

Frequently Asked Questions – Candidates

(Updated September 17, 2026)

Election Signs (and Billboards)

1. When can election signs go up?

Election signs may be posted as of September 26. For reference, this date is listed on the [key dates section](#) of the website.

2. Can election signs be purchased before September 26?

Yes, if a candidate has registered with the Clerk and opened a campaign bank account, they can purchase election signs. The signs can not be put up until September 26.

3. Is a billboard considered an election sign?

Yes, billboards are considered a sign and need to follow all the rules that apply to election signs, other than the exceptions indicated in the [Election Sign By-law](#).

4. Are election signs permitted on billboards on lands that are zoned Commercial, Industrial, Employment and Agricultural.

Yes, provided the election sign is in accordance with the [Election Sign By-law](#).

5. Can street furniture with ad space (e.g. benches, waste receptacles, bus shelters, etc.) be used for election signs if the street furniture is located on the road allowance or public boulevard?

No, election signs are not permitted on public land, including road allowances and boulevards.

6. When can campaign magnets be added to cars?

In accordance with the [Election Sign By-law](#), campaign magnets can be added to vehicles as of September 26; be sure to review all provisions of the Election Sign By-law.

7. Can a sign inside a building on a commercially zoned property be visible from outside the building?

Yes, the sign can be visible from outside the building, such as through a window or doorway. Be sure to follow any other rule in the [Election Sign By-law](#).

8. How many signs can I put up on a residential property?

One sign per candidate can be placed on a residential property. Corner lots can include one sign per candidate facing each road (i.e. if the property fronts two roads, then each candidate can have two signs on the property, one facing each road).

Campaigning and Communications

1. When do candidates get access to the voters' list?

Candidates get access to the voters' list starting September 1 through an online Candidate Portal. Candidates will receive an email in late August with instructions for accessing the portal.

2. Can candidates wear St. Catharines 150 gear while campaigning?

The St. Catharines 150 gear is intended to unify our community in a year of celebration. All members of our community, including candidates while campaigning, are able to wear St. Catharines 150 gear.

This is different than the City logo. Candidates cannot wear clothing with the City logo while campaigning or in campaign material.

3. Can Members of Council who are candidates continue to provide resident updates?

Members of Council are responsible to serve their constituents and fulfill their responsibilities until the end of the term. Members of Council are allowed to communicate with the public, but cannot use city resources towards the creation or distribution of campaign materials / messages.

4. Can a candidate change the contact information on the City's website?

Yes, please email elections@stcatharines.ca with any updates. The City will include the following contact details:

- Name (as it appears on the ballot)
- Telephone number
- E-mail address
- Website (a second social media handle can be included in place of a website)
- Social media

5. Does the City publish candidate profiles on the City's website?

No, but the City will include the following contact details:

- Name (as it appears on the ballot)
- Telephone number
- E-mail address
- Website (a second social media handle can be included in place of a website)
- Social media

6. When will I get a ward map?

Ward maps are now available on the City's [website](#).

7. Is information on the results of the 2022 election available?

Yes, results by poll are available on the City's [website](#).

8. Can campaign signs and materials be posted at a poll?

No. The *Municipal Elections Act* prohibits the display of campaign material and literature inside a voting place. The “voting place” could include the entire property of a building that has a voting place inside it, including the parking lot. Candidates are not allowed to have campaign brochures, campaign buttons, signs or any other material inside the voting place.

Campaign Financials and Contributions

1. Can candidates use a credit card for campaign expenses?

Yes. The Province's Candidate Guide notes: Expenses must be paid from your campaign bank account. If you use a credit card to pay for purchases, you should make sure that you keep clear records showing that the expense on the credit card was reimbursed from the campaign account.

2. What is the maximum amount that an individual can contribute to someone's campaign?

There is a \$1,200 limit that applies to contributions from other individuals. If a person makes more than one contribution (for example, contributes money, contributes goods, and purchases a ticket to a fundraising event), the total value of all the contributions cannot exceed \$1,200.

3. Do I need to include the address for contributors?

You are required to list the names and addresses of every contributor who gives more than \$100 total (includes contribution of goods services) to your campaign in your financial statement. You should keep a record of the names and

addresses of every contributor, regardless of the value of their contribution, because the same contributor may make multiple contributions that end up totalling more than \$100.

