



## Election Signs

Guide for Candidates and Registered Third Parties

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## Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to participate in the upcoming election! This is an exciting opportunity for you to engage with eligible Markham voters and promote the democratic process.

There are many important components to an election campaign, one of which is signage. Election signs serve an important function in the electoral process. Often, election signs are a primary means by which citizens become aware of an upcoming election as well as an important platform through which voters engage with candidates and/or issues facing the community.

Election signs are subject to both local municipal and regional sign by-law regulations. The City of Markham administers and enforces election sign regulations for municipal, provincial, and federal elections in accordance with Markham's Election Sign By-law ([By law 2018-8](#)), the Region of York's Election Sign By-law ([By-law 2015-36](#)), and Markham's Consolidated Sign By-law ([By-law 2002-94](#)). These rules are designed to address challenges related to public nuisance and public safety by preventing sign pollution and hazardous conditions for road users.

In order to put up election signs in Markham, candidates and registered third parties must obtain one or both of the following election sign permits:

**(1) City of Markham Election Sign Permit (\$255)**

For election signs on private property and designated local road intersections within the City of Markham

**(2) Region of York Election Sign Permit (\$270)**

For election signs on designated regional road intersections within the City of Markham

There is a non-refundable fee for each permit. Permits may be purchased from the Legislative Services counter at the Markham Civic Centre.

This Guide has been designed to assist you and your campaign team by presenting the regulations contained in the City of Markham and Region of York Election Sign By-laws in the style of a "Frequently Asked Questions." This Guide also includes maps and graphics to help illustrate the rules for permitted and prohibited use of election signs so that you may ensure your campaign's compliance with the by-laws.

Further information on election signs can be obtained from City of Markham's By-Law Enforcement & Regulatory Services Department at [ElectionSigns@markham.ca](mailto:ElectionSigns@markham.ca).

We wish you the best of luck on your campaign!

## Getting Started

### ***Who can apply for an election sign permit?***

Candidates and registered third parties<sup>1</sup> in a federal, provincial, or municipal election or by-election taking place in the City of Markham may apply to the City for an election sign permit.

### ***What can I do with an election sign permit?***

The City issues two (2) types of election sign permits: [City of Markham election sign permits](#) and [Region of York election sign permits](#).

A [City of Markham election sign permit](#), candidates and registered third parties may put up election signs on private property and at designated local road intersections within Markham.

A [Region of York election sign permit](#) is required to place signs at designated regional road intersections within Markham.

### ***How can I get an election sign permit?***

Election sign permit applications are available by contacting [ElectionSigns@markham.ca](mailto:ElectionSigns@markham.ca).

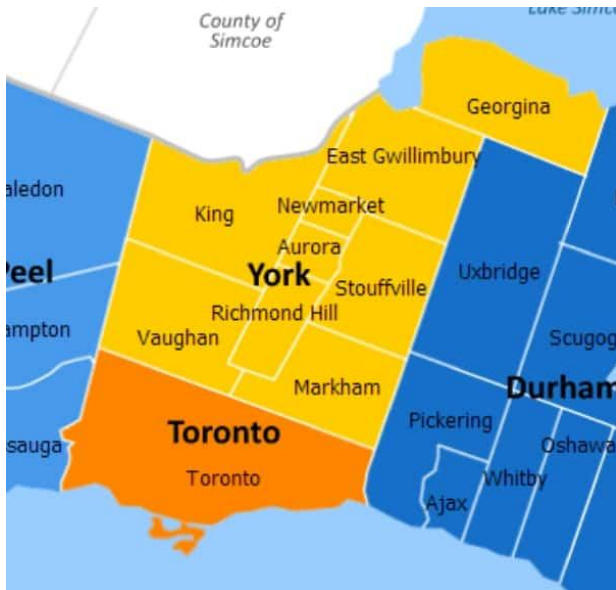
An information session meeting is a requirement to receive an election sign permit, one will be scheduled upon request.

Candidates and registered third parties wishing to put up election signs must complete an election sign permit application and pay a \$250.00 non-refundable fee for each permit obtained.

### ***Do I have to register for both a City of Markham election sign permit and a Region of York election sign permit?***

No – candidates and registered third parties may register for one or both permits. However, candidates and registered third parties may put up election signs only in locations for which they have obtained the appropriate permit.

