

Granby Ditch Open Space & Overlook

Joint Project Application

City of Aurora

Ms. Nicole Ankeney

15151 E. Alameda Pkwy. Ste. 3600
Aurora, CO 80012

nankeney@auroragov.org
O: 303-326-8947

Application Form

Application Summary

Grant Category*

Select One:

Joint Project

Primary Contact Information*

Please provide information for the primary contact for this project in the following format.

Agency:

Name:

Title:

Telephone:

Email:

City of Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department

Curtis Bish

Principal Planner

303-739-7131

cbish@auroragov.org

Project Type*

Select One:

- **Trail Project:** Trail/trailhead construction or improvement, including stream/road crossings and trailhead amenities (such as parking, restrooms or shelters)
- **Site Improvement Project:** New construction, improvement, repair, or replacement of passive outdoor recreation amenities
- **Acquisition Project:** Eligible projects include fee simple acquisition of land for public open space or trails; acquisition of buffer land; acquisition of a conservation easement; and/or acquisition of water rights
- **Other Project:** Other allowable projects include stream/habitat restoration, natural re-vegetation, and water quality improvement

Site Improvement Project

Project Title*

Granby Ditch Open Space & Overlook

Project Address

High Line Canal North of 7th Ave

Project Location*

Select all that apply:

Aurora

GPS Coordinates (Latitude in Decimal Degrees)*

Example: Dove Valley Regional Park

Latitude: 39.577303

39.728170

GPS Coordinates (Longitude in Decimal Degrees)*

Example: Dove Valley Regional Park

Longitude: -104.828850

-104.804893

Grant Request Amount*

\$95,000.00

Cash Match Amount*

\$95,000.00

Total Project Amount*

Total project amount includes grant request and cash match only. Please do not include in-kind match.

\$190,000.00

Cash Match Percentage*

Calculate cash match as % of total project cost.

50

Project Partners

List partner agencies if applicable.

High Line Canal Conservancy

Executive Summary*

Highlight key points of your proposal, such as project description, components, deliverables, need, goals, beneficiaries, planning, etc.

The City of Aurora has come together with Arapahoe County Open Spaces, High Line Canal Conservancy and all of the jurisdictions along the High Line Canal to plan for the Canal's future as a recreational and ecological resource. The result, The Plan for the High Line Canal (The Plan), has identified and prioritized projects that will enhance the user experience on the trail through improved access, awareness, connectivity and activation. The Plan prioritizes improvements in Aurora and Northeast Denver where the Canal connects diverse communities and yet is significantly underutilized compared to other reaches of the trail. This project will implement priorities identified in The Plan in Aurora, adding amenities along the trail that create an overlook and interpretive stop along the Canal where the trail borders the Granby Ditch Open Space. This improvement area will activate the corridor with a nature-based overlook that includes natural elements, seating, wayfinding signage and interpretive signage.

After completing a community-centered design process in 2023 to develop the plan for improvements in this area, the High Line Canal Conservancy (Conservancy) successfully procured funding from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) focused on improvements in north Aurora that activate the trail and connect communities to nature. The neighborhoods along the Canal in north Aurora are 40% Latino, 20% African American and 5% percent Asian American. The median household income in these areas is \$41,000 per year, less than half of the median household income of the Denver Metro Area. The City of Aurora's and the Conservancy's interest is in removing barriers to using the trail for recreation and positioning the Canal as a catalyst of community health. Aurora PROS is requesting funds from ACOS to match these private funds raised by the Conservancy to implement these critical projects and invest in these north Aurora neighborhoods.

This project will include steppingstones in the Canal providing an alternative access to the trail, a natural overlook to provide a spot to stop, rest and enjoy the natural open space, natural resource restoration, seating, wayfinding signage and interpretive signage. The natural overlook will utilize gravel and boulders to establish a pull off from the trail and seating to provide visual interest and invite users to enjoy the natural open space. Natural resource restoration will focus on planting along the Canal and, adding shade for trail users and habitat for wildlife. Seating will improve user comfort and accessibility while connecting trail users to the natural open space. A series of signs will provide wayfinding and interpretive information to neighborhood residents and trail users, implementing a portion of the Canal-wide sign package. The goals of the project are to increase use of the trail through improved access and awareness while improving community health and the ecological health of the Canal.

Authorized Signature

Certification and Authorized Signature Form*

Please attach completed Certification and Authorized Signature Form as a PDF document. Form must be signed by highest authority in agency or authorized individual. *Staff will email you the form.*

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_CertificationandAuthorizedSignatureForm.pdf*

SIGNED GranbyDitch_Certification and Authorized Signature Form.pdf

Project Timeline

Project Timeline Form*

Please attach completed Project Timeline Form as a PDF document. *Staff will email you the form.*

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_TimelineForm.pdf*

Aurora PROS Granby_Project Timeline Form.pdf

Project Budget

Budget Forms*

Please attach completed Summary Budget Form and Detailed Expense Budget Form as a single PDF document. *Staff will email you the form.*

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_BudgetForms.pdf*

AuroraPROS Granby_BudgetForm (2).pdf

Project Narrative

Question 1*

Describe the project goals, scope, expected results, and deliverables. Discuss the current condition of the project site and what improvements, if any, are proposed and why. Discuss how this project preserves open space, improves access to the outdoors, creates connectivity, and/or provides educational opportunities.

The project's goals are to increase use of the trail through improved access and awareness, improve community health and enhance the Canal's ecological health. This project will have deliverables, all of which are prioritized in The Plan: stepping stones in the Canal that provide an alternative access to the trail, a natural overlook to provide a spot to stop, rest and enjoy the natural open space, natural resource restoration, seating, wayfinding signage and interpretive signage. The natural overlook will utilize crusher fines and boulders to establish a pull off from the trail and informal seating to invite users to enjoy the adjacent open space. Natural resource restoration will focus on planting along the Canal and tree planting within the open space, adding shade for trail users and habitat for wildlife. A series of signs will provide wayfinding and interpretive information to neighborhood residents, implementing a portion of the Canal-wide sign package.

