



memorandum

date 21 June 2016  
 project name High Line Canal Vision Plan  
 subject Community Open House Series #1 – June 8-9, 2016  
 Chapter 1, Our Journey Begins  
 Feedback Summary

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**SUMMARY**

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This series of public meetings was themed as “Chapter 1: Our Journey Begins,” in keeping with the overall theme for this outreach process of writing the story for our High Line Canal. **The goal for this initial round of meetings was to increase awareness of the vision plan effort, help residents understand the diversity of the Canal’s full 71 miles, as well as constraints and opportunities along the way, and start testing different ideas.** There were three identical open houses held:

- Wednesday, June 8, 4-8pm, Aurora Central Library
- Thursday, June 9, 11am-1:30pm, Lowry Town Center
- Thursday, June 9, 4-8pm, Goodson Recreation Center

These public meetings solicited feedback through three channels.

- (1) The team provided a **handout for attendees to fill in**, which framed the attendees as authors writing the story of the High Line Canal.
- (2) Attendees were also provided with a **set of stickers to place on the “what if” boards** displayed throughout the room to highlight ideas that they liked best.
- (3) Attendees were provided with sticky notes and a large white paper to capture any **open-ended feedback** and additional ideas.

The following table shows the number of responses per feedback channel by meeting location. Feedback from each of the channels was holistically integrated and considered proportionally based on number of responses in determining the emerging themes from this open house series.

FEEDBACK CHANNEL	Aurora	Lowry	Goodson	TOTAL
(1) Handout <i>(number completed)</i>	10	3	19	32
(2) “What If” Boards <i>(number of stickers)</i>	699	362	749	1810
(3) Open-Ended Feedback <i>(number of comments from both sticky notes and “How was your journey” papers)</i>	76	181*		275

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\* Almost all of these 181 responses came from Goodson. Only a few sticky notes were added in Lowry, and Lowry did not include the “How was your journey” station because of its outdoor setting. The few Lowry sticky notes were collected at the same time as the Goodson notes and analyzed together.

The meetings were a success in terms of increasing awareness of the Canal and helping residents understand the full scope of the Canal's 71 miles. For example, participants shared that "This was a great experience that opened my mind to the total of the High Line Canal" and "It was very interesting to learn how each section is unique and what each section has to offer."

#### OVERALL EMERGING THEMES

Most common themes for enhancing the Canal that were heard at all meetings include:

- Habitat & Conservation
- Awareness & Wayfinding
- Water & Stormwater
- Education & Interpretation
- Active Recreation

Across all locations there was agreement in requesting **infrastructure improvements**: bathrooms, signage, wayfinding, benches, picnic tables, trash cans, trailheads, etc. Additional environmental education opportunities were also of interest to many participants. **Adjacent supportive development** (cafes, breweries, bike rental, etc.) was felt to be appropriate in some areas, but the majority of attendees did not want extensive development or event programming on the trail itself. Finally, the need for **more education and awareness** about the Canal as a resource was acknowledged by many as well. Desires for **maps and trail guides** were strong at all locations, even at Goodson Recreation Center where participants on average were already more familiar with the Canal than other locations. **Habitat enhancements** including tree planting programs, stormwater & rainwater harvesting, and more conservation was also desired at all locations.

A few areas of overall conflicting feedback were biking and dog-walking. Many use the trail for these activities, but others complained of high speed bikers or dogs off leash posing dangers to walkers.

Helpful ideas included developing a network of volunteers to clean up or maintain the trail, partnering with local organizations to spread awareness and publicity of the trail, or creating accompanying education programs with schools to use the Canal as an outdoor learning resource – and many more.

