

GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026

PROJECTS

As Highland's Corridor Redevelopment and Comprehensive Master Plan begin to take shape, here's a look at some of the projects emerging in 2026.

[FORMER ULTRA SITE]

Council President George Georgeff said the nearly 21-acre former Ultra site is key to gateway development proposed in coordination with the updated comprehensive plan. "This property is high visibility and one of the largest parcels available for redevelopment," he said. "We are taking into account citizen comments and consultant recommendations to make the best decisions for the future use of this property."

[OLD TOWN THEATRE CORRIDOR]

Three years after developers proposed construction of a campus that would be anchored by the former Town Theatre and include the EMCOR Hyre Electric property, 2655 Garfield, Council President George Georgeff said the acreage is back on the town's list for acquisition as are scenarios that would include a multi-purpose development within a footprint west of Kennedy just north of Highway Avenue.

[FORMER COACH USA SITE]

Once a bustling hub for transportation to Chicago's airports, the Coach USA property at 8144 Indianapolis Boulevard is a component of the town's gateway development initiative and Comprehensive Master Plan that is expected to advance in 2026. Councilman Alex Robertson updated the Plan Commission in late 2025 with a proposal for the 3.5-acre site.

[PUBLIC WORKS CORRIDOR]

As the town moves forward on focused redevelopment, a potential new use for the Public Works garage and surrounding land has resurfaced as a means for business start-ups in Highland to capitalize on increasing traffic counts that are being generated across the Little Calumet River in Hammond. "With this number of development opportunities we have, we are in a great position to add tax base to Highland," Council President George Georgeff said. "We've been studying how we can help make that happen in Highland."

[FORMER SPEEDWAY PROPERTY]

The Redevelopment Commission is moving forward to finalize the purchase of the long-abandoned Speedway property at 8436 Kennedy – north of the Post Office. The land is strategically located at the western border of LaPorte Avenue and east of the bike trail.

[WHAT'S NEXT?]

Visit highland.in.gov for the latest news on the town's Corridor Redevelopment, Comprehensive Master Plan and upcoming community meetings.

[AVOID FREEZING PIPES]

When frigid temperatures arise this winter, Highland Public Works Director Mark Knesek urges residents to let a faucet trickle continuously, open cabinet doors under sinks to allow warm air circulation, insulate exposed pipes with pipe sleeves or heat tape, and maintain a consistent indoor temperature above 55 degrees Fahrenheit, especially when leaving home during cold snaps.

INFO: For more information and additional prevention tips, visit highland.in.gov.

[SNOW PARKING BAN]

All on-street parking is banned when there is two inches or more of new-fallen snow. This allows plows to do their jobs in the first critical hours after snowfall.

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HIGHLAND OFFERING \$10,000 EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE TO WORK – AND LIVE IN TOWN

For the first time, the Town Council will offer police officers, firefighters and full-time town workers a \$10,000 down payment assistance loan to make their home in Highland.

Council President George Georgeff said the town will make the incentives available through forgivable loans in 2026 – two each for police, firefighters and town employees.

“These are offered as loans that will be fully forgiven after nine years,” Georgeff said. “Funded through a portion of the town’s gaming funds, the loans will help bolster our fire department, increase police presence and make it so that our employees will have quicker response times in emergencies, such as water main breaks, which is a benefit for residents.”

[IN OTHER NEWS ...]

Water and sewer rate increases are effective this January. Town Council President George Georgeff said the rate hikes are largely because of negotiated increases with the City of Hammond, which provides both water and sewage treatment to its customer communities, including the Town of Highland.

Water rates, which were \$2.41 per 1,000 gallons in 2025 will be \$2.51 in January, an increase of 10 cents per 1,000 gallons. Wastewater fees, which were \$7.85 per 1,000 gallons will be \$8.16 per 1,000 gallons beginning in 2026, an increase of 31 cents per 1,000 gallons.

Questions? Please call the Clerk-Treasurer’s office at (219) 838-1080.

TOWN COUNCIL SEEKS QUALIFIED MEMBERS FOR HIGHLAND BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

After seven years as secretary on the Tree Advisory Board, Richard Underkofler has stepped down as he and his wife move out of the area.

“I’m proud of what we have been able to accomplish for Highland with the planting of trees and putting the town on the map as a Tree City USA,” he said. “I would encourage every Highland resident to serve on a board. It’s good for the community.”

Applications are welcome and must be submitted to the Clerk-Treasurer’s office as soon as possible.

Most boards meet once or twice a month with additional meetings scheduled as they become necessary. Individuals applying for an open position can choose the board or commission that appeals to them.

**[HOW TO APPLY]**

The Highland Town Council is looking for residents eager to serve on a board or commission. From the Plan and Police commissions to Community Events and the Water Board, the council is looking for residents who want to make a difference in our community.

