

CITY OF UPPER ARLINGTON

2019 CITIZEN FINANCIAL REVIEW TASK FORCE

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

JUNE 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Task Force met for the first time on April 4, 2019 and completed its work by presenting this report to City Council on July 8, 2019.

On March 4, 2019 Upper Arlington City Council appointed nine residents of the City to serve on a Citizen Financial Review Task Force to study the City's response to the report of the 2014 Citizen Financial Review Task Force (2014 Task Force) as well as issues related to the City's financial status and operations.

The members of the Task Force were:

Jamie Crane	Ann Gabriel (Chair)
Colin Gawel	Greg Guy
Ukeme Awakessien Jeter	Tim Keen
Matthew Kirby	Matthew Rule
Kaz Unalan	

Substantial support was provided by City staff including:

Dan Ralley, Acting City Manager
Brent Lewis, Finance Director
Ashley Ellrod, City Clerk
Jackie Thiel, Public Services Director and City Engineer
Debbie McLaughlin, Parks & Recreation Director
Joseph Henderson, Economic Development Director
Chad Gibson, Acting Community Development Director
Steven Farmer, Police Chief
Lyn Nofziger, Fire Chief
Emma Speight, Communications Director
Jon Lindow, Assistant Finance Director

CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE

On March 4, 2019, Upper Arlington City Council adopted Resolution No. 2-2019, which contained the following charges to the Citizen Financial Review Task Force:

1. Review the report of the 2014 Task Force
2. Determine the extent to which recommendations have been implemented; evaluate whether desired outcomes were achieved for each implemented recommendation, or if not, determine if each recommendation is still valid at this time
3. Undertake a high-level review of the City's current financial status and overall outlook
4. Explore further privatization and/or collaboration opportunities
5. Undertake a high level assessment of existing service levels to verify alignment with community needs and/or expectations
6. Assess the status of capital investments made to date and the outlook/plans for the next 10-year Capital Improvement Program
7. Examine and recommend specific program areas where a fuller review may be necessary
8. Report findings and make recommendations for City Council to consider

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on a study of financial information, interviews with many City officials, a review of the capital improvement program, the results of surveys and studies relating to City services, the Kingdale West/River Ridge neighborhood, and Parks & Recreation, and extensive discussion at multiple public meetings of the Task Force, the Upper Arlington Citizen Financial Review Task Force reached consensus on the following conclusions:

- Most of the recommendations of the 2014 Task Force have been implemented and the desired outcomes have been achieved. Those not implemented are still valid at this time.
- Fund balances are very strong and the city is in strong financial shape. There are sufficient revenues to support the operations of the City and a robust capital plan to address the extensive capital needs.
- We commend the City on its exemplary privatization and collaboration initiatives implemented to date. In general, back office functions where employees do not work face to face with the public are prime candidates for privatization and/or shared services. Information Technology, Human Resource Compliance Functions and Fleet Maintenance were identified as potential areas for review.
- For the most part, citizens are happy with service levels and the City has been responsive to areas of concern identified in the 2017 Community Survey. Areas of service level not being met relate primarily to Parks & Recreation.
- The City is making the right choices regarding the Capital Improvement Program, and there is a good process in place to make these decisions.
- Identified areas where a fuller review may be necessary include fees for services and programs, capital equipment, and economic development activities.

STATEMENT OF SHARED VALUES

In order to create a framework for evaluating the elements of the Charges and possible recommendations to City Council, the Task Force unanimously agreed upon the following statements of shared values:

- We believe that Upper Arlington offers a superior quality of life to its citizens of all ages by emphasizing public safety, innovative public services and high quality amenities. We intend to continue and build upon that tradition for the benefit of future generations.
- We want to live in a community that carefully maintains and reinvests in its existing assets— such as streets, parks and other municipal facilities—and that embraces opportunities for new investment to provide inviting public gathering spaces in support of a safe, healthy and connected community.
- We recognize that in order to maintain the high quality of City services our community has come to expect, we need to ensure that our City is well managed and uses its available resources prudently, efficiently and effectively.
- We understand that our community has limited options to generate additional revenues and we should carefully weigh all appropriate and available means of raising the necessary revenue while insuring that any plan is done in a fair and equitable manner.

METHODOLOGY

Given the high level reviews requested in City Council's Charge to the Task Force and the time frame to complete the work, the members of the Task Force worked as a Committee of the Whole and addressed all of the charges as a group.