#### LOCATION DIFFERENCES

Some of the emerging themes differed per meeting location. The Goodson Rec Center and Lowry Town Center meeting participants agreed on themes related to **naturally preserving the trail as-is**. We heard about the **fear of overdevelopment**, or the Canal losing its character as a peaceful nature retreat from urban life. Themes in these locations tended toward **nature-focused topics** like stormwater management, tree planting programs, and existing open spaces, with a slight emphasis on trail markers and wayfinding from the Lowry Town Center participants. Goodson Rec Center respondents also were most vocal about **requesting that water remain** in the Canal as an amenity – suggested lining the Canal to prevent seepage or taking advantage of stormwater to fill the Canal, to both water trees and provide water as a recreational amenity.

In contrast, the attendees of the Aurora meeting were more likely to vote for ideas that would **activate the Canal more intentionally**, such as adventure play areas, fitness stations, public art, outdoor classroom spaces, or food trucks. There also seemed to be an emphasis from this meeting location on **habitat and ecological restoration**.

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**SUMMARY CHARTS**


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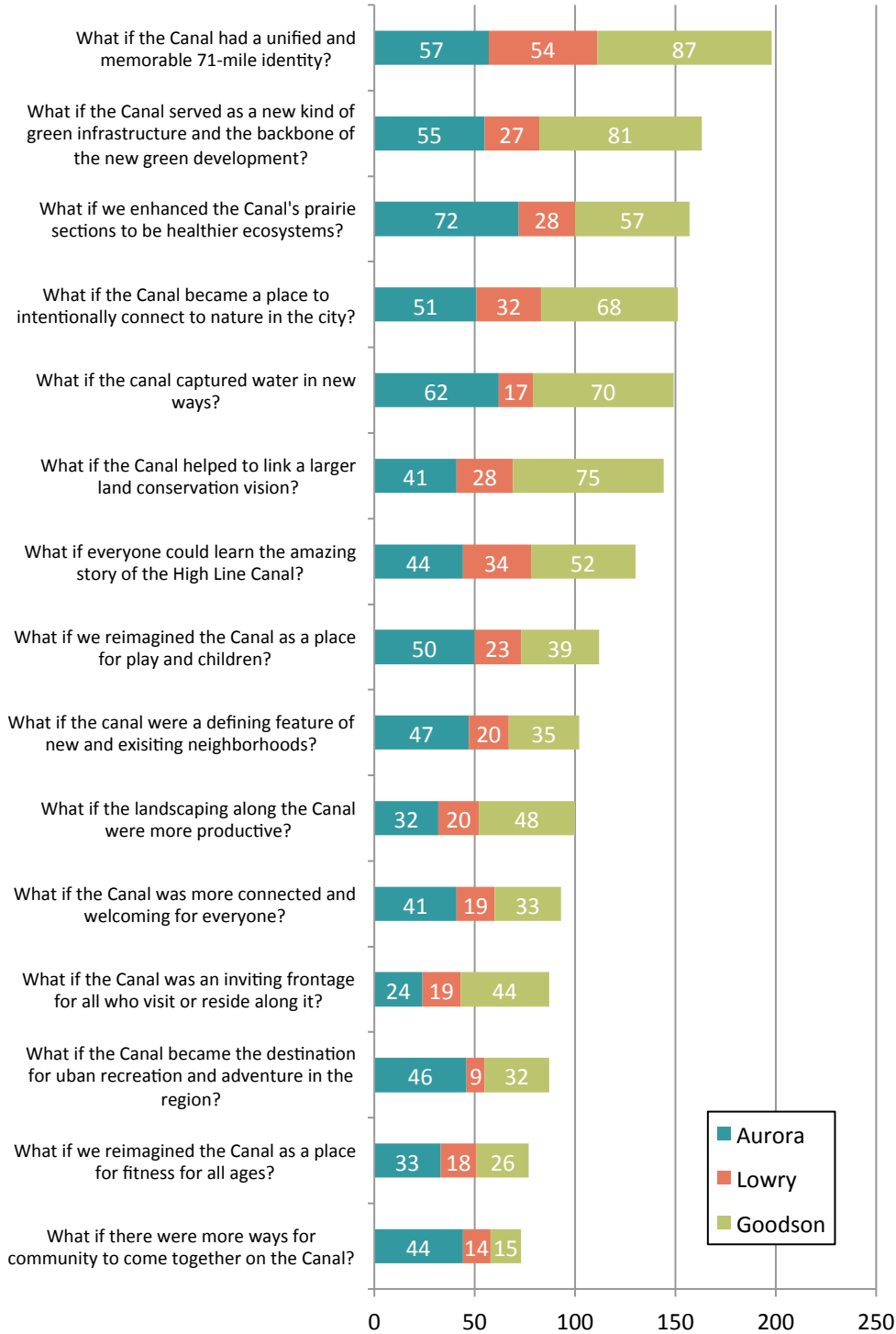
**(1) HANDOUTS**