<sup>1</sup>A third party is an individual, corporation, trade union, or group that prints, broadcasts, and/or distributes paid advertisements during an election that promote, support, or oppose a candidate or issue on the ballot. Third parties are required to register with the applicable federal, provincial, or municipal election authority before engaging in any paid election-related advertising.



*signs* at designated regional road intersections.

Please email [ElectionSigns@markham.ca](mailto:ElectionSigns@markham.ca) to apply for permits..

***I'm running for office in an electoral district that borders Steeles Avenue, but I don't see any permitted intersections on Steeles Avenue on the map provided. Are election signs allowed anywhere along Steeles Avenue?***

***I'm running for office in an electoral district that represents voters in both Markham and another municipality in York Region. If I have purchased a [Region of York election sign permit](#) from the other municipality, can I put up election signs at regional road intersections in Markham?***

According to Schedule "B" of York Region By-Law 2015-36, candidates and registered third parties are required to apply for a [Region of York election sign permit](#) and pay the applicable fees *in every municipality in which they wish to put up election*

The placement of election signs on private property and intersections along Steeles Avenue East is regulated by the City of Toronto.

In order to put up election signs on the northside of Steeles Avenue East, candidates and registered third parties must obtain an election sign permit from the City of Toronto and comply with the City of Toronto's Sign By-law.

For more information on the City of Toronto's election sign regulations, contact the City of Toronto's Election Office at [www.toronto.ca/elections](http://www.toronto.ca/elections) or 416.338.1111.

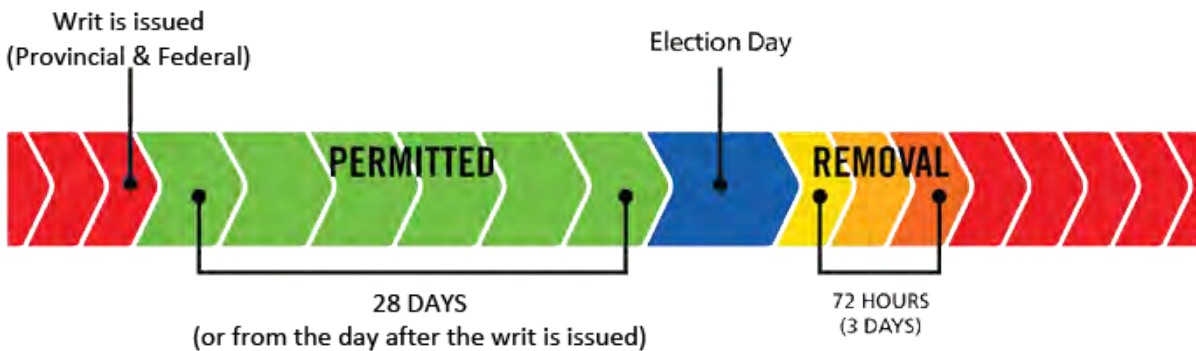
## Putting up Election Signs

### **When can I start putting up election signs?**

Candidates and registered third parties in a provincial or federal election or by-election can put up election signs the day after the writ is issued.

Candidates and registered third parties in a municipal election or by-election may put up election signs beginning at 10 A.M. on the date that is **28 days prior to Voting Day**.

Candidates and registered third parties must obtain the proper permits before posting any election signs in the City of Markham.



### **Are there any size restrictions on election signs?**

Election signs in Markham are subject to specific size and dimensional restrictions. These restrictions are detailed in the chart below:

| Dimension   | Maximum Dimensions                  |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sign Area   | 1.49 square metres (16 square feet) |
| Height      | 1.22 square metres (4 feet)         |
| Width       | 1.22 square metres (4 feet)         |
| Top of Sign | 2 metres (6.6 feet) from the ground |

### ***Are there any design or content restrictions on election signs?***

Election signs cannot be designed or constructed in a way as to distract, confuse, or mislead vehicular traffic or impair the safety of drivers or pedestrians. The following are examples of prohibited election signs:

- Signs that are illuminated;
- Signs that have flashing lights, reflectors, or rotating parts;
- Signs that simulate any traffic sign, traffic signal, or other sign that directs the movement of traffic; and,
- Signs that use words such as “Stop”, “Look”, “One-Way”, “Danger”, or any similar phrases, symbols, lights, or characters.

In general, content and messaging on election signs is not regulated by the Election Sign By-law. Messaging that rises to the level of libel or hate speech is regulated by the *Criminal Code* and enforced by the York Regional Police.

