



HIGH LINE CANAL  
CONSERVANCY

# STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

2024-2026

NOVEMBER 2024



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Dear Partners and Friends of the Canal,

As the High Line Canal Conservancy approaches its 10-year anniversary, we are providing an update to our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan that reflects a shift in our work toward execution of goals we have worked to achieve over the past decade. This plan will direct our work to implement projects and management changes that will enhance public use and environmental health of the 71-mile High Line Canal.

Since our inception, the Conservancy has remained dedicated to our mission to preserve, protect and enhance all 71 miles of the High Line Canal in partnership with the public. Over the past decade, we've achieved significant milestones, including a regionally endorsed community vision and framework plan, fostering robust community engagement, and progress toward permanent protection of the Canal. In addition, the Conservancy is nearing the completion of a \$33 million capital campaign that will fund priority work identified in *The Plan for the High Line Canal*.

Since early 2023, Denver Water has been working to transfer ownership of the Canal to the local counties. Through this, we are preparing for the responsibility of Denver Water deeding the Conservancy a Conservation Easement. As we look ahead, we recognize the need to adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of our partners, communities and environment. In 2024 and through 2026, the Conservancy's responsibilities will expand in five key areas:

- ▶ Upholding the values contained in the Conservation Easement
- ▶ Implementation of more than 30 improvement projects in partnership with local governments
- ▶ Managing the Stewardship Fund
- ▶ Land ownership
- ▶ Public communications and community relations

These expansions underscore our commitment to implementation of *The Plan for the High Line Canal* that includes collaborative management, as well as proactive management, sustainability, and community engagement along the Canal.

Furthermore, we acknowledge our evolving role as the primary entity advocating for the entire continuous, connected linear park. With this role comes the responsibility of representing all communities and diverse users, as well as the obligation for its protection and sustaining its conservation values in perpetuity. To support and ensure continued progress during this time of ownership transition, while advancing efficiencies and effectiveness of the public private partnerships and the collaborative management model for the Canal, we plan to implement numerous measures to achieve specific identified outcomes as outlined in this update.

As we embark on this Strategic Plan Update, we invite your continued support and collaboration. Together, we are preserving and enhancing the High Line Canal as an environmental and recreational gem while establishing a legacy of community stewardship and vitality.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our shared mission.

Warm regards,

Harriet Crittenden LaMair  
CEO

Paula Herzmark  
Board Chair

# IMPACT STATEMENT

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The High Line Canal Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update is intended to guide the Conservancy dynamically through 2026, supporting the Canal's transition and providing a clear pathway forward for the Conservancy. The Conservancy will work with land owners, local agencies and communities to:

- ▶ Ensure protection and enhancement of the Canal's environmental and conservation values.
- ▶ Increase public use of the Canal through improved access, safety and quality of visitor experience.
- ▶ Foster community stewardship and engagement to ensure the canal benefits all communities along its reach.

## EQUITY STATEMENT

The Conservancy staff and Board of Directors prioritize equity and inclusion in all aspects of its work with the mission to preserve, protect and enhance all 71 miles of the High line Canal in partnership with the public. Through this mission, and as guided by this Strategic Plan Update, our goal is to support healthy lifestyles, improve the natural environment and enhance the Canal's infrastructure, ensuring that all people of our region – considering, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, economics, age, geography, ability, and sexual orientation – have access to a safe and welcoming outdoor space. As our region experiences rapid development and population growth, the Canal represents an opportunity to increase access to nature and improve recreational opportunities for generations of Coloradans while also building climate resilience.

### MISSION

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

### COMMUNITY VISION

The High Line Canal's 71 meandering miles will be preserved and enhanced as a cherished greenway that connects people to nature and binds varied communities together from the foothills to the plains.

### THE PARTNERS

- ▶ 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

# STRATEGIC GOALS

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## 2024 THROUGH 2026

Working in concert with its Partners, the Conservancy will ensure protection and enhancement of the Canal, increase public use, and foster community stewardship and engagement by achieving the following six strategic goals. These goals are supported by objectives as shown on the chart on the following page.

### 1. FACILITATE AND EXECUTE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

The Conservancy will facilitate and lead the Canal Collaborative as a cooperative regional governance structure and funding strategy to implement *The Plan for the High Line Canal* and care for the Canal. The Conservancy will ensure coordinated, consistent and equitable partner participation, investment, and communication.

### 2. IMPROVE USER ACCESS AND EXPERIENCE

The Conservancy will lead implementation of recommendations in *The Plan for the High Line Canal* to enhance access and user experience to make the Canal a valued destination for recreation, health and enjoyment along the regional corridor.

