

## Borough of Highlands Bay Avenue Redevelopment Final Survey Results– Report Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 2021

**Background and Objectives:** The survey questions are sourced from other redevelopment questionnaires in the state of New Jersey. The goal of the survey is to give our Planner access to Highlands Stakeholders objective answers and freeform responses to a wide variety of questions. The survey output will enrich our planner's efforts as he crafts/creates an inclusive, comprehensive, and all-encompassing Redevelopment Plan for Bay Avenue.

**Data Collection:** Survey respondents were a combination of residents, property owners and business owners. The survey consisted of 10 questions. Logistically, the survey was created for both online and paper survey completion. The survey's duration was an average of 10 minutes, and the completion rate was 75%. The survey was promoted at the 10/6/21 Council Meeting, paper copies were available at the Borough Office, posted on Borough website landing page, Borough website Public Notices page, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts, and part of a mailed postcard campaign all to encourage a good response. Study period was October 3, 2021, through October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

**Demographics:** According to the 2020 US Census, Highlands has a population of 4,621. Using a **90%** confidence level and being prepared to accept a margin of error of **±4**. This means the proportion was tested to assess whether a sample from a population represents the true proportion from the entire population. Using this test, we are **90% confident** that the data reflects the true population of the Borough of Highlands using a margin of error of **±4**.

From the US Census American Community Survey 2019:

- Median Household Income = \$60,638
- Bachelor's Degree or Higher = 32.9%
- Poverty Rate = 7.2%
- Median Age = 52.5

**Action Standard:** This research will be used to provide the Borough Planners and the Council with data that reflects what Highlands Stakeholders thoughts and ideas are regarding what should be in the Bay Avenue Redevelopment Plan.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** **477** respondents answered Q1-Q9 and **256** answered the optional open end at Q10. The top open-ended mentions: Parking 35, Flooding 27, Community 21, Beach/Waterfront 20.

The biggest takeaways from this survey are as follows:

- The top four answers to what makes Highlands unique AND would support revitalization Downtown, if enhanced or promoted were *The Shrewsbury River and the downtowns relationship to it* [53%] *The types of businesses in Downtown* [39%] *The Borough's History* [33%] and *Its relationship with and proximity to the Twin Lights National Monument* [32%].
- The overwhelming answer to Which of the following businesses would you spend at least \$20 a month at if it were in Downtown Highlands was *Food stores (Specialty or grocery)* [70%].
- Another standout question was: What type of housing/commercial/retail/mixed use do you think would help support the sustainable vibrant Downtown on Bay Ave the overwhelming response was *Apartments over retail/commercial; mixed-use (maximum 3 stories)* [63%] This is nearly double the next top answer.
- The recommendation is to incorporate the Stakeholders' ideas presented here into the Bay Avenue Redevelopment Plan.

Many thanks to the Tabulations Team at Gazelle Global Research Services, LLC for providing these tables Pro Bono as a service to the Borough of Highlands.

## Highlands Redevelopment Survey - Summary of Key Results

### Q1. Which of the following describes you?

Note: As respondent can choose multiple answers, the individual answers will not always sum to the total. Totals are net unique responses.

		<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>		<b>477</b>
I live in Highlands	# of responses	451
	% of responses	94.5%
I work in Highlands		56
		11.7%
Business owner (Net)		24
		5%
I own a business in the Central Business District		13
		2.7%
I own a business but not in the Central Business District		11
		2.3%
Property owner (Net)		139
		29.1%
I own a property in the Central Business District		32
		6.7%
I own a property not in the Central Business District		109
		22.9%

**Q2. Please select a few adjectives that describe the look and feel of Downtown Highlands before the outbreak of COVID.**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>477</b>
Empty	147
	30.8%
Stale	147
	30.8%
Small	141
	29.6%
Evolving	141
	29.6%
Dull	134
	28.1%
Gritty	110
	23.1%
Varied	110
	23.1%
Boring	109
	22.9%
Deserted	104
	21.8%
Safe	101
	21.2%
Ugly	98
	20.5%
Friendly	95
	19.9%
Quiet	93
	19.5%

Unique	86
	18%
Cheap	84
	17.6%
Dirty	84
	17.6%
Eclectic	81
	17%
Charming	81
	17%
Historic	76
	15.9%
Pleasant	65
	13.6%
Genuine	55
	11.5%
Comfortable	50
	10.5%
Diverse	50
	10.5%
Welcoming	47
	9.9%
Peaceful	46
	9.6%
Clean	43
	9%
Fun	41
	8.6%
Calm	39
	8.2%

Active	37
	7.8%
Traditional	35
	7.3%
Colorful	34
	7.1%
Uncomfortable	31
	6.5%
Lively	29
	6.1%
Predictable	28
	5.9%
Cheerful	25
	5.2%
Tranquil	24
	5%
Beautiful	24
	5%
Attractive	22
	4.6%
Consistent	16
	3.4%
Congested	16
	3.4%
Busy	10
	2.1%
Unsafe	10
	2.1%
Cultured	9
	1.9%

Suburban	8
	1.7%
Noisy	8
	1.7%
Crowded	8
	1.7%
Bustling	7
	1.5%
Terrifying	6
	1.3%
Stressful	6
	1.3%
Expensive	6
	1.3%
Exciting	5
	1%
Spacious	5
	1%
Remarkable	4
	0.8%
Hectic	4
	0.8%
Surprising	3
	0.6%
Sensible	2
	0.4%
Modern	1
	0.2%
Refined	1
	0.2%

Cosmopolitan	0
	-
Contemporary	0
	-
Dramatic	0
	-
Pretentious	0
	-

**Q3. Over the past year, which of these activities have led you to visit Downtown Highlands?**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>477</b>
Restaurants and dining	436
	91.4%
Entertainment or special events	260
	54.5%
Retail/Shopping	173
	36.3%
Recreation or fitness	136
	28.5%
Personal services (dry cleaner, laundry, veterinary)	132
	27.7%
Banking or personal finance	85
	17.8%
Religious services	4
	0.8%
Other	21
	4.4%

### Q3 -Other Responses

Working remotely from home since the pandemic
work at The Proving Ground
Work
We don't need redevelopment we need better and less corrupt management
USPS
To drive out of town to shop or site see. Nothing here to keep people in town.
See what's going on
seasonal green market
Live and own a building since 1970
I used to go to the skate park but now I can't because of how bad condition it's in
I love in Highlands
I live here
I live here
I live down town
Enjoying the evolving ambience
Drive thru to go to work
Co-work office
Borough Office
Auto repair
American Legion



**Q4. Imagine that we as a community were successful in creating a sustainable, vibrant economy downtown. Please select a few adjectives that describe the look and feel of Downtown Highlands in 10 years.**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>477</b>
Welcoming	321 67.3%
Charming	281 58.9%
Friendly	274 57.4%
Attractive	264 55.3%
Clean	250 52.4%
Fun	214 44.9%
Safe	207 43.4%
Lively	199 41.7%
Active	198 41.5%
Beautiful	195 40.9%
Historic	193 40.5%
Pleasant	191 40%
Cheerful	186 39%

Unique	179
	37.5%
Colorful	165
	34.6%
Diverse	152
	31.9%
Comfortable	143
	30%
Cultured	142
	29.8%
Eclectic	130
	27.3%
Bustling	106
	22.2%
Evolving	103
	21.6%
Exciting	103
	21.6%
Genuine	99
	20.8%
Varied	89
	18.7%
Peaceful	87
	18.2%
Busy	71
	14.9%
Sensible	60
	12.6%
Modern	54
	11.3%

