



**TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH  
FY 2024/2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PLAN  
February 1, 2025**

**OUR VISION:**

The Town of Highland Beach is a beautiful safe harbor in paradise whose residents never leave.

**OUR MISSION:**

To provide exceptional governance and municipal services, in partnership with our residents, in a fiscally responsible manner with an emphasis on planning for the future.

**OUR MOTTO:**

“3 Miles of Paradise”

**OUR VALUES:**

**H**elp citizens live a better life by providing a safe and secure community.

**I**nclusiveness – we respect people, value diversity and are committed to equality.

**G**ive exceptional citizen service.

**H**onor public trust through ethical behavior, transparency and servant leadership.

**L**ead with integrity at every level.

**A**ssure fiscal responsibility and accountability.

**N**urture and respect our natural environment.

**D**eliver services through collaborated efforts and coordinated actions.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This strategic priority plan identifies ranked community projects and initiatives within four (4) operational categories. These projects and initiatives are classified as “Commenced” and “Planned” based on their implementation status and/or schedule. The strategic priority plan is a dynamic and simple document that serves as a decision-making tool to be updated on a quarterly basis via reports to the Town Commission. The strategic priorities are worked on concurrently by the assigned departments and staff with the ranking driving resource allocation. The plan is intrinsically linked to the annual operating budget which commits funds to complete the projects and initiatives identified. Completing a project and/or initiative leads to attaining the operational category goal for each and leads to fulfilling the mission and vision of the Town.

### Organizational Excellence

Strengthen the Town’s ability to strategically, and effectively, deliver municipal services in a fiscally responsible, collaborative, inclusive and innovative manner.

#### Projects/Initiatives:

##### **SP 4: Communication & Community Engagement**

Description: Actively communicate with the public through multiple mediums and platforms to ensure the community receives timely value-added communications regarding town business and affairs. Town Manager’s Office is in the process of developing “My Highland Beach” app to improve interactive communication with residents. Also, plan community events.

Progress: Ongoing. The Manager’s Office sends out a weekly news flash, the Manager’s Monthly Newsletter (emailed and mailed), updates Channel 99, and regular updates to Facebook. The Manager’s Office is evaluating the value of using polls, surveys and other social media platforms. Website use and navigation to be evaluated to improve user experience. “My Highland Beach” app has been created and is being tested by staff prior to public rollout.

##### **SP 9: State Appropriations**

Description: Requests for state financial assistance for capital improvement and planning projects. Annually evaluate town operations and capital improvement plan for opportunities for appropriation requests and/or grants.

Progress: FY 2025 Appropriation requests to be discussed with Lobbyist November/December 2024.

##### **SP 13: Financial Management Systems**

Description: The Finance Department in partnership with the Manager’s Office is updating the town’s investment policy and the 5-year Financial Forecast Model.

Progress: Draft 5-Year Financial Forecast Model under staff review.

##### **SP 15: Preferred Employer Program**

Description: The Town Manager’s Office, in collaboration with the Town Commission, will design and implement a comprehensive compensation, workplace, and benefits program. This initiative aims to attract and retain high-quality employees who excel in teamwork and are committed to delivering exceptional municipal services and public safety.

Progress: Ongoing with annual budget.

**SP 20: Public Record Digitization/Management Project**

Description: This project is the digitization of historical, hard copy records and documents.

Project also includes the migration to Laserfiche Cloud Record Management System.

Progress: Seventy-five thousand (75,000) records digitized to date and the goal is to digitize all historical records by end of 2024 and create a policy governing record management moving forward. Policy is drafted and under administrative review.

**SP 21: Charter Review/Amendments (Annual Review)**

Description: Annual review and consideration of necessary charter revisions and/or amendments to ensure effective and efficient town operations consistent with best management practices. This project also involves evaluation of the previous charter amendments. Town Commission approved a referendum for March 2025 seeking authorization to spend \$3.5 million for two public safety projects: Old Fire Station and Marine Docking Facility.

