

**Human Relations Advisory Group Meeting
Highland Park Police Department**

May 14, 2026

5:00 PM

Agenda

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the Statutes of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Highland Park, a Regular Meeting of the Human Relations Advisory Group of the City of Highland Park is scheduled to be held at the hour of 5:00 PM on Thursday, May 14, 2026 at the Highland Park Police Department, 1677 Old Deerfield Road, Highland Park, Illinois during which it is anticipated there will be a discussion.

Individuals with questions or feedback about an agenda item can address the Advisory Group in the following ways:

1. **Emails for the Record.** [Email Christina Earle](#), the Human Relations Advisory Group staff liaison. If you wish to have your comments read into the record, limit your communication to 200 words or less. Public comments received by 3:00 PM the day of the meeting will be read under Business from the Public. Public comments should contain the following information:
 - • In the subject line, identify, “HRAG Meeting – Read into the Record”
 - • Name • City • Address (optional) • Phone (optional) • Organization, agency representing, if applicable • Topic or agenda item number of interest
 2. **Emails with Unlimited Information.** Individuals who do not wish to have their comments read into the record can email Christina Earle an unlimited number of words. Emails will be forwarded to the Human Relations Advisory Group if requested.
 3. **Telephone.** Individuals with no access to email may leave a message with Staff Liaison Christina Earle at 847.926.1861 by 3:00PM the day of the meeting.
 4. **Live Comments.** Individuals are able to address the Advisory Group during the meeting. Questions/comments are limited to written testimony into the record or spoken comments, not both. Comments should be limited to three minutes or less.
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- I. **Call to Order**
 - II. **Roll Call**
 - III. **Approval of Minutes**
 - A. March 12, 2026 Regular Meeting
 - IV. **Business from the Public (Individuals wishing to be heard regarding items not listed on this agenda)**

V. Old Business

- A. MLK Day of Service (WP1)

VI. New Business

- A. Statement Against Hate discussion

VII. Other Business

- A. City Staff Update
- B. Chairman Update
- C. Advisor Comments

VIII. Adjournment

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY GROUP
OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS**

MEETING DATE: March 12, 2026

MEETING LOCATION: Highland Park Police Department
1677 Old Deerfield Road, Highland Park, IL 60035

CALL TO ORDER: At 5:02 PM, Chair Canchester called the Human Relations Advisory Group (HRAG) regular meeting to order and Staff Liaison Earle called the roll.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Chair Canchester, Vice-Chair Buzard, Members Jasenof, Klayman, Luger, Tiersky, Weisskopf

Members Absent: Member Harris, Lynch, Weiner

Also Present: Student Liaison Babalola; Staff Liaison Earle, Alternate Staff Liaison Ford; NSSD 112 Representative Fink; Park District Representatives Peirce and Greenberg

Chair Canchester declared a quorum was present. Chair Canchester welcomed new members Babalola, Greenberg, and Klayman.

CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

- (a) Approval of Minutes of January 8, 2026 Regular Meeting

Member Jasenof moved to adopt the minutes. Member Klayman seconded the motion. Voice vote, unanimous. Chair Canchester declared the motion passed.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

OLD BUSINESS

- (a) MLK Day of Service (WP1)

Chair Canchester thanked everyone for their hard work on the event and read written comments from Lidawer and Lynch, who praised the event and brought up having the entertainment right after the speaker and raised the question of the primary goal of the event. Discussion was had by the group on the timing of the entertainment, if the entertainment should stay part of the event, and who would be a meaningful keynote speaker. The structure of the service project was also discussed with the idea to combine to one service project or to charge groups without projects to fund other projects or charities.

The group decided to incorporate the "I Have a Dream" speech, either read by a Park District employee or by students, and to consider a key speaker who walked with Dr. King. The group also decided consider

local entertainment and dance troupes. The group noted to reach out and loop in Ravinia, Glencoe, and kids in the community to lead their own service projects.

The group assigned the following tasks and subcommittees for preparing for the 2027 event:

Members Lynch, Klayman and Weiner will work on a subgroup to communicate/market to service groups. They will evaluate whether to consolidate any of the groups and how to create meaningful service projects.

Chair Canchester is to reach out to Glencoe and ask how they would like to be looped into next year's event.

Member Tiersky and Vice-chair Buzard are to look into a keynote speaker, possibly someone who walked with Dr. King or knew Dr. King, and incorporating the "I Have a Dream Speech" into the event.

Members Lugar and Weisskopf and to reach out to Ravinia and look into local dance groups for entertainment.

(b) HP Awards Ceremony

Chair Canchester and Staff Liaison Earle noted that the ceremony is on April 23 at the High School and asked volunteers to arrive by 5:45 pm. Staff Liaison Earle distributed a volunteer sign-up sheet.

NEW BUSINESS

Vice-Chair Buzard proposed to the group asking for a proclamation by the City in recognition of the 80th anniversary of Nuremberg trials and in support of the International Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity at the October 23 Council Meeting.

Member Luger made motion which was seconded by Member Kalyman to create a subcommittee to work on the proposal. Voice vote, unanimous. Chair Canchester declared the motion passed. The subcommittee will consist of Vice Chair-Buzard, Member Luger and Member Jasenof. Staff Liaison Earle is to bring back information on how to propose a proclamation.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) City Staff Update

Staff Liaison Earle reminded the group that there was time for submit for the photography and food photography contest with submissions due on March 15. A reminder was also given to sign up for resident academy, to take place on Tuesday evenings, 6 - 8 PM from May 12, 2026 through June 23, 2026. Earle announced that the permanent Place of Remembrance project is making progress in their design plan and will release information on community engagement opportunities soon. Staff Liaison Earle and Alternate Liaison Ford also reviewed the event line up for Independence Day and America 250 and invited any interested parties to join the Independence Day Parade.