Contemporary	51
	10.7%
Small	48
	10.1%
Tranquil	46
	9.6%
Surprising	46
	9.6%
Remarkable	44
	9.2%
Calm	42
	8.8%
Traditional	42
	8.8%
Consistent	38
	8%
Refined	33
	6.9%
Cosmopolitan	32
	6.7%
Quiet	25
	5.2%
Expensive	23
	4.8%
Crowded	18
	3.8%
Cheap	13
	2.7%
Spacious	13
	2.7%

Congested	12
	2.5%
Gritty	10
	2.1%
Suburban	10
	2.1%
Predictable	9
	1.9%
Empty	9
	1.9%
Noisy	9
	1.9%
Dramatic	8
	1.7%
Dirty	7
	1.5%
Pretentious	6
	1.3%
Boring	6
	1.3%
Uncomfortable	6
	1.3%
Ugly	5
	1%
Hectic	5
	1%
Deserted	5
	1%

Stale	5
	1%
Stressful	5
	1%
Unsafe	4
	0.8%
Dull	3
	0.6%
Terrifying	1
	0.2%

**Q5. Please imagine that in 10 years, this plan has been successful, and a sustainable and vibrant Downtown Highlands has been built. Please pick up to five of the following statements to describe what that place looks like in your mind. The Downtown is...**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>477</b>
A great place to grab a drink and go out with friends	267 56%
A safe and attractive place to walk and bike	235 49.3%
A place with regular community events and activities	218 45.7%
A place with a diversity of dining options	214 44.9%
A place with a diversity of retail / shopping options	201 42.1%
Family friendly	172 36.1%
Active during the day and in the evenings	162 34%
A good place to start a business	150 31.4%
A good place to be outdoors, exercise, or be active	144 30.2%
A welcoming place for people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds	143 30%
A place with a strong relationship to the Shrewsbury River	138 28.9%
A tourist destination	87 18.2%
An economic engine that serves the entire region	45 9.4%

**Q6. Imagine that you have the control over how to implement this plan. Please choose what you think are the top 3 factors in what would most support the creation of the sustainable vibrant Downtown you envisioned in the previous question:**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>477</b>
Attract new/different businesses	281
	58.9%
Making the downtown more physically attractive/welcoming	278
	58.3%
Making the downtown cleaner and/or more attractive	193
	40.5%
Preserving historic character and identity	193
	40.5%
Supporting existing business	130
	27.3%
Preventing gentrification or displacement of current residents & businesses	91
	19.1%
Improving living conditions for existing residents	81
	17%
Providing new/better parks and open space amenities	73
	15.3%
Providing community events	56
	11.7%
Attracting more residents	32
	6.7%
Expanding economic opportunities to low-income or vulnerable populations	23
	4.8%

**Q7. Distinguishing Downtown Highlands from other downtowns in the region will be important to creating a sustainable economy. Which of the following do you think makes Highlands unique AND would support revitalization Downtown, if enhanced or promoted? Please choose what you think are the top 3 factors in importance:**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>477</b>
The Shrewsbury River and the downtowns relationship to it	251
	52.6%
The types of businesses in Downtown	186
	39%
The Borough's History	156
	32.7%
Its relationship with and proximity to the Twin Lights National Monument	154
	32.3%
The family-friendly atmosphere	149
	31.2%
Being an affordable place to start a business	100
	21%
Being an affordable place to live	98
	20.5%
The current size & scale of buildings	86
	18%
The cultural diversity of its residents and businesses	86
	18%
The architecture Downtown	72
	15.1%
The quality of its open/civic spaces	67
	14%
Other	23
	4.8%



## Q7 Other Responses

We need a more successful combination of residential and business properties. Right now, the ratio is off as too many developers are holding business properties rather than develop. You will never have a successful downtown with so much undeveloped property

The Twin Lights is NOT a National Monument and you don't address flooding

The entire length is walkable.

The beauty of its natural surroundings

The Bayfront restaurants are Huge draw. We need more businesses

Sustaining the historic businesses, architecture, and history of the town while promoting and being respectful to our natural landscapes- River, parks, Henry Hudson trail, Hartshorne, Twin Lights

Stop wasting our taxes

Small town feel that grabs attention of people all over

Sandy Hook

Quaint and quiet charm

Public boat ramp. We are a fishing village at heart.

Not a clue. Not sure I want to have people here all the time. Why don't we just keep putting condos that cost 700k where trailers parks were. Big saving on our taxes

Make parking a priority it's a big problem for residents!

I only want to check one. Not the others

Highlands is currently unique mainly in its inability to consistently and uniformly enforce codes which would enhance our town's visual image.

Gentrification

Eliminate parking requirements for new housing and businesses

Do not turn it into Sea Bright, a traffic nightmare

closing portions of Bay Ave as a pedestrian walkway

Blue color culture of many residents - they do real work

Being a welcoming place to visit for any and all

Architecture? There really isn't any.

A paved Bay ave would go a long way!

1st story buildings on bay master plan commercial

**Q8. Which of the following businesses would you spend at least \$20 a month at if it were in Downtown Highlands?**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>477</b>
Restaurants (Net)	425 89.1%
Restaurants/Bars (Casual/Pub/Sports)	305 63.9%
Restaurants (Fine Dining)	272 57%
Restaurants (Family-Friendly)	245 51.4%
Restaurants (Delivery/Take-out)	241 50.5%
Food stores (Specialty or grocery)	336 70.4%
Coffee shops	263 55.1%
Entertainment venues (playhouse, theater, concert hall, etc)	239 50.1%
Household goods (Hardware, furniture, pets)	223 46.8%
Drugstores / Convenience Stores	177 37.1%
Salons/spas	172 36.1%
Book/music stores	150 31.4%
Amusements/arcade/game lounge/bowling alley/indoor mini golf	126 26.4%
Clothing/shoe stores	122 25.6%

Artist makers space	101
	21.2%
Fitness Centers	101
	21.2%
Art galleries	88
	18.4%
Child Day-Care	17
	3.6%
Body Art (tattoo, piercing, etc.)	17
	3.6%
Other	28
	5.9%

**Q8 Other Responses**

a water taxi service between Highlands, AH and Long Branch.

Accessible water sport rentals (kayak, rowing, paddle board, etc.)

Beach and tourism related

Brewery

Brewery, tourism to beach, entertainment should be a public venue (not quite like the Atlantic highlands Gazebo) like a small amphitheater/ or stage so we can hold events.

Brewery, yoga

Cannabis dispensary

Cannabis dispensary

Car repair,

Children's museum

Church

Clothing Boutiques, Organic Market, Another Bike Shop

Dispensary

Dispensary

Dispensary

Dr.s

Free up the school properties by merging into other towns. The school properties are prime.

Gift shop

Hardware

Hardware store

hardware store

I only support real local businesses not businesses that move here to make a buck

Marijuana dispensary

Professional Services Engineer, Arch, CPA, ESQ, MD

Recreational Marijuana dispensary

Souvenir stores...highlands unique offerings

vegetarian/vegan restaurant

water happenings

**Q9. Which, if any, types of housing/commercial/retail/mixed use do you think would help support the sustainable vibrant Downtown you envisioned in previous questions, if they were located on Bay Avenue?**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>477</b>
Apartments (Net)	362
	75.9%
Apartments over retail/commercial (Subnet)	351
	73.6%
Apartments over retail/commercial; mixed-use (maximum 3 stories)	300
	62.9%
Apartments over retail/commercial; mixed-use (maximum 4 stories)	107
	22.4%
Apartment building (Subnet)	78
	16.4%
Apartment building (maximum 3 stories)	62
	13%
Apartment building (maximum 4 stories)	20
	4.2%
Single-family houses	180
	37.7%
Townhouses	147
	30.8%
Twin / two-family / semi-attached homes	97
	20.3%
Affordable housing	62
	13%
Age-specific housing (i.e. 55 and over)	55
	11.5%
Other	48
	10.1%

