



Our Voice. Our Vision.  
Centennial 2030

12503 E. Euclid Dr., Ste. 200, Centennial, CO 80111



## Executive Summary



# Our Voice. Our Vision. Centennial 2030

## Community Visioning Process Final Report

A project of the City of Centennial, Colorado



April 2008

Dear Citizens,

Many of you may have heard me speak of creating an “intentional” city. A city where we have control over our destiny, where we anticipate the needs of our citizens and create a path that unites citizens and their government around a common vision.

Last year, the Council and I asked citizens to step up to the task of creating a vision for the next 20 years that would continue our efforts to make that intention real. The result is “Our Voice. Our Vision. Centennial 2030.”

This citizen-led visioning process has proven to be inspiring, involving hundreds of citizens participating in phone surveys, Web site surveys, online feedback and topic-specific committees. The level of enthusiasm and dedication by these citizens is testimony to the continuation and growth of the spirit this City was founded upon and promises a bright future.

When we first embarked on creating this City in 1998, our vision to incorporate as an independent, lean city was clear. It was a truly successful experiment in democracy, and we stood together to chart our own future and define our own path.

With our City firmly established, Centennial moves into a new chapter. By 2030, we expect our population to swell by 19 percent and employment to jump by 28 percent. Many of our citizens will age in place, putting stronger demands on senior services, housing and amenities. The environment is a universal issue that will have a huge impact on how we conduct ourselves and become stewards of our natural resources.

The expectations of our citizens and leaders are already beginning to evolve since the City’s inception, and will continue to change as new challenges and opportunities present themselves for Centennial’s future.

This visioning report not only reflects the future direction of our City, but also represents the height of Centennial’s dynamic growth and maturity since our inception. As I looked through these pages and reviewed the issues that our own citizens deemed important, I am thrilled that even when focused on such divergent topics, members of our community share in common goals and values that will continue to make Centennial a place we are proud to call home.

I am personally grateful to all the citizens who contributed their time, insight, passion and intelligence to creating a vision that will serve as the framework within which to build our future. This vision report will be a Reference Document to Centennial’s Comprehensive Plan, and thus will give direction to every decision citizens and leaders make as we use intention to bring our vision and dreams to life.

Sincerely,  
Mayor Randy Pye

“I believe the way we create our future is to tap our community’s energy and ideas to chart an intentional future that is far superior than a future left to chance.”

MAYOR RANDY PYE  
STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS, 2007



# Visioning Process



**Step 1:** ▶▶▶▶▶

## ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

Visioning process leaders educated and engaged other community members about the visioning process and involvement needed.

- Media and advertising announcements
- Special Centennial Connection edition
- Launching visioning Website
- Information at local businesses and faith-based communities

1

**Step 2:** ▶▶▶▶▶

## MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD

Community members shared ideas and visions for Centennial's future.

- Formal telephone survey of 400 residents
- Four Ward meetings
- Faith-based leader breakfast with Mayor
- 3,100 visits to Centennial2030.com
- 175 citizens took Web survey or submitted comments online, at recreation centers, libraries or by mail
- Engagement of Centennial Youth Commission

2



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Step 3: >>>>

**CRAFTING OUR VISION**

Committees comprising 40 citizen volunteers synthesized input to create the vision and action plans. Topics included:

- Economic Health
- Environment
- Community Quality of Life/ Citizen Engagement
- City Services

Step 4: >>

**SHARING OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE**

Committees created a written report for Centennial's citizens outlining the vision and action plans.

Step 5: >

**TURNING VISION INTO ACTION**

City leaders and engaged citizens implement the action plan, with ongoing citizen dialogue guiding direction.

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5



## Why a Visioning Process?

The vision of Centennial actually began nearly 10 years ago, when its founders launched an initiative to incorporate as a city. The citizens of Centennial made history in 2001 with the successful culmination of their efforts—the largest city incorporation in U.S. history. The City was formed on a platform of self direction, lean government and fierce independence, and citizens prided themselves on the opportunity to create a fresh government that incorporated new ideas.

After six years of incorporation, the need for a more formalized, long range and citizen-led vision became apparent. First, the City had “grown up” during that time, establishing a strong working government but facing changing demographics and economic strains. With the start-up phase of the City behind them, citizens started asking new questions about what their City should provide and how it should operate.

Second, most of the original City founders had completed their terms in City Council and the Mayor, a key leader in the founding of Centennial, was in his last term. A clear visioning process would attempt to capture the historical perspective while inviting in new ideas to help guide future City leaders.

