



TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH
2023 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PLAN
FEBRUARY 2024 *(This is a working document)*

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:

Help citizens live a better life by providing a safe and secure community.

Inclusiveness – we respect people, value diversity and are committed to equality.

Give exceptional citizen service.

Honor public trust through ethical behavior, transparency and servant leadership.

Lead with integrity at every level.

Assure fiscal responsibility and accountability.

Nurture and respect our natural environment.

Deliver 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 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 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 1: Labor Negotiations

PBA Collective Bargaining Agreement FY 2023 – 2026

FOP Collective Bargaining (General Employees) FY 2023-2026

Description: Negotiation of new bargaining agreements with our two existing employee unions. The process traditionally takes 3 to 6 months concluding with ratification by the Town Commission.

Progress: Completed.

SP 3: 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: Completed for FY 2023 (awarded \$250,000 for Lift Station Rehabilitation) and appropriation requests submitted and sponsored for FY 2024 projects include: (1) sanitary sewer lining project and (2) lift station rehabilitation.

SP 5: Charter Review/Amendments—Funding Limitations

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 with focus on funding limitation question.

Progress: Commission has included referendum language on the March 2024 election.

1. Financing a Sanitary Sewer Lining Rehabilitation Project.
2. Raising the Current Funding Limitation.
3. Ability to Designate Election Canvassing Duties to Palm Beach County.

SP 9: Canvassing Board (Charter Amendment)

Description: The Town Commission to review the implications and liability around allowing a county canvassing board versus a local canvassing board as the County Supervisor of Elections is moving away from supporting local canvassing boards. The Highland Beach canvassing board composition is stipulated within the charter; therefore, a change of board composition requires a charter amendment approved by voters.

Progress: Commission approved ballot questions for the March 2024 election. (See SP:5)

SP 10: 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. Also, plan community events.

Progress: Ongoing. The town has launched a website design project with CivicPlus to improve navigation, usability, and content access. 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.

SP 14: Financial Management Systems

Description: The Finance Department in partnership with the Manager’s Office is updating the town’s investment policy, constructing a dynamic 5-year financial forecast model and development a more effective budget document. Also included in this project is the update to the purchasing policy.

Progress: The 5-year financial forecast model completed -- April 2023 and will be updated annually as part of the budget process. Additionally, intermittent updates may be made based on changes to economic conditions, state mandated services and/or operational modifications. The Purchasing Policy update completed – October 2023. The investment policy update is scheduled for the Spring of 2024 and the enhanced strategic budget document will be used for the FY 2024 budget cycle.

SP 23: Public Record Digitization/Management Project

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

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.

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 4: 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: FDOT has held public education meetings and awarded construction contract. Public construction outreach meeting scheduled for March 7, 2024. FDOT is reviewing traffic control strategies to limit disruptions. Work tentatively scheduled to commence May 2024 with construction lasting 12 to 15 months.

SP 6: Solid Waste and Recycling Collection Contract

Description: The existing solid waste collection and disposal contract is set to expire May 31, 2023. A request for proposal (RFP) for a new contract must be advertised and reviewed with award recommendations sent to the Town Commission for consideration. The solid waste contract includes recycling, yard waste and bulk item collection (and disposal) twice per week with specialized container service for condominium buildings.

Progress: Complete. Contract awarded to Waste Management.

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.

Progress: Ordinance stakeholder group drafted amendment concepts that were presented at three public workshops in December 2022. The Town Commission directed the Planning Board to evaluate public review comments when drafting amendments for Commission consideration. The Planning Board is currently reviewing the comments and amendments to return to the Commission for their final adoption.

SP 13: 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 temporarily suspended further review pending Milani Park Project and “Live Local” legislative modifications.

SP 18: Town Entry Signs (A1A)

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

Progress: The commission has solicited resident input via a design contest which closed on February 6, 2023. Architectural design was completed in November 2023. Request for Proposals (RFP) issued, and bids accepted and reviewed January 2024. Target completion late winter 2024.

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 2: Fire Rescue Department Implementation

Description: Multi-year project that involves the establishment of the town’s first fire rescue department. Project involves contract termination with the City of Delray Beach, securing charter funding authorization, obtain COCPN/State Licenses, organizational expansion (HR), recruitment of fire rescue personnel, procurement of apparatus and special equipment, development of EMS and Fire policies and protocols, and Fire Station Construction.