<b>Q9 Other Responses</b>
Weed store
We need more businesses on Bay Avenue
This county has ENOUGH million-dollar housing and ENOUGH bars and restaurants We NEED service businesses
There has been enough building its so congested already
Talk to Bollermans they do it right
Stop with the housing. Bring the businesses in.
Small cute individual buildings for each business
Single story retail shops that attract tourists, not additional residents
separate residential from business buildings
Retail, w/o apartments
Retail alone
Red bank is a turd. Don't make highlands a turd. Money is not going to make this town better but will make it cheap and plastic
Parking and flooding are major concerns
Opposed to multi story development
Only residential with regulations on upkeep. Some current look awful.
NOTHING ABOVE 3 STORIES
none of the above
No single family homes on a main street
No more ugly condos! if on bottom floor on bay ave should be required to be a used for commercial space not residential. Not saying all homes on bay are bad (actually really builds our character) but if we are creating a centralized downtown area bottom has to be commercial. Would love affordable modern apartments on top of businesses.
No more housing.
No development to high to block views.
No additional housing is needed.
More commercial area and less housing on bay ave
Low rises so everyone can continue to enjoy the water views
Lofts.
It should be updated single family homes or multi apts. Retail space separate single or multi standing. No more apts on top of commercial space. End that variant more business minded people will invest. Those who own multiple properties should be made to update or sell to updated business minded people not sit on their properties.
If it looks nice like Asbury Park
I want to see more businesses not more housing
I really don't want to see the business district demoed and rebuilt but rather work with what we have and create a more business friendly atmosphere to attract local artists, new businesses etc. I wouldn't mind seeing apartments above those spaces but I don't think Highlands should be a cookie cutter "Pier Village"
I believe we have plenty of housing in the town. We do not have enough commercial. This is the reason why we are not attracting consumers to the town. Sure you can build more Commercial with apartments however it needs to be high end or nothing at all. We have enough section 8 in this town. Time to convert
Hotel
High end homes

Hard to have residential homes in a business district especially ones that are run-down, takes away from beautification, also it just doesn't fit, unless the Apts are above stores, like in Sea Bright...businesses should be all in one area , not mixed in with residential space. Very hard...
connect retail areas presently too disconnected
Business not housing
boutique hotel
Bay Ave needs to be more commercial, to many residential homes that are an eyesore, born and raised here. Bay Ave is ugly and this project is a must!!
B&B
Apartments over retail/commercial; mixed use max 1-2 stories
Apartments over retail/commercial; mixed use (Max 2 stories)
apartments over retail max 2 stories
Any apt over retail/commercial, mixed use or apt building but not more than 2 stories
A hotel/guest housing would be nice to bring in tourists

**Q10. Please use this space for any other vision you have for the Redevelopment Plan.**

Open-Ended Responses

You need to compel these vacant landholders. Start taxing them. Allow more pop-up businesses. Find a grant a bury all those electrical wires when you pave!
You fail to address flooding. You fail to address that the residents lose in this plan and the developers win. People like the [identifying surname remove] are laughing all the way to the bank while lifelong residents are getting the short end of the stick.
Would close The Sandbox and discourage loud music blasting during the summer months. We have enough bars...no more...better and more diverse restaurants--yes!
What I love about Highlands is in many ways what distinguishes it from most other towns in this corner of Monmouth County. It's eclectic, diverse, with a rich history and a friendly, small coastal town vibe. There's a fine line when it comes to planning for redevelopment that encourages economic growth while honoring the "salty" eclectic, diverse and small town, family friendly quality of where Highlands is at this point. I hope that the plans ultimately encourage young families to want to move and raise a family here. As much as Highlands is its history and its proximity to so many attractions, it's the people who make it different (in a good way). Similar to Austin's small business campaign, "Keep Austin Weird," I feel that would be a good framework to describe what I mean.
What I am afraid will happen is that developers will come in build buildings with store fronts that will fail and that Highlands will become a rental town that will destroy it. This scenario is not only very likely but most likely probable. Single family homes with steady taxes and ownership is the most viable answer for Highlands.
We would seek a more diverse population, development of vacant lots, removal or rehabilitation of derelict or abandoned buildings. Would like to see an increased cultural presence
We need vibrant business but should try to avoid chain stores and restaurants downtown. It would be nice to have small businesses that would allow Highlands to remain a unique.
We need to fix our sidewalks and roads, throughout, not just downtown. We need diverse retail not more pet oriented shops or restaurants. We need to have and enforce regulations that require residential and commercial property to look nice, eg., overgrown grass and weeds, horrible exterior paint colors, shuttered homes, etc. Too many homes and commercial buildings look like shit. Gentrification will help not hinder and should be encouraged. Higher home values equal higher tax base.
We need to capitalize on the national park that we have and also the ferry people. We have a captive audience we need to act!!!
We need to bring in new business that are service based, I hate getting my nails done in Middletown, dry cleaning as well. Would love to see a butcher or French market. We need to clean up Bay Avenue and really recruit to fill any vacant spots. Also push businesses to finish their projects, the building on Bay and Waterwitch. That could really help that part of town shine
We need a barber shop and a hardware store
We have an opportunity to remake this unique waterfront community by generating revenue. We need to promote the unique location as a hub for technology, healthy food stores, yoga, music, school performances, bike shops. We should consider offering tax abatements to businesses and they will come.
We have a wonderful town, with great parks, beach, marinas and restaurants. The community events held here are growing and getting better and better every year. I believe change is happening organically and this should not be forced. We can make it easier for zoning changes to happen in the CBD, (i.e. SF to MF or Multi use), yet not at the expense of our neighbors living in this area.
Water diverted away from bay avenue areas so business owners can invest. Businesses opening on shore drive. Highlands offering munis to buy areas by the water to develop(Keyport)
Visitor center - a place to HIGHLIGHT EVERYTHING about what makes Highlands special
Vibrant, historic, arts town



Underground Utilities!!!
Trees...plantings. Similar color scheme. More businesses....Avoid Traffic...Too much speeding from bars and restaurants. We do not need a tourist trap town
Town Pool. Theater, small cinema, trendy shopping stores. Arcade area for children with bowling.
Town not in area for retail. Surrounded by open space and water. Better living
Town needs a boat ramp to access the river and possibly a small-town marina
To many homes on bay Ave, too many homes and buildings need to be torn down. It's a very unappealing Main Street and I was born and raised here! We need more businesses on the West side of town!!!! It has been an issue getting worse each decade. Doris and Ed's, Hardware store, scuba and the beast, long Johns, the cladder and other business gone and never anything new !
To keep the downtown safe and economically viable, flooding must be prevented. Good drainage is a key factor. More parking (perhaps a 2-story deck) needed so shoppers/visitors don't vie with residents for street parking.
THIS TOWN NEEDS A CHANGE. EVERY OTHER TOWN IN THIS COUNTY IS A FORTUNE. HIGHLANDS HAD FALLEN BEHIND IT IS CLEAR AND UNDENIABLE THAT THAT OLD WAY OF DOING THINGS IS COMPLETELY WRONG. BAY AVE NEEDS TO BE REDONE, REFORMED, REVITALIZED. WITHOUT A TOWN CENTER THIS TOWN DIES AND EVERYONE LIVING HERE LOOSES THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY OF BECOMING MULTIMILLIONAIRES FROM THEIR PROPERTY OWNERSHIP. THE ASSETS THIS TOWN HAS IS UNMATCHED BETWEEN MULTIPLE STATES, NOWHERE IN NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK OR CONNECTICUT HAVE THE PROXIMITY AND EASE OF ACCESS TO MANHATTAN. WAKE UP AND REALIZE THIS OR JUST GIVE UP.....WHOEVER RAN THIS HEAP OF SHIT ON BAY AVE GAVE UP....LETS NOT REPEAT.....
This is a good town and area and we have many resources at our disposal. It's up to us to make it an even better community. Let's do it!
There's so much potential in our amazing town, we love the walkability of Highlands, the great restaurants and cafes, the live music, friendly residents, parks and gorgeous waterfront scenery. I'd love to see the downtown include shops that we wouldn't have to leave town for— a pharmacy, small grocery store, hair/nail salons, bookshop— I think these would enhance Highlands even more and bring us to the next level. So many visitors come from the area to go to our bars and restaurants, which is great, but it would be wonderful to have more places for residents to use on a daily basis as I noted above. Thanks for putting this survey together!
There should not be any plan without addressing the abhorrent parking problems downtown has and always had. Also, without access to boat launching or marina facilities ie: A legit marina or Harbor like our neighbors to the west, our town is not progressing with full potential. The town has never been the same since Rt.36 was built. Also, we need access to an ocean beach, as in Highlands Beach which was taken away by the state in the 1960s.Check the history books please!
There is no clear-cut business area. The houses and businesses mash into one another - so there is NO Business district. It looks like a war zone and has for the past 8 years I have lived here and for the past 20+ I have been coming here. Whoever has been in charge of the redevelopment plan has failed miserably and continues to fail by mixing the businesses with the communities - IE: putting the municipal building on the edge of a neighborhood. I would like to see plethora different businesses line the avenue. I would like to see people supporting this business and people coming from other towns to support. I don't want to see two semi homeless people n the corner of the main drag with their chairs set up and smoking on the corner (ie: currently in front of the laundry mat across the street) BTW that corner has been vacant for over 8 years now!!! IT IS time for the town to force development! It is an eye sore as is most of this town. It is embarrassing that more development has not been done since Sandy - yet our neighboring towns are flourishing!

