

SUBJECT: Enforcement Protocol – Election Signs
TO: Council Information Package
FROM: Development and Growth Management
By-law Compliance

Report Number: DGM-37-26

Wards Affected: All

Date to Committee: N/A

Date to Council: N/A

CIP Date: 5/1/2026

This memo clarifies election sign enforcement following the decision in [Charles Frederick Armstrong v. The Township of Russell](#) (2025 ONSC 3790), which found that the Township's restrictions on election sign placement infringed freedom of expression under Section 2(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The City of Burlington's *Election Sign By-law* (12-2022) and *Signs and Advertising By-law* (34-2007) are being reviewed for compliance.

Since 2018, staff have prioritized education, recognizing that candidates rely on volunteers for sign placement and that most violations result from vandalism rather than deliberate non-compliance. Signs placed on City property are typically removed by staff and held at City Hall for free pickup.

In the interim, staff will be continuing current enforcement practices which emphasize education and reasonableness, and will no longer remove signs on municipal road allowances provided they are not attached to objects or trees, do not pose safety risks, and are in good condition. Signs must still comply with timing requirements (no more than 45 days before and 4 days after an election). Signs on other City property, such as parks, will continue to be removed.

Appendix A outlines the Election Sign Rules to be distributed to candidates.

Election sign enforcement requests remain low relative to sign volume. Across seven elections since 2018 (includes municipal, provincial, and federal elections), there have been 137 requests (an average of 19.5 per election), nearly all concerning signs on City property. One case involved repeated placement on private property without consent.

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Attachments:

A. 2026 Election Sign Rules (for inclusion in Candidate Packages)

Memo Approval:

All memos are reviewed and approved by the Commissioner, Head of Corporate Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.