Progress: Referendum scheduled for March 2025.

**Departments:**

Town Manager's Office

Highland Beach Fire Rescue Department

Finance Department

Clerks' Office

IT Consultant

**Advisory Board(s):**

Financial Advisory Board

**Public Infrastructure & Resiliency**

Ensure that Town managed and maintained facilities, infrastructure and public places are afforded appropriate attention, maintenance, repairs, and upgrades.

**Projects/Initiatives:**

**SP 2: Sanitary Sewer Lining Project**

Description: The sanitary sewer system has begun to show signs of deterioration and needs complete rehabilitation via a comprehensive lining project. The selected method of rehabilitation is the least disruptive and most cost effective. The residents in March of 2024 authorized the project at a not to exceed cost of \$3.5 million. Staff attempted to secure a "piggyback" contract to complete the project in phases. No such contract could be obtained; therefore, staff will commence securing a Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan (SRF) to complete the project in one single phase.

Progress: Staff has reached out to the State of Florida SRF Program. This project cannot start construction until FDOT has completed the A1A Resurfacing Project. August application date targeted.

**SP 6: A1A Highway RRR Project**

Description: Partner with FDOT to ensure the road rehabilitation and resurfacing (RRR) project is completed with limited and controlled disruptions to the community. The project includes needed drainage improvements, paved shoulder enhancements to accommodate cyclists and embedded crosswalk lighting.

Progress: Under Construction. Target completion date June 2025.

**SP 7: Town Entry Signs (A1A)**

Description: The two existing town entry signs have deteriorated and need to be replaced.

Progress: Signs have been constructed. South sign installed and waiting for north installation. Landscaping follows installation.

**SP 8: ~~Marine Accessory Structures Ordinance Amendment(s)~~**

~~Description: Conduct an in-depth review of all ordinance provisions related to the installation and construction of marine accessory structures to ensure they are appropriate for waterfront property owners. The review shall include a public engagement process. The project is being facilitated by the Planning Board, ordinance sponsor and staff at the direction of the Town Commission. The Town Commission on 12/17/2024 direct the Town Attorney to opine on "Floating Vessel Platforms (FVP)" and the Commission's ability to apply zoning setbacks.~~

~~Progress: Commission approved on Second Reading Ordinance 25-002 following a lengthy and thoughtful public review process. On January 21, 2025, the Commission reviewed the Town Attorney's legal opinion on FVP and selected to leave regulation of such with the FDEP.~~

**COMPLETED**

**SP 19: Zoning District Evaluation (Density)**

Description: The Town Commission has directed to the Planning Board to commence a public review process of the permitted zoning densities of each zoning district within the town to see if it is appropriate to revise to preserve town character, accommodate redevelopment and protect property values.

Progress: The Planning Board has commenced its discussion of the public engagement process. The Commission has suspended further review pending Milani Park Project and "Live Local" legislative modifications. No other progress.

**Departments:**

Highland Beach Fire Rescue Department

Public Works Department

Town Planner

Town Manager's Office

Finance Department

**Advisory Board(s):**

Financial Advisory Board

Planning Board

## Community Safety

Proactively plan for and responsively maintain a safe and resilient community focused on visibility, awareness and care for residents and visitors.

### Projects/Initiatives:

#### **SP 3: Police Assigned Vehicle Program**

Description: To enhance the recruitment and retention of high-quality police officers and remain competitive with neighboring agencies, the Town Commission has directed the Town Manager's Office, in collaboration with the Police Department, to develop an assigned vehicle program. The project will also involve exploring and assessing various financing options.

Progress: The Town Commission authorized the program and necessary budget amendments. Legal reviewing contract which will be followed by ordering. **COMPLETED**

#### **SP 5: Police Marine Docking/Access Facility**

Description: The project involves the design and construction of a marine docking facility to support the Police Department's patrol and rescue vessel. The facility will be situated at the western end of the Town Hall complex, behind the library. To offset project costs, the Town will actively seek grants and appropriations.

