

Hello Hollaback! Team,

Thank you for including Mathieu Fleury's comments on your website. Please see his comments below:

Street harassment is a very important issue that everyone in Ottawa needs to work towards ending. We need to work together to change behaviour and create positive spaces and transit experiences. No one should be made to feel uncomfortable or scared on our streets, public spaces, buses or in our communities. The top 5 priorities identified by The Hollaback! Team are a great jumping off point.

First and foremost, as mentioned in the Hollaback! priorities, it is important that the City increase its public education campaigns to change societal behaviour. Crime Prevention Ottawa and the Ottawa Police Service regularly educate the public on numerous topics, so ending street harassment should definitely be their next priority. Ottawa Public Health has also worked hard to encourage safe and healthy sex, so it is also important that OPH work to encourage safe, respectful, and healthy relationships in all capacities of life. These campaigns are easy to work towards and should be distributed widely, from transit buses and shelters, to City facilities, public washrooms, to print and electronic media.

It is also important that we continue to support organizations like Jer's Vision, which visits schools, groups, and communities to educate students and residents on respectful relationships. We need to normalize acceptable behaviours and strongly discourage unacceptable behaviours publicly and loudly.

Secondly, it is also important that we create public spaces that are welcoming and inviting. Public spaces can include sidewalks, pathways, transit shelters, buses, and public facilities, and so on. It is important that we create spaces that encourage positive activities and make everyone feel safe. This can be as easy as increasing street lighting, opening enclosed spaces, and having more walking police officers on our streets and special constables on buses. We have already seen a huge improvement in Lowertown East by changing the old yellow lighting to new white LED lighting. Two of my top priorities for the next term of Council include creating huge pedestrian areas in the ByWard Market that are friendly and inviting, and a full renewal of Montreal Road, with new sidewalks, lighting, and people spaces. These improvements will go a long way to creating friendlier spaces, which in turn will increase the number of people on our streets.

Finally, it is important that we support community initiatives. Vanier residents have been very active in beautifying their community and walking their neighbourhood streets to discourage undesirable behaviours. As a result, we have seen a huge decrease in the crime rate. We need to support community initiatives by partnering residents with programs like Crime Prevention Ottawa and the Ottawa Police to create safe spaces for all residents to enjoy.