

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

City of Highland Park, Illinois





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The City's annual report is a comprehensive report on the City's activities throughout the year. We appreciate the opportunity to serve this great community.



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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the City of Highland Park is to provide excellent services with the highest degree of efficiency, fairness and equity. The City is governed by the council-manager form of government. In Highland Park, there are six City Council members and the Mayor, all elected at large, who serve staggered four-year terms. The Council hires a professional manager to carry out the administrative responsibilities and delivery of public services.

A professional City Manager and staff who are experienced in city management handle the day-to-day operations of the City. The City has a number of commissions comprised of citizen volunteers who take an active role in City policy recommendations.

You can learn more about the City and its operations at www.cityhpil.com, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HighlandParkIL and Twitter at www.twitter.com/CityHPIL.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL



Nancy R. Rotering
Mayor
2011-2015



Anthony E. Blumberg
Councilman
2011-2015



Paul Frank
Councilman
2011-2015



Michelle Holleman
Councilman
2014-2015



Daniel A. Kaufman
Councilman
2013-2017



Alyssa Knobel
Councilman
2013-2017



Kim Stone
Councilwoman
2013-2017



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Nancy R. Rotering

Together, we plan and achieve great things for our city. We build coalitions and find solutions to meet the needs and achieve the hopes of our community. With each project, we face opportunity and embrace thoughtful change. This is evident as we focus on our core priorities of fiscal stability, public safety and investment in our infrastructure. We join together to support business development, meet the needs of our most vulnerable community members, celebrate the arts and preserve our natural resources.

Over many months our City staff, my council colleagues, and I work as a team to create our budget – our most important policy statement. We are fiscally responsible with your dollars and plan for the coming year and the future with an eye on potential challenges and opportunities. I am proud to say that we approved a balanced operating budget for the fourth year in a row and with healthy reserves; our financial house is in order.

Through strong partnerships with our dedicated police and fire departments, public safety is robust and highly effective both on a day-to-day basis and during the Ravinia Festival summer season, when more than 600,000 people come to town to celebrate the arts.

City-wide infrastructure investment means we plan and build for a safe and healthy today and years to come. Our Department of Public Works crew works hand in hand with us, meeting our daily and long term infrastructure needs. They said “it couldn’t be done,” but new sidewalks were added for the second year in a row, filling in decades-old dangerous gaps on major roads. This means safer streets for all of us, from our kids to our seniors. It also means we have created attractive and connected neighborhoods for families and businesses to grow.

The economic outlook is positive in Highland Park, with increased development, jobs, improved sales tax revenues and enhanced vibrancy in our city. New businesses continue to open and the city’s retail occupancy rate is at a pre-recession high.

Last fall, inspired by the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ (USCM) National Call to Action against bullying and the Elm Place Project Citizen students, representatives from the City of Highland Park, our sister governments, agencies and not-for-profit organizations joined together to promote an on-going and unified message about bullying awareness, prevention and intervention. This Anti-bullying Initiative recognizes that bullying knows no bounds, and can have detrimental impacts on all ages, genders, races and economic groups. Each organization planned activities, events and dialogues focused on the message ‘We Stand Together’.

As State resources continue to vacillate, we work to meet the human service needs of our neighbors. The Human Services Task Force, a group of over 250 volunteers ranging in age from 17-85, assessed needs and inventoried services available. A comprehensive human services plan was created and immediate outcomes led to creatively addressing various service issues, including food insecurity, finding financial support for free medical care, identifying specific housing and transit opportunities, and so on.

Our community is driven by a collective desire to work together to shape our future, starting with fresh thinking and appreciating our city as a place where new ideas and approaches make a tangible difference in what we do and how we evolve as a community. I love that our residents care about each other and care about our city. You call and write, and your input is vital to our vibrancy and progress. Hearing from you is my favorite part of this job.

We are a team. Thank you to my Council colleagues and our staff. Your dedication and hard work is appreciated and impactful. And most of all, thank you to our residents, our sister governments, partner organizations and our businesses. Our community is strong thanks to your passion and our partnership.

Nancy R. Rotering, Mayor



MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Ghida S. Neukirch

My inspiration to become a city manager came when I was an undergraduate student at DePaul University. More than 20 years later, I continue to feel energized about the work that I do and regard this profession as one of the most rewarding. I am blessed to have the opportunity to work with an intellectual, professional, hard-working and creative group of professionals to manage the City's day to day operation. The opportunity to carry out that task in Highland Park is truly a dream come true for me.

In 2014, the City undertook more than 130 major projects and initiatives to achieve innovative solutions and implement effective and efficient change. Our staff embraces the City Council's defined core priorities of public safety, fiscal stability and infrastructure. We work together to carry out every initiative in order to best serve our residents, businesses and visitors.

