

To: City Council

From: Mary Medeiros, Director, Legislative Services/City Clerk,
Office of the C.A.O.

Report Number: CNCL-26-14

Date of Report: March 18, 2026

Date of Meeting: March 23, 2026

Subject: Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy

Ward: All Wards All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present an updated Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy (“Policy”), which regulates the use of City of Oshawa (“City”) resources during municipal, provincial, and federal election campaigns, in accordance with Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched. (“Municipal Elections Act” or “Act”).

Attachment 1 is the revised Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy.

2.0 Recommendation

It is recommended to City Council:

That based on Report CNCL-26-14 dated March 18, 2026, the revised “Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy” as set out in Attachment 1 to said Report be approved.

3.0 Input From Other Sources

- Municipal Benchmarking: Ajax, Burlington, Clarington, Hamilton, Kingston, Markham, Newmarket, Oakville, Pickering, Toronto, Vaughan, Whitby,

4.0 Analysis

4.1 Legislative Framework

The Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy (“Policy”) is essential to protect the interests of both Council members and the Corporation of the City of Oshawa,

while maintaining public trust and the integrity of the electoral process. Under Section 88.18 of the Act, municipalities and local boards are required to establish rules and procedures regarding the use of municipal or board resources during the election campaign period, no later than May 1 in the year of a regular election.

Additionally, Section 88.8(4) of the Act prohibits any corporation, including municipal corporations, from making contributions to a candidate running in a municipal election. Similarly, Section 29(1) of the Ontario Election Finances Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.7 and Section 363(1) of the Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9, prohibits corporations (including municipalities) from contributing to candidates, constituency associations, nomination contestants, leadership contestants, or political parties.

The Policy specifically prohibits the City from making any contributions during election campaigns (“Campaign Period”). Contributions are defined as money, goods, or services provided to candidates, registered third-party advertisers, or political parties. The Policy defines the Campaign Period as follows depending on the type of election:

- For regular municipal and school board elections, the Campaign Period is between May 1 and Voting Day of that year;
- For a municipal or school board by-election, the Campaign Period is between the passage of a by-law authorizing the by-election and Voting Day;
- For a provincial or federal election or by-election, the Campaign Period is between the issuance of the writ and Voting Day.

As the Municipal and School Board Election will be held on Monday, October 26, 2026, it is necessary to review and revise the Policy and approve any changes prior to May 1, 2026.

4.2 Benchmarking

The Policy has been reviewed in comparison with the policies from comparator municipalities. The current Policy aligns with similar frameworks adopted by other municipalities of comparable size and governance. During the review, it was noted that comparator municipalities have included a provision prohibiting the use of the City’s Integrity Commissioner during the election period for seeking advice related to political campaigns. It is recommended that this provision be added to our policy to further align with municipal best practices.

4.3 Prohibiting the use of the Integrity Commissioner by Municipal Council

Restricting the use of the Integrity Commissioner during the Election Period for the purpose of seeking advice related to a candidate’s campaign is an important measure to maintain fairness, impartiality, and public trust in the electoral process. The Integrity Commissioner is appointed to provide guidance on matters related to the ethical conduct of Council members and the application of municipal policies in the performance of official duties.

Members of Council who seek campaign-related advice from the Integrity Commissioner could create a perception of preferential treatment, misuse of public resources, or undue influence, undermining the integrity of the election process. By restricting access during the campaign period for election related purposes, the Policy ensures that the Integrity Commissioner's role remains focused on official duties rather than campaign activities, thereby reinforcing the principle that municipal resources and advisory services are not to be leveraged for electoral advantage. This restriction protects both the Integrity Commissioner's impartiality and the public's confidence in the fairness and transparency of municipal elections.

It is recommended that the following be added to the Policy as Section 6.4:

Integrity Commissioner

The City's appointed Integrity Commissioner is considered to be a Corporate Resource under contract with the City and may receive, from time to time, compensation from the Municipality in accordance with services provided.

Members of Council shall not use the services of the City's Integrity Commissioner during the Election Period for the purposes of seeking advice related to their Campaign.

5.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial impacts associated with the recommendation contained in this Report.

6.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report responds to the Oshawa Strategic Plan Priority Area. "Lead: Governance and Service Excellence" with the goal to provide transparent, efficient, and responsible fiscal stewardship and use of resources.



Laura Davis, Manager, Legislative Services/Deputy City Clerk,
Legislative Services



Mary Medeiros, Director, Legislative Services/City Clerk,
Office of the C.A.O.

