



DOCUMENT 2 OF 3 • THE SITE

Why This Location Is the Best Place in Boulder

1777 6th Street is where the canyon, the creek, the Creek Path, the Main Library and downtown all meet. This document explains why that makes it the right home for a botanical garden, and where the Justice Center could go instead.

THE STANDARD

Five tests for any garden site

Wherever Boulder builds its garden, the site should meet five tests. The Justice Center land at 6th and Canyon meets all of them, which makes it the benchmark for judging any other parcel.

- 1 **On the creek**, so the garden celebrates Boulder's defining natural feature.
- 2 **On the Creek Path**, so people arrive on foot and by bike.
- 3 **Linked to existing public land**, so it adds to a network instead of standing alone.
- 4 **Near the library and downtown**, so it pairs with learning, lodging and dining.
- 5 **Off Pearl Street but within walking distance**, so it spreads visitors instead of crowding them.

7.8 ac

Site between Canyon Blvd, 6th St and Boulder Creek

1.7 ac

Creek buffer kept wild

3/4

Of the site stays lawn, garden or woods

4

Gates: Creek Path, Canyon Blvd and 6th St

TEST 3

It completes a chain of public land along the creek

The site sits between Eben G. Fine Park and the Civic Area, so a garden here would join them into one continuous public landscape.

- **West, the canyon gateway.** Eben G. Fine Park has a playground, creek access and a historic stone shelter, and a pedestrian bridge links it north to the People's Crossing Trailhead and Red Rocks Trail. The Boulder Canyon Trail continues up the creek from there.
- **East, the civic heart.** The Creek Path runs past the Main Library, the Civic Area park and the Dushanbe Teahouse. The city has renamed that area Boulder Creek Park, with Phase 2 construction planned for 2027–2028.
- **The gap between them is a courthouse and a parking lot.** A garden fills it, giving Boulder one green spine from the canyon mouth to 13th Street.



The creek buffer: cottonwoods and willows along the Creek Path stay wild. Watercolor by J. Pergolizzi.

TEST 1

It honors the creek instead of turning its back on it

The site lies along Boulder Creek's flood corridor. State floodplain studies for the 6th-to-9th Street reach examined the Justice Center parking lot specifically. Boulder's long-standing practice is to put parks, paths and habitat in its high-hazard flood zone, not buildings.

A garden is the right tenant for that ground. Meadows, riparian plantings and lawns can take water; a courthouse cannot. In the plan, buildings go only on land that is already built on or paved today.

TEST 2

Visitors arrive without adding cars downtown

- **The Creek Path delivers them.** It is a 5.5-mile multi-use path from Boulder Canyon to the Stazio Ballfields. A timber gateway off the path lets cyclists roll in without touching a road.
- **The parking already exists.** On busy holidays the City sends Eben G. Fine overflow to the Justice Center lot and the Main Library lot. Those spaces serve a garden on weekends and evenings.
- **Canyon Boulevard is the front door.** Everyone entering or leaving Boulder Canyon passes the site.

Bike in: a goal of 30% or more

The garden would invite visitors to park once, further along the creek or in a downtown garage, and ride or walk the Creek Path in. The goal is for at least 30% of visitors to arrive by bike. That is ambitious but realistic: Boulder residents already make 18% of all their trips by bike or scooter, and a ride along the creek to the garden is part of the outing, a family adventure or an evening date, not a chore.

- **Reasons to ride:** a bike-in discount, staffed bike valet on concert and festival days, ample racks, a repair stand and water at the gate.
- **Spread the arrivals:** timed-entry tickets on the busiest days, and shuttles from remote lots for the largest events.
- **No new garage on site.** Parking stays in existing lots, so the land goes to gardens, not cars.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

Quiet evenings, even on concert nights

The garden is meant to bring peace, not frustration. Concerts are part of the plan, and so is respect for the neighbors as night falls.

