

12th Annual State of City
Mayor Cathy Noon
April 28, 2016

Seems like only yesterday a group of us started campaigning for what is now Centennial to become a City. Walking door to door, standing outside grocery stores - you name it, we did it. It was important to us to control our destiny. To be a City with retail, business development, strong neighborhoods and an overall great place to live and work. The vision in 2001 was to be an intentional government- to not just do things because that's what government does. We wanted to do business differently and I think we have succeeded.

Our great City was the brain child of a few good men that had breakfast together in 1998. Let me start by thanking these visionaries: John Brackney, Brian Vogt, Ed Bosier, Pete Ross and Randy Pye for the idea to create Centennial. Following the successful incorporation vote, Randy Pye gave the Bank President, Frank Peterson \$1 for the City's first office space which was at the Arapahoe Bank & Trust. As City responsibilities and staff were added, additional space was necessary so the City leased office space until 2008 when we purchased our first City Hall. What an investment! We paid cash for the building and purchased the surrounding land. Since then we have constructed our award winning Centennial Center Park and added a Public Works facility, remaining debt-free.

Over the years leaders of our City have contributed to it what it is today. From City Council to members of our Boards and Commissions and Home Rule Charter Commissioners, residents serving the City have shaped it to be anything but "typical government". Last year we said goodbye to Council Members Vorry Moon and Keith Gardner and welcomed Candace Moon and Carrie Penaloza to City Council. Council Members Stephanie Piko and Ken Lucas were re-elected and serve along with Mayor Pro Tem C.J. Whelan, District 1 Kathy Turley, District 2 Doris Truhlar, and District 3 Mark Gotto. Ensuring vision becomes reality, we have to give kudos to our dedicated staff and contractors. City Manager John Danielson has assembled a team that strives for innovation, efficiency and excellence. As you see from the slide, we have many great partners and it is a pleasure to work with you all.

Throughout the years, Centennial has been recognized as one of the safest cities in Colorado, a Best Place to Live in the U.S. by Money Magazine and twice by USA Today. We were recently named the best city in Colorado for young families and the friendliest! We have two top ranked school districts, nationally accredited public safety and emergency services partners, the Top Librarian in the United States and Centennial Rotarian, Nicolle Davies and our own home town hero Olympian Missy Franklin. Our public private partnerships have provided opportunity to be featured in a variety of national publications. Pretty impressive for a 15 year old city.

To set the stage today, I'll be to sharing some data about the City "then and now". Remember back in the early 2000's- when people still used land lines for phones, not everyone had a cell phone (certainly not a smart phone)? Now 63% of Centennial residents consider their cell phone their primary telephone. Back when we started people received their information through community newspapers and newsletters. Now we are recognized as the most "internet connected city in the U.S. and get our neighborhood information through Nextdoor. We may not be old in "municipal years", but there has been a lot of change in our 15 short years of being a City.

In our first citizen survey in 2003, two out of ten residents didn't know they lived in the City. In my early years as mayor, residents self-identified with their neighborhood because 1) they hadn't had a City to

identify with and 2) few people knew where Centennial was located. Now people offer that they live in our City and I have to ask which neighborhood. It's not only enough to know they are in our City but they are proud to be a Centennial resident!

Also beneficial to our community identity, Centennial's size has grown. The original City map looked like swiss cheese -14 miles east to west, roughly 2 miles north to south with a number of "holes". There were areas that remained in the County when we incorporated- unsure of the benefits or consequences of being in Centennial. Over the years, the majority of these "holes" are now in Centennial and most of them entered the City voluntarily. Parts of Willow Creek and Chapparral (our first annexations!), Arapahoe High School, a cemetery, Tagawa Gardens, and entire business parks such as the Centennial Promenade, Panorama Corporate Center and the Dry Creek Corporate Center now known as INOVA Dry Creek. The city saw an opportunity to fill in another "hole" and purchased 44 acres of former U.S. Postal Service land for open space

Our recent 2016 citizen survey results showed residents continue to rank the City excellent or good when it comes to being proud to live in Centennial, their neighborhood as a place to live, Centennial as a place to raise children, a place to retire and the overall quality of life in our City.

Necessary to protecting that quality of life, Economic development is one of the reasons Centennial exists today. The south metro Denver area has always been a place of opportunity for businesses and plays a huge role in driving Colorado's economy. Seven of the nine Colorado-based Fortune 500 companies are located in south metro Denver and almost 30% of the state's earnings originate here.

Through hard work, becoming a Home Rule community and best practices, we know there are more than 6,000 registered businesses. Recent numbers show Centennial continues to prosper with 53 percent of City revenues generated by retail sales tax, increasing by more than \$1 million each year. The City has a work force population of more than 59,000 and is home to a variety of industries, world-wide companies and amazing small businesses. Throughout the last 15 years, Centennial has become home to Colorado's only IKEA and Topgolf and continues to expand our key industries such as aerospace, telecommunications, healthcare and construction among others.

