



HIGH LINE CANAL

CONSERVANCY

PROGRESS REPORT | QUARTER 1 • 2021

Dear Partners and Friends of the Canal,

As I look out the window at yet another Colorado spring storm, I do hope each of you has experienced the beauty of the Canal during these early spring sun and snow days! We are working hard for the Canal every day with finalizing plans for tree planting pilots, locating signage on the Canal and other critical first improvements prioritized in The Plan for the High Line Canal. As the darkness of the pandemic begins to lighten, we are thrilled at the thought of seeing so many of you out on the Canal and participating in an inspiring season of programs, stewardship events and our second annual Walk FOR the Canal community event!

Enjoy the report as we share recent and exciting updates on complete and in-the-works projects, including a comprehensive overview of all the on-the-ground projects slated for 2021, a detailed preview of Canal programs for the year and more ways to support the Canal and stay involved with the Conservancy. Your engagement in this work for the Canal sustains and lifts up each of us here at the Conservancy – nothing we do would be possible without you!

Tremendous progress toward implementing the community vision for the Canal will occur in 2021 and we look forward to sharing each step along this journey for the Canal with you all by our sides. Thank you for your trust in us and your passion to preserve, protect and enhance the High Line Canal!



Harriet Crittenden LaMair
Executive Director

The mission of the Conservancy is to preserve, protect and enhance the 71-mile-long High Line Canal, in partnership with the public.



Cover photo credit: Connie Brown

ABOUT THE HIGH LINE CANAL

As one of the longest urban trails in the nation, the High Line Canal (Canal) has long been a cherished asset across our region, tying distinct communities across Colorado together. The Canal was built in the 1880s to deliver South Platte River water to settlers and farmers following the gold rush in 1859. More than a century later, the Canal has outlived its historic purpose as an irrigation utility and taken on a new life as a recreational and ecological resource.



HIGH LINE CANAL
CONSERVANCY

ORIGINS OF THE HIGH LINE CANAL CONSERVANCY

The High Line Canal Conservancy (Conservancy) is a nonprofit representing the passionate community dedicated to preserving the Canal. The Conservancy was founded in 2014 to provide leadership that reflects the public's commitment to the Canal's sustainable future. Working collaboratively with its partners, including Denver Water, as well as the local governmental jurisdictions and stormwater managers along the Canal's reach, the Conservancy's efforts will lead to a natural, more connected corridor with improved access, amenities and safety for all trail users.

THE EMERGING CANAL COLLABORATIVE

New life for the Canal demands a new management structure that will support the Canal's role as a 71-mile linear park and emerging function as a stormwater management system. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is currently being finalized that will formally launch the Canal Collaborative this summer.

The Canal Collaborative will consist of three levels of engagement including a forum of elected officials, a leadership team of high-level staff and a series of technical advisory committees.

CANAL COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS

- › Arapahoe County
- › Aurora
- › Cherry Hills Village
- › The City and County of Denver
- › Denver Water
- › Douglas County
- › Greenwood Village
- › Highlands Ranch Metro District
- › High Line Canal Conservancy
- › Littleton
- › Mile High Flood District
- › Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority
- › South Suburban Park and Recreation District





2021 PROGRAM PREVIEW

GEARING UP FOR A SUMMER OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ON THE CANAL

We are looking forward to a bustling 2021 program season on the Canal that will include a series of trash cleanup, brush removal, weed removal and tree planting volunteer events.

To prepare for the upcoming stewardship season, the Conservancy will be hosting orientation and training opportunities for Canal Conservation Corps (CCC) leaders and outreach ambassadors throughout the summer to support our volunteer-led events. We also plan to offer several educational and recreational programs with our partners, including Denver Audubon, Walk2Connect and Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK).

How to get involved:

- › Volunteer at a stewardship event
- › Become a Corps Leader or Canal Ambassador
- › Plan your own independent cleanup
- › Host a group or corporate event

Our 2021 volunteer stewardship goals:

 **325**
volunteers
engaged

 **10K**
pounds
removed

 **175**
trees
planted

[Click here to view our stewardship event schedule.](#)

Please let us know if you know of any groups interested in partnering or receiving a presentation from us.

LAUNCHING THE CANAL CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC)

The CCC harnesses the commitment of community members from across the region, enabling and inspiring them to work together to enhance the Canal's ecological health, safety and future vitality. Through thoughtful planning, training and management, a corps of volunteers, representing all communities along the Canal, will measurably improve the Canal's ecosystem and the enjoyment by users for generations to come.

