (since May 2025)



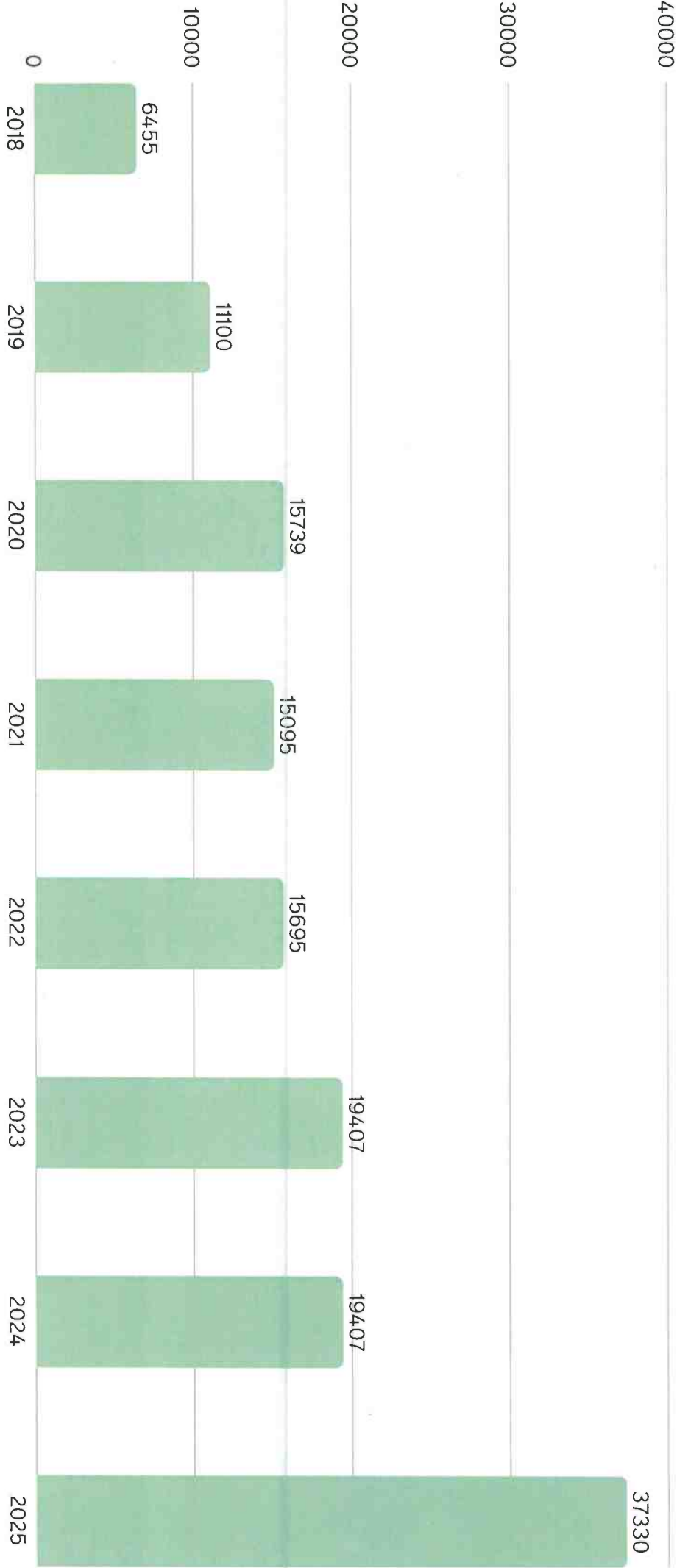
Street Resurfacing - Key Resident Priority

- Budget doubled by 2020-2025 City Council
- Completed 2025 paving plan ahead of schedule and under budget
- 10 additional streets paved
- 187,487 linear feet to be paved over the next five years



Street Resurfacing

Resurfacing (Linear Feet)