The Task Force met regularly at 8:15 am each Thursday in the Municipal Building. In addition, two Wednesday evening meetings were held in the Municipal Building to provide an opportunity for citizens not able to attend the Thursday morning meetings to provide input to the Task Force. All meetings were conducted in sessions that were open to the public. Minutes were kept of each meeting and any information requested by one member of the Task Force was distributed to all members of the Task Force, so as to ensure that all members remained fully informed.

At the organizational meeting, City staff presented each of the Task Force members with a notebook containing detailed information about the City's financial situation. Among other materials, the notebooks contained copies of the City's most recent Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), the City's most recent Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR), financial policies, the most recent rating reports from Moody's Investors Service and S&P Global Ratings, the City's 10-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the 2017 Community Survey, a summary of comparative fiscal indicators benchmarking Upper Arlington against demographically similar communities and a summary of Upper Arlington demographics, financial history, trends and expenditures with comparative data for Central Ohio communities. The Finance Director, Communications Director and the Acting City Manager led the Task Force through a review and explanation of the materials and answered questions raised by members of the Task Force. In addition to the written materials provided by City officials, members of the Task Force requested and were provided with copies of the 2019-2020 Adopted Budget Book, the Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan and the River Ridge/Kingsdale West Study.

The second and third meetings of the Task Force were focused on understanding governmental accounting. The Finance Director led the Task Force through the basics of fund accounting, the various basis of accounting used by the City, revenue sources and uses, and restrictions on use of funds by source type. Task Force members were extremely interested in understanding the intricacies of city finances and asked probing questions to gain a better understanding.

The Task Force met with Directors/Chiefs from City departments including Public Services and City Engineer, Parks & Recreation, Economic Development, Community Development, Police, Fire, and Finance. These are all of the first line Directors/Chiefs who organizationally report to the City Manager. We asked each Director/Chief to prepare a brief introduction to his/her department; who they are and what they do. We then followed up with questions from the Task Force. While all conversations with City officials were conducted in a cordial manner, members of the Task Force did not hesitate to ask tough questions to gain a better understanding of the City's operations. Given the wealth of experience brought to the table by various members of the Task Force, the conversations were often quite specific with respect to City practices and procedures, with many productive exchanges of ideas about the pros and cons of various actions that could be taken to increase operating efficiency.

As the Task Force reviewed materials and met with Directors/Chiefs, members of the Task Force submitted requests for additional information and clarification. Staff would promptly provide responses, usually by the next meeting.

Information gathering was completed on May 23 and deliberations began May 30. The Task Force was very methodical in its review to be fully responsive to each of the charges. We have proceeded step by step through the charges and thoroughly discussed each charge separately including each recommendation of the 2014 Task Force.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CHARGES FROM CITY COUNCIL

Determine the extent to which recommendations have been implemented; evaluate whether desired outcomes were achieved for each implemented recommendation, or if not, determine if each recommendation is still valid at this time

Recommendations 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, and 13 have been implemented and the desired outcomes were achieved.

Recommendation 3 relates to exploring options for meeting service delivery needs in a more cost effective manner. While this recommendation has been implemented and the desired outcome has been met, the Task Force recommends that these efforts continue and be part of standard operating procedures when procurement and/or delivery of city services are considered.

Recommendation 4 lists specific options for consideration. Options A and B have been implemented and desired outcomes are being met. Option C recommends raising the employee share of the cost of health insurance and other benefits to levels more closely aligned with private sector employers. This recommendation has not been implemented. However, steps have been taken to control and/or reduce the cost of health care incurred by the City. Employee contributions are comparable to those of other public entities. Health care and other benefit plan costs should continue to be closely monitored as they represent a significant expense to the City. Option D recommends consideration of contracting for legal services. It is our understanding that this is currently in process.

Recommendations 7 (general operating) and 8 (business operating) relate to fees charged for programs and services. These recommendations have not been implemented but do remain valid at this time. The Task Force will address fees in the “Areas where a fuller review may be necessary” section of this report.

Recommendation 10 relates to exploring new avenues of revenue to support City Operations. Similar to Recommendation 3, while this recommendation has been implemented and the

desired outcome has been met, the Task Force recommends that these efforts continue and be part of standard operating procedures.