The CCC will be guided by The Plan for the High Line Canal and Canal-wide natural resources management as set forth by the newly formed Canal Collaborative – a formal management structure between the Conservancy, Denver Water and 11 local government partners to support the Canal's future roles as a 71-mile linear park and stormwater management system.

Goals of the CCC:

- › Improve and protect the ecological health and vitality of the 71-mile, 850-acre corridor ensuring trees, plants and wildlife thrive;
- › Increase Canal use and improve user experience resulting in improved community health and well-being; and
- › Inspire and enable community members to engage as active stewards while cultivating future generations to protect and preserve the corridor into the future.

HIGH LINE CANAL AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Ambassador Program is a new program to recruit and train a group of dedicated community members to build awareness of the Canal and gain a deeper level of engagement with the communities along the 71-mile reach. Ambassadors serve as representatives of the Conservancy and help with the following:

- › Support outreach and marketing efforts;
- › Lead and attend community programs and events;
- › Monitor Canal use and user enjoyment;
- › Promote trail safety;
- › Support environmental education and recreational programs; and
- › Increase public awareness of Canal enhancements and our work.

Ambassadors help the Conservancy gain a deeper understanding of the environmental health, varied community use, safety concerns and improvement project updates occurring on the Canal. Their presence on the Canal increases community engagement and visibility of the Conservancy, while also increasing equitable access to the Canal by creating more connections between their neighbors, the Canal and our organization.

PREPARING FOR A SECOND YEAR OF WALK FOR THE CANAL

Our inaugural Walk FOR the Canal was such a success that we're bringing it back for the second year in a row! Get ready to walk, bike, run, roll, skip, or scoot 71 miles from August 1 - October 10, 2021, while supporting our beloved Canal.

Stay tuned in the coming months for registration details and new ways to participate in the event.

Want to learn more about sponsorship opportunities for Walk FOR the Canal? Email Lindsay@highlinecanal.org for details.

Interested in joining the CCC or becoming an Ambassador? Reach out to us at volunteer@highlinecanal.org for more information and upcoming training opportunities.



2021 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AT-A-GLANCE

Several critical improvement projects will be culminating in 2021, including the completion of three much-anticipated underpasses. This year also marks the first year that the Conservancy will be funding improvement projects in partnership with the local governments, marking an important new phase for this public-private partnership.

2021 DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS



ACCESS

- 2 pedestrian bridges
- 2 trailheads



CONNECTIVITY

- 5 underpasses
- 1 trail gap connection
- 2 enhanced at-grade crossings



SIGNAGE

- New mile markers
- 168 wayfinding signs



LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

- 225 new trees



STORMWATER

- 2 stormwater projects

We are thrilled to debut the Canal's new Colorado red sandstone mile markers. These mile markers were funded with the generous support of the [Conservancy's Founding Partners](#).



MAP KEY



Crossing Enhancement



Underpass



Trail Enhancement



Stormwater Project



Trailhead



Pedestrian Bridge

Aurora Trail Completion Phase II:
North of Colfax and I-70 Underpass

8th Ave Pedestrian Bridge

Parker & Mississippi Underpass

Windsor Trail Surface Enhancement (Design)

Valentia Street At-Grade Crossing Enhancement

Eisenhower Park Stormwater Project

Hampden & Colorado Underpasses
Hampden Trail Connection

Bellevue Trailhead

Orchard Road At-Grade Crossing Enhancement

Elati Street Pedestrian Bridge Replacement

Writer's Vista Enhancements

Santa Fe Underpass

Solstice Stormwater Project and Linear Park

Origin Story Trailhead (Design)

WATERTON
CANYON

FULL 2021 PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Mile Markers

The new High Line Canal mile markers have been installed! These Colorado red sandstone markers have replaced the existing mile markers and will help orient users and guide their travel along the corridor. These mile markers were funded by the Conservancy and made possible with the generous support of private donors. The mile marker locations have been reoriented to follow the trail rather than the Canal itself, so the locations differ slightly from the old mile markers. While this round of installation is complete, there are eight mile markers that will not be installed until improvement projects are completed. These eight mile markers that will be installed later on are for miles: 7, 10, 37, 48, 63, 64, 70, 71.

Valentia Street At-Grade Crossing Enhancement

The Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) recently completed safety upgrades at Valentia Street and the Canal in the Windsor neighborhood. The enhanced crossing at Valentia Street includes a pedestrian activated signal, improved signage and additional striping. This at-grade crossing enhancement comes on the heels of another safety upgrade completed in late 2020, this one at Holly Street and Iliff Avenue in the Goldsmith neighborhood.

