

# CANALS CAN CONNECT COMMUNITY



For the past 50 years, the Boise River Greenbelt has been one of the Treasure Valley's most beloved parks. The 25-mile pathway serves as one of the more popular alternative transportation routes for commuters. Now, it is time to develop a similarly ambitious vision for the next 50 years of pathway development to truly connect our entire community.

**Join us in asking our city, county and state leaders to collaborate on the development of a Treasure Valley multi-use pathway plan that utilizes canals to connect our communities, provide transportation options for all, build an investment strategy for public transit routes and bring open space to every neighborhood.**

## TRANSPORTATION CRUNCH

The Treasure Valley is facing growth that will outpace an underfunded transportation and infrastructure system. The vast majority of valley residents rely on single passenger vehicles for their daily commuting needs; increasing impact and congestion on our roadways and contributing to the Treasure Valley's poor air quality.



## CREATIVE SOLUTION

Investments in off-road travel corridors can increase alternative transportation adoption and reduce vehicle miles traveled. As development proliferates around the Treasure Valley, cities and counties are producing and executing master plans for pathways without a focus on cross-municipal connectivity as a guiding principle.



We need a collective plan that connects the Treasure Valley, creates priority areas for public transportation investments to increase commuters that mode shift (*walk/move/bike to public transit*), and influences the smart development of our communities while capitalizing on a uniquely valuable recreation resource.



**Now is the time for city, county and state leaders to plan a valley wide, multi-use pathway system utilizing our existing canals.**



# WHY CANALS?

Every day, hundreds of thousands of Treasure Valley community members drive over canals that cut through the city, many likely not realizing they are crossing flowing water. There are a total of 66 irrigation districts serving Ada and Canyon counties. Together they distribute water through 1,500 miles of canals, laterals, and drains in southwestern Idaho and eastern Oregon. That's more miles of waterways than Venice and Amsterdam combined: Venice has about 26 miles and Amsterdam has 60 miles.

Because canals and laterals provide the water necessary for hundreds of thousands of residents to water their lawns and grow their crops, they are a natural network winding through and connecting our community. They are also open spaces, preserved from the pressures of development through easements. Today in many neighborhoods canals are de facto pedestrian pathways, bike ways, and dog parks.

Because canals have maintenance road and easement setbacks that don't interface with major roads, they present a unique opportunity to build new multi-use pathways in neighborhoods throughout the valley. This is critical because 73% of respondents in a local survey said that a lack of safe bike routes is their primary obstacle for using cycling as a transportation option. Canals, an option for off-road pathway development, can be part of the answer!

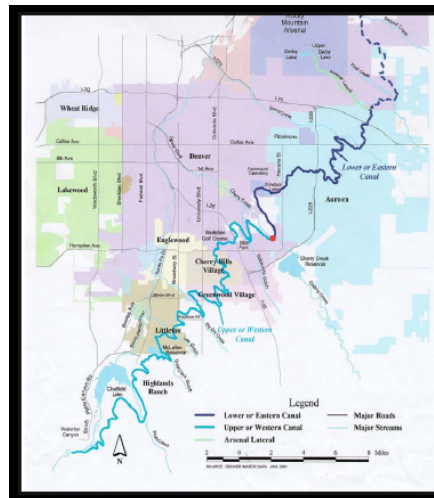
## THE CONNECTED CANAL VISION

We would like to see irrigation districts, cities, counties, and state leaders in the Treasure Valley come together to open our extensive canal system as a transportation corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists.

We have seen this be successful in other metropolises like Denver and Phoenix. We even have great examples of canal pathways in Boise, Meridian, Nampa, Idaho Falls and other Idaho cities. The Treasure Valley is a perfect fit and it is time to get moving!

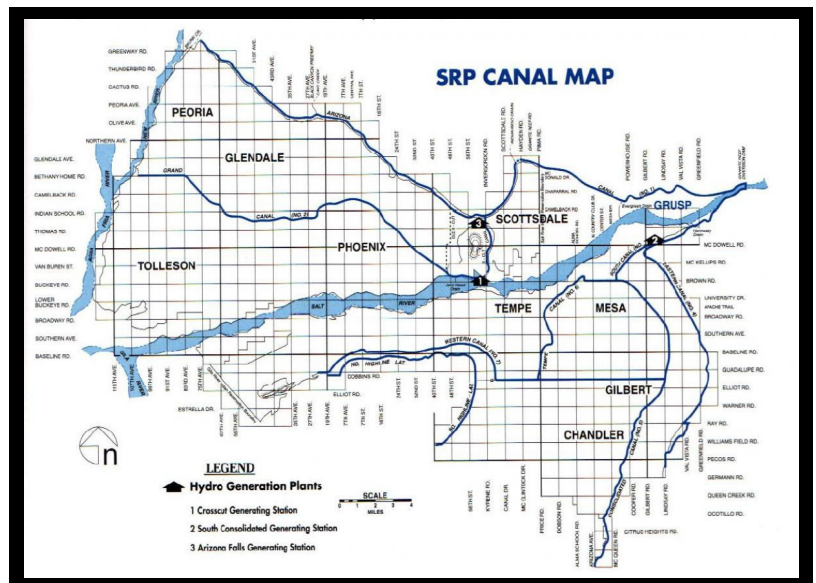
We would like a plan that focuses on connectivity, linking neighborhoods across the valley to community centers, schools, parks and public transportation facilities.

It is time to revive these canals as iconic landmarks and community-gathering spaces. As safe routes to schools, commuter pathways and open space for neighborhoods. We see this canal network as a critical way to develop interconnected communities throughout the Treasure Valley.



To the left is an image of the canal network in Denver that is 66-miles of paved or hard-paved pathways.

Below is a canal network in Arizona that spans several cities and 69.7 miles.



Do you want to see our canal connectivity vision come to life in the Treasure Valley? Head to [www.sierraclub.org/idaho](http://www.sierraclub.org/idaho) to sign our petition and join the conversation today!