The site of the stepping stones provides a connection to the Canal for the north Aurora community as it connects to a well-worn social trail has been developed in this location, demonstrating a high-level of use from the adjacent neighborhood. However, access is currently gained by walking through the Canal itself, making the access point inaccessible and unsafe. The Canal corridor in the neighborhood has a high-quality trail but lacks formal access points, signage, and amenities to help users connect along the trail and promote recreation. Planting around the project site will improve the user experience along the Canal while

supporting the ecological health of the corridor. Interpretive signage will create educational opportunities for trail users, connecting the community to the unique history of the Canal and the importance of conservation.

Question 2*

Describe the community/neighborhood and user groups the project will serve. Discuss the type of users (children, families, seniors, etc.), and estimate the number of users that will benefit annually. How did you arrive at this estimate? *Include up to five community support letters in the Attachments section. Support letters should come from users, working groups, community members, volunteers, schools, etc. Letters should be dated within the last six months.*

The north Aurora neighborhoods along the Canal are predominantly Latino and African American and the project will actively work to engage these communities in enhancing and activating the Canal. There are two schools in the neighborhood where this project site is located that serve low-income, diverse populations that are representative of their neighborhood. Hinkley High School has a rate of 72.4% free and reduced lunch and 94% of students are non-white. Laredo Elementary school has a rate of 84.9% free and reduced lunch and 91% of students are non-white. Engagement with these schools has been a critical component of the Conservancy's community engagement that has sought to empower the community and ensure a feeling of ownership in the neighborhood for the Canal. Moving these projects into implementation is critical to ensure that the community members who have been involved in public engagement processes can see these improvements come to life. Access improvements will create valuable opportunities to provide safe routes to school and partnerships with these educational institutions will be essential to catalyzing use of the Canal. There are other indicators of barriers to accessing health and wellness resources in this community as 20% of neighbors speak English less than very well and 22.6% do not have a high school diploma.

User counts performed by the Conservancy in north Aurora have recorded just 3-12 users per hour, though anecdotally these numbers increase before and after school. For comparison, user counts in the Canal's southern suburbs have consistently recorded 50-100 users per hour during peak use. Based on these user counts, assuming the average 7.5 users per hour in the neighborhood and extrapolating for the year, 32,850 total users would benefit from awareness and activation improvements in north Aurora. The Laredo Highline neighborhood is home to more than 6,300 residents living in over 2,200 households and these neighborhood residents will experience the greatest benefit.

Question 3*

Discuss the need and urgency for this project and why it is a priority. Was the project prioritized in a master plan or other planning document (including County Comprehensive Plan, County Open Space Master Plan, etc.), an independent community planning process, a working group, etc.? Is this part of a larger phased project? What opportunities will be lost if this project is not funded now?

This project was identified and prioritized in The Plan for the High Line Canal, a plan that has been endorsed by Aurora, Arapahoe County, and the Conservancy. The project was requested by local community members during a robust outreach process that informed both the High Line Canal Community Vision Plan (Vision Plan) and The Plan for the High Line Canal (The Plan). The Plan recommends significant investment in diverse communities along the trail, prioritizing Denver, and Aurora for a large proportion of enhancements. The Canal is underutilized in these communities and will require investments to reach its full potential as a recreational resource. The designs developed were cocreated with community members through robust community engagement efforts in 2023, and the community is eager to see these improvements come to life.

The Plan recommends a series of Community Activation Zones, areas of the Canal where investments are needed to increase use of the trail as a community resource and catalyst for improved community health. The

Plan states the goal of Community Activation Zones as: Increase health, wellness, and active uses by providing activation through the addition of nature play, gathering spaces, exercise stations or other activation types as identified in the Design Guidelines. Neighborhoods for these zones are called out explicitly in The Plan and focus on low-income and diverse communities where the Canal is underutilized. These investments will improve the user experience along the Canal and have the potential to improve community health in some of the most diverse communities in the region. The Conservancy's design process was supported by a private foundation and their share of implementation funds have been secured from GOCO, leveraging philanthropy to enhance the Canal in the Northeast.

This investment would represent one of the first efforts to construct community-informed improvements since completion of The Plan. If this project is not funded now, it will stymie momentum in achieving the level of investment in Aurora that is recommended in The Plan. Implementing all of the recommendations in The Plan in Aurora will require significant support from private sources, Arapahoe County Open Spaces and federal funding for transportation improvements. Demonstrating success will help the Conservancy continue to raise funds and show members of the community that progress is being made. These improvements will be further leveraged by the development of an underpass at the Canal's first crossing of Colfax. This \$12M project, funded with federal funds in addition to matching funds from Arapahoe County and Adams County, will provide a critical connection for trail users to connect along the Canal in north Aurora and utilize these improvement zones.

Question 4*

Summarize any planning completed prior to submitting this Joint Project proposal. Is design and engineering complete? Does the project necessitate a zoning change? List any permits that need to be obtained and status of obtaining those permits (Federal 404, County or City, Storm Water Drainage, etc.).

The master plan for these projects was developed in 2023 through a community-centered design process. Since that time, the Conservancy and Aurora PROS have progressed designs to 95% and the plans are in the 2nd review with the City of Aurora, Arapahoe County and Denver Water. Staff is working through final design comments from these agencies. The plans have also been submitted to the City of Aurora AMANDA review process to progress through their final review before Aurora can put the projects out to bid and start construction. The final approval for the project will come from Arapahoe County and Denver Water who will need to grant a license for these improvements that approve the plans and formalize Aurora PROS commitment to maintenance.

