



Envision
LITTLETON

Help us see the future of Littleton!
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ENVISION REPORT

DRAFT

OCTOBER 8, 2018



Envision
LITTLETON
Our Community. Our Future.

2040

This draft Envision Report provides an opportunity for residents to “check our work” to ensure we accurately captured and reflected the input received during the Envision Littleton engagement efforts of recent months. The final revised Envision Report will be produced in November and considered for adoption by City Council in December.

VISION 2040

The statement below reflects shared values and priorities for Littleton expressed by its residents and leaders as they, together, look ahead toward the Year 2040 – and beyond:

WHO AND WHAT WE ARE

As a **hometown community** close to the “big city,” Littleton is in a **premier location** near the Front Range with its own river corridor, regional parks and trails, and transportation linkages in all directions. It is a **largely built-out city** with a historic and vibrant downtown at its core, established neighborhoods, and fingers and concentrations of green throughout. It is also home to both major private and institutional employers and a **robust small business community**, with local shops, services and restaurants that cater especially to Littleton residents and guests.

WHAT SETS OUR CITY APART

Littleton is widely known and envied as a **city with “strong bones”** that is **the real thing** when it comes to building and maintaining community. It is a **place where nature and city living intersect**, can both be enjoyed, and are guarded with a **fierce sense of stewardship**. Littleton is a **strikingly beautiful city**, with its highly valued mountain views, the South Platte River corridor and other creeks and water features, an abundant tree canopy, and clean and attractive roadway corridors.

WHAT WE STRIVE FOR

We expect that urban and suburban development will be carefully designed and integrated within the natural endowment and physical context described above. As Littleton has a **diverse landscape** and varying development character across its neighborhoods, districts and roadway corridors, we recognize that its **unique character areas** must be respected or their evolution sensitively managed and planned as the entire metro region continues to grow and change around the city.

As we are a relatively **mature city** in the region, our focus will increasingly be on **reinvestment and revitalization** needs, both residential and nonresidential. This will require that we keep one eye on the **long-term financial sustainability** of municipal government in a community that rightly expects the **best in public services**, and the other eye on ensuring **conscientious development and redevelopment** practices that are consistent with local values while helping to reinforce the local economy and tax base. An emphasis on renewal will also enable us to make Littleton **even safer and more accessible** for those moving about on foot and by bike, whether in neighborhoods, getting to/from community destinations, or along and across busy roadway corridors. We will also continue to embrace and support the **public transit services** that link our city to the employment centers, amenities and international airport that a great global metropolis like Denver offers.

Above all else, we will strive to make Littleton **a community for people of all ages**, including those who have grown up here and wish to stay, those who have moved here to raise a family or grow a business, and those who wish to age in place and continue enjoying the many amenities of this **singular place**.

HOMETOWN COMMUNITY

Strikingly Beautiful

NATURE AND
CITY LIVING

Diverse Landscape

MATURE CITY

ROBUST SMALL
BUSINESS COMMUNITY



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Even in the face of potentially significant demographic change ahead, Littleton will be **ANCHORED** with a firm belief among its residents and leaders of what makes this a truly exceptional place, from its traditional downtown, established neighborhoods and longstanding reputation as a community of choice for quality schools, to its role as the Arapahoe County seat, home to a significant Arapahoe Community College campus and medical and other institutions, and hub for an array of cultural and lifestyle amenities for both residents and visitors.



Littleton will be **AUTHENTIC** and comfortable for both residents and guests, whether in terms of its historic character, residential living options and walkable settings or its inviting, friendly and safe atmosphere and true sense of place and community. Littleton must always strive to balance where the market is driving development trends with the fundamental character elements that set Littleton apart.



Littleton will be **CONNECTED** and accessible, both from a physical and mobility standpoint with regional ties via highways and arterials, transit services, long-distance trails and the South Platte River greenway system, and in terms of being an inclusive and neighborly community that provides opportunities for youth, seniors, and residents in need to thrive here. Littleton will also remain a fun and eventful locale throughout the year, bringing together residents for both leisure and volunteer activities, and drawing visitors from across the Denver metro region and beyond.



Littleton will be an **ACTIVE** community that supports its residents' efforts to be fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle, embraces their desire to gather for live performances and other local happenings, appreciates and builds on the value of a lively downtown, and elevates its position as a dream community for outdoor recreation and nature enthusiasts and a destination for visitors wishing to share in these local amenities.



