High Line Canal Vision Plan

Open House #2
July 20-21, 2016
Feedback Summary
Open Houses Overview

• Series of meetings in July 2016; each meeting offered the same content
  – July 20: Expo Rec Center
  – July 21: Eloise May Library
  – July 21: Eisenhower Rec Center

• Open-house style boards explained options for the Canal’s future

• Engagement activities included handouts and sticker placements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities Completed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preserve Handout</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect Handout</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stickers Placed</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open House Respondents by ZIP Code
Summary of Findings

The findings from Open House #2 mirrored what we heard in the OurHighLineCanal survey: consistent themes related to preserving nature and preserving the ecosystem, as well as connectivity.

Responses were largely consistent per neighborhood, with strong preferences for managed landscape, diverse districts, and adaptation. Themes relating to new development on the Canal were less popular. Protecting the Canal’s connections and habitat were highly ranked across all neighborhoods, with protecting the Canal’s surroundings ranked slightly lower.

Finally, stickers placed along a map of the Canal revealed in which neighborhoods respondents wanted to experience certain activities. Each neighborhood had a distinguishing theme that separated it from the others.
This handout asked open house attendees to respond to the options outlined on the Preserve boards. After identifying their ZIP code, attendees then were able to check multiple boxes to identify which of the options appealed to them and why.
What aspects are most important to preserve?

- Wholistic 71 miles: 95 boxes checked
- Ecosystem: 105 boxes checked
- Historic profile / construction: 51 boxes checked
- Mobility connections it provides: 90 boxes checked
- Other: 3 boxes checked
**ECOSYSTEM BOARDS**

- **MAN-MADE ECOSYSTEM** (i.e. the Canal today)

  The Canal’s construction in the late 1800s brought water to previously dry prairie, nurturing flora and fauna usually found in wetter environments, like Cottonwood trees. Looking ahead, this ecosystem is not sustainable as-is in the long-term. Lining the Canal has been proposed as a solution. This would allow water to flow farther in length through the Canal, but it means water would not seep in along the way to water trees.

  **OPPORTUNITIES**
  - Studied and familiar environment

  **CHALLENGES**
  - Future of irrigation management is unclear
  - Water-demanding Cottonwoods are aging and not a sustainable species
  - Water does not reach the northeastern end due to seepage and evaporation
  - Costs to maintain as-is are relatively high, while benefit are nominal

- **MANAGED LANDSCAPE** (Stormwater or other opportunities)

  The Canal could be retrofitted to collect stormwater from adjacent neighborhoods. This would provide more days when the Canal would be wet/moist, which would help support a new generation of trees of different species that need less water.

  **OPPORTUNITIES**
  - More wet days provide a sustainable long-term option for trees
  - Potential for stormwater use to be a revenue source

  **CHALLENGES**
  - Expensive: while this approach is feasible throughout the entire Canal, it might not be economically viable on its own everywhere
  - Water can be held for a limited amount of time
  - Requires long-term maintenance plan/funding
  - Demand: Water might need alternative delivery method for irrigation customers along the Canal

- **NATURAL ECOSYSTEM** (Prairie)

  A common misconception is that a drier Canal provides less habitat for wildlife. In fact, this is just a different kind of habitat, which can be beautiful, too, when cultivated. For example, a more natural prairie landscape with meadows of wildflowers and grasses can attract butterflies. This can help reestablish the region’s native prairie landscape of drought-tolerant grasses and shrubs.

  **OPPORTUNITIES**
  - Habitat for native fauna - new kinds of wildlife than other parts of the Canal
  - Less cost to maintain
  - Does not require water flow for healthy landscape

  **CHALLENGES**
  - Irrigation water customers along the Canal would need alternative delivery method
  - Less shade from vegetation
Overall: Managed Landscape was most frequently chosen

Most common reasons attendees reported selecting an option:

Overall
- A combination of all three is good, can be different depending on the area. Diversity is good!