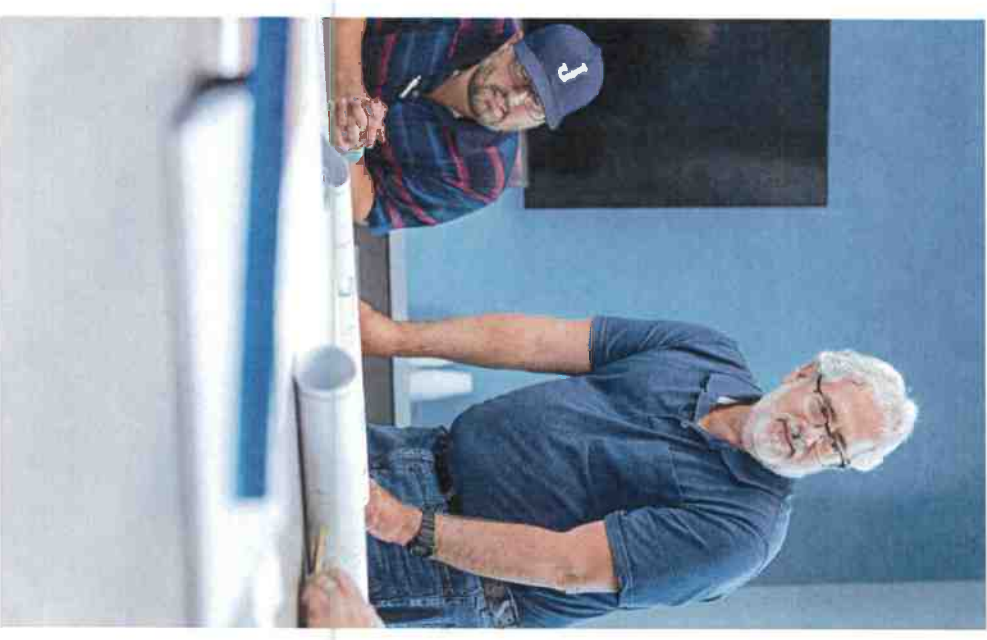
IT Enhancements

- Citywide fiber-optic WAN implemented
- Redundant internet connection added
- Civic Complex Wi-Fi upgraded to support events, Bulls games, and Operations



Investing in Pelham's Future

- Continued focus on long-term capital projects
- Prioritizing road safety, infrastructure resilience, and recreation amenities
- Proactive financial planning for multi-year engineering and construction needs



Continuing the Journey Together

- Upcoming projects: Greenway Trail section, Hwy 31 lighting, Hwy 261 utility work
- Master developer selection for former Live Nation property
- Ongoing development in front of the library
- Commitment to communication, transparency, and citizen engagement



An Extraordinary Team

City of Pelham Employees

- # achievements in 2025





Pelham

Closing

Thank You



Employee Awards & Honors – 2025

Here's just a sample of the awards, honors, and achievements of our City of Pelham employees and departments this year:

- The Pelham Fire Department honored Pelham Racquet Club staff member **Cooper Dorough**, along with two Racquet Club members, for helping to save the life of a heart attack victim.
- The **Pelham Public Library** was voted Family Favorite Library Branch by readers of Birmingham Parent magazine.
- City Clerk **Jonathan Seale** was appointed to the Executive Board of the Alabama Association of Municipal Clerks and Administrators. He will serve from 2026 to 2028.
- Three officers with the Pelham Police Department were honored with the prestigious FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Award. Congratulations to **Master Sergeant Paul Martin**, **Lieutenant Steve Johnson**, and **Lieutenant Chris Johnson**.
- **Officer Lee Tibbets** and **Officer Matthew Staggs** led the Pelham Police Department's efforts for the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics and attended the annual conference in Minneapolis.
- The Pelham Police Department had two medal winners in the World Police & Fire Games. Congratulations to **Detective Daryl Smith** (Gold) and **Officer Jason Barksdale** (Silver)
- The Pelham Fire Department was also well represented in the World Police & Fire Games. **Fire Medic Jake Lanier** won several awards in both the Individual Combat

Challenge and the Tandem Relay. **Retired Fire Medic Buddy Ingleright** won a silver medal in his age group for the triathlon. And Fire Medic Gary Mince competed in seven events while injured!

- **Lieutenant Michael Freeman** graduated from the National Public Safety Innovation Academy, an eight-week executive-level program.
- The Shelby County Chamber honored **Officer Matthew Berry, K-9 Officer Matt Harnden, Sergeant Iliana Hayakahua** (eye-ah-kow-ah), **Officer Carl Perkinson**, and **Sergeant Clint Rhodes** as Pelham Police Officers of the year. They won the award for their teamwork, vigilance, and investigative excellence in a multi-jurisdictional case that led to the arrest of two suspects in possession of more than 5,000 gift cards, 300 of which had been altered, resulting in an estimated \$1 million in losses to businesses across the U.S.
- The Shelby County Chamber honored **Fire Medic David Douglass** for his quick lifesaving actions this summer when he saved a choking seven-month-old child by immediately assessing the situation and removing the obstruction before anyone else could respond.
- **Jacob Bradley**, one of the Operations Managers at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena, received his Certified Ice Technician designation from the United States Ice Arena Association.
- Hockey Director **Josh Harris** was inducted into the Castleton University (Vermont) Athletics Hall of Fame, Class of 2025. He graduated in 2013 and played men's ice hockey.
- Pelham Parks & Recreation received two district-level awards, including **Alicia Walters** for Innovative Program

of the Year – A Very Special Easter Egg Hunt, and the Merit in Parks Award, which went to **Grant Sasser**.

- Assistant City Manager **Justin Smith** was recently elected Southeast Region Vice President of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).
- Finance Director **Jamie Wagner** was selected for the 2025 Birmingham Leadership Program with the Momentum organization.
- Retired Communications & Records Manager **Jeanie Davis** was named Public Safety Telecommunicator of the Year by the American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555.
- Fire Medic **Galen Smitherman** was recognized as the 2025 Firefighter of the Year by the American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555.
- City Manager **Gretchen DiFante** was named President of the Alabama City/County Management Association (ACCMA).
- *These are just the awards and honors that were reported to us.*