Littleton will be **ENGAGED** and civic-minded in all matters affecting the direction and priorities of City government and the community, participating in transparent processes, and maintaining a respectful and productive dialogue among committed elected officials, informed residents and other partner organizations and agencies interested in Littleton as it is today and will be tomorrow.

COMMON GROUND – SHARED PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS

The Envision Littleton survey asked residents what they value most about living in Littleton as well as concerns they have for the future of Littleton. In addition to the survey, the Envision team held over 100 events and had almost 3,000 in-person conversations that helped to validate the survey results and enabled more “drill down” questions and give and take. Analysis of this combined input revealed that while there are various features and considerations about Littleton that people do not always agree on, many people share basic values that are now reflected in the vision and guiding principles. Related to the lists below of most frequently cited priorities and concerns, examples of such underlying values include emphasis on fitness and healthy living, appreciation of natural assets and the outdoors, and interest in having a safe, inclusive, neighborly and visually attractive community.

SHARED PRIORITIES

The following elements consistently came up as being valued in Littleton (even if there are concerns about the element changing or being threatened):

- ▶ Parks, Trails, and Open Space
- ▶ Small Town Feel and Community
- ▶ Downtown Littleton
- ▶ Littleton Public School System
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Accessibility (having a variety of ways to get around Littleton as well as connect to Denver and other parts of the region)
- ▶ Amenities (such as Bemis Library and Littleton Museum) and Events (such as Western Welcome Week)

SHARED CONCERNS

The following elements consistently came up as being concerns about the future of Littleton, although in many instances there is significant variation as to why people are concerned about an issue:

- ▶ Traffic
- ▶ Growth and Redevelopment
- ▶ Crime and Safety
- ▶ Affordability
- ▶ Contentious local politics

“I have two sons, one currently of school age, and Littleton schools are some of the best around. Additionally my family and I have enjoyed, even prior to living here, the downtown Littleton area, trails, Chatfield, basically all that Littleton has to offer. It's the whole enchilada.”



“Littleton is a great city to live in. It has a nice small-town feel and great amenities, including parks and local shops.”

“Crime seems to be going up.”

“The traffic, as is, is unsustainable, in twenty years it will be worse. It has to be addressed.”

“Though I love our history, sometimes it seems many are more focused on preserving the past instead of planning for the future.”



“Littleton is a special place in the greater Denver Metro area. It has maintained its history in terms of Community that is reflected in parks, common areas, buildings, walkability, friendliness, etc.”

“I could think of no other city I would wish to live.”



Quotes from Envision survey respondents.

SMALL TOWN FEEL AND COMMUNITY – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Over 150 survey responses cited “Small Town Feel” when asked to list words that represent what they value about Littleton. In addition, more than 100 survey responses mentioned “Community” or “Community Feel,” and similar comments were made repeatedly during in-person discussions. This was not surprising to the planning consultants on the Envision team as they hear these sentiments in most every city they work with, from small burgs of several thousand residents to cities with populations into the hundreds of thousands. The challenge is that Small Town Feel and Community can mean different things to different people, and they remain abstract concepts unless clarified. Based on lengthier survey comments, focus groups, community coffee chats, and in-depth discussions at community events, the Small Town Feel and Community Feel that exists in Littleton and is highly valued stems from the following:

Stable Population

Many Littleton residents grew up in Littleton, stayed for a lifetime after moving here, or have family that also live in Littleton.

Active in Daytime

Littleton is an active daytime city versus a sleepy “bedroom community.”

SAFE

Complete Community

Littleton has many more pieces in place than others in aiming to be a complete community with homes, businesses, schools, diverse places of worship, outdoor recreation and health and fitness amenities, entertainment, healthcare, and transportation options.

Destination for Visitors

**DISTINCT IDENTITY
AND HISTORY**

**WELCOMING AND
FRIENDLY**

Neighborhoods

Gathering Places

Littleton has community gathering places - including Downtown Littleton, local businesses, Hudson Gardens, the Aspen Grove lifestyle center, Littleton Parks, Bemis Library, and Littleton Museum.