<p>There is a need for community parking, including accessible parking, better signage promoting Highlands' businesses, community markers noting Highlands' history, and smart design to preserve businesses and homes from flooding.</p>
<p>There are not enough fun things to do for children and a lot of dining closes way too early. Biggest issue is there are no ferries past 630 during the week and 730 on weekends into the city. Ferry's need to run later and more frequently. A redevelopment will not be successful without better transport options</p>
<p>There are a lot of empty lots and vacant store fronts on Bay Ave that could support new development.</p>
<p>The town is quaint and charming the small businesses need help to stay alive and maybe more shopping for visitors of the beach so they can stroll through town the reopening of scuba and the beast property would help its an eyesore !</p>
<p>The sidewalks are sometimes in bad shape and it makes it hard for people to walk around and not trip on the sidewalks. Better repair of the sidewalks could be helpful.</p>
<p>The parking situation here is horrible. You pay rent and can't even get a spot by your house it's absurd. We are looking to relocate after 6 years because of this problem!</p>
<p>the master plan has to be upgraded.</p>
<p>The flooding needs to be fixed. What is the incentivization to have a business downtown when it floods and have to go through the destruction and cleanup of property and inventory? Flooding should be taken care of then figure out what will survive. Perhaps just have all residential with a smattering of businesses.</p>
<p>The existing parks and gardens are beautiful. It is difficult to ride bike/walk on bay ave when it's crowded and there is parking allowed on the street on both sides. The sidewalks aren't wide enough to support the traffic and it's dangerous to try and get on and off the sidewalks/crossroad. Lots of blind spots when pulling out of side streets. I think street parking is great but needs to be restricted on corners or perhaps only one side of the road</p>
<p>The biggest issue I see is all of the empty space. Many of the current businesses are adorable, attractive, and do a lot to add to the town. The issue is the decrepit or empty buildings in between. Bay Avenue will never have the attraction of Atlantic Highlands or Red Bank when there are unkempt homes, properties, and vacant lots. Locals also need to be more welcoming to tourists and transient guests. We moved here about 2 years ago and there are some locals with a negative attitude toward anyone that hasn't historically lived here. If you want to build up your town, you need to welcome visitors---and their money--for the success of local businesses. Invest in areas for local parking. Invest in new businesses from retail to experiences, to more eateries. Invest in signage that doesn't feel like a mini mart. If you want the charm of an old beach town, than all of it needs to change. Some of the businesses on Bay have done a great job, and others need to work for things to be more aesthetically pleasing. China Sea is an eyesore. Bay Ave Bakery, while fabulous, is beyond dirty inside. Katz is entirely unwelcoming to anyone they don't know. The Welsh Farms/Blimpie doesn't add to the towns' "character". If the town wants to turn around, locals need to be more welcoming of change.</p>
<p>The area around Gianna's and where Grimaldi's used to be can be a restaurant zone if expanded.</p>
<p>Take all the vacant properties of more than 2 years, by Eminent Domain</p>
<p>Sports shops and boat rentals and room to park cars</p>
<p>Speed Breakers on Linden Avenue along with a light or 4-way stop by the school.</p>
<p>solve the flooding problem before you move forward with redevelopment. also make sure the aesthetic vision is consistent with a beach town. don't reinvent the wheel - look to neighboring towns and others in the country that have solved the problems we have in a thoughtful and economic way that gives residents a good quality of life.</p>
<p>Simply filling vacant places would be a great start! I'd love to not have to drive to AH for so many of my needs.</p>
<p>Sidewalks should be widen to accommodate outdoor dining, plants/greenery, and entertainment space.</p>

Should be built to be as "green" as possible, with the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians in mind.
Reviving park with attractive landscaping and maintenance. Possible closed off Street devoted primarily to outdoor restaurant seating and pedestrian walking. Encouragement of artistic touch on buildings such as paintings on walls and sculptures by local artists/volunteers for vibrancy, uniqueness, and sense of community.
Repave the streets and upgrade the sidewalks. Add lighting to Bay Ave. Keep it clean!!! Market Highlands to potential compatible retailers as a quaint pretty downtown. Add a quality small grocer and practical small retailers. Plan seasonal events, flea markets, food tastings, be creative.
Remove the HBP and have them pay the town for town services
Redeveloping only the buildings and homes that were left in sandy and not the apartments that were fixed and still being used on Bay Ave.
Really appreciate this survey.. I do believe that Highlands could be a weekend destination for visiting historic sites, art galleries, boutiques, staying in B&B's, etc... So much to do in the town and surrounding area...(Like Piedmont, NY)
Raised buildings with dining underneath more green space or environmentally friendly spaces antique shop, art galleries etc
Quaint rustic community small town environment
Public Access to the Shrewsbury River is limited at best. Outdated and private residential properties block access to the waterfront which is one of Highlands greatest assets. The central business district would benefit exponentially to have greater access for residents and visitors to this historic, beautiful & natural resource that should be available to all.
Public access to a board walk which runs the length of the town's waterfront. Residents to have special access to the ocean beaches.
Provide signage on both sides of Rt. 36 to encourage visitors to our town. Traffic from Sandy Hook is enormous and that should be captured. Too many tourists bypass the town and go right to Quik Check. Missed opportunities in my opinion.
Provide access to the River for residents ie: Kayak racks Parking permits for residents who don't live downtown so we ( taxpayers) don't get restricted parking options. Don't go all fancy and high end We are a town for the middle class Don't price us out Keep us simple
Protection from the floods and hurricanes for Highlands' downtown. Water is the number one thing that should be taken care of first. Bring in the Army Corp of Engineers to revue to see how we can help change this since it's the most important thing for keeping Highlands alive.
Private and Public partnerships; economic development opportunities; skate park; beach facilities at Rec center with resident beach pass option; resident parking pass and pay for parking revenues; more consistency with Bay Ave look; continue to offer more local events and rec options
preserve the clamming community while cleaning up bay ave - ban parking - allow open containers on the street - gambling and strip clubs - make it the Monaco of the east - fully exclude all but the richest clientele for the good of our home values. also get rid of the school and the pd - regionalize -- cut property taxes to zero. anything short of all that is either futile or petty corruption. but you know that. all these jersey towns are cesspools of corruption and middle class tax farming.
Preserve small town feeling, No neon lights in shops, traffic lights, metered parking, or big signs. But we badly need a modern municipal complex .
Please, remove ugly electrical wires and slanted poles. Bring some general style to architecture and signs. Attract young people to the streets.

