

City of Highland Heights, Ohio 2015 State of the City Address

Dear Residents:

As your mayor, it is my responsibility to submit an annual State of the City report to the residents of our community. In this year's report, I will provide a brief overview of the City's financial position and information and highlights from our various departments.

I have lived in Highland Heights for over 50 years and it has always been, and continues to be, my extreme honor and privilege to serve as Mayor of my hometown. I am very fortunate to have a staff of dedicated, hard-working individuals to work with me in providing our residents with the very best services available. Without a doubt, I can state that it has always been my goal, and that of my staff, to work to maintain and improve the quality of life in Highland Heights, so that we continue to live in a City with "Pride and Promise". The following information is meant to be informative, and I welcome any comments or questions you may have.

Financial Overview

We began 2014 with a General Fund Balance of \$7.78M and ended the year with a balance of \$7.93M. This increase in the General Fund is a result of a commitment to spending within our means. This is the eighth consecutive year resulting in an increase in our General Fund balance. Our expenditures in 2014 were \$13.01M, which was a decrease of \$174,000 compared to 2013. Revenue decreased in 2014, as a result of the state's elimination of the estate tax being the largest contributor to the decrease.

The 2015 budget has been approved by Council. We have a number of significant capital improvement projects scheduled for this year. Within the 2015 budget, \$4.4M in capital expenditures are planned, including approximately \$3.7M for road improvements. The reconstruction of Miner Road will be the biggest project at a cost of about \$3M. We will receive County reimbursement of \$1,025,000, along with a state grant of \$100,000, and a zero interest loan of \$686,800. An additional \$500,000 is budgeted for general and drainage upgrades.

Plans for the reconstruction of Miner Road are complete and a formal bid for the project has been accepted. The scope of the project includes widening, the addition of berms, drainage improvements, deep swale enclosure, traffic signal upgrades, and complete recycling and resurfacing of the asphalt pavement.

As always, we will continue to evaluate and approve expenditures based upon the resulting quality of services provided to our residents.

Building Department

The Building Department, under the direction of Building Commissioner Dale Grabfelder, is staffed with a full-time building inspector, a part-time inspector, and a full-time administrative assistant. This department and its personnel are fully certified by the State of Ohio Board of Building Standards to enforce the Ohio Building Code and Residential Code of Ohio for the

safety of all residents and businesses. The department handles the issuance of all permits for both residential and commercial construction.

In 2014, the department issued 489 residential permits (25 for new home construction) and 140 commercial permits which generated total receipts of \$397,035, with an estimated construction value of \$17.1M. New home construction mainly occurred in the Aberdeen and Maypine development area.

Significant commercial development took place within the City in 2014. The transformation of the former Catalano's property at the corner of Brainard and Wilson Mills Roads is complete. The beautifully designed Brainard Crossing commercial property is the home of a state of the art Fitworks fitness facility, as well as their corporate headquarters, Highland Wellness Center, TNT Tanning, and a Grind Burger restaurant.

Kemper House, a 49,850 sq. ft. residential care facility on Golfview Lane, opened its doors to residents in 2014, and construction of Highland Pointe Skilled Nursing Facility, a 52,000 sq. ft. residence, also on Golfview Lane, will open in June 2015.

New construction began at the corner of Wilson Mills Road and Alpha Drive. The former BP station was demolished, and a new building will house a Chipotle restaurant, as well as another retail business.

The department is also responsible for enforcing all zoning laws and property maintenance codes. With the help of a part-time inspector, the department issued 117 violation notices, primarily dedicated to identifying violations of our zoning code and residential and business maintenance codes.

Fire Department

The Fire Department, under the direction of Chief William Turner, continues to provide superior services to the residents of our community. Chief Turner has served our community for over 26 years, the last 7 years as Chief. In addition, Chief Turner is the Emergency Coordinator for the City. As emergency coordinator, Chief Turner is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing city-wide policies and programs related to emergency management in order to meet County, State, and Federal mandates.