### ***Can I put up election signs on private property?***

Candidates and registered third parties who have purchased a [City of Markham election sign permit](#) may place election signs on private property, provided that:

- The property owner or occupant consents to the placement of the sign;
- The sign is planted in the ground;
- Only one (1) sign per candidate or registered third party is placed on the property;
- The sign does not interfere with the safe operation of vehicular traffic or impair the safety of pedestrians;
- The sign does not obstruct a fire escape, fire exit, door, window, scuttle, skylight, flue, air intake, or exhaust;
- The sign does not prevent or impede the access of emergency personnel to any part of the building, including emergency water connections and fire hydrants; and, • If the sign is on a rural property, it is placed only on the portion of the property that is being maintained for residential purposes.

Candidates and registered third parties must maintain records demonstrating consent from the property owner or occupant to the placement of election signs on private property, and produce this information upon request from a City of Markham official.

## ***Can I put up election signs on public property?***

Candidates and registered third parties who have purchased a City of Markham and/or Region of York election sign permit may place election signs on public property, provided that:

- The sign is placed at a designated intersection for which the candidate or registered third party has obtained the applicable permit;
- No more than two (2) election signs per candidate or registered third party are placed at the designated intersection;
  - There cannot be more than one election sign per corner
- The sign is posted within 50 metres of the corner of the designated intersection, but not:
  - Within the sight triangle<sup>2</sup> of the corner;
  - Within three (3) metres of the curb, edge, or shoulder of the road;
  - Within one (1) metre of a sidewalk;
  - Within ten (10) metres of a point of access/egress;
  - Within five (5) metres of a bus stop, bus shelter, or fire hydrant;
  - Within three (3) metres of a school crossing;
  - On a median strip/island located within a roadway or on a roundabout;or,
  - Between the curb and a sidewalk;
- The sign is not placed on a corner where the abutting property is occupied by a community centre, public library, or other City-owned or operated facility; and, · The sign is not placed on a corner where the abutting property is a designated voting place<sup>3</sup>.

*\*For a visual illustration of these rules, see [Appendix 'A'](#) of this Guide*

<sup>2</sup>A sight triangle (or daylight triangle) is the triangular space of a corner lot formed by the street lines and a line drawn from a point in one street line to a point in the other street line, measured 5 metres (or 16.4 feet) along the street from the point of intersection of the street lines.



***Can I put up election signs on public property adjacent to a private residence?***

Election signs are permitted on municipal boulevards abutting the front yard of a residential lot, provided that the property owner or occupant consents to the placement of the sign and the sign does not impede vehicular traffic or pedestrian safety. Please try to place signs along the front of the residence and not along the side.

Election signs are not allowed on municipal boulevards bordering private properties zoned for commercial or industrial uses. Election signs are also not allowed on boulevards within areas designated as Heritage Conservation Districts.

***Can I put up election signs along City streets and regional roads?***

Election signs are only permitted on public property at designated local and regional road intersections. Election signs are not permitted on municipal boulevards between intersections, except in cases as described above.



***Are election signs allowed in Heritage Conservation Districts?***

Election signs may be placed on private property within areas designated as Heritage Conservation Districts, provided that the sign conforms to all of the standard rules for election signs on private property. However, election signs are not permitted on properties (public or private) abutting restricted streets within Heritage Conservation Districts.

***Can I put up election signs outside of my riding or ward?***

No – candidates and registered third parties may put up signs only on private properties and designated intersections within the electoral district(s) in which they are registered.

***Other than location restrictions, are there rules on how election signs are posted?***

Election signs must be planted in the ground at a height that does not exceed the maximum allowance prescribed in the by-laws. Election signs cannot be:

- Affixed to public utility poles (telephone poles, hydro poles), light structures, or any other utility infrastructure;
- Placed on, painted on, attached to, or supported by a tree, stone, or other natural object;
- Placed on a fence or noise attenuation wall which is on public property;
- Placed so as to impede, hinder, or prevent vehicles from parking on public or private property or on a highway;
- Placed so as to impede or obstruct the City's maintenance operations; or, Placed so as to impede or obstruct the safe passage of pedestrians where they are reasonably expected to walk

***What signage can I put up at my campaign office?***

On the day after the writ is issued for a federal or provincial election or 28 days prior to Voting Day in a municipal election, as the case may be.

Candidates may post a single election sign displaying the words "Campaign Headquarters" on private property.