(b) Chairman Update

Chair Canchester and Vice-Chair Buzard informed the group that they accepted proclamations for Black History Month and MLK Day.

(c) Advisor Comments

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Canchester entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Member Jasenof and seconded by Vice-Chair Buzard. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the members present. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Parker Ford
Administrative Program Specialist

DRAFT

The Statement Against Hate was drafted in 2019 and updated most recently in July 2023. The Statement was drafted by elected and appointed officials and City staff and emphasizes the City's commitment to stand against all forms of hate, discrimination, and harassment in Highland Park. It is frequently referenced in response to current events or trends that are counter to the City's values.

City Council adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, underscoring the City's commitment to standing against hate and strong support for Highland Park's Jewish community. The definition will now be incorporated into public-facing communications and internal employee documents, such as the Employee Manual, standardizing the terminology.

"In Highland Park, we value truth, transparency, and accountability in our governance. Our values statement, ethics guidelines, and our statement against hate are more than just words on paper – they're promises we keep to our residents and ourselves every day. These principles remind us to act with integrity, treat each other with fairness, and imagine what is possible when we work together toward common goals." – Mayor Rotering, State of the City 2025

CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK VALUES STATEMENT

Highland Park is an inclusive and welcoming community that honors and affirms the intrinsic worth and unique perspectives of all who reside, work, study, and visit here. The City of Highland Park celebrates the diverse characteristics of persons of every race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, religion and faith tradition, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability, age, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and immigration status. These individual characteristics bring richness to our community. We are committed to ensuring that our priorities, policies, and behaviors nurture a sustainable citywide culture of inclusion that embraces the full diversity of our community. We invite all members of our community to participate and contribute to a more just and equitable future.

As a City, we will work to live up to this Values Statement by always:

- Working through an equity lens.
 - We will ensure access, processes, policies, and outcomes do not inadvertently exclude anyone.
- Operating with transparency.
 - We believe that open communication, honest discussion, and inclusion of the diverse voices of our community lead to trust.
- Condemning any act of hate or discrimination.
 - We will uphold the City's Statement Against Hate in a timely, unequivocal, and actionable way.

STATEMENT AGAINST HATE

Hate has no home in Highland Park. The City strives to embody our inclusive and affirming values as an open and welcoming community. The City of Highland Park strongly opposes prejudice, bias, hostility, discrimination or violence against individuals based on their race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, gender, or gender identity. The City unequivocally condemns any racist, xenophobic, misogynistic, antisemitic, anti-LGBTQ+, ableist, or otherwise hate-motivated groups or individuals who threaten any form of violence towards, harassment, or discrimination against our residents, visitors, students, or City staff. This behavior is never acceptable.

Recognizing the critical responsibility of responding swiftly to safeguard our community from hate, the City of Highland Park will take every possible action to ensure that residents, workers, students, and visitors will not face discrimination or harassment. Hate crimes and violence have no place in our city, state, or country and will not be tolerated. If a report of such a hate crime is received in Highland Park, the City's Police Department will thoroughly investigate, in partnership with appropriate partner agencies, to ensure the continued safety of our community.

It is essential that our community stand together in denouncing all acts of bigotry and violence in accordance with our values. Hate has no home in Highland Park or anywhere.

HISTORY OF HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY GROUP INVOLVEMENT

Human Relations Advisory Group 2020 Review (from the 1/9/20 minutes)

Stance on Hate & Intolerance: Member Ruddle gave a brief update on the background of this Workplan action. Staff Liaison Frey gave a brief power point presentation of examples of previous statements, press releases, and social media posts. Member Ruddle read a copy of an initial statement draft and discussion ensued. The HRAG created a list of desired actions to take regarding hate and intolerance to bring forth to City Council. The HRAG group desires to: 1) create a general statement on the City's desire to be welcoming and inclusive, 2) create a general statement to be used by the City in response to incidences of hate as needed, 3) write a proclamation on the City's desire to be welcoming and inclusive, 4) create protocol for individuals who encounter hate or intolerances in the City, and 5) create a document and web page which notes and links regarding procedures residents can report and address incidents within various agencies within the City such as at the schools, businesses, etc. 6) receive regular updates from the Police Department on the issues, 7) reporting options to track incidents. This list will be presented to City Council for consideration and addition to the 2020 and/or 2021 Workplans. Staff Liaison will send an updated version to a HRAG members and members are asked share feedback with Member Ruddle directly.

Human Relations Advisory Group 2023 Review (from the 7/12/23 minutes)

Statement Against Hate:

Mission & Priorities reviewed by Mayor & Council, brought to HRAG attention/information

Krent – grammar is incorrect

*was suggested that there are parts that are not grammatically correct/inconsistencies, needs an editor

*discussion was had about the legality of using the word speech (re: freedom of speech)

Suggested to possibly lead with the values statement and then include the statement against hate within the values statement

Fishman - suggested to use City of Santa Monica's statement against hate as an example

-appreciate the format of Santa Monica's statement

- Specifically lead statement with a positive spin

- Tie in similar language from Santa Monica

<https://www.santamonica.gov/press/2022/07/28/santa-monica-city-council-statement-against-hate>

HRAG recommendation to consider format of Santa Monica and incorporate language

Harris – direct and to the point

Fishman – positive spin, celebration of diversity

Neukirch – communicate how the City stands on the matter of hate; values statement purpose to be proactive about City values

Veterans Organizations – don't need something official, miscommunications will be resolved overtime; what was thought that might have been an issue, is in fact not an issue.