Question 5*

Describe the timeframe needed to complete the project. Discuss the agency's capacity to complete the project, including project management, resources, and experience implementing similar projects.

The goal is to complete this project by mid-2027. The City of Aurora will be responsible for bidding and hiring a construction contractor. The Conservancy will support project management in three ways: staff time dedicated by the Conservancy's Project Manager, a construction administration contract with the landscape architecture firm that has developed the plans and an outside project management firm that will be hired by the Conservancy to support Aurora PROS with construction oversight and payment applications. Aurora PROS has extensive experience completing park and trail improvements and the Conservancy's Project Manager and Chief Operating Officer have extensive experience overseeing construction projects in other capacities.

The Conservancy has also engaged a consultant team to complete a Canal-wide Interpretive Plan, and this team will develop interpretive signage for this site within this Canal-wide effort.

Question 6*

Summarize any efforts to obtain public input, disseminate information to the public, develop partnerships, and garner community support for this project. List the stakeholders that are involved. Discuss any known or anticipated opposition to this project and how this will be addressed. *Include letters, petitions, news articles, or other documents evidencing opposition in the Attachments section.*

The development of The Plan for the High Line Canal included engagement with over 5,000 residents across the region, providing far-reaching input about ways to enhance the Canal. Aurora PROS partnered with Arapahoe County Open Spaces and the High Line Canal Conservancy to develop both the Community Vision Plan and The Plan. Improved access to the Canal as one of the most important themes in The Plan and the Northeast reaches of the Canal highly prioritized activation and amenities.

Since 2019, the Conservancy piloted a collaborative and community-centered approach to engagement that, in recent years, has been replicated across the Northeast to cultivate meaningful involvement of local youth and their families, community leaders, and partner organizations that represent the diverse populations of the Northeast. Deep community engagement through the community-centered design approach ensures that all communities along the Canal engage in and co-lead the design of trail enhancements by establishing a community feedback structure that cultivates local leadership and decision-making.

Public engagement for the Granby Ditch trail improvements has occurred at two scales: a comprehensive effort across the northeast reach of the High Line Canal and site-specific engagement tied to the Laredo Highline neighborhood.

Overall Engagement

Outreach efforts for the Conservancy's GOCO-funded north Aurora initiative have reached over 55,000 people via postcards, social media, newsletters, and other channels. Formal feedback was received from more than 770 individuals through surveys and polls, and 305 people were engaged in person at community events. Partners have included local schools, libraries, rec centers, and places of worship, as well as organizations including Environmental Learning for Kids, Girl Trek, Groundwork Denver, Metro Denver Nature Alliance, Outdoor Afro, Promotores Verdes, Sand Creek Greenway, Spirit of the Sun, YES Coalition, and Mile High Youth Corps.

Feedback showed significant support for Canal improvements, especially for shade, seating, and safer access—top priorities in the Laredo Highline neighborhood.

In addition, in April 2024, the Conservancy hosted a community cleanup and engagement event with the Aurora Police Department to help build trust between neighbors and law enforcement and address safety concerns raised by residents. This event and ongoing outreach allowed for meaningful dialogue about both safety and design elements of the project.

Through continued engagement into 2024 and early 2025—including City Council town halls and meetings—150 additional residents have been reached with project information and design updates, reinforcing public awareness and ensuring community voice in shaping the final design.

Opposition and Response

Three neighbors living adjacent to the Canal near the Granby Ditch have expressed concern about the project, particularly regarding elements in the original master plan such as a shade structure and a land bridge crossing. These concerns focused on potential misuse by unhoused individuals and increased unauthorized motorized vehicle access. In response to this feedback, these two elements were removed from the final design, and Aurora PROS and the Conservancy continue to work with community members and City Council to address concerns and maintain support for the remaining project components.

Question 7*

How much of your planned cash match is secured? If applicable, what are your plans for raising additional funds? Describe cash and in-kind match partnerships established for the project. Explain if partnerships were not possible or necessary for this project. *Include partner support letters in the Attachments section and include match from partners on the Budget Forms. Joint Project recipients are responsible for project cost overruns.*

All matching funds have been secured from the Conservancy's GOCO grant, including construction funding, interpretive signage design, fabrication and installation as well as funding for contracted construction oversight and construction administration. The Conservancy's GOCO grant will also support Conservancy staff time and project management being contributed to the project in-kind. The Conservancy has also invested significant funds raised from a private foundation in staff time to manage the design and community engagement process as well as design costs associated with advancing the designs to 95%.

Question 8*

Describe any scenic, historic, or cultural values associated with the project site. Will they be preserved or restored? Discuss specific natural resources at the site (including habitat, water, wildlife, and vegetation) and impacts to these resources as a result of this project. If applicable, discuss environmental sustainability benefits of this project (such as energy or water conservation, water quality improvement, etc.).

The High Line Canal has significant historic value as a remnant of Aurora's agricultural heritage. The project will preserve the historic High Line Canal channel while providing opportunities to educate the local community about the Canal's history and its importance to the growth of Aurora. The Canal also forms an important habitat for wildlife and vegetation, providing a green spine for animals to move throughout the city. Natural resource restoration will enhance habitat for birds, insects, and small mammals while the stepping stones will limit the disruption of vegetation in the Canal channel.

This project will lay the groundwork for future engagement in this community, including educating local residents about the Canal's transition from irrigation facility to stormwater management system. This is particularly important in north Aurora, where irrigation water has not been delivered for over twenty years. This lack of water has taken a toll on the tree canopy, and Aurora now has the least dense tree canopy of any jurisdiction along the Canal.

Question 9*

Discuss ownership and legal access at the proposed project site. Detail any third-party rights, easements, or other encumbrances that exist.