Within 42 days of Voting Day or the day after the writ is issued (whichever is earlier), candidates may put up election signs in the windows of their designated campaign office.

Election signs posted at a candidate's campaign office must conform to the size and dimensional restrictions outlined in the City of Markham's *Election Sign By-law*. Mobile, portable, and banner election signs are not allowed at a candidate's campaign office.

***I ran for office in a previous election. Can I use the signs from my previous campaign in this election?***

Candidates and registered third parties are subject to specific limits on what they can spend during their campaign period. Candidates and registered third parties should consult the applicable federal, provincial, or municipal campaign finance legislation for guidance on using inventory from a previous election.



## Enforcement

### ***How will the election sign by-laws be enforced?***

During the campaign period, City of Markham officials will patrol City streets and intersections to ensure compliance with the election sign by-laws.

Election signs will be removed and impounded without notice if:

- The sign has been placed in a non-permitted location;
- The sign has been removed from its grounding and/or has fallen into a state of disrepair; or,
- The sign poses a hazard to public safety.

### ***What are the penalties for violating the City's or Region of York's election sign by-laws?***

Any election sign found in contravention of the City of Markham or Region of York sign by-laws will be removed and impounded by City of Markham officials. Candidates and registered third parties whose signs are put up in violation of the by-laws will be charged a **\$26.00 infraction fee** for every election sign impounded.

The City of Markham reserves the **right to revoke any election sign permit** issued to a candidate or registered third party who has demonstrated habitual or dangerous offences under the City of Markham or Region of York election sign regulations. Permit fees will not be refunded to candidates or registered third parties whose election sign permits have been revoked.

### ***What should I do if I see an election sign placed in violation of the by-laws?***

Potential violations of the City of Markham or Region of York election sign regulations should be reported in writing to the City of Markham's By-Law Enforcement & Regulatory Services Department at [ElectionSigns@markham.ca](mailto:ElectionSigns@markham.ca). Complaints will be investigated by City of Markham officials within two business days of receipt.

***How will I be notified if one of my election signs is impounded?***

Candidates and registered third parties whose election sign(s) have been impounded for non-compliance with the by-laws will receive weekly email reports that will include:

- The location of any of the candidate or registered third party's election signs that have been impounded;
- The reason for the removal of the election sign(s); and,
- The cumulative infraction fees incurred by the candidate or registered third party.

***If my election signs are impounded by the City, how can I get them back?***

Election signs that are found in contravention of the by-laws and impounded by the City will be held until after the election. Following the election, candidates and registered third parties will be notified as to how they may retrieve their signs. Impounded election signs will be returned only upon payment of the total infraction fees incurred by the candidate or registered third party's campaign.

***What happens if I do not retrieve my impounded election sign(s)?***

Election signs that are not retrieved by 30 days after the election date will be recycled by the City. Candidates and registered third parties whose signs have been impounded will be charged the full amount in infraction fees incurred by their campaign regardless of whether they recover their election signs.

***What happens if I do not pay the fees charged to my campaign for election sign infractions?***

Candidates and registered third parties who do not pay the fees for election sign infractions incurred by their campaign may be subject to litigation by the City for recovery of costs related to the enforcement of the election sign by-laws. Candidates and registered third parties may also face denial of future election sign permits in the City of Markham for failure to pay all outstanding fees for election sign infractions.



***One of my election signs was vandalized, moved without my permission, or stolen. What should I do?***

Incidents of vandalism, theft, and other forms of tampering with election signs are regulated by the private property provisions of the *Criminal Code* and should be reported to the York Regional Police. Please contact the York Regional Police non-emergency number 1-866-876-5423.

***What should I do with my election signs after the election is over?***

Candidates and registered third parties will be given 72 hours following Voting Day to remove their election signs from all public and private property.

Election signs that are not removed within this timeframe will be impounded without notice by City of Markham officials. A **\$25.00 infraction fee** will be charged per impounded sign to the candidate or registered third party.

Candidates and registered third parties wishing to dispose of corrugated plastic election signs may bring them to one of the following York Region depots for recycling:

*Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre*  
1124 Elgin Mills Road  
Richmond Hill, Ontario  
L4S 1M4

*McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre*  
130 McCleary Court  
Concord, Ontario  
L4K 1W8

*Georgina Waste Transfer Station*  
23068 Warden Avenue  
Keswick, Ontario  
L4P 3E9

## Appendix 'A'

### Election Signs at Designated Intersections

