

Deck It: Town Vote Puts Covered Front-Entry Setbacks in Focus

October 23, 2026

BURLINGTON, MA - October 23, 2026 -

Burlington Town Meeting voted on September 28, 2026, in favor of Article 14, an amendment addressing covered front entries and porches in the town's RO residential district. The vote could change how some homeowners plan an entry near the front property line, subject to final bylaw review and the rules that apply to their particular lot. Deck It offers covered-porch and front-entry work in Burlington, making the public decision relevant to an existing service rather than a newly announced company program.

The September warrant proposed retaining the 25-foot front-yard requirement while letting certain entries extend to within 20 feet of the front lot line. Its proposed language limits an enclosed entry to 10 feet in exterior width. An open porch, portico or entry could reach the same line if it did not exceed the width of the house. Those are the warrant's dimensions, not a confirmed set of final instructions for a permit application. Local reporting says members made minor wording changes before voting.

Burlington Access Television reported that members debated whether to allow front structures closer to the property line and ultimately voted for the amendment. Residents who favored it described wanting a porch without the expense and process of a variance. The decision concerns a particular front-yard placement issue; it does not move the house's required setback or make every proposed deck eligible for the exception.

The town's article backup explains why a roof can change the question. Uncovered steps or a ramp may project into the front setback, while adding a cover can bring an entry under different zoning treatment. That distinction can matter to an owner thinking about shelter over a front landing. It does not mean a roof can simply be added to an existing entrance: the design, enclosure and lot measurements still have to be assessed against the applicable rule.

The front lot line is especially important. The town's backup notes that the legal setback is measured from that boundary, not from the curb. A wide strip between pavement and a house may look like available

building space even when part of it lies outside the lot. A plot plan and the proposed entry's measured width are more useful than an estimate from the street when comparing a design to the town's proposed exception.

A vote is also not the same as a bylaw already in force. Massachusetts requires town clerks to submit bylaw amendments for review by the Attorney General after Town Meeting. The warrant is proposed text, and the final version must account for the wording changes reported at the meeting. Until the certified language and state approval are confirmed, the proposal's 20-foot figure should not be treated as a building entitlement. Homeowners can ask the town for the current text and status before settling on a porch layout.

The amendment addresses zoning placement, not the full construction review. Burlington's building department says most construction requires a permit before work starts, with drawings and site information depending on the application. A parcel near wetlands may also raise a separate Conservation Department question. The front-entry vote does not decide those matters, waive structural requirements or replace the review of an actual address.

Deck It's porch-installation page lists covered porches and front-entry work, and its site identifies Burlington among its markets. The company's existing service provides a construction context for the public vote; the town decides whether a proposed entry meets its zoning and building rules. A useful first step for property owners is to confirm their parcel's district and front lot line, then compare the intended open or enclosed entry with the final bylaw text when the town confirms its status. Information about Deck It's porch work is available on its website.

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For more information about Deck It , contact the company here:Deck It - BurlingtonDeck It Marketing+19789714455marketing@deckitnow.com1500 District Ave, Burlington, MA 01803, United States

Deck It

Deck It is a Burlington, MA based, family-owned custom deck builder serving Central Massachusetts. Founded in 2017 by Jake and Pat, our team has focused exclusively on decking since 2021

Website: <https://deckitnow.com/>

Email: marketing@deckitnow.com

Phone: +19789714455

