Welcome! The High Line Canal Conservancy is leading a broad and inclusive community conversation about the future of the well-loved High Line Canal, with the goal of creating a forward-looking story of how to preserve, protect, and enhance the Canal into the future. Today, we’ll explore the draft vision, developed from your input at the Chapter 1 and 2 open houses. We’ll be asking for your insight on whether we’ve heard you right so far. Do these ideas feel right for your High Line Canal?

The resulting Vision Plan will ensure the Canal reaches its greatest potential as an economic, environmental, recreational, and social asset along not just some, but all of its 71 miles.
What is a “Vision Plan”? 

The Vision Plan is the Story of the Canal’s next 100 years.

For more than a century, the High Line Canal has served a number of purposes — a water delivery infrastructure, a unique man-made ecosystem and, recently, a recreational asset. But what does the next century hold in store for the High Line Canal? There are challenges and opportunities ahead ... and new decisions need to be made around each bend.

We need your help to write this story. What do you imagine the Canal can be for future generations?

This process is structured like a story.

A Vision Plan includes:

- Big picture opportunities for preserving and enhancing the Canal’s character and identity
- Strategies for celebrating the different communities and landscapes along the Canal
- Ideas for future actions and tactics to engage the communities, partner organizations, and governmental agencies

What is a “Vision Plan”?

Today

Chapter 3
Our Story
Draft Vision Plan

Chapter 2
A Fork in the Road
Ideas & Opportunities

Chapter 1
Our Journey Begins
Exploring the Canal

Once upon a time ...
The Canal was constructed in 1883 as an irrigation waterway, envisioned to support newly settled farms east of Denver. The 71-mile channel crossing multiple streams was an engineering feat for the Victorian era, irrigating 20,000 acres of land through 165 headgates at its peak. Beginning in 1970, Denver Water opened the Canal to the public, allowing communities to use the existing maintenance road adjacent to the Canal as a trail.
Today, the Canal’s purpose has evolved, from an irrigation waterway serving farms to a recreational greenway serving neighborhoods. At the same time, the Canal faces many challenges related to water scarcity, development, regional climate, and natural ecosystems. How can the Canal best adapt to today’s needs while preserving the aspects we all love? What does the future High Line Canal look like?
Your High Line Canal
Here’s What You Shared With Us

When asked, “What words describe the Canal as you’d like to see it become?”, these were the top responses:

**PEACEFUL, NATURAL, BEAUTIFUL**

Most important role of the Canal

**#1 ANSWER:**

“A PEACEFUL NATURE RETREAT”

Most important to focus on outside of the Canal

**#1 ANSWER:**

“PROTECTING OPEN SPACE NEAR + ALONG THE CANAL”

**PROTECTING THE CANAL’S HABITAT**

SCORED **4.3** OUT OF **5.0**

When asked, “What words describe the Canal as you’d like to see it become?”, these were the top responses:

**CONNECTED, ACCESSIBLE, SAFE**

Most important role of the Canal

**#2 ANSWER:**

“ACCESS TO JOGGING OR BIKING”

Most important to focus on outside of the Canal

**#2 ANSWER:**

“IMPROVING CROSSINGS TO MAKE THEM SAFER”

**“PROTECTING THE CANAL’S MOBILITY CONNECTIONS”**

SCORED **4.1** OUT OF **5.0**

**COMMON THEME**

at Chapter Two Open House

Respect and celebrate the diversity of the communities along the canal, allowing each its own “piece” of the overall experience.

**DIVERSE DISTRICTS 2 TO 2.5X**

MORE SUPPORT THAN CONSISTENT OR PATCHWORK CHARACTER

**WHILE EXERCISE WAS THE #1 MOST DESIRED EXPERIENCE ACROSS ALL AREAS, THE #2 ANSWER WAS...**

**GATHER**

Green Valley Ranch, Aurora, and the northern end of the Canal

**MEDITATE**

Denver and Unincorporated Arapahoe County + Cherry Hills Village, Greenwood Village, Littleton, and Centennial

**EXPLORE**

Highlands Ranch and Douglas County + Waterton Canyon
Draft Vision Elements

What are the specific elements of the Canal that the community values?

NATURAL

Preserving an urban refuge, a ribbon of nature twisting through the region

CONNECTED

A connected landscape and uninterrupted trail that binds together our varied communities and people

VARIED

Celebrating and expressing the different communities and ecosystems of the region
When asked, “What words describe the Canal as you’d like to see it become?”, these were among the top responses:

**COMMON THEME**

at Chapter One Open House

**THANK YOU**

for undertaking this process; the Canal is a beloved treasure worthy of thoughtful caretaking.

**MANAGE**

Preserve the Canal to protect it as a beloved regional asset

**COMMON THEME**

at Chapter Two Open House

Stormwater management is an opportunity to become more sustainable and the canal should take advantage of it.

**ENHANCE**

Create infrastructure and maximize landmarks for a vivid sense of place and experience

500+ Locations identified as “Aspects to Celebrate”, including:

**LANDMARKS, BEAUTIFUL VIEWS, FAVORITE PLACES**

I wish the Canal would connect me to...