Request for Council Action

Referred to Council: August 11, 2025
 Subject: Antisemitism Definition
 Staff Contact: Emily Taub, Assistant City Manager
 Ghida Neukirch, City Manager
 Department: City Manager's Office

TITLE: An Ordinance Adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism and Directing the City Manager to Implement Antidiscrimination Terms of City Employment

Background

At the August 11th Committee of the Whole meeting, the City Council will discuss the possible adoption of adopting a formal definition of antisemitism. An ordinance has also been prepared for formal consideration. Please see the staff report for the Committee of the Whole for a comprehensive overview of the topic.

Recommendation

Should the City Council choose to move forward, the following course of action is recommended:

1. Adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism by ordinance.
2. Include the IHRA working definition of antisemitism into the City employment manual under prohibited acts of discrimination by City employees and contractors. This is accomplished by authorizing and directing the City Manager to include the antisemitism definition into employee materials.

CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

ORDINANCE NO.

**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST
REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM AND
DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO IMPLEMENT ANTIDISCRIMINATION
TERMS OF CITY EMPLOYMENT**

WHEREAS, the City is committed to combating all forms of discrimination, and setting a clear example that bigotry and hate have no home in the City of Highland Park; and

WHEREAS, hate crimes and other incidents motivated by bigotry have spiked throughout the Chicago area in recent years, with antisemitic incidents alone skyrocketing by almost 50 percent in 2024; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that antisemitism today is being promoted by individuals and groups at both ends of the political spectrum throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ("**IHRA**") developed a working definition of antisemitism to provide a roadmap for governments, law enforcement agencies, judicial institutions, and others to identify the diverse and distinct manifestations of antisemitism; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to: (i) endorse the IHRA working definition of antisemitism in order to facilitate the identification and reporting of antisemitic incidents and the education of what constitutes antisemitism; and (ii) foster an employment environment for City employees and contractors free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and inappropriate or offensive conduct; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 34.002(A) of "The Highland Park Code of 1968," as amended ("**City Code**"), the City Manager has been authorized to establish terms and conditions of employment with the City; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that it will serve and be in the best interest of the City to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, and to implement and enforce terms of City employment that expressly forbid illegal discrimination by City employees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF HIGHLAND PARK, LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, as follows:

SECTION ONE: RECITALS. The foregoing recitals are incorporated into, and made a part of, this Ordinance as findings of the City Council.

SECTION TWO: ENDORSEMENT OF IHRA WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM. The City Council hereby endorses the IHRA working definition of antisemitism adopted on May 16, 2016, as follows:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

SECTION THREE: IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTIDISCRIMINATION TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT. The City Council hereby directs the City Manager to implement and enforce terms of City employment that expressly forbid illegal discrimination by City employees, pursuant to the authority granted to the City Manager in Section 34.002(A) of the City Code. At a minimum, the actions included within discrimination must include antisemitism in accordance with the IHRA working definition endorsed pursuant to Section Two of this Ordinance.

SECTION FOUR: PUBLICATION. The City Clerk is hereby directed to publish this Ordinance in pamphlet form pursuant to the Statutes of the State of Illinois.

SECTION FIVE: EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance will be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval, and publication in the manner provided by law.

: August 11, 2025

ORDINANCE NO.

Nancy R. Rotering, Mayor

ATTEST:

Ghida S. Neukirch, City Clerk

26 May 2016

IHRA non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism

Adopted by the IHRA Plenary in Bucharest

In the spirit of the Stockholm Declaration that states: “With humanity still scarred by ...antisemitism and xenophobia the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils” the committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial called the IHRA Plenary in Budapest 2015 to adopt the following working definition of antisemitism.

On 26 May 2016, the Plenary in Bucharest decided to:

Adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

2025 State of the City Address

Mayor Rotering delivered the State of the City at the Monday, January 27, 2025 City Council meeting. View [video](#) of the meeting.

2025 State of the City

I am pleased to present the 2025 State of the City of Highland Park. Before we begin, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for my [City Council](#) colleagues: Tony Blumberg, Barisa Bruckman, Annette Lidawer, Kim Stone, Yumi Ross, and Andrés Tapia. While we may not always agree, although we do the vast majority of the time, our shared commitment to serving the best interests of Highland Park keeps us focused on what truly matters. Our varied perspectives reflect the strength of our democratic process, and I deeply respect the thoughtfulness, dedication, and integrity each of you brings to the dais. Together we strive to make decisions that are sensible, responsible, and impactful for our entire community.

Equally, I am deeply grateful for the extraordinary leadership and unwavering dedication of our [City staff](#). On behalf of all of us and the community – thank you. Under the guidance of City Manager Ghida Neukirch, along with our senior staff, corporation counsel Steve Elrod and every member of our City team, Highland Park continues to thrive. Their tireless work ensures our streets are safer, our environment healthier, and our residents' concerns are met with sensible, effective solutions. Whether it's providing peace of mind through round-the-clock public safety services, supporting our business community, managing essential construction projects, or delivering a budget we can all be proud of, they hold themselves accountable to the highest standards of integrity and responsibility.

As elected officials, we work closely with staff to provide our community with responsive customer service that exemplifies our five core priorities: fiscal stability, public safety, economic development, infrastructure investment, and environmental sustainability. Each spring at our strategic planning workshop, we revisit these priorities to ensure we're meeting the practical needs of today

while preparing responsibly for tomorrow. You will see these priorities reflected in every initiative we undertake this year – always with an eye on their long-term impact.

In Highland Park, we value truth, transparency, and accountability in our governance. Our [values statement](#), ethics guidelines, and our [statement against hate](#) are more than just words on paper – they're promises we keep to our residents and ourselves every day. These principles remind us to act with integrity, treat each other with fairness, and imagine what is possible when we work together toward common goals.

