The City of Centennial, the largest incorporation of its kind in U.S. history when it was created six years ago, is bringing the same kind of intensive citizen involvement to its growth plans as it did to its formation.

Our Voice. Our Vision. Centennial 2030, will be a citizen-led effort to chart a course for the next two decades. We will formally launch August 10 and will run through April 2008.

Mayor Randy Pye said he believes the new visioning process is needed for two reasons: first, because residents’ expectations have changed as the city has evolved and, second, because citizens will be asked this November to decide if they want to change their form of government to a “home rule” type that provides more flexibility and autonomy.

"Planners have a nice phrase for this,” Mayor Pye explained in his State of the City speech earlier this year, “creating the ‘intentional city’ – a purposeful and thoughtful city that grows not only from opportunity, but from people’s dreams, and what they are willing to do as partners with their government to make those dreams happen.”

Mayor Pye and members of the Centennial City Council, who unanimously support the visioning process, also believe the vision has to come from the same place as the city’s origins—a broad coalition of energized and engaged citizens who take part in a deliberate effort.

Spanning the next 10 months, Our Voice. Our Vision. Centennial 2030, will begin with an intensive month of opportunities for community members to make their voices heard—through meetings in each City Council ward, through a random-sample telephone survey, through opportunities to contribute ideas and opinions at (continued on page two)

Planning for open space, parks, recreation and trails now underway

The master plan for Centennial’s open space, parks, recreation and trails is one of the City’s next big accomplishments.

WENK Associates Planners & Landscape Architects has been selected to develop the plan in partnership with the citizens of Centennial and the newly appointed Advisory Board for open space, parks, recreation and trails. WENK will provide an inventory of assets, survey the community and provide the City with ideas for enhancing and protecting the City’s natural resources and for recreation and community activities.

Centennial receives a portion of the Arapahoe County Open Space Tax each year. The amount received annually amounts to about $2 million. Projects identified in the master plan could be funded through these “shareback” moneys. In addition, the City Council wants to award part of each year’s allocation through a City grant program.

Advising the City Council and WENK Associates is the Advisory Board, selected to represent the four wards of the city. Nine members were sworn-in at a special ceremony July 19. Five are regular members and four serve as alternates.

Mayor’s Representative: Chad Klever
Ward I: Mike Keables (Member) and Wayne Nelson (Alternate)
Ward II: Teri Hjelmstad (Member) and Malcolm Parks (Alternate)
Ward III: Sue Rosser (Member) and Gigi DiPalma (Alternate)
Ward IV: Stephanie Piko (Member) and Jay Ledbetter (Alternate)

A Public Meeting on the Master Plan is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, September 6, at the City Building, 12503 E. Euclid Drive.

For more information, please go to the City’s Website at www.centennialcolorado.com.

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Residents voted to incorporate the City of Centennial on September 12, 2000 and elected its first officials on February 6, 2001. Centennial officially became a city the next day, February 7.

The quest for a new city took almost two and a half years, with victories in the state legislature and the Colorado Supreme Court. More than three-quarters of voters approved what was the largest city incorporation in U.S. history.

As described in a November 2001 edition of Governing Magazine, “the City remains largely an abstraction to many residents. There’s no industry to give it identity in the way that steel, automobiles or ports have created a sense of uniqueness for other cities. It has no downtown, no Main Street, no iconic buildings or monuments to local heroes. Although its neighborhoods are all handsomely upscale, and its commercial areas are modern and well maintained, it has no distinctive architecture or special features that set it apart in the sprawling urban region southeast of Denver.”

While that assessment might be seen as merely a litany of negatives, it also could be read as a new page in the formation of cities—Centennial as a place with a chance to redefine what a city might be in a modern era, when steel, automobiles and even ports are no longer the most relevant defining elements of an urban environment.

The two positives—handsome neighborhoods and modern, well maintained commercial areas—are increasingly relevant in attracting residents. And, without aging city physical structures and perhaps overly bureaucratic governmental structures to undo, citizens have a greater chance of incorporating new thinking about what makes an effective and sustainable city.

The visioning process, Our Voice. Our Vision. Centennial 2030 will provide an opportunity to define the Centennial of the future.

Home Rule, cont.’d.

Voters will ultimately decide whether the proposed charter is acceptable at a second election tentatively scheduled for near spring.

A ‘yes’ vote will not affect taxes because no city, not even a home rule city, can increase or adopt new taxes without first obtaining voter approval. Voting against formation of a Commission means that Centennial will remain a statutory city.

Mayor Randy Pye has noted that home rule status supports the principle that “the best government is the one closest to the people. Voting for formation of a Commission opens up the possibility that Centennial may become a home rule city with increased citizen control and empowerment of our local government.”

All registered electors of the City are encouraged to consider participating in framing this important document. Persons interested in seeking election to the Commission should contact Brenda Castle, Deputy City Clerk, at 303-754-3302, to obtain a nomination petition. Petitions require the signatures of 25 registered electors and are due back to the City on or before September 4, 2007.