<b>PROMPT</b>	<b>SAMPLING OF RESPONSES<sup>†</sup></b>
Visionary Statement <i>It is known far and wide as a...</i>	"A tremendous asset" "Beloved regional gem" "Natural, well-connected passage" "Peaceful retreat" "Recreational trail" "Urban nature connector"
Place <i>I first came to know the HLC when I visited...</i>	"Moved nearby, began walking the trail and fell in love with its natural beauty" "My backyard" "Rode my bicycle for recreation" "The trail through Fairmount Cemetery" Bible Park, DeKoevend Park, Waterton Canyon, Cherry Hills Village, Expo Park, Aurora, Centennial, Littleton
Adjectives <i>It captivated me with its...</i>	"Beauty" "Access to the countryside" "Many types of flora and fauna" "Natural beauty" "Peaceful parklike setting" "Wilderness in an urban setting"
Characters <i>You might bump into a...</i>	Fox, Deer, Coyote, Owl, Snake Friend, Neighbors, Cyclist Everyone, Anyone, People
Conflicts <i>Sometimes there was no... Other times, you'd be lucky to...</i>	"Know where you are" "Water supply source" "Way to cross the Canal" "Not get run down by cyclists" "Not easily crossing"
Happy Ending <i>From conflict to...</i>	"A community asset" "A people-friendly one" "Loved, preserved" "Open space vitalization" "Thriving animal habitat"
Theme <i>As a ___ for our region.</i>	"Corridor of transformation" "Peaceful retreat" "Symbol of community" "Natural refuge" "Place for connecting with others and with nature"

<sup>†</sup> Responses were chosen to represent the breadth of feedback received on these handouts. Themes heard multiple times are more likely to be represented in this table. See attached spreadsheet for full responses.

