
POLICY TITLE:	Use of Corporate Resources During an Election Year
POLICY #:	PLCY-2026-001
CATEGORY:	Council
AUTHORITY:	<i>Municipal Elections Act, 1996</i>
POLICY APPROVED BY:	Report No. ADMIN-2026-011
EFFECTIVE DATE:	April 21, 2026
APPLICABLE TO:	Mayor and Council

1. Purpose

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, (the Act) as amended, requires municipalities to establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal resources during an election campaign period.

Municipalities are prohibited from making campaign contributions to municipal candidates or registered third parties. As a campaign contribution may take the form of money, goods or services, this policy provides a fair and consistent approach on how municipal corporate resources can and cannot be used during a municipal, provincial and federal election. This policy supports compliance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, the Council Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Members of Local Boards and Advisory Committees, and the Staff Code of Conduct.

The provisions identified in this policy are in effect throughout the duration of the campaign period in a municipal election year or in the event of a by-election, unless otherwise noted in this policy. It applies to candidates (municipal, provincial, federal), current members of Council, Registered Third Party Advertisers, and staff.

2. Definitions

“The Act” means the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended.

“Campaign Contribution” means anything of value given to influence an election, may take the form of money, goods, or services.

“Campaign Materials” means any materials used to solicit votes for a candidate(s) or question in an election including but not limited to literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, or other paraphernalia. Campaign materials include, but

are not limited to, materials in all media, for example, print, displays, electronic radio or television, online including websites or social media.

“Campaign Related Activities” means any activity by or on behalf of a registered candidate, registered third party, or question on a ballot meant to elicit support during the election period.

“Campaign Period” means the date a candidate files their nomination through to Voting Day in an election year or in the event of a by-election.

“Candidate” means any individual running for an elected office, including Mayor, Councillor, Regional Chair or School Board Trustee.

“Common Areas” means areas within Town facilities including but not limited to foyer, halls, atriums, and parking lots.

“Corporate Resources” means anything that a person would have access to only by virtue of their elected Office or employment with the Town of Halton Hills. This includes but is not limited to town facilities, town funds, town events, town employees, information and infrastructure.

“Town of Halton Hills employee” means any individual working for, or receiving compensation from the town of Halton Hills, including those in part-time, seasonal or contract positions.

“Election” means any municipal, provincial or federal election including by-elections.

“Election Period” means the specific duration during which an election campaign takes place. For a provincial and federal election, beginning on the date the writ is issued and ending on voting day.

“Members” means Councillors, the Mayor or anyone acting on behalf of a Councillor or the Mayor.

“Registered Third Party Advertiser” means in relation to a municipal election, an individual, corporation or trade union that is registered under Section 88.6 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended.

3. Policy

Town of Halton Hills facilities, services and property may not be used for any election related purposes except as identified in this policy.

This policy applies, where applicable, to municipal council and school board elections or by-elections, provincial or federal elections or by-elections, and referendums.

It applies to:

- All candidates for a municipal election or by-election;
- All candidates for a provincial or federal election or by-election;
- All elected officials of the Town including those not seeking re-election;
- All municipal staff, including individuals employed by the offices of the elected officials;
- Registered third parties; and members of the public.

3.1 Town Staff

Members and candidates may not use Town of Halton Hills staff for any election related purposes during regular business hours or while the employee is receiving compensation from the Town.

3.2 Municipal Facilities and Property

- a) Election campaign activities are not permitted at Town Hall (located at 1 Halton Hills Drive)
- b) Municipally owned or run assets and facilities, excluding Town Hall, may be rented in accordance with the Town of Halton Hills rental procedures and current rates and fees for election campaign activities providing that the rental is available to all registered candidates and registered third parties. Use of rentals are subject to the following conditions:
 - i. All election campaign materials must only be displayed within the allotted rental period in the allotted rental area designated in the rental agreement;
 - ii. Rentals for campaign related activities are not permitted from the first date of advance voting to the day after voting day;
 - iii. The Town reserves the right to refuse or cancel a rental contract at any time, in accordance with the terms of the contract, should it conflict with the Town's corporate values or established policies or procedures, or presents a health and safety concern.
- c) Members, candidates and registered third party advertisers may engage in election related activities, such as the distribution of campaign materials outside of Town-owned or run facilities.
- d) Election signs, or other election material, including third party advertising may not be displayed in, or on the property of, any Town-owned or run facilities.
- e) The Town will not host, organize, or advertise all-candidates meetings or debates. With the exception of Town Hall, use of town facilities for all-

candidates meetings or debates is permitted, provided that the rental fee is paid and all candidates for an office are invited to attend and participate.

- f) Registered candidates and registered third parties may attend town organized events or funded events during a campaign period, but may not display or distribute any campaign materials, or engage in any election related activities.

3.3 Use of Corporate Identifiers and Resources

- a) The Town of Halton Hills corporate logo, corporate branding, crest, coat of arms, chain of office, flag, slogan or other similarly branded corporate resources or property shall not be used by any candidate or registered third party advertiser for any election related campaign materials, including printed literature, signage, and websites.
- b) Registered candidates and registered third parties may not use photographs, videos, electronic images, or graphics, produced by the Town or its affiliates for any election campaign-related purposes.
- c) Corporate resources shall not be used for the development, creation, design, printing, or distribution (electronic or print) of:
 - i. Any material that illustrates that a member of Council or any other individual is registered or intends to run for office; or
 - ii. Any campaign material that makes reference to, or contains the names or photographs, or identifies registered candidates;
 - iii. Any material that is linked in any way to an election campaign (i.e. campaign messaging, a campaign logo, or a social media handle or hashtag which links to campaign social media channels, web sites and/or materials)
- d) Corporate resources or services that are funded by the Town of Halton Hills such as computers, cell phones, smart phones, tablets, e-mail, voicemail or virtual meeting platforms shall not be used to communicate election related messages.