**ENGAGED AND
PROUD CITIZENS**

**FAMILY AND
SENIOR FRIENDLY**

Community Events

Quality Schools

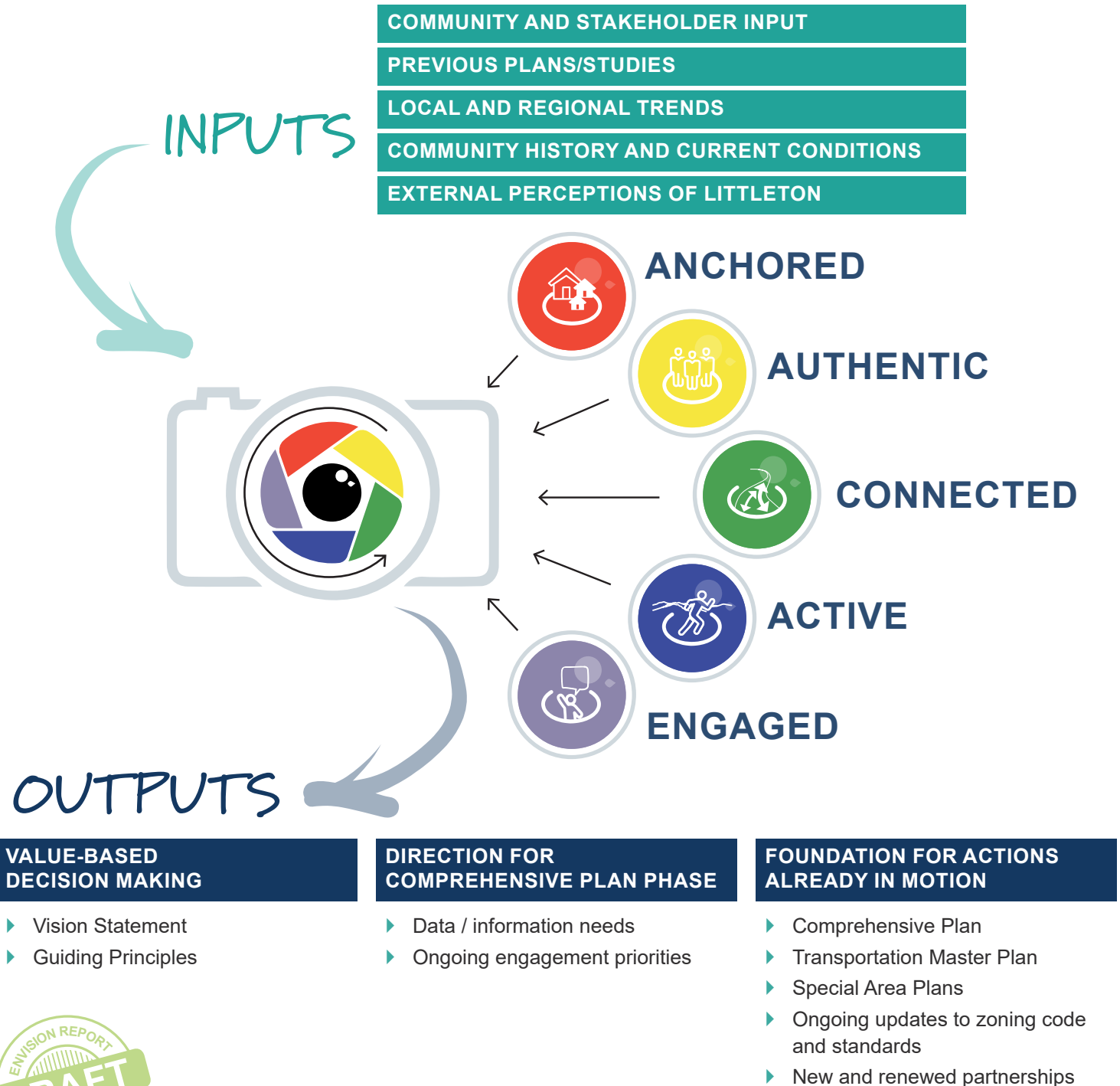
**SUPERIOR PUBLIC
SERVICES**

**ACCESSIBLE
CITY OFFICIALS**



WHY UNDERTAKE A VISIONING PROCESS AND HOW WILL IT BE USED?

Littleton has always been a great place and we want it to stay that way! Without a vision to define shared community values, decisions that impact those shared values will be made without a solid foundation. The vision will provide a guide to help the City and others make decisions, inform policy, and ensure the city never loses its heart and soul—**what makes Littleton, Littleton**—as it continues to grow and thrive. Envision Littleton has involved a filtering process of sorts. The Envision Team has sifted through many essential yet disparate inputs, including expressed hopes and concerns and stated priorities of both community leaders and residents, to work toward more focused outputs, similar to how light and images are filtered through a camera as illustrated below.



