



Rio Vista Community Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 254

St. Michaels MD 21663

A Deed Restricted Community Incorporated in 1954

Overview of the Construction & Architectural Policies/Guidelines for Rio Vista

The Board of Governors for the Rio Vista Community Association (RVCA) encourages property owners in Rio Vista to improve their homes and their properties to maintain and improve the property values in the community. Therefore, a simple one-page form is provided to obtain approval **BEFORE** county permitting is requested. As always, we appreciate your support of this process, and should you have suggestions and feedback for improvement, please contact the Architectural Committee at RVCAarchitectural@gmail.com Additional forms may be found at <https://riovistacom.org/architectural/>

A **Construction Approval Request Form (CARF)** must be submitted to, and approved by, the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) prior to obtaining county building permits for and prior to beginning any new construction, new shed, fence, or renovation involving the change in the footprint or roof line of a structure.

1. The ARC approves all Construction and Architectural applications unless there is a serious conflict in which case the homeowner may use the **Appeals Process** found with the CARF form.
2. The ARC reviews and considers additions and renovations for the purpose of enhancing a single- family residence. Additions or renovations for the purpose of creating a short-term rental or multi- family use will not be considered.
3. With respect to properties within Rio Vista, all requests for variances to the county code must be submitted to and reviewed by the ARC and the full Board of Governors.
4. The ARC approves reviews and approves requests only for homeowners whose RVCA annual fees are current.
5. **Documentation Required:**
 - a. Completed CARF (available at <https://riovista.org/architectural/>)
 - b. Plat showing setbacks and location of improvement
 - c. Color and style choices (URL or brand/color and brand/style), and
 - d. Exterior elevation renderings/construction drawings.
6. **Paper Streets**:** Any proposed improvement that utilizes a paper street must submit a revised surveyor's plat indicating newly set property markers installed at the centerline of the paper road as part of the CARF process.
 - a. The CARF Application *may not utilize any paper road for purposes of a fence or structure of any kind regardless of Quitclaim status.*
 - A 25' setback is still required from the rear property line.
 - b. A CARF that includes a paper road that has not been properly deeded, recorded, and staked as described in 6(a) will not be considered.
7. **New Residential Structures**
 - a. Must contain a minimum of 1200 square feet of heated living space.
 - b. Are limited to a total of 6,000 square feet of heated living space.
 - c. The height of any structure is limited to 2 ½ stories (see Talbot County height restrictions)
8. **Roof pitch** is limited to a minimum of 12/4.
9. To maintain the character of the Rio Vista Community, the ARC:
 - a. *Approves requests for:*
 - construction of homes, sheds, outbuildings, community free libraries and additions/renovations, that are similar in design and color to surrounding homes.
 - "Green" construction (new or renovation) to include one or more Solar panels.
 - b. *Disapproves requests for the following:*
 - construction of the following styles: 'A' Frames, modern, geodesic domes, log cabins/log constructed homes, or structures built on stilts/pilings.
 - large Satellite Earth Station Antennas
 - short-term rental vacation homes/additions, or mobile homes/trailers
 - designs that are not suitable or desirable for aesthetic or other reasons
 - fences or any structures on a quitclaim portion of a paper street
10. **Setbacks** for all structures, including garages, sheds, boathouses, playhouses, or other outbuildings:
 - a. *25 feet* from any road, including paper streets. This requirement remains in effect even if there is a Quitclaim of a portion of the paper street. ** See [Quitclaim Process HERE](#).
 - b. *10 feet* from an adjoining property



- c. New homes/renovations, additions and planned structures must conform to setbacks, impervious surface and Buffer Management Mitigation requirements as established by Talbot County/State of Maryland.
 - d. The placement of buildings or other structures as planned must take into consideration the outlook from the adjacent or neighboring property.
11. **Fences**
- a. Limited to six feet high
 - b. Not to extend past the front line of the house toward the street
 - c. On the water, not to extend past the back line of the house toward the water
 - d. The 'front facade' of the fence faces the neighboring property and the street
 - e. Chain link fences are not approved.
 - f. When replacing a fence of the *same style and color and in the same location* a CARF is NOT required.
12. **Pools**
- a. Must conform to county requirements (fencing and pool)
 - b. Must conform to Rio Vista setback requirements (fencing and pool)
 - c. Pools on the waterfront are allowed if they have a cover so that a fence to the water is not required.
13. **Sheds / Auxiliary Buildings**
- a. Either installed or constructed on a property, are considered permanent structures that must meet Rio Vista setbacks and other architectural requirements.
 - b. Storage and work sheds must be constructed in a style consistent with the construction style of the home.
 - c. Shed EXCEPTION when the shed is 300 square feet or less. *If the shed is less than 300 square feet, then a 12' 6" setback from the rear property line (that abuts a paper street) is allowed*
 - d. When replacing a shed, a CARF is required.
14. **Painting/Shutters/Doors/Roofs**
- a. When replacing with the same color and style, a CARF is not required.
 - b. If changing the color and/or style, a CARF IS required.
15. In environmental matters such as driveways, waterfronts, buffer management, mitigation plans, impervious surface requirements, building codes (house construction, electrical and plumbing) and docks, the ARC defers to the appropriate governmental agency.
16. Approval by the ARC does not release applicants from local building code requirements including, but not limited to permitting, construction, electrical, plumbing, or other county inspections.
17. Revisions to the original approved request should submit copy of original marked "REVISION" and note changes to the original plan.
18. Typical approvals take approximately one week.

Reference Guides for Talbot County Code Requirements.

NOTE: RVCA Architectural Guidelines are in some cases more stringent than County Codes. RVCA Guidelines take priority over County Codes (setbacks and fence requirements.) Please be sure to check with the Permits Office to ensure that you have the latest version, as Zoning, Building and Environmental Codes are subject to change without notice.

PERMITTING and INSPECTIONS GUIDES: <http://www.talbotcountymd.gov/index.php?page=Guides>

For More Information, go to
www.riovistacom.org/architectural-standards/
and click on Architectural Documents