### 3. PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE CANAL'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION VALUES.

The Conservancy will implement and maintain standards, agreements and plans to support the Canal's environmental health, as well as uphold the Canal's conservation values by monitoring and enforcing the Conservation Easement, allowing the Canal to serve as a natural experience for people and be useful for water management, wildlife habitat, and vegetation diversity.

### 4. BUILD A ROBUST, REPRESENTATIVE AND ENGAGED CONSTITUENCY

Through communications and marketing efforts, the Conservancy will demonstrate and promote community benefit, expand public awareness and provide comprehensive, engaging communications to the public, funders and Partners to help build greater appreciation for the Canal, expand leadership, sustain funding, and ensure accountability. Communications and marketing efforts will reach local, regional, and national audiences.

### 5. SUSTAIN AND GROW FINANCIAL STABILITY THROUGH FUNDRAISING

The Conservancy will ensure sustained funding through diverse sources for protection, enhancement and management of the Canal, responsibly manage funds and fulfill commitments to funders.

### 6. BUILD CONSERVANCY ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Conservancy will improve internal systems and structures for continual efficacy and organizational excellency by enhancing human resources, leadership competencies, governance, systems, and processes.

## INTENDED IMPACT

The High Line Canal Conservancy will work with land owners, local agencies and communities to:

- ▶ Ensure protection and enhancement of the Canal’s environmental and conservation values.
- ▶ Increase public use of the Canal through improved access, safety and quality of visitor experience.
- ▶ Foster community stewardship and engagement to ensure the canal benefits all communities along its reach.

GOALS					
Facilitate and advance collaborative governance	Improve user access and experience	Protect the Canal’s environmental and conservation values	Build a robust, representative and engaged constituency	Sustain and grow financial stability through fundraising	Build Conservancy’s organizational capacity and excellence
Ensure coordinated, consistent and equitable partner participation, investment, and communication.	Physical improvements and on-Canal programs that increase use and improve equitable access.	Uphold the conservation values of the Canal and ensure long-term care through the Stewardship Fund.	Build understanding, connection, and support to enhance community awareness, trust and pride.	Develop diverse funding sources for protection and enhancement of the Canal and a sustainable Conservancy.	Enhance human resources, leadership competencies, governance, systems, and processes for efficacy.
OBJECTIVES					
<p>Adopt permanent protections of the corridor for public use</p> <p>---</p> <p>Facilitate a cooperative governance structure that includes financial and operational commitments with HLCC and Partners</p> <p>---</p> <p>Lead the Canal Collaborative to oversee and manage implementation of the Plan</p> <p>---</p> <p>Secure partner commitments to construct and maintain capital improvements</p> <p>---</p> <p>Secure public financial commitments to leverage private support</p> <p>---</p> <p>Support land owners to develop sustainable systems for management and accountability.</p>	<p>Manage design of improvements in line with the community’s vision</p> <p>---</p> <p>Oversee design and guide project completion to budget, schedule and in accordance with design guidelines.</p> <p>---</p> <p>Advance processes to identify needs, improvements, programs and partnerships</p> <p>---</p> <p>Build and maintain partnerships to enhance programs and community engagement</p> <p>---</p> <p>Strengthen recreational and educational programming with local communities and partners</p> <p>---</p> <p>Grow and manage the volunteer program to build on interest, support and needs</p> <p>---</p> <p>Provide free and inclusive programs across the entire Canal</p> <p>---</p> <p>Develop comprehensive interpretive plans that include historical, ecological and cultural information</p>	<p>Hold and manage the conservation easement in accordance with procedures</p> <p>---</p> <p>Sustainably manage the Stewardship Fund and associated work</p> <p>---</p> <p>Create a healthy and resilient plant community and ecosystem through tree plantings and restoration of existing natural resources</p> <p>---</p> <p>Support the community stewardship plan and build local support and protection through the Canal Conservation Corps</p> <p>---</p> <p>Lead development and adoption of a Natural Resources Management Plan</p> <p>---</p> <p>Advance the stormwater transition across the Canal</p>	<p>Expand public awareness through events, programs, presentations, digital channels, and on site</p> <p>---</p> <p>Creatively and proactively tell the compelling story of the Canal through local, regional and national channels</p> <p>---</p> <p>Expand and foster local, regional and national partners</p> <p>---</p> <p>Coordinate consistent Canal Collaborative communications internally and publicly</p> <p>---</p> <p>Track and report progress on impact of the Conservancy’s and Partners’ work consistently</p> <p>---</p> <p>Develop comprehensive public communication and marketing plans that promote the Canal as a recreational and natural resource</p>	<p>Generate a sustainable operating budget that includes a diverse stream of revenues</p> <p>---</p> <p>Manage campaign funds in support of project implementation</p> <p>---</p> <p>Increase donor retention by stewarding new and longtime Conservancy donors with meaningful communications</p> <p>---</p> <p>Identify and cultivate new major individual and foundation donations</p> <p>---</p> <p>Secure sponsors and in-kind donations for events and programs</p> <p>---</p> <p>Offer HLCC branded events that fulfill funding goals and are effective and sustainable</p> <p>---</p> <p>Launch planned giving program</p>	<p>Provide oversight and management of office administration, budget, human resources and operations</p> <p>---</p> <p>Develop staff to align with skills and competencies needed to meet goals and objectives</p> <p>---</p> <p>Cultivate a Board of Directors with collective expertise to support organizational growth, meet fundraising goals and strengthen external relations</p> <p>---</p> <p>Advance organizational leadership and management succession plans</p> <p>---</p> <p>Create strong team work structures and maximize impacts across departments</p> <p>---</p> <p>Enhance volunteer structure and systems</p>