<p>Please we need to realize why we are here. We like a small lovely pokey town. We cannot support bike friendly lanes. We barely have enough parking ourselves. It is time to put in speed bumps for bars in residential areas. Unless you can deliver a Trader Joe's to this town, leave it alone. Take a poll how many people like the bike [expletive removed] that come in our town.</p>
<p>Please start focusing and supporting the businesses already in town (more than the same 5 that seem to be the only ones ever supported). Get rid of the BID. It's a shame of an organization. Start streamlining mercantile licenses and COs. This is the most business UNfriendly town I'm the area. The favoritism is deplorable. This town doesn't need revitalization. It needs consistency, transparency and less nepotism.</p>
<p>Please please please consider a grocery store! Even a small one. It is such a pain to run out of something and have to carve out at least a half hour to/from Foodtown.</p>
<p>Please make a quaint downtown like in a Christmas postcard with consistently in the look and feel of the stores buildings and lighting . Please make it pretty using lighting and beautiful desire murals where there are lifted blank spaces. Quaint and charming and consistent Picture perfect seaside town Quaint fun unique stores Local Honey Local Art Fresh veggie Tea shop Oranhi. Fresh Juice and smoothie shop</p>
<p>Please don't turn this town into Long Branch with Eminent domain or ultra modern buildings clashing with other architecture. Classic buildings and respectful opportunities for everyone</p>
<p>Please clean up the downtown area which includes moving forward with our town hall center uptown which would allow for the removal of the trailers.</p>
<p>Periodic closing of Bay Avenue., encouraging walking and supporting businesses ( similar to Red Bank) Redevelopment of nearly abandoned property ( Shadow Lawn off route 36)</p>
<p>People love Highlands for it's small town charm, those who have lived here a long time and those moving in now. I personally know of both long time and new residents. People live here for that very reason. Don't change us. It works!</p>
<p>Pave Bay Ave!</p>
<p>Parking needs to be an important part of any redevelopment.</p>
<p>Parking areas are a MUST. As a resident, it is very hard to park near our home in the summer, due to the restaurant crowd. More parking areas are needed for visitors and the homeowners need to have parking near their homes.</p>
<p>Outdoor cafes, attractive friendly multi cultural shops and restaurants, live music venues.</p>
<p>One of the many reasons that Highlands is such a great place to be is the quaint nature of the town. It is a true community where everyone knows and supports each other at the end of the day. I would hate to see it grow into a town that loses that personal and homey touch that so many people love about the town. I am supportive of Bay Ave being revitalized but we need to support the staple businesses of Highlands and be mindful of creating too much traffic. Don't lose the personal and comforting touch of Highlands!</p>
<p>One of the main issues I have with downtown is that there is certain areas in which the buildings have been vacant or lots are not being maintained adequately. There could be a lot more continuity if some of the lots were in use and buildings occupied. For instance, there seemed to be a lot more cross traffic when Grimaldis and the Tap House were around, and now those properties seem like dead zones.</p>
<p>Nothing to add</p>
<p>Not sure how to do this , but residents need to concentrate on " pride of ownership" to build, and maintain neat and clean and unkept residents. And the property they own, not only on Bay Ave but all back roads</p>
<p>No to this bad idea. Once you stop wasting our tax money we can revisit this. I don't trust those who would run this "plan" unless we audit them and their families when it's done and it would have to be run by the citizens not some cronies</p>

No matter what is done, we need to maintain it! Why are there always 2 employees driving in a Public Works pick up truck?
No Marijuana related stores on Bay Ave. Keep it to dining, fun and family friendly with a coastal and welcoming vibe.
No flooding!!
No chains.
No affordable housing
Nicely paved roadways, low level parking garages, remove above ground wiring and replace with underground.
Need policies that encourage conversion of residential and vacant lots to mixed use or business. Eliminating the parking requirements and increasing the 3 story limit to 4 stories would do this immediately.
Need more health related businesses
My vision for downtown highlands is to celebrate the historical significance of the community. To develop a cohesive plan for architecture and colors of the town that celebrates the history and is welcoming to visitors. More like colonial Williamsburg colors with beautiful murals and architecture. We should focus on the two different business areas in town the east and the west. Making those areas full of shops and abundant. The area between is residential and all chain link fences should be replaced with picket fences and ordinances of upkeep of houses should be required. all vacant buildings should have art in windows.. Trees should be finished planted and the flower pots should only be on the four corners of every intersection. There should be destination attractions like a mini golf course ( like the one in Bradley beach), a artist shed village with little shops ( like Viking village )interactive sculpture garden, town trolley tours and bringing people to to Hartshorne woods and to the ocean, some type of aquarium and museum down town and finally to fix the skatepark. Business should be small and affordable . Pave bay ave and have some businesses clean up their fronts.
My opinion, we need to build retail / restaurants , shopping in general. Level bay Ave it is gross. If you build a better foundation, to build a better tomorrow!!!! Dan Kole ....
My hope is that the charm of Highlands is enhanced while offering understated, modern spaces to come in. We also don't want Highlands to be overrun with too many people and it's important to cater to our residents who want to preserve the precious small town feel.
Must be easier for new businesses to open. Stop putting roadblocks in their way!
Murals like Exeter, CA. They cost more than you can imagine, but draw people to town. Splash park for kids. Paid parking for non residents would be fantastic. A few 15 min or less spots for pickup at business. Clean up eye soars in town. Free shuttle from local town corners to Seastreak. Paid parking makes sure locals only. Expand town events that are crowded by using old Claddaugh lot. Keep new structures 2 stories along Bay Ave.
Move recycling and borough garages and create a Town Square connected to Bay Ave
More trees and plants in the downtown area
More transparency/easier process for businesses to open in town.
More retail spaces, restaurants, parks, outdoor space!
More murals that tell the "story" past/present of Highlands
More imagination. Same people with zero vision running the town. HBP needs to step aside and let residents be involved in the vision of our town.
More consistent zoning. Too much residential between businesses leading to an inconsistent experience and less opportunity to walk the downtown
More condensed downtown instead of it being so spread out
More "pocket" parks

Modernized drainage system; flood mitigation
Maybe create something with a raised boardwalk on bay Ave so flooding can be mitigated. Would be unique and practical and attractive.
Mandatory underground utilities.
Making sure there is sufficient parking for businesses and their customers which does not take away from homeowners parking, which is an issue at times now. Beautifying Bay Ave with landscaping.
Make it more exclusive, cosmopolitan, not just another beach town. Service the sophisticated new residents who came from NYC with high end dining, cultured music. Put an end to the Springsteen, Bon Jovi, Jimmy Buffet era and introduce classy businesses that will attract more wealthy patrons from the area. Beer joints, beach bars and wings are unlikely to adequately support local businesses. To make money businesses need to attract customers who can spend. The alternative is pizza joints and bars... and cops trying to stop DWI's.
Make it happen soon!
Make Bay Avenue look more like a street in a beach town. It looks like any street in any regular town, not one that's a few blocks from bay beaches & short drive to ocean beaches.
Make Bay Ave a true business district to draw outside towns in or visitors. Old outdated properties need to go or be updated. If owners do not move to update or sell to someone who will then surcharge them on the size of their properties yearly besides their property tax.
Lower residential taxes
Lower my property taxes!
Love the murals, gardens and flowers. More of the same! Crosswalks in more areas. fewer empty/abandoned storefronts.
Looking forward to highlands being a place with more places to visit. The problem I could see arising is parking and traffic. None of your questions involved that.
Look like a red bank Main Street
Look at Red Bank and Asbury Park
Like Sea Bright used to be, with a hardware store, barber, bakery, laundromat, ie, service businesses instead of all restaurants and bars. We have a good foundation with our businesses, let's build on it. NO MORE HIGH END HOUSING. And don't tell me it is necessary for the tax base, it's going up everywhere and my taxes have risen astronomically regardless.
Let's make Highlands a beautiful, thriving borough. Now is the time to begin to make our vision a reality.
Let's just make sure we develop every single piece of vacant land and vacant storefront so we can help with taxes and make it more of a destination people won't skip
Less potholes, less political flag waving pickup trucks
Leave it alone. Private investors can already do whatever they want to.
Large dog park
Keep the vibe just add to it!
keep the small town and clamming/fishing/bootlegging history alive as the folks that actually participated in these activities can no longer afford to live here.....also-how are air b&b's which are to my mind a commercial operation, allowed in residential zones NOT found downtown?
Keep the charm. No tall buildings. No shopping centers. All retail boutique size. OK to mix housing with commercial as it is.
Keep simple clean small town with open land.
Keep it small and non-commercialized.
Keep it quaint
Keep an eye out to utilize and leverage Federal and/or State financial support/programs wherever possible.