Manmade
- More affordable and simple option

Managed Landscape
- Stormwater management is an opportunity to become more sustainable and the Canal should take advantage of it
- The Canal cannot be supported by today's ecosystem, needs some management
- Can be used for water transportation
- Can enhance development opportunities

Natural Ecosystem
- Plants need water to survive – need a combination of managed and natural
- Requires less maintenance and is more sustainable
- Preserves natural beauty and diverse habitat
CHARACTER BOARDS

UNIFIED AND CONSISTENT CHARACTER FOR 71 MILES

The Canal would maintain one profile, set of uses, and relationship to its surrounding neighborhoods for its entire length. This approach means we would focus on creating as similar an experience as possible for the entire 71 miles.

OPPORTUNITIES
- Visible and recognizable brand
- One experience to unite many communities
- May be easier to manage and plan for as a unified approach

CHALLENGES
- Unique details of the Canal’s districts could get lost

DIVERSE DISTRICTS (i.e. “Rooms of a house”)

Along its 71 miles the Canal would pass through distinct zones each with a specific character defined by its adjacent communities, ecology and use patterns. It could still have elements of unity like wayfinding signage or furniture. This approach means we would focus on creating an identity that adapted to different communities along the way.

OPPORTUNITIES
- Diversity of culture and ecology is celebrated and enhanced

CHALLENGES
- Could be harder to create a distinct brand for the Canal

PATCHWORK CHARACTER

This would mean an identity that changed frequently along the Canal without a clear pattern. The changing character could add an element of surprise to the experience of moving along the Canal. This approach means the character would be less consistent and more of a patchwork experience.

OPPORTUNITIES
- Smaller-scale identities could be more driven locally
- One canal many neighbors

CHALLENGES
- More difficult to make legible as one Canal
- Sections would not relate to each other; experience could feel more jarring when moving between sections
Overall: Diverse districts was most frequently chosen

Most common reasons attendees reported selecting an option:

Unified + Consistent Character
- Unification is more equitable; solves the “haves” and “have nots” issue
- Creates consistencies in signage and creates continuity

Diverse Districts
- Can enhance the beauty of the place and create unique experiences to draw people there
- Respect and celebrate the diversity of the communities along the Canal, communities can have their own “piece” of the overall experience
- Too many governments and jurisdictions can make it too difficult to make it fully unified
- Basic elements are important for continuity (signage, path treatment, maintenance, etc.), but diversity is important

Patchwork Character
- More economical approach
- Similar thoughts to Diverse Districts
**MAINTAIN THE CANAL’S PROFILE AS-IS**

The Canal’s historic profile, or cross-section, has an identifiable channel on the uphill side and embankment on the downhill side with a maintenance path, all within the corridor measuring 100 to 150 foot in width. This approach means future uses would be more limited and water would only be possible through continuing diversions from the Platte River.

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- No changes to existing landscape structure
- Preserves the Canal as an element of cultural heritage
- Less flexible; stormwater would require adaptation (approach 2)

**CHALLENGES**
- Over time, ecosystem would change
- Preserves Canal’s historic shape

---

**ADAPT (New uses for the historic profile)**

Honoring the simple low channel and high pathway of the historic profile, new uses and landscapes could be inserted within the corridor. With this approach, many options are possible and could vary along the Canal.

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Flexible approach allows for stormwater management or a range of other options
- Provides opportunities for elevated experiences as well as protected options in the low Canal bed
- Maintaining the historic profile constrains proportions of new ideas and interventions
- Trees within the levee may compromise the Canal’s ability to carry water

**CHALLENGES**
- Greatest flexibility of potential new uses
- Trail alignment could shift to one side of right-of-way
- Opportunity for wider, flatter areas for sports, picnicking, playgrounds, public art and more

---

**HONOR THE HISTORIC LEGACY IN NEW WAYS**

Are there other, less literal ways we could honor the Canal’s history through future enhancements? What other possibilities could you imagine?

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Adapting the Canal as a linear social space where the low points could collect stormwater
- Adapting the channel to hold stormwater

**CHALLENGES**
- Maintaining the Canal’s story
- Outdoors Classroom
- Picnicking & Butterflies
- Play & Public Art

**THE HISTORIC PROFILE**

100-150’ RIGHT-OF-WAY

**OUTDOOR CLASSROOM**
Adapting the Canal as a linear social space where the low points could collect stormwater

**STORMWATER**
Adapting the channel to hold stormwater

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**
The high and low variation could be enhanced for wildlife watching with elevated viewing platforms, boardwalks, and habitat enhancements
Most common reasons attendees reported selecting an option:

**Overall:**
Each option can create opportunities

**Preserve the Canal as-is**
- Avoid adding a lot of man made features and development
- As-is is better for the environment
- Keep a link to the past and preserve historic character

**Adapt**
- Preservation of profile is engaging and can increase usability and diversify uses

**Honor Historic Legacy in a New Way**
- Can have historic markers and educational tools to engage people
- Creates more flexibility for uses
- Enhances the relevance of history and future
Preserving the Canal’s historic story:
If we adapt, which new uses appeal to you?

