

Business/Industry Affairs Advisory Council (B/IAAC)  
2009 Final Report to City Council  
City of Littleton

## ***Embracing Littleton's Future***

In April 2008, the Littleton City Council charged the Business/Industry Affairs Advisory Council (B/IAAC) to study a city that is in the process of “aging gracefully” and, more specifically, the economic opportunities associated with aging. B/IAAC’s mission statement for this year has been “to develop a self-contained report on a mature community which includes specific recommendations to aid existing and new businesses toward a more vibrant community.”

Our nine members formed four subcommittees to examine Housing and Schools, Downtown Aspect, Big Business, and Industry. The B/IAAC committee, volunteers from different businesses throughout the community, interviewed residents, businesspeople, and representatives of other cities engaged in similar studies, and read and digested much information. The contents of our report follow.

Defining the “Aging Demographic”	Pages 1 - 3
Housing and Schools	Pages 3 - 4
Downtown Aspect	Pages 4 - 6
Big Business	Pages 6 - 8
Industry	Pages 8 - 9
Responses to City Council’s Questions	Pages 9 - 14
Complete List of Recommendations	Pages 14 -16

### **Defining the “Aging Demographic”**

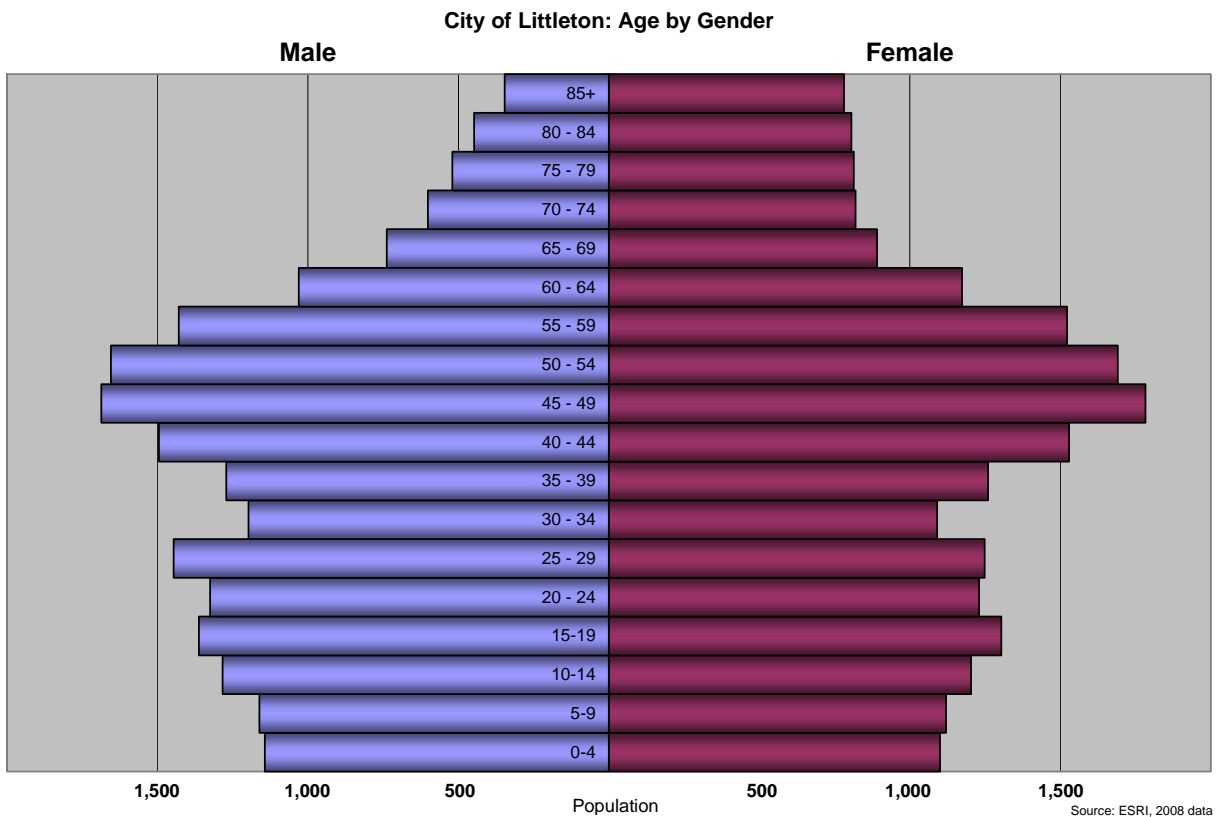
Littleton, one of the Denver metro area’s oldest cities, is a financially safe and secure, people and business friendly town of over 41,000. We determined that there is a need to balance our maturing community, embrace businesses we have, and focus on opportunities and challenges ahead. Littleton is fortunate to be located in a region viewed by most of the country as the top place to live (Joey Bunch, Survey Tabs Denver as Best City to Call Home, Denver Post, January 29, 2009, based on Pew Research Study). Most of those surveyed said they would like to live in a small town where the pace of life is slow, neighbors know each other well, and people can become involved in their community. These qualities appeal to all ages, particularly to those over the age of 50.

