



May 7, 2024
18th State of Our City
Mayor Stephanie Piko Speech

We are a collaborative community that depends on each of our organizations to work for our citizens. It has been my honor and privilege to get to know and work with individuals from all of these organizations, to build relationships and to increase the understanding of how we help each other achieve amazing things.

It is our City Partners that continue to keep things running smoothly for our citizens and take on the big projects in Public Works - Thank you Jacobs and TerraCare for all of your efforts - you are truly an extension of our city and the pride you exhibit in our shared goals is noticed. Thank you for getting us through what has been one of our largest and most impactful infrastructure projects - the replacement of the Arapahoe Bridge over Big Dry Creek!

Initially, constructed in 1945 - nearly 80 years ago - it was time for a replacement. The new bridge is wider, taller and has improved pedestrian access to South Suburban's Big Dry Creek Trail. Working with SEMSWA and South Suburban we have created a more accessible and pleasurable experience for the thousands of citizens that utilize this trail annually - oh, and then there are the cars that utilize the bridge! Eliminating what had been a frustrating bottleneck - the wider bridge offers both drivers and pedestrians safer access to neighborhoods, shopping and the intersection of Arapahoe and University.

Our Street fund and road maintenance make up nearly 1/3 of our budget expenditures each year and we appreciate the work done by all these crews to keep traffic signals working, our streets plowed and maintained as well as their planning for future improvements to keep our businesses, our citizens and our city thriving. - And to my Douglas County friends - we all know County Line Road widening is coming next ... let's say some prayers for a successful project now!

Knowing that I only have a couple of these "State of our City" presentations left, I wanted to take this opportunity to focus on the extraordinary things that go on in Centennial, not because of what we do - but because of what YOU do!

All of the people here today whether they live or work in Centennial are a part of what truly makes our community unique and successful. It's the "YOU" - Comm-YOU-nity that is a part of self-determination, innovation, resilience, generosity and motivation that has created and continues to foster what makes Centennial home.

Video 1: [Learn why Centennial is the place to be](#)

Centennial would not have been founded without YOU. Without the individuals who worked for the self-determination behind Centennial - we would not be where we are today. But even before that, citizens recognized this area was special - with great neighborhoods, great parks and trails and great schools - Centennial was already well on its way to becoming a favorite place to live and raise a family.

Couples like the Winkler's, hosting a community ice cream social for over 25 years are a great example of what citizens wanted to protect. City Council's decision to establish a community grant program has brought more people in our neighborhoods together. Whether for neighborhood beautification efforts, movie nights or just a neighborhood party - we want to support ways to bring the citizens of Centennial together.

Working together we have brought over \$350,000 of investment directly into our neighborhoods.

The City also works to bring neighborhoods together through our District-wide summer social events and bringing the entire City together at favorites like - Centennial Under the Stars, the Chalk Art Festival at the Streets at SouthGlenn and a new fall favorite – Sip in Centennial.

We know our citizens gather in our many parks and event spaces throughout the City - so we thank our partners - Arapahoe Libraries, South Suburban Parks and Recreation District, and Trails Park and Recreation District for providing beautiful facilities that continue to bring people together to do more than just recreate, but to celebrate. Not only does our community come together where we live and play, but also where we work. Centennial relies on our businesses, both big and small - to keep our community thriving. With sales tax driving over 60% of our budget dollars - supporting our business community and creating a business-friendly environment is vital to Centennial's effort toward success.

Video 2: [Why Urban Air and Colonna's love to be in Centennial](#)

Every storefront, every office, every entrepreneurial venture represents a story - a story of determination, vision and hard work. Spark Centennial is a program designed to help small business owners take that next step - with our support and the support of their fellow Sparkers! Over the past few years, nearly 30 businesses have explored and implemented bold ideas to give their business the Spark it needed.

So, a confession that most people do not believe is I do not have an Amazon Prime account. Believe me, that does not prevent us from shopping online - which still generates sales tax for Centennial - but it does create a conscious effort to support local businesses when we can and by choice.