Hampden Underpass Pedestrian Bridge Connection

The City of Cherry Hills Village has installed a pedestrian bridge to create a trail connection to the new underpass being installed at Hampden Avenue. The project used a combination of city funds and grants from Arapahoe County to make this critical connection. Users will follow the existing High Line Canal Trail to Hampden and will then be able to cross the newly installed footbridge across the canal and follow a new trail to reach the underpass once construction is completed.

- › Location: High Line Canal south of Hampden Avenue
- › Status: Pedestrian Bridge
- › Funding: This project is funded by Cherry Hills Village (\$175,000) and Arapahoe County Open Spaces (\$175,000)

ACTIVE PROJECTS

Signage and Wayfinding

In 2020, Aurora was the first jurisdiction to install portions of the newly designed High Line Canal sign package. This year, 168 wayfinding signs will be installed across the Canal to build awareness, improve access and connect users to new parts of the trail. These new signs will include crossing signs that identify street crossings, wayfinding signs to help connect to destinations along the trail and kiosks with maps to help orient users and inform them about rules of the trail.

- › Location: Canal-Wide
- › Status: Fabricator selected. Content currently being finalized. Installation anticipated in Q2 and Q3 of 2021
- › Funding: Each jurisdiction along the Canal will be funding part of their sign package, with Arapahoe County Open Spaces and the High Line Canal Conservancy providing matching funds. The total project cost for this round of signage is \$506,332

Parker and Mississippi Underpass

In partnership with Arapahoe County, The City and County of Denver is constructing an underpass at the busy intersection of Parker and Mississippi. Construction began in November 2020 and is anticipated to be completed by fall of 2021. The High Line Canal trail is closed from Parker Road north to the edge of Fairmount Cemetery and a trail detour is in place. [Click here to learn more.](#)

- › Location: E. Mississippi Ave. and S. Parker Road
- › Status: Construction started in November 2020 and is anticipated to be completed by fall of 2021
- › Funding: \$3.2M FASTER Federal Funds, \$1.75M from the City and County of Denver, and \$1.75M from Arapahoe County

Eisenhower Park Stormwater Project

The Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure began construction of an innovative green stormwater infrastructure project from Hampden Ave to I-25, including along Eisenhower Park and Wellshire Golf Course. The project includes three water quality berms in the Canal to manage the flow of water, four forebays to clean water before it reaches the Canal and two underground water quality vaults to remove trash and sediment. Construction will continue into Q4 and localized closures will be in place during construction. [Click here to learn more.](#)

- › Location: 1 mile of the Canal from Hampden Ave to I-25, including Eisenhower Park
- › Status: Construction started in March 2021 and will be completed in Q4
- › Funding: \$1,050,000 from Denver DOTI

Colorado and Hampden Underpasses

The City of Denver, Arapahoe County and Cherry Hills Village have come together to create a safe connection where there currently is a significant gap in the Canal trail. Two underpasses have been installed, one at Hampden Ave. and one at Colorado Blvd., and a stretch of trail is currently under construction on the edge of Wellshire golf course. These underpasses will significantly improve the safety of crossing this challenging intersection and better connect Cherry Hills Village and Denver. The project is anticipated to be completed in June of 2021. Where the Canal trail routes users on the sidewalk along Colorado Blvd., a detour is currently in place that takes users around Magna Carta Park. [Click here to learn more.](#)

- › Location: S. Colorado Blvd. and E. Hampden Ave.
- › Status: Construction began May 4th 2020; anticipated completion June 2021
- › Cost: \$5.4M, with \$4.32M coming from Federal Sources and \$1.08M coming from the City and County of Denver, Cherry Hills Village and Arapahoe County

Greenwood Village Tree Planting Pilot

The City of Greenwood Village is beginning the process of planting trees along the Canal, reinvigorating the tree canopy and enhancing the Canal's ecological health. Greenwood Village will be planting 50 trees this May, planting two varieties of Cottonwood, Boxelder, Hackberry, Bur Oak, Chinkapin Oak, Kentucky Coffeetree, Mesa Glow Maple and Catalpa.

- › Location: Multiple locations throughout Greenwood Village
- › Status: Planting anticipated in May
- › Cost: The City of Greenwood Village is funding tree planting and watering

Bellevue Trailhead

The City of Greenwood Village has nearly completed a trailhead off Bellevue Ave near the Marjorie Perry Nature Preserve. This trailhead will provide access to the preserve and the High Line Canal trail, adding signage and a restroom.

