



City of Santa Clara

The Center of What's Possible

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CAMPAIGNS

Can signs be placed on public property?

City Code Section 18. 80. 170 prohibits attaching signs to any public property such as buildings, sidewalks, fences, trees, poles or signs.

Can signs be placed on city-owned utility poles and guy wires, as in the past?

No.

Can candidates campaign on public property?

Candidates may campaign on any public property that is considered a traditional public forum subject only to reasonable time, place and manner regulations.

Can candidates campaign near election ballot boxes?

Candidates are not allowed to conduct campaign activity or distribute materials 100 feet from any official election ballot box or drop box. This includes the Santa Clara City Hall election ballot box located at 1500 Warburton. Ave.

What are the rules for City parks?

Parks are considered traditional public forums and therefore candidates may campaign in parks. During the time that candidates are campaigning in parks it is not illegal for them to display signs related to their campaign.



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In City facilities, e.g. the Senior Center, the Community Recreation Center?

In general, the interiors of public buildings are not traditional public forums. They may be subject to different rules regarding expression depending on the building's purpose. The exterior areas outside of certain public buildings are considered traditional public forums subject only to reasonable time, place and manner regulations.

Can elected officials' campaign for candidates on public property?

The Council Chambers during a council meeting are a limited public forum. As stated in the Brown Act, only items on the agenda should be discussed by Councilmembers. During public presentations, only items that concern City business should be discussed. Outside of City Council meetings, the interior of City Hall is not a public forum and campaigning is not allowed.

In parks or in City facilities, including Santa Clara City Hall?

Elected officials have no greater or lesser right to campaign in parks, outside city facilities or City Hall than the general public. They cannot use public resources (i.e. money, supplies and equipment or City staff time) to campaign under any circumstances or in any location.

Can candidates set up booths at the Farmer's Market?

Yes, under reasonable time, place and manner regulations.