

## **City of Highland Heights, Ohio 2017 State of the City Address**

Dear Residents:

As the Mayor of the City of Highland Heights, it is my responsibility to prepare an annual State of the City report for the residents and businesses of our community. Within this report, I will provide information about city departments and services available to the community, as well as highlights of the year 2016. It was a busy year with major construction projects and significant achievements. One notable highlight was Cleveland Magazine's ranking of the City of Highland Heights as the seventh best suburb, out of the 77 suburbs, in the Cleveland area. This rating is not only something to be proud of; it is also a valuable tool that increases the desirability of our community when prospective home buyers and businesses are looking to relocate.

Recognition like this would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of all the city departments and staff, as well as each and every resident taking pride in their city. I am truly honored to serve as Mayor of "The City of Pride and Promise".

### **Financial Overview**

The City of Highland Heights ended the year 2016 financially strong. General Fund revenues increased by \$774,000 over 2016 receipts. However, the largest contributing factor to this increase was an additional \$689,000 in income tax receipts as a result of a new income tax ordinance imposed by the State. The ordinance changed the collection dates, which in some instances, resulted in payments received in 2016, rather than 2017. This increase will be netted by the reduction of collections in 2017. Although 2016 General Fund expenditures were approximately \$354,000 higher than 2015, largely due to the cost of capital projects, the General Fund balance increased by \$939,000.

I have once again presented a balanced budget for 2017 to City Council for their approval. Capital expenditures for 2017 include \$870,000 in street repairs and drainage, three new police vehicles, a new rescue squad, new service department vehicles, maintenance and repairs at the Community Pool, and security cameras and landscaping for the Municipal Complex.

### **Building Department**

The Building Department, under the direction of Building Commissioner Dale Grabfelder, is staffed with a full-time Assistant Building Commissioner, a part-time Building Inspector, and a full-time Administrative Assistant. The Building Department 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.

Larry Puskas joined the department in 2016, replacing Mike Joyce who retired from the position of Part-Time Building Inspector.

In 2016, the department issued 596 residential permits (18 for new home construction) and 139 commercial permits. These permits generated total receipts of \$336,312 with an estimated construction value of \$9.8M.

The Building Department is responsible for enforcing all zoning laws, property maintenance codes, storm water management plans, including roadside ditch and rear yard swale maintenance, and the issuance of right of way permits. With the help of a part-time inspector, the department issued 276 violation notices, primarily identifying violations and enforcing of our zoning code and residential and business maintenance codes.

## **Fire Department**

Under the direction of Chief William Turner, the Fire Department currently has 18 full-time employees and 10 part-time employees providing services to the residents and businesses in our community. The full-time staff includes one chief, one captain, four lieutenants, and twelve firefighters. The department operates on a 24 hour on, 48 hour off basis with a minimum of four firefighters per shift. The Department provides fire prevention services, public education, hazardous materials response and mitigation, technical rescue and preparedness, and response to both man-made and natural disasters. As the Emergency Coordinator for the City, Chief Turner is also responsible for planning, developing and implementing city-wide policies and programs related to emergency management, in order to meet county, state and federal mandates.

Our firefighters are cross-trained and provide both fire suppression and advanced emergency medical care (Paramedics). Our paramedics operate under the medical control of the University Hospital system; however, they will transport residents to any local hospital, under normal circumstances.

The Highland Heights Fire Department has been a member of the Hillcrest Technical Rescue Team since its inception. The team is comprised of approximately thirty Firefighter/Paramedics from the cities of Beachwood, Gates Mills, Highland Heights, Lyndhurst, Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Pepper Pike, Richmond Heights, and Willoughby Hills. They are trained in specialty rescues such as Swift Water Rescue, Building Collapse, Confined Space, Ice, Dive, Trench, Rope and Tower Rescue. The Hillcrest Technical Rescue Team recently merged with the Heights Region Technical Rescue Team to form one team for improved efficiency and cost savings.

As a part of a community outreach effort, the Fire Department offers free CPR training to residents and businesses within the city throughout the year. The department also continues to work with, and support, the efforts of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Boy Scout Troop 461 and provides on-site aluminum can recycling for the Aluminum Cans for Burned Children (ACBC).

In 2016, the Fire Department responded to 1,175 ambulance service calls, 335 fire calls, and 181 general calls for service.

## **Police Department**

The Highland Heights Police Department is led by Chief James Cook. Chief Cook is responsible for the overall effective and efficient management of the Department. He is assisted in this role by Lieutenant Dennis Matejic, an Administrative Assistant, and a Communications Specialist. The Department consists of 48 employees, 26 of which are sworn police officers and an additional 22 civilian and part-time employees. Emergency services are provided by the Police and Fire Departments through a 24 hour dispatching center located in our Communications Center.