Centennial's Retail Center Revitalization Program - supports that idea too - this program is bringing forward great opportunities to engage with owners, tenants and the surrounding communities to ensure that we have retail environments that are unique, sustainable and attract quality tenants and engaged customers. So, whether you are enjoying the concerts at the Streets at SouthGlenn or food trucks at Two22 Brew - appreciate our local businesses and support them, because it is amazing to see how much they support us. Businesses not only support other businesses - but they support individuals, entrepreneurs and a collection of non-profits which reminds us of why we all work to build community.

Video 3: [Why The Village Workspace and Nourish love to be in Centennial](#)

In Centennial, we are proud of everyone's commitment to support our non-profit community. Not only do non-profits service a need, provide employment, and support local businesses, they strengthen the health and spirit of our community.

Curiosity inspired me to check in with Colorado Gives to see if they could back up my experience with the generosity, I have witnessed within our community . And boy did they.

In 2023, as part of Colorado Gives Day - 6,384 donors from Centennial gave over \$4 million to the 1,842 non-profits working across Colorado - representing 6% of all the giving through Colorado Gives in 2023.

Additionally, there are 142 non-profits operating in Centennial (who participated in Colorado Gives Day) who received a collective \$2.6 million from Colorado Gives donors from across the state. - this is just with Colorado Gives...

This doesn't even include the local events that our community supports. Some additional, back-of-the-napkin math - demonstrates that in just supporting education - the foundations from Arapahoe Community College, Community College of Aurora, Littleton Public Schools and Cherry Creek Schools have in the past few months alone raised well over \$1.2 million to support education and students in our communities!

It seems every one of our partners has supported and benefitted from supporting a local non-profit, relying on them to provide a niche benefit that is outside of their scope of service. Working with and through non-profits expands all our reach and helps us connect with the members of our community.

The City's partnerships with the non-profit community allow us to connect with your community in very special ways. Our partnership with the YMCA for the development of the Center for Generations has brought a great connection point for both the seniors and youth in our community.

Centennial's opportunity to provide support for youth through the Broncos Grant Program has allowed us to support everything from K-9 Back the Blue with the publication of their children's book - promoting a beloved program with our School

Resource Officers and our students. We have supported Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Exceptional Kids, Trails Rec District, Youth Athletics and more to a tune of \$1.1 million going directly to youth opportunities in your community.

Centennial has also extended support through our connection with the Centennial Faith Council, creating opportunities to support families, students and individuals experiencing homelessness. Through partnerships with Iron Sharp Community Foundation, our Faith Community and our school districts students have been provided school backpacks and families were celebrated at the Lavished with Love holiday event bringing services, support, joy, and a wonderful meal to families in need illustrating the generosity and support found within our community.

The City has continued to partner with the Centennial Arts and Cultural Foundation, and is excited to bring art to public spaces - we continue to work to place art along our corridors through the traffic box wrap program, provide entertainment at the Chalk Art Festival through Art Rocks and are very excited to announce our newest piece of infrastructure - the Arapahoe Bridge will have artist murals as part of the experience provided to the trail users along Big Dry Creek! Thank you to the Centennial Rotary Club and Ting for sponsoring the artists who will be participating this year!

We have so many wonderful organizations within the city whether big, global, small or local - like Project Cure, Special Olympics, Love Justice, The Salvation Army - there is something or some way for everyone to contribute to bringing Centennial together and making our citizens the key to our success.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize two citizens who were incredible keys to our success, Mayor Cathy Noon and Councilmember Ron Weidmann. We lost two of the best supporters and friends Centennial could have asked for this past winter - their generosity with their time, energy and wisdom was more than we deserved, and we thank them and their families for their dedication to our community.

Understanding the strength in our community lies in our ability to come together, work together and celebrate together - What's the one word you would use to describe the "State of Your City". Mine is - Unstoppable -

Video 4: [City Council and others use one word to describe Centennial.](#)

I hope you enjoyed a chance to learn more about what Your City is doing.

Go out and enjoy what makes Your City Great. Thank you!