Recommendation 14 relates to the one-half mill property tax for bonds issued to fund capital improvements. Part of this millage expired in 2017 with the rest expiring in 2020. The recommendation was that the City consider putting before the voters a property tax for capital needs to replace those levies. This recommendation has not been implemented and Council has asked for the Task Force's input on this issue.

Given the support citizens have recently provided to the Schools with the approved property tax increase and the City with the .5% increase in the income tax, the consensus of the Task Force is that, if a levy is placed on the ballot, use of the proceeds from the levy should be tied to a very specific purpose and thoroughly communicated to the citizens of Upper Arlington. Consequently, we do not recommend placing a levy on the ballot until such a purpose has been identified.

Recommendation 15 calls for a fresh review of the City's financial position in three years to determine the effectiveness of actions taken and initiate new actions as necessary. While it has been five years since the report of the 2014 Task Force, our Task Force is the implementation of that recommendation. We recommend that a new Citizen Financial Review Task Force be convened every five years to take a fresh view of the City's financial position and recommend areas for additional study.

Undertake a high-level review of the City's current financial status and overall outlook

Fund balances are very strong and the city is in strong financial shape. With the increase in the income tax, there was a significant burst of growth in income tax receipts as expected. Growth of income tax receipts has been sustained by a strong general economy as well as economic activity from City projects. We note and commend that the City has continued to monitor expenses despite the significant rise in revenue. In particular, staffing levels are being increased only after due consideration. There are sufficient revenues to support the operations of the City and a robust capital plan to address the extensive capital needs. The Task Force is impressed with the City's tracking and understanding of the City's revenues and expenses and

the budgetary process and by its understanding and grasp of where the City is benchmarked with other communities.

The Task Force also recognizes that financial challenges remain. The extent of the capital needs and the fact that the current economic expansion is the longest in history needs to be taken into account. Continued vigilance is needed on how tax dollars are spent. The income tax is the largest revenue source for the City representing approximately 48% of the overall revenue estimates and 55% of General Fund revenue estimates. Withholdings from employers operating within the City account for 59% of the income tax revenues. Given the significant reliance on the income tax, we recommend that the City conduct a stress test to determine the impact of potential significant decreases in revenues, through economic downturn or employers leaving the City, on required spending for City operations and services, and the resulting impact on fund balances.

In conjunction with the stress test, we also recommend that the City undergo a formal evaluation of the appropriate level of fund reserves. The current policy is to hold 30% of the general fund expenses in reserve. However, at the current time, the fund balance is at 46% and it is projected to be at 46% for the next five years. Once an appropriate reserve level has been established, the City should determine the disposition of amounts above the target. The disposition should be for one time uses and should not be used for ongoing expenses. We also suggest that the City consider a range target for the fund balance around a point instead of a fixed reserve. That will give the City flexibility to lower the reserve in stronger economic times and increase the reserve in weaker economic times.

The Task Force is somewhat concerned about the comments from the rating agencies concerning the level of debt the City has taken on. The City could consider financing capital improvements using cash to reduce the size of future issuances of debt or increase the time between debt issuances. The increase in the gasoline tax can also provide additional funding to support cash payment for capital improvements. We acknowledge that taking on debt may have been a conscious decision given the current low interest rates. However, Council should assess what debt level it believes is appropriate on an ongoing basis.

The City has an option to add an additional \$5.00 to the cost of a license plate. It is anticipated that the fee could generate between \$300,000 and \$400,000 which could also be used to

provide additional cash for certain capital improvements. However, since this fee can be imposed at any time and a specific use has not been identified, the Task Force does not recommend pursuing this option at the present time.

Explore further privatization and/or collaboration opportunities

We commend the City on its exemplary privatization and collaboration initiatives including the privatization of solid waste services, the consolidation of 911 dispatching and call services, the partnership among the City, Schools and Library to install the fiber optic network and the shared cost with the Schools to include a School Resource Officer at the High School, one officer at each middle school and one officer for the elementary schools. While not implemented, we acknowledge the effort to explore privatization of pool operations and to develop a Joint Economic Development Zone with Clinton Township. Despite the efforts of the City, the partnership with Clinton Township to provide Fire and EMS services was terminated by Clinton Township and the Village of Marble Cliff chose to continue its shared service agreement with Grandview. We understand that retaining outside counsel for legal services, sharing records management systems software for police departments with local municipalities, and sharing security system back-end for video monitoring and door access with the Schools is currently under consideration.