(2) "WHAT IF" BOARDS

Total number of dot stickers per idea by location

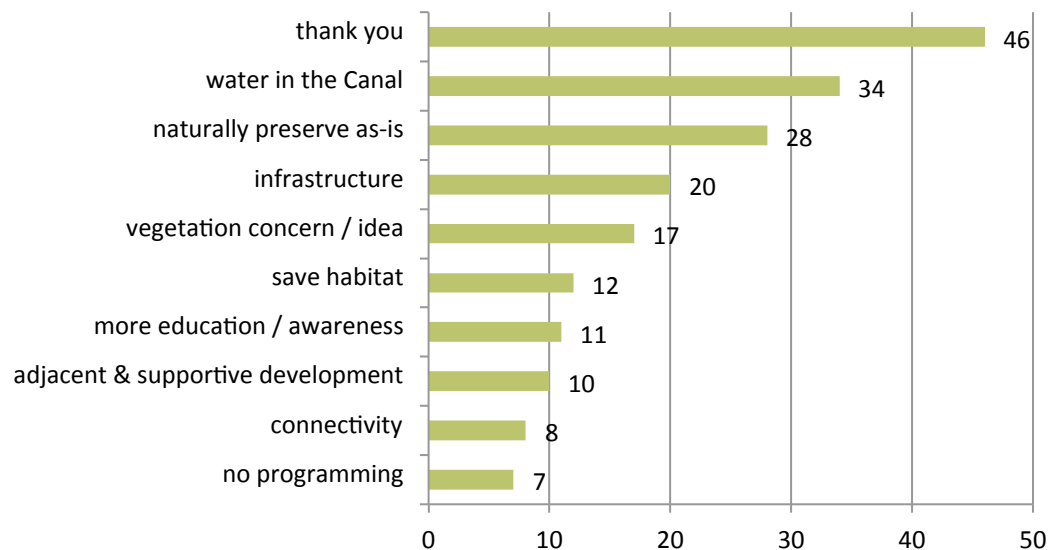


### (3) OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK

We received over 275 open-ended comments. To process these comments, written on sticky notes and large pieces of paper, each of the comments was assigned a theme. The table below shows the most commonly-recurring themes heard from attendees, while the outline below offers an explanation of how the themes were categorized and interpreted.

#### TOP 10 THEMES

*Most popular*



*Summary of all themes and descriptions:*

1. **Thank you (46)** – expression of thanks for hosting the meeting, or praise of presentation materials
2. **Water in the Canal (34)** – desire to maintain water in the Canal
3. **Naturally preserve as-is (28)** – warning against too much development or appreciation of natural, wild character of the Canal
4. **Infrastructure (20)** – request for wayfinding, benches, bathrooms, trash cans, picnic tables, etc.
5. **Vegetation concern / idea (17)** – need to maintain trees or plant more climate-appropriate species
6. **Save habitat (12)** – maintain the Canal's ecosystem as a healthy place for animals to live
7. **More education / awareness (11)** – increase awareness of the Canal and educate population about its resources
8. **Adjacent & supportive development (10)** – request for cafes, breweries, food trucks, etc. near to the Canal
9. **Connectivity (8)** – ideas for the HLC to connect to other trails, parks, or better connect to neighborhoods through pedestrian bridges
10. **No programming (7)** – expressed aversion for planned events and developed areas along HLC, in favor of keeping it as a natural retreat
11. **Specific location improvement (7)** – requests to improve crossings, nearby parks, or other specific locations
12. **Regional asset (6)** – acknowledging and celebrating the HLC as a long and diverse asset for the entire Denver region
13. **Funding (6)** – ideas for ways the Canal's improvements and upkeep could be funded (tax levies, corporate sponsorship, etc.)
14. **Walking dogs, good and bad (6)** – differing opinions about the appropriateness of dogs on the trail, both on and off leash

15. **Natural trail surface (6)** – expressed preference for gravel or dirt trail; do not want pavement along the trail
16. **Programmed space / event (5)** – some requests for play areas, urban farming, a 71-mile challenge
17. **Speed enforcements (5)** – complaints about high speed bikers, skateboarders, roller bladers, bike races
18. **Organizational / partnering (4)** – suggestions for the HLC to have state park status, to partner with developers, to rezone as one continuous park
19. **Volunteering (4)** – ideas about developing a HLC volunteer network for clean-up days, stewardship activities, planting, weed removal
20. **Crossings (4)** – recommendations for crossings to be improved
21. **No parking (3)** – some attendees felt strongly that parking should not be provided because they didn't want to encourage "outsiders" to visit
22. **Closing a trail gap (3)** – specifically the area of Santa Fe / Plum Creek
23. **Maintenance (3)** – relatively few complaints about maintenance (footpath improvements, cleaning)
24. **Birding (3)** – ideas to partner with Denver Audubon for birding hikes
25. **Buy adjacent parcels (3)** – request for someone related to the HLC to purchase adjacent parcels for conservation
26. **Tourism (3)** – some felt that the HLC has potential to become a walking vacation destination
27. **Active rec (3)** – general support of biking and exercise, including ideas about a HLC bike share program and exercise stations
28. **Quiet zones (2)** – some requested that certain areas of the HLC be cell-phone-free zones
29. **Public art (2)** – request for permanent or temporary art installations
30. **Historical context (2)** – suggestion to celebrate the Canal's history by making it more visible, such as in an app, signage, or through historical materials provided by HLCC
31. **Miscellaneous (2)** – comments that did not fit into the other themes ("We need red carpet along the Canal length," and "Against CCWWTS")

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