WHY NOW?

VISION BEFORE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Littleton will be developing a new Comprehensive Plan in 2019. The Comprehensive Plan will be based on the **Values, Guiding Principles, and Vision** identified through Envision Littleton. The first phase has also allowed the Envision Team to develop new relationships in the community with residents, organizations, and businesses, to build upon during the Comprehensive Plan process. Envision Littleton also exposed data gaps and areas and topics of contention or disagreement to focus on during the Comprehensive Plan phase.

BUILDING ON PREVIOUS EFFORTS IN LITTLETON

Envision Littleton builds upon the extensive existing planning work undertaken by the City as well as regional and local organizations. These existing, and in some cases ongoing, planning efforts provide a baseline of data and ideas that will inform both this Vision Report and the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.

- ▶ **Recent City of Littleton Plans (LittletonPlans.org)**
 - 2014 “Citywide Plan”
 - Belleview Avenue Corridor Vision
 - Mineral Station Area Framework
 - Littleton Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines
- ▶ **City of Littleton Resident and Business Surveys (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018)**
- ▶ **Littleton Housing Study**
- ▶ **Regional and Local Partner Plans**
 - South Platte River Corridor Vision
 - High Line Canal Conservancy Vision
 - South Suburban Parks and Recreation Master Plan
 - RTD (Regional Transportation District) 2015-2020 Strategic Plan
 - DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments) Metro Vision

KEY TERMS USED IN VISION REPORT

Envision Littleton—Envision Littleton is a community-driven process to develop a vision for Littleton that will directly inform the City’s plans for the next 10-20 years. Envision Littleton imagines the future of the city. We listened to what you value, why you love Littleton and your ideas about the future. This vision is the initial step in a larger process to update the City’s Comprehensive Plan and prepare a first-ever Transportation Master Plan.

Vision—A broad statement of what a community hopes and intends to be like in the future. With words and images, it offers a picture of that future, to provide inspiration, motivation and a framework for more detailed planning and decision-making.

Guiding Principles—Describe the values identified by the community and serve as the foundation for the Vision. The Guiding Principles provide a reference point for Littleton to consider when making decisions. The guiding principles reflect major themes, or areas of focus, for achieving the desired vision, that emerged based on analysis of input by stakeholders.

Values—Identify what matters most to the community, and how it wishes to be viewed by others. Our shared values inform the vision.



PROCESS OVERVIEW

The goal of the Envision Littleton community engagement was to tailor the engagement to each group, go to the community where they were already gathering, and build long-term relationships, awareness, and engagement throughout all the phases of Envision Littleton.

During both the first visioning phase and the second comprehensive plan phase we are guided by the following principles:

- ▶ We are working in partnership with our residents, businesses, and visitors.
- ▶ We are transparent.
- ▶ We strive to involve everyone including residents, employers, employees, and visitors.
- ▶ We tailor our interactions to bring out the wisdom of our participants.
- ▶ We are systematic in how we compare and analyze what we hear.
- ▶ We are building long-term relationships for all City efforts.
- ▶ We show participants how their input is used throughout the process.
- ▶ We build upon existing efforts, activities, and resources.
- ▶ We maintain flexibility to maximize opportunities and input.