- › Location: Bellevue Ave just west of the High Line Canal
- › Status: Trailhead completion anticipated in May with signage installed in July
- › Cost: Greenwood Village funded improvements to the trailhead and acquisition was supported by Greenwood Village and Arapahoe County Open Spaces

Solstice Stormwater Project and Linear Park Trail

Solstice is a new residential development in Douglas County just south of Chatfield State Park. The Canal runs through the development and the developer has pulled back the banks of the Canal to convey stormwater. The developer is featuring the Canal at the center of the development, incorporating the Canal corridor into a 37-acre linear park that will expand the size of the open space on either side of the Canal. The developer has planted trees to reestablish vegetation in the area, leveraging the additional stormwater that will make its way to the Canal. Construction of the linear park is still in progress but the High Line Canal trail is open to the public.

- › Location: High Line Canal west of Roxborough Park Road
- › Status: Construction of the linear park is still in progress but the High Line Canal trail is open to the public
- › Funding: The project is funded by the developer and the Canal will be cared for in this reach by the newly formed Mirabelle Metro District

UPCOMING PROJECTS

Aurora Trail Completion Phase II: North of Colfax and I-70 Underpass

The City of Aurora is working to construct 3 miles of trail connecting the longest gap along the Canal corridor. The project is being implemented in two phases with phase 1 completed in October 2020. Phase 1 included construction of over 1 mile of trail from just north of I-70 to the border with Denver in the Green Valley Ranch neighborhood plus the installation of new signage. Design has begun on the second phase, which will include the I-70 underpass and connection to Colfax to the south.

- › Location: High Line Canal from Colfax to Denver/the Green Valley Ranch neighborhood
- › Status: Northern half completed, southern half currently in design
- › Funding: Conservation Trust Fund, Adams County Open Space Grant, Adams County Open Space Tax Shareback, Federal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The total project cost is currently \$4,850,000

Laredo Highline Access and Awareness Improvements

The Conservancy is partnering with the City of Aurora and Arapahoe County Open Spaces to construct a pedestrian bridge, install signage and place natural elements along the Canal in the

Laredo Highline neighborhood of Aurora between 6th Ave and Colfax Ave. The pedestrian bridge will be located where 8th Ave meets the Canal and additional improvements will be installed throughout the neighborhood.

- › Location: High Line Canal from 6th Ave to Colfax Ave
- › Status: Funded, design to begin in May
- › Funding: The Conservancy has raised funds for this project from The Colorado Health Foundation (\$180,000) and Aurora has secured a match from Arapahoe County Open Spaces (\$180,000)

Enhanced Trail Surface Design

The City and County of Denver and Arapahoe County Open Spaces will begin the process of design and engineering for an enhanced trail surface in 2021. The Plan for the High Line Canal proposes a divided trail surface, providing a segment of concrete trail and a gravel side path that will help to separate users and improve trail safety. Design and engineering work will cover much of Denver and Unincorporated Arapahoe County, but implementation will begin in the Windsor neighborhood of East Denver, with trail surface enhancement anticipated to begin in 2022.

- › Location: High Line Canal in Denver and Unincorporated Arapahoe County
- › Status: Design to begin in May
- › Funding: Design work is funded by Denver Parks and Recreation and Arapahoe County Open Spaces

Conservancy Tree Planting

The Conservancy has raised funds to plant 175 trees along the Canal in 2021, 75 in Denver, 50 in Centennial and 50 in Littleton. These trees will be planted in September and October and the Conservancy plans to engage volunteers to assist with the planting projects. The final tree palette and detailed planting locations are currently being developed.

- › Location: Denver, Centennial and Littleton
- › Status: Funded, tree palette and planting plans in development
- › Funding: The Conservancy has raised funds through Walk FOR the Canal, Great Outdoors Colorado (Denver), the City of Centennial (Centennial) and an anonymous foundation (Littleton) to plant and water trees, for a total budget of \$175,000

Littleton Neighborhood Canal Improvements

The Conservancy, South Suburban Park and Recreation District (SSPRD) and Arapahoe County Open Spaces are partnering on a series of improvement projects that will be designed in 2021 with some projects implemented this fall.

These projects include the replacement of the Elati Street Pedestrian Bridge, the design of a trailhead off of Dry Creek Ct, construction of amenities and installation of an interpretive sign. The Conservancy will lead a community engagement process this summer with the support of SSPRD to design these improvements and engage neighbors in the planting of 50 trees between Lee Gulch and Windermere Street.

- › Location: The Heritage Neighborhood of Littleton
- › Status: Project funded, design to begin in May
- › Funding: The Conservancy has raised funds from an anonymous foundation to partner with SSPRD and Arapahoe County Open Spaces

Writers Vista Park Enhancements

South Suburban Park and Recreation District has secured funding from Arapahoe County Open Spaces to update the restrooms and picnic shelter at Writers Vista Park. Writers Vista serves as a critical trailhead and access point for the High Line Canal and these enhancements will provide valuable facilities for Canal users.