Arapahoe County owns this portion of the High Line Canal and, jointly with Denver Water, will license these improvements. Denver Water delegates maintenance of the trail corridor to Aurora PROS through a recreational lease agreement. Access to the site will be coordinated with Arapahoe County and Denver Water.

Question 10*

Describe long-term plans for maintaining the project. Who will be responsible for maintenance? Estimate annual costs to maintain the site, and explain how maintaining this project site affects your agency's budget.

Aurora PROS will be responsible for maintenance of the site improvements and the Conservancy will be responsible for maintaining signage and benches. The site improvements maintenance cost will be considered and included in the annual operating budget and is documented in an executed funding agreement between Aurora PROS and the Conservancy. The Conservancy estimates that bench and sign

maintenance will cost approximately \$200 per year to remove graffiti and provide touch ups. These signs are a part of a significant sign package being installed across the Canal and represent a small percentage of the overall sign package implementation.

Question 11*

If applicable, describe how this project will address inclusivity per Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.

Aurora PROS and the Conservancy are committed to universal design and ensuring that site improvements are available to people of all abilities. The High Line Canal can be a great resource for people of varied abilities, as the trail has very little slope and the concrete path provides a high level of accessibility. Additional site amenities, such as natural elements, signage and seating will all be compliant with ADA guidelines.

Question 12*

If successful in obtaining Joint Project funding, how will the agency use this project to inform citizens about the value of the Arapahoe County Open Space Sales and Use Tax? Discuss plans for public outreach, signage, celebration, dedication, etc. *You are required to inform the County of any press about the project and any related events (ribbon cutting ceremonies, etc.). Additionally, acknowledgement of County support must be included in any press about the project.*

This project will acknowledge the value of the Arapahoe County Open Space Sales and Use Tax in several ways and highlight the County's key role as the owner of the Canal. All outreach and engagement materials will recognize Aurora PROS, Arapahoe County Open Spaces, GOCO, and the High Line Canal Conservancy. Temporary and permanent signage promoting improvements in the neighborhood will recognize all partners. Arapahoe County Open Spaces will have the opportunity to play a central role in any project related events.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Evidence of Support from Highest Authority*

Please attach evidence of support from the agency's highest authority (official letter or resolution) as a PDF document. At a minimum, this document must include: project title, amount of grant funds requested, statement that matching funds are secured and/or efforts to secure funds are underway (include the amount of matching funds committed), and certification that the project will be open to the public or serve a public purpose upon completion. *A sample resolution is available on the Open Space website.*

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_SupportfromHighestAuthority.pdf*

SIGNED GranbyDitch_Applicant_SupportHighestAuthority.pdf

Attachment 2: Evidence of Community Support

Please attach letters of support from users, working groups, community members, volunteers, schools, etc. (maximum of 5) as a single PDF document. Letters should be dated within the last 6 months.

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_CommunitySupport.pdf*

Aurora PROS Letters of Support- Combined.pdf

Attachment 3: Documentation of Opposition

Please attach documentation of opposition as a single PDF document. If there is no known opposition to this project, please attach a page stating that this section is not applicable.

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_Opposition.pdf*

Aurora PROS Granby Opposition.pdf

Attachment 4: Evidence of Commitment from Project Partners

Please attach evidence of commitment from project partners (such as partner support letters or commitment to provide cash/in-kind match) as a single PDF document. There is no maximum allowable number of partner support letters. If there are no partners for this project, please attach a page stating that this section is not applicable.

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_PartnerCommitments.pdf*

Aurora PROS Granby_Partner Support.docx.pdf

Attachment 5: Primary Project Photo*

Please attach one high resolution photo in JPG format. Please choose the photo that provides the best overall representation of your project. This photo will be used for presentations and/or publications.

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_PrimaryPhoto.jpg*

Aurora PROS Granby Ditch Open Space Photo.pdf

Attachment 6: Photos

Please attach photos of existing conditions at the project site (including captions) as a single PDF document. Include conceptual drawings if applicable.

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_Photos.pdf*

Aurora PROS Granby Ditch Open Space and Overlook photos.pdf

Attachment 7: Maps*

Please attach a site map and a vicinity map as a single PDF document.

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_Maps.pdf*

Aurora PROS Granby maps.pdf

Attachment 8: Other Attachments

Please attach additional supporting documentation (news article, cost estimate, appraisal, title commitment, etc.) as a single PDF document.

Please name your file as follows: *Applicant_OtherAttachments.pdf*

NAuroraCIZ_Engagement Summary_2023-2024.pdf

Confirmation

Please click the "I Agree" button below to certify that your application is complete and ready to submit. Once submitted, applications are final and cannot be returned.*

I agree

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- SIGNED GranbyDitch_Certification and Authorized Signature Form.pdf
- Aurora PROS Granby_Project Timeline Form.pdf
- AuroraPROS Granby_BudgetForm (2).pdf
- SIGNED GranbyDitch_Applicant_SupportHighestAuthority.pdf
- Aurora PROS Letters of Support- Combined.pdf
- Aurora PROS Granby Opposition.pdf
- Aurora PROS Granby_Partner Support.docx.pdf
- Aurora PROS Granby Ditch Open Space Photo.pdf
- Aurora PROS Granby Ditch Open Space and Overlook photos.pdf
- Aurora PROS Granby maps.pdf
- NAuroraCIZ_Engagement Summary_2023-2024.pdf



Certification and Authorized Signature Form

Please attach this form to grant and joint project applications submitted through the Arapahoe County Open Spaces Online Grant Portal.

By signing this form, I certify that:

- The information included in this application is true to the best of my knowledge.
- If funded, the applicant commits to completing the proposed project.
- If funded, the applicant accepts responsibility for any cost overruns necessary to complete the project.
- If funded, the completed project will be open to the public or will otherwise serve a public purpose.
- If funded, the applicant agrees to maintain the completed project site or to continue its maintenance agreement with a partner agency as outlined in the application.
- I am authorized to sign on behalf of the applicant.