<p>Its such a hodgepodge of bungalows and storefronts that I would like to see cleaned up. Bay Ave should have more flowers or greenery on its sidewalks to give more curb appeal.</p>
<p>It's very important to me to keep buildings 3 stories and under. Increased water access would be amazing for Highlands.</p>
<p>It's important to preserve what highlands has historically looked like to separate it from pier village and other tourist attractions. Highlands should retain a small town feel while inviting diverse small businesses to open up. Turning it into cookie cutter developments of townhouses and apartment buildings is not sustainable for the infrastructure of the town. It would also make it look like everywhere else.</p>
<p>It would be really cool to bring a brewery or something locally made in.</p>
<p>It would be great to have a downtown that you can walk around and visit establishments. Bike parking would be great too.</p>
<p>It would be great to have a bike lane on bay ave and also re paving the road would be excellent. We also need more business in town and less homes being built. Lastly re build the skatepark please!!!! It's not even skate-able anymore. Having a good skatepark would attract people of all kinds from all over. I know people who travel from PA just to skate the Long Branch skatepark, highlands could have that same potential.</p>
<p>Improvement does not have to mean regentrification. Look at red bank and asbury park</p>
<p>If you need help with future surveys, please reach out to me at <a href="mailto:schweitzerb@gmail.com">schweitzerb@gmail.com</a></p>
<p>If Bay Avenue hasn't been rezoned yet for mixed use (commercial/residential), that should be done. The entire street should be either (i) commercial, or (ii) commercial with residential apartments/condos in higher stories. Single family homes should be torn down. Incentives should be created for new businesses to build and open.</p>
<p>I'm 86 years old leave my building alone. I'll be dead before your 10 year plan. I have been here before any of you.</p>
<p>I'd like to know the Mayors thoughts.</p>
<p>I would support a two year property tax abatement for businesses to revitalize the curb appeal in place of paying property tax</p>
<p>I would love to see Waterwitch between shore and bay closed to traffic to create a unified plaza with Huddy park where people would be more likely to gather</p>
<p>I would love for Highlands to retain its historic fishing village feel while attracting new businesses. I envision an eclectic arts friendly community with the now empty buildings filled with galleries, shops and restaurants.</p>
<p>I would like to see the Driftwood strip mall, the laundromat, and Andy's Shore Bar get a facelift.</p>
<p>I would like to see paid parking in many areas of the town. I would like to see parking on only one side of Bay Ave with a bike path on the other. I would like to see the current houses/structures repurposed for commercial use, not ripped down and rebuilt. I would like to see all the broken down buildings, empty lots and dead retail space put to good use. I would like to get rid of broken down vehicles all over town. I would like the town to take advantage of the touristy resources that surround us. Everyone else is making money on tourism and we give it away for free. Why do we do that? We know we can't compete. So we need to get better. If any of you have ever been to Key West, this is the perfect situation for Highlands and specifically Bay Ave. to become a mini Duvall St.</p>
<p>I would like to see Highlands keep a small town feel while providing the residents what they need without having to leave town. We need far more businesses that are not restaurants. We also need to attract more professional offices such as doctors/lawyers/etc.</p>
<p>I would hope that the frequent flooding downtown would be a priority to improve the viability of attracting businesses and residents</p>
<p>I wish that it was easier for businesses to open, that vacant or distressed homes were addressed.</p>

I think that any redevelopment plan needs to address global warming and a rise in sea level. To get new businesses into the Highlands, these business need to know there is a plan to reduce flooding in town.
I think Highlands is a wonderful community but change needs to happen and I wish I knew how to make that happen. The empty church could be a revolving space to showcase artists, musicians, pop up stores etc. There are too many empty store fronts and bad restaurants. The community should collectively say ok we are having an event how do we get everyone involved to maximize this event. The problem is the clientele right now with the bikers, large noisy trucks with massive flags, strung out people walking regularly doesn't make everyone feel comfortable to hang out and enjoy bay ave.
I think expanding the bike trail and creating a beautiful riverfront "attractions" either shops or restaurants will help make highlands a destination not just a drive by.
I think any new construction should be high enough to conform to flood insurance requirements. Bay Avenue desperately needs trees.
I think a town like Highlands is best experienced on foot, walking to restaurants, shops, public spaces, and entertainment venues. This would need to be supported by parking areas for visitors, more spacious pedestrian walkways and designated bike lanes. Converting Bay Ave into a one-way street would allow for expanding sidewalks, addition of a bike lane, and potentially outdoor seating space for restaurants.
i support a plan that brings in revenue to the town thereby lessening the burden on the tax payers
I see a beautiful little quaint downtown with thriving businesses, that reflects a seaside vibe, Fun, charm, and a place that would attract people to it...you need to attract successful businesses, build it, they will come...we don't want to be the next Asbury Park, but scaled back, Highlands has so much to offer...let's get busy pls..been here 32 yrs, still waiting for Bay Ave to improve...love the planters, street lamps, corner parks, but...we need bussinesses..especially a small market...we love it here for the natural beauty but we need other businesses to make it easier for the residents...thanks for all you're doing...
I love highlands and want to see it succeed for its current and future residents. Our downtown has so much potential but needs a facelift to bring in the quality businesses and people.
I love downtown Highlands. It needs some infusion for vibrancy, but I would really hate to see it become gentrified geared only toward Manhattan bound workers. The strength of Highlands is it's old fishing village eclecticism makes it different than Atlantic Highlands' yacht style downtown and we should embrace that difference and keep some gritty and diverse in our downtown.
I envision Bay Avenue like Red Bank with shops and dining Must make use of our waterfront
I envision a family friendly, eclectic community with many non-competing town events. A safe walkable, bike friendly beach town at the top of the Jersey shore.
I do not want to see our town turn into a pier village, we are a fishing/clamming village have been and will always be. We should capitalize on our history and unique, not like any other.
I do not want to see any drug dispensaries, rehabilitation facilities, or homeless shelters in town. I think it is a bad idea for our small community where our children play in the parks and on Bay Ave. Any establishments like these will quickly affect the small town charm and any efforts to establish a flourishing business community.
I didn't see anything pertaining to how flooding will be addressed. Regardless of whether there is a three or four story apartment building, Bay Ave is a flood zone so any revitalization plan needs to have a plan in place for where these people will go. There are great examples in Europe about how they prevent mass flooding inside stores when the Danube floods, we could look to them for guidance (but not parking as that's a given problem).
I believe its important to support ALL existing business & encourage any new.business to invest in our town.. also require abandoned building owners to take care of their buildings or get fined.
I am very excited to see Bay Ave get this attention (FINALLY)! Great job.