- › Location: Writers Vista Park
- › Status: Project funded. Improvements anticipated in 2021
- › Funding: The project is funded with \$136,925 from SSPRD and \$410,775 from Arapahoe County Open Spaces

Sante Fe/Highway 85 Crossing

As part of the Sante Fe/Highway 85 improvements between C-470 and Highlands Ranch Parkway, a High Line Canal pedestrian underpass is being planned and funded by CDOT and Douglas County. The pedestrian crossing is estimated at \$3.5 million and could start construction in the fall of 2021.

- › Location: S. Santa Fe Drive and the High Line Canal
- › Status: Design underway. Construction could start in fall of 2021
- › Funding: The pedestrian underpass is estimated at \$3.5 million and is a part of the larger Santa Fe/Highway 85 widening project

Origin Story Trailhead Design

The Conservancy has raised funds to begin design of enhancements to The High Line Canal Origin Trailhead, located along Waterton Rd near the start of the Canal. A public input process will begin in Q3, partnering with Douglas County to engage surrounding communities and prioritize amenities to formalize the small parking area. This trailhead is intended to be an interpretive hub, educating

trail users about the Canal's unique history and connection to water in the West.

- › Location: Waterton Rd and the High Line Canal, where the Canal emerges from Waterton Canyon
- › Status: Design to begin in Q3
- › Funding: Design funded raised by the Conservancy through the South Suburban Park Foundation

MEDIA/PRESS

RECENT MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- › Aurora City Newsletter: "Sign up to help clean the High Line Canal," March 11, 2021
- › Denver Post YourHub: "High Line Canal Conservancy Moves to Historic Little Dry Creek Location," February 2, 2021
- › Littleton Independent: "Littleton to improve pedestrian safety with CDOT grants," January 17, 2021

Looking for content in your newsletter? Email us at hello@highlinecanal.org. Interested in sharing more about the story of the transformation of the Canal with your neighbors? [Click here to request a presentation from the Conservancy.](#)

Social media

The Conservancy continues to see steady growth in both audience and engagement across all social media platforms. Analytics to date:

- › Facebook followers: 2,141
- › Instagram followers: 1,995
- › Twitter followers: 952

FUNDRAISING/DEVELOPMENT

WALK FOR THE CANAL

Our inaugural Walk FOR the Canal was so successful that we are bringing it back for 2021. Stay tuned for more details and save the date for August 1 - October 10 for another exciting 71-day challenge to raise critical funds for the Canal.

HIGH LINE HERO MEMBERSHIP

Our High Line Hero membership base continues to grow. There are over 2,600 High Line Heroes from across the region. There's no better time to join or renew as a member. Visit joinhighlinecanal.org.



CONSERVANCY STAFF

Harriet Crittenden LaMair

– Executive Director

Suzanna Fry Jones

– Senior Director of Programs and Partnerships

Lindsay Moery

– Director of Development

Josh Phillips

– Director of Planning and Implementation

Connie Brown, part-time

– Community Relations and Development Specialist

Chip Brunk, part-time

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– Community Outreach and Programs Coordinator

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Elle Ritt

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Breana Winters

– Operations and Programs Manager

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SOUTHEAST METRO

STORMWATER AUTHORITY

Paul Danley

SSPRD

Rob Hanna

HIGH LINE CANAL WORKING GROUP

Thanks to these valuable regional elected officials and staff partners for their past service on the High Line Canal Working Group over many years. Their guidance, dedication and support is what makes all of this work possible.

Arapahoe County

Aurora

Centennial

Cherry Hills Land Preserve

Cherry Hills Village

Denver

Denver Water

Douglas County

Greenwood Village

High Line Canal Conservancy

High Line Canal Preservation Association

Highlands Ranch

Littleton

South Metro Land Conservancy

South Suburban Park and Recreation District



HIGH LINE CANAL CONSERVANCY

Upcoming Happenings





Spring & Summer Stewardship Events

Get involved with the Conservancy! Take a look at our 2021 stewardship program schedule and register for an upcoming event. Visit highlinecanal.org/stewardship for more information and to register.

Conservancy Open House

First Thursday of every month at 4 pm via Zoom. Join us online to ask about any Canal-related questions you have.

Stay informed

-  [@High Line Canal Conservancy](https://www.facebook.com/HighLineCanalConservancy)
-  [@COHighLineCanal](https://twitter.com/COHighLineCanal)
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-  highlinecanal.org

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DOUGLAS COUNTY
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