Lastly, Centennial’s leadership expressed a strong desire to become a home rule city which would provide the City the flexibility needed to define its own future path without current statutory confinements. A vision plan would lend guidance to the newly elected Charter Commission and provide a voice for more citizens in the process.

Thus in 2007, Mayor Randy Pye and City Council were inspired to develop a visioning process that would not only capture the voice of the current citizenship, but would also inspire direction for Centennial’s future population for the next 20 years. Facing challenging geography and an unclear role in a long-established metropolitan region, the goal was to chart the course for an “intentional city”—a city that knows what it wants to achieve, the role it will play in the region and how to capitalize on Centennial’s inherent strengths to succeed.



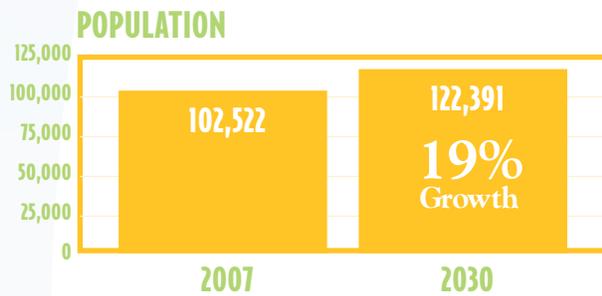
# Building on Centennial's Strengths, Facing its Challenges

After six years of incorporation, Centennial is a vibrant community with a strong foundation on which to grow. The City maintains a high quality of life for its residents on many levels. As Centennial looks to the future, there are as many strengths to leverage in creating a great city, as there are challenging realities that must be thought through and addressed. Highlights of these considerations include:

- **Strong neighborhoods**—Citizens speak proudly of “their” neighborhoods, and many participate in the strong neighborhood associations that connect them to each other and the greater community. Vacancy rates are low at 2.3 percent, yet with little developable land available, only 40 new housing units were built in 2005-2006.
- **Challenging geography**—With 28 square miles of land located in an east-west “barbell” configuration along Arapahoe Road, the City has no natural geographical center that creates a sense of community. It has limited opportunities to acquire additional land: 83 percent of its land is already developed with only 10 percent land use growth expected by 2030.
- **Safety leader**—Centennial was ranked the safest city in Colorado and in the top 25 safest cities in the U.S. in 2006 and 2007.
- **Healthy economy**—Home to many of the region’s most successful corporations, the City’s employment rate is expected to grow 28 percent by 2030. The City recently hired an economic development manager to encourage business growth, but limited room for physical growth will provide a challenge.
- **Efficient city services**—Centennial partners with Arapahoe County and other outside organizations to provide effective, cost-efficient services such as police, fire protection, school districts and libraries. Citizens have been increasing demands for services, requiring evaluation of the current arrangement.
- **Improving open space**—The City recently completed a master plan for its open space, trails, parks and recreation to enhance Centennial’s natural resources. However, there is little opportunity to acquire additional open space within City limits.
- **Growing population**—Centennial will need to accommodate its growing population, which is expected to grow 19 percent by 2030. Additionally, the senior population in Arapahoe County is expected to increase 65 percent from 2000 to 2012. One third of the population will soon be over the age of 75 and will require additional senior services.

