

Town Manager Regulations 2024  
Regulation #2024-001  
Date: February 20, 2024

## **TOWN of BRIDGEWATER POLICAL SIGN POSTING RESTRICTIONS UPDATE**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

This updated version of the Political Sign Posting Restrictions acknowledges residents' right to voice political speech, balanced with the town's interest in preventing distracted driving, and maintaining safe streets and litter free neighborhoods.

Recently there have been a proliferation of political signs affixed to state and municipal properties throughout the Town of Bridgewater. The signs and their placement could lead a voter to mistakenly believe that the Town or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is endorsing a particular candidate or advocating a particular position on elections day. The signs also offer visual diversions which can distract drivers, creating danger to drivers and pedestrians. This regulation provides clarity to candidates and advocacy groups on the placement of political signs.

### **POLICY:**

Definition. A political sign is a sign designed, used or intended to induce voters to vote for either the passage or defeat of a measure appearing on the ballot of any election, or for either the election or defeat of a candidate for nomination or election to any public office in any election, and includes without limitation banners, campaign signs, posted handbills and notices of any kind.

Traffic Hazards. No political sign shall be placed in a manner that would obstruct visibility to pedestrian or vehicular traffic or which shall constitute a traffic hazard in the discretion of the Building Official or the Chief of Police or their designees.

Time Limitations. Pursuant to the Town's zoning ordinance, Section 6.2, in the business and industrial districts political signs may be displayed in connection with an election beginning no earlier than thirty days prior to the first day of early voting for the primary or preliminary election and continuing up to two days after the date of the election. If election signs pertain not only to a primary or preliminary election but also to a succeeding general election, they may be displayed until the general election and shall be removed within two days after the date of the general election. These limitations do not apply to residential zoned areas.

Signs On Public Property. No person shall erect or display, or cause or authorize any person to affix, erect, display, place or post any political sign on any public property or utility pole or within a public right-of-way, on traffic signs, signals, or devices including directional signs, advisory signs, regulation signs and traffic-signalized intersections, or where signs may be

obstructing a driver's view. Additionally, Massachusetts state law and regulations prohibit the posting of political signs and other political activities within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a polling place on Election Day. Election signs on public property may be removed without notice by members of the Bridgewater Police Department, Department of Public Works, or the Building Official.

Exceptions – The Town of Bridgewater shall permit political signs, limited to no more than four square feet, to be placed outside the gates of the Bridgewater Transfer Station, 1200 Bedford Street, Bridgewater, Massachusetts under the same conditions as if they were placed on private property. No signs will be permitted inside the gated area. Additionally, this regulation shall not apply to the holding of signs at a standout on public property if such standouts are beyond one hundred fifty (150) feet from a polling place.