- Retrofit: 104
- Enhance habitat and education: 98
- Tiered social spaces: 58
PROTECT HANDOUTS
This handout asked open house attendees to respond to the options outlined on the Protect boards. After identifying their ZIP code, attendees then were able to check multiple boxes to identify what should be focused on outside the Canal. Questions 3, 4, and 5 asked attendees to rank their opinion about the option on a scale from 1-5.
Questions 3, 4, and 5 asked attendees to rank their opinion about the option on a scale from 1-5. Question 6 requested open-ended responses.
What is most important to focus on, outside of the Canal?

Overall Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Number of Boxes Checked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening habitat connections</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting open space along and near the Canal</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring new development embraces the Canal</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving connections with adjacent parks and recreational amenities</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving crossings with local roads to make them safer</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying new revenue sources to support future enhancements of the Canal</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Other includes: Creating public awareness of issues that surround the Canal, safety, possible job creation, addressing homelessness, involving communities in maintenance, reduce possible disturbance on existing ecosystems, parking needs, encouraging cafes and places along the Canal for people to eat, shop, relax, resurface the paved trails, stormwater and water sources, utilizing the Canal as an urban asset, children’s education program.
Protecting the Canal's Connections

Strengthening the Role of the Canal to Connect Communities

The High Line Canal already acts as movement corridor for walking, jogging, and bicycling. What are the opportunities to further protect this identity?

**OPPORTUNITIES:**
1. Improve crossings along and to the Canal
2. Strengthen connections with other trails across the region
3. Promote development of additional trail connections
4. Support active lifestyles and recreation

**THIS APPROACH COULD INCLUDE IMPROVING ...**

**TRAIL CONNECTIONS**

**EXAMPLES**
- Cherry Creek Greenway and Triple Creek

**STREET CROSSING**

**EXAMPLES**
- Sante Fe and Broadway

1. BELTLINE, ATLANTA
2. CHILE: PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
How do you feel about this opportunity?

**Weighted Score**: 4.14

**Why protect connections?**

- Creates easier and safer access
- More access and connections mean more users
- Greater connections can enhance quality of life
- Safety is a priority
- Creates an alternative, safe transportation system that can be a model for other places
- Is an important shared resources
- Is a unique asset for the metro area and can increase tourism

* Boxes checked at the "5" level were weighted with 5 points, 4 with 4 points, etc. to achieve an average score for each option across all feedback.
Protecting the Canal’s Habitat

Strengthening the Role of the Canal as a Wildlife Corridor

The High Line Canal already acts as movement corridor for wildlife. The success of the Canal depends on its connections to existing and new development, adjacent conservation land, creek corridors, and other open spaces.

OPPORTUNITIES
1. Strengthen the Canal’s environmental role in the region
2. Link patches of larger habitat areas, providing a connection for wildlife
3. Intersections with creeks and waterways connect the Canal’s habitat with other green corridors
4. Backyards can provide small patches of open space for wildlife.

THIS APPROACH COULD INCLUDE IMPROVING CONNECTIONS TO ...

CONSERVATION LAND

EXAMPLES
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and DeKoeven Conservation Land

CREEK CROSSINGS

EXAMPLES
Cherry Creek and Toll Gate Creek

BACKYARD HABITAT

EXAMPLES
Homes and lots of other adjacent uses
How do you feel about this opportunity?

Weighted Score* 4.30

Why protect habitat / wildlife?

