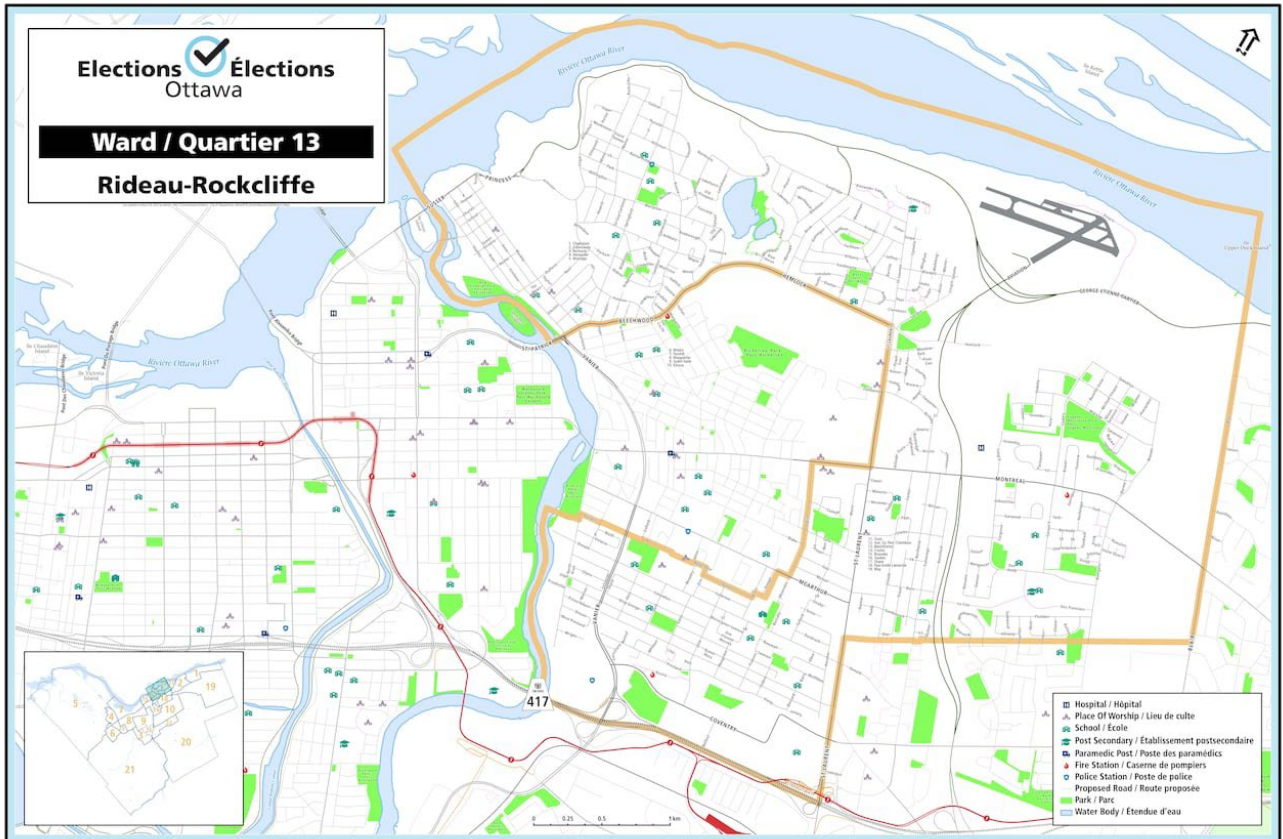


WARD 13

Rideau-Rockcliffe



2 candidate(s)



Peter J. Karwacki

Candidate for City Council • Ward 13 — Rideau-Rockcliffe

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1) What role can the City play to push back against antisemitism and the violent forms of antizionism so Jewish residents can live safely and openly in Ottawa?

The City can't change what people believe, and I won't promise that. What it can do is make sure Jewish residents can get to a synagogue, a school, a community centre or a city facility without fear, and that hate gets a fast, visible response. That is a practical job, and I'd divide it into four parts:

Protect access. Enforce the Safe Access bylaw and publish the results, so residents can see whether it's working.

