

RIO Task Force

Meeting 4: August 13, 2025

Tonight's Agenda

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Task Force Admin**
 - a) **Operating Principles Update**
 - b) **Meeting Minutes June-11 and June-18**
3. **Public Transportation**
4. **RIO Bylaw Discussion**
 - a) **Building Height**
 - b) **District Eligibility and Density**
 - c) **Signs, Parking**
 - d) **Building Conversions**
 - e) **Mixed-Use Projects**
5. **Notes on Next meeting**
6. **Adjourn**

Meeting Minutes

- ☐ **Questions / Corrections / Clarifications**
- ☐ **Motion / vote to approve**

List of Tonight's Discussion Topics

- A. Overall RIO Approval Process
- B. Uses
- C. Proximity to Commercial and Public Transportation
- D. Lot Requirements: Size, Setbacks
- E. Building Requirements: Height, FAR, other**
- F. Open Space and Amenities**
- G. District Eligibility and Density**
- H. OTHER: Signs, Parking, Off-Street Parking, etc.**

RIO Zoning Bylaw Review/Discussion

Topic E: Building Requirements

Building Requirements

J. Building Height

➤ **4 stories and 45 feet**

- New construction
- Asstd elderly living, indep. elderly housing, and conventional multi-unit housing
- Located in: Business/A, Industrial/A, or Lower Falls Village Commercial Districts

➤ **3 stories and 36 feet**

- New construction
- Asstd elderly living, indep. elderly housing, and conventional multi-unit housing
- Located in: Single Residence Districts and General Residence Districts

➤ **3 stories and 36 feet**

- Nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities

TO CONSIDER

- Other 'residential districts' not defined (e.g., Limited Residence, Town House, ...)
- Parcel in multiple districts: if building is sits across districts, must it change height along the zoning line? Adhere to height of the predominant district? Other?

Building Requirements

G. Floor Area Ratio

- “... not subject to floor area ratio requirements”

RIO Zoning Bylaw Review/Discussion

Topic G: District Eligibility and Density

District Eligibility and Density

H. Applicability

- **Assisted Elderly Living or Independent Living**
 - 1,400 ft² per unit (31.1 units/acre)
 - Max 150 units in development site
- **Conventional multi-unit housing**
 - 1,800 ft² per unit (24.2 units/acre)
- **Nursing Home or Skilled Nursing Facility**
 - Max 250 beds in development site

TO CONSIDER

- What if RIO defined a variable density in different underlying zoning districts?
 - Density table by zoning district, or
 - Algorithm to define density based on underlying district density
- Would Washington Court have been acceptable if a lower density was required over the SR10 district (e.g., what if 6 units or 8 units was allowed?)

District Eligibility and Density

B. Applicability

➤ **Current RIO**

- “The RIO shall be considered as overlaying other zoning districts”

➤ **Original RIO (1998)**

- To provide residential reuse incentive for parcels where one or more of the following conditions apply:
 - General site conditions and access constraints impede long term successful commercial or industrial use;
 - The parcels that border the residential districts and their residential re-use would extend and complement the character and function of the existing surrounding neighborhood;
 - The parcels border unique natural features, open space, or historic resources which would be better preserved and enjoyed by the public over the long term through residential rather than commercial or industrial uses.

TO CONSIDER

- If density varies by zoning district, why need to restrict the underlying districts?

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- H. OTHER: Signs, Parking, Off-Street Parking, etc.**

RIO Zoning Bylaw Review/Discussion

Topic H: Other Sections in RIO bylaw

- Mixed use
- Conversions
- Signs
- Parking

District Eligibility and Density

K. Signs

- **Compliance with 5.18 Signs rules**
- **If RIO is in Single Residence or General Residence,**
 - 2 permanent signs per lot (1 wall sign, 1 standing sign)
 - Max total signage area = 25 ft² (9 wall sign, 16 standing sign)

District Eligibility and Density

L. Off Street Parking

- **Compliance with 5.17 Off Street Parking**
- **Off Street Parking defines Min Parking Spaces per Use and Zoning District:**
 - Conventional Multi-Unit Housing in RIO: 2 spaces per unit
 - Assisted or Independent Elderly Living in RIO: 0.65 spaces per unit
 - Nursing Home / Skilled Nursing Facility in RIO: 1 space per 5 beds

District Eligibility and Density

M. Building Conversion

- **Conversion of existing building is permitted, if ...**
 - Special permit granted by Planning Board
 - No expansion to exceed the height limitations, or (if the building is > 45 ft) the current height of the building
 - No maximum residential density
 - If building to be converted is currently non-conforming, the provisions of **5.1 Pre-Existing Non-Conforming Uses, Structures and Lots** shall apply. An application shall not be made to the ZBA under Section 5.1 prior to the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board.

District Eligibility and Density

N. Mixed Use Projects

- **Mixture of conventional housing types**
 - Example: town houses mixed with an apartment building
 - “permitted up to the maximum density of 24 units per acre”
- **Mixture of conventional and senior housing**
 - Example: 75 conventional units + 80 assisted units together
 - Permitted within the numbers/ratios defined
- **If project provides 100+ elderly units or 50+ conventional units:**
 - 10,000 ft² retail space, in a separate structure, is permitted

RIO Review Discussion Topics

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How We Move Forward From Here

What we have done

- A. Walk-through Discussions of RIO Components
 - What the bylaw says (and doesn't say)
 - Identified potential conflicts, confusions
 - In some cases, things members like and don't like
- B. Some examples of overlay districts in other towns
 - How they are constructed, etc.
- c. Our individual personal thinking on what could or should be the scope of RIO

**ARE WE READY TO START DISCUSSING
POTENTIAL CHANGES TO RIO?**

Next Meeting: Tuesday September 9

Key Agenda Items September 9

- We agreed we would review the **Strategic Housing Plan**
- Now that we are finishing our “internal” review of the bylaw, we need to begin including **Citizen Speak** in our meetings
- We need to start floating, debating, voting on specific proposals to change the RIO bylaw

Potential Approach

Task Force Members Offer Change Proposals

- **Be Prepared the following at the Next Meeting**
 - **Section of Bylaw proposed to change** (e.g., “F. Minimum Open Space”)
 - Executive Summary of the change, and why
 - Additional details, as necessary, to explain how it will work
 - The benefit of adopting a change like this
 - **** NOT YET WRITE THE PRECISE TEXT ****
- **Task Force Open Discussion**
 - Start at the Top / higher level (e.g., Purpose, Applicability, Uses) or with fundamental scope change proposals
 - Save details like Signs, Setback, Mixed-Use rules for later

THIS NEXT PHASE MAY TAKE A LOT OF TIME! WE SHOULD PROBABLY PENCIL IN ANOTHER MEETING DATE

Meeting Dates and Potential/Projected Flow

Meeting Date	Key Deliverables
September 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Comment • Strategic Housing Plan • Discussion / debate of future RIO provisions
<i>added meeting?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion / debate of future RIO provisions (continued)
October 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Comment • Review 1st draft “new RIO” proposal (summary of provisions discussed and voted by Task Force) – continued discussion
November 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Comment • Continued refinement of “new RIO” proposal, finalize voting • Summarize key messages to report to Planning Board
December 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Comment • Review/advise warrant and initial bylaw write-up materials
January ??	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Planning Board’s bylaw wording / presentation materials • Celebrate the work of the Task Force

Dec 1 or 15



**Report to
Planning
Board**