Many of our older citizens like Littleton and wish to remain in their homes as long as possible or at least stay in the area. Available research indicates that the national senior market, sometimes expressed as age 50 and over and other times as age 55 and over, is growing rapidly. It is growing because the numbers of people of this age are increasing rapidly as the baby boomer generation, born 1946 to 1964 and presently age 45 to 63, enters this age group. In addition to the population growth, these new seniors are quite different from their predecessors. They are more highly educated, more affluent, healthier,

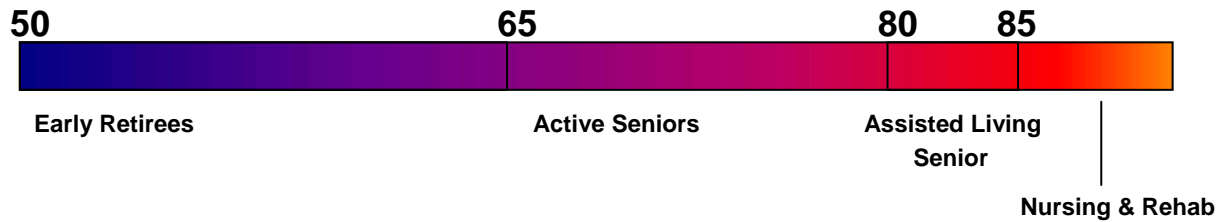
active, and plan to lead a more active retirement. Colorado has more than its share of baby boomers because of migration. Littleton should celebrate its good fortune in having a large number of these baby boomers joining the ranks of seniors in the city.

The City of Littleton offers baby boomers outstanding cultural amenities including Town Hall Art Center, Smithsonian-affiliated Littleton Historical Museum, Bemis Public Library, and Hudson Gardens. In addition to mature trees and landscaping, the award-winning South Suburban Park and Recreation District provides 35 miles of bikeways and trails and the 878-acre South Platte Park is one of the largest suburban parks in the U.S. The city has 36 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, far higher than the U.S. average of 10.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Forty-seven percent of Littleton citizens have college degrees, 13% having advanced degrees. Littleton is host to Arapahoe Community College, a source of education and retraining for many residents. Littleton’s public schools are among the best in Colorado. Littleton is a safe community, with a low violent crime rate (67 total incidents in 2007 in a population of 40,000 as opposed to the national violent crime rate of 187 incidents per 40,000 population. (Source: LPD and FBI.) The city’s staff also provides high-quality services.

The following graph shows age breakdowns in Littleton, indicating large numbers in the 40 - 64 age brackets representing almost exactly the boomer generation as above-referenced. None of the subsequent generations’ numbers come close to the baby boomers.



While age references may overlap, the following graph was utilized by B/IAAC in discussing the senior demographic by age:



Previous B/IAAC reports have commented on the challenges of an aging population and the impacts on the community in general. There is an issue of increasing costs to the city due to an aging population. Services such as Omnibus and emergency medical services are increasing (statistical information follows). However, there are many business opportunities to cater to an aging population that may provide an offset to these increasing expenses.

This report should be viewed in context of the entire Littleton population. In 2000, the over age 50 population was 30% of the total, whereas in 2008, Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) projections put the percentage at 37%. This age group still represents less than 50% of the population, so in many of our subcommittee reports you will read conclusions which pertain not only to the over 50 age group but to the community at large. Due to the inextricable link between our educational and business communities, there will be information in subcommittee reports that may overlap.

## Housing and Schools

During the past year, we have learned that some increased housing density is needed, especially near light rail. Many retired people like to live near light rail so they have easy, quick access to Denver without driving. Retired people who are still vigorous want to live in patio homes, townhomes, and condominiums with all living facilities on one floor so they don't face the barrier of stairs. They want to be able to easily leave home and travel without the worry of security and maintenance; they don't want to have to care for yards, etc. The types of housing most frequently discussed with residents were patio and cluster homes, as well as townhomes with main floor living and condominiums with elevator access. Availability of affordable homes that can be paid for in cash or with a small mortgage were also mentioned by interviewees.

High-quality schools have been the city's main "selling point" to attract young families for many years. Fortunately, Littleton Public Schools is maintaining school quality; however, if school enrollment continues to decline, it will threaten the future quality of student education and overall viability. The city should investigate ways it can support Littleton Public Schools, including encouraging a healthy enrollment in the district.