Authorized Signature (highest authority in agency or authorized individual)

11/05/2025

Date

Jason Batchelor, City Manager, City of Aurora, CO

Printed Name and Title

Granby Ditch Open Space & Overlook

Grant Project or Joint Project Name

Applicant: _____ City of Aurora _____

Project Title: _Granby Open Space and Overlook



Joint Project Timeline Form

Use the sample timeline below as a guide to complete your proposed project timeline. Rows or columns may be added as necessary to include any milestones specific to your project. Timeline must be detailed, realistic, and coincide with details provided in the narrative portion of the grant application. Timeline must conclude within two years of project start date.

Task	2026											2027					
	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Grant Award Notification																	
IGA Executed/Project Start Date																	
Project Bid Award(s)																	
Construction																	
Grand Opening																	
Final Report																	

Summary Budget Form - STANDARD Grants (25% minimum cash match)

Source of Funds	Date Funds Secured	Grant Request	Cash Match	Total Project Funds
Arapahoe County Open Spaces Grant		\$95,000		\$95,000
Applicant Cash Match	4/14/2025		\$27,000	\$27,000
High Line Canal Conservancy Partner Match	3/15/2024		\$68,000	\$68,000
Totals		\$95,000	\$95,000	\$190,000

MATCH REQUIREMENTS	Total Project Cost:	\$190,000.00
	Cash Match % Required:	50%
	Required Cash Match Amount	\$95,000.00
	Project Cash Match Budgeted:	\$95,000.00
<i>Minimum Met? Y or N</i>		

Applicant: Aurora Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Project Title: Granby Ditch Overlook

** Please do not include in-kind match on the Budget Forms. Describe in-kind match in the budget narrative and project narrative.*

DETAILED EXPENSE WORKSHEET

[illegible]

Applicant: Aurora Parks, Recreation and Open Space	Project Title: Granby Ditch Overlook	Date: 11/11/25
---	---	-----------------------



November 5, 2025

Arapahoe County Open Spaces
Open Space and Trails Advisory Board
6934 S Lima St, Unit A
Centennial, CO 80112

Re: Joint Project Grant Application 2025

Dear Arapahoe County Open Spaces and OSTAB Members:

Please accept this letter of commitment on behalf of the City of Aurora for support of the Granby Ditch Open Space & Overlook joint project grant application. This project will add seating areas, interpretive signage, an informal Canal crossing, and enhance the native plantings with increased shrubs and trees.

Aurora is requesting \$95,000 in grant funds from the Arapahoe County Open Space Tax program. The City has a secured cash match of \$27,000 comprised of Great Outdoor Colorado Centennial grant funds in partnership with the High Line Canal Conservancy who have also brought \$68,000 in funding. The City will be responsible for any cost overruns. Maintenance and care of the facility will be managed as part of our ongoing maintenance budget.

If awarded, an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Aurora and Arapahoe County will be required along with a city council resolution. Grant reports will be authorized by the Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space.

By approving this grant application for \$95,000, the Arapahoe County Open Space and Trails Advisory Board will contribute to the improved Canal's community awareness and ecological health. The trail is currently and will remain open to the public. Thank you for your on-going support of our parks, open space and trail system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jason Batchelor". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Jason Batchelor
City Manager

May 13, 2025

Arapahoe County Open Spaces
6934 S Lima St.
Centennial, CO 80112

RE: Joint Project Grant Support for High Line Canal Projects in North Aurora

Dear Arapahoe County Open Spaces,

On behalf of the High Line Canal Northeast Community Committee, we are writing in strong support of the joint project grant applications submitted by the High Line Canal Conservancy and the City of Aurora for the Granby Ditch Overlook, Laredo Elementary Outdoor Classroom, and Triple Creek Trailhead Site Improvements.

Our committee represents over 15 neighborhoods in Northeast Denver, Aurora, and unincorporated Arapahoe County. Formed in 2022, we serve as a trusted bridge between the High Line Canal Conservancy and our communities—ensuring that trail improvements are shaped by local voices and benefit those historically underrepresented in outdoor spaces. These three projects are direct results of an inclusive, community-centered design process. As members of the committee, we've played an active role in shaping the priorities and designs for these sites. Each project reflects our collective vision to activate the Canal as a safe, healthy, and accessible green space for our youth, families, and elders:

- Granby Ditch Overlook will transform a part of the trail into a natural refuge with interpretive signage, natural seating, and plantings.
- Laredo Elementary Outdoor Classroom will connect students and neighbors to the Canal through a shade structure, safe crossings, and meaningful educational opportunities.
- Triple Creek Trailhead Site Improvements will deliver long-awaited enhancements to a key regional access point, including natural elements, bike skills features, and interpretation.

Together, these projects address the priorities we've consistently elevated: safe access, ecological restoration, cultural interpretation, and joyful use of the Canal for all. They advance equity in public space and demonstrate how public-private partnerships can meet the needs of communities who have been historically underserved.

We are grateful for Arapahoe County Open Spaces' past support and urge you to invest in these community-backed projects. They will deliver visible, lasting impact for the neighborhoods we call home.

Sincerely,

The High Line Canal Northeast Community Committee

Leslie Brown

Calvin Ann Evans

Nelson Holland

Debi Hunter Holen

Cynthia Armendáriz-Maxwell

Laura Morales

Adolfo Romero

Vanessa Salinas

Arapahoe County Open Spaces
6934 S Lima St
Centennial, CO 80112

November 10, 2025

Dear Arapahoe County Open Spaces,

I am writing to support for the High Line Canal improvements near the Granby Ditch Open Space in Aurora. I have lived in Aurora most of my life and as someone who loves the outdoors and staying active, the High Line Canal is one of my favorite places to explore nature in the city.