Progress: The Police Department has secured the FIND Grant (50% cost share) for the design portion of the project. The Town Manager's Office and Police Department will pursue grants/appropriations for construction. Staff recommends a referendum as cost may exceed charter spending limit and may not be able to meet grant match obligations if awarded.

#### **SP 10: Old Fire Station**

Description: Consider the rehabilitation of the Old Fire Station to not only store reserve apparatus and equipment for the Fire Rescue department but also create useful and beautiful multi-purpose space for community functions.

Progress: Preliminary design concepts and structural evaluation of old fire station completed. Project in value engineering and cost estimation phase. Staff recommends a referendum as cost may exceed charter spending limit.

#### **SP 11: Old Post Office (PD)**

Description: Explore the rehabilitation of the old Post Office into a security center and public entrance to the Police Department. Project will evaluate physical connection of the old Post Office to the existing Police Station.

Progress: Preliminary design concepts developed and shared independently with Commissioners. Value engineering and cost estimation phase has commenced.

#### **SP 14: Electric Vehicle Protocols (Fire Safety)**

Description: In response to the increasing use of electric vehicles and other battery-powered modes of transport, the Town Commission has tasked the Fire Department, in collaboration with Condominium Associations, with developing fire safety guidelines for vehicle charging and rechargeable battery storage. These guidelines will aim to ensure safe practices and reduce fire risks within the community. The guidelines will be accompanied by a public outreach campaign.

Progress: Guidelines developed by Highlands Place Condominium and Vice Mayor Stern and will be used as template for other groups. Outreach pending.

**SP 16: Home Occupation Ordinance Provisions**

Description: House Bill 403 which became effective July 1, 2021, prohibits local governments from taking certain actions relating to the licensure and regulation of home-based businesses, specifies conditions under which a business is considered a home-based business, authorizes home-based businesses to operate in areas zoned for residential use if the business meets certain criteria, specifies that home-based businesses are subject to certain business taxes and authorizes adversely affected current or prospective home-based business owners to challenge certain local government actions in violation of the statute.

The current "home occupation" regulations provided in Chapter 30 need to be revised to be compliant with Florida Statutes.

Progress: Town Commission reviewed draft ordinance concepts and directed Planning Board to conduct public review and make recommendations. **COMPLETED**

**SP 22: Evaluate Ordinance Development Process**

Description: Consider reviewing the current ordinance development procedure to ensure it is the most efficient and effective means of addressing community problems and challenges and engages the residents.

Progress: No progress to date. Preparing discussion for future Commission meeting Fall 2024/Winter 2025.

**SP 23: Temporary Sign Ordinance Review**

Description: The Town Commission and concerned residents have requested staff to evaluate the ordinance provisions related to temporary signs with a focus on political signs and real estate signs.

Progress: No Progress.

**Departments:**

Police Department

Building Department/Code Enforcement

Town Planner

Highland Beach Fire Rescue Department

Town Manager's Office

**Advisory Board(s)/Community Support Group(s):**

Planning Board

Board of Appeals and Adjustments

Code Enforcement Board

Highland Beach Police Foundation

## Community Enrichment & Sustainability

Recognize the vital role Highland Beach's natural resources play in a healthy community and implement projects and policies that sustain them. Support residents' desire for community services and programs that enhance personal growth, knowledge and quality of life.

### Projects/Initiatives:

#### **SP 1: Milani Park**

Description: Continue to work with Palm Beach County Administration and Parks and Recreation Department along with County Commissioner(s) on the future development of Milani Park. Milani Park is governed by a settlement agreement that stipulates design of the park and the timing of construction. The county has one more 5-year extension.  
Progress: Contract compliance review is ongoing. An archaeologist to assist with cultural resource review has been secured. Town Mayor facilitating design conversations with Palm Beach County.