Corporate Policy

Title:	Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy
Number:	GOV-13-02
Approved By:	City Council
Administered By:	Legislative Services
Effective Date:	September 23, 2013
Revision Date:	March 23, 2026

1.0 Purpose/Background

The purpose of the Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy (the Policy) is to meet the City of Oshawa's responsibilities under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Election Finances Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.7 and the Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c9. by establishing for the benefit of Candidates, current members of City Council, Employees and members of the public, the requirements and restrictions relating to campaign finances, the use of municipal resources and municipal contributions to election campaigns.

2.0 Policy Statement

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 3 6, as amended, establishes rules and regulations governing the financing of municipal Election campaigns in Ontario. Section 88.8(4) prohibits corporations (including municipal corporations) from making any contribution to a Candidate running in a municipal Election.

The Election Finances Act and the Canada Elections Act establish regulations for Candidates and parties running in provincial and federal Elections. Section 29(1) of the Election Finances Act and Section 363(1) of the Canada Elections Act prohibit municipal corporations from contributing to any Candidate, constituency association, nomination contestant, leadership contestant, or political party.

As campaign contributions may take the form of money, goods and services, any use of a Corporate Resource for an Election-related purpose, by a member of Council, Candidate, Third Party Advertiser or staff, is prohibited.

3.0 Scope/Application

This Policy applies to members of Council, members of City Committees, Candidates, Third Party Advertisers, City Volunteers, Contracted Service Providers and Employees:

- in the year of a Municipal and School Board Election from April 30 until Voting Day; or,
- from the day Council adopts a by-law directing a Municipal or School Board By-election until Voting Day, or,
- from the date the writ is issued for a provincial or federal general Election By-election, until Voting Day.

4.0 Definitions

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, 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, electronic communications, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, signs, magnets and vehicle decals.

Campaign Period means:

- In the case of a regular Municipal or School Board Election, the period between May 1 and Voting Day in the year of a regular Municipal or School Board Election; or,
- In the case of a Municipal or School Board By-election, the period between the passage of a by-law authorizing a By-election and Voting Day; or
- In the case of provincial or federal Election or By-election, the date the writ is issued until Voting Day.

Candidate means a person who has filed the relevant nomination (and has not withdrawn that nomination), or expressed an intention to file the relevant nomination for an office on the council of a lower-tier or upper-tier municipality, local board, provincial parliament or federal parliament at an Election or by-Election and includes those candidates who have been acclaimed.

City means the Corporation of the City of Oshawa.

City Clerk means the City Clerk of the City of Oshawa, or their designate, or a returning officer appointed under Section 7(1) of the Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6 ("Election Act"), or Section 24(1) of the Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9 ("Canada Elections Act"), or their delegate.

City Committee means any advisory, task force, working group or any other committee to which members of Council or of the public are appointed, including but not limited to Standing Committees, Advisory Committees, Committee of Adjustment, Property Standards Committee, Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and any other committee to which staff or Council appoint members.

City Council means Oshawa City Council as a whole.

City Facility means any land, building or other structure owned, leased, operated or otherwise controlled by the City, other than a City road, and includes, but is not limited to, City Hall, administrative offices, operation centres, libraries, community and recreation centres, the Tribute Communities Centre, the Oshawa Executive Airport, parking lots, parks, trails, sports fields and open space.

City Volunteer means an individual who performs duties on behalf of the City and who does not receive financial payment from the City for their work as a volunteer.

Contracted Service Provider means an individual or business that undertakes a contract or agreement with the City in order to perform a service on a continuing basis (e.g. Security Guard Services, Marriage Officiants, etc.).

Corporate Resource means any physical, intellectual or financial asset owned, leased or otherwise controlled by the City and includes vehicles, equipment, supplies, services and Employees.

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

Election means a municipal, provincial or federal election, or by-election, held in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c.32 ("Municipal Elections Act, 1996"), the Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6 ("Election Act"), or the Canada Elections Act, (S.C. 2000, c.9) ("Canada Elections Act").

Election Activities means any Election-related session, event or activity hosted by or at the direction of the City Clerk, or a returning officer appointed under Section 7(1) of the Election Act, or Section 24(1) of the Canada Elections Act.

Election Sign means a device, including its structure and other component parts, which is used or is capable of being used to promote a Candidate in a federal, provincial or municipal Election, including an election of a local board or commission, or to influence persons to vote for or against any Candidate, question or by-law, or referendum.