3.4 Technology and Communications

- a) Websites and domains that are operated or funded by the Town of Halton Hills shall not include any election related campaign materials or links to any sites which include election related campaign material.

- b) Member's social media accounts, domain names or websites, that are funded by the Town, may not include any election-related campaign material and may not be re-designated for campaign purposes or provide a link to a campaign site or campaign activities.
- c) Notwithstanding the ban on election related campaign materials and links on websites and domains operated or funded by the Town of Halton Hills, the Town's election webpage which lists candidates may include one link per candidate to a website which features the candidate's specific election related campaign material.
- d) Links to the Town's election page on the Town's website are permitted for the purpose of obtaining information about the election.

3.5 Social Media

- a) If a Member of Council uses any social media account for campaigning, such account must not be created or supported by Town resources.
- b) Members of Council who choose to create or use social media accounts for campaigning must include, for the duration of the election period, a clear statement on each campaign website or social media account's home page (or profile) indicating that the account is being used for election campaign purposes and is not related to their duties as a Member of Council.

"This account is being used for campaign purposes and is not related to my duties as a Member of Council for the Town of Halton Hills."

- c) Members of Council are required to remove the Town logo, crest, official photo or title from their social media bio, but can say they are running for re-election.
- d) During a Campaign Period, Candidates may not post photographs of themselves with Town staff. Photos posted to a social media account prior to the person becoming a candidate are allowed.
- e) All Town of Halton Hills social media accounts will not like or reshare posts from Members of Council or registered candidates on social media.
- f) Online communications for official Town purposes are acceptable in accordance with Town policies and related procedures.

3.6 Town Services

- a) During a municipal election period, the following Town-based services

shall be discontinued for Members of Council as of the day nominations open:

- i. All development, creation, design, printing or distribution of members' flyers, newsletters, advertisements, mail outs, publications, etc., whether electronic or print;
 - ii. Use of municipally owned or run assets and facilities, unless rented in accordance with municipal agreements and current rates and fees;
 - iii. The prohibitions set out in Section 3.6(a) of this Procedure do not apply to a Member who is acclaimed, or who is retiring from office and, therefore, is not a candidate in the election.
- b) Corporate resources (such as town issued phones and email addresses) shall be provided to current Members of Council for council related purposes and to serve their constituents and shall not be used to support an election campaign.
- c) All Town communication will be in accordance with the Town's policies and related procedures.

3.7 Town organized/hosted events

- a) Members of Council and other elected officials may attend town-organized events and act as participants in their capacity as elected officials, including speaking at the event and partaking in ceremonial activities, but shall not campaign while in attendance or distribute campaign-related materials and they shall not promote or oppose the candidacy of a person for elected office or party.
- b) Where a current Member of Council or elected official is invited to an event, whether a Town event or community event, in the capacity of their elected position, they are not to speak of their candidacy, their intention to run, or any campaign-related matters.
- c) Elected officials must adhere to bi-partisan commitments by not including campaign materials (including, but not limited to, uniforms, tents, signage, images or message) that is indicative of their candidacy or associated political party. Materials may make reference to the office they hold/represent (Council, MPP etc.)
- d) Candidates, registered third party advertisers, ballot question campaigns and their representatives may attend Town events in their capacity as private citizens, but shall not campaign while in attendance or distribute campaign-related materials and they shall not promote or oppose the candidacy of a person for elected office or party.

- e) Candidates, registered third party advertisers and representatives of ballot question campaigns shall not be invited to deliver formal remarks at a Town event in their capacity as a candidate, registered third party advertiser or ballot question campaign representative.

3.8 Access to Information

- a) All requests for information must be directed to the Town Clerk through the Town's Candidate Request for Information form on the Town's website.
- b) If the information that will be provided to one candidate or registered third party is of a general nature and may provide valuable guidance to all others, the information will be provided to all through the Town's website to ensure equal access to information. The website will display, the question that was asked, by whom and the response provided by staff.
- c) This procedure will take effect as of January 1st of an election year or for the nomination period during a by-election, provincial or federal election and will apply to all current members of Council, candidates, registered third party advertisers, and members of the public who have publicly declared they will be running in the municipal election.

3.9 Responsibilities

- a) Town Staff

Staff are expected to take extra care to ensure that they behave in a manner that residents, members of Town Council and potential candidates for election see as impartial, fair and unbiased.

Staff are to consult with their manager prior to agreeing to perform any task asked by an incumbent member of Council, registered candidate or registered third party advertiser that is beyond their normal duties, and/or could be construed as contributing to an election campaign.

Staff are discouraged from assisting with municipal election campaigns in Halton Hills, including posting election signs on their property, phone and e-mail solicitations, distribution of brochures and wearing candidate buttons; due to a perceived conflict of interest.

As in non-election years, corporate project meetings/public information centres will continue to be planned and coordinated by Town staff during a municipal election year.

- b) Town Clerk

The Clerk shall ensure the administration, communication and

interpretation of this policy and shall receive and respond to any complaints, concerns and inquiries/requests for guidance related to it.

c) Members of Council

Members shall understand, support and comply with this Policy, Council Code of Conduct, Council Expense Policy and related procedures. They shall seek clarification of any aspect of this policy, as required, and seek independent legal advice where appropriate.

4. Limitations

Nothing in this policy shall preclude a Council Member from performing their job as a Councillor, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them.

5. Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed every term of Council and as required by changes to legislation.

This policy replaces the previous policy entitled PLCY-2022-0001 which was approved by Council on February 7, 2022.