In general, back office functions where employees do not work face to face with the public are prime candidates for privatization and/or shared services. We suggest three areas to consider; Information Technology (IT), Human Resources compliance functions, and Fleet Maintenance. There are several IT providers in the area and given the rapidly changing IT environment, from a quality perspective, a third party provider may be a better solution.

We recognize that there some complexities in government entities' compensation compliance processes given the various public employee pension systems and unions. However, all government entities would have these issues. Given the large number of municipalities as well as county and state agencies, if there is not an existing company to provide these services, there may be an opportunity for government entities to collaborate to create and to share such services.

We recommend that the City engage an independent, objective third party to evaluate current service delivery processes and available privatization and shared options. An independent, objective review will provide an opportunity for improvement and can be focused upon a set of agreed upon procedures to control the cost of the review. The Task Force recommends that the City consider the resources offered by the State Auditor's office as those services are, in general, more cost effective than those offered by many consulting firms.

The City must constantly monitor service delivery and prioritize what is most important. The Task Force strongly encourages the City to continue its efforts to explore options for meeting service delivery needs in the most cost effective manner.

Undertake a high level assessment of existing service levels to verify alignment with community needs and/or expectations

The basis of our assessment of existing service levels is the 2017 Community Survey and our meetings with Department Heads and Chiefs. The results of the 2017 Community Survey indicate that, for the most part, citizens are happy with service levels. We also note that the City has been responsive to the survey and has worked to address areas where there were concerns such as the implementation of the Solid Waste Program in 2018.

While we commend the City for consistently seeking input from the citizens of Upper Arlington, we note that similar input has not been sought from the business community. Given the importance of retaining the current employer base, it would be beneficial to understand the service expectations of businesses as well as how well those expectations are being met. We encourage the City to survey the business community with an instrument similar to the Community Survey with appropriate modifications.

During our discussions, the question was raised as to whether surveying the entire community every three to four years is most appropriate for understanding needs of the community. We understand that the Kingsdale West/River Ridge survey was intended to be the first of neighborhood specific surveys. We suggest replicating that survey to specific individual neighborhoods on a consistent, rotating basis.

Areas of service level not being met as identified in the 2017 Community Survey relate primarily to Parks & Recreation. An online, real time, field and court scheduling system that is readily accessible to the public is strongly recommended. Such a system would provide better communication and understanding of what options are available. A third party vendor may be the most effective way to timely and effectively implement such a system. We understand the Parks & Recreation Department is exploring such software called Teamup. While we acknowledge that there will be a learning period for citizens to become familiar with the software, such a system could not only facilitate scheduling for the public but also allow the Parks & Recreation Department to take fields offline for rest by marking them unavailable. This system could be enhanced by including a process for identifying and scheduling meeting space within the City.

An intergenerational indoor recreation facility was identified as a major need in the 2017 Community Survey. In addition, the Task Force observes that the existing Senior Center is not a competitive amenity and, in its current tired physical condition, is not reflective of the high standards of our community. We understand that the City will be conducting a feasibility study to assess a Community Center which would address both the need for an intergenerational indoor recreation facility as well as the need to update/replace the Senior Center. In the interim, we suggest the City, Schools and Library work together to better utilize existing space within the City. While we understand that the City, Schools and Library are separate government entities, we suggest that further cooperation in sharing space would be beneficial to the citizens of Upper Arlington. In particular, there is great need for indoor space during winter months, especially gym space, for youth activities. Some leagues and teams are going outside the City to rent space for these activities. Rental of indoor space could become a revenue stream or at least cover incremental operating costs.

We offer our thoughts on issues to be considered in the Community Center feasibility study, especially those related to finances and the local competitive landscape. The feasibility study for a Community Center will need to be very specific as to financial impacts. The Task Force recommends that the feasibility study address the full costs, both operating and capital, over the whole life cycle of the project. Consideration must also be given to how the presence of a Community Center affects other needs of the city, including but not limited to, police, fire, and infrastructure. The feasibility study should also include any anticipated offsets from shutting down the existing Senior Center and incorporating its program offerings into a new intergenerational Community Center.

The Task Force recommends that the 0.5% income tax that was voted on for infrastructure not be used for the Community Center. There are other potential sources of revenue to support the facility and the increase in the gas tax may free up General Funds currently allocated to capital improvements. The Capital Improvement Plan has been at a heightened level since the passage of the tax increase, but there are still infrastructure challenges and we would not want to dilute the ability to fund those needs.