Employee means all full-time, part-time, temporary and seasonal staff of the City of Oshawa including staff hired on a contract basis for a defined period of time and practicum students.

Integrity Commissioner means any person or corporation appointed by the City of Oshawa to perform the functions assigned by Section 223.3 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended.

Member means an individual elected or appointed to City Council and holding public office or an individual appointed to a City Committee and sitting on this committee during a Campaign Period.

Third Party Advertiser means any individual, corporation or trade union registered in accordance with Section 88.6 of the Municipal Elections Act, Section 37.5 of the Election Finances Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.7 ("Election Finances Act"), or Section 353 of the Canada Elections Act.

5.0 Responsibilities

The City Clerk or their designate shall be responsible for the administration of this Policy and investigating and resolving any complaints regarding the alleged use of Corporate Resources in contravention of this Policy.

6.0 Practice/Procedures

6.1 General

The City shall not make contributions of money, goods or services to any Candidate or Third Party Advertiser.

6.2 Members, Candidates and Third Parties

The following applies to Members of Council, Members of City Committees, Candidates, Third Party Advertisers and any individual acting on behalf of a Member, Candidate or Third Party Advertiser.

6.2.1 Use of City Facilities, Services and Property

1. City Facilities may not be used for any Campaign Activities.
2. Campaign Material may not be displayed at any City Facility.
3. Members, Candidates and Third Party Advertisers may not engage in Campaign Activities at any meeting or function hosted, managed or coordinated by the City, whether located at a City Facility or not.
4. Members of Council and Candidates may not use their City office, or any municipally-provided facilities for any Election Activities, which includes the display of any campaign-related signs in the window or on the premises, as well as the display of Election-related material in the office.
5. Any rental agreement for a City Facility held by a Candidate or their agent, or Third Party Advertiser or their agent must end prior to the Campaign Period. The balance of the rental fee will be refunded upon cancellation.
6. Rental of City Facilities for all-Candidates meetings or debates is not permitted.
7. This provision does not apply to public right of way sidewalks and thoroughfares, except where prohibited in accordance with Durham Region and City of Oshawa sign by-laws.

6.2.2 Technology

1. Corporate Technology may not be used for any Campaign Activity.
2. Corporate Resources including but not limited to strategic or official plans, maps, staff reports, minutes and agendas may be linked from Candidate websites and social media to the City's websites and social media, but may not be housed on Candidate websites, or modified/reproduced for use in any campaign related material. The only exception to these rules shall be that Candidates may promote and/or distribute City materials developed by the City specifically for promotion of the Election including but not limited to promotional videos, infographics, and voting calendars, provided that they are not modified from their original format in any way.

3. Websites, domains and social media accounts operated or funded by the City shall not include any Campaign Material or links to any website, domain or social media account containing Campaign Material.
4. Notwithstanding the prohibition on links to Campaign Material from websites, domains and social media accounts controlled, operated or funded by the City, the City of Oshawa Election website that lists Candidates may, subject to the approval of the City Clerk, include one link per Candidate to a website containing Campaign Material.
5. On January 1 in the year of a Municipal Election, biographical information about a Member and links to personal websites and social media accounts shall be removed from any website, domain or social media account controlled, operated or funded by the City.
6. On the day the writ is issued for any provincial or federal Election, biographical information about any Member registered as a Candidate, and links to personal websites and social media accounts shall be removed from any website, domain or social media account controlled, operated or funded by the City.

6.2.3 Communications

1. Members, Candidates and Third Party Advertisers shall not include the City's logo, crest, flag, tagline and other similarly branded Corporate Resources or trademarks in any Campaign Material.
2. Photographs produced for and owned by the City of Oshawa may not be used for any Election purposes.
3. Members, Candidates or Third Party Advertisers may not print or distribute material paid for with City funds that illustrate or reference that they (or another person) are or intend to be, a Candidate for office at an Election.
4. Members, Candidates or Third Party Advertisers shall not convey, in any medium developed, distributed or paid for by the City, the registration of any individual as a Candidate or any individual, corporation or trade union as a Third Party Advertiser.
5. On the day preceding a municipal Campaign Period, the following shall be discontinued for Members, Candidates or Third Party Advertisers where they are paid for by the City:
 - a) All forms of advertising, including within municipal publications;
 - b) The ordering of stationery.
6. On the day preceding a municipal Campaign Period, no printing, reproduction, mailing or other distribution of material in a quantity of more than 50 pieces per week is permitted using Corporate Resources, irrespective of any funding available to a Member, Candidate or Third Party Advertiser.

