

Purpose

This document establishes the rules for how candidates are shown on the ballot in a Markham municipal or school board election, including those for when a prospective candidate requests to be nominated under and appear on the ballot by an alternate name.

This policy is intended to establish a consistent and transparent standard that also affords candidates reasonable flexibility in how they are represented in the election.

Application and scope

This policy applies to all Markham municipal and school board elections.

Legislative authority

Section 41(2) of Ontario's Municipal Elections Act (MEA) establishes rules for how ballots are designed and presented in a municipal or school board election. Among other things, this includes the requirement for candidate names to be listed alphabetically by last name, positioned to the left of the voter's marking space, and preclude references to a candidate's occupation, degrees, titles, honours or decorations. This section also permits prospective candidates to request to appear on the ballot by another name instead of or in addition to their legal name, subject to the agreement of Markham's City Clerk.

Section 12 of the MEA authorizes Markham's City Clerk to establish and/or clarify any matter or procedure of the election process that is not prescribed by law and is necessary or advisable for conducting the election.

Policy

1. General

- 1.1 A candidate's name is shown on the ballot according to how it is presented on their certified nomination paper.
- 1.2 Notwithstanding the above:
 - (a) a candidate's name is shown on the ballot in title case with their first name followed by their last name, and with their last name in bolded font (i.e., First **Last**).
 - (b) diacritical marks, accents, prepositions, prefixes, other punctuations, and modified letter casing are shown on the ballot where they are indicated on the candidate's certified nomination paper and supported by acceptable identification (ID).

- (c) a lengthy candidate name is shown on the ballot in reduced size font, adjusted spacing between letters, or in an abbreviated form if doing so is required to display the candidate's name according to accessible ballot design standards.
- 1.3 Legal single names are considered last names for the purpose of completing a nomination paper and for ballot creation.
- 1.4 Where the names of two or more candidates for the same office are identical or so similar as to cause potential confusion, the candidates may be differentiated on the ballot using:
 - (a) middle names or initials; or,
 - (b) an alternate name by which a candidate is commonly known.

2. Use of alternate name

- 2.1 A request from a prospective candidate to be nominated under and shown on the ballot by an alternate name instead of or in addition to their legal name is decided by Markham's City Clerk.
- 2.2 An alternate name requested by a prospective candidate may include a shortened, abbreviated, or familiar form of their first or last name, or a nickname.
- 2.3 A prospective candidate's request to use an alternate name is accepted when the candidate presents acceptable proof that they are ordinarily or commonly known by this name in their professional and/or social life. Acceptable proofs include:
 - (a) invoices, bills, and financial statements;
 - (b) debit cards, credit cards, and personal cheques;
 - (c) education certificates and diplomas;
 - (d) employee cards, professional ID badges, union cards, and professional licences;
 - (e) professional business cards;
 - (f) membership cards and passes;
 - (g) signs, flyers, and other promotional material from a previous election;

- (h) references in published documents including books, magazines, newspaper articles, and commentaries;
 - (i) official correspondence from a public or private sector organization; and,
 - (j) other documentation issued or certified by a professional third party entity and deemed acceptable by Markham's City Clerk.
- 2.4 If a prospective candidate is unable to present acceptable ID showing them by the alternate name being requested, a signed declaration from at least three eligible Markham voters attesting that they know the candidate by the alternate name will be accepted.
- 2.5 A request to use an alternate name will not be accepted if:
 - (a) the alternate name includes an occupation, degree, title, honour, adjective, descriptive word, phrase, brackets, quotation marks, or non-Latin characters; or,
 - (b) the request is believed by Markham's City Clerk to be made in bad faith and be:
 - i. derogatory or offensive;
 - ii. intended to confuse or mislead voters; or,
 - iii. intended to manipulate the order in which the prospective candidate appears on the ballot.

Roles and responsibilities

Elections Markham periodically reviews and updates this document to support legislative compliance as well as the principles of transparency, consistency, and accessibility. Updates made during an election period will be communicated to candidates and the public.

Date approved: April 2026
Approved by: Markham City Clerk