



DATE: April 9, 2026  
TO: Bel Aire Planning Commission  
FROM: City Attorney  
SUBJECT: Final Report Re: Airport Hazard Preventative Zoning Requirements

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**Background:** Obstructions to aircraft during landing or takeoff that exist in areas nearby airports can create hazards posing risks to lives and property. These hazards can impact current and future flight paths, maneuvering space, and overall airport operations. To address this problem, Kansas statute allows local governments to adopt and enforce airport zoning regulations which can prevent hazard development.

Wichita and Sedwick County have shared a joint Airport Hazard Zoning Code since 1995. Properties within the city limits of Bel Aire are not subject to this Code, as the Sedwick County jurisdiction only extends to unincorporated areas of the county. This situation presents a gap in airport safety coverage for Colonel James Jabara Airport (Jabara), as a portion of its footprint is adjacent to and located within the city limits of Bel Aire.

Jabara is a rapidly growing general aviation airport which is home base to approximately 150 jet and propeller-driven aircraft. It is also home for the National Center for Aviation Training and WSU Tech, which is currently building a \$30 million expansion. It is a significant economic driver located approximately a mile south of Sunflower Commerce Park. It is a valuable asset in the City's total economic development opportunity package, yet requires no financial contributions from the City.

**Analysis:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a new Advisory Circular in September 2022 covering Airport Land Use Compatibility Planning intended to aid local jurisdictions developing airport land use compatibility plans. The Wichita Airport Authority (WAA) hired a consultant to review the Wichita-Sedgwick County Airport Hazard Zoning Code in light of this new FAA guidance and to propose necessary changes. After full review by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, both Wichita and Sedgwick County have repealed the old Code and adopted a comprehensive replacement Airport Hazard Zoning Code. This includes a new Airport Hazard Zoning Map covering all of Sedgwick County.

The ordinance proposed here incorporates the provisions of the 9-16-25 Wichita-Sedgwick County Airport Hazard Zoning Code which pertain to Jabara Airport, and therefore impact the nearby properties within the Bel Aire city limits. The provisions limit the height of structures, objects and natural vegetation, and other hazards to air navigation within areas nearby Jabara. This ordinance defines specific hazards, establishes boundaries and outlines procedures for modifying the restrictions for modifying the restrictions and boundaries of protection zones. It follows the land use compatibility guidance from the FAA, ensuring that there will be no conflict with air service and airport development at Jabara.

Any applicant proposing any structure, object or natural vegetation that exceeds the height limits specified in the Airport Hazard Zoning Map or proposing any tower or structure of any height that

transmits signals must use the FAA's web-based Notice Criteria Tool before submitting the proposal to the City's Director of Community Development.

On 12/11/25, the Planning Commission shared concerns regarding drainage, ponds/birds, and businesses/solar panels. The drainage ponds near Jabara Airport are established drainage infrastructure that have existed for many years. The drainage ponds do attract bird activity. The airport expressed no concerns regarding their presence or the associated bird activity.

As part of future development, some businesses may consider incorporating solar panels. To support ongoing coordination and compatibility with airport operations, the airport indicated a preference to be notified of any applicable permits, including those associated with solar panel installations.

On 02/12/26, the Planning Commission did not share any additional concerns or questions.

**Financial Considerations:** Adoption of this ordinance will not create any financial obligations for the City.

**Legal Considerations:** A draft ordinance has been prepared and updated with comments from the Airport Zoning Commission and City staff.

**Recommended Action:** Airport Zoning Commission approve the final report and submit to the City Council with the recommendation that airport zoning regulations be considered and adopted in an ordinance.

**Attachments:**

Draft ordinance

Sedgwick County Airport Hazard Zoning Map