

Answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Q: Is the GRC Overlay a mass rezoning of properties along Greeno Road, or a rezoning of any kind of any property in Fairhope?

A: No. The GRC is an *amendment* to the City of Fairhope Zoning Ordinance creating an overlay district as allowable by Article V, Special Districts. Currently there are eight (8) existing special districts in the Zoning Ordinance.

Q: If there are no re-zonings, and the underlying zoning district along Greeno Road does not change, exactly what does the GRC do?

A: The GRC Overlay creates additional requirements and restrictions for properties located entirely or partially within 400' of the Centerline of Greeno Road (US HWY 98) on both the west side and east side. The GRC also enhances the landscaping requirements of Ordinance 1444, Tree/Landscape Ordinance. (Pending approval of the GRC, Ordinance 1444 will require amendments to reconcile it with the GRC)

Q: What about existing single-family residences?

A: *No provision of the GRC applies to properties zoned R-A, R-1, R-2 or R-3 which are the zoning classifications that only allow single family residential uses. Additionally, as stated previously, the underlying zoning districts within the GRC are not changed. As to all zoning classifications, the "applicability" section of the GRC provides: "Non-conforming uses, structures, lots, and other non-conformities existing within the GRC at the time of establishment shall be governed by Article VII, non-conformities".*

Q: How does the GRC address parking, traffic, drainage, buffering against residential areas, etc.?

A: 1) *Parking* – all existing parking requirements of the zoning ordinance remain in effect, including the requirements for Low Impact Development (LID) techniques (permeable pavers, permeable concrete, etc.) for parking areas with 12 or more spaces.

2) *Traffic* – as required by the existing Article IV Section D. of the zoning ordinance, and Article IV Section C.1.h. of the subdivision regulations a traffic study, including a roadway improvements plan, (depending upon the trip generation estimate prepared by a licensed professional engineer) may be required and is applicable to all developments and includes any developments occurring within the GRC. Further, all ALDOT ROW permit requirements remain in effect.

3) *Drainage* – most developments trigger the drainage plan requirements of the subdivision regulations or are required to include a drainage system design by the Building Official and must be prepared by a licensed professional engineer. Drainage improvements require that post development flows of stormwater are equal to or less than pre-development flows of stormwater. *Further, Low Impact Development (LID) techniques are required that remove 80% of the Total Suspended Solids (TSS) of the stormwater from the site.*

4) *Buffering* – A site plan review is mandatory for all new construction, demolition, Class III renovations, sidewalks, uses, private improvements, and landscape alterations of any kind occurring within the GRC overlay zones, with the exception of single-family residential zones R-A, R-1, R-2 or R-3. Further, a landscape plan must be submitted concurrently with the site plan review application and must include the screening and buffering requirements of the Tree/Landscape Ordinance as applicable, for any commercial, industrial, PUD, or multi-family unit abutting a residential zoning district. Buffering methods include: an 8’ fence and four-foot-wide strip of evergreen plantings 6’ tall, or a staggered double row of evergreen plantings 6’ in width and 6’ in height providing a nearly impervious buffer, or natural undisturbed forest providing a nearly impervious visual barrier.

Q: Does the GRC re-route traffic on Greeno Road? Will the GRC require delivery trucks and other commercial vehicles to pass through residential areas to access new developments within the GRC?

A: No and No. See comments related to the traffic impact study and traffic improvements plan mentioned above. The GRC, as a component of the Zoning Ordinance, does not alter traffic patterns. As stated previously, a mandatory site plan review is required for each development within the GRC, which is a review by staff, considered by the Planning Commission, and final approval granted by the City Council.

Q: Why is the GRC 400’ wide each side of the centerline of Greeno Road / (Why 400’ and not a longer or shorter distance?)

A: The 400’ width captures all properties necessary to create an “area of influence” along the corridor for which the GRC aids in managing the development pattern of Greeno Road.

Q: What about properties that are longer than 400’ long?

A: The entire property through which the GRC boundary passes is included in the GRC.

Q: Does the Greeno Road Corridor address light pollution / light trespass?

A: Yes. The lighting standard in Article IV, Section B.3. of the zoning ordinance has been completely rewritten and modernized, and is modeled after the lighting requirements of Walton County, FL. If adopted, these new lighting standards apply to ALL zoned areas, not just the GRC.

Q: How long is the GRC Overlay, and what about properties not within the city limits?

A: The GRC begins at Dale Road / Dale Drive on the north end of Fairhope, roughly aligned with the northern terminus of Rock Creek, and terminates at Old Battles Road, for a length of about 6.5 miles. THE GRC IS ONLY APPLICABLE TO PROPERTIES WITHIN THE FAIRHOPE CITY LIMITS. Properties that are currently outside the city limits are not subject to the GRC (or the city's zoning ordinance generally). Property subsequently annexed into the city will automatically be subject to the requirements of the GRC.

Q: Explain the approval process, specifically what is done by the Planning Commission and what is done by the City Council.

A: As mentioned previously, the GRC Overlay is an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. Final approval of the zoning ordinance is made by the *Fairhope City Council*. The review process begins with the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council. That recommendation may be for approval, denial, or approval with changes to the zoning ordinance amendment as recommended by the Planning Commission. The City Council may approve, approve with changes, deny, continue for further study, or "send it back" to the Planning Commission for additional study by the planning department or Planning Commission.

Q: Why have I not received a letter in the mail about the GRC?

A: To, date Planning and Zoning Staff has not requested the Planning Commission Act upon (take a vote) on the GRC. As a result, there is no action by the Planning Commission for which written notice in the form of a letter to affected citizens is required. The various meetings and work sessions have received the required public notice as is the case with any regular meeting of the various bodies of the City of Fairhope. No action by the Planning Commission is requested at today's meeting.

Q: OK, when will I received a letter in the mail about the GRC?

A: Prior to the meeting at which action by the Planning Commission (a vote) is requested, *all property owners affected by the GRC* will received written notice in the mail.

Q: In a 'nutshell', what does the GRC restrict?

A: Drive-through lanes (except Southern Edge District), backlit or illuminated plastic signs, neon signs, video boards, blank, featureless walls, flat roofs without parapets or cornices, unscreened rooftop equipment, and certain uses.

Q: In a 'nutshell', what does the GRC require or encourage?

A: Enhanced landscaping (see the illustrations), requires a "build to" line, parking in the rear of buildings, mandatory site plan review, mandatory landscape review, requires four-sided architecture, and encourages retrofit of older shopping centers.