As we begin 2025, I am proud to say that we adopted a [balanced operating budget](#) for the 14th consecutive year. Our principal policy document, the City's budget is more than just an accounting ledger or an exercise in numbers – it is a clear demonstration of responsible fiscal management and thoughtful stewardship of taxpayer dollars, and our commitment to ensuring peace of mind for our residents. The budget reflects a sensible roadmap for Highland Park's future, aligning with our core priorities and ensuring that every dollar spent is an investment in a safer, cleaner, healthier community for all.

In 2024, Highland Park continued to lead with innovation, sustainability, and community spirit. Through sound financial management and strategic foresight, we once again attained recognition for both our [budget document](#) and [comprehensive annual financial report](#). Moody's reaffirmed our prestigious Aaa bond rating, a distinction granted to just 13 Illinois municipalities whose credit is rated by that agency. These accolades reflect the City's unwavering commitment to fiscal responsibility and forward-thinking planning.

Throughout the year, we leveraged the strength of our long-range financial planning to implement an ambitious and transformative slate of capital development projects. While planning began many years ago, in 2024, the time was right and we put plans into action. We invested more than \$11M in Downtown Highland Park, delivering projects that enhance accessibility, beauty, and economic vitality. The complete reimaging of Second Street, with sidewalk bump-outs for outdoor dining, environmentally-friendly brick pavers that create a seamless connection to Central Avenue, is just one example. Additional improvements included miles of freshly resurfaced roadways, enhanced accessible crosswalks and pedestrian access, and numerous resurfaced parking lots. While construction season is a challenge for everyone, especially our businesses, we know that this investment will yield dividends as it allows businesses to serve customers in new and exciting ways while affording residents the opportunity to create new memories.

These enhancements are about more than aesthetics - they are also about increasing access to our businesses and making it easier than ever for visitors and residents to [shop, dine, and enjoy Highland Park](#). These projects contribute to economic development by creating a sense of place through our streetscape, landscape, and business mix that is uniquely Highland Park. We were thankful to work with our existing businesses and proud to welcome numerous businesses to our town over the past year. It is truly rewarding to see those businesses become part of the community: attending events, supporting other businesses, and encouraging customers to explore all that Highland Park has to offer.

In 2024, we invested heavily in expanding our [portfolio of economic incentives](#) to support business attraction and retention to Highland Park. The first boutique incentive grant supported the arrival of DeNucci's late last fall through a special public-private partnership that brought this sought-after Italian-American hotspot to our community. This year, through the limited boutique incentive program, we are delighted to welcome home Highland Park native Amy Morton, who's bringing The Barn Steakhouse to First St. in September.

With input and feedback from the Business and Economic Development Advisory Group and local restaurateurs, we launched the new [Food & Beverage Interior Improvement Grant Program](#), which encourages successful Highland Park businesses to invest further in their interior spaces, allowing them to enhance their service to our community. We also expanded the scope of our [Exterior Improvement Grant Program](#), which encourages business and property owners to beautify their storefronts, in turn attracting new and returning visitors to our business districts.

We welcomed more than 20,000 visitors to [events](#) in [Downtown Highland Park](#), including the return of the Taste of Highland Park, the Vintage Auto Show, and Stews and Brews, and relaunched a Friday night concert series in Port Clinton Square. In 2025, we're looking forward to expanding this series to include additional nights, more activities for families, and greater participation from local businesses.

In 2023, we solidified [environmental sustainability](#) as a Core Priority, demonstrating our leadership in environmental stewardship. Guided by our Sustainability Strategic Plan, we are implementing impactful, cost-effective programs that align with our goals of reducing citywide greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030, and achieving net zero by 2035. Our initiatives continue to include efforts to increase waste diversion through [composting and recycling](#); to [reduce water usage](#); to promote [community solar programs](#); increase our electric vehicle fleet and to improve [transportation](#) options serving our community. To support these ambitious goals, we hired a full-time staff member in 2024 to drive these efforts forward and build on our success.

Our dedication to serving all residents is exemplified by the transformation of the former Highland Park Country Club into a sleek, modern facility now home to the [Highland Park Senior Center](#). The space features multiple activity rooms with integrated technology, a new movement room to support additional exercise classes, and coming later this spring, a dedicated new entrance that will enhance accessibility to Senior Center programs. This space will empower seniors to thrive. It also provides an updated community event space for any age to celebrate and meet, now known as The Moraine.

Looking ahead, the City is also investing in digital accessibility. A redesigned website is on the horizon, promising enhanced navigation and interactive features to ensure residents have easy access to City government, services, and facilities.

On behalf of our working group planning for a [permanent place of remembrance](#), we thank all those who have shared their insights with us as our planning process has progressed to location feedback over the past few months. Your thoughtful consideration of this most important aspect of planning

for the future place of remembrance has been invaluable. We will continue to provide opportunities for you to connect with us when it feels most comfortable for you.

We know the importance of relying on community for support. Please don't hesitate to reach out for help. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of resources available through the City's [Resiliency Division](#), which provides short-term counseling and case management among other services, to individuals impacted by the shooting. Visit resilienthpil.org to learn more. Please also know that multilingual resource navigation and service referrals are available 24/7 via [211 Lake County](#), which is a program of our partners at United Way of Lake County.

The State of the City is always an opportunity to highlight just a few of the successes that marked the past year – but it's also a chance for us to recognize the government and community partners who made that work possible. Through quarterly meetings with elected and appointed officials of the governments serving Highland Park, roundtables with clergy members, and regular meetings with our social service partners, we continue to share information and amplify resources, all with an eye towards providing excellent synergistic service to our community.

On numerous occasions over the past few years, I have reflected on the partnerships and generosity of these people and the organizations they lead. Our collaborative approach truly exemplifies the value of strong community bonds in promoting happiness and quality of life. We are knit together in hundreds of thousands of ways big and small, many of them engendered by shared experiences facilitated by these partners.