The improvements that are proposed at the Granby Ditch Open Space are exciting and will offer welcoming benefits to trail users and neighbors alike. This spot on the canal is especially beautiful, and the boulder overlook will provide trail users and neighbors a spot to sit and enjoy the view. The educational signage, benches and new plants will provide more reasons to spend time visiting the trail as well.

Please consider funding this very worthwhile project with Arapahoe County funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SJR' or similar, with a stylized flourish.

Sofia Reyes
sore2489@colorado.edu
21925 E Rowland Dr. Aurora, CO, 80016

November 8, 2025

Arapahoe County Open Spaces
6934 S Lima St.
Centennial, CO 80112

RE: Letter of Support for High Line Canal Improvements in North Aurora

Dear Board members,

I am thrilled to offer my strong support for the High Line Canal Conservancy and City of Aurora's proposed improvements at the **Granby Ditch Overlook** and **Laredo Elementary Outdoor Classroom**.

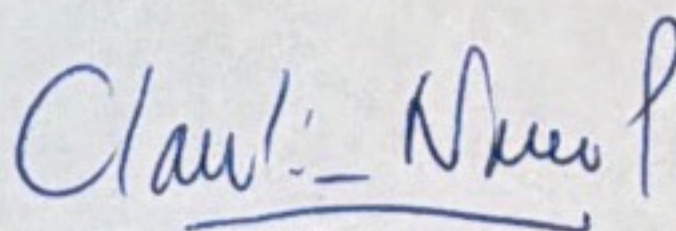
As a local resident, fitness enthusiast and certified coach, I've actively engaged with the Conservancy for several years, discovering the High Line Canal, especially in Aurora. These projects are critical to improving bike and pedestrian access, trail safety, and overall user experience on this beautiful regional trail corridor.

- The **Granby Ditch Overlook** will provide an informal trail connection in an area with a well-used social path, with natural seating and signage that enhances awareness and community pride.
- The **Laredo Elementary Outdoor Classroom** creates an exciting opportunity for students to safely access the trail by replacing an aging neighborhood bridge that provides access for walking and biking to school. The addition of an outdoor classroom adjacent to the trail promotes youth connection and appreciation of the outdoors and our natural world.

These projects have been shaped by neighbors' involvement and reflect real priorities from local residents and advocacy groups. I personally think they will make a difference in the community and make a statement that the High Line Canal is for the community that can access and enjoy it.

I urge you to support funding for these important trail improvements.

Sincerely,



Claudia Navarro
Aurora Resident
(720) 698-0698



MADE WITH
**Scanner
App**



November 11, 2025

Arapahoe County Open Spaces
6934 S. Lima Street
Englewood, CO 80112

Dear Arapahoe County Open Spaces staff,

I am writing to share my support for the High Line Canal improvements in North Aurora.

As someone who loves the outdoors and staying active, the High Line Canal is a wonderful place to explore and enjoy nature, right in the middle of the city. I first discovered the trails and the canal as a teenager in the late 80's/early 90's and I would love to see it continue to be preserved and enjoyed by myself and others for many more years to come.

The improvements that are proposed at the Granby Ditch Open Space are exciting and will offer welcoming benefits to trail users and neighbors alike. The steppingstones across the canal will provide a fun way to cross over to the trail. The interpretive educational signage, benches and new plants will certainly enhance the area around an already beautiful open space. All of these things will improve and beautify this section of the Canal and potentially bring more people of all ages out to enjoy the trail.

Thank you for your consideration of this funding request and for your support of parks, open spaces, and trails in Arapahoe County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheri Roberts". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cheri" and last name "Roberts" clearly legible.

Cheri Roberts



HIGH LINE CANAL
CONSERVANCY

TO: Arapahoe County Open Spaces

FROM: High Line Canal Conservancy

DATE: November 10, 2025

SUBJECT: Documentation of Opposition- Granby Ditch Open Space

The Granby Ditch Open Space and Overlook is supported by neighboring community. Ongoing public outreach and engagement has occurred since 2019 to keep the community informed and invested in the goals of the site.

Opposition and Response

In 2024, three neighbors living adjacent to the Canal near the Granby Ditch have expressed concern about the project, particularly regarding elements in the original master plan such as a shade structure and a land bridge crossing. These concerns focused on potential misuse by unhoused individuals and increased unauthorized motorized vehicle access. In response to this feedback, these two elements were removed from the final design. Aurora PROS and the Conservancy continue to work with community members and City Council to address concerns and maintain support for the remaining project components.

Sincerely,

Josh Phillips, Senior Director of Planning and Implementation
High Line Canal Conservancy



TO: Arapahoe County Open Spaces
FROM: High Line Canal Conservancy
Amy Daley, Chief Finance and Administrative Officer
DATE: November 11, 2025
SUBJECT: Support for the Granby Ditch Project

The Conservancy is partnering with Aurora Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces (Aurora PROS) on design and construction of the Granby Ditch Improvement Project. The Conservancy has secured \$95,000 from Great Outdoors Colorado and private donations for the project as described in the joint project request. The Conservancy will spend \$23,000 on project design and engineering to prepare documents for bidding. A funding agreement, signed by both parties, has been executed to transfer \$67,000 to Aurora PROS for project construction. An additional \$5000 has been allocated for Project Management.

The opportunity to further enhance the High Line Canal in North Aurora is an exciting opportunity for the Conservancy and Aurora PROS. We appreciate the consideration of Arapahoe County Open Spaces to support the implementation of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Daley".

