

Tax Relief Evaluation Task Force

February 26, 2026

Approved March 12, 2026

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the Tax Relief Evaluation Task Force convened in person and via Zoom at 8:30 AM.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Salinger (Co-chair) called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. TF members present in person: Mr. Feeley, Mr. Piper, Ms. Quackenbush (Co-chair). Ms. Sweeney was present on Zoom. Ms. Rovelli (Select Board liaison) was present in person.

The minutes of the meeting of February 19 were approved as submitted by unanimous vote of members in attendance.

Ms. Salinger thanked Ms. Quackenbush and Mr. Piper for all their work on the survey and impact analysis. Ms. Quackenbush may be unable to participate in the activities of the Task Force for some time after this weekend because of a family emergency.

Survey and Impact Analysis

Ms. Quackenbush noted that simplifying assumptions were used in presenting the results. Most importantly, a break point of household income of \$150,000 per year---rather than 30% of income on housing expenses---was used to differentiate those who are potentially housing cost stressed. This is approximately 70% of the Concord median household income of \$212,000 a year. \$2 million was used as the break point for higher and lower priced homes. These breaks simplify the presentation of data since they coincide with the break points in the income and house price ranges in the survey. In addition, the \$2 million house price is a little less than the current “break even” assessed value for the RTE of \$2.4 million.

Ms. Quackenbush explained how she scaled up to town-wide values from the survey results. The extrapolation was greater for renters, given the lower response rate among renters. Ms. Sweeney opined that this method is valid as long as the limitations are discussed.

Discussion followed on the difficulties of quantifying the number of units as opposed to the number of parcels. The Assessor’s data is for “parcels,” but the information in the Housing Production Plan is by housing unit. The Task Force is interested in calculating impacts on individual units (rental or ownership), not parcels.

Another analytic problem occurs in allocating the number of “non-qualifying parcels,” as it is impossible to determine for some parcels whether they could have qualified, but did not apply. There were definitely survey respondents who could have qualified for the RTE but did not know how to do so, or thought their home was not eligible. Approximately 1,500 parcels below the breakeven valuation did not get the RTE. The Task Force supported the analyses as explained by Ms. Quackenbush and Mr. Piper, but indicated the need to explain each assumption used and the individual steps in the calculation of town-wide impacts.

One number of particular interest in the analysis is the number of RTE recipients needing help with housing expenses (income <\$150,000 per household per year) *who are under the age of 65*. The projected number of such households is approximately 240. These households would receive no benefit if the Town were to shift to 41C½, which only helps elders. This estimate is relevant to the question of whether the RTE is effective in making the

town more accessible for home buyers with modest incomes. The RTE currently provides benefit to seniors who may be struggling to stay in their homes, but may be less important to maintain economic diversity.

Task Force members think that the quotes from comments on the survey are important, and reinforce the findings from the qualitative interviews. We should use the quotes, but also find a way to present the general themes revealed by the quotes. We also need to clearly differentiate the survey quote analysis from the analysis of the qualitative interviews. There is probably also a caveat to be stated that the voluntary nature of the survey likely oversamples those with strong opinions for and against the RTE.

Since some portion of eligible homeowners did not apply for the RTE, the Task Force discussed what would happen if these properties did receive an RTE. Ms. Quackenbush and Mr. Piper said they had run sensitivity analyses, and an increase in the overall qualification rate would not make a big difference in the “break even” valuation, or the benefits (and costs) received by taxpayers at different house valuations. Members thought this analysis should be presented in the report.

Landlords/Rental Units

Interviews with landlords indicate that they do attempt to pass increased costs on to tenants. They may not do so immediately when hit with a cost increase, such as the increase in property taxes resulting from implementation of the RTE. Any “pass through” depends on the market--- a landlord might not increase the rent for a particularly desirable tenant, or when the market is soft and higher rents might result in more vacancies. However, in the long run, the costs are passed through.

Report Preparation

Ms. Rovelli has tentatively placed the report of the Task Force on the Select Board agenda for April 13. This will need to be done with a relatively limited number of slides.

Ms. Salinger will attempt to have an integrated draft of the report by the next meeting. The Findings and Options for Select Board Consideration would form the basis of the Conclusions and Executive Summary.

Net Meetings

March 5 8:30 AM

March 19 8:30 AM

The Task Force meeting adjourned at 9:56 AM.