Respond quickly. Hold a standing line between the City, police and community organizations like the Jewish Federation, with one named contact, so a report at 9 a.m. doesn't turn into a reply next week.

Keep City spaces clear of hate.

Permit conditions, facility rentals and city programs should have written rules against intimidation and incitement, applied the same way to every group.

Count it and report it. Hate incidents, response times and outcomes should be published every year. If the numbers aren't improving, residents should be able to see that and ask why.

I'd draw the line at **violence, threats and intimidation.**

Criticism of a foreign government is legitimate political speech. Targeting Jewish residents for their identity, or for a real or perceived link to Israel, isn't. The City should be unambiguous about the second and leave the first to public debate.

I also can't promise outcomes that depend on police or prosecutors. What I can promise is to ask for the data, publish it, and tell residents when the system falls short.

2) Ottawa has seen violent demonstrations where participants have expressed support for terrorist organizations and celebrated the October 7 attacks. What steps should the City take when events on public property cross the line into intimidation, hate, support

for terrorism or threats to public safety?

Peaceful protest is legitimate, even when it's uncomfortable. Violence, threats, intimidation, and support for a listed terrorist group are a different matter, and the City should treat them that way. Who acts matters here. The Criminal Code decides what is a crime, and police and Crown prosecutors decide whether to lay charges. The City controls permits, city property, bylaws and how fast it responds. I'd use that authority in four ways:

Write permit conditions in advance. They would be clear, apply to every group, and spell out what happens if they're broken. A rule written in calm beats a councillor improvising in the moment.

Enforce what council has already passed. That includes the Safe Access bylaw, and I'd publish the numbers: complaints, responses, charges.

Agree a same-day protocol between bylaw, police, and the affected community, so nobody is working out who calls whom while an event is underway.

Report back after any serious incident. A short public account would cover what happened, who acted, and what changes.

I can't promise police or prosecutorial decisions, and I won't pretend a councillor controls them. What I can promise is to ask for the data, publish it, and say so when the system falls short.

3) Will you work with the Jewish Federation of Ottawa to better equip municipal agencies to recognize, prevent and respond to antisemitism?

Yes. Jewish residents should not have to explain to a city employee why something is a threat. The test is outcomes, not outputs. Training sessions delivered is an output. What matters is whether reported incidents are handled faster, whether residents know where to report, and whether hate-crime and incident data is public. I'd ask for a named contact at the City, regular meetings on the record, and a yearly report on results. The same standard should apply to every community facing hate, and the City's existing anti-racism work needs to show results too, not just activity.

4) Will you oppose efforts to bring international political campaigns, including BDS measures targeting Israel, into city politics?

Yes, and I'd apply the rule to every foreign conflict, not just this one. Council's job is roads, water, transit, housing and the tax bill. Foreign policy belongs to Ottawa the federal capital, not Ottawa City Hall. City purchasing should run on price, quality and the law, not on a motion about a war that council can't influence. Council time spent on those motions is time taken from Ward 13 files that council actually controls.



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PUBLIC RECORD HIGHLIGHTS

Antisemitism motion (2023): [King seconded Ariel Troster's successful January 25, 2023 motion](#) denouncing antisemitism and directing that the city's diversity and anti-racism training programs explicitly incorporate education regarding antisemitism.

Bubble bylaw vote (2026): [Voted in favour of the April 22, 2026 Council motion](#) approving the Safe Access to Social Infrastructure By-law.

1) What role can the City play to push back against antisemitism and the violent forms of antizionism so Jewish residents can live safely and openly in Ottawa?

No family in Ottawa should have to wonder whether their children are safe at school, at synagogue, at a community centre or walking home wearing a kippah. When a Jewish resident feels they must hide who they are, our whole community has failed, and City Hall has a duty to respond.

I have spent my time on Council working on anti-racism and inclusion, and I have always said that fighting hatred cannot be selective. Antisemitism must be named clearly as a distinct form of hatred with its own history. It must be addressed with the same seriousness we bring to every other form of discrimination. That is why I seconded and spoke in support of the motion denouncing antisemitism in the City of Ottawa, which Council passed. The motion came forward on January 25, 2023, two days before International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and it put Council clearly on record. You can watch my statement on the motion here: https://youtu.be/lk_G9yDeaqc. Our job now is to make sure that commitment shapes how the City acts every day.