INTERESTED? Download an application at highland.in.gov and file it with the Clerk-Treasurer’s office – either in person or submitted by mail to the Office of the Clerk-Treasurer, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, IN 46322.



HELP OUR FURRY FRIENDS

The Highland Police Department is still seeking donations and sponsors to build a new animal control shelter just south of the current building. So far, officers have raised about \$20,000 of the \$300,000 needed for the new facility.

Sponsorship opportunities include a more personal way to give back with the following options:



- TOP DOG** \$5,000+ gets your name or business on the building
- PAW PROTECTOR** \$2,000 gets your name or business on a kennel
- MAN'S BEST FRIEND** \$1,000 gets your name or business on a donor wall



For more information, call Administrative Cmdr. Shawn Anderson at (219) 237-5571 or email sanderson@highland.in.gov.

An account has been opened at Centier Bank under the FOP Lodge #122 "Animal Shelter Donation" account. You can make a donation two ways:

DONATE IN-PERSON: You can donate directly at the bank, 9102 Indianapolis Blvd., or the Highland Police Department, 3315 Ridge Road. Please make checks payable to the Highland FOP Lodge #122 with "Animal Shelter" in the memo.



DONATE ONLINE: You can make an Animal Shelter Donation with your credit card or bank account online by scanning the QR code here.

HIGHLAND POLICE OFFICER SAVES WOMAN'S LIFE



Det. Kenny Norsweather has been recognized for the lifesaving action he took September 18 tending to a gunshot victim in the parking lot of the

Highland Police Department.

Info: Visit highland.in.gov for the full story and additional photos.

HIGHLAND POLICE SEEKING VIPS, CROSSING GUARDS

Police Chief Ralph Potesta is looking for dedicated individuals who want to work alongside Highland police and help keep our community safe.

[VIPS CANDIDATES]

This volunteer position comes with perks – training, a uniform and becoming part of the town's public safety network. VIPs assist police officers by providing a variety of tasks, including: vacation home checks, assisting at community events, traffic patrols in residential/business/park districts, funeral escorts, fingerprinting, filing, typing, even answering telephones.

To apply: Download an application at highland.in.gov or call Deputy Cmdr. Glenn Cox at (219) 838-3184.

[CROSSING GUARDS]

Police are seeking individuals at least 18 years old to dedicate about an hour twice a day to provide safe crossing for schoolchildren.

To apply: Applications are available at the HPD, 3315 Ridge Road. Starting pay is \$16 per hour.

[CRIME WATCH MEETING]

Join us for a Crime Watch meeting at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, **January 14** in the Community Room at the HPD, 3315 Ridge Road. Officers will discuss recent crime trends.

**[BUSINESS LICENSE RENEWAL]**

Every Highland business is required to get a business license and renew it annually. Download a business license form online at highland.in.gov. Complete the application and submit it along with the appropriate fee to:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK-TREASURER
Highland Town Hall
3333 Ridge Road
Highland, IN 46322

QUESTIONS? Call (219) 838-1080.

**[ANIMAL LICENSE RENEWAL]**

All dogs and cats that call Highland home need a license. Registering is a one-step process that begins and ends at the Clerk-Treasurer's Office, 3333 Ridge Road. Pet owners must provide contact information as well as pet name, breed, sex, color, spay/neuter, vet and current rabies vaccination certificate. The owner will then receive a registration tag the pet is required to wear.

**[RESTAURANT CRAWL]**

Join us for our Restaurant Crawls from 4-8 p.m. Tuesday, **January 27** and **February 24** in downtown Highland. Participating restaurants feature a special for \$7 or less, so that visitors can "eat their way through downtown," stopping at their usual haunts and discovering new favorites along the way.



5-7 PM | SATURDAY | MARCH 7

Join us for an evening of flower power, disco lights and unforgettable memories as we turn back the clock to the '70s at the Lincoln Community Center Fieldhouse! Dads and daughters – ages 3-13 – are invited to dress up in their best retro outfits and enjoy a groovy good time! The evening includes light refreshments, DJ entertainment and professional photos, which will be available for digital download.

Fee through February 27: \$35 residents | \$40 nonresident couple
\$17.50 resident | \$20 nonresident additional daughter

Fee February 28-March 6: \$40 residents | \$45 nonresident couple
\$20 resident | \$22.50 nonresident additional daughter

Please note: No tickets will be sold the day of the dance.

[PARKS & RECREATION: WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!]

Thank you to all those who completed the Highland Parks and Recreation survey. Please visit highlandparks.org for the results. We would love more public input that will guide improvements to parks, programs and facilities. Please join us at an upcoming Park Board meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, **January 15** and **February 19** at Lincoln Community Center.