- Protect and educate, people benefit from wildlife observation
- Natural environment is what makes this place great and there is already little nature nearby
- Opportunity to incorporate wildlife into the city and enhance natural experience, adds to urban living
- Protecting the natural habitat can bring more animals which are invaluable
- Need to protect the wildlife and save animals from over development
- Need to protect wildlife corridors, if not it can create conflict with humans

* Boxes checked at the "5" level were weighted with 5 points, 4 with 4 points, etc. to achieve an average score for each option across all feedback.
Protecting the Canal’s Surroundings

Supporting the Canal through Adjacent Uses and Neighbors

As the High Line Canal passes through diverse communities, the character of adjacent development and neighbors impacts this experience. How can these nearby uses support and enhance the Canal?

**OPPORTUNITIES**
1. Revenue generation to support Canal enhancements
2. Programming and recreational opportunities
3. Development that supports the character and function of the Canal, providing a source of stormwater, trail connections, and integrates with the Canal (not turning its back on the Canal)
4. Parks and schools can provide recreational connections, expanded social space, and educational programming opportunities
5. Cafes and other nearby uses can provide places to pause, rest, and grab a bite to eat. These locations could also provide supporting activities like games or disc golf. Revenue could help support the Canal.

**THIS APPROACH COULD INCLUDE IMPROVING CONNECTIONS TO …**

**DEVELOPMENT**

**EXAMPLES**
Plum Creek and Sterling Ranch Village

**PARKS & SCHOOLS**

**EXAMPLES**
Eisenhower Park and Expo Park

**OTHER USES**

**EXAMPLES**
Dry Dock Brewing; Hudson Gardens Coffee House (Mary Carter Greenway Trail)
How do you feel about this opportunity?

Weighted Score*: 3.03

Why protect surrounding context?

- Will create commitment and resources to sustain the Canal
- Education and involvement is important
- Protect the surrounding so it does not become over commercialized or a tourist attraction
- It’s a good thing when local businesses get involved
- Gives more opportunity for use schools and other community organizations
- Give the community more ownership in the vision and to become better stewards

* Boxes checked at the "5" level were weighted with 5 points, 4 with 4 points, etc. to achieve an average score for each option across all feedback.
Responses to this question were open-ended; to analyze, they were grouped by theme as shown above.
ENHANCE
MAP STICKERS
Attendees at each open house placed stickers on the boards to identify where they would like to experience certain activities on the Canal.

The photo at left displays the stickers placed at the Open House held at Eisenhower Rec Center. Similar feedback was recorded on separate boards at the other two open houses.
Stickers Placed by Canal Section

- **Green Valley Ranch, Aurora, and the northern end of the Canal**
  - MEDITATIVE: 20
  - INSPIRE: 21
  - GATHER: 10
  - EXPLORE: 16
  - EXERCISE: 44
  - SOMETHING ELSE: 2

- **Denver and Unincorporated Arapahoe County**
  - MEDITATIVE: 44
  - INSPIRE: 28
  - GATHER: 13
  - EXPLORE: 15
  - EXERCISE: 96
  - SOMETHING ELSE: 6

- **Cherry Hills Village, Greenwood Village, Littleton, and Centennial**
  - MEDITATIVE: 30
  - INSPIRE: 14
  - GATHER: 4
  - EXERCISE: 46
  - SOMETHING ELSE: 3

- **Highlands Ranch and Douglas County**
  - MEDITATIVE: 13
  - INSPIRE: 11
  - GATHER: 3
  - EXERCISE: 15
  - SOMETHING ELSE: 3

- **Waterton Canyon**
  - MEDITATIVE: 14
  - INSPIRE: 4
  - GATHER: 26
  - EXERCISE: 24
  - SOMETHING ELSE: 3

Number of Stickers Placed

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
**Summary of Stickers Placed**

**EXERCISE ranked 1st for all communities.** The top other themes varied by community:

- Green Valley Ranch, Aurora, and the northern end of the Canal: **INSPIRE and GATHER**
- Denver and Unincorporated Arapahoe County: **MEDITATIVE and INSPIRE***
- Cherry Hills Village, Greenwood Village, Littleton, and Centennial: **MEDITATIVE**
- Highlands Ranch and Douglas County: **BALANCED across all themes**
- Waterton Canyon: **EXPLORE**

*In addition – Exercise is an especially strong theme, even stronger than in other parts of the Canal. Here, the “Exercise” sticker comprises about 48% of the total stickers placed for that section, which is a higher percentage than any other Canal section for Exercise.*