# Centennial at a Glance

## DEMOGRAPHICS\*



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (IN 1999) **\$76,824**

POVERTY RATE **2%**

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE **\$48,397**

HOME OWNERSHIP RATE **88%**

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE **2.76**

PERCENT HISPANIC **5%**

MEDIAN AGE **37**

PERCENT OVER 25 W/ BACHELORS DEGREE OR HIGHER **53%**

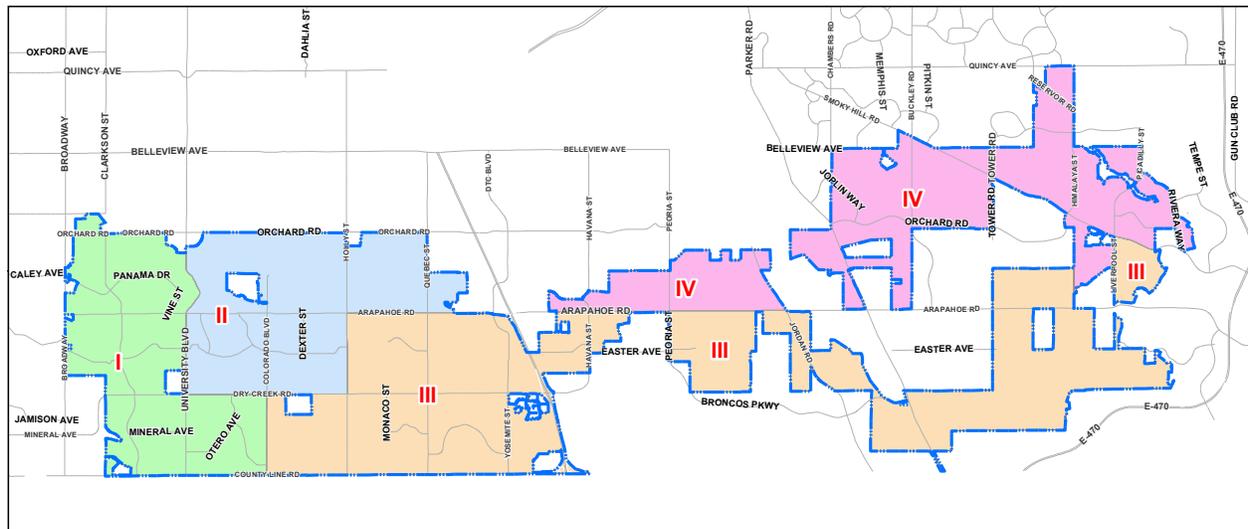
PERCENT OVER AGE 55 **8%**

DISABILITY RATE **9%**

\*Compiled from DRCOG and 2000 Census

# Centennial's Wards

The City is organized by four Wards/Districts, each with about 25,000 residents. Ward I is on the west side of the City and contains a good deal of Centennial's new, mixed-use development. The Streets at SouthGlenn development is located in Ward I. Ward II is also on the west side of City and has strong existing neighborhoods. Centrally located, Ward III has larger property lots and some equestrian properties. Ward IV comprises the easternmost part of Centennial, with the newest housing developments and is home to many young families. (See appendix for full Ward descriptions)



**LEGEND**

- Centennial Boundary
- Ward Boundaries
- I
- II
- III
- IV

  
**CITY OF CENTENNIAL**  
 Ward Boundaries

  
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## Centennial 2030 Vision and Values

We are a proud, thriving community committed to excellence and reinforced by a unifying community vision of a dynamic, healthy and safe Centennial. We honor the integrity and values of our neighborhoods and support a government that is responsive, respectful and accountable to our citizens. We are committed to the conservation of the environmental beauty of our City and promoting a vibrant economy with a sustainable future. Our City strives to provide outstanding services to all residents and nurture a supportive community that enhances the lives of all our citizens. Our fiscally responsible values integrate sustainable policies and practices into the fabric of our community and emphasize a healthy balance of economic development and quality of life. As we aspire to establish a community that leads by example, from the top down, we celebrate our past and embrace our future.



## Voices of Centennial The Citizen-Led Committee Process

All citizens were invited to participate in any of the four, topic-specific, Centennial 2030 vision committees, and were encouraged to choose a committee that appealed to them personally. Citizens were appointed to serve as committee chairs and lead their committee's meetings. Committee topics were determined by areas of focus that strongly affect Centennial's future. These include:

- City Services
- Community Quality of Life / Citizen Engagement
- Economic Health
- Environment

The committees met over 20 times during a three month period. Each group was tasked with developing a vision statement for their area of focus and an action plan including goals, strategies to achieve that vision by 2030. Participants analyzed research and a variety of current and future trend information. Each committee heard from members of city staff, city contractors and county and regional organizations in order to facilitate the creation of a vision that represented Centennial's citizenry and the relevant challenges they face.





## Common Themes

### Connecting the Community

While each committee concentrated on a specific area of focus, there were several common themes that pervaded the discussions about Centennial's future. One overriding theme was the notion of connectivity. The committee volunteers expressed a strong desire to bring their community together in a variety of ways.

They explored their connection with area businesses, specifically, how they could support and engage them to ensure lasting economic vitality. The committees envisioned a physically connected Centennial, through open space trails, transportation innovations and road improvements. Each committee's vision included a passionate aspiration to stay connected to each other and the local government, through community events, information sharing and facilitation of open communication.

This aspiration for connectivity was influenced by the research and the spirit of all Centennial citizens. The Centennial Youth Commission's views were especially powerful, as they represent the future of the City and those who would be living the vision created today. The Youth Commission expressed a strong desire to improve transportation, diversify housing offerings, connect open spaces and uphold Centennial's overall high quality of life.

### A Safe and Secure City

Centennial citizens are proud of their status as the safest city in Colorado and national recognition around the country. Even more importantly, they value safety as an asset that ensures their high quality of life within their community. Representative action items surrounding safety included implementing programs such as Neighborhood Watch, the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and increasing citizen engagement in safety efforts.

### City Signature Events

Regardless of committee area of focus, it was clear that the committees felt strongly about creating City-wide efforts to bring people together as a community. Ideas included a variety of events that would enable a community celebration of art, culture, sport and family activities.