The Task Force recommends conducting an analysis of the competitive landscape of community offerings among comparable communities as a Community Center is an amenity that seems to be an expectation when people and/or businesses consider where they would like to reside. The competitive analysis should also address the respective facility size, facility staffing and funding structure utilized by other local communities. We also recommend the feasibility study explore public/private partnerships and privatization of services such as professional management by an outside firm.

Assess the status of capital investments made to date and the outlook/plans for the next 10-year Capital Improvement Program

The Task Force believes that, overall, the City is making the right choices regarding capital improvements. We are impressed with the process in place, how diligent the plan is, that it is being updated annually, and appreciate the transparency of the process. Given the substantial increase in procurement activity since implementation of the Capital Improvement Program, the City may want to reevaluate the procurement strategy to make sure it remains appropriate and the most cost effective.

We recognize the City is aggressively seeking outside grant funding and we encourage this process to continue. In particular, we encourage the City to review its grant management process to ensure it is able to capture all available grants.

While the Task Force is impressed with the Capital Improvement Program to date and plans for the next 10 years, we recognize there may be a need for significant changes in the plan going forward. In particular, we believe it would be helpful to have a “what if” strategy relating to capital improvements. One area of concern is the sewer and storm water systems, especially

south of Lane Avenue. We are aware of the remediation plan agreed to with the EPA but note that most of the sewer and water lines affected are north of Lane Avenue. It is not clear from the improvements to date or those planned for the next 10 years whether consideration has been given to the state of the sewer and water lines south of Lane Avenue. Given the age of those lines, they may be susceptible to the same overflow issues that are part of the EPA agreement. Even if not directed by the EPA, it would be prudent to evaluate any potential risk of failure of the storm water lines south of Lane Avenue as there could be significant potential liability in this area. "What if" scenarios might also be helpful in anticipation of economic development projects.

Examine and recommend specific program areas where a fuller review may be necessary

Over the course of the meetings and information gathering activities of the Task Force, a variety of topics came to light. We offer our observations and recommendations in no particular order.

Fees for Services

As previously noted, Recommendations 7 and 8 of the 2014 Task Force state that fees for services should be set at a level sufficient to cover both operating and capital improvement costs associated with those services. It is our understanding that Council has determined that such a fee structure is not practical or attainable. The Task Force recommends that the City identify all the direct, indirect (as is practical), operating and capital costs for each program or service, assess what level of fees would be necessary to cover those costs, and then make a judgement as to what the City wants to subsidize. In this regard, Council could consider a study/review to determine if the process it follows to identify fees to impose and the level of subsidy each program or service receives is comparable to like cities. While the Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan includes cost recovery targets for certain of its programs, comparison to our peer cities would be informative. The consideration and decisions regarding subsidies of City programs and services should be a formal part of budget process and communicated to the public.

Complete Capital Equipment Review

At the present time, each Department within the City is responsible for its own capital equipment. This includes maintaining the inventory of the equipment, estimating useful lives

and anticipating replacements, and when appropriate, arranging for maintenance with the Public Service Department. However, these individual plans are not consolidated so that an overall assessment of capital equipment can be easily made. In particular, the City cannot easily assess the funds required for new or replacement capital equipment in any given year. Also, without a consolidated picture of capital equipment, it may be difficult for the City to determine if the overall capital equipment plan is cost effective or identify opportunities where cross department use of capital assets may be appropriate.

We recommend the City consider an independent, objective third party review to evaluate the capital equipment needs of the City, determine the appropriate useful lives of those assets and consider the best plan for maintaining those assets. The assessment could also include guidance on indicators of when capital equipment levels need to be increased or decreased given service demands.

Economic Development

The Task Force is very pleased with the many exciting things going on in the City regarding economic development and acknowledges that this is being accomplished with only one dedicated Economic Development Professional. We also acknowledged there may have been thought given to areas we recommend for further consideration but they have not yet been formalized or communicated. We understand there are economic development activities that are “behind the scenes” for competitive purposes. We offer our observations in an effort to further the initiatives already in place.

The Task Forces observes that current development activities may be overly reactive and/or project specific. The Task Force believes there is a need for the City to develop a broad, holistic vision for economic development and income tax revenue growth. Although commercial property is limited in the City, we observed that many adjacent communities have creatively and successfully overcome similar limitations utilizing visionary public/private partnerships.

