



City of Highland Park

1707 St. Johns Avenue
Highland Park, Illinois 60035
www.cityhpil.com

Media Release

Staff Contact

Amanda Bennett
Communications Manager
Email: abennett@cityhpil.com
Tel: 847.926.1043

For Immediate Release

May 4, 2023

Guidance for Media Partners Ahead of the Highland Park Shooting One-Year Mark

Highland Park, Illinois – The City of Highland Park (the City) has compiled recommendations to help media partners share information about the Highland Park shooting in a compassionate, trauma-informed manner, cognizant of the ways in which language may inadvertently cause harm to others. **The recommendations below are for your information and consideration.**

The guidance was developed with input from the Department of Justice Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) and is consistent with recommendations provided to service providers, not-for-profit partners, businesses, and the public. As communicators, we all share the same goals of clear, transparent and timely information sharing. Discussing an incident such as the Highland Park shooting challenges us to consider as carefully and as thoroughly as possible the potential and inadvertent consequences of the words and images we use. It is the City's hope that by sharing these guidelines with all of our stakeholders, we will facilitate public dialogue that is aligned with best practices for the resiliency of communities that have experienced mass violence.

References to the Highland Park shooting

Use "Highland Park shooting" to reference the event.

- "Shooting" is preferred to "mass shooting." Based on the City's research, articles and commentary tagged with "mass shooting" frequently focus on the shooter. It is important to center victims and minimize focus on the perpetrator.

Avoid use of "Highland Park parade shooting," "July 4 parade shooting," or other references to the Independence Day holiday.

- Because the Highland Park shooting occurred on an annual, national holiday, during a beloved community tradition, it is important to begin distancing the

tragic events of 2022 from future Independence Day events. The holiday will continue to be celebrated by many, and we anticipate that as time passes, individuals who may not feel comfortable celebrating now will reclaim the holiday and its traditions in the future.

Avoid use of “anniversary” to denote the one-year mark.

- This recommendation is in line with best practices suggesting that it’s important to choose words that lack emotional weight where appropriate and possible. Using the term “one-year mark” or “one-year remembrance” acknowledges the passage of time since the shooting while still conveying a sense of solemnity and respect for the victims and their families.
- Neutral language in this and other instances helps individuals dealing with trauma to create emotional distance, which in turn is helpful for long-term resilience.

Avoid use of “Highland Park Strong.” Replace with “Together Highland Park Unidos.”

- In the immediate aftermath of the incident, the community rallied around the phrase “Highland Park Strong.” However, language that includes “strong” or similar terms can create a hierarchy and reinforce power imbalances within a community over time. This can make some members feel superior or more important than others, and can inadvertently lead to division and lack of cohesion.
- Community feedback, staff analysis, and expert input from OVC indicates that “strong” and similar terms are thus counterproductive for many victims of tragedies, not just incidents like the Highland Park shooting.
- The new slogan “Together Highland Park Unidos” is intended to emphasize collaboration and cooperation to promote unity and a sense of belonging among community members. The new branding underscores that the community is working towards common goals.
- A media kit, including graphic files, is available at cityhpil.com/togetherhp.
- The City has made the Together Highland Park Unidos logo available for community use. Individuals using the logo for commemorative items should clearly disclose that the product is not affiliated with or endorsed by the City of Highland Park.

References to the victims of the Highland Park shooting

Ensure names are in alignment with the names as written at the temporary memorial:

Katie Goldstein, Irina McCarthy, Kevin Michael McCarthy, Stephen Straus, Jacki Lovi Sundheim, Nicolás Toledo, Eduardo Uvaldo.

Avoid use of unauthorized photography, even if images were obtained from public profiles or otherwise available in the public domain.

- Some victims’ family members have expressed a desire to limit circulation of their loved ones’ photos.
- The City can provide photography of the temporary memorial upon request.
- The City is unable to provide photography of the victims.

Refer to “lives taken” or “people killed” as opposed to “lives/people lost.”

- Language that accurately conveys the severity of the situation is important in communicating the gravity of what occurred.

Phrases to avoid

The City has compiled a list of common words or phrases that may be inadvertently re-traumatizing, along with suggested replacements:

Avoid	Preferred
healing, recovery	resiliency, journey
strong	resilient
normal	familiar
move on	move forward
trigger (as in, triggering)	re-traumatize
anniversary	(x) years since, (x)-year mark, remembrance
lives lost	lives taken, people killed

Use of photography/videography

Avoid use of photography or videography in which faces are clearly visible. Victims’ experts indicate that it is re-traumatizing for survivors to spot themselves in footage of the incident.

Avoid use of photography or videography in which victims who were killed are visible.

- In the aftermath of the incident, still photography and on-scene video emerged in which it is possible to identify the victims pictured. These images and video are very disturbing to surviving family members.
- The City recognizes that demonstrating the graphic impact of gun violence may be relevant to reporting. However, the City has heard from victims’ family members that these images are re-traumatizing for their loved ones.