Littleton is experiencing an increase in diversity. The 2000 Census showed that 12% of Littleton's population is foreign-born, with 25% of the workforce in the 80120 zip code made up of workers from other countries. The 2010 census may well show a higher percentage. Significant numbers of immigrants are older and need services just as older long-term residents do. Typically immigrants are taxpayers, shop in Littleton stores, and use city

services such as EMS. To the extent that newcomers learn English and become citizens, the economic and social health of the entire community will be improved. Learning English and citizenship are key to better jobs, family stability, and reduced dependence on city services.

There is an increased demand for property tax rebates for homeowners 65 and older. These rebates have grown from \$129,454 in 2000 to \$136,605 in 2008, an increase of 5%.

Maintaining a balance of all ages of residents is important to the health of the community. In several areas around Littleton, a mix of young and old residents provides stability and security.

It appears that downtown must have additional housing for all age groups if downtown businesses are to be healthy. The area already has a number of elderly housing and assisted living facilities. Typically, people in assisted living facilities rarely go downtown or frequent restaurants. In many cases, the jobs at such facilities are low paying and workers do not support downtown businesses.

## **Downtown Aspect**

Downtown is the emotional heart of the city and needs to be a healthy place to do business. During the past 20 years, the city has put considerable resources into downtown's economic health, including taking on maintenance of Main Street so that sidewalks could be widened, streets rebuilt, and special lighting installed, along with benches, flowers, and other beautification. Holiday lights have been installed, and there are many events such as Western Welcome Week and the Candlelight Walk. The city has supported the Town Hall Arts Center as it improved its financial viability. There have been enhancements made to the downtown light rail station, and the city has established guidelines to protect downtown's historic character.

There are significant housing, retail, restaurant, and small business opportunities in the downtown area that can attract residents, visitors, and businesspeople to support downtown businesses, and there is potential for substantial increased sales tax generation in downtown. "Heritage" marketing can economically tap into the baby boomer demographic by creating the "experience" of Littleton that people can share, can remember, and want to recreate.

The "downtown aspect" was initially selected as this subcommittee's focus to "identify economic opportunities associated with the aging of the community." It is this subcommittee's belief that there exists potential for substantial increased sales tax generation in downtown Littleton if the area is properly marketed as a destination. Aging was discussed in terms of demographics and infrastructure, and this subcommittee concluded there is a need to implement a consistent and effective marketing and wayfinding program in Littleton. Following this subcommittee's preliminary report, B/IAAC members stated that not only the downtown area but the City of Littleton has seen its physical boundaries and identity become merged with the areas around Littleton which are not in the city proper. It became B/IAAC's desire that this subcommittee's focus be expanded to address all of Littleton. Therefore, while downtown Littleton is considered our community's central location for the "historic and hometown feeling"

of the city, it is B/IAAC's intent that recommendations be applied in a broader sense benefiting the entire City of Littleton.

Research indicates that people over age 50 account for half of the discretionary spending in the United States (Pepper Institute on Aging & Public Policy, September 2007) and are a prime demographic for the unique, tactile destination experience associated with authentic historic shopping districts. A large portion of this demographic includes baby boomers, as previously defined, who have discretionary money and time and are seeking adventurous experiences and community connection. Downtown Littleton currently attracts an aging demographic and offers housing opportunities (Littleton Station, Nevada Place, and proposed Prince Street Senior Residences), light rail transportation, recreational activities (The Buck Center, South Platte River, bike trails, parks, and open space), educational opportunities (Arapahoe Community College), traditional and nontraditional health services, cultural productions (Town Hall Arts Center), city-sponsored special events (Wild On Littleton! Block Party, Western Welcome Week, and Candlelight Walk), and a variety of shopping and dining experiences. Many interviewees made note that walkable grocery and drug stores are missing from the downtown area.

Littleton needs a consistent and effective marketing and wayfinding program to capitalize on the community's attractions, amenities, and activities. While known to and enjoyed by long-time residents, many new residents and nonresidents are not familiar with what Littleton has to offer. Re-establishment of Littleton's identity and promoting its quality of life experience with a focus on Historic Downtown Littleton as a shopping and dining destination enhances Littleton's ability to economically tap into the aging demographic. Currently, the city has no marketing budget or marketing staff. It has an award-winning economic development department that is internationally known for its innovative support of the growth of existing businesses and for the numbers of jobs created that far outstrip job-creation rates in the rest of Arapahoe County. In addition, the city contracts with South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce to provide a range of economic development services. Specific to the downtown area, the city spends \$25,000 for public parking and approximately \$6,000 for holiday lighting and potted flora on Main Street.

Nationally, cities similar to Littleton are redefining their historical identities in order to increase revenues through updated marketing and wayfinding programs. This subcommittee's research found increasing amounts of matched funds are being awarded through the Preserve America grant program for development and design of consistent, comprehensive, and uniform systems of directional and wayfinding signage with enhanced pedestrian, vehicular, parking, and gateway features.