4. Do I need to issue a receipt to contributors?

Yes. You must issue a receipt for every contribution you receive. The receipt should show who made the contribution, the date, and the value. If the contribution was in goods or services, you must determine the value of the goods or services and issue a receipt for the full value. If you receive a contribution from a joint account, the contribution can only come from one person. You must determine who is making the contribution and issue the receipt to that person.

5. Can I accept cash contributions?

Only a contribution that is \$25 or less can be made in cash. All contributions above \$25 must be made by cheque, money order, or by a method that clearly shows where the funds came from (such as certain debit, credit or electronic transfer transactions).

You must issue a receipt for every contribution you receive. The receipt should show who made the contribution, the date, and the value.

6. Can I run a raffle to raise money for my campaign?

No, there are specific rules in Ontario about raffles and lotteries. Candidates are not eligible to operate a raffle.

7. Can I accept campaign contributions through e-transfer?

Yes. The Province's Candidate Guide notes: All contributions above \$25 must be made by cheque, money order, or by a method that clearly shows where the funds came from (such as certain debit, credit or electronic transfer transactions).

8. Can corporations, organizations or clubs contribute to a campaign?

No. The Province's Candidate Guide notes: The following individuals and organizations are not permitted to make contributions to municipal council and school board campaigns:

- a corporation
- a trade union
- an individual who is not normally a resident in Ontario
- a federal political party, constituency association, or a registered candidate in a federal election
- a provincial political party, constituency association, or a registered candidate or leadership contestant

- a federal or provincial government, a municipality or a school board

Groups such as clubs, associations or ratepayer's groups are not eligible to make contributions. The members of these groups may make individual contributions from their personal funds (as long as they are residents of Ontario).

9. Are donations to a campaign tax deductible?

No. The Province's Candidate Guide notes: Contribution receipts are not tax receipts. Contributions to municipal council and school board campaigns cannot be credited against provincial or federal income taxes.

10. Is there a maximum amount people can donate towards all candidates?

Yes. The Province's Candidate Guide notes: There is a \$1,200 limit that applies to contributions from other individuals. If a person makes more than one contribution (for example, contributes money, contributes goods, and purchases a ticket to a fundraising event), the total value of all the contributions cannot exceed \$1,200. The maximum total amount that a contributor can give to candidates in the same jurisdiction (for example, running for the same council or for the same school board) is \$5,000.

Voters' List

1. When will candidates get access to the voters' list?

Candidates will receive an email with access to the Candidate Portal (which contains the voters' list) on or before September 1.

Voters and Voting

1. If an eligible elector owns multiple properties in St. Catharines, where do they vote?

Eligible electors that own multiple properties in St. Catharines are entitled to vote in the ward where they live. If they also own or rent property in another ward, they are not permitted to vote in that ward instead.

A non-resident elector that owns or rents property in more than one ward in the municipality, must choose one ward to vote in.

2. If an eligible elector owns property in St. Catharines but lives in another City, can they vote in St. Catharines?

If an elector qualifies to vote in more than one municipality, they can vote in all of those municipal elections, however there are some limitations / exceptions:

- Eligible electors are only permitted to vote in the same school board election once.
- To qualify to vote in a school board election, an elector must live in the municipality, or the elector (or their spouse) must rent or own residential property in that municipality.
- If the elector (or their spouse) owns or rents commercial property in a different municipality than where they live, they are not eligible to vote for school trustee in that municipality.

Examples:

- An eligible elector lives in Niagara Falls and owns residential property in St. Catharines. They can vote for Mayor and councillor in both municipalities but can only vote for school trustee once; they would vote for trustee where they live.
- An eligible elector lives in Ottawa and owns commercial property in St. Catharines. They can vote for Mayor and councillor in both municipalities but can only vote for school trustee in Ottawa.
- An eligible elector lives in Ottawa and owns residential property in St. Catharines. They can vote for Mayor, councillor and school trustee in both municipalities.

3. Are polling stations set up at retirement homes?

Retirement homes (with 50 or more beds) and institutions (with 20 or more beds) will have a poll on election day if those residents are not registered to vote by mail. We are also working with a small number of retirement homes, Linhaven and Martindale Place, who have also signed up to have an additional early vote day. Voting at retirement homes and institutions is only available for those individuals who live at those homes.

4. Is vote-by-mail only available on request?

Yes, voters must submit an application that is reviewed by City staff to be approved to vote-by-mail. More information is available [here](#).

5. When can someone sign up to vote-by-mail?

Applications open on August 17 and close at 4:30 p.m. on September 11. More information is available [here](#).