

RIIS Consensus Decision Making Policy

(Policy on Meetings)

The RIIS Board makes decisions by a modified consensus process inspired by the process used by the Local Context, Inc. and designed to ensure that all members are heard, power is shared, decisions reflect the needs of all stakeholders, minority positions are respected and addressed, and the Board can make timely decisions.

This is the consensus process:

1. **Define the problem.** The Board Chair introduces the issue. members ask questions to explore the scope of the issue. The Board works toward a clear statement of the issue.
2. **Set the stage.** The Board discusses the issue broadly. What are the facts? Who are the stakeholders? What are their needs? What are the councilors' feelings and opinions about the issue?
3. **Lay out options.** Members of the Board are invited to suggest approaches to the issue. They explore different approaches through dialog.
4. **Seek connection.** The Board connects the common elements of suggested approaches and finds key points of agreement. They assemble these into a proposal.
5. **Tumble rocks.** The Board rumbles over the fine points of the proposal and any points of contention. As needed, the Board convenes small groups to work through individual issues. The Board amends and refines the proposal.
6. **Test for agreement.** The Chair presents the refined proposal and asks whether anyone is against the proposal. Dissent may include:
 - a. **Reservations** by board members who may wish to support the proposal but still have reservations about some elements and believe further consideration is warranted;
 - b. **Stand-asides** by board members who are not prepared to approve the proposal but are prepared to support it publicly if the Board approves it; and
 - c. **Blocks** by board members who fundamentally disagree with the core of the proposal, cannot publicly support it, and believe it should not be approved.
7. If a majority of the Board dissents in any of these ways, there is no consensus and the Board may continue refining the proposal or develop alternative proposals. If two or more Councilors block, the block resolution process begins. If a majority of board members approve the proposal and there are fewer than two blocks, consensus is reached and the proposal approved.
8. **Follow through.** As the decision is implemented, the Board communicates with those responsible to guide and address issues as they arise.