The Jones District is currently underway as the City's first Transit Oriented Development. This 42 acre mixed-use project is located between IKEA and Panorama Corporate Center anticipating more than one million square feet of office, residential and retail space. While we mourn the passing of pioneer Glenn Jones and the Jones University, we are proud his legacy will continue in Centennial.

In 2003, citizens prioritized the fiscal health of the new city. So did our leaders and the payoff is our economy is thriving. Centennial remains debt free and has always strived to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. We are fiscally strong now because we have been smart and safe with our finances and plan for the long term.

The business community contributes mightily to our fiscal health. To help encourage success for our businesses, Centennial streamlined processes and our development code, reduced the Business Personal Property taxes owed to the City, and just launched a mobile "Explore Centennial" Business Directory. Those initiatives seem to be working as the past year saw a 39% increase in the value of commercial building permits – both expansions and new businesses. From entertainment to lasers, child care to senior living communities, banking to breweries, please join me in welcoming a few - Performance Cycle, Topgolf, Bad Daddy Burger Bar, Half Penny Brewing, Nuburu, Fast Enterprises,

Peakview Assisted Living, HomeGoods,. I'd also like to thank Allosource, Oppenheimer Funds, Epicurean Catering and many others for reinvesting in their Centennial locations.

Redevelopment will continue to play an important part of Centennial's future and while change can be hard, it can also produce wonderful outcomes like the SouthGlenn area. Last year, Centennial's 80122 zip code was recognized as the 3rd hottest zip code in the nation by realtor.com. Houses spent approximately two weeks on the market- the shortest number of days in the U.S. at the time. The Streets at SouthGlenn is located in this zip code. How many of you remember going to the SouthGlenn Mall? It's hard to believe it's been nearly 7 years since this urban mixed-use development opened. Adding to the mix, this year we expect to welcome Marshalls and Ross to The Streets at SouthGlenn. You can be sure that our Council and staff are planning for and encouraging other redevelopment opportunities throughout Centennial.

Speaking of planning, transportation is all about planning. When the City incorporated, there were not a lot of options to get to and from Centennial, but we survived T-REX which brought light rail to the south metro Denver area. The Dry Creek Light Rail Station provides options to get to and from Centennial easier and more conveniently. City Council recently approved funding for the Dry Creek Station platform expansion. This will reduce walk times and add a Kiss & Ride to ease access for existing riders and benefit new development. Construction will start soon and we want to thank our partners, the Southeast Transportation Management Association, SPMID, and the Panorama Metropolitan District for helping to implement a new vision for the area.

Who can go without talking about Arapahoe Road and I-25, improving this interchange has been on the priority list for quite some time. More than half of the respondents to the 2010 citizen survey ranked reconstruction of Arapahoe/I-25 as essential or very important. Our coalition with Arapahoe County and Greenwood Village worked hard to bring this to reality. Well, this project is scheduled to begin very soon.

To the east, Arapahoe Rd. Waco to Himalaya- was conceived by Arapahoe County prior to Centennial's formation. Since the City's first citizen survey in 2003, this project has been a high priority to us and our citizens. Again there was strong desire, years of planning and partnerships with Arapahoe County, SEMSWA, & the City of Aurora. I am pleased to share that after all of this time the project is underway and will be complete by the end of this year.

Centennial is also involved with another project along with Arapahoe County, the Denver South TMA and the SPIMD to study short-term and long-term improvements at Dry Creek and I-25 to address peak period congestion along the corridor. Recommendations should be coming in June of this year.

The widening of C470 is another example of partnerships and hard work. The contractor selection has just occurred for additional managed toll and auxiliary lanes on C470 from I-25 to Wadsworth. Look for this project to begin this summer.

As I mentioned earlier, Centennial's public private partnership with what is now ch2m for public works services is often studied for replication. At the time it was the largest public private partnership conversion in the U.S. Safety and mobility on our roadways is always of utmost importance in our City. Street maintenance and improvements to intersections, signals and operations over the years have benefitted our residents and businesses, with more improvements coming in the future.

Traffic congestion is always a topic of conversation and a never-ending challenge, especially with the Denver metro area so attractive to millennials. With each citizen survey traffic congestion continues to rank higher in importance-. In 2016, (40%) of survey respondents ranked congestion as their number one priority. Recognizing this, the City chose improving mobility across all modes of transportation for its innovation team's first priority. Centennial was one of just over a dozen cities selected to receive a 3-year, \$1.5 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies Innovation Teams program. Innovation teams function as in-house consultants moving from one priority to the next. The Centennial Innovation Team is working with our regional partners and coming up with innovative ways to help all of us get from point A to point B easier.

The i-Team is currently working with our Senior Commission on a Mobility Ambassadors Program (MAP). Seniors helping seniors learn the various travel options and online tools to increase their mobility. Centennial, through the i-team, is the only city to join with Denver's U.S. DOT Smart Cities Grant application. The i-team has much more coming so watch for exciting announcements soon.