#### **SP 12: Comprehensive Plan Update**

Description: Pursuant to state law, local governments are required to periodically update their Comprehensive Plan. The Town's comprehensive plan functions as a roadmap for a community's future growth and development, encompassing principles, guidelines, standards, and strategies to ensure orderly economic, social, physical, environmental, and fiscal growth. It captures the community's commitment to implementing sustainable, balanced development initiatives through detailed sections, which often include goals, objectives, and policies. These sections outline how the local government's programs, activities, and land development regulations will align with and promote the plan in a cohesive and consistent manner

Progress: The Town Planner along with the Town Manager's Office has engaged a consultant to assist with our Comprehensive Plan update. Initial internal staff meetings have commenced and will be followed by a Commission and public engagement and approval process.

#### **SP 17: Dune Restoration & Management**

Description: The Town Commission assigned the Natural Resource Preservation Advisory Board (NRPAB) to work with staff to educate the public on the importance of dune restoration and management.

Progress: The updated the 2013 Beach Feasibility Study completed. Natural Resource Advisory Board educating the public on the results.

#### **SP 18: Intracoastal Waterway (Speed Control)**

Description: Community concerns exist regarding the safety of the intracoastal waterway, and the town needs to take an active role in its management.

Progress: Ongoing. The Marine Unit of the Police Department started in March of 2022 to improve boater safety by enforcing existing speeds, educating boaters, and heightening intracoastal presence. The police department will collect data and information that can be utilized by all stakeholders in the future to lower speeds and wakes in the intracoastal. The town will continue to meet with our neighboring communities and stakeholders to form

partnerships to manage this critical resource.

**SP 24: Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Regulations**

Description: Community concern has surfaced over the continued use of gas-powered leaf blowers within the community based on noise, pollution, and personal health.

Progress: No progress.

**SP 25: A1A Right-of-Way Beautification Project**

Description: The Town Commission has expressed interest in evaluating the landscape conditions of the A1A Right-of-Way following the completion of the reconstruction and resurfacing of the State Road. This evaluation aims to assess whether landscaping applications are necessary or beneficial to enhance the aesthetics and functionality of the greenspace within the right-of-way.

Progress: No progress.

**Departments:**

Town Planner

Highland Beach Library

Town Manager's Office

**Advisory Board(s)/Community Support Groups:**

Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board

Planning Board

Friends of the Library

Library Volunteers

**Emerging Issues**

The following emerging issues may require action by the community in the short-term planning horizon resulting in the creation of a new project/initiative or require re-prioritization of existing projects/initiatives.

The emerging issues include:

- Aging/Underbuilt Infrastructure, Facilities & Structures
- A1A Drainage/Flooding Issues
- Climate Change/Sea Level Rise effect upon Intracoastal Waterways
- Outdated Management Systems
- American Disabilities Act (ADA) Requirements
- Inflation/Recessionary Concerns
- Property Insurance
- Affordability/Cost of Living

## **Capital Improvement Plan:**

Attached to the Strategic Priorities Plan is the Town of Highland Beach Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2024-2029 Outlook. The full CIP is prepared annually by Town Administration. The CIP is a strategic and dynamic guide that outlines the Town of Highland Beach's plan for significant, long-term projects aimed at improving and maintaining the town's infrastructure. These projects range from public works improvements, fire, and life safety upgrades, and maintaining and upgrading existing facilities. The CIP not only provides a detailed projection of the town's capital needs but also a layout of funding sources and timelines for each project. This plan is crucial for the town's sustainable growth and development, ensuring that all projects are systematically planned and executed with the town's best interest in mind.

The benefits of the CIP are as follows:

- Ensure timely and systematic repair and replacement of aging infrastructure.
- To forecast the capital needs for the near- and long-term future to serve as a guide in making budgetary decisions.
- Identify the most economical and efficient means of timing and financing (if needed) capital projects.
- Provide an opportunity for public input in the budget and finance process.
- Help to eliminate unanticipated, poorly planned, or unnecessary capital expenditure.

