

City of Bel Aire

STAFF REPORT

DATE: 01/12/2026

TO: Bel Aire City Council
FROM: Paula Downs
RE: PEC Work Order 26-03

STAFF COMMUNICATION

FOR MEETING OF	1/20/2026
CITY COUNCIL	
INFORMATION ONLY	

SUMMARY:

PEC Work Order 26-03 is for planning services to update the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for the City of Bel Aire.

Zoning and subdivision codes are the foundation of land-use planning and development within a community. They regulate how land can be used, the types of structures allowed, and the standards for building design and placement. However, Bel Aire’s codes have not been updated for quite some time. This creates challenges to be able to fully address development needs.

Alignment with Comprehensive Plan

The city has approved the Bel Aire 2035 Comprehensive Plan. This document establishes the community’s framework for long-term growth and development and sets the stage for the zoning and subdivision regulations. The plan outlines goals for land use, infrastructure, and economic development. The zoning and subdivision regulations are designed to implement this vision by setting parameters for how land is developed.

The plan includes a future land use map which identifies areas for residential, commercial, and industrial development and sets priorities for density and open spaces. Zoning districts and their permitted uses are established from this information. In addition, the regulations establish lot sizes, building heights and setbacks to align with priorities.

The comprehensive plan sets the direction, and the regulations provides the tools as to how the plan is implemented.

Updating the regulations will create standards that allow for consistent and more predictable development and address changes occurring in development.

Goals of the Zoning Code Update

1. Modernize Outdated Language and Structure

- a. Revise terminology to reflect current planning practices and legal standards.
- b. Reorganize the code for clarity, usability, and predictability (example: fence and sign codes incorporated into zoning regulations)

2. Fill Regulatory Gaps

- a. Add missing standards and definitions to address emerging land-use trends.
- b. Ensure comprehensive coverage to prevent ambiguity.

3. Improve Consistency and Clarity

- a. Eliminate conflicting provisions and ambiguous language.
- b. Provide clear, enforceable standards that reduce interpretation challenges.

4. Align with Community Vision and Comprehensive Plan

- a. Ensure zoning regulations implement the goals and policies outlined in the adopted comprehensive plan.
- b. Support desired development patterns.

5. Ensure Legal Compliance and Best Practices

- a. Update provisions to comply with current state and federal laws.
- b. Integrate recognized best practices in zoning and subdivision regulation.

6. Increase Transparency and Predictability

- a. Make the code easier for residents, developers, and staff to understand and apply.
- b. Provide clear processes for permitting and development review.

Ongoing Review and Maintenance of Zoning Regulations

Once the zoning regulations have been updated, the City will establish a process for regular review and incremental updates to ensure the code remains current, effective, and aligned with community goals. This process will include:

1. **Scheduled Reviews:** Conduct a comprehensive review of the zoning code at least every 3 years, or sooner if significant changes in state law, development trends, or community priorities occur.

2. **Monitoring Emerging Issues:** Track new land-use trends, technologies, and best practices to identify areas where the code may need refinement.
3. **Alignment with Comprehensive Plan Updates:** Update zoning provisions whenever the comprehensive plan is revised to maintain consistency between policy and regulation.
4. **Continuous Improvement:** Implement minor amendments as needed to address ambiguities, improve clarity, and respond to evolving legal requirements.

This proactive approach will help maintain a zoning code that is flexible, responsive, and supportive of the community's long-term vision.

The scope of work and proposed work order amount was included in the 2026 budget.

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the PEC Work Order.