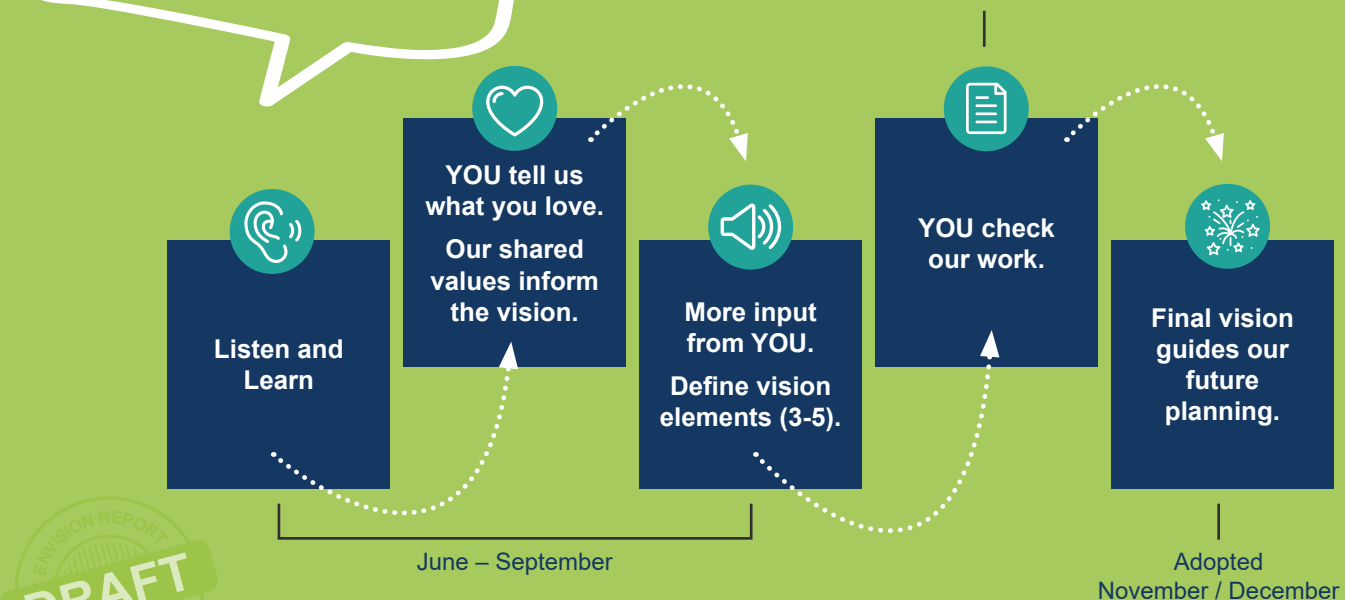
VISION REPORT ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

The stages of Envision Littleton include:



YOU ARE HERE

Check our work - during this phase of the process we are looking for feedback on the Draft Vision Report, including the draft vision and guiding principles. Does the initial work resonate with you? Is there a critical piece missing? Let us know so we can adjust as needed prior to the final Envision Report in November / December.





ENVISION LITTLETON SURVEY

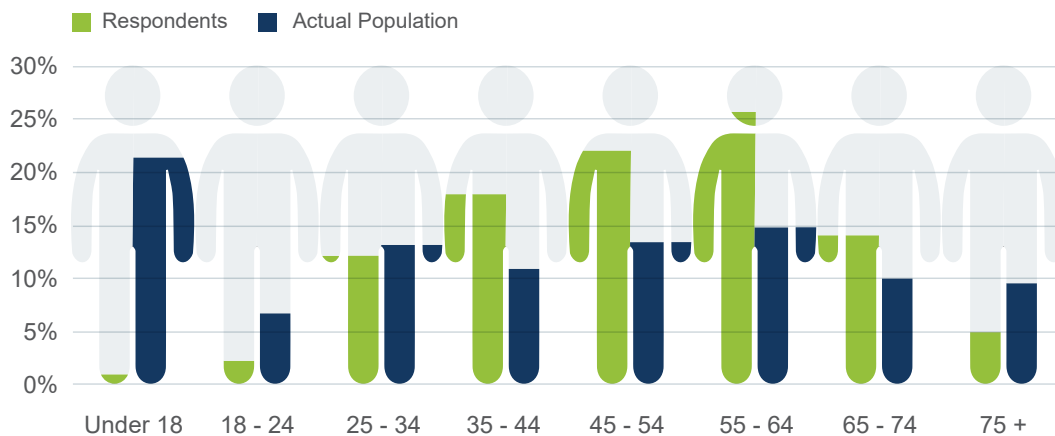
As part of the Envision Littleton engagement an online survey was created as one of many opportunities to voice values, concerns, and priorities about Littleton's future. The Envision Littleton Survey was open from June 12 to September 4, 2018. The survey was highly publicized through a variety of communication methods and a paper survey was also made available. The survey was open to anyone who wanted to take it and is not a scientific sample of residents. As such the results should be taken to represent the opinions of those who took the survey and not as representative of all voices and opinions. The survey results do provide insight into values and priorities that, combined with insights from other engagement methods for Envision Littleton, can provide a basis for the draft vision and guiding principles.



SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

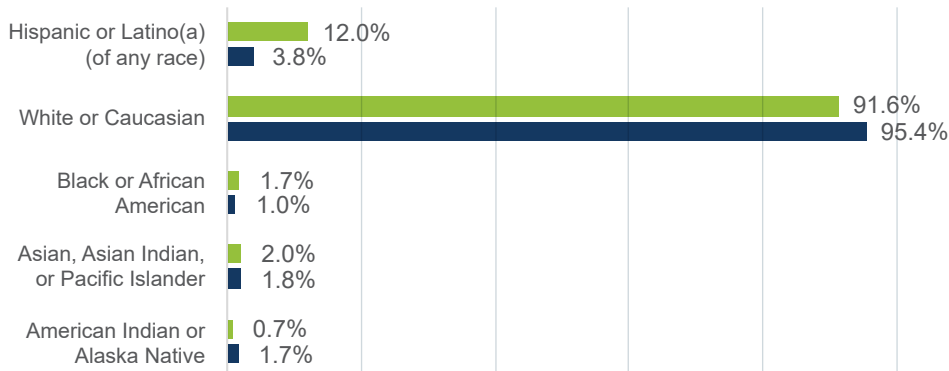
- ▶ Total Surveys Completed: **870 (852 online)**
- ▶ Total Resident Surveys (address within City of Littleton city limits): **635**