As with many five-year plans, there are also projects that have not been funded. Several are dependent upon other projects occurring first, while others are at a funding level that may need alternate funding sources for our infrastructure needs to maximize the value of our public dollars.

## **Action Planning:**

The successful implementation of the projects and initiatives defined in the strategic priorities plan is contingent upon the development of an action plan. The action plan must provide clear directions with the ordered tasks/steps needed with target completion dates along with resources needed to complete the project. The plan shall identify those responsible for completing the steps and tasks and monitoring the progress of the project.

As a project or initiative identified in the Strategic Priorities Plan moves from the "Planned" stage to "Commenced" stage, an action plan will be created by the assigned department. The action plan shall include:

- A well-defined description of the project/initiative to be completed; and,
- Tasks/steps that need to be carried out to complete the project/initiative; and,
- Department/Employee who will be in charge of carrying out each task; and,
- When will these tasks be completed (deadlines and milestones); and,
- Resources needed to complete the tasks; and,
- Measures to evaluate progress.

The assigned department shall forward its action plan to the Town Manager for review and approval. Once approved, the action plan will be posted on the Town website and will be updated monthly. It is important to note that some projects may require a more complex action plan based on the scope of the project/initiative. The *Action Plan Template* is attached for reference.

## Strategic Priorities: Completed Projects & Initiatives List

### **Fiscal Year 2020**

1. PBA Collective Bargaining Agreement 2020 - 2023
2. FOP Collective Bargaining/General Employees 2020-2023
3. Sanitary Sewer Collection System Evaluation -- CCTV
4. FY 2020-2025 Water & Sewer Rate Study
5. Crosswalk Enhancement Project – Pedestrian Activated Signs/Flashers
6. Install ERP IT System: BS&A Modules Permitting, GL, Fixed Assets, Cash Receipting, AP/AR, PO, Utility Billing
7. Define Purchasing/AP/AR Process, Roles & Responsibilities
8. Update Building Administrative Code Section -- 7th Edition of Florida Building Code:
9. Complete Salary Table & Job Description Update
10. Implement Geographic Information System (GIS) & Expand Capacity
11. Southeast Palm Beach County Coastal Resiliency Partnership & Climate Vulnerability Assessment
12. Bucket Tree Pilot Program

### **Fiscal Year 2021**

1. Charter Review Process
2. Study Alternate Fire Rescue Service Models
3. Building Recertification Ordinance/Program
4. Crosswalk Enhancement Project – Overhead Lighting
5. Police Department – Marine Unit Formation
6. As-built drawing for Municipal Complex project
7. Right-of-Way (ROW) Disruption Ordinance
8. Town Hall Building Improvements
9. Fire Rescue Services Implementation  
*PR Campaign, Retain Fire Rescue Services Consultants; Retain Medical Director and Assistant Medical Director; Election; Retain architect for fire station design; Commenced fire station design process; Development of Medical Protocols; EMS vehicle selection; Execution of fire services dispatch agreement; Preparation of COCPN and State EMS application documents.*
10. FY 2020-2025 Water & Sewer Rate Study Update

### **Fiscal Year 2022**

1. Veterans' tab on Town's website
2. Police Department Accreditation (incl. Marine Unit)
3. Fund Balance Guidelines/Policy Revision
4. Property Rights Element – Comprehensive Plan Update
5. Building Permit Discount

### **Fiscal Year 2023**

1. PBA Collective Bargaining Agreement FY 2023 – 2026
2. FOP Collective Bargaining (General Employees) FY 2023-2026
3. FY 2023 Appropriation Received: \$250,000 for Lift Station No. 2 Rehabilitation
4. 5-year financial forecast model completed (Updated Annually)
5. Purchasing Policy Update
6. Interactive Budget Posted on Website (Updated Annually)

