

USE OF MUNICIPAL RESOURCES FOR ELECTION PURPOSES

Policy Number:	LC-011
Responsibility:	City Clerk
Approval:	Sarnia City Council
Effective Date:	February 9, 2026
Date of Last Review:	February 7, 2022

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure compliance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32 (Municipal Elections Act) as it relates to the use of Municipal Resources for election purposes, including but not limited to the following provisions:

Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Act requires municipalities to establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal resources during the election campaign period.

Section 88.8 of the Municipal Elections Act prohibits a municipality from making any contribution to a Candidate running in a municipal election.

Section 88.12 of the Municipal Elections Act prohibits a municipality from making any contribution to a Registered Third Party.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy should be interpreted as a general prohibition against the use of Municipal Resources for any campaign related purpose.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

“Campaign Period” means the Election Campaign Periods for Candidates and Registered Third Parties as prescribed by the Municipal Elections Act.

“Campaign Activity” means any action, event, or pursuit that promotes or opposes any Candidate, or a response to any question on a ballot or referendum and includes any display, posting or distribution of Campaign Material.

“Campaign Material” means any material, regardless of format or medium, that promotes or opposes any Candidate, or a response to any question on a ballot

or referendum and includes, but is not limited to, printed literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, signs, magnets and vehicle decals.

“Candidate” means any individual who has filed nomination papers with the City Clerk in accordance with Section 33 of the Municipal Elections Act.

“City” means the Corporation of the City of Sarnia.

“City Property” means any City owned real property and/or related assets, including City facilities, parks, trails, sports fields, open space, vehicles, and busses. City facilities which are leased or operated on a continuous and long-term basis by a third party are excluded from the scope of this definition.

“Contribution” means money, goods and/or services given to and accepted by or on behalf of a Candidate or Registered Third Party.

“Corporate Technology” means computers, servers, cell phones, smart phones, telephones, tablets, printers, scanners, copiers, email, file storage, voicemail, or any other equipment or technology controlled, leased, or owned by the City.

“Employee” means all full-time, part-time, contract, and temporary employees of the City, students, co-op placement staff, and volunteers acting on behalf of the City or appointed by Sarnia City Council.

“Municipal Resource” means any physical, intellectual, or financial asset owned, leased or otherwise controlled by the City and includes vehicles, equipment, supplies, services, data, corporate technology and employees during hours in which they receive compensation or while engaging the performance of designated responsibilities for the City.

“Registered Third Party” means any individual, corporation or trade union registered in accordance with Section 88.6 of the Municipal Elections Act.

4.0 PROCEDURE

Without limiting the generality of the Policy Statement, the following procedural provisions are intended to provide greater certainty about the use of Municipal Resources for campaign related purposes.

Use of City Facilities, Services and Property

City Property shall not be used for any Campaign Activities.

Campaign Materials shall not be displayed on any City Property.

Campaign Activities shall not be permitted, nor shall Campaign Materials be displayed or distributed at any function hosted, managed, or coordinated by the City, whether located on City Property or not.

Advertising opportunities made available for sale by the City, shall prohibit campaign related advertising.

Technology

Corporate Technology may not be used for any Campaign Activity, or to produce, communicate, or display any Campaign Material.

On the last business day preceding May 1 of an election year, biographical information about Members of Sarnia City Council and links to personal websites and social media accounts shall be removed from the City's website, with only the member's name, position, telephone number and corporate email address to remain on the page.

Communications

The City's logo, crest, slogans, or other corporate identifiers may not be printed, posted, or distributed on any election related campaign materials or included on any election related website or social media channels.

Information provided to one Candidate or Registered Third Party that is of a general nature and may provide valuable guidance to all others shall be provided to all Candidates and Registered Third Parties. The City will post the information on the internet or through another mechanism to ensure equal access to information.

Exceptions

Nothing in this Policy shall preclude a Member of Council from performing their duty as an elected official, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of their constituents.

Nothing in this Policy shall preclude the City Clerk, or designate(s), from carrying out their responsibilities under the Municipal Elections Act including the implementation of procedures that are necessary or desirable for conducting the election.

Nothing in this Policy shall preclude a Candidate or Registered Third Party from referring to municipal information and documents that have been published to the City's website and/or social media accounts.

With the approval of the City Clerk, all Candidates events may be hosted on City property.

5.0 ENFORCEMENT

Should a complaint arise regarding the alleged use of Municipal Resources in contravention of this Policy, the City Clerk or their designate shall have the authority to investigate and resolve the complaint.

6.0 RELATED POLICIES

N/A

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Revision	Date
Adoption of policy required prior to May 1 in election year	February 9, 2026
Adoption of policy required prior to May 1 in election year	February 7, 2022