As our city revises the Comprehensive Plan and oversees the Historic Preservation Board's forum efforts regarding downtown Littleton, the City of Littleton must also take a leadership role initiating meetings of downtown property and business owners to identify funding options toward implementation of a marketing and wayfinding program in Historic Downtown Littleton. The following two paragraphs contain suggestions for program components that could be implemented in Littleton to increase economic opportunities associated with the aging demographic.

In terms of marketing Littleton, we believe that utilizing a consistent logo and a “moniker” identity, increasing geographic marketing scope, focusing on the destination experience and the memorable benefits created by the experience, capitalizing on historic heritage and landmark features, utilizing collaborative brochure materials connecting recreational and cultural activities and amenities provided by South Suburban Recreational District, Arapahoe Community College, Hudson Gardens, and the Littleton Historical Museum, increasing advertisement and promotion of special events, and advertising on light rail transportation can all benefit the business community.

In order to aid those trying to find a destination and to set the city apart from areas not actually in Littleton, we suggest installing distinctive gateway entrances at the city boundaries along major thoroughfares. Installing directional signage, utilizing traffic caution markings and decorative street signs, increasing lighting for safe pedestrian walkability (especially into and around downtown), increasing locations of decorative lamp poles and banners, installing decorative street signs, and providing maps at light rail stations are all effective wayfinding tools.

## **Big Business**

According to a database used by the city’s Business/Industry Affairs Department (B/IA), there are 1,660 businesses in Littleton employing 20,648 people. There are businesses with approximately 1,000 employees or more (e.g., EchoStar, Qwest, and Littleton Hospital), and 10 businesses with over 200 employees. Therefore, most Littleton businesses should be considered “small” businesses with fewer than 50 employees (average number of employees of a small business in Littleton is 7.3).

Some innovative small businesses will be able to find and exploit a niche in the marketplace. This will lend itself well to serving members of the over age 50 community who are healthy. Typically, healthy older people have money to spend on both needs and discretion, including wellness and wellbeing, health care, beauty, spirituality, travel, play, recreation, romance, fashion, housing, immediate and extended family, eldercare, and finance and wealth management. (ESRI and Dr. Mary S. Furlong, Turning Silver into Gold, 2007.)

With the current downturn of the world economy and, in particular, the U.S. economy in 2009, we are constantly reminded of the negative issues that are affecting businesses and the general population, respectively. Trickle down effects at the state and city levels are currently being felt as well. Items such as job losses, home foreclosures, lack of credit availability, cutbacks in services, and generally increased stress levels are some of the key topics on citizens’ minds.

Citizens of Littleton are not immune to what is happening around us and in our community. It appears Littleton has been able to maintain the course without serious repercussions to its personnel and quality of services. The city has done a good job focusing on core matters and has made good decisions and investments. However, this could change as future budgets may project shortfalls due to lack of additional revenue-generating sources or lower sales tax receipts. For now, cutting spending or creating new taxes is another entire area for evaluation

and is beyond the scope of this report. Being prepared and ahead of the curve when the economy recovers will prepare Littleton to take advantage of opportunities in a timely and cost-effective manner. No matter what the future holds, it becomes important to prudently utilize the available budget dollars moving forward with a general effort centering on retaining key personnel and keeping intact the most vital city services such as police and fire for the safety of all the residents.

We believe that the city must concentrate its business efforts on smaller scale projects in these lean times. There isn't much space in our land-locked community for large-scale developments that were a part of our earlier history but rather more "microsurgery" type of projects that bring improvements and continual vitality in small but achievable steps.

Change is inevitable. It is anticipated that when the next census is taken in 2010, it will show a drastically different Littleton in terms of the community demographics from 2000. One finding likely to stand out is that the average age of its residents will be higher. It is well-known that Littleton residents tend to want to stay in Littleton, resulting in low turnover and more of a tendency to maintain the status quo. The question becomes how to embrace this change and deal with an aging population along with its revised needs. Much is being written on aging communities, and it would be beneficial for the City to become involved in on-going local and national discussions to best determine what key items can be directly addressed and incorporated into its offerings and to find ways to attract businesses that can provide the likely goods and services that will be required. In brief, aging effects on cities is a developing area that will require further evaluation beyond the basic thoughts provided in this report.