Recently, outgoing U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy published his [Parting Prescription for America](#). His message - that community is the key to fulfillment - struck a chord with me as I reflect on what makes Highland Park truly special. Over the past few years, we've faced unimaginable challenges as a city, but we've also witnessed the strength and compassion that define who we are.

As your mayor, I feel the weight of these challenges. I have heard your concerns, your frustrations, and your hopes for our future. I want you to know that as we begin a new year, I remain committed to working with you to address the issues we face and to fostering open conversations about the path forward.

Dr. Murthy's reflections remind us that the foundation of a thriving community lies in the relationships we build and the values we hold dear. The road ahead may not be easy. Trials - both literal and figurative - are on the horizon. It is through connections, built on mutual respect and shared purpose, that we find the strength to move forward. Whether it's a conversation about what matters most to you or collaborative efforts to address our shared challenges, I believe that together, we can shape a future that reflects the resilience and spirit of Highland Park.

Highland Park has always been defined by its people, their compassion and their strength. That compassion and strength will guide us through whatever comes next. We are Highland Park. I am so proud to call this community our home.

[View as Webpage](#)

March 13, 2024



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- Second St. Parking Lot Reconstruction Project
- Photography Contest: Vote for the Community Favorite
- Spring Clean-Up
- Photography Contest Community Favorite Voting
- March 17: Garden for Wildlife Resource Fair
- Infrastructure Maintenance Updates
- City Council Meeting Recap
- Early Voting Information
- April 3: Community Poetry Reading Event

City of Highland Park Police Department Investigating Antisemitic Graffiti



HATE HAS NO HOME HERE.

الكره ليس له بيت هنا

שנאה לא יכולה לחיות פה 이집에는 미움이 없다

El odio no tiene hogar aquí.

On Monday, March 11, the City of Highland Park was notified that graffiti depicting a swastika was found at Millard Park. The Park District of Highland Park took immediate action to remove the graffiti, and the Police Department is actively investigating this incident. Individuals with information regarding this antisemitic graffiti are encouraged to call the public safety non-emergency line at 847.432.7730. The City stands in solidarity with our Jewish community in denouncing all acts of antisemitism.

Hate-motivated acts have no place in our community and are antithetical to our values. As a community, we stand firmly behind our Statement Against Hate:

Hate has no home in Highland Park. The City strives to embody our inclusive and affirming values as an open and welcoming community. The City of Highland Park strongly opposes prejudice, bias, hostility, discrimination or violence against individuals based on their race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, gender, or gender identity. The City unequivocally condemns any racist, xenophobic, misogynistic, antisemitic, anti-LGBTQ+, ableist, or otherwise hate-motivated groups or individuals who threaten any form of violence towards, harassment, or discrimination against our residents, visitors, students, or City staff. This behavior is never acceptable.

Recognizing the critical responsibility of responding swiftly to safeguard our community from hate, the City of Highland Park will take every possible action to ensure that residents, workers, students, and visitors will not face discrimination or harassment. Hate crimes and violence have no place in our city, state, or country and will not be tolerated. If a report of such a hate crime is received in Highland Park, the City's Police Department will thoroughly investigate, in partnership with appropriate partner agencies, to ensure the continued safety of our community.

It is essential that our community stand together in denouncing all acts of bigotry and violence in accordance with our values. Hate has no home in Highland Park or anywhere.

Second St. Parking Lot Reconstruction Project

Construction is coming to the Second St. surface lot between Michael's and Terry's Toffee! Reconstruction of the lot is scheduled to begin on Monday, March 18, and is anticipated to be complete in late May. The project will enhance available parking for customers accessing businesses along Second St., including Michael's, Terry's Toffee, Wayfarer Theaters and others. The project includes reconstruction of the pavement to convert it from an asphalt pavement to an environmentally friendly permeable pavement. Other improvements include LED lighting and conduit for future EV Charging Stations.

The City has been in direct communication with impacted businesses that rely on the parking lot for customer parking, deliveries, and refuse, recycling, and compost containers. Construction fencing will be placed around the perimeter of the lot, including the sidewalk in front of the parking lot.

Access to businesses and customer parking along Second Street will be maintained throughout the reconstruction of the parking lot. Parking options include:

- On-street parking (with the exception of two 15-minute parking spots in front of Terry's Toffee, which have been designated for use by the construction team)
- Parking in the Renaissance Place Garage

To learn more about the reconstruction of this parking lot, and to explore additional improvements planned for Second Street during spring/summer 2024, please visit cityhpil.com/construction.

Spring Clean-Up

Spring is coming, and the City's annual Spring Clean-Up program for single-family residential customers is just around the corner! **Please note the following corrected schedule:**

- If your regular collection day is Monday, your Spring Clean-Up Day is Saturday, March 30
- If your regular collection day is Tuesday, your Spring Clean-Up Day is Saturday, April 6
- If your regular collection day is Thursday, your Spring Clean-Up Day is Saturday, April 13
- If your regular collection day is Friday, your Spring Clean-Up Day is Saturday, April 20

Items must be placed at the curb no later than 7:00 AM on collection day. LRS will pick up all allowed oversized items that are placed at the curb during



In this issue...

- FY 2024 Budget Approved
- Hate Has No Home Here Signs Available
- Dec. 9: CPR Class
- City Council Meeting Recap
- Winter Parking Restrictions Begin Dec. 1
- Student Commissioner Applications Due Dec. 1
- Recycling Center
- Volunteer Snow Shoveling Program

FY 2024 Budget Approved

*At the Monday, November 27, 2023 City Council meeting, the City Council adopted the **Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget** for the period January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. City Council members and staff have been engaged in the budget development process since the spring. The City Manager's transmittal letter providing an overview of the budget, the budget document, and budget presentations may be found at cityhpil.com/budget.*

Mayor Rotering delivered the following remarks:

Every year, City Council and staff follow a rigorous budgeting process that begins in the spring with a strategic planning meeting of the City Council and Senior Staff to set priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. These conversations continue through the summer with careful planning across all departments, detailed staff reports and one-on-one budget meetings with Council members, and culminate in the series of public workshops and hearings that began in August and conclude tonight.