AGE DISTRIBUTION



RACE / ETHNICITY

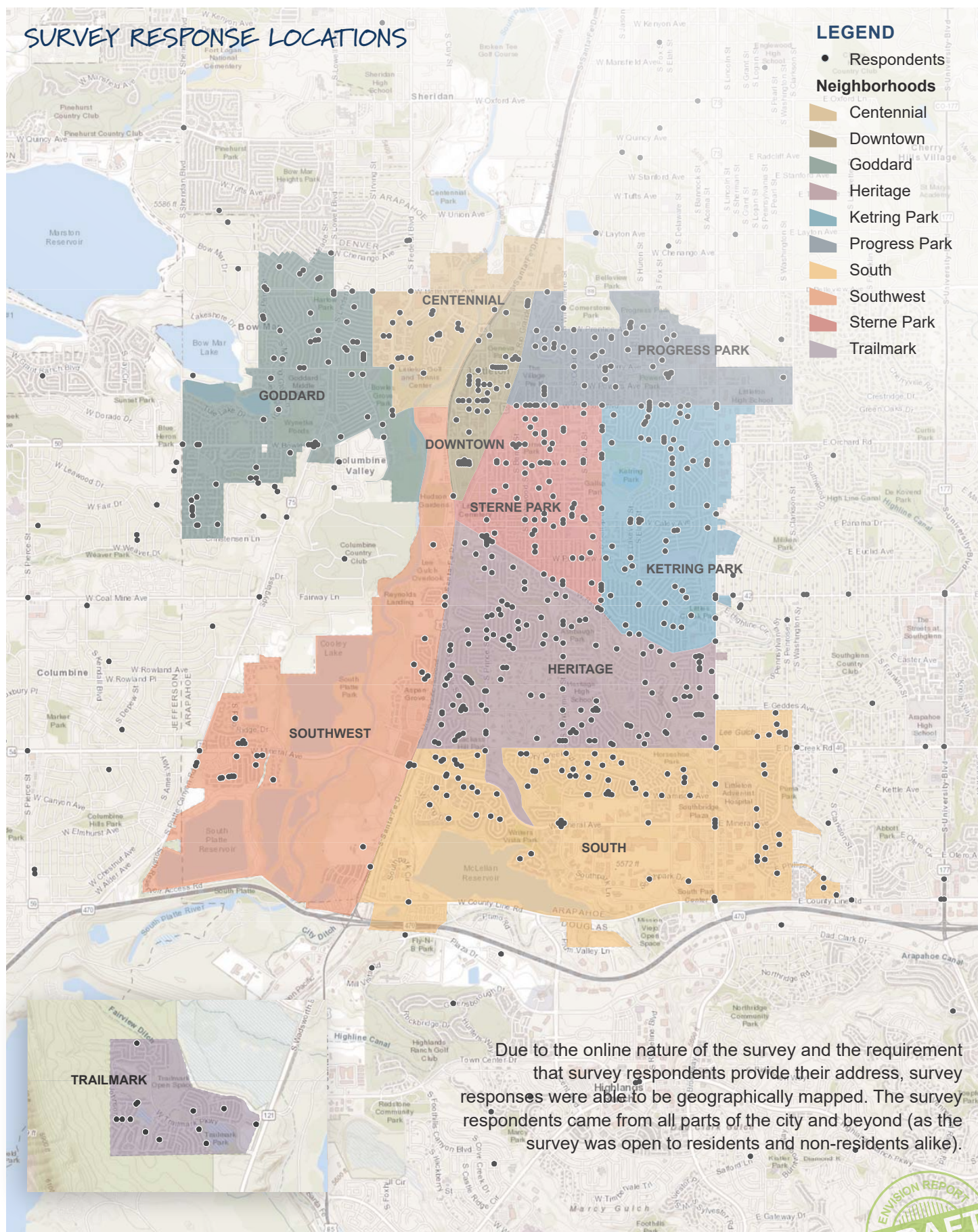
■ Respondents ■ Actual Population



Year first moved to, began working in, or visiting Littleton

	% of Responses
Before 1970	9%
1970 to 1979	10%
1980 to 1989	12%
1990 to 1999	18%
2000 to 2009	20%
2010 to 2014	15%
2015 to now	15%
No Response or Unsure	1%





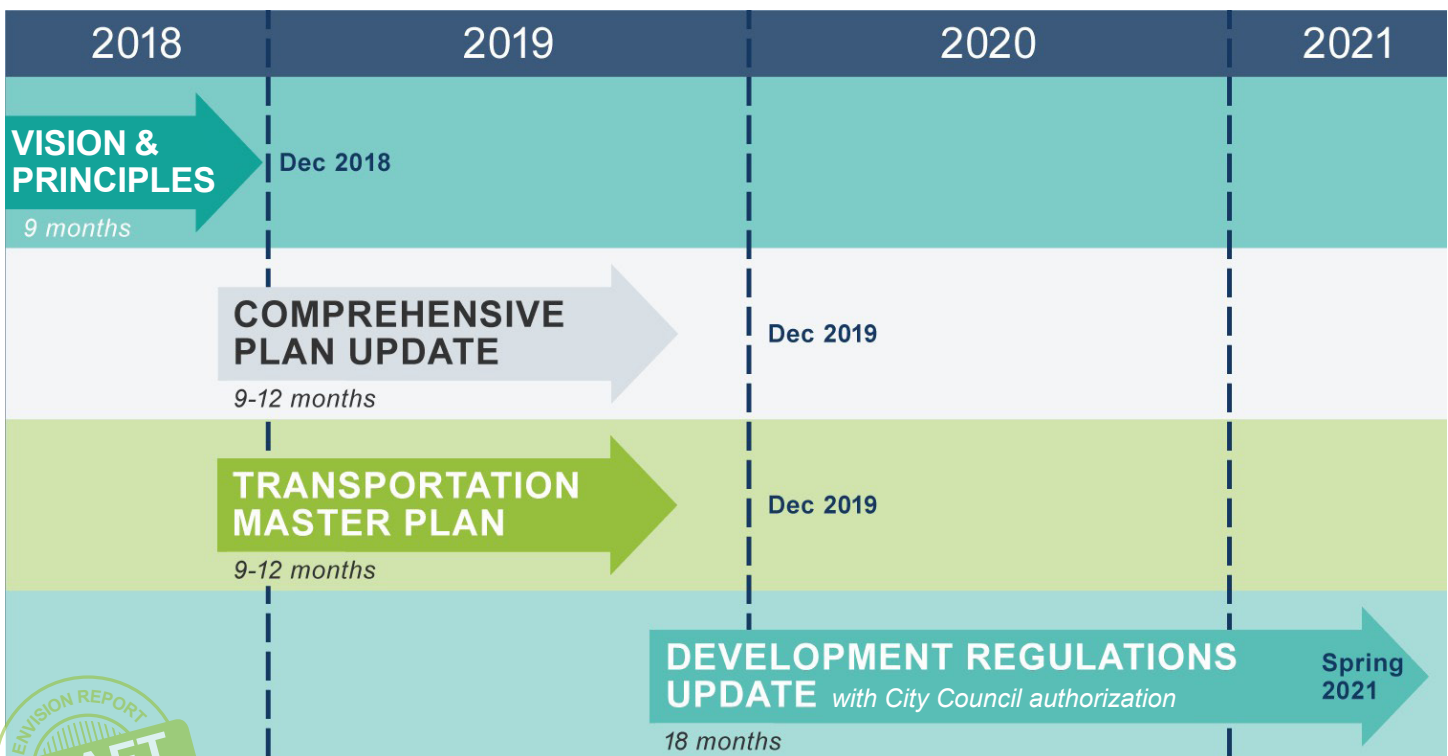
WE ARE HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD

Littleton will always be building on the shoulders of its original founders and past civic leaders who were the determined innovators and community champions of their day. They established certain expectations and standards for Littleton that enabled the community to prosper and navigate through periods of both incremental and phenomenal change. Among the core values ingrained many decades ago that still endure are civic involvement, outstanding public schools, preserving and celebrating local history, and being a model community and leading voice among other cities in the region and state. The proud residents and leaders of today, likewise, must pass on this community spirit and shared legacy that also now reflects their influence.