This subcommittee believes that it is important to partner with schools, businesses, and residents to share resources and services. The Littleton Public School system is consistently rated as one of the top school districts in Colorado. It is starting to feel the effects of shrinking budgets, school closures, reduction of staff, and declining enrollments especially at the elementary levels that jeopardize the quality. In a somewhat similar manner, these challenges also apply to local businesses and residents who provide key goods and services that support our city. To help meet the challenges, it is being suggested that the city find a way to partner with Littleton Public Schools, Arapahoe Community College, local businesses, and residents to see if there are shared resources and services that may be utilized by each party. The idea might be to pool dollars to buy or rent common assets or services or drive prices down with larger purchasing power. For example, by using a common snow or trash removal service, sharing buses and buildings, and pooling education programs, costs may be lower. Other resources could be traded between parties to minimize cash outlay. Old business or city computers, printers, etc., can be reused locally in schools. The community college could offer job retraining in exchange for city advertising. With some creative thinking, the possibilities seem like a reasonable starting point for long-term cooperation. Finding ways to keep goods and services in the local community may save thousands of dollars here and there. This may not be necessarily a large amount of money when compared to the total city budget but may be enough to make a difference and keep other projects funded.

As previously stated in the subcommittee report on the Downtown Aspect, this subcommittee believes it is important to develop and deliver a consistent marketing identity differentiating the City of Littleton from other areas using the name Littleton. In the most basic sense, Littleton

needs to brand itself. Utilizing a common logo, moniker, and/or saying portrays a consistent message that may become a household term. Littleton is more than just our unique downtown area. Both the south and north parts of the city offer a wide-variety of lifestyle choices. There is so much here including parks, trails, gardens, restaurants, theater, family events, schools, shopping, and light rail. However, there isn't a simple connection to any of this in a way that readily makes us a destination spot for people to stop and spend the time to enjoy. With the right, simple message, we can be a place for family shopping and entertainment, nightlife, and recreational activities. We must find a way to create an identity that separates us from our neighboring cities rather than having no identity blending us in with everyone else. One low cost solution might be to first develop signage that is consistent across the major entry and exit ways through our city. This signage could also be directional showing people the way to go to find certain places or attractions. One way to start the process would be to ask the local community to help develop a logo and identity through contests that are overseen by the city and an independent agency. With the development of a city identity, drawing people here whether to live or just stop by, may result in additional dollars being spent in our local community with very little up front investment. Something as simple as a standard logo can be created and strategically placed on current street signs or other identifying structures throughout the city to aid in this effort. Standardizing all city publications, letters, webcasts, and other forms of communication begins the process of spreading the word both locally and outside the community. It's possible that word of mouth might result in other forms of free publicity that end up reaching large news readerships or television audiences. The approach could be done in varying stages over time with the long-term goal for people not just to drive through our city but rather find a reason to regularly stop and explore. Taking simple steps to ultimately give an identity to the community will also provide our residents with a sense of pride and a willingness to discover more within their hometown than they would have otherwise contemplated.

## **Industry**

With the nation in deep recession as this report is being written, there are many challenges facing Littleton and its citizens; and there are and will be local opportunities for developers, health care providers, restaurateurs, architects, and engineers, and financial service, automotive, education, religion, recreation, high technology, and communications industries.

One major effect of the baby boomer generation, as well as the younger generations, on the city is their increasing use of internet purchasing. Many, if not most, internet purchases avoid local and state sales taxes. There is a movement underway by most states to capture this source of revenue. The problem has become so severe that 44 states plus the District of Columbia are working on legislation known as the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement to simplify collection of taxes from internet vendors. Unfortunately, Colorado is not one of those states. Colorado House Bill 1237, enacted in 2004, creates a certified, electronic retail sales tax database of state addresses to determine to which jurisdiction tax is owed. Littleton should join with other cities and counties to support this effort in Colorado.

An effort was made to obtain good quantitative information on the number of business establishments within the city by business category. This data, together with sales volume, number of employees, and revenue generated for the city in sales and use tax, would have

provided an excellent picture of the diversity of businesses and relative contributions to the health of the city and would have been useful to project the probable effects of our changing senior population on those businesses within our city. Unfortunately, no commercially available data sources could be found which provide such information with reasonable accuracy for Littleton (whose boundaries include portions of counties, portions of zip codes, etc.). There are a number of databases independently maintained by different departments within the city. Two of these, the Finance Department (tax data) and B/IA (establishments within the city), are very promising for these purposes. Although both have fields for NAICS (North American Industrial Classification System) codes, this information is incomplete at best and does not contain classification data. The Finance Department is making good progress toward completing coding. After both databases have the NAICS codes, it will be possible to compare the two, correct coding differences, and obtain useful information. Other departments reportedly having separate databases are the Fire Department and the Planning Department, and there may be others. A single city-maintained database utilized by different departments could be more efficient and more effective. In order to obtain good information on business establishments, it may be necessary to require city business licenses. Even if there is no charge for the license, the city could have a requirement that businesses register and provide basic information in a consistent manner with provisions for periodic updates.

There are many incorrect stereotypes concerning seniors, and we must be open to new information about current and future seniors. To keep up on the senior market, Littleton should send a staff member to the annual Boomer Business Summit each year to report back on what's happening. Another way to keep up with seniors is to designate one of the staff to become a member of the American Society on Aging and its Annual Business Forum. If City Council wishes to explore aging in Littleton in a workshop setting, there is a company called Senior Lifestyle Trends that specializes in custom presentations to corporate leaders who want to capture the senior market.

