



BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW & THE STATE OF THE BOROUGH

151 Navesink Avenue, Highlands NJ 07732
Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 7:00 PM

During 2024, the Mayor, Council and Staff worked to address past issues as well as plan for Highlands' future. We were again very successful in locating, pursuing and winning grants as well as other financing sources to help fund our infrastructure projects and updates to our open spaces.

The State of the Borough at the end of 2024:

- Residents, staff, businesses, charitable organizations, and clergy all worked together to help our neighbors who needed assistance. Food, clothing and toy drives showed how amazing and resilient our community remains. Our Emergency Services drove many donations to NC after Hurricane Helene.
- The Municipal tax rate was lowered or remained steady for the fifth consecutive year. We expect the rate to lower again in 2025. The 2025 preliminary valuation of all properties in the Borough increased to \$1,349,056,000. This was an increase in valuation of an incredible \$254,204,100 [+23.4%] over 2024. The largest year-over-year value increase the Borough has ever seen.
- New businesses: Saltwater Social [vacant since Sandy], Waterwitch Grocer, One Stop & Highlands Cafe.
- The 40-year vacant property at 95-99 Bay Ave was finally developed into 8 townhome units.
- Grants and other funding sources awarded in 2024 totaled **\$1,980,410**.
- Our bond rating is steady at AA

Goals that were accomplished in 2024:

- Completed Phase 1 of the Sanitary Sewer project including paving Bay Ave for the first time in 27 years.
- Completed curb & sidewalk replacement on Linden Ave for the first time in over 50 years.
- Completed Updates to Veterans Park.
- Continued Updates to Marie Ave & Bayside Drive.
- Completed Veterans Park Living Shorelines design & permitting approved by DEP.
- Awarded the Asset Activation Planning grant for major updates at the James T. White Clam Plant.

Goals for 2025 - completion of the following approved projects:

- Frank Hall Park Updates – Survey & concept plan in works. MCOS \$86,000. Will be bid with Overlook Park to maximize potential cost savings.
- Overlook Park Creation [empty lot on NJSH 36] for a passive park – MCOS \$148k + DCA \$74k
- Shore Drive Pedestrian Safety Improvements – Sidewalks from Waterwitch to Willow. DOT \$284k
- Washington Avenue Paving – Mill & pave of Washington Ave from Marine Pl. to Cheerful Pl.
- Complete Marine Pl Elevated walkway East [Sea Drift], Monmouth County CDBG grant \$167,647.
- Portland Road Drainage – Stormwater improvements, DOT grant \$261,900. Awarded 10/6. Gas mains moved through 1/9 to resolve conflicts.
- Jones Creek Dredging – DEP approved 7/31/24, the County will complete, waiting for dates.

Community Rating System [CRS] Certification Update

We continue the CRS process & work with property owners in the flood zone to build resiliently. Floodplain Town Hall workshop, watch it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_xlr6_ff-Q
Floodplain Design Guidelines can be found here: <https://bit.ly/CBDFloodplainDesignGuideline>

All the best to you and yours in 2025,
Mayor Carolyn Broullon