We have achieved much together as a team in 2014. We continuously collaborate with our governmental partners. The City successfully consolidated public safety dispatch operations with the Village of Glenview and other partner municipalities, bringing efficiencies and cost savings to our community. The Water Treatment Plant Upgrade project was completed on time and on budget in 2014. As a result, the City will provide a new level of water quality and service to our residents and municipal customers in neighboring communities. The Public Works Department also completed more than \$13 million of infrastructure improvements as part of its 2014 Capital Improvement Program. Streets, storm sewers, sanitary sewers, parking garages, and bridges received major upgrades. For the second year in a row, the City continued its new sidewalk installation program, prioritizing the connectivity of our neighborhoods.

Other projects such as the City's Central Business District's 2014 rezoning considerations aim to enhance the vibrant energy of the downtown experience for residents and visitors by creating a more residential and pedestrian-oriented environment. The City's 2014 branding initiative will set into motion a new way of thinking and talking about Highland Park enhancing our visibility locally and regionally, supporting our residential and business vibrancy.

Fiscal stability is a critical component of effective city management. In 2014, Moody's again affirmed the City's Aaa bond rating, the highest level that a municipality may attain. The City also received the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and received the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award in 2014. Additionally, the Police Department was reaccredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies. We are proud to also have accredited Fire and Public Works Departments, a testament to our level of professionalism across the organization.

Working with a talented staff and a dedicated group of elected officials is extremely gratifying and the work we produce together is of the highest quality. Highland Park is not only a great place to serve, but it is an exceptional community, filled with progressive, caring and passionate individuals.

I invite you to contact me if there is anything that we can do to enhance the quality of life in our great community. I may be reached at (847) 926-1000, gneukirch@cityhpil.com, or feel free to stop by City Hall..

Ghida S. Neukirch
City Manager

CORE PRIORITIES

Our City Council and staff work together to establish the major projects and initiatives for the coming year. These are based on a thoughtful vision for the short and long term incorporating public feedback. For 2014, an aggressive work plan was created that focused on more than 130 projects. Three core priorities, as established by the Council, guide the work plan and principles of the City. These priorities are public safety, fiscal stability and infrastructure.



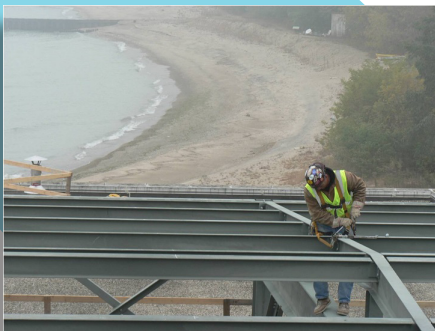
Public Safety

The City Council and staff prioritize public safety. We support expedited response times and high quality services during public safety emergencies, strengthening community relations, providing on-going education and enforcement of drug and alcohol regulations, focusing on vehicular and bicycle traffic education and enforcement, partnering with the community to resolve neighborhood concerns and enhancing the quality of life in Highland Park.



Fiscal Stability

Fiscal stability is a critical component of effective city management. The City reviews its operations, seizes opportunities to improve its financial health, and encourages development opportunities that improves the quality of life in the community.



Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a significant component of a community's public safety. The City has prioritized addressing aging infrastructure, which includes streets, sidewalks, water mains, sewers and bridges. Residents can track capital improvement plan progress through an interactive map on the City's website. All capital improvement projects are planned and implemented with an eye towards environmental sustainability opportunities.

BikeWalk 2030 Plan

To implement the City's objective of promoting pedestrian traffic, the Public Works Department continues to budget and complete bike and pedestrian friendly projects. In 2014, the projects include completion of sidewalk gaps along the following routes:

- Oak Street (Sheridan Road) from Walker Avenue to Bloom Street
- Sheridan Road from Lincolnwood Road to Dell Lane
- Sheridan Road from Lakeside Place south to the bridge
- Sheridan Road (Lake Cook Road) from 25 Sheridan to South Deere Park Drive

Green Bay Road Sewer Improvements

The replacement of the storm and sanitary sewers on Green Bay Road were included in the Sewer Master Plan. The project scope entails increasing the size of the sanitary sewer, relocation of the storm sewer, existing above sanitary sewer, and replacement of the water main. The construction work included new 8, 12, 18 and 21-inch storm sewers, new 8-inch sanitary sewer, and new 8-inch water main beginning 200' south of Ridgewood Drive extending to approximately 700' north of Ridgewood Drive. The new storm sewers will replace existing undersized pipes thereby improving drainage conditions in the neighborhood. The new sanitary sewer and water mains will be increased to City-standard 8-inch size. All public infrastructure utilities were installed within east parkway in order to avoid conflict with a large telecommunications duct and major impact to Green Bay Road.