### Transportation

With the advent of FasTracks bringing light rail to the City, citizens were better able to envision the transportation options the future could hold. A heavy emphasis was placed on planning for future transportation needs, especially looking at alternative forms and partnerships with other entities. While future needs included transit options to connect the City within the region, there was even more focus placed on creating safe and convenient intra-City transportation suitable for youth, seniors and shoppers.

### Infrastructure Support / City Services

Compared to other municipalities in the region, Centennial has a newer physical and governmental infrastructure. However, the committees also recognized and anticipated the projected growth that will affect the City in years to come. The committees wanted to take a proactive approach to maintaining Centennial's physical infrastructure, helping to avoid costly problems in the future and plan for growth. They also wanted to determine the need and timing of moving city services from a rural or suburban level to an urban level of service.

### Open Space

Even with a committee dedicated solely to the environment, open space was a consistent theme in many aspects of the visioning process. Protecting and enhancing parks and open space was also seen as part of maintaining a high quality of life and an area of focus for city services through the recently developed Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.



## Voices of Centennial

### Government Accountability and Transparency

With the City founded on the principals of lean government, the committees expressed the desire to expand that notion to ensure open access to the City's financial strategy, records and decision-making processes. The focus was on fiscal responsibility, competitively priced City services and citizen access to the City's financial decisions.

### Partnerships

The strength of Centennial's current, lean government relies on successful relationships with Arapahoe County and special districts to provide many city services. The committees highlighted the need to expand partnerships with other municipalities, transportation organizations, city service providers and educational institutions to meet the growing demands on the City and enhance services and overall quality of life.

### Open Communication between Government and Citizens

As part of the connectivity theme heard throughout the visioning process, the committees stressed the importance of staying engaged in a two-way dialogue with their government. They developed a wide range of recommendations, such as creating ample opportunities for citizens to stay current with City happenings, a forum to provide feedback to government leaders and participate on citizen advisory committees. They strongly encouraged formalizing volunteer opportunities with the City government to follow-up and support initiatives.

### Economic Vitality

At the cornerstone of many recommendations was a strong economic future for Centennial. While committees wanted the economy to thrive and create a strong tax base, they also expressed concern for ensuring a balance of diverse business types. Overall, the committees set a goal of Centennial earning a reputation as a business friendly city that strikes a balance between business, neighborhoods and the environment.

## Challenges to Balancing Initiatives

As with any process, there were a few issues that may present unique challenges in the future. These include:

### Economic Growth vs. Open Space Protection

Taking into consideration the landlocked geography that limits the use of land within Centennial, there will likely be the common struggle to balance economic development and protection of open space. However, each committee valued open space and wanted it increased and preserved.

### Expanding Level of City Services

Centennial has prided itself on lean government, efficient city services and partnering with Arapahoe County and other entities to provide service to its citizens. Already citizens are making more demands on the City to provide additional and more robust services, and this will likely continue to increase as the City grows. The desire for more "urban" city services will need to be balanced with Centennial's spirit of right-sized, fiscally responsible government.

# City Services Committee



## VISION

We are a well-planned city which strikes a balance between the citizens' desire for efficient and effective government while acknowledging the realistic needs of our community. We believe in strong attention to infrastructure and have an expectation that the City government will ensure the quality of such development and maintenance such that the safety of our citizens and the value of our beautiful neighborhoods are sustained. We are committed to equality, ease of access to services and superior service from the City to its citizens. We value government transparency; for example, our citizens know where their tax money is spent and who is delivering city services. We are further committed to 1) developing and maintaining strong partnerships with other governmental and private entities when it benefits the citizens of Centennial and 2) implementing the City's Comprehensive Plan.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dennie Bourbeau (Chair)

Bonnie Straight (Co-Chair)

Margo Allen

Conrad Ladd

Eric Marburger

Earl Meeks

Bennett Rutledge

Jane Smith

Rick Zinn



This committee examined the governmental structure that would best serve the growing needs of the community. Specifically, they explored the need for managing city services and infrastructure needs differently than the current “outsourced” arrangement. Safety, transportation and government communications were also under this committee’s purview.

During their series of meetings, the City Services committee heard from Sgt. Randy Council, of the Arapahoe Sheriff’s Office, to discuss the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Centennial Communications Director Sherry Patten reviewed public works and Susie Ellis of Community Preservation Specialists (CPS), discussed code enforcement services. They also reviewed the City’s comprehensive plan for the future.