I am an advocate of the redevelopment! Although I think some diverse restaurants and store fronts would make a huge improvement. sometimes I think just cleaning up would make a difference. Beginning with the interesting murals that the storefronts/ businesses have done. It's the little things that sometimes make the biggest change.

Huge potential here! Get it together.

How to stop or alleviate flooding!

Hotel, tall ship restaurant, bed and breakfast, water taxis to Sandy Hook and to destinations along the Shrewsbury and Navesink rivers, doctors, dentists, hair care, Insurance, clothing stores for male and female, handsome cabs, surf shop, scooter shop, dry cleaner, tourist office, Old fashion bakery,

Highlands needs to refurbish /tear down Sandy damaged or abandoned buildings and put in more small retail spaces Do not overbuild with a lot of high rise condos , which will create traffic congestion since there are only two ways in and out of town.

Highlands is unique because of its many marinas which offer an increasing rare access to Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay and the Twin Rivers. For instance Captains Cove is the only place on Raritan Bay left where people can rent a skiff

Highlands is such a unique place on East Coast. I would like it into a mini Charleston, Rehoboth beach, or Cape May. If Highlands were on the West Coast, they would call it a Hamlet similar to Sausalito CA off San Fran. We need to take advantage of our proximity to New York City, and geographic uniqueness, Ft Hancock/ Sandy Hook, Twin Lights, etc. I would love to see highlands become a craft beer incubator and Take advantage of the town owned property where the current City offices and police station are and invite beer or distillery developers to re-imagine the location for manufacturing beer/ Liquor and add food service. The craft beer revolution and brewpub concept has completely missed Highlands. This industry has produced thousands of jobs across the country. Each brewing operation would employ up to 25 people, not including staff to sample, serve and feed consumers. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to reimagine that space now. There are enough regional Based entrepreneurial people and companies that would be willing to invest in a location so rich in history (especially the beer, rum running and hospitality industry). That area can sustain 4 to 5 separate businesses plus ancillary support businesses year round. A perfect example of what a town that committed to this type of business is Dunedin FL. They have a varied craft beer industry, which attracts people to restaurants and shops, and a bed and breakfast (cottage-LOI) industry for people to stay. I would also like to see better cooperation amongst the local town government and our elected officials in finally doing something at Fort Hancock that may include ferry service, creation of bed and breakfast locations and other tourism related businesses. Fort Hancock can be an asset to town like Highlands and big Atlantic Highlands and even red Bank, if we looked at it cooperatively.

Highlands is currently run for the benefit of the Highlands Business Partnership. It should be run for the benefit of our full-time residents, regardless of who they know or what part of town they live in. Toward that end, Bay Avenue redevelopment should be focused on attracting new businesses, and on rezoning to support them (for example, to take down buildings that are still vacant post-Sandy, and replace them with multi-purpose structures and parking facilities).

Highlands has been improving, with nice restaurants, some fun shops, and more beautiful homes, let's keep this momentum going!

Highlands has a great unique vibe. Want to build on this safe, friendly real environment with great lo key music everywhere. I'd love to see the downtown have an array of businesses that can sustain the community. Need a grocery store, drug store, hardware store, local not big chains. Running a small business is hard work but we need to encourage people to open businesses- that means affordable rent and business friendly. Town should encourage people who are passionate and want to invest in the town. It's a great place so we have a lot to build on. The community events are wonderful.

Highlands CBD has huge potential giving its incredible location. A combined walk/cycle path along Bay Ave would connect the Hudson trail to Sandy Hook and attract a lot of people. Any development on Bay Ave should have strict planning regarding architectural style. Developers should be encouraged to submit quality designs of a historical nature. Would be great to see architectural plans for a redeveloped Bay Ave.
Health food store w organic produce.. we'd never need to leave town
HEALTH FOOD STORE and BAGEL SHOP!!!
Good luck - this town is not open to change unless forced!
Get rid of old run down buildings
get rid of any dilapidated and vacant buildings; front/street facing property should be absent of chain link fences; lawns should be mowed or have stones (landscaping options)
Get a new Mayor.
From what i understand i believe this is the 3rd redevelopment plan highlands has done. What actions have been done with the 1st plan? 2nd plan? There, are many empty lots and buildings sitting vacant for years and since sandy, why hasn't anything been done?
Free shuttle buses from ferry to our downtown. It could be like a Newport RI but it's no where close. We should go with our assets water boating trips, fishing, great restaurants
Foolish - We are houses built on a beach. Flooding precedes all of this wish list nonsense. No plan for flooding., but a plan for Downtown redevelopment?
Focus on the historic aspects of the town and promotes businesses like fine dining, bars and outdoor events like music and festivals
Focus on cultural and diversity.
Flooding needs to be addressed. Open space needs to be utilized for fuel use park/mitigation. More trees, no deforestation.
Flooding issues are number 1, no one will come and open businesses if they flood every highline with a wind or full moon.
Flooding issues
Flooding first issue to be solved
Fix up the run down buildings on Bay Ave. Keep the old charm just needs some more boutiques, specialty food stores, good deli, hardware store.
Fix the flooding. And potholes
Fix the flooding
Fix the drainage system before all else
Fix the boarded up buildings or tear down and build new. Also parking is a huge issue.
Expand upon the historical, low key charm that the downtown has. No food chains or store chains. All local businesses food, retail, art with preserving and expanding on the history and architecture of the Highlands. I love the local, small town charm that Highlands has to offer but it is in desperate need of some revitalization.
Excited for the future! Some residents my have reservations but you have to break some eggs to make an omelet
Eliminate overhead electric service - service from the rear or underground; Appropriate flood control strategies; Rear yard parking pockets; Maintain street wall - no drive through (or up) facilities (Driftwood); Movies on the new life Church Lawn; Property maintenance enforcement; Bike lane on Bay Ave(?) connecting to the Henry Hudson trail on Shore Drive;
Electric shuttle/bus to help people get around town easier. Environmentally friendly and adds value to every resident/visitor in town. Affordable fare helps cover the cost.

Downtown will not be able to be revitalized unless the flooding situation is remediated. No one wants to live or do business in a flood zone! We need a broader scope of businesses. There are plenty of bars & restaurants; more diverse types of businesses are needed. How about a card store? How about some entertainment venues? How about some vegetarian restaurants so I don't have to travel to Red Bank or Long Branch? How about a chain grocery store? I always have to travel to get to one..... How about an affordable unisex hair salon?
Don't make Highlands unaffordable and ruin the town with expensive housing and expensive restaurant/retail stores. Don't follow in Fair Haven's footsteps - that town has lost it's charm.
Don't gentrify.
Don't lose the history of this town, it's beaches and water activities.
Dog park. Functioning water fountains. Use of veterans and huddy park for music/ plays.
Dog park, fitness/yoga centers, grocery store
Dog park Breweries Yoga studio Nice coffee shop
Do whatever you can go get this passed. The town needs it. It has been in disrepair for years. There are so many empty buildings and shops. I pay some of the highest taxes in town and our downtown doesn't warrant it
Do what Keyport did .
do not waste money building a new borough hall that is not needed...not wanted...a burden on tax payers.
Do not fill the town with weed dispensaries. This is a shore family town with walkable night life, not downtown Brooklyn.
Do it!
Diversity, art, and culture should be showcased
Diversity / Eco-Friendly / Environmentally Conscious That is my vision for this beautiful community
Differentiate highlands by renaming it Twin Lights NJ. it gets looked over and lumped in with Atlantic Highlands.
Desperately need more Commercial Activity on the west side of town. Huddy Park is a gem in the rough, The corners of Waterwitch and Bay needs business as that's the 1st thing you see when you enter town. The old hardware store is rotting into the street and the other corners are a complete eyesore !!!! Please focus here Waterwitch to Washington is really empty of anything.
Currently Highlands has multiple scattered business areas and marinas ...need a more unified plan like Atlantic Highlands to make it a destination.
Cultural center, perhaps the old church
Couldn't find info on redevelopment plan on website.
Continuing to make this town walkable by providing basic amenities: groceries / bodega, convenience stores, more variety of pickup food options with better hours. Loving the community events and want to continue to see those grow. Would love to see a dog park to support all of the pets in this town.
Consistent signage and storefront aesthetic to delineate the downtown and create a cohesive and beautiful look!
Consistency and character would be nice to see ....Highlands should and can be restored to the destination town it use to be! Can't wait to see the progress over the next several years. But hope we can accommodate those that have spent their lives here and have concerns around change. Progress is a good thing but it's not for everyone.
Community has to be behind all changes. Highlands has so much history and so much opportunity for growth but so many people not willing to change or scared of it. With community backing I think its possible to bring a downtown to highlands without sacrificing our values.
Code enforcement is one area that can improve the feel of DT highlands. Overgrown lawns, overgrown weeds at the sea walls and Huddy park,park is dirty and out dated