7. Solid Waste Contract: FY 2023 -FY 2028 (w/ 2 one-year renewals)
8. Sprint/T-Mobile Cellular Lease Renewal (25-year Agreement based on a 5-year renewal periods)
9. Adopted Sea Turtle Lighting Ordinance
10. Updated Building Recertification Program (compliant with state statute)

#### **Fiscal Year 2024**

1. FY 2024 Appropriation Received: \$250,000 for Lift Station No. 3 Rehabilitation.
2. March 2024 Ballot Questions Approved: (1) Financing a Sanitary Sewer Lining Rehabilitation Project, (2) Raising the Current Funding Limitation, and (3) Ability to Designate Election Canvassing Duties to Palm Beach County.
3. Fire Station Construction
4. Fire Rescue Department Implementation
5. Mutual Aid Agreement with the City of Boca Raton
6. Code Enforcement Process Modified to Incorporate Special Magistrate
7. TOHB Beach Restoration Feasibility Study January 2024.

#### **Fiscal Year 2025**

Marine Accessory Structures Ordinance  
Home Based Occupation Ordinance  
Police Assigned Vehicle Program

### **Capital Improvement Plan: Completed Projects List**

The 2024 budget was \$1.218M, with a \$685K spend, leaving \$533K unspent. Of this, \$225K is allocated for the completion of Lift Station 3 in 2025. The cancellation of the Metal Car awning project added another \$60K, while the remaining savings come from several Public Works projects that were completed under budget.

#### **WS 24-001 Muffler Replacement for Generator**

Project safeguarded efficient generator operation and reduced noise for residents. The project, with a \$100K budget, came in under budget at \$93.2K, saving \$6.8K.

#### **WS 24-002 Media Replacement - Scrubbers & Degassifier**

Project ensured optimal treatment process performance and remove harmful contaminants from the water supply. The project budgeted \$100K but came in under budget at \$99.8K, resulting in a slight savings.

#### **PW/DST 24-003 Fence Replacement**

Fence replaced due to end-of-life. Project completed on time and within budget of \$50K.

#### **SW 24-006 Pipe Well Coating (3) LS**

The original project planned to coat our existing piping. We changed it to HDPE, a better standard, saving us \$72K compared to the original \$150K budget, cutting the project's cost in half.

#### **SW 24-007 Library Sewer Rehabilitation**

Sewer library rehabilitation was completed, fixing the sewer issue in the Library. The project cost was \$17K vs the \$50K budgeted a savings of \$33K

**SW 24-014 Upgrade Electrical Panel Lift Station 1**

The electrical panel upgrade for lift station 1 was completed for \$10K, saving \$40K over the budgeted \$50K. The savings was mostly due to a rescale of inner components, as the exterior was unchanged.

**WS 24-017 Vehicle Purchase 5**

The purchase of a new vehicle to replace the aging one was within budget at \$30K.

**PW/DST 24-019 Gas Dispenser & Pump**

The dispenser system gas pump was completed for \$9K, saving \$21K over the budgeted \$30K.

**PD/DST 24-002 Axon 2024-2028**

The AXON Contract body-worn cameras, taser-less lethal, were purchased for \$48.3K instead of the budgeted \$52K, saving about \$3K.

**PD 25-002 Marine Unit Trailer 2 Purchase**

The Police Department trailer purchase, originally scheduled for 2025, was completed in 2024 and stayed within budget of \$20K.

**PD/DST 24-003 Flock Safety 2 License Plate Reader and Surveillance**

This project cost \$27.7K, slightly over budgeted at \$25K.

**PD/DST 24-004 Motorola**

This project replaced current police radios with (23) new units, coming in on budget at \$53K (annual cost.)

**PD/DST 24-005 New Carpet for Police Department**

The Police Department's carpet replacement was completed on budget of \$12K.

**FD/GF 24-001 Rescue Holmatro Equipment**

Holmatro Cutter, Spreader, Ram, and associated battery packs were purchased within budget of \$44K.