In 2014, with council approval, the City of Highland Heights was able to order a new ladder truck for the Fire Department which will replace a 1992 used ladder truck purchased in 2006. The new vehicle, which is scheduled for delivery this spring, is being manufactured by Sutphen Corporation in Hilliard, OH and is expected to serve our City for the next 25 years.

Many residents are not aware of the services the department provides on a daily basis. Our firefighters are cross-trained and provide both fire suppression and advanced emergency medical care (paramedics). The department also provides fire prevention, public education, hazardous materials response and mitigation, technical rescue and preparedness, and response to both man-made and natural disasters.

The Highland Heights Fire Department is a member of the Hillcrest Technical Rescue Team which is comprised of 32 Firefighter/Paramedics from the cities of Beachwood, Gates Mills, Highland Heights, Lyndhurst, Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Pepper Pike, Richmond

Heights, and Willoughby Hills that are trained in specialty rescue. The team specializes in Swift Water Rescue, Building Collapse, Confined Space, Ice, Dive, Trench, Rope and Tower Rescue.

The Fire Department continually receives commendation from residents and medical staff from local hospitals for their outstanding pre-hospital care. The department offers the community, free CPR/AED and basic first aid training to residents and Highland Heights businesses throughout the year. They also assist with basic aid training at Millridge School, and CPR classes at Mayfield High School. The department also continues to work with, and support, the efforts of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The Fire Department also sponsors Boy Scout Troop 461 and provides on-site aluminum can recycling for the Aluminum Cans for Burned Children (ACBC).

The Fire Department currently has 18 full-time employees and 10 part-time employees. This total includes one chief, one captain, four lieutenants, and fifteen firefighters. The department operates on a 24 hour on, 48 hour off basis with a minimum of four firefighters per shift. Chief Turner and his crew have done an outstanding job providing such a high level of service to an increasing population without increasing staff. For the calendar year 2014, the Fire Department's total receipts for ambulance service, permits, and inspections exceeded \$289,000 . The Fire Department responded to 1,048 ambulance calls, 382 fire calls, and 222 calls for service during the year.

Police Department

The Police Department is headed by Chief James Cook, who is responsible for the overall effective and efficient management of the Department. Highland Heights has been privileged to have Chief Cook serve the residents for the past 45 years, the last 25 as Chief. Chief Cook is assisted by the Lieutenant, Administrative Assistant, and Communications Specialist.

In April, the Department completed 23 years of our Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. Officer Patrick Hopkins graduated 160 students during the 2013-14 school year. Since its inception in 1992, the program has graduated 3,990 students. The program offers guidance to children in the elementary school system on drug awareness and self-esteem issues. The Department also provides services in community relations consisting of crime prevention and school safety. The Crime Prevention Program is responsible for conducting residential surveys and care calls for senior citizens.

The Police Department's ALICE active shooter training in our elementary schools was initiated in 2013, and was continued into 2014, with great success. The ALICE program is designed to provide specialized, proactive strategies to students, teachers and officials in case of a violent intruder. This training provides the department an excellent opportunity to reach out to the community before an incident occurs. The Police Department will continue to offer this training and follow up with both the schools and the business community.

In 2014, Executive Officer, Lieutenant Ken Visoky retired from the Police Department after 35 years of service. During his career, he was assigned to the Detective Bureau and SPAN S.W.A.T. Tactical Team. Lt. Visoky joins other retirees of the Police Department who have served the City for more than 30 years.

During the year, we continued the Community Policing Initiative Program whereby officers are vigilant in checking for unlocked vehicles, open garage doors, or valuables left outside while patrolling overnight. A bright orange card is left for the resident as an informative, preventive

measure, and as notification of a condition at the residence or business that could present a potential problem for safety and/or crime prevention. The program has been very effective and well received by the community.