Amy Daley, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer
High Line Canal Conservancy



High Line Canal at Granby Ditch

Photo credit: Evan Anderman

Granby Ditch Open Space and Overlook

Aurora PROS Joint Project Request, November 11, 2025



High Line Canal at Granby Ditch-looking south



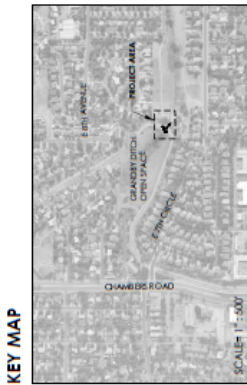
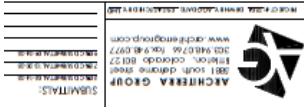
High Line Canal at Granby Ditch-social trail



Concept Plan- Granby Ditch Overlook



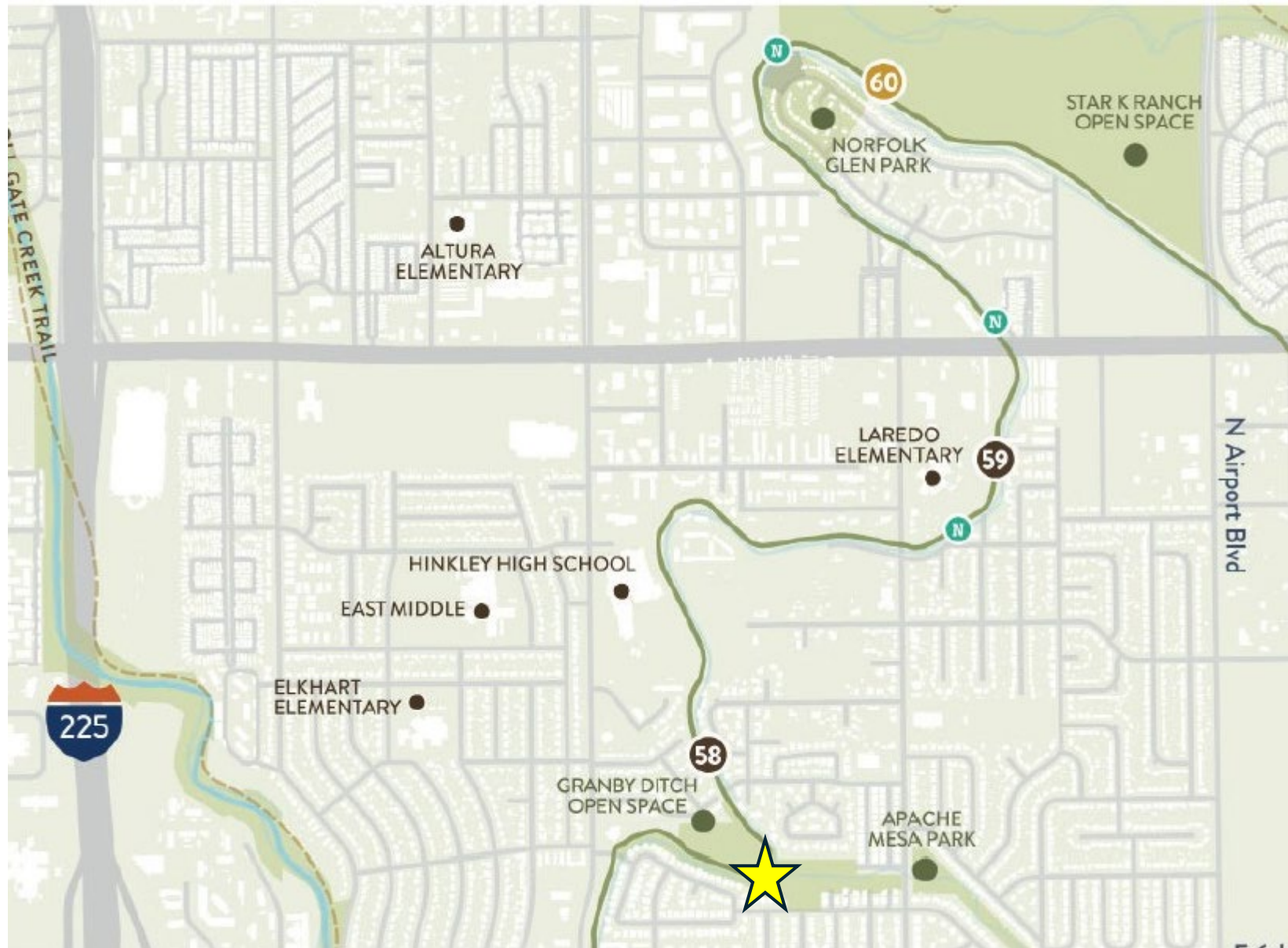
High Line Canal at Granby Ditch-looking north