The Police Department remains nationally recognized by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The Department was first awarded CALEA recognition in 2010, and they are in the process of completing additional mandatory standards for assessment in 2017. In order to receive CALEA certification, they must comply with mandatory standards on life, health, safety and critical legal issues and conditions.

Since 2013, the Police Department has provided ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate) Active Threat Training in both of our elementary schools. The ALICE program is designed to provide specialized, proactive, option-based strategies to students, teachers and officials in response to any violent intruder. The training provides preparation and a plan for individuals and organizations in handling the threat of an aggressive intruder or active shooter event. This program provides the Department with an excellent opportunity to reach out to the community before an incident occurs. The program has been well received, and training is provided to new teachers, administrators and students.

The Police Department also continues to provide Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) to students at Millridge Elementary and St. Paschal Baylon Elementary Schools. The program offers guidance to children on drug awareness and self-esteem issues. Last year, Sgt. McGrath graduated 161 students from the program for a total of over 4,400 graduates since the inception of the program in 1992. The Department also continues to provide community service programs such as crime prevention, residential surveys, and care calls for senior residents.

In 2016, the Department also complied with the Ohio Collaborative State Mandated Standards on the use of force, and the selection and hiring of personnel. All policies and procedures were updated to comply with state standards, and all officers were trained and tested on policies and standards.

Special recognition was received by Officer Brian McCallister in 2016. He once again received the Award of Excellence from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) for OVI enforcement. In addition, for more than 10 years, the Police Department has been awarded the AAA East Central Community Traffic Safety (Gold) Award. This award is presented to communities for their efforts toward making their streets safer through reduced traffic and pedestrian accidents, safety promotions and educating the public on safety.

In August, Officer Carol Perry retired from the Department after 25 years of service. During her career, she was assigned to the Care Call, Residential Survey, Crime Prevention, and Safety Town programs. Officer Perry was the first full-time female officer within the Department.

In 2016, there were two reported residential burglaries and three breaking and entering of residences and commercial buildings within Highland Heights.

The Police Department had approximately 18,360 requests for service in 2016. The total breakdown of service requests is as follows:

Assistance Related to Criminal Events	745
Assistance Related to Citizen Conflict	277
Assistance Related to Traffic Safety	6,387
Assistance Related to Miscellaneous Emergencies	4,031
Assistance Related to General Duties	5,629
Assistance Related to Jail Activities	1,291

In addition, the Police Department houses and manages a twelve day Jail Facility certified by the State of Ohio Bureau of Adult Detention. During 2016, 251 prisoners were incarcerated in the Jail Facility for a total of 10,701 hours. The average stay of a prisoner was 24 hours.

### **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 approximately 200 businesses. The department is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of the publicly owned infrastructure and 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, and the Assistant Director, under the leadership of the Director of Public Service, Thom Evans. Department personnel are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year, to respond to the emergency needs of the community.

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 service in 2016. The Service Department conducted collection programs at various times throughout the year for computer, hazardous waste, and shredding.

The City's curbside solid waste and recycling program is contracted through Kimble Recycling and Disposal Inc. Kimble has provided service to our City since 2004. In 2015, the City entered into a new contract with Kimble for the collection of solid waste and recyclables via a two cart, automated collection system. Based upon information gathered from the first year under the new system, there has been a 40% increase in the collection of recyclables. This is good news not only for the landfills, but for the City. While the City is charged a curbside collection fee of \$6.25/month/residence for both solid waste and \$3.08/month/residence for recyclables, disposal fees are paid to Kimble only for solid waste at a cost of \$39.39 per ton. The disposal of recyclables is free. Therefore, any increase in recyclable collection, results in a decrease in solid waste, which in turn reduces disposal fees to the City. The total refuse collection program cost in 2016 was \$530,279.60.

Originally constructed in 1955, replacement of the 16" ductile iron, cement-lined Highland Road Water Main began in July 2016. This water main not only serves residences and businesses along Highland Road, but also adjacent sub-divisions. The City was successful in obtaining approximately 74% of the funding of the \$3.5M project from a grant and a zero interest loan

from the Ohio Public Works Commission. About half of the project was completed in 2016, with the remaining project construction slated to begin in the spring, with completion of the project by the end of 2017. The replacement of the water main will enhance the reliability of water service to a large portion of our community for many decades to come.

Other road projects completed in 2016 included, full depth concrete repairs, the reconstruction of catch basin inlets, and crack sealing in the Glen Eden subdivision, Radford Dr., Cheriton Dr., Franklin Blvd., Avion Park Dr., Brainard Rd. and Wilson Mills Rd.

Additionally, a project to remove more than 500 cubic yards of silt, along with minor improvements in the Williamsburg detention basin 22, was completed by Fabrizi Trucking and Paving in 2016. On multiple occasions, the basin overflowed due to a loss of capacity caused by years of silt buildup as identified by the City Engineer.

And finally, the 2016 street tree program included the installation of 40 trees at various locations throughout the City, including the removal and replacement of 17 diseased ash trees along Aberdeen Blvd.