Special recognition was received by Officers Matt Evers and Brian McCallister in 2014. Both officers were commended for their OVI enforcement by the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

Near the end of 2014, dispatchers in the Police Department completed Emergency Medical Training Certification enabling them to communicate life-saving information to 9-1-1 callers in emergency situations. The training has been invaluable. Since completion of the training, dispatchers have already assisted residents in the delivery of a baby and in heart related incidents where CPR was necessary. The training is critical in saving lives during the short period of time it takes for our paramedics to arrive on the scene.

The Police Department remains nationally recognized by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The Department is currently in the middle of a three year award period. During the accreditation process, the Department complied with 112 mandatory standards on life, health, and safety issues, as well as, the reduction of risk and high liability exposure. The Department was first awarded CALEA recognition in 2010.

For more than 10 years, the Police Department has been awarded the AAA East Central Community Traffic Safety Award. In October, the Department was once again presented the Gold Award, AAA's second highest award. This award is presented to communities for their efforts toward making their streets safer through reduced traffic and pedestrian accidents, traffic safety promotions, and educating the public on safety.

The Highland Heights Police Department consists of forty-nine employees, twenty-five (25) of which are sworn police officers and an additional twenty-four (24) civilian and part-time employees. The Department's organizational structure consists of an Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Police, the Detective Bureau, Patrol Unit, Jail Facility, Communications Specialist, Records Unit, Communications Center and School Crossing Guards. Emergency services are provided by the police and fire departments through twenty-four (24) hour dispatching located in the Communications Center.

The Police Department had approximately 17,450 requests for service, of which 8 were reported residential burglaries and 5 attempted burglaries in residences and commercial buildings. Burglaries have taken place in random areas and neighborhoods throughout the City, but most break-ins have taken place during the day while residents were not at home. The total breakdown of service requests is as follows:

Assistance Related to Criminal Events	628
Assistance Related to Citizen Conflict	261
Assistance Related to Traffic Safety	5,453
Assistance Related to Miscellaneous Emergencies	4,047
Assistance Related to General Duties	5,834
Assistance Related to Jail Activities	1,227

In addition, the Police Department houses and manages a 12 day Jail Facility certified by the State of Ohio Bureau of Adult Detention. During 2014, 265 prisoners were incarcerated in the Jail Facility for a total of 8,361 hours. The average stay of a prisoner is 32 hours.

For the calendar year 2014, the total funds collected for court and miscellaneous receipts by the Police Department were approximately \$194,000.

Service Department

The Highland Heights Department of Public Service serves a growing community of more than 8,200 residents, with more than 3,300 homes, and over 200 businesses. The department is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of publicly owned infrastructure and public land, including more than 90 lane miles of roadway, 52 miles of storm sewer drainage and 112 acres of public property. The department interacts with the City's safety forces and other departments as well as county, state, and federal agencies to coordinate a wide range of services in the community.

The Department is comprised of a staff of nine full-time laborers, part-time and seasonal employees, an administrative assistant, the Assistant Director and the Director of Public Service. Department personnel are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, to respond to the emergency needs of the community. Under the leadership of Service Director Thom Evans, the department has been able to maintain an excellent standard of service to the residents of Highland Heights.

In November, we bid farewell to our Assistant Service Director Al Hess. Mr. Hess retired after more than 33 years of service with the City. Effective January 1, 2015, Bob Gorentz was appointed as our new Assistant Service Director. Bob has been a member of the Service Department since 2000. We welcome Bob and look forward to the experience and enthusiasm that he brings to his new role.

In addition to programmed activities such as road patching, crack sealing, street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, property maintenance, leaf collection, snow plowing, etc., the department responded to hundreds of miscellaneous requests for services. The Service Department conducted seven drop-off recycling programs at various times throughout the year for computer, hazardous waste, and shredding. Recycling programs are currently scheduled for 2015. Please check our website at www.highlandhts.com and newsletters for dates and more information about these programs.

