



THE CORPORATION
OF
THE TOWN OF HALTON HILLS

Resolution No.:

Title: Provincial Updates to the Municipal Elections Act

Date: September 16, 2024

Moved by: Councillor A. Hilson

Seconded by: Mayor A. Lawlor

Item No.

WHEREAS elections rules need to be clear, supporting candidates and voters in their electoral participation and election administrators in running elections;

AND WHEREAS legislation needs to strike the right balance between providing clear rules and frameworks to ensure the integrity of the electoral process;

AND WHEREAS the legislation must also reduce administrative and operational burden for municipal staff ensuring that local election administrators can run elections in a way that responds to the unique circumstances of their local communities;

AND WHEREAS the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA) will be 30 years old by the next municipal and school board elections in 2026;

AND WHEREAS the MEA sets out the rules for local elections, the Assessment Act, 1990 and the Education Act, 1990 also contain provisions impacting local elections adding more places for voters, candidates, and administrators to look for the rules that bind the local democratic process in Ontario;

AND WHEREAS with rules across three pieces of legislation, and the MEA containing a patchwork of clauses, there are interpretation challenges, inconsistencies and gaps to fill;

AND WHEREAS the Act can pose difficulties for voters, candidates, contributors and third-party advertisers to read, to interpret, to comply with and for election administrators to enforce;

AND WHEREAS while local elections are run as efficiently and effectively as can be within the current legislative framework, modernization and continuous improvement is needed to ensure the Act is responsive to today's needs and tomorrow's challenges;

AND WHEREAS to keep public trust and improve safeguards the Act should be reviewed considering the ever-changing landscape which impacts elections administration including privacy, the threats of foreign interference, increased spread of mis-disinformation and the increased use of technologies like artificial intelligence and use of digital identities;

AND WHEREAS the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) reviewed the Act and has provided several recommendations including modernizing the legislation, harmonizing rules, and streamlining and simplifying administration;

AND WHEREAS AMCTO put forward recommendations for amendments ahead of the 2026 elections and longer-term recommendations for amendments ahead of the 2030 elections;

THEEFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Town of Halton Hills calls for the Province to update the MEA with priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO before Summer 2025 and commence work to review and re-write the MEA with longer-term recommendations ahead of the 2030 elections;

AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be forwarded to all municipalities in Ontario for support and that each endorsement be then forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Public Business Service Delivery, Ministry of Finance, the Premier of Ontario, Halton MPP and AMCTO.

Mayor Ann Lawlor