The City can act in concrete ways. It can make sure our anti-racism and anti-hate work explicitly includes antisemitism, with Jewish community voices at the table. It can work with the Ottawa Police Service and the Police Services Board so that hate crimes and hate incidents are taken seriously, investigated and reported transparently. It can provide security support for places of worship, schools and community institutions. It can also make sure City facilities, programs and grants are never used to promote hatred against Jewish residents.

Just as important, the Mayor and Council must speak out quickly and clearly when antisemitic incidents happen. Silence is heard loudly by those who are targeted.

2) Ottawa has seen violent demonstrations where participants have expressed support for terrorist organizations and celebrated the October 7 attacks. What steps should the

City take when events on public property cross the line into intimidation, hate, support for terrorism or threats to public safety?

Peaceful protest is a Charter right and a vital part of democracy. Intimidation, threats, glorifying terrorism and harassing people because of their identity are not. Celebrating the murder of civilians on October 7 is not protest. It is hate, and it has no place in our city.

The City should enforce its existing bylaws consistently, including rules on permits, noise, obstruction and the use of City property. It should not issue permits or provide City space to events that promote hatred or support for listed terrorist entities. Where conduct crosses into criminal behaviour, including hate-motivated threats or promoting terrorism, I expect the Ottawa Police Service to enforce the law fully and visibly. I will support the resources needed to do that.

The City has also acted to protect people where they are most vulnerable. I supported the creation of Ottawa's Safe Access By-law, which went into effect on August 1, 2026. It establishes 50-metre safe access zones around designated vulnerable infrastructure, including schools, childcare centres, hospitals, places of worship, residential care homes and community health facilities. Peaceful protest is an important right, but vulnerable communities made a convincing case that these rules were necessary to prevent targeted harassment, hate speech and obstruction during a period of rising community tensions. After incorporating the concerns of advocacy groups and organized labour, I believe the by-law strikes a reasonable balance. It protects people accessing lawful services from intimidation while preserving exemptions for labour picketing and passing marches. Going forward, I will push to make sure it is enforced consistently so that families can attend services, drop off their children or visit a community facility without fear.

3) Will you work with the Jewish Federation of Ottawa to better equip municipal agencies, programs and civic institutions to recognize, prevent and respond effectively to antisemitism? Please share how you will accomplish this.

Yes. I seconded Council's 2023 motion denouncing antisemitism, and I want to build on it in partnership with the community. Effective anti-hate work has to be built with the communities affected, not designed for them.

I will advocate for a standing working relationship between the City and the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, so that concerns are heard and acted on before they become crises. I will push for antisemitism awareness training for City staff, developed with Jewish community partners, with a particular focus on front-line staff in recreation, transit and bylaw services. I will support clear ways for residents to report antisemitic incidents in City facilities and programs, with a follow-up on each report and public reporting so we can see whether we are making progress.

I will also encourage OC Transpo and other City agencies to review their policies to ensure Jewish residents and staff are protected. Finally, I will continue to show up in person, at community events, commemorations and in difficult moments, because representation means being present.

4) Will you oppose efforts to bring international political campaigns, including BDS measures targeting Israel, into city politics?

Yes. City Council's job is to deliver services, keep residents safe and build a city where everyone belongs. Our procurement, investment and partnership decisions should be based on value, ethics and the needs of Ottawa residents, not on foreign-policy campaigns. In these challenging geopolitical times, Council has directed procurement policies that support Canadian businesses and workers, and that is where our focus should remain. When measures like BDS are brought into municipal decision-making, they do not change events overseas. Instead, they divide neighbours here at home and too often leave Jewish residents feeling singled out and unwelcome.

Residents hold deeply felt and different views on conflicts abroad, and they are free to express them. But City Hall must remain a place that serves all residents equally. I will oppose efforts to have the City adopt BDS or similar measures, and I will work to keep our civic institutions focused on bringing people together.