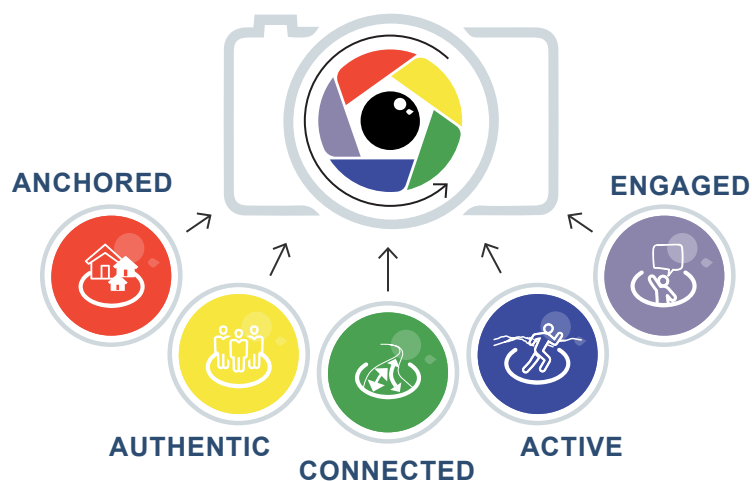
WHAT'S NEXT?

As shown in the timeline below, the Envision Littleton process was launched in the spring of 2018 as a prelude to initiating an update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Concurrently, a first-ever Transportation Master Plan for Littleton will also be developed in 2019. Envision Littleton's initial phase will provide a firm foundation for these more in-depth planning efforts and a basis for ensuring both plans are well-aligned and that the considerations, concepts and direction from earlier special area plans and studies are factored into the community-wide plans. The goals, policies and other specifics in the Comprehensive Plan will also provide further context for the vision and guiding principles.



APPLYING OUR VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Following anticipated City Council adoption of a finalized Vision Report in December, the City will immediately begin to incorporate the vision and guiding principles into its strategic planning and routine operations to ensure values-based and priorities-driven decision-making. Just as Envision Littleton has involved an initial filtering effort to evaluate an array of inputs, City of Littleton officials and staff will apply the resulting new vision and principles when weighing choices involving annual budgeting, capital project priorities, department work programs and staffing, grant pursuits, new or expanded intergovernmental and public/private partnerships, and zoning and land development proposals, among others.



WE ARE STILL LISTENING

Going forward, the City will also continue to listen, learn and adapt so that the desired future we are all seeking for Littleton will remain in focus. Effective communities evaluate their choices made and revisit their vision and principles regularly to ensure they remain on target, are clearly understood and encompass the range of likely issues that will come before them. All who have contributed so far to Envision Littleton must remain stewards of the vision our community has put forward. This will ensure that Littleton is among the places where visions and values endure across the decades and generations.



AS ONE LOCAL FAITH LEADER OBSERVED, REFERRING TO HIS OWN CONGREGATION'S EFFORTS TO CREATE A VISION AND ESTABLISH A UNITY OF PURPOSE:

*"Clarity builds momentum.
Ambiguity kills it."*





envisionlittleton.org



WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- ▶ **CHECK OUR WORK** – We want to hear if the draft vision and guiding principles resonate with you. Did we get it right? What's missing?
 - The Envision Littleton Team will be back out in Littleton during the month of October gathering feedback. The most up to date list of events can be found on:
 - **The Envision Littleton website** (envisionlittleton.org)
 - **The City's Events and Meetings Calendar** (littletongov.org/connect-with-us/calendars/city-events-meetings)
 - **The Littleton Rocks Calendar** (littletonrocks.com)
- ▶ If you can't join us in person at an event the draft will be available on the **Envision Littleton website** (envisionlittleton.org) and you can **submit comments online**.
- ▶ **Join the Envision Littleton email updates list** to receive emails about the project and keep up to date with the latest happenings by emailing Kathleen Osher, Special Project Manager, at kosher@littletongov.org.
- ▶ **STAY INVOLVED AND GEAR UP FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN LAUNCHING IN 2019!**