## **Responses to City Council's Questions**

City Council asked B/IAAC to answer seven questions:

### **1. What are the demographics of the aging population?**

America and the rest of the world are aging. In less than nine years, all of the baby boomers will be 51 - 70 years old. "Boomers will account for roughly 40% of U.S. spending by 2015 and for a disproportionate share of the growth and consumption in industries ranging from consumer electronics and clothing to home furnishings, restaurants and health care" (The McKinsey Quarterly, November 2007.) Boomers control approximately 51% of U.S. net wealth and are projected to control 60% of net wealth by 2017. Of those surveyed nationwide, 84% expect to work after formal retirement and 63% said they could not envision ever retiring completely.

Littleton's demographic, as shown by the 2000 U.S. census and predicted by ESRI shows the following predictions for 2008 and 2013:

2000 actual population:	40,340
2008 estimated population:	41,500 (an increase of 2.9%)
2013 projected population:	42,097 (a further increase of 1.4% from 2008)
2000 over 50 actual population:	12,145
2008 over 50 estimated population:	15,264 (increase of 25.7% from 2000)
2013 over 50 projected population:	16,498 (a further increase of 8% from 2008)

The median age is expected to increase from 38.5 years to 41.7 in 2008 and to 42.6 years in 2013. The average household size appears to have decreased and the median household income predicted to have risen by up to 28% (current events notwithstanding) and household net worth, especially among Littleton boomers, has potentially increased substantially since 2000.

This data mirrors that found in a book entitled Turning Silver into Gold by Dr. Mary Furlong reporting that 45% of the U.S. population is older than 40 years. With an average life expectancy of 78 - 80, people can expect to live longer and more fulfilling lives than ever before. Dr. Furlong writes that the aging phenomenon is occurring throughout the world.

As previously stated, the business of health, wellness, fashion, passion, housing, eldercare, continuing “lifelong learning” education, and financial advice are all areas of existing and growing opportunities.

**2. How is Littleton playing a vital and active role in the aging of its citizens?**

Littleton’s climate and geography allow its citizens to focus on wellness and wellbeing. Outdoor activities abound, from golf and tennis to parks and trails, summer concerts, gardens, and other outdoor activities. The Buck Recreation Center was cited among interviewees as one of the main reasons to locate a project in or near downtown. Littleton has a significant availability of holistic and traditional health care providers.

City-sponsored festivals, celebrations, cultural events, and civic involvement provide an opportunity for entertainment and activities beneficial to everyone, especially an aging population that has available time and resources to enjoy life.

Citizens feel involved in the city through interaction with city leaders and employees, by holding public events such as Western Welcome Week, and provision of public meetings on Channel 8 and the internet.

Safe neighborhoods are key to helping residents feel secure in their homes and on the street.

### **3. What does Littleton currently offer?**

Littleton has many high quality-of-life offerings. Included in these is a diverse and affordable housing stock, including senior housing, co-housing, quality schools, a hometown feel, an historic downtown, and mature landscaping with open spaces, trails, and parks. The South Platte River, high quality library and museum, connectivity in individual and mass transit, and topnotch recreation centers provided by the South Suburban Parks and Recreation District are all attractive components of the community.

A healthy business community runs parallel to the social attributes of Littleton, and key employers such as medical, telecommunications, retail, government, restaurant, automotive, and education are all present. Littleton has a healthy variety of large and small businesses, each of which appeal to their market segment. Some shopping centers are finding adaptive reuse or are changing hands and undergoing facelifts. Littleton's police and fire departments keep our city safe.

### **4. What are other communities doing?**

The committee was presented with outlines from other communities across the U.S., including Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Tampa, Florida; and Lake Oswego, Oregon. Lake Oswego, a Portland suburb, is roughly the same size as Littleton and faces many similar challenges. In 2005, Lake Oswego's city council identified the importance of better understanding the needs and expectations of residents over age 50 as one of their top goals. ("A Community Vision for Aging in Lake Oswego," page 2.)

Lake Oswego hired Lincoln Crow Strategic Communications with assistance from Portland State University. The study found that Lake Oswego residents want to age in place and create a community where they can maintain their independence with appropriate housing, increased mobility, and effective services and support:

Many people over the age of 65, burdened by high housing costs and living on fixed incomes, are in need of affordable housing that is safe and easy to maintain, especially for those who live alone or have low incomes. Many residents anticipate downsizing their homes and want help developing affordable, accessible smaller homes near transportation and shopping. Simple home modifications can also make their current homes more supportive and safe.

As above-mentioned in the Housing and Schools section, affordable, single level cluster homes with accessibility standards mirror those of Lake Oswego's.