The annual budget development process represents tremendous dedication on the part of City staff throughout the City's six departments, especially City Manager Ghida Neukirch, Finance Director Julie Logan and Deputy Director Kristi McCaulou, the Finance Department team, and the Senior Staff. Thank

you all for your commitment to our priorities and careful attention to every detail in the FY 2024 budget document.

Our operating budget is balanced, reflecting our five core priorities of fiscal stability, public safety, infrastructure investment, economic development, and environmental sustainability with a wide range of annual and ongoing initiatives, each of which are detailed by department.

In particular, attention to long-term fiscal stability is woven throughout the budget document, in all department projects. As a result, the City maintains a continued Aaa rating, the highest available, and has received ongoing recognition for our budget document and financial reporting.

The proposed budget meets the City's revenue, financial, budgetary, and capital policies, and offers a balanced focus between the short- and long-term while minimizing the property tax burden to residents. We will continue our ongoing investments in improving and maintaining our roads, water mains, bridges, sidewalks, and other Public Works projects.

Thanks again to City Manager Neukirch and Finance Director Logan, who in multiple public [budget workshops](#) have highlighted features of the budget and reviewed the City's long-range goals. These presentations are available at cityhpil.com/budget. We encourage everyone to review the budget document and explore the presentation slides to better understand how Highland Park strives to fulfill its mission to provide high-quality municipal services in an efficient and fiscally-responsible manner, and in alignment with our community's values.

Nancy R. Rotering
Mayor, City of Highland Park

Hate Has No Home Here Yard Signs Available



Hate has no home in Highland Park! To demonstrate the core principles of the City's [Values Statement and Statement Against Hate](#), Hate Has No Home Here yard signs have been placed at all City buildings. Highland Park residents and businesses are invited to stop by City Hall (1707 St. Johns Ave.) during regular walk-in hours (Tues. - Fri., 8 AM - 5 PM) to pick up a free Hate Has No Home Here yard sign for their home or business, while supplies last.

Dec. 9: CPR Class

A very limited number of places remain in the City of Highland Park Fire Department's upcoming CPR class on Saturday, December 9, 9:00 AM at Fire Station #33 (1130 Central Ave.) This three-hour, one-day class covers CPR, AED use, and choking for adults, children, and infants. Participants who successfully complete the program receive an electronic card; an email address must be provided. There is a \$50 program fee; payment is required one week in advance to secure the spot, and reschedules/refunds are not available. Payment is due by end of day on Friday, December 1. For more information and to register, call 847.433.3110 or email fire@cityhpil.com.

City Council Meeting Recap

Also at the [Monday, November 27 City Council meeting](#), City Council observed a moment of reflection for those who are held hostage in Israel and all who are impacted by the ongoing violence. Mayor Rotering shared appreciation for the [more than thirty communities across the region that joined the City in condemning all acts of hate](#), including antisemitism and Islamophobia, and continue to partner to promote public safety in our area.

[View as Webpage](#)

August 25, 2023



In this issue...

- Junior Police Academy Recap
- City Announces New Values Statement & Updated Statement Against Hate
- Sept. 16: CPR Training
- Back to School Safety
- Friendly Reminders

Junior Police Academy Recap



Congratulations to the City of Highland Park Junior Police Academy Class of 2023! These outstanding young people completed an intensive week of activities focused on building decision-making and leadership skills and developing moral character. Students explored several different aspects of law enforcement, including K9 presentations, fingerprinting, crime scene evidence, and more. The Junior Police Academy is part of the Police Department's community engagement efforts, guided by the Ten Shared Principles of Public Safety. Learn more at cityhpil.com/jpa.

[View more photos from the Junior Police Academy Class of 2023.](#)

City Announces New Values Statement & Updated Statement Against Hate

Reflective of the City of Highland Park's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as well as its updated mission and expanded core priorities, the City is proud to announce a new Values Statement and an updated Statement Against Hate. Developed in close collaboration between the Mayor and City Council, City staff, and resident volunteers appointed to the Human Relations Advisory Group, the Values Statement and Statement Against Hate provide a strong and unequivocal endorsement of the principles that form the foundation of the City's public-facing community services and internal employee engagement. Three commitments guide the operationalization of the Values Statement in alignment with the City's mission: working through an equity lens, operating with transparency, and condemning any act of hate or discrimination.

The Values Statement offers a strong declaration of the City's commitment to engaging, supporting, and inviting diverse individuals to call Highland Park home. The adoption of the City's Values Statement complements existing efforts to collaborate with individuals and organizations dedicated to supporting increased access and engagement with diverse communities, including the Ten Shared Principles of Public Safety, which guides the Police Department Strategic Plan. The City will begin referencing the Values Statement as appropriate in developing major projects, communications, planning, and service enhancement.

Since its initial development in 2017, the Statement Against Hate serves a key role in City communications with its dual focus of unequivocally condemning hate in all its forms, whether occurring in Highland Park or elsewhere, and reinforcing the City's commitment to both proactive and responsive law enforcement relative to any potential threats against Highland Park.

[Read the Values Statement and Statement Against Hate.](#)

September 16: CPR Training

City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government's Post



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government

October 31, 2025 · 🌐

At the October 30, 2025 Special City Council meeting, Mayor Nancy Rotering shared remarks on behalf of the Council about the importance of supporting our neighbors and coming together as one community during difficult times. Mayor Rotering stated, "Many of our neighbors have experienced significant stress, concern, fear, and outrage over the past few months as actions taken at the federal level directly impact communities in Illinois and across the nation. As a City Council and staff, we share these concerns from fears for the safety of our immigrant neighbors to the uncertainty facing families affected by the federal government shutdown. Highland Park is not immune to these national events, but we can choose how we respond, together."

