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For questions, contact Plain Dealer Business Editor Mary

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2015

SUN PRESS

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University Heights

Mayor looks ahead in State of the City speech

THOMAS JEWELL
Special to Sun News

In addition to a \$2.1 million surplus, a new park and streetscape improvements on major thoroughfares, the city enters 2015 with a grant that will pay for the first update of its Master Plan in more than a decade.

And from there, city officials

will tackle a comprehensive upgrade of University Heights' 60-year-old Planning and Zoning Code, to bring it in line with today's standards.

In her State of the City address Tuesday, University Heights Mayor Susan Infeld also touched on challenges that the new year will bring, namely the use of the former Wiley Junior High as a "swing

school" while Heights High undergoes a two-year renovation.

After that, middle school students will move over to Wiley for another two years while the Roxboro and Monticello buildings get overhauled.

Recognizing the importance of safety for students and residents — the latter being accustomed in recent years to a student body

of about 400, with peak enrollments of 800 — Infeld noted that the school district will employ Cuyahoga County sheriff's deputies for the next four years for people movement and traffic control.

"And, the city recognizes that adding 2,000 people at this site will likely require an increased presence of University Heights'

police officers as well," Infeld said.

"Our Police Department is committed to keeping the students staff and neighbors of the new high school site safe."

As for higher education, the city maintains a strong relationship with its major employer, John Carroll University.

SEE STATE | A1

Demonstrations



LISA DEJONG | THE PLAIN DEALER

Protesters and members of the group Puncture the Silence rally on Public Square in November, days after the killing of 12-year-old Tamir Rice.

Group's focus grows with controversy Puncture the Silence protests U.S. justice system, attacks on immigrants, more

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They are led by eight people, rallying Greater Cleveland residents to stand up against mass incarceration of minorities, "police terror," and the "criminalization of a generation."

Puncture the Silence — Stop Mass Incarceration led hundreds of protesters who shut down the Shoreway in November, after a

Cleveland police officer shot and killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice. The demonstration, like others downtown, came on the heels of a Ferguson, Missouri, grand jury's decision not to indict a police officer who fatally shot 18-year-old Michael Brown.

Cleveland Heights resident Carol Steiner, who started protesting institutional racism at the University of Michigan in the 1970s, helped found Puncture the Silence

in April, to make people aware of the number of black people sent to prison.

As news of police killings increased across the nation, the group's purpose expanded. Steiner, who is white, said the group is equally concerned about the death of Tanisha Anderson, a mentally ill woman who died after struggling with Cleveland police officers.

"We literally want to disrupt people's lives. They have to look

into the fact that police are killing black people with impunity and not being punished," Steiner said.

"Black mothers are terrorized right now," she added. "They try to train their kids to be careful and how to talk if they get stopped by the police, but it makes no difference because like with Tamir, they just drive up and he's dead. No discussion."

SEE SILENCE | A6

Beachwood Did city violate law with Buzz paid ad?

Law director calls term limits 'illegal'

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Open this month's Beachwood Buzz magazine and you'll find a taxpayer-funded ad in which city Law Director Brita Reali calls a proposed charter amendment to limit the mayor and City Council members to three terms "illegal" and "unconstitutional."

Brian Byrne, a spokesman for the group that petitioned to put the issue on the Tuesday, Feb. 3, ballot, says the city violates a state law that prohibits using tax dollars to pay for political advertising. Catherine Turcer, political analyst with Common Cause Ohio, agrees.

Reali defended the piece, saying it's not a political advertisement, but an objective explanation of an upcoming ballot issue, which is legal. Government agencies are allowed to use tax money to impartially educate voters about a ballot issue.

"Nowhere in the article does it advocate for the electors to vote 'yes' or 'no,'" Reali said. Byrne's group in November collected 495 signatures for the charter amendment which includes language that is retroactive, meaning the five-term Mayor Merle Gorde could not run for re-election. But he and council member would finish their terms. Several council members in November said they oppose



LISA DEJONG | THE PLAIN DEALER

Protesters along with members of the group Puncture The Silence rally against the shooting of 12-year-old Tamir Rice at Public Square on Nov. 24.

SILENCE

FROM A1

Q: How did Puncture the Silence start?

A: Organizers who started Puncture the Silence, an affiliate of the national Stop Mass Incarceration Network, were inspired by civil litigator Michelle Alexander's book, "The New Jim Crow — Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness."

According to the Sentencing Project, an advocacy group against unjust racial disparities and practices in the criminal justice system, 60 percent of the 2.3 million people in America's prisons are minorities.

For black men in their 30s, 1 in every 10 is in prison or jail, which Steiner calls evidence of police profiling.

Q: What does the group hope to accomplish?

A: Puncture the Silence is working to stop mass incarceration, killings by police, torture in prisons and attacks on immigrants.

"African-Americans are criminalized," said Alice Ragland, a University Heights resident and member of the Puncture the Silence steering committee. "They don't have to have done anything, but a lot of people will just assume or behave in a way that portrays them as criminals."

Q: How does the group organize protests?

A: Puncture the Silence has an eight-person steering committee that organizes demonstrations and spreads the word via email, Facebook, MeetUp and Twitter.

Q: Who takes part?

A: Puncture the Silence has more than 1,000 followers on its Facebook and Twitter pages and often partners with other groups to organize demonstrations. Anyone who wants to participate can.

"We don't want people coming out and being disruptive," Steiner said.

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