City Council showed their commitment to enhancing fiber opportunities by dedicating \$5.7 million early last month to implement the City's Fiber Master Plan. Initially, the plan is to be able to provide fiber for community anchor institutions (such as schools, emergency service responders, libraries, etc.) to tie into. The hope is eventually increasing higher internet speed options among private providers. In 5 years not having access to fiber will be like a building not having power or water. It is a must for businesses to be successful and highly desired by residents. I'd like to recognize Councilmembers Whelan, Lucas and Piko, Assistant to the City Manager Eric Eddy and the entire Fiber Sub-Committee along with Magellan Advisors for their commitment to this effort.

We wouldn't be who we are today without our community partners. We have a lot of them and as they precede the City, they help shape Centennial. There's been some changes over the past 15 years, but resident surveys confirm satisfaction with the level of service our special districts provide. Let's see how we react to change with an example of "then and now"—our Arapahoe County Sheriffs are here launching their new uniforms. Deputies, please stand – pretty sharp, aren't they? Our Arapahoe County Sheriff Department along with South Metro, Cunningham, and Littleton Fire Districts have a commitment to excellence—from national accreditation to response times and services, our community feels safe and protected. The quality of our Cherry Creek and Littleton School District attracts families who value excellence in education. The Arapahoe Library District embraces the changes in how people get information. Reliable and responsive, our water and sanitation, stormwater and other providers of essential services are integral to a quality community. We thank you.

Upon incorporation, Centennial was already served by two Parks and Recreation Districts and had no open space, trail or park responsibilities of its own.

With early citizen survey feedback and the passage of the Arapahoe County open space sales tax with subsequent share back funds to Centennial, indications were that our residents wanted more open space trails and parks. Since 2008, the City has contributed about \$6.1 million from its Arapahoe County Share-back and Conservation Trust Funds to improve park amenities and expand trails used by Centennial residents. Just recently Centennial, SSPRD, Arapahoe County, the South Metro Land Conservancy and the Trust for Public Lands partnered to acquire a Conservation Easement on the Sumac Hill Farm next to deKoevend Park and the High Line Canal, thus protecting this 11 acre farm from development and provide open space for future generations. Centennial is also participating in the High Line Canal preservation and restoration discussions.

In 2010, the City partnered with the Parker Jordan Metropolitan District for one-half ownership of the 107 acre Parker Jordan Centennial Open Space. Another wise investment made by the City, making it possible to complete one of the last links in the 40-mile Cherry Creek Regional Trail.

In 2012, Centennial opened its first City-owned Park, Centennial Center Park. This 11-acre, award-winning Park continues to be a destination for visitors throughout the state and home to the City's summer events which have undoubtedly evolved throughout the years.

Centennial Under the Stars used to be held in a parking lot. Now we get to use our award winning Centennial Center Park amphitheater- and enjoy live music and a laser light show. Due to the positive response we've received for our summer events we decided to add to the summer fun. The U.S. Air Force Falconaires band will kick off the summer events. New this year we will have Savor Centennial which is a happy hour type event with local music, food and beverages; a Brew and Que- a barbeque and beer tasting festival; a Car Show and Movie Night and the City is taking on the Centennial Chalk Art Festival, which if you missed it last year was two days of artists creating amazing chalk artwork. Rather than list all the events this summer in the park-I'd suggest visiting the City's website to view the complete list of summer fun.

A lot has changed in our City throughout the last 15 years, including our residents. Forty-nine (49%) of current residents did not live in Centennial when it was formed. This is something to think about. Expectations have changed and will continue to change. When moving to Centennial from a full service City new residents may expect the City to manage utilities, trash, parks and recreation. While we do business differently, we also do it smart. Ninety-three percent (93%) of residents are very likely or somewhat likely to recommend Centennial to someone who asks. Eighty-nine (89%) are very likely or somewhat likely to remain in Centennial for the next five years.

I would be remiss to not mention a topic that is near and dear to my heart- aging in place. With the help of the Centennial Senior Commission we are planning for our future. With nearly 16,500 Centennial residents ages 60 and older we need to think about transportation, housing, and quality of life for our seniors.

Our community has always been involved and has always strived to be the best it can be. This year, the City will be leading the development of a new comprehensive plan which is the City's vision for the future. Where do we want to go, are we heading in the right direction? We will also be updating our Open Space Master Plan. It is important we hear from all of you. We want to continue the trend of being the great place to live.

Looking back provides a learning opportunity and hopefully affirmation that the path chosen was the right one. Our citizen surveys seem to provide that:

- In 2003, survey respondents thought "Centennial isn't anything special yet, but they believe there is enough potential that they would vote for it all over again".
- In 2007, "optimism in the City's future remains strong and steady". Seventy-two (72%) of respondents stated Centennial as "having a few growing pains but eventually will become something special", and have we ever!

- When compared to national benchmarks in 2016, Centennial rated higher than average as a place to raise children, economic health, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, a place to work and K-12 education. Proving once again that we are a great place to live, work, play and grow.

We have gone from learning to leading, while remaining a responsive intentional government. It seems the vision of those who formed Centennial remains much the same and I believe that vision will continue to serve our residents and you, our partners in the community, for years to come. Happy 15 years, Centennial!