- **A short season.** A summer series of 10 to 14 concerts, not nightly shows. Most evenings the garden is quiet.
- **An early finish.** Music would end by 9:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, well before 11 p.m., when Boulder’s residential noise limit drops from 55 to 50 decibels.
- **Sound aimed away from homes.** The stage and speakers face into the garden, and trees screen the edges. Sound would be measured at the nearest homes during every show and kept within the City’s residential limits.
- **Neighbors first.** A published season calendar, a neighbor hotline on concert nights, and tickets set aside for nearby residents.

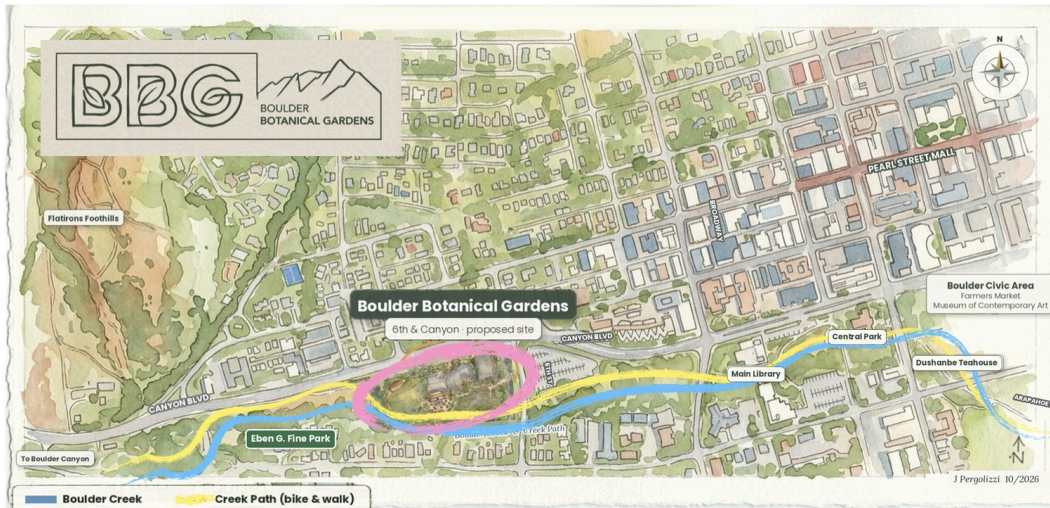
TESTS 4 AND 5

It partners with the library and relieves Pearl Street

The Main Library at 1001 Arapahoe is a few blocks east on the same path, and its Canyon Theater will host Sundance talks in 2027. Library plus garden makes a paired learning campus: books and lectures at one end, living collections and outdoor classrooms at the other.

The same path runs east through the CU Boulder campus, so students and faculty can ride from class to the garden’s gate. That makes the site a natural public home for CU’s plant science: the EBIO Research Greenhouse and the CU Herbarium are built for researchers, and the garden would let the public see that work.

Pearl Street is four blocks, from 11th to 15th, and Sundance plans to center the festival around it. A garden a short walk west gives visitors a second place to spend a day.



Downtown Boulder: the garden site on Boulder Creek, with the Creek Path, Main Library, Farmers Market, Dushanbe Teahouse and Pearl Street Mall a short walk away. Illustrated map by J. Pergolizzi, October 2026; not to scale.

REVENUE

The highest-earning location for a garden

A garden’s income tracks how many people pass by, how easily they arrive and how long they stay. This site wins on each count.

REVENUE DRIVER	WHY 6TH AND CANYON DELIVERS
Foot and bike traffic	On the city’s busiest path, next to its most-used creek park
Visitor reach	Walkable from downtown hotels, Pearl Street and Sundance venues
Event rentals	A mountain backdrop for weddings, concerts and festival receptions
Repeat visits	Residents pass it on daily walks and rides, which drives memberships
Shared parking	Existing lots serve evening and weekend events

Downtown surveys show out-of-state visitors spend nearly double per visit what local residents spend. A garden placed where those visitors already walk captures that spending; a garden on the edge of town would not.