Fast Facts About 2014

The City provides numerous programs and services to the residents, business and property owners and visitors to Highland Park on a daily basis. The City is dedicated to providing these high quality programs and services efficiently and effectively. The following are a few fast facts identifying City accomplishments in 2014.



- In 2014, the City Council approved **104 ordinances** and **168 resolutions**.
- The Office of Business Development registered **935 businesses** in Highland Park.
- The City has **127 volunteers** serving as members on one of the City's **18 commissions**. Additionally, the City has **30 student representatives** who serve as ex-officio members on these commissions. The commissions craft recommendations for Council consideration and play an integral role in policy-creation.
- Mayor Rotering welcomed **305 third graders** to City Hall from North Shore School District 112 where students toured the building, learned about city operations, and participated in a mock City Council meeting.
- The City sent **104 press releases**, **62 e-newsletters** and **11 public safety alerts** to keep the community informed of news and alerts occurring in Highland Park.

- The City has **three** accredited agencies: the Fire Department, Public Works Department and the Police Department, which was recertified in 2014.
- The Police Department responded to **15,885 calls for Police service** and conducted **406 well-being checks**.
- The Fire Department responded to **2126 fire incidents** and **1968 emergency medical incidents**.
- Additionally, the Fire Department **taught 964 elementary students** about fire prevention and fire safety.
- During a snow event, the Public Works Department **plows 260 miles of public streets** and **120 miles of sidewalk**. On average, it takes the plows 6-8 hours to plow the streets at
- The Public Works Department installed **2800 feet of new sidewalk** throughout Highland Park as part of the Bike Walk 2030 Plan.
- The City's Building Division issued **5400 building permits**, conducted **10,000+ building inspections** and responded to **852 requests for code enforcement**.



City-Sponsored Events and Initiatives

The City of Highland Park hosts and sponsors various community events throughout the year that are family-friendly and open to the public. We encourage you to join us next year for one of these fun events.



Recycling Extravaganza: January 4, 2014

This annual recycling drive occurs on the first Saturday of the year at the Recycling Center, 1180 Half Day Road.

Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service: January 20, 2014

This annual Day of Service welcomes 1,400 individuals from our community and Chicagoland to participate in service learning projects.



Food Drive for Moraine Township, March - December

The City joined the community in collecting food donations to assist the Moraine Township Food Pantry with maintaining a secure stock of food year-round

Fire Department Blood Drive: May 24 & November 1

The Fire Department hosted two blood drives in support of a fellow firefighter and his daughter, who is fighting a high-risk cancer.

Memorial Day Observance: May 26, 2014

This annual observance honors the fallen who have served our country proudly.



USO Children's Drive: June 2014

The City collected school supplies, toys and books for the children of military personnel stationed at the Naval Station Great Lakes in collaboration with the USO.

Stukey Cabin Community Picnic: June 7, 2014

The City co-sponsors this annual event with the Park District and the Historical Society to celebrate Highland Park's pioneer history and our oldest structure. Cabin tours, children's activities and reenactments are the highlight of this event.

Independence Day Parade & Fireworks: July 4, 2014

With about 3,000 spectators lining the streets, the parade brings together community organizations, local businesses, entertainment, dignitaries and more. At night, the City hosts the Bitter Jester Battle of the Bands concert and fireworks show.

Port Clinton Art Festival & Taste of Highland Park: August 22-24, 2014

This annual festival attracts more than 250,000 art enthusiasts and features art from more than 260 celebrated artists. The event is coordinated by Amdur Productions.

Anti-Bullying Initiative: Kick off October 6, 2014

Inspired by the U.S. Conference of Mayors' (USCM) Campaign to End Bullying, Mayor Rotering convened representatives from sister governments, agencies and not-for-profit organizations to launch 'We Stand Together,' an Anti-Bullying Campaign. On-going events and activities were scheduled by the team throughout the year.



Business Summit: October 15, 2014

The Business Summit brings together brokers, developers, existing and prospective business owners to facilitate economic growth and new opportunities in Highland Park.

Fire Department Pancake Breakfast: November 8, 2014

The Fire Department hosted this event to support the Illinois Burn Camp, I Am Me.



Veterans Day Observance: November 11, 2014

This annual commemoration honors local veterans who have served their country in dedication.

Holiday Lighting Ceremony: November 22, 2014

Every year, this event kicks off the holiday season with entertainment, a scavenger hunt, a visit from Santa and official lighting of the trees.