### **Storm Water Management**

Over the last few years, some residents have experienced storm water related issues in and/or around their homes and property. The City has consistently worked with the County to assess and repair sewer infrastructure and to help residents with flooding issues. To facilitate that process further, in 2016, we hired Mr. Charles Zibbel as our first Storm Water Manager. Chuck works in collaboration with the Service Director, Building Commissioner and the City Engineer on matters pertaining to basement flooding, drainage and storm water regulatory issues.

Last year, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District investigated the sanitary sewer system looking for sources of excess storm water. This information was made available to the City and the Cuyahoga County Sanitary Engineer. Utilizing these reports and information will help us move forward with a program to address the potential for excess storm water in our sanitary sewer system.

### **Community Park**

Along with the Park and Recreation Committee, Recreation Director David Ianaro is responsible for planning and coordinating all the recreation events within the City. With the help of program managers, directors, commissioners, seasonal employees and volunteer coaches, the Recreation Department is able to offer a wide range of quality recreational programs and entertainment for all to enjoy.

Along with the regular summertime park activities of baseball, softball, tennis, swimming and day camp, the Recreation Department also offers special events each year such as Family Fun Nights at the Pool, the Neighborhood Bicycle Ride, and Family Movie Night at the Park.

The Park 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 2017 Summer Sizzler for information on pool passes, swimming lessons, tennis lessons, and day camp, as well as other summer activities.

The Community Park is also the site of the annual Highland Heights Community Day. This one day event is sponsored by the City of Highland Heights and includes food, fun and entertainment for all. The event concludes with a fantastic fireworks display to cap off the day of 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 also available. The registration link is available at [www.highlandhts.com](http://www.highlandhts.com). We are fortunate that our City is able to offer such a wide range of quality programs and activities for children and adults of all ages to enjoy.

### **City Hall/Municipal Complex**

The Community Center is available for rental by residents and businesses of Highland Heights. Community Center Coordinator Gina Bissell is responsible for booking all events and activities at the Center. Information about the amenities and rental costs of the Community Center are available on our website at [www.highlandhts.com](http://www.highlandhts.com).

“Music at the Gazebo” events were held during the summer and a special lighting and musical display was broadcast from the Gazebo once again this year during the holidays. A special thank you to the Highland Heights Garden Club for the beautification of the Municipal Complex grounds each year with the planting of flowers throughout the area. They are also responsible for the rental of the plots within the Community Garden which enables residents to grow produce for their own consumption or to donate to charitable groups.

### **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 toward the mutual goal of meeting 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	<a href="mailto:cmurphy@highlandhts.com">cmurphy@highlandhts.com</a>
Leo R. Lombardo, Ward 2	440-449-2881	<a href="mailto:llombardo@highlandhts.com">llombardo@highlandhts.com</a>
Robert Mastrangelo, Ward 3	440-442-2854	<a href="mailto:rmastrangelo@highlandhts.com">rmastrangelo@highlandhts.com</a>
Ann D’Amico, Ward 4	440-461-4224	<a href="mailto:adamico@highlandhts.com">adamico@highlandhts.com</a>
Chuck Brunello, Jr., At Large	440-567-7771	<a href="mailto:cbrunello@highlandhts.com">cbrunello@highlandhts.com</a>
Edwin V. Hargate, At Large	440-473-5476	<a href="mailto:ehargate@highlandhts.com">ehargate@highlandhts.com</a>
Lisa Marie Stickan, At Large	440-759-1106	<a href="mailto:lstickan@highlandhts.com">lstickan@highlandhts.com</a>
Regina Cahill, Clerk of Council	440-461-2440	<a href="mailto:rcahill@highlandhts.com">rcahill@highlandhts.com</a>

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

Safety and Service: Lisa Stickan, Chairperson  
Ed Hargate  
Leo Lombardo

Drainage: Lisa Stickan, Chairperson  
Ann D'Amico  
Bob Mastrangelo

## **Conclusion**

In addition to serving as Mayor, I also serve as the Safety Director for the City. Many cities, similar in size, have mayors that also serve in this dual capacity role. Within the community, I currently serve as President of the Suburban Police Anticrime Network (SPAN) Eastern Suburban Regional Council of Government. SPAN is a unit comprised of members from the following Hillcrest Police Departments: Gates Mills, Highland Heights, Lyndhurst, Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, and Richmond Heights. SPAN members are highly trained and skilled in special weapons and tactics, bomb squad procedures, hostage negotiation, accident investigation, and drug enforcement.

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.

As your Mayor, my goal is to provide the very best in city services to each resident and business within the City of Highland Heights. At the same time, I am committed to keeping a balanced budget and a low tax base to continue to attract new businesses and residents to our community. I am truly honored to serve this community that I have called my home for more than 50 years, and I look forward to meeting the opportunities available to our City in 2017.

Most Sincerely,

Scott E. Coleman