Click through to read the Mayor's full remarks and to access additional information and resources:



CITYHPIL.COM

Supporting Our Neighbors: Message from Mayor Rotering | City of Highland Park, IL

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33 comments 11 shares

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Dee-Lee Ted

City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government's Post**City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government**

September 30, 2025 ·

True to our values statement, Highland Park is an affirming and welcoming community, and ensuring that everyone who lives, works, or studies here feels safe is of paramount importance to the City. While reports of recent federal immigration operations in the North Shore have been circulating on social media, no evidence has been found to suggest such activity in our community. In alignment with State of Illinois law, local law enforcement agencies may not participate, support, or assist in any capacity with immigration enforcement operations. Immigration enforcement remains the purview and responsibility of federal agencies. The City is committed to protecting and serving the community and recognizing the dignity of all persons, regardless of their national origin or immigration status. This is a core value of the Highland Park Police Department, and one shared by all representatives of the City.

The City partners with social service agencies to provide informational resources to community members about a variety of issues that impact quality of life in our community, including immigration. The North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic (NSLAC) offers a wealth of information about immigration, domestic violence, and housing on its website at nslegalaid.org.

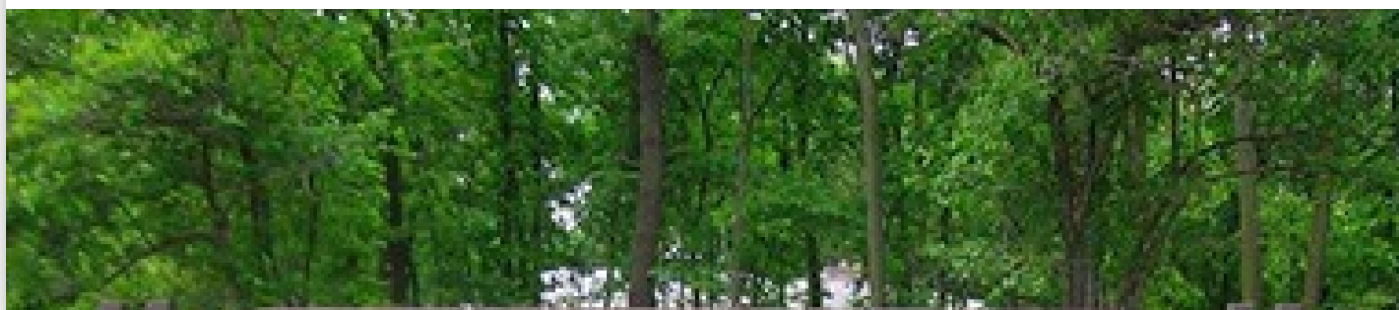
To learn more about Highland Park's commitment to promoting an inclusive environment where all are welcome, visit cityhpil.com/values.

Know Your Rights

According to NSLAC, it's crucial for immigrants to understand their rights, whether they have DACA, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or another immigration status. The Clinic recommends that everyone should be aware of the following key rights, regardless of legal status:

- **Right to Remain Silent:** If approached by police, immigration agents, or other officials, you have the right to remain silent and do not have to answer any questions about your nationality or immigration status.
- **Right to an Attorney:** You have the right to speak with an attorney before answering any questions or signing any documents.
- **Protection Against Unlawful Searches:** If immigration officers ask to come into your home, they must have a valid warrant signed by a judge to enter without your permission

NSLAC provides education and support to help immigrants feel more secure and informed about their legal protections and immigrant rights. Visit nslegalaid.org for more information.



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government's Post



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government

April 20, 2021 · 🌐

Mayor Nancy Rotering, City Council, and City staff reaffirm Highland Park's Statement Against Hate, which clearly states our community's values and support for a just and equitable society, just as we did last spring following the tragic death of George Floyd. You can learn more about the City's longstanding work to foster an inclusive and welcoming community at cityhpil.com/diversity. We will continue to have meaningful dialogue with community members around the important topics of diversity, equity, and justice.

The City's primary mission is the community's public safety and well-being, and it is our intent that everyone, whether visiting, residing, or working in Highland Park, feels safe and welcome in our community. Residents, business owners and employees, and guests should feel confident that the City is prepared to ensure community safety in the event of an emergency in a respectful and responsive manner, fully aligned with our values which affirm our commitment against discrimination and harassment.

Please contact the City Manager's Office with any questions at cityhp@cityhpil.com or 847.926.1000.



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government's Post



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government

April 8, 2021 · 🌐

Today, April 8, is Holocaust Remembrance Day. May we always honor the memory of those lost by preserving their legacies and ensuring that the magnitude of their loss is never forgotten. The [Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center](#) will mark Holocaust Remembrance Day with a virtual observance including a candle-lighting ceremony and stories of survivors. Click through to learn more and to register; there is no cost to attend the event.



Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center

April 8, 2021 · 🌐

Join us tonight for a virtual gathering in observance of Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) along with [Sheerit HaPlaitah](#) of Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago Jewish Community Relations Council, Jewish Federations of Chicago, Champaign-Urbana, Springfield, Rockford, Southern Illinois, Quad Cities, and Peoria, the Office of the Governor, the Illinois Jewish Legislative Caucus, and [CJE SeniorLife](#) Holocaust Community Services as part of our Ellen V. and Philip L. Glass Holocaust Commemorative Series.