In January 2015, the City awarded a new five year contract to Kimble Recycling and Disposal Services of Dover, Ohio. Kimble has been providing solid waste and recycling services to the City since 2007. The new contract will bring some changes to both collection and disposal. Residents will be provided with two, two-wheeled containers, one for rubbish and one for recyclables. Residents are asked to place the containers at the curb, as they do now, and Kimble will utilize an automated collection process to empty the containers. If the solid waste container is full, residents can place additional refuse alongside the container. The new service is expected to greatly increase the volume of recyclables collected. This increase in recyclables will significantly reduce our overall cost of rubbish collection.

The new rubbish collection program will begin in June. Please visit the City website at www.highlandhts.com and/or contact the Service Department for more information about the program. An informational meeting about the new rubbish collection program will be held on Wednesday, May 20 at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center. This meeting will give residents an opportunity to see the new rubbish containers and to hear more about the program.

The major roadway project for 2015 will be Miner Road resurfacing and reconstruction. Construction is slated to begin this spring. The scope of the project includes widening of the road, the addition of berms, drainage improvements, and the replacement of the traffic signal at Highland Road. The project will also include the complete recycling and asphalt resurfacing of the pavement. The estimated cost of the project is approximately \$3M. The County has committed \$1,025,000 toward the total cost, and the Ohio Public Works Commission has awarded the City \$786,800 in grants and loans. We are hopeful that all, or most of the project, will be completed in 2015.

The City and the County Sanitary Engineer continued to evaluate and implement programs and projects designed to address basement flooding issues and overall sewer maintenance. The County has maintained the sanitary sewer system in Highland Heights for decades. In 2014, we entered into a new agreement with the County that expands their service to include maintenance of the storm sewer system as well. Having access to the County Public Works Dept. resources, adds a new implement to our sewer maintenance toolbox.

Community Park

David Ianiro serves as our Park and Recreation Director. David has served the City in this capacity for the past 12 years and is responsible for coordinating all the recreation events for the City as well as managing our sport and activity programs.

Several improvements took place at the Community Park in 2014. These improvements included the replacement of the property fences along the east side of the park, installation of a new outfield fence on ball diamond #1, resurfacing of the pool parking lot (the old tennis courts), and the addition of numerous concrete walkways and pads throughout the park. Projects scheduled for 2015 include the much needed resurfacing of the tennis courts, scoreboard replacement, and the addition of a canopy in the concession area.

The Parks and Recreation Department works year-round to ensure that residents and families have the opportunity to take full advantage of the fun and beauty we have to offer in our Community Park. Two pavilions, as well as the enclosed park barn pavilion, may be reserved by residents, businesses and schools located within the City of Highland Heights.

The community pool, located within the park, is open to Highland Heights and Mayfield School District residents and their guests. The zero-entry pool is approximately 10,000 square feet. Please refer to the 2015 Summer Sizzler for information on pool passes, swimming lessons, tennis lessons, and day camp, as well as other summer activities.

Each year the Summer Sizzler is published and mailed to all Highland Heights residents with details about the many programs and activities offered by our Recreation Department. As a convenience to our residents, online registration is available for all of our summer recreation programs. The registration link is available at www.highlandhts.com. We are fortunate that our City is able to offer such a wide array of quality programs and activities for children and adults of all ages to enjoy.