The human services component is important. This includes a healthy community infrastructure that brings people of all ages together, and includes lifelong learning, life planning, volunteer opportunities, physical fitness, and mental wellbeing, along with excellent health care.

## **5. What economic opportunities are there in an aging community?**

There appears to be a significant opportunity in providing housing stock in new and redeveloped areas that will be affordable and resonate with baby boomers. The over age 55 demographic have a high incidence of home ownership. “Home ownership for Americans age 55 and older is the highest it has ever been. In 2000, an AARP study revealed that 86% of respondents stated they owned their home.” (Dr. Mary S. Furlong, Turning Silver into Gold, 2007, page 119.) In Littleton, that percentage in 2000 was 74% (ESRI). Over 50% of women over the age of 45 are single (AARP Magazine, June 2006) and this demographic purchases one in five homes, so there exists a market for this demographic in Littleton. People feel most comfortable living within a reasonable radius of their last dwelling, thus patio homes with main floor masters, low maintenance, accessibility, and energy efficiency, “smart” homes, and the ability to work from home are likely to be good opportunities for the development community. People surveyed made observations that they had purchased homes for aging parents outside Littleton because the housing stock did not exist in the city. People who still like the independent feel of a single-family home located in a homogenous community will purchase and encourage their friends to join them.

Another area that should be examined, especially for seniors aging in place, is the idea of an Accessory Dwelling Unit. These are independent housing units created within single-family homes or on their lots. They have the potential to assist older homeowners in maintaining their independence by providing additional income to offset property taxes and maintenance costs. Other potential benefits to older homeowners include companionship, lower housing costs, and personal security. Accessory Dwelling Units also offer a cost-effective means of increasing the supply of affordable rental housing in a community without changing the character of a neighborhood or requiring construction of new infrastructure to serve development. (“Accessory Dwelling Units,” Model State and Local Ordinance, Kephartliving.com).

Baby boomers and aging residents will be looking for jobs. Even in the event that the economy recovers to previous 2008 levels, most retirees plan to continue to work. Businesses can tap into the job skills learned by these productive workers and realize a benefit from their hires. Retraining workers at Arapahoe Community College or through private schooling provides a good chance of success. In terms of opportunities for business, those providing access to global markets, and wellness and health, along with longevity planning and end-of-life issues, life stage transitions, technology, and spirituality will thrive. The effect of “wellness” cannot be overstated. As life spans increase and healthier life styles emerge, planning for a longer and more fulfilling life is an area for growth among businesses. Posit science that improves memory and cognitive thinking through brain exercises and Body Media (mobile monitoring of vital signs, weight management, prevention of cardiac disease, and managing of stress and sleep), along with medical spas, active orthotics, and disease prevention can be a source of profit for small businesses.

Downtown offers a number of amenities and the current study by the Planning Commission of the Central Area Plan can determine the ideal blend of compatible businesses and high quality, livable residential areas that can attract customers to view downtown as a walkable destination. Businesses supported by downtown residents will become opportunities as the

residential density increases. Economic opportunities can increase in Historic Downtown through consistent, appropriate, and clear signage.

**6. How can Littleton prepare for an increase in demand for resources to serve its aging population?**

Besides recommendations previously stated regarding for-sale housing, there exists a rental component in the market that was described as having high demand. One interviewee indicated that a fifty-unit elderly project, located near downtown, would only penetrate 7% of the market demand. There appears to be a need for additional rental housing for seniors.

Continuing to monitor cities like Lake Oswego and especially other towns located in and around Denver is important. Observations and conclusions can be shared with each other to each other's mutual advantage.

In certain parts of the city, safety can be increased with improved lighting. These areas include sidewalks, paths, and bikeways that lead from one area of the city to another, especially into downtown.

Littleton should fund a representative to attend the American Association on Aging to monitor trends in the industry and across the country.

The city should study the efficiencies of partnering with schools, businesses, and other governmental agencies in the city to promote cost sharing of goods, services, and volunteerism.

Continuing to support and maintain vital services and key personnel within the city is important relative to the aging population.

As people age, a larger portion of their spending may be for services rather than sales taxed goods. "Healthy baby boomers are expected to direct their expenditures toward experiences rather than goods, and those who are not healthy into retirement tend to spend largely on health care. In both cases, this spending is not captured in the sales tax base . . . . These seniors will continue to demand services from local government, but are likely to contribute less sales tax revenue per household than they did during their prime earning years." (Dr. Phyllis Resnick, Colorado Municipalities Magazine, December 2008).

For example, demand for emergency medical services is greater in Littleton than in Highlands Ranch and rest of the Littleton Fire Protection District. Call loads per 1,000 population in 2007 were 103 in the city versus 38 in Highlands Ranch and 42 in the remaining service area. The city will need to find additional ways to increase revenues as higher levels of service and the costs associated with these services rise.

