

VISION

Our Vision for the High Line Canal: 71 meandering miles preserved and enhanced as a cherished greenway that connects us to nature and binds together varied communities from the foothills to the plains.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OBJECTIVES



Natural

The Canal's natural, scenic beauty is integral to its identity. We will preserve the natural character of the Canal, ensuring it continues to be an urban refuge for the region's population and wildlife.



Connected & Continuous

We will maintain and increase the connectivity of the Canal along all 71 miles, preserving and enhancing the Canal's use as an important resource and regional network. We support the various physical characteristics of the Canal and will maintain the diversity of uses across the Canal's different character zones, ensuring all of the Canal's users can continue to enjoy its use where they can today.



Varied

Through the course of its 71 miles, our Canal passes through many different communities and ecosystems. We value the variety of experiences this creates and will preserve the "varied" character of the Canal.



Managed

Our Canal is a critical, cherished asset for the region. We will work together to preserve and support a long-term, sustainable future for generations to come.



Enhanced

We will enhance the enjoyment and use of the Canal in keeping with its natural and varied character.

Maintain the peaceful character of the Canal, so it continues to be a place for the region to connect with nature, from the foothills to the plains

Identify sustainable, responsible water sources for the continued nourishment of the Canal's trees and vegetation, and transition to tree species that require less water to thrive

Protect and improve wildlife habitat and environmental health of the Canal

Preserve and enhance open space along the Canal, including identifying opportunities to protect adjacent open spaces to create larger habitat areas

Employ environmentally sustainable practices in landscape management and Canal maintenance to assure overall health and public safety

Improve connectivity along the Canal by closing gaps and upgrading crossings through safety and signage

Improve connections from the Canal to other trail networks, further strengthening the regional trail network

Enable safe connectivity for all types of users: walkers, bikers, equestrians, joggers, dog-walkers, and more

Strengthen safe access to and from local neighborhoods, schools, parks, and other amenities

Minimize future interruptions of the Canal experience such as new crossings

Maintain a continuous wildlife and ecological corridor

Acknowledge that there exists diverse communities, trail character zones, & ecosystems along the Canal:
• The wild canyon (Waterton Canyon)
• The rolling foothills (Douglas County & Highlands Ranch)

• A wooded village (Cherry Hills Village, Greenwood Village, Littleton, Centennial)
• An urban refuge (Denver & unincorporated Arapahoe County)
• A meandering natural retreat in the prairie (Aurora & Denver's Green Valley Ranch)

As change happens, support enhancement and protection of unique characteristics of each character zone to best suit each zone's needs

Provide equity of experience and opportunities along the length of the Canal for the varied communities

Promote appropriate habitat caretaking in the Canal's different ecosystems

Encourage and promote continued public engagement & local leadership involvement throughout the many Canal-adjacent jurisdictions

"MANAGEMENT" IS BOTH OPERATIONAL AND PHYSICAL

Operational
Establish a clear model for governance and a sustainable funding source (both monetary and in-kind)

Strengthen regional, county, municipal, and community partnerships

Provide a role for citizen input and stewardship

Increase use, safety, and awareness of the Canal in underused areas, including coordination with law enforcement

Promote a unified brand with common themes and approaches to management along the Canal (i.e., mile markers, maps, signage, etc.)

Physical
Model responsible water management practices and consider the Canal for stormwater management where feasible

Plant drought-tolerant species that require less water and explore alternative irrigation methods

Provide appropriate maintenance of the Canal's vegetation for safety and beauty while exploring options for fewer or different trees

Provide on-going maintenance for physical improvements such as trailheads, signs, furnishings, etc.

Provide an overall wildlife management plan consistent with regional and state authority plans

Provide enhancements that are consistent with the Canal's vision

Increase awareness about the Canal and its story

Acknowledge and enhance views, landmarks, and special moments

Celebrate the Canal's history through education, historic preservation, and documentation

Improve connections and awareness where appropriate from the Canal to nearby amenities while protecting the Canal from commercialization

Coordinate with new development to encourage design that supports the character of the Canal

Provide basic infrastructure and facilities along the Canal where appropriate (i.e., trash cans)

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

The action steps to implement and sustain the vision in coordination with local entities



STRATEGY 1

Create a Roadmap for the Canal's Future Physical Form

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

1. Framework Plan
2. Character Zone Plans
3. Crossing Study 2.0
4. Stormwater Study 2.0
5. Historic Resources Study
6. Branding, Wayfinding, and Signage Design
7. Landscape Design Guidelines
8. Trail and Landscape Maintenance Standards



STRATEGY 2

Build Awareness & Understanding of the Canal

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

1. Celebrate and share this Vision & Action Plan and report on progress
2. Develop a Communications Strategy
3. Implement signage and wayfinding improvements along the Canal
4. Create supportive materials to make exploring the Canal easier
5. Expand educational programs
6. Tell the story of the Canal's history



STRATEGY 3

Align the Canal's Governance & Funding Structure with the Vision

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

1. Study and develop a long-term coordinated governance model for the Canal
2. Continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions, districts, and other governing entities
3. Evaluate existing expenditures on the HLC
4. Explore and identify funding sources (Funding Strategy)
5. Evaluate National Register Listing
6. Continue to coordinate with developers



STRATEGY 4

Harness the Community's Passion to Promote Stewardship of the Canal

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

1. Grow volunteer opportunities
2. Provide exciting donation opportunities
3. Continue to develop strategic partnerships with other cultural and community organizations
4. Continue to encourage community involvement and grow a network of local champions
5. Develop the next generation of High Line Canal stewards



STRATEGY 5

Capitalize on Existing Momentum to Take Action Now

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

1. Pursue grant funding that aligns with quick win projects
2. Provide tours and programming to increase familiarity with the Canal
3. Initiate additional stormwater demonstration projects
4. Continue to improve crossings
5. Continue to complete connections to other trail systems
6. Continue upgrading and replacing pedestrian bridges