

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

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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

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Our Voice. Our Vision.
Centennial 2030





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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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.



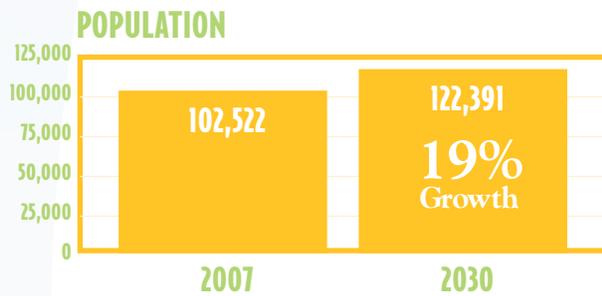
Building on Centennial's Strengths, Facing its Challenges

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%**

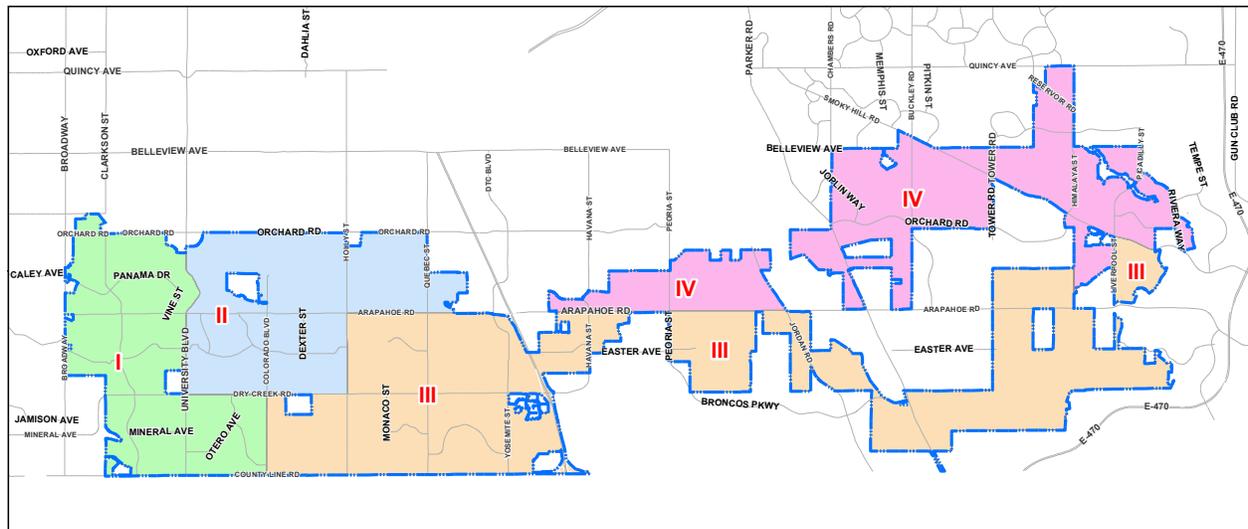
PERCENT OVER AGE 55 **8%**

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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 Miles

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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 and 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 and 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.