**#1 ANSWER:**

“PLACES NEAR THE CANAL FOR PEOPLE TO EAT, SHOP, RELAX”

**COMMON THEME**

in MyHighLineCanal online survey

Basic infrastructure, vegetation, planting and maintenance, and crossing safety

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**COMMON THEME**

in MyHighLineCanal online survey

Basic infrastructure, vegetation, planting and maintenance, and crossing safety
A national model of environmental + recreational stewardship

A unique regional resource for the Rocky Mountain West

A place for communities to connect with nature and each other
A treasured slice of nature twisting through the foothills and meandering across the prairie. A place to enjoy a quiet moment removed from the hustle-and-bustle of daily life. Chirps of birds, an occasional deer, and other wildlife greet visitors, revealing a corridor that is as welcoming to wildlife as it is to people – a regional environmental resource. The Canal as a “natural” refuge includes...

- Sustaining the green, peaceful character of the Canal (See ‘Manage’ for more about the potential of stormwater as a water source)
- Enhancing wildlife habitat and environmental health of the Canal
- Preservation and enhancement of open space along Canal, with expansion of adjacent open spaces to create larger habitat areas
Exploring wild nature

A quiet, peaceful retreat

Moments of respite in the prairie

A home for the region’s wildlife

Environmental education and nature play
A continuous and uninterrupted trail that traverses the region seamlessly, connecting with other trails and greenways to form a regional network. A resource that dynamically engages with the surrounding neighborhoods and communities. The “connected” Canal includes...

- Stitching the Canal together by closing gaps and upgrading crossings
- Improving connections along the trail to other trail networks
- Strengthening safe access to and from local neighborhoods
A continuous 71 mile canal

Safe and accessible neighborhood connections

Improved crossings

Connecting a regional trail network and ecosystem
The 71 miles of the Canal pass through many different communities and ecosystems. The “varied” Canal celebrates these differences by enhancing the character of distinct districts along the way. These distinct districts could include places like...

- **The wild canyon**, with opportunities for exploration and discovery, hiking or climbing, and wildlife watching along the South Platte River

- **The rolling foothills**, celebrating the dramatic views and topographic relief of the southern stretches; here, inspirational education moments like environmental kiosks or historical markers integrate the Canal experience with the surroundings

- **A quiet wooded village**, where a renewed tree canopy provides a refuge for quiet and peaceful experiences like meditating or birdwatching; adjacent conservation land and open space contributes to this character

- **An urban refuge**, where opportunities to connect with nature are never far from retail, restaurants, and other urban amenities

- **A meandering natural retreat** in the prairie, a place for families and friends to gather together, where new trees and enhanced prairie landscapes create a vegetated and welcoming space for residents as well as wildlife
The wild canyon
The rolling hills
A quiet wooded village
An urban refuge
A prairie meadow
A cherished and cared-for greenway that celebrates the unique history and character of our Denver region. A focal point for the community, robustly supported by committed local citizens and local partnerships, and elevated by strategic governance. Careful adaptations like alternative irrigation, new trees species, and stormwater to nourish the ecosystem, providing new models of responsible water management and stewardship. Caretaking of the Canal includes responsibilities such as...

• Establishing a clear model for governance and funding
• Strengthening community partnerships
• Providing a role for citizen input
• Retrofitting plans for stormwater collection
• Comprehensive planting of drought-tolerant species that require less water and address invasive weed mitigation
• Exploring alternative irrigation methods
• Managing vegetation for views and enhancing the experience
Economic development generated

Community partnerships to collectively maintain and support Canal

Drip irrigation

Drought tolerant plant management

Adapting the Canal for stormwater and improved water quality

Community stewardship and engagement
A special view of the mountains, or a quiet shady grove, that now has a bench to pause and enjoy. Trailheads with entry maps, trash cans, and parking to make access to the Canal easier. Easy connections from the Canal to cafés for refreshment, or bike shops for repairs. Consistent wayfinding along the trail to help visitors navigate the Canal’s length, variety, and context - all of these thoughtful details combine to create a system of supportive infrastructure that enables the best High Line Canal experience.

- Creating wayfinding, maps, and trail guides
- More environmental, historic, and cultural education
- Providing benches, trailheads, parking, and trash cans
- Acknowledging views, landmarks, and special moments
- Celebrating historic landmarks
Wildlife viewing

Celebrate views

Preserve and celebrate historical landmarks

Enhance basic infrastructure (benches, wayfinding, facilities)

Map and trail guide to develop sense of place
Your turn!
Help us write the Vision statement

A national model of environmental + recreational stewardship

A unique regional resource for the Rocky Mountain West

A place for communities to connect with nature and each other
Looking ahead ...

What are the next steps in the Vision Plan process?

WE HAVE BROUGHT MANY KINDS OF FEEDBACK TOGETHER TO BUILD THE VISION...

- Site Visits & Analysis
- Chapter 1 Open House
- Our High Line Canal Survey results
- Stakeholder Focus Groups
- HLC Working Group, Core Team, and HLCC Board

- CrowdGauge Survey results
- Chapter 2 Open House
- City as Play sessions
- Strategic Input Sessions

Chapter 3 Open House (TODAY!)

Draft Vision

THE NEXT STEP IS REFINING THE VISION BASED ON YOUR FEEDBACK, AND DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN TO BRING THE VISION TO REALITY

Final Vision & Action Plan

Chapter 4 Open House
- Physical improvements and changes that help establish or reinforce the desired vision
- Action steps to get us to the draft Vision
- Roles and responsibilities
- Priorities