Leadership Alliance of Lake County: January 10, May 8, & September 19

The Leadership Alliance of Lake County, established by Mayor Rotering brings together community leaders from the region to stimulate conversations among regional leaders (civic, corporate, non-profit) to focus on unique opportunities for business development and improved strategies for providing human service.

Happy 125th Anniversary to the Fire Department

The Highland Park Fire Department celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2014, marking a long and prosperous history. The Department was established in 1889 as a volunteer department when citizen Andrew Bock requested to City Council that the City purchase two fire hoses and establish two fire companies. 125 years later, the Department is now fully accredited demonstrating the highest quality fire and emergency medical service. The Department is comprised of 54 personnel, including three battalion chiefs and more than 40 sworn firefighters and paramedics. In 2014, the Department hosted two blood drives, a pancake breakfast to raise awareness for a local children's burn camp, and a reception for participants in the Wounded Warrior Ride.

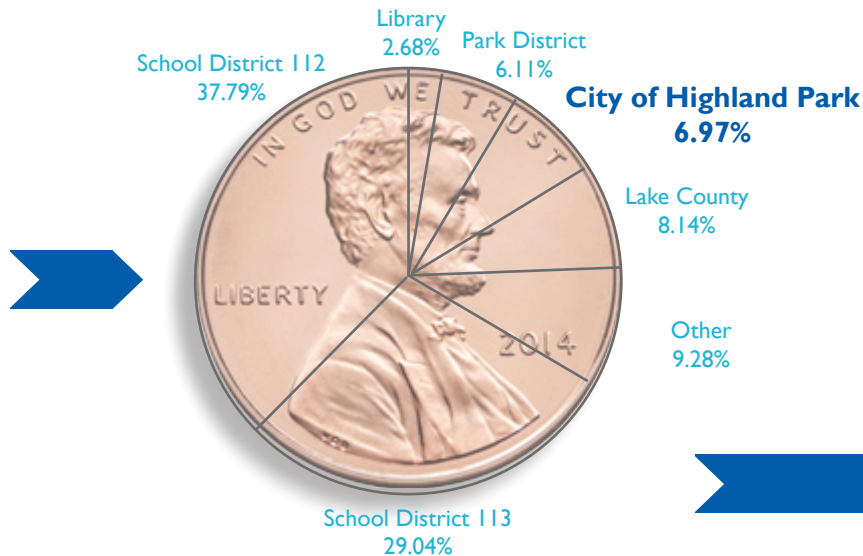


Financial Summary

The City was recognized once again by the Government Finance Officers Association with the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting for the 2013 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 2014 Budget. This distinction is a continued honor for the City and is representative of the City's methodical and comprehensive financial reporting and commitment to meeting the highest principles of governmental transparency.

Your Tax Penny

Property tax revenues are distributed to a number of taxing bodies, as illustrated here. For every \$100 of your property tax bill, less than \$7 of that goes to the City, based on your 2013 property tax bill.



Expenditures

The 7% of your property tax bill that goes to the City is expended in several ways. However, since the City is a service-oriented organization, the majority of the expenditures go toward personnel costs.

Expenditures:

31% Personnel Costs	8% Transfers
24% Contractual Services	7% Debt Service
27% Capital Outlay	Less than 1% Reserves
3% Materials & Supplies	

Revenues

In 2014, the City received only 15% of its total revenue from property taxes. However, the City receives revenue from multiple sources. In 2014, the City's total revenues were budgeted at \$83,818,000.

Revenue Sources:

15% Property Taxes	11% Bond Proceeds
15% Sales Tax	9% Transfers
16% Other Taxes	17% Other Revenues
17% Enterprise Revenues	

Connect With Us



We encourage you to connect with us! Sign up to receive our City Enews at www.cityhpil.com/signup and join us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Or become a Neighborhood Coordinator and give back to your community by bringing your neighborhood together. You can join this program at www.cityhpil.com/n2n. We look forward to your feedback and working with you as we continue to support and shape our vibrant community.

City Manager's Office

City Hall
1707 St. Johns Avenue
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(847) 926-1000

Finance Department

City Hall
1707 St. Johns Avenue
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(847) 432-0800

Public Works Department

1150 Half Day Road
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(847) 432-0807

Community Development

1150 Half Day Road
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(847) 432-1608

Mayor's Office

1707 St. Johns Avenue
(847) 926-1009

Police Department

1677 Old Deerfield Road
Records Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Non-Emergency: (847) 432-7730
Emergency: 911

Fire Department

1130 Central Avenue
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Non-Emergency: (847) 433-3110
Emergency: 911

*In the event you need to contact the City outside of business hours for a non-emergency, please contact (847) 432-7730.

*To sign up cell phones and work phones for the Emergency Voice Notification System, go to www.cityhpil.com/signup. Landline phone numbers are automatically signed up.



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