



Marc C. Laredo
Mayor

City of Newton
Department of Inspectional Services
Department of Planning & Community Development
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#91-26
Anthony Ciccariello
Commissioner of
Inspectional
Services

Katie Whewell
Acting Director

DATE: February 19, 2026

TO: Councilor R. Lisle Baker, Chair, Zoning & Planning Committee
Councilor Pamela Wright, Vice Chair, Zoning & Planning Committee

FROM: Anthony Ciccariello, Commissioner of Inspectional Services
Katie Whewell, Acting Director, Department of Planning and Development
Nora (Masler) Colello, Chief of Long Range Planning

RE: **Inspectional Services and Planning Department Response:**
#91-26 Discussion and Possible Amendment to Change Effective Date of the 60% Façade Build Out COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, KELLEY, KRINTZMAN, GREENBERG, and ROCHE requesting a discussion and potential amendment to Ch 30, Zoning that would change in the effective date of the 60% façade ordinance from March 1, 2026, to June 1, 2026. A delay in the effective date will allow more projects to finish the multi-faceted, time-consuming review process and avoid disruption as well as increased mid-review additional costs when changes to the City zoning ordinances are implemented (180 days: 08/17/2026).

CC: City Council

The Inspectional Services and Planning Departments have recently been made aware of the above docket item to delay the implementation date of the recently approved Residential Façade Build Out Ratio found in Section 1.5.7 of the Newton Zoning Ordinance. The façade ratio amendment was adopted under docket items #28-25, #85-24, #41-24 to ensure that new residential redevelopment better fits the scale and visual character of existing neighborhoods. This regulation applies to all Single-Family, Detached and Two-Family, Detached building types and is effective March 1, 2026.

The Departments strongly caution against delaying the March 1, 2026 implementation date. The implementation date was set in October of 2025 and provided ample time for City Departments to communicate the change and allow homeowners and building professionals the opportunity to either obtain a building permit with existing plans prior to the effective date or adjust their plans so they would not be negatively impacted by this new regulation. As additional concerns have emerged from builders and property owners, staff believe this provision needs time to be tested and fully understood by the development community to evaluate whether this provision is working as intended.

Staff are committed to aiding the community in understanding this tool as well as addressing other sections of the Ordinance that may conflict with the façade ratio regulation and prevent this tool from being utilized as intended. For example, staff are currently reviewing an amendment the definition of a two family dwelling under **#64-26** in part due to the added restriction of façade ratio.