THE WHOLE PICTURE

Woven into the creek, the path and the heart of Boulder

Boulder Creek is the spine of the city: it carved the canyon, it carries the Creek Path, and it is where Boulder walks, rides, tubes and gathers. This site is the one place where the creek, the path, the canyon and downtown all meet.

- **Ecologically**, the garden continues the creek's riparian corridor from the canyon mouth into the city: native meadows, wetlands and cottonwoods that welcome water, pollinators and birds.
- **Physically**, the Creek Path is its front door, so the garden joins the trail network instead of sitting beside it.
- **Culturally**, it completes a walkable circuit with the Main Library, the Farmers Market, the Dushanbe Teahouse, Central Park and the Pearl Street Mall, adding a home for music, art and science at the west end of downtown.

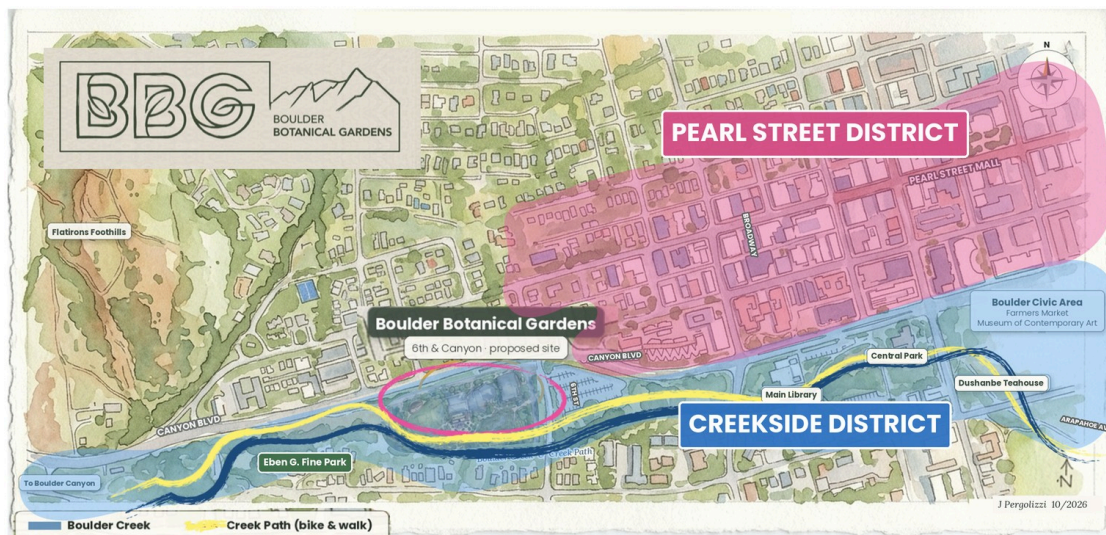
A garden anywhere else would not be the same

Built on the edge of town, a botanical garden would be a pleasant place to visit. Built here, it becomes part of everything around it. Its value comes from those connections: the creek, the path, the library, the market and downtown, each making the others better.

Today this land has creek frontage, mountain views and Boulder's busiest trail at its door, yet its current use keeps the public at arm's length. A secure courthouse needs fences, parking lots and closed doors on evenings and weekends. That is no fault of the courts; it is simply the wrong fit for the most connected piece of ground in the city. This corner of Boulder is ready for an energetic renewal.

One downtown, two districts

With the garden here, downtown gains a second district overnight. Pearl Street remains the place for shopping, restaurants and coffee. Along the creek, a new Creekside District joins the garden, the Creek Path, the Main Library, Central Park, the Farmers Market and the Dushanbe Teahouse into one stretch of nature and culture. The two sit a few minutes' walk apart, so visitors stay longer, spread out instead of crowding the mall, and spend in both.



The Pearl Street District (pink) and the Creekside District (blue). Illustrated map by J. Pergolizzi, October 2026.