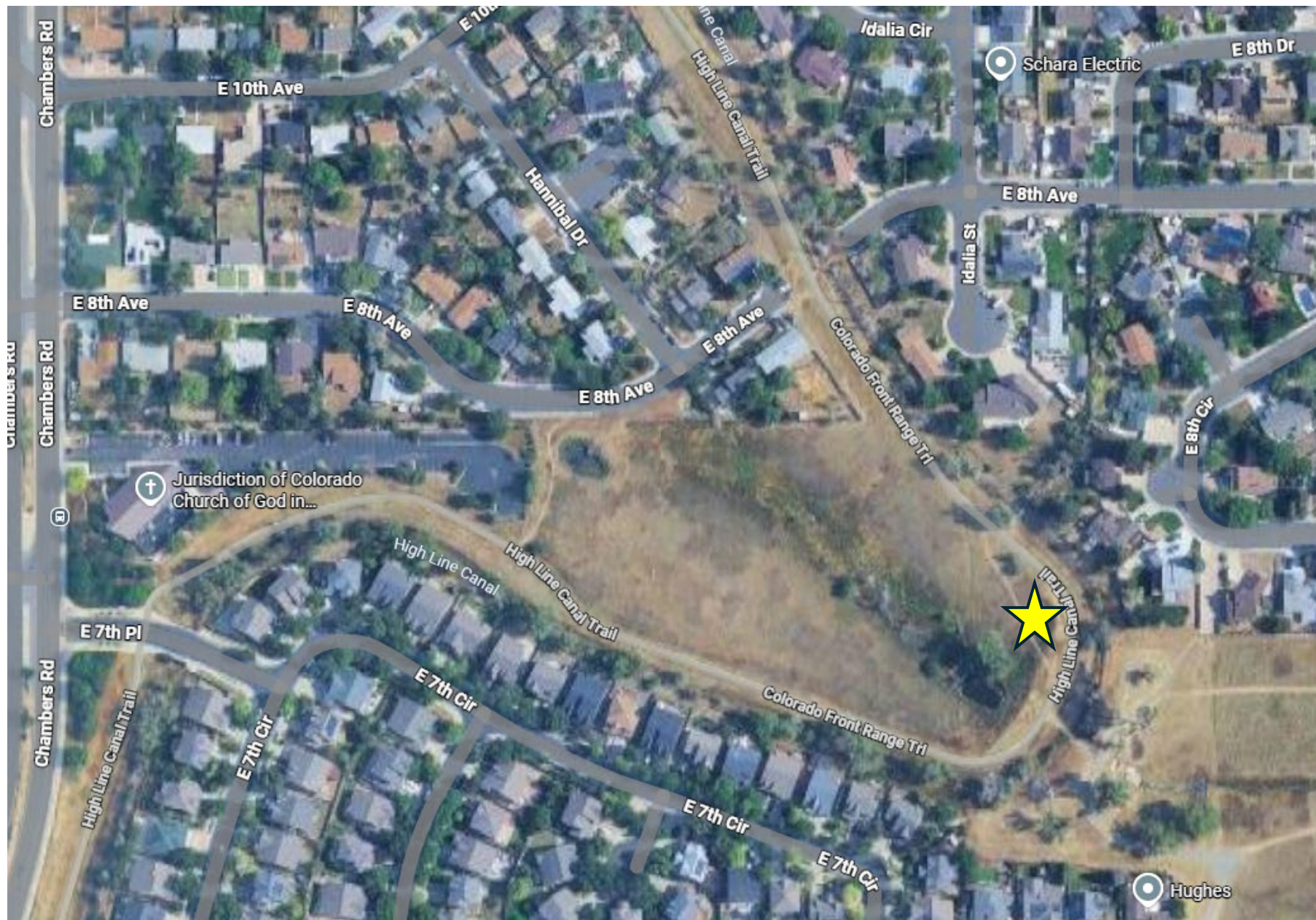
- NOTES:
1. STAKE IMPROVEMENTS FOR REVIEW BY OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE PRIOR TO ANY CONSTRUCTION.
 2. SEE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EROSION CONTROL MEASURES.
 3. COORDINATE W/ OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE FOR LOCATION OF SITE FURNISHINGS AND LANDSCAPE BOLLARDS.

[illegible]

CR	DESCRIPTION	NET AREA	ARC LENGTH	BAR NO.
1	SOUTHERN EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	74.42	14.27	11
2	SOUTHERN EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	74.42	14.27	12
3	SOUTHERN EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	74.42	14.27	13
4	SOUTHERN EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	81.12	13.03	16
5	EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	110.21	12.86	16.5
6	EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	110.20	10.48	165
7	SOUTHERN EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	73.25	23.25	17
8	SOUTHERN EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	73.25	23.25	18
9	SOUTHERN EDGE OF CONCRETE TMS. PARAMETER: BETHANIN P. & P2	81.20	13.03	17.5



Granby Ditch Open Space and Overlook- Vicinity Map



Granby Ditch Open Space and Overlook- Site Map

Speak Up for the Canal

High Line Canal Northeast Community Engagement, 2016 - 2024



ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



TOTAL REACH

1,500,000 reach through media & mailings

10,000 people engaged across the region

4,000+ youth engaged

1,500+ total surveys

100+ community input events

2022-2024 NORTH AURORA

FEEDBACK REACH

55,000+ total through mailings, social media, newsletters & more

770 formal feedback responses

305 people engaged at community events

WHAT ELSE WE HEARD

- Prioritize wayfinding signage
- More bathrooms and trash cans
- Maintenance of grass and vegetation along the trail
- Trees are desired for shade
- Safer trail access and connectivity needed at Colfax Ave. intersections & Airport Blvd.
- Improved crossings needed at most access points
- Concerns about personal safety & use of Canal for camping
- Prevent unauthorized vehicles on the trail
- Excitement for new and improved neighborhood access points

KEY TAKEAWAYS

NATURE + NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Water

Natural Vegetation/Habitat/Plants & Trees

"Maintain the natural setting with cottonwoods and the wildlife corridor!"

SAFETY + CONNECTIVITY

"I feel safe when the trail is far from any stress and I know my kids can run free. And I don't feel safe when the trail comes to a street and there are not stop signs or pedestrian light that makes it safe for us to cross."

Access + Parking

RECREATIONAL + EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Signage

Gathering Spaces

Play Areas

"I know that there are a few areas where the school uses the High Line Canal and the property around it for education and for kids to be able to get outside and play."

ACCESS, AWARENESS + ACCESSIBILITY

Shade

Benches + Seating

Signage

Access

Parking

Restrooms

"A big reason that I love the trail is because in most places that I've been on the trail there is a dirt or crusher-fined jogging path next to the paved path. So wherever the trail is going to be built out in the future, or wherever that enhancement could be made, to continue having both a paved and a dirt or gravel surface would be awesome."

STEWARDSHIP + MAINTENANCE

"More community cleanups and trash pickups."

Natural Vegetation/Habitat/Plants & Trees

Water