Use a content screen if it is determined that inclusion of a graphic image of the nature described above is required.

- It is recommended that the content screen provide an accurate and detailed description of the image that has been hidden.
- It is worth remembering that images placed behind a content screen may be indexable and thus may appear in search without the benefit of a content screen.
- Some survivors note that photos and footage that include personal belongings on the parade route are uncomfortable to look at.

Interview requests

The City will consider interview requests for Mayor Nancy Rotering, City Manager Ghida Neukirch, and other relevant staff as available. Requests for Mayor Rotering should be directed to Alyssa Knobel, aknobel@amcommunicationsteam.com. All other requests should be directed to Amanda Bennett, abennett@cityhpil.com.

The City is unable to schedule interviews or connect media partners with victims or victims' family members. All such requests should be directed to the relevant attorneys.

Filming considerations

The Highland Park City Code requires a permit for any commercial filming within city limits, applicable to filming for the primary purpose of commercial sale or distribution as a movie, television show, music video, advertising commercial, training film or educational program. A permit is not needed for broadcast news, whether live on-site or produced in advance. However, a permit would be required for documentary filming. If you are unsure as to whether the City's commercial filming regulations would apply, please contact the City Manager's Office at 847.926.1000.

Out of respect for victims' families, the City requests that media partners avoid broadcasting or interviews at the temporary memorial located at 1707 St. Johns Avenue. Still photography and b-roll footage is appropriate unless guests are present. Please avoid photographing individuals who are visiting temporary memorial.

Support services

The City has established the practice of including a statement regarding widely available support services when discussing topics pertaining to gun violence. We would appreciate your support in amplifying the following:

Reports of gun violence have the potential to trigger the trauma of survivors. Free and confidential multilingual assistance is available to Lake County residents from trained navigators who can connect you with local available resources to manage trauma 24/7 via 211 Lake County (United Way of Lake County). Visit [211LakeCounty.org](https://www.211LakeCounty.org), call 211, or text your zip code to 898211.

The City's Resiliency Division is also able to assist individuals impacted by the incident in accessing resources such as specialized mental health providers, peer support groups, and other assistance. Visit cityhpil.com/resiliency to learn more.

Public information

The City has received a number of inquiries regarding where to access information specific to the Highland Park shooting. Please don't hesitate to let us know if the following links do not answer your question:

- Services for individuals impacted by the shooting: cityhpil.com/resiliency
- July 4, 2023 plans: cityhpil.com/july4
- Together Highland Park Unidos media kit: cityhpil.com/togetherhp
- Public communication toolkit: cityhpil.com/togetherhp
- Temporary memorial information: cityhpil.com/temporarymemorial
- Permanent memorial information: cityhpil.com/permanentmemorial

Special considerations for July 4, 2023 activities

The City is working collaboratively with the Park District of Highland Park to plan a meaningful slate of opportunities to come together as a community on July 4, 2023:

- Remembrance Ceremony (10 AM, City Hall, 1707 St. Johns Ave.)*
- Community Walk (11 AM, start at City Hall or The Lot, 523 Central Ave.)*
- Community Picnic (11:30 AM, Sunset Woods Park)
- Evening Entertainment & Drone Display (6:30 PM, Wolters Field)*

For the safety of all, activities denoted with an asterisk will require pre-registration for ticketed entry. Information will be available at cityhpil.com/july4 by mid-May.

A media advisory with more specific information, including site maps/staging areas, on-site contact information, media availability schedule, and media registration will be released in early June.

Media partners are encouraged to review the below recommendations when planning coverage of these events:

- Victims' family members, individuals who were injured, and individuals who were present and uninjured will be in attendance at these events. Please be

cognizant that high media visibility, such as satellite trucks and staging, may be re-traumatizing.

- The City understands there will be intense regional and national interest in the one-year remembrance and subsequent events; however, these are intended to be community-focused. Our community is still grappling with the serious consequences of gun violence, and we appreciate compassion in engaging with our residents.
- The City will offer reserved seating for victims' families and individuals who were injured who may choose to attend the remembrance ceremony. We ask that media avoid approaching these individuals who are grieving.
- Two media staging areas will be provided; the City requests that camera crews do *not* participate in the community walk. Media staging will be provided outside the boundaries of the walk route, facing east down Central Ave. nearby Port Clinton Square, for visibility of the crowd.
- Out of respect for grieving family members, the City requests that crews avoid staging at Port Clinton Square; while this is a public area and thus access cannot be restricted, it is also the space where beloved members of our community were killed. Your support in maintaining this area as a solemn place of reflection on July 4, 2023 is deeply appreciated.

City staff are pleased to provide any assistance you may need in planning coverage for July 4, 2023. By working together, we can balance the interest in our community and these events with the needs of our still-grieving community.

###