Clusters of stores. Fun transportation such as trolley, bikes, scooters, etc.
Cleaning up the open space and eye-sore properties would go a long way. There are a handful of parks which are beautiful, vibrant and well-maintained that are nearby to eyesore properties along Bay Ave, which take away from those places that look nice. Empty lots with grass that is hardly mowed could be replaced with green infrastructure and pathways that look nice, support our ecosystem, and require low maintenance. Planting trees with strong root systems help bring shade to otherwise hot and too-sunny sidewalks. One specific area of wasted space is at 297 Bay Ave and the neighboring parking lot. I never see anyone parked in that lot, and so much more could be done with those lots to improve the look on that block. There are a bunch of other similar properties along Bay Ave that seem like wasted ugly space that could be turned into vibrant green spaces that look way better and support our ecosystem.
Cleaner streets, no cigarette butts, weeds, or dog poop on sidewalks.
Celebrating the character and history of Highlands
Car dependency should be eliminated from all plans. We are a small sized community. We should be encouraging people to walk and bike to local stores & neighbors. A monstrous parking lot was built in the heart of highlands wasting incredible land resources. That entire space could of been used for a nice green park or commercial retail. Also I would remove car parking on one side of the street on bay avenue and turn it into a protected two way bike lane to connect to the bridge easier. It would bring in more people from neighboring towns and create a safe cycling experience along highlands. (Sometimes there are more bikes than cars on the weekends & spring, summer seasons). A thriving attractive neighborhood doesn't rely on its cars but it does however rely on its people. Foot traffic & bike traffic would economically enhance the area in less than 5 years. It's cheaper it's green and aesthetically more pleasing if done right. There's evidence throughout the world that it works and especially some neighboring states.
Burying the power lines would go very far in making Highlands not only look much more attractive, but help keep us from constant power outages. It's the first thing people notice on Bay Ave. I know it's a lot but that's on my wish list for sure.
Brewery for Twin Lights; dispensary
Boat ramp public ramp marina like Atlantic Highlands. Public access. Like blackberry bay. Retail stores don't have a chance. Not enough traffic or. Need. We need a public waterfront.
Better public access to the water; better upkeep of the entire shoreline. Ride in a boat past Highlands and you see areas with debris, blue and orange plastic tarps used as fencing...it looks "seedy".
Beautify the existing parking area with plants and benches, much like the new butterfly garden, by removing some of the Huge stones which would be more appealing and encourage visitors to stay longer
Bay Avenue must be made more cheerful, Need a diversity of shops, no large chains. We need to promote small and medium sized businesses, which also in the end will bring in more tax dollars to the community and hopefully shift the burden at least to some extent, from the average house owner. But before all this, we need to make sure downtown is as safe as possible from potential flooding, which will help assuring businesses they are safe and can get established without major flooding worries.
Bay Ave should mirror towns similar to Sea Isle City, where commercial is on the bottom and beautiful condos on top. Bay Ave is currently dated and looks abandoned. I long for the future to regain some pride in my new town that has TREMENDOUS potential to be more outstanding than the surrounding towns that are already rich and well groomed. Bay Ave has a lot of potential for stores, rich dining, and promoting more water events to attract neighboring towns. Fireworks along the river, etc. Highlands is progressing forward, houses are selling for close to a million. It's time the main strip accounts for that to continue to attract new families. Best to avoid stores that bring the level of class down (tattoo shops, bad upkeep on buildings, the rundown convenience stores at the gas station, etc.) It is time for Highlands to acknowledge the out with the old and in with the new. Change is healthy.

As stated before; make portions of Bay Ave pedestrian & outdoor dining friendly; easily done with streets to the left and right for vehicle access. Many California towns have done this and it works well for residents & tourist trade.
As a new resident modeling downtown similar to red bank will bring in additional revenue, attract more people and reduce taxes. The property taxes are Insane and causing existing residents to move out and reducing the attractiveness for buyers
Art grants to bring in artists
Appropriate parking
Apartments/Condos mixed use with parking under first floor retail second floor and one or two story residential above
All we ask is Highlands stay cool, clean, safe and eclectic.
All parks should allow for a dog/ pet area. CCTV should be put around for safety. We should have bike lanes, bike stands, electric car charging stations, at least one small parking garage, and an urban garden (food source).
Addressing the issue of flooding must happen before investing in any beautification efforts and/or attracting new businesses.
Address Flooding!
A QUIANT, SEASIDE VILLAGE. NO high rises of any combination over 3 stories. Have Bay Avenue roadway repaved and the maintenance kept up so it doesn't look like it does now.
A more modern and safe downtown with dining and drink options.
A mix of historic & modern. More parking. Water filling stations w dog filling station. Dog park. More trash receptacles on Main Street. More light up stop signs on main streets. Flags such as American & holiday along entire main drag. Clearer, well lit pedestrian crosswalk areas. M Uniform planters throughout town that aren't placed where they can be blocked by cars even if fewer with a bold statement.
A friendly place where people can exercise, dine be entertained
A dog park would be a great addition as our dogs have no place to run and play
A community with shared values
A business or businesses that allow different types of water activities- fishing, sailing, paddle boards, kayaks, educational environmental purposes both historical and futuristic is really needed. We live in one of the most beautiful water regions that many do not have access to. Cultural and diversity is an important factor for balance, economics and a welcoming start for visitors.
A business corridor beautification project - a tree and flora/fauna plan, attractive and consistent lighting, bicycle racks, trash cans. . . A library!! Perhaps a community resource space that features historic exhibits, info center and LIBRARY!
A bandshell for concerts- perhaps in Veterans Park
25 mph speed limit on All roads and Enforced. Bay Ave to be a one way street going North and Shore Drive one way going South. Bay Ave, Miller Street and Waterwitch Ave to be fully stamped cobblestone paved. And a trolley that brings people to Seastreak from the Bay Ave Parking lot.
1st priority Quality of life for residents not investors. Plenty of FREE parking parking parking taking in account of the maximum of visitors, sound ordinances for residence, safety, speed limits. 2. Historic, artistic, focused on our traditions and history of clamming town.
We never feel like there are enough options for takeout food. Would be wonderful to have a better selection of international cuisine. Would love it if you approached the owner of the Thai restaurant in AH to open a second location in Highlands. We could really use a bakery and a specialty food store.

- local business owners - clam shack???????? - walking paths - bike paths - parking structure so people can park and walk - maximum building prep for flooding - uniform theme of some sort - lively, colorful - many towns have revitalized around local breweries that offer a geographically specific reason to show up - grants offered to current businesses for facade change - lot by lot assessment of the effects of a given height on neighbors - honest assessment of parking - active recruitment of businesses - flood mitigation, planning - varied heights based on views entering town - honest assessment of the work it will take