7. Contact information for residents such as newsletter or email distribution or circulation lists may not be used for Campaign Activities or provided to a campaign for the purposes of supporting or opposing a Candidate or ballot question. Further, contact information provided through social media which is owned and/or operated by the City or Employees, shall similarly not be used for Campaign Activities or provided to a campaign.
8. Members during a municipal Election Campaign Period, or Candidates in other Election periods, may not hold ward meetings during this period.

6.2.4 Budget

1. From January 1 to Voting Day in the year of a municipal Election, budgets allocated to Members of Council will be restricted to 11/12ths of the approved annual budget.
2. Candidates newly elected to Council during a regular municipal Election will be allocated a budget equal to 1/12ths of the approved budget for the month of December.
3. A Member or Candidate re-elected to Council during a regular municipal Election will be allocated the balance remaining available as of Voting Day.

6.2.5 Use of Employees, Volunteers and Contracted Service Providers

1. Members, Candidates and Third Party Advertisers shall not use the services of an Employee for any Campaign Activity during assigned hours working for the City, unless the Employee is on a pre-approved personal paid or unpaid leave of absence, including time off in lieu of over-time, flex time, vacation or parental leave.
2. Members, Candidates and Third Party Advertisers shall not use the services of Contracted Service Providers for any Campaign Activities while the Contractor is directly engaged in the delivery of goods or services for which the Contractor is receiving compensation from the City.
3. Members, Candidates and Third Party Advertisers shall not use the services of City Volunteers for any Campaign Activities while the City Volunteer is directly engaged in the delivery of goods or services on behalf of the City.

6.3 Employees and City Volunteers

The following applies to Employees and City Volunteers as indicated:

1. Employees shall not engage in any Campaign Activities in support of a Member, Candidate or Third Party Advertiser during assigned hours working for the City, unless they are on a pre-approved paid or unpaid leave of absence, including time off in lieu of over-time, flex time, vacation or parental leave.

2. City Volunteers shall not engage in any Campaign Activities in support of a Member, Candidate or Third Party Advertiser during assigned hours volunteering for the City unless they have cancelled or terminated the assigned hours.
3. Employees and City Volunteers shall not engage in any Campaign Activities in support of a Member, Candidate or Third Party Advertiser while wearing any City uniform, badge, crest or other item that identifies them as an Employee or City Volunteer.
4. Employees and City Volunteers shall not engage in any Campaign Activities while using any vehicle, City Technology, or other Corporate Resource owned or leased by the City.
5. Employees and City Volunteers have the right to engage in political activities, including Campaign Activities; however, Employees shall be mindful of their responsibilities under the City of Oshawa's Employee Code of Conduct. Employees and City Volunteers must be aware of public perception while engaging in Campaign Activities and ensure that their involvement does not create a perceived or actual conflict of interest with their official positions. Before participating in Campaign Activities, Employees and City Volunteers are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposed participation with their supervisor or manager to identify perceived or actual conflicts of interest that may arise.

6.4 Integrity Commissioner

The City's appointed Integrity Commissioner is considered to be a Corporate Resource under contract with the City and may receive, from time to time, compensation from the Municipality in accordance with services provided.

Members of Council shall not use the services of the City's Integrity Commissioner during the Election Period for the purposes of seeking advice related to their Campaign.

7.0 Limitations

Nothing in this Policy will preclude the City Clerk from performing their statutory duties, restrict them from distributing information respecting Election Activities, or undertake actions that assist residents in exercising their right to vote.

Nothing in this Policy will preclude Members from discharging their duties, or limit the role of the Mayor as the Head of Council and Chief Executive Officer of the City of Oshawa.

8.0 Policy Administration

This Policy is reviewed by the City Clerk or designate prior to the Municipal Election to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legislation and current business processes or as required based on legislative changes.

The City Clerk is authorized to make minor or housekeeping amendments to this Policy, as required.

For further information regarding this Policy, contact Legislative Services at 905-436-3311 or email at clerks@oshawa.ca.

9.0 Resources

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended
Election Finances Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.7
Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c9.
City of Oshawa's Employee Code of Conduct

10.0 Approved

Authority	Date	Signature
City Council		