Progress: Commenced in FY 2021. Targeted completion May 1, 2024. Major Projects Elements:
(1) Secure Charter Funding Approval \$10 million (Complete);
(2) Hire Fire Chief (Complete);
(3) Secure Medical Director (Complete);
(4) Obtain COCPN (Complete);

- (5) Fire Station Construction (Target Completion March 2024-TCO);
- (6) HR/Risk Management (Complete);
- (7) Veteran’s Memorial Design/Location (preliminary concept completed);
- (8) Recruit and hire Fire/Paramedics, Driver/Engineers ad Captains (Started June 2023).

It is important to note that the aforementioned project components are not an exhaustive list and that many other related tasks exist.

SP 7: Building Recertification Program (*Senate Bill 4D*)

Description: The Town Commission has expressed concerns with the state law as it requires significant capital reserves for condominium/threshold buildings that accompany a building recertification program. The Commission also has concerns related to the time provided to address any deficiencies discovered during the inspection process.

Progress: The Commission amended ordinance to include the state mandated changes. Several buildings have been recertified.

SP 15: 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: Draft revisions have been completed by staff and will be presented to the Planning Board and Town Commission in the summer 2024. No other progress to date.

SP 16: Temporary Sign Ordinance Review

Description: The Town Commission has directed staff to update the ordinance provisions related temporary signs with a focus on political signs and real estate signs.

Progress: Target start date is fall 2024. No progress to date.

SP 21: Water Tower Lease

Description: Sprint/T-Mobile cellular equipment exists on the town’s elevated water tank, and it is set to expire in 2025. Additionally, other providers have reached out with potential interest in installing cellular equipment. The commission needs to consider granting an extension and/or develop a policy on the use of the water tower.

Progress: Extension of Sprint/T-Mobile Contract approved with improved conditions and higher, annually adjusted rental rates. No formal policy discussions.

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 11: Sea Turtle Lighting Ordinance

Description: Develop lighting standards and provisions within the Town Code of Ordinances to protect and enhance sea turtle habitat and nesting activities on our beaches. The town currently has limited lighting provisions.

Progress: Updated sea turtle lighting standards and provisions have been written by staff and are consistent with best management practices and state guidelines. The Town Commission directed review of the draft standards and provisions to the Natural Resource Preservation Advisory Board (NRPAB) and Planning Board. The NRPAB and the Planning Board have recommended for approval. The draft has been considered and modified by the Commission at several noticed meeting and is scheduled for a Second Read in February 2024.

SP 12: 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. Additionally, the commission directed staff to obtain a proposal from coastal engineering firm to update the 2013 Beach Erosion Study, and that the study identify dune areas in need of restoration.

Progress: The Commission directed the Town Manager’s office to update the 2013 Beach Feasibility Study, which is being done. The final report is under review by staff and should be available for Commission/Public Review in March 2024.

SP 17: Seawall Ordinance Review (Height/BFE) (Marine facilities)

Description: The recent FEMA flood insurance rate map (FIRM) increased the base flood elevation (BFE) for the town. The BFE is the target height for seawalls and the town does not have a maximum seawall height. Based on existing ordinance requirements, seawall height has started to create concerns amongst waterfront property owners. Therefore, ordinance provisions regarding seawall height may need to be modified.

Progress: Considered as part of the modifications to Marine Accessory Structures Ordinance Amendments (SP 8)

SP 19: Milani Park

Description: Continue to work with Palm Beach County Administration and Parks and Recreation Department along with County Commissioner on the future development of the 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: The Mayor and the Town Manager have met and will continue to meet as needed with the county staff and county commissioner to express town concerns over the park development. County Administration has authorized commencement on the project. Item is a standing item on Commission agendas. A public meeting has been scheduled for February 1st at 6:00 P.M in the Highland Beach Library. The Town has assembled a consulting team to assist as directed. The Commission is considering a resolution opposing the project and developing a formal partnership with the Milani Family.

SP 20: 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 22: 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.

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
- Charter Spending Limits
- Property Insurance
- Affordability/Cost of Living

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 direction 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 on a monthly basis. It is important to note that some project 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