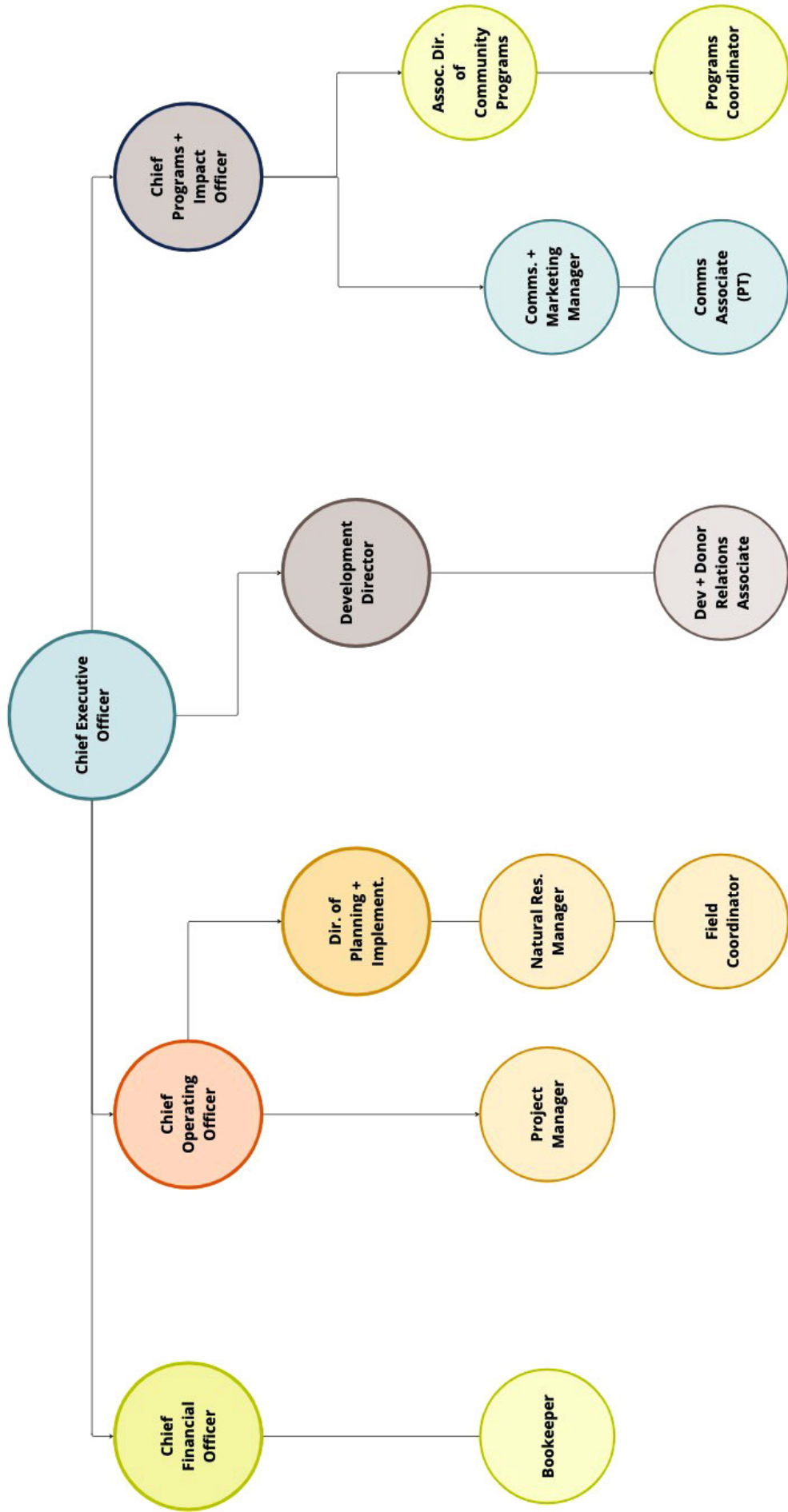
**HIGH LINE CANAL**  
C O N S E R V A N C Y