City Council

I am privileged to have the opportunity to work with seven dedicated public servants who serve as City Council representatives. Council and I have a strong working relationship and we

collectively work together to meet the needs of the residents of Highland Heights. Below is a list of our City Council members and the committees on which they serve:

President Cathy S. Murphy, Ward 1	440-442-0377	cmurphy@highlandhts.com
Leo R. Lombardo, Ward 2	440-449-2881	llombardo@highlandhts.com
Robert Mastrangelo, Ward 3	440-442-2854	rmastrangelo@highlandhts.com
Ann D'Amico, Ward 4	440-461-4224	adamico@highlandhts.com
Chuck Brunello, Jr., At Large	440-446-9474	cbrunello@highlandhts.com
Edwin V. Hargate, At Large	440-473-5476	ehargate@highlandhts.com
Lisa Marie Stickan, At Large	440-759-1106	lstickan@highlandhts.com
Regina Cahill, Clerk of Council	440-461-2440	rcahill@highlandhts.com

Legislative and Finance: Leo Lombardo, Chairman
Chuck Brunello
Cathy Murphy

Safety and Service: Lisa Stickan, Chairperson
Leo Lombardo
Bob Mastrangelo

Drainage: Ann D'Amico, Chairperson
Ed Hargate
Lisa Stickan

Just recently, Clerk of Council Jean Buchak retired after more than 50 years of dedicated service to the City. Jean has been an invaluable resource to the City, and especially to City Council in her role as Council Clerk for the last 33 years. However, her responsibilities have been left in the very capable hands of her replacement Regina Cahill, who previously served as the Council Clerk in the City of Euclid.

City Hall/Municipal Complex

Some exciting changes took place during 2014 within City Hall and the Municipal Complex. In the spring, installation of a new HVAC system was completed within City Hall. The antiquated heating and air conditioning system was replaced with a 90% plus energy efficient system which has resulted in significant savings. Remodeling of the City Hall restrooms and office space was also completed in 2014. Renovation of these areas was long overdue and the resulting facelift has provided a pleasant environment for all residents and employees to enjoy.

Significant improvements were also completed at the Police and Fire Department building. These improvements included the repair of leaks within the cupolas, waterproofing and stabilization of the basement walls and substantial masonry repairs.

City Website

In May 2014, the City entered into a contract with CivicPlus to upgrade and redesign our City website. CivicPlus is a leading expert in local government website design and is responsible for over 1,500 government websites serving 32.6 million citizens throughout the country. In November, a new, dynamic and user-friendly website was rolled out to the community.

While we continue to make additions and changes, we hope you will enjoy the ease and flexibility of navigation within the new website. Please visit our website at www.highlandhts.com.

Community Center/Gazebo Area

The Community Center is maintained by a part-time Coordinator and four part-time custodians. Coordinator Gina Bissell is responsible for booking all events that occur at the Community Center. Rental of the Center is available to the residents of Highland Heights. During 2014, the Community Center was a constant center of activity. From community civic group meetings to exercise classes, the center was used as a gathering place for many different events.

Once again in 2014, the Gazebo area was the site of numerous community activities, including the "Music at the Gazebo" series. The Gazebo and Community Center were also the sites for the annual Holiday Lighting and Children's Party. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all.

The Highland Heights Garden Club completed another successful Community Garden season. Residents renting plots within the garden were able to harvest hundreds of pounds of produce for personal consumption, as well as for donation to charitable groups.

Conclusion

In addition to serving as Mayor, I currently serve as President of the Suburban Police Anticrime Network (SPAN) Eastern Suburban Regional Council of Governments and as the Hillcrest area representative to the Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) Board of Directors. Within NOACA, I also serve on the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee provides technical advice and recommendations in the area of comprehensive policy and long-range planning matters to the Board of Directors. NOACA is the region's metropolitan planning organization and is responsible for transportation planning in a five-county area. The NOACA Governing Board determines how federal transportation dollars will be spent in the region.

Within our school community, it is my pleasure to serve as a member of the Excel TECC Advisory Council. And finally, I also serve on the Council of Government for the Community Partnership on Aging (CPA). CPA is an organization that was established in 1978 (formerly the Tri-City Consortium on Aging) and was organized to meet the needs of senior adults, their caregivers, and families.

It is my extreme honor to serve as your Mayor. I look forward to 2015, and the many exciting opportunities to provide quality services to the residents and businesses within our wonderful community.

Most Sincerely,

Scott E. Coleman