The powerful commemoration will include remarks by Illinois Holocaust Museum, Sheerit

City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government's Post



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government

March 19, 2021 · 🌐

The City of Highland Park condemns all acts of violence, especially those motivated by hate. We are deeply saddened by the attack against the Asian-American community in Atlanta, Georgia earlier this week. The deadliest mass shooting in over a year, this attack was a violent expression of increasingly hateful threats and rhetoric against Asian-Americans over the past year.

We extend our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones in mourning and share in the grief of Asian-Americans across the country.

The City's Statement Against Hate reminds each of us that it's equally important to promote diversity and inclusion and to speak out against hate in all its forms. As a City, we are committed to continuing to build a culture of inclusivity that affirms and celebrates the richness of our community's diversity.



👍👤 8

1 comment

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City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government

June 15, 2020 · 🌐

The City of Highland Park raised the LGBTQ+ rainbow flag in honor of Pride Month. As Mayor Nancy Rotering shared at the June 8, 2020, City Council meeting, Highland Park is a community vested in inclusivity, and flying the rainbow flag during the month of June and throughout the summer is but one way to demonstrate our city's values. The City has chosen to fly the rainbow flag with brown and black stripes, first seen in Philadelphia as part of the More Color, More Pride campaign. This initiative aims to make LGBTQ+ people of color more visible. Learn more at morecolormorepride.com. #HPPride #PrideMonth



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government's Post



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government

April 21, 2020 · 🌐

In observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day, please take a moment to listen to the story of survivor Kurt Gutfreund in the video below. May we always honor the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and the stories of survivors. In bearing witness to the suffering they endured, may we preserve their legacy and affirm our commitment to ensure that it will never happen again. This video was shared with the City by the [Highland Park High School](#) Remembrance Day Committee, and produced by HPHS student Stephen Knobel.



YOUTUBE.COM

A Holocaust Survivor: Kurt Gutfreund's Story, 5 Minute Version

👍🗣️ 6

4 shares

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City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government's Post



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government

December 30, 2019 · 🌐

The City of Highland Park is saddened and outraged by the senseless act of anti-Semitic violence which occurred during a Hannukah celebration inside of a rabbi's home in Monsey, NY this past Saturday. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and families of this appalling and tragic incident. The City stands side by side in solidarity with the Jewish community to strongly condemn anti-Semitism and hate of any kind.

The string of multiple anti-Semitic incidences that have occurred in the New York/New Jersey area is antithetical to the peaceful practice and enjoyment of religious freedoms in our country. Such acts of hatred have absolutely no place here or anywhere! Prejudice, hatred, and bigotry are antithetical to our values and will not be tolerated in our community. We repeat loudly for all to hear that hate has no home in Highland Park.



HATE HAS NO HOME HERE.

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Copyright ©2018 IYL, IWPCA. Inspired by "Hate Has No Home Here" page on Facebook

👍❤️👎 143

8 comments 24 shares

City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government's Post



City of Highland Park, Illinois - Government

December 6, 2017

Today begins DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) Day of Action. Mayors across the country, including Nancy Rotering - Highland Park Mayor are in support of all DACA recipients, and families due to what the program provides to our cities and nation.

DACA provides employment authorization and protection to immigrants who entered the United States before they turned 16 and meet several qualifying criteria. It has benefitted nearly 800,000 youth since it began in 2012. With work authorization and without fear of deportation, these young people have been able to participate in and contribute to our cities and country by becoming vital members of our work force.

Residents who have questions about immigration can contact the Highland Park – Highwood Legal Aid Clinic at 847.926.1867 or visit <http://www.hphlegalaid.org/>. In addition, we ask residents to contact their state and federal representatives to urge them to support maintaining DACA. Contact information for your state and federal officials are available by utilizing the City's Community Portal, linked below: <https://apps.gisconsortium.org/CommunityP.../Default.aspx...>



Home - Highland Park - Highwood Legal Aid Clinic



Home - Highland Park - Highwood Legal Aid Clinic



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**Communications
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Statements Supporting Marginalized Communities / Statements Against Hate



The City of Highland Park is committed to creating a safe and inclusive community for residents by issuing public statements of support and celebration as well as condemning acts of hate and violence. The City recognizes that silence in the face of oppression benefits only the oppressor, to paraphrase the [words of Elie Wiesel](#). By taking a public stand on the events or causes below, as well as others, the City reinforces Highland Park's values.

Statement Against Hate

The Statement Against Hate was drafted in 2019 and updated most recently in [July 2023](#). The Statement was drafted by elected and appointed officials and City staff and emphasizes the City's commitment to stand against all forms of hate, discrimination, and harassment in Highland Park. It is frequently referenced in response to current events or trends that are counter to the City's values.

Examples of the City's commitment to issue public statements of support for marginalized communities, or statements against hate include the following:

Anti-Asian Hate-Motivated Violence ([2021](#))

Antisemitic Violence ([2019](#); [2021](#); [2022](#); [2023](#))

Attacks Against Israel ([2023](#); Mayor Rotering and City Council have continued to reiterate the City's solidarity with those who are held hostage in Gaza at each City Council meeting since Oct. 7, 2023)

Black History Month ([2021](#))

DACA ([2017](#))

Death of George Floyd (2020)

- [Mayor Rotering](#)
- [Chief Jogmen](#)

- [Commitment to Fair & Equitable Policing](#)
- [Welcoming & Safe Community](#) (2021)

[Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service](#)

Holocaust Remembrance Day ([2020](#); [2021](#))

Immigration Heritage Month ([2019](#); [2020](#))

Juneteenth National Freedom Day ([2020](#))

Pride Month ([2019](#); [2020](#); [2021](#))

[Solidarity with Ukraine](#) (2022)

[Unity Against Hate: Joint Statement with Regional Municipalities](#) (2023)

U.S. Capitol Riot ([2021](#))

This list is representative and is not exhaustive.