# EXHIBITS

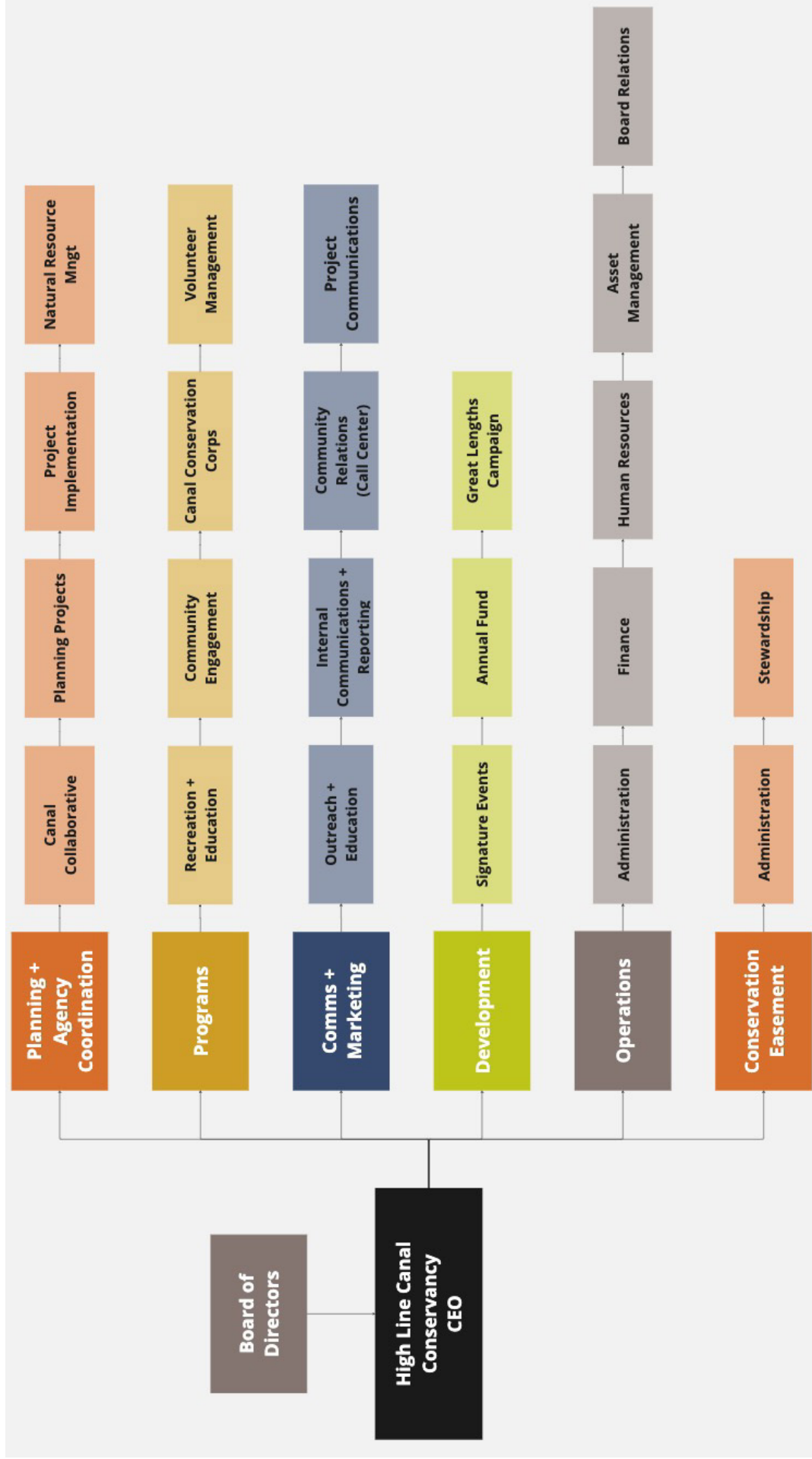
STAFF CHART

HLCC ROLES

# STAFF CHART



# HIGH LINE CANAL CONSERVANCY ROLES







# HIGH LINE CANAL

## CONSERVANCY

Connecting Communities – Connecting Nature  
From the Foothills to the Plains

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