Once the vision is developed, specific targets/benchmarks should be established and the vision should be pursued with intentionality. The Task Force recognizes that creation of this economic vision will require an initial investment of time and capital and may require third party consultants and/or external planners to bring fresh thinking to the process. Given that 48% of City revenue comes from the income tax base, it is key the City is focused on utilizing the highest level talent (both internally and externally) to grow this base.

Specific priority geographic corridors should be identified and pursued. The Task Force identified Lane Avenue, Kingsdale/5 Points, and Arlington Blvd/Henderson Rd as the priority corridors. The Task Force cautions against economic development activities which may take focus away from the priority corridors. The development community looks to local jurisdictions to signal that they want to encourage development and the public and the business community need to understand the City's specific vision for each corridor. There is an opportunity to clearly message the City would be willing to work with the development community.

As current legal proceedings begin to wind down in the Arlington Blvd area, it is important for the City to plan for the next steps regarding this property. We learned that over 30% of the City's commercial space is in this corridor so it is vital to set a vision and expectations for this area. In particular, there needs to be a consistent branding or identification of the area.

The Task Force notes that the latest Master Plan was completed in 2013. We believe that it would be beneficial for the City to update the Master Plan given the significant development that has taken place in the last six years. The plan could begin with a review of economic expansion opportunities in a three, five and seven year time frame with targeted benchmarks for growth. The plan could also provide for "what if" scenarios depending on economic events. For example, the use of the Arlington Blvd property is uncertain at this point. When an economic event happens, the City must be ready to act. The City could develop a set of scenarios and options to pursue should a given scenario occur. In addition such a Master Plan could serve as a great indicator to developers on what is welcomed and what is not.

While bringing new businesses and jobs to the City is critical, it is also important to retain the current businesses already here. The Task Force senses a need for a stronger relationship with existing businesses. As mentioned previously, we suggest the City consider a business survey similar to the community survey to determine if City services are in alignment with the expectations of the business community and what additional services may be desired. Business leaders can be engaged in the formation of the aforementioned broad, holistic vision for economic development which would give them ownership in future economic development activities. In addition, we suggest current business owners could serve as advocates for the City in the economic development process. Finally, we understand the primary function of the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) is to review the financial incentives offered by the City and make recommendations to City Council. However, since the City has only one

Economic Development Professional, members of the CIC could help reach out to the current business base to strengthen relationships within the business community.

When appropriate, the Task Force agrees that financial incentives should be utilized to activate the identified corridors as well as retain existing businesses. We note there is healthy competition among cities for businesses and it is important that staff have the appropriate tools to counter balance offers from competing cities to retain our current businesses and attract others. The City currently has 11 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) areas with a 12th recently approve for the Lane Avenue II project. While the TIFs currently in place have been highly successful, it may be appropriate for the City to explore other underutilized financial incentives to fund not only new business acquisition but also business retention. The Task Force reminds Council to continue to be mindful of how economic incentives are used, the level of upfront funding the city is providing, and whether the expected returns are being achieved. Clear goals around income tax revenue, employer retention and new employers should be stated when financial incentives are offered. The Task Force perceives a misunderstanding of economic development incentives and their benefits by the public. It may be beneficial to include a brief explanation of incentives used, particularly TIFs, and the return to the City in the Popular Annual Financial Report.

CONCLUSION

This report represents the strong consensus of the 2019 Upper Arlington Citizen Financial Review Task Force. All members of the Task Force wish to thank City Council for giving us the opportunity to serve the community on this project and for supporting us as we conducted our work. Having completed our work, we believe it has given each of us a good understanding of the financial challenges facing our City.

We wish to compliment the Acting City Manager, the Finance Director, and the other members of the City's management team for their hard work and professional approach in implementing the recommendations of the 2014 Task Force. We note and commend that the City has continued to monitor expenses despite the significant rise in revenue. In particular, staffing levels are being increased only after due consideration and high-quality services have been maintained. Upper Arlington continues to stand out as a model for effective local government.

We urge our fellow citizens to consider the information in this report carefully. We are confident that upon reflection our community will concur with the consensus we have reached (after much discussion and vigorous debate) and support our recommendations to City Council. We believe Upper Arlington will continue to be a residential community of choice for future generations.