

Centennial eyes transformation of 800 acres into mixed-use destination



Image: City of Centennial

A rendering shows what the re-envisioned area of Midtown Centennial could look like.
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By [Justyna Tomtas](#) – Reporter, Denver Business Journal
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Centennial is in the process of developing a long-term vision to turn an 800-acre area of mid-20th-century office parks and commercial developments into a mixed-use neighborhood that could one day serve as the city's downtown.

The area planners have dubbed Midtown Centennial, located along the Interstate 25 corridor, spans west to east from South Yosemite Street to South Havana Street and north to south from East Arapahoe Road to East County Line Road.

The 50-year vision for the area aims to bring a more vibrant and walkable area that encompasses residential, commercial and transit-oriented spaces. It will set the stage for the next generation of people who will live in Centennial, said David King, a senior city planner and the project manager for Midtown.

“It’s not necessarily a short-term play or a short-term vision, but we’re hoping that through the city’s work here, through the private investment that we’re seeing, through future city investments, that we can really revitalize the area and bring a lot of energy here,” King said. He predicts the change from what exists today to what Midtown Centennial envisions will occur over multiple market cycles.

The project involves creating new zoning districts within the Midtown area to facilitate the redevelopment. A sub-area plan is expected to be developed, shaped by public feedback gathered in coming months, and the plan readied for planning commission and city council review late this year.



A rendering shows what Midtown Centennial could look like after it's developed.
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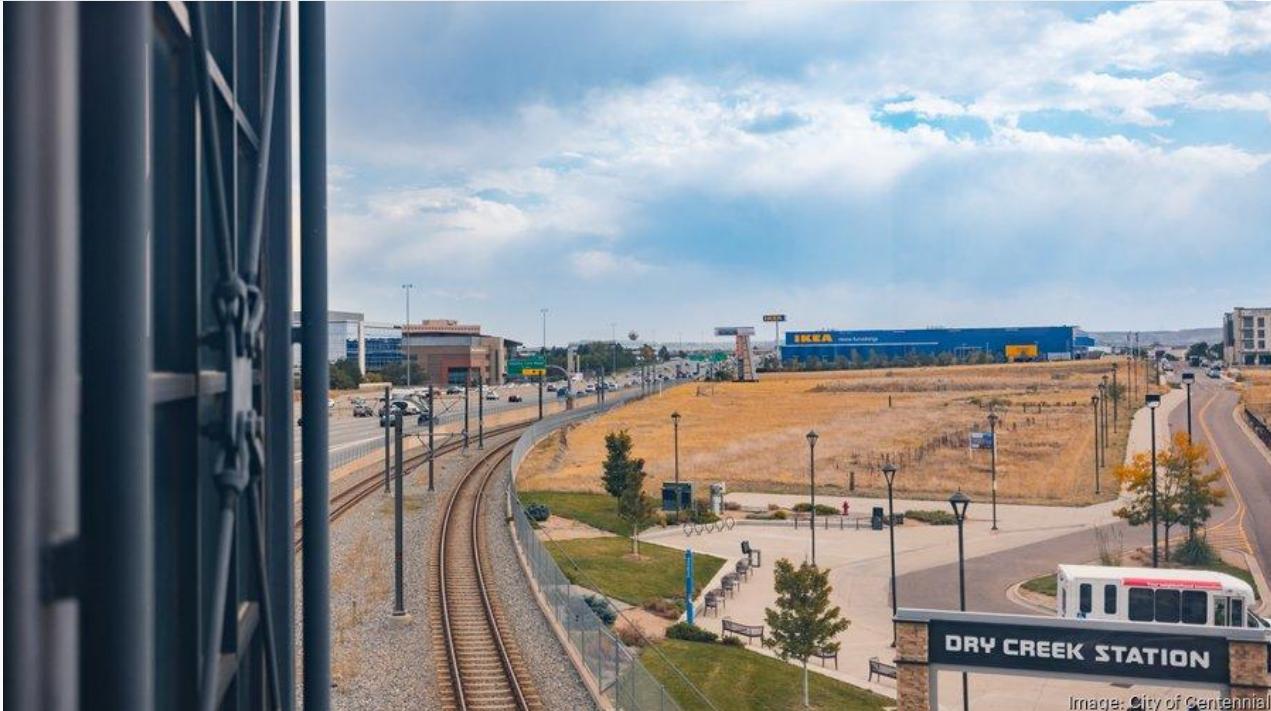
The goal of the project is not to lay out a plan of what goes where, but to encourage developers to bring their ideas and work hand in hand with the city.

“Typically, economic development is all about trying to bring new businesses into the city and working with our existing businesses,” Neil Marciak, the city’s economic development director, said. “Centennial takes a little different approach where we still do all that in economic development, but we’ve also pulled this future land use component into what we do.”

Centennial updated its comprehensive plan in 2023, designating Midtown Centennial as a place type.

The city and its consulting partners are “trying to look into the future” to anticipate what the market and private sector are looking for while balancing that with the city’s vision, Marciniak said.

“We have a lot of neighborhood retail centers and other commercial corridors, but there’s nothing with the same intensity, the same potential as Midtown has and has the same concentration of office uses, of transportation, mobility access that Midtown has,” King said. “It really becomes a unique place in the city.”



The Dry Creek Station near IKEA is pictured.

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Centennial has not been immune to the post-pandemic vacancy issues that have impacted office buildings in Denver and across the country. The vacancy rate of the buildings at Midtown currently hovers at about 24%, but that’s anticipated to rise higher into the low 30% range, King said.

The redevelopment will not do away with office space but instead encourage projects that stray away from the 1970s, two-story office buildings popular in the area today, King said.

“We still see this as a very vibrant office area,” King said, “It’s going to be new development. It’s going to be maybe a more unique, iconic style development that happens within Midtown, so office still has a place, but we have too much office.”

Midtown is situated near one of the city's last greenfield areas. The District, previously called the Jones District and once [pitched as a potential spot for Amazon's HQ2](#), includes around 40 acres of undeveloped land along the I-25 corridor.



Image: City of Centennial

A rendering shows The District in Centennial.

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The property, owned by Brue Baukol Capital Partners, now includes [three new multifamily residential buildings](#), with several parcels available for development. The area is envisioned to include a mix of uses, from residential, office, to retail and park space.

“Now, there’s an opportunity to expand that area of change beyond just The District,” Marciniak said.

The city is working with Denver-based urban design and landscape architecture firm Civitas and land economics consulting firm Economic & Planning Systems. The two firms are working to determine how to create a neighborhood-feel at Midtown, and how to connect various land uses to facilitate a more urban-style development.

While the area will become a new neighborhood, it also has the potential to become something that Centennial is missing.

“It could be the future downtown Centennial,” Marciniak said. “We just don’t know exactly what that’s going to look like.”

The city is garnering community input on [Midtown Centennial](#) and has launched [an interactive mapping tool](#) that allows people to highlight opportunities, ask questions and provide feedback on specific locations within Midtown.

“We want something special to be here and we’re willing to take the first step, set the vision, and be there as a partner for people as they want to come into the city, make this their home,” King said. “I think that’s a really exciting message for us that Midtown is a place for this type of opportunity and that the city’s really ready to work with anybody on it.”