

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project Name	Rooftop Solar Criteria for a New Category of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness
Proposal	To establish design criteria for rooftop solar installations in the Entrance Corridor Overlay District to be used by staff in the review of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness applications.
ARB Meeting Date	January 20, 2026
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

HISTORY

At the September 2, 2025, meeting, the Architectural Review Board (ARB) reviewed and approved three applications for rooftop solar installations. At the meeting, the ARB expressed interest in developing design criteria by which future applications of this type could be reviewed and approved by staff and asked which other localities had solar guidelines. A Resolution of Intent to amend the County Code to add a category of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness for rooftop solar installations was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 10, 2025 (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION

Virginia State Code section 15.2-2306 is the enabling authority for local entrance corridors and historic districts. A search found 48 localities (other than Albemarle) with ordinances that invoke that code section. Of those 48, 21 localities were found to have design guidelines or standards for their overlay districts that include specific reference to solar installations. Those guidelines/standards are summarized in Attachment 2. (Of the 21 localities, five have corridor overlays and 19 have historic districts. Two of the 21 are counties and the others are cities or towns.) A review of the guidelines/standards revealed that many of the localities employ similar standards. The guidelines for historic districts tend to be stricter, with a focus on limiting impact to historic materials and preferring installations to be located on non-historic or secondary buildings. Drawing from this research and from the ARB's recent approvals, criteria have been drafted for rooftop solar facilities in Albemarle's Entrance Corridors. Those criteria, and images illustrating some of the design issues referenced in the criteria, are provided in Attachment 3.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the ARB adopt the criteria listed in Attachment 3.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [Rooftop Solar Criteria: Adopted Resolution of Intent for a New Category of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness](#)

Attach. 2: [Rooftop Solar Criteria: Summary of Virginia localities with solar guidelines](#)

Attach. 3: [Rooftop Solar Criteria: Draft design criteria for rooftop solar installations in the Entrance Corridor Overlay District](#)