The City is already moving in this direction: it is seeking a development partner to make the Civic Area's East Bookend, home to the Farmers Market and the Dushanbe Teahouse, a year-round destination for arts, culture, local business and nature access. A garden at the canyon end would anchor the other end of the creek.

There is no better place for Boulder Botanical Gardens, and no better use for this land. We hope it is a decision Boulder can make with one voice.

Where the Justice Center could go

The Justice Center is not scheduled to move. This section offers three concepts for the County and City to study, so the garden and a better justice facility can be planned together.

Today the building at 1777 6th St is owned by Boulder County. It houses the courts and the District Attorney's office, which added a two-story addition for 53 employees, and City of Boulder Municipal Court staff also work there. Any move is a decision for the County Commissioners and the state courts, and starts with a space-needs and relocation study.

RECOMMENDED CONCEPT

1. A consolidated justice campus at the County Jail, 3200 Airport Road

- **Courts already work there.** The jail has on-site courtroom facilities for arraignments and hearings.
- **It cuts daily transports.** About 86% of the jail's population is held before trial, so people move between jail and courtroom constantly. Courts next door save time, staff and risk.
- **The County is already investing there.** The Joe Pelle Center, a 252-bed alternative sentencing facility, and a new housing unit have been added on the same campus.
- **It moves justice functions out of the creek corridor** and frees downtown land for public use.

2. The 28th Street corridor, near the County's new service hub

- The County bought 2525 28th St in late 2024 for \$14.2 million and is consolidating Community Services, Public Health, Human Services and Housing there.
- It sits near the Boulder Junction transit center, on multiple bus lines and next to the Goose Creek trail, which makes it easy for jurors, witnesses and the public to reach without a car.
- A justice building in this corridor would continue the County's own consolidation strategy.

3. Municipal Court to the City's Western City Campus

- The City is building a consolidated office campus at Broadway and Alpine for about 600 employees, opening in 2027.
- City Municipal Court functions now housed in the Justice Center could join the rest of City government there, reducing what a new County facility needs to hold.

How a move could be paid for

The County has done this before. In 2025 it decided to sell its 17.5-acre North Broadway Complex, approving a \$26 million sale in November 2025, and consolidated services at the new 28th Street hub. The same approach could work here: the value of the 6th Street land, transferred to the City for public use, becomes part of the funding for a modern justice facility.

The point: the garden doesn't ask the County to give something up. It offers a path to a better-located, more efficient justice facility, and turns the old site into a public asset for everyone.

Read next: Document 3, The Business Plan. · BoulderBotanicalGardens.org · Contact & press: LetsGrowTheBoulderBG@gmail.com

SOURCES

1. Eben G. Fine Park and Boulder Creek Path: City of Boulder, bouldercolorado.gov/locations.
2. Boulder Canyon Trail: Boulder County Parks & Open Space.
3. Boulder Creek Park Phase 2 (2027–2028 construction): City of Boulder project page.
4. Floodplain studies, 6th–9th St reach, and high-hazard zone land use: Colorado Water Conservation Board floodplain documents.
5. Holiday overflow parking at the Justice Center and Main Library lots: City of Boulder, July 4 closures notices, 2022–2025.
6. Canyon Theater as a Sundance venue: Axios Boulder and KKTV, Feb 24, 2026.
7. Downtown visitor spending: Downtown Boulder Intercept Survey via ColoradoBiz.
8. Justice Center ownership and DA addition: Milender White project page. Municipal Court staff at the Justice Center and Western City Campus details: City of Boulder, Western City Campus project page.
9. Jail courtroom facilities and address: Boulder County, History of the Jail. Pretrial share and Joe Pelle Center (252 beds): Boulder Reporting Lab, Oct 1, 2024; Boulder County news.
10. 28th Street hub (\$14.2M, departments, transit): Boulder County Building Services.
11. North Broadway Complex sale (17.5 acres, \$26M, Nov 18, 2025): Boulder County news; Axios Boulder, Aug 26, 2025.
12. Site acreage and layout: Boulder Botanical Gardens site plans, October 2026.