# Community Quality of Life/ Citizen Engagement Committee



## VISION

Centennial, Colorado is a proud, thriving community committed to the conservation of the natural beauty of our City, promoting a vibrant economy with a sustainable future, providing outstanding educational opportunities for our citizens, and nurturing a supportive community that enhances the lives of all our citizens children, families, singles and seniors. We are a community of citizens that feels safe and secure. We honor the integrity and values of our neighborhoods, and support a government that is responsive, respectful and accountable to our citizens. We celebrate our past and look forward to the future.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Susan Pye (Chair)

Peter Cooney

Lynn Goering

Tamara Hunter-Maurer

Bill Koerner

Heather Kreider

Shari Lawson

Alex Muggenthaler

Thom Reed



The Community Quality of Life / Citizen Engagement committee focused on the tangible community assets that enrich overall quality of life in Centennial. Members also focused on how the City could create an environment that would encourage a more participatory community in government and civic activities. Topics included education, outdoor recreation, city events, safety and maintaining strong neighborhoods.

The group heard from Linda Haley, Senior Resources Division Director for Arapahoe County, who discussed the expected needs and services for the area's growing aging population; Centennial Youth Commission members Ashley Lambert, Amy Barber, Karen Bobkowski and Jeff Nadel lent perspective on tomorrow's Centennial residents; and Centennial Communications Director Sherry Patten reviewed DRCOG data on future demographics.

# Economic Health Committee



## VISION

The City of Centennial is a fiscally responsible, business-friendly City that balances business, residential and cultural community interests. Known throughout the region as a vibrant business community, the City attracts and retains a strong business base, generates healthy revenue and encourages ongoing revitalization through thoughtful and responsible development.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jim Kirchheimer (Chair)

Judy French

Linda Gawlik

Karen Hamilton

Robb Luinstra

Cyndee Lutz

J. Robert Parker

Darrin Robertson

Pam O'Mara

Jim Stahler



The Economic Health committee considered opportunities to develop a stronger tax base through building business with the challenging reality of Centennial's landlocked geography. The committee members also wanted to balance that growth with respect to residential neighborhoods and a creative mix of business options. In addition to focusing on economic development activities to increase retail and capture more of the citizens' tax dollars, the committee stressed government financial responsibility and transparency as well.

City of Centennial Economic Development Manager Corri Spiegel, Director of Planning and Development Wayne Reed and City Finance Director Charles Montoya, made presentations to the Economic Health committee about current City activities that support future growth. Mike Fronapfel, Manager of Planning and Development for Centennial Airport, also presented several issues related to Centennial's economic relationship with the airport.

# Environment



## VISION

We have a long-term vision that is mindful of Centennial's impact on the global ecosystem and determined to advance programs that reduce our environmental footprint. Centennial is a city that establishes and continues to integrate environmentally sustainable policies into the fabric of our community and successfully balances the challenges of economic development and quality of life. We aspire to establish a community that leads by example, from the top down, with an overarching and ecologically aware constitution that supports balanced practices and principles.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Pat Bedford (Chair)

Mark Schulz (Co-Chair)

Kristen Beatty

Regina Foley

Tracey Griffith

Justin Herrera

Laura Hoepfner

Donna Jesenovec

Eric Ness



The Environment committee examined how to protect and conserve Centennial’s natural assets, while simultaneously serving as stewards of the global ecosystem. Specifically, they explored the City’s role in incorporating sustainable practices in government activities and promoting citizen participation in “green” initiatives. They also took a strong role in assessing the vision for Centennial’s Open Space and how it lends itself to the City’s future quality of life.

They heard from Centennial Communications Director Sherry Patten who walked through the recently completed Open Space Master Plan. Sherry articulated the differences between citizen groups that are officially recognized by City government, such as advisory boards, task forces, quasi judicial boards and those groups that are not recognized, such as citizen committees and coalitions. She also discussed the City’s current operations and potential for creating environmentally sustainable activities in the future.

# ON THE ATTACHED DISK

## Full Report

The attached disk contains the full Centennial 2030 visioning report, complete with action plans developed by each committee.

## Appendix

### I. What is a Vision?

(Opening Presentation: Vision Kick-off Meeting – 9/29/07)

### II. Centennial Youth Commission

a. Roster

b. Presentation

(Vision Kick-off Meeting – 9/29/07)

### III. Centennial's Existing Practices and Policies

a. City Services

b. Community Quality of Life / Citizen Engagement

c. Economic Health

d. Environment

### IV. Research

a. City Services

b. Community Quality of Life / Citizen Engagement

c. Economic Health

d. Environment

e. Citizen Opinion Research and Feedback

(Presentation: Vision Kick-off Meeting – 9/29/07)

### V. Ward Descriptions

a. Ward I

b. Ward II

c. Ward III

d. Ward IV

