# Plan Your Vote Candidate Guidelines - Clerk's Procedure

## 1. Summary

1.1. For the 2022 Regular Municipal Election, all candidates who are required to submit their nomination to the Clerk of the Town of Whitby (e.g. Mayor, Regional Councillor, Ward Councillor, DDSB Trustee, DCDSC Trustee) may submit, at the candidate's option, certain information on their candidacy and a photo for inclusion on the "Plan Your Vote" webpages hosted on the Town of Whitby's website, subject to the guidelines outlined in this procedure.

1.2. Plan Your Vote is a online election information tool on the Town's website designed to assist electors identify if they are on the Voters' List, submit an application to add or revise their information on the Voters' List, identify who their candidates are, find additional information on candidates, and identify their voting location(s). While information on candidates will be posted as nominations are received on and following May 2, 2022, the remaining functionality of Plan Your Vote will be activated on or following September 1, 2022 once applications to amend the Voters' List are accepted.

## 2. Background

2.1. The principles of the Municipal Elections Act (MEA) include but are not limited to: that the election should be accessible to the voters and that voters and candidates should be treated fairly and consistently. The MEA provides that the clerk may provide for any matter or procedure that, in the clerk's opinion, is necessary or desirable for conducting the election.

2.2. The ability of electors to obtain information on candidates to inform their voting decisions can be challenging for a variety of factors, amongst which include the decrease in local mainstream media coverage, a decline in local civic organizations facilitating candidate sessions and debates, and the proliferation and fragmentation of online information sources.

2.3. Electors in Canada have indicated that being too busy or not being informed on the issues have ranked high on reasons for not voting.[1] Providing election information in a centralized location, including information submitted by candidates regarding their campaigns, and making it available to all electors both benefits electors and furthers the principles of the MEA to make the election accessible.

## 3. Not a contribution

3.1. Subsection 88.8 (9) of the MEA provides that if the municipality makes information available to the public on a website or in another electronic format, the provision of the information does not constitute a contribution to a candidate. As such, providing an online tool for candidates to

[1] Statistics Canada, Civic engagement and political participation in Canada, Release date: September 14, 2015

provide information to electors on themselves and their campaigns does not constitute a non-monetary contribution from the municipality.

3.2. The primary beneficiary of the service being provided is the electorate rather than the participating candidates.

3.3. Participation by candidates is voluntary, and the participation of some candidates but not others does not alter the fact that the expenses incurred by the municipality are not election expenses of the participating candidates, and are therefore also not non-monetary contributions to the participating candidates.[2]

## 4. General Guidelines

4.1. Candidates may submit information and a photo as outlined in Section 5 of this procedure for inclusion on the "Plan Your Vote" webpages, subject to the following:

4.1.1. Information from each candidate will only be accepted once through the online "Plan Your Vote – Candidate Intake Form", after a candidate has filed their nomination papers.

4.1.2. The Office of the Town Clerk will strive to post candidate information received through the intake form to the website within 2 business days following submission.

4.1.3. Notwithstanding subsection 4.1.1, a candidate may update their address, phone number, email address, social media hyperlinks, and webpage hyperlinks and/or correct spelling mistakes at any time before Election Day by emailing the change request to elections@whitby.ca

4.1.4. Should a candidate not submit certain fields, those fields will remain blank and will not appear under the candidate. A candidate may not later submit information for fields left blank, save an except for a field provided for in subsection 4.1.3.

4.1.5. Regardless whether a candidate submits all, some, or none of the fields, the Clerk shall include their name on the Town's website and "Plan your Vote" webpages.

4.1.6. Only information provided in English will be published.

4.1.7. The Town of Whitby will not edit the information submitted, including spelling, grammar, inaccuracies, or other obvious errors. Once submitted, information cannot be edited save and except as permitted by Section 4.1.3.

[2] For similar reasoning, see also "Candidate and leader debates" Interpretation Note: 2015-03 – August 2015 from Elections Canada

4.2. Content Moderation

4.2.1. The Clerk and Town of Whitby does not moderate content submitted by candidates for accuracy or appropriateness.
4.2.2. Content that is identified as hate speech per the Criminal Code of Canada will be reviewed with the applicable authorities prior to posting, and if determined to be hate speech, will not be posted.

4.3 Content Submission Deadline

4.3.1 To ensure that candidate information is available to electors in advance of the voting period, **the deadline for candidates wishing to submit information for inclusion on the "Plan Your Vote" webpages is Monday, October 3, 2022 at 4:30pm**. As permitted by these Procedures, certain information (e.g. contact information and spelling errors) may be corrected or updated following the deadline.

**5. Candidate information eligible for submission**

5.1. A photograph meeting the following requirements:

5.1.1. A colour passport style photo of the candidate's current appearance that clearly shows their face from the neckline to just above the top of the head.
5.1.2. The photo must be free from any writing or logos and ideally contain a neutral background.
5.1.3. Be a .jpg, .jpeg or .png file.
5.1.4. Be a minimum size of 300 x 300 pixels with identical height and width dimensions (e.g. the photograph should be a square)
5.1.5. Be a maximum file size of 5 MB.

5.2. Biography meeting the following requirements:

5.2.1. Intended to provide the electorate with general information on the candidate, with opportunity to include information such as a candidate's work experience, education, connection to Whitby, etc.
5.2.2. Be a maximum of 750 characters.

5.3. Platform

5.3.1. Intended to provide the electorate with information on why the candidate is running for office and what they hope to accomplish if elected.
5.3.2. Be a maximum of 750 characters.

5.4. Contact Information and Hyperlinks

5.4.1. Name – we will use your name as it is to appear on the ballot paper per the Nomination Paper – Form 1
5.4.2. Qualifying address – per the Nomination Paper – Form 1
5.4.3. Mailing address
5.4.4. One (1) telephone number
5.4.5. One (1) email address
5.4.6. Website hyperlink
5.4.7. Facebook page hyperlink
5.4.8. Twitter handle hyperlink
5.4.9. Instagram profile hyperlink
5.4.10. Other social media hyperlinks (maximum of two (2) in addition to above)

## 6. Notice of Collection

6.1. Candidate information submitted for the "Plan Your Vote" webpages is collected under the authority of the MEA and will be used for the purpose of providing information to electors for the 2022 Regular Municipal Election. The information will be available for public inspection in the Office of the Town Clerk and posted on the Town of Whitby's website, and may continue to be made publically available until the next regular municipal election. Questions about this collection of information should be directed to the Town Clerk, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario L1N 2M8, 905.430.4315.