Eighty percent of calls to the fire department are for medical emergencies. According to EMS Chief Wayne Zygowicz, there are more Medicare and chronic health calls from Littleton than Highlands Ranch or the remaining service area.

Demand for Omnibus transportation is increasing, with ridership up by 9.5% to 6,025 through November of 2008. Approximately 40% are for medical appointments or tests.

Although Littleton is predominantly Caucasian, consideration needs to be given to other races and nationalities among our citizens and non-citizen residents. Continuing the Immigrant Initiative to allow integration into the community by helping those who wish to learn the English language and become citizens, as well as those citizens who are part of the community to be involved in cultural, civic, and business opportunities, helps the city to provide a general sense of wellbeing and inclusion.

## **7. What are some innovative ideas to help Littleton age gracefully?**

The city should examine the adaptive reuse of Littleton Public School buildings and/or property that may become available. The construction of amenities, including mixed-use designs for business and housing, should be encouraged. It is always helpful if amenities are within walking distance of residences.

## **Complete List of Recommendations**

B/IAAC's recommendations are given based on the belief that there exist economic opportunities in this era of the increasing influence of baby boomers, some have been identified and acted upon by the business community and some await discovery.

### **Housing and Schools**

- Develop and articulate a vision for balanced housing stock to guide future development in the city over time to allow a healthy mix of all age groups.
- Adopt policies allowing some increased density adjacent to light rail and make policies known to development community.
- Explore "universal" or "visitability" standards (wheelchair and walker access) and consider requiring a small percentage of any new housing developments be built to these standards.
- Encourage development of well-designed, attractive single-level cluster or patio homes, townhomes, and condominiums with living facilities on one floor that will be attractive to baby boomers, while also exploring the possibility of allowing Accessory Dwelling Units to allow those who are "aging in place" to be close to other family members.
- Limit additional age-restricted housing adjacent to downtown.
- Study reducing or eliminating permit fees as an incentive for renovation of older single-family homes inhabited by their owners.
- Encourage the type of housing adjacent to downtown that will attract young professionals.

- Partner with realtors to conduct a survey to discuss how to attract people, especially younger families, in Littleton.
- Continue to partner with Littleton Public Schools and the business community to provide a healthy environment for education and for business development. This will have the goal of allowing schools, businesses, and residents to share resources or services. Shared facility and fleet use are mutually cost-saving approaches that should be explored.
- Ensure that the Littleton Immigrant Integration Initiative, with its focus on using community volunteers to encourage citizenship and English language learning, remains viable.

### **Downtown Aspect**

- Implement a uniform system of wayfinding signage with enhanced pedestrian, vehicular, parking, and gateway features to include new signage promoting key places to visit within the city such as the Littleton Historical Museum.
- Continue investment in downtown by supporting improved marketing and directional signage along the hiking and biking trails directing people to downtown.
- Explore possibility of Preserve America grants for funding development of consistent, comprehensive, and uniform systems of directional and wayfinding signage.
- Implement effective marketing to re-establish Littleton's historic identity and high quality of life experience.
- Take leadership role initiating meetings of downtown property and business owners toward identifying funding options for downtown's long-term economic viability.
- Maintain rapport with Arapahoe Community College to further downtown's stability and progress.

### **Big Business**

- Partner with non-governmental agencies, schools, businesses, and residents to share resources and services.
- Develop and deliver a consistent marketing identify for the city.

### **Industry**

- Implement a unified database for use by city departments.
- Require all Littleton business-related establishments to obtain a low-cost business license or no-cost business registration so that the city knows what businesses exist in Littleton.

- Continue to nurture all Littleton business establishments by keeping them advised of news and developments critical to Littleton's success.
- Explore instituting a tax on services, "head taxes," and other alternative tax sources if necessary.
- Examine the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement that provides sales tax on internet purchases.
- Designate a staff person to attend the annual Boomer Business Summit.
- Attain membership in American Society on Aging and designate a staff person to attend its Annual Business Forum.

We wish to thank City Attorney Suzanne Staiert for facilitating B/IAAC through an outline process to formalize responses to City Council's specific questions and the B/IA staff for technical support. Respectfully submitted to Littleton City Council on March 5, 2009, by members of the Business/Industry Affairs Advisory Council.

Pam Camelio, President  
Creatively Affordable Marketing

Julie Fryberger, Owner  
Fryberger Art Consulting

Kim Glidden, Owner  
The Pottery Studio Gallery

Margie Munoz, General Manager  
Aspen Grove Lifestyle Center

Mike Price, Owner  
Hearthstone Fund

Bill Snyder  
Retired Businessman

Susan Thornton, Principal  
Susan Thornton Associates, LLC

Kay Watson, CEO  
Kay Watson Properties

Rohan Zaveri, VP of Space Programs  
EchoStar Satellite