

A PRIVATE GUIDE

The Boulder Homeowner's Sundance GAZETTE



Vol. II · Second Edition

Boulder, Colorado

Summer 2026

What's changed since April. New rules, new venues, a closer look at Park City — and the math, the map, and the calendar for the seven months between now and January.

· Published by Joel Ripmaster · Broker, Boulder, Colorado ·

FROM THE EDITOR

A second look

In April we sent out the First Edition of the Gazette. Since then, the City has changed its rules again, the Institute has named its first venues, and the festival's final year in Park City has wrapped. Here is what is new — and a closer look at what we already knew.

WHAT THIS ISSUE IS

This is the Second Edition of *The Boulder Homeowner's Sundance Gazette*. It is intentionally narrower than the first. The First Edition introduced the festival and the rules. This one moves past the introductions — and into the details that matter most in the seven months between now and January.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

- **Dispatches** — Council and venue news since April
- **What Park City Got Wrong** — the harder lessons of forty years
- **The Boulder Atlas** — six neighborhoods, with the hidden Boulder alongside
- **The Numbers** — the bedroom gap, and the money math
- **From Now to January** — a month-by-month plan



PART ONE

Dispatches

What's moved since the First Edition. Two departments — one on what City Hall has done, one on what the festival has announced — that will return each issue.

COUNCIL WATCH

APRIL 2, 2026 · CITY COUNCIL

Ordinance 8743 — Tenants may sublease during Sundance, with landlord consent

The Council unanimously approved an ordinance allowing renters — not just owners — to apply for a Festival Lodging License, provided the landlord signs off in writing. The license is \$75 for properties already holding a Long-Term Rental License (the standard rental designation), or the full \$190 + \$25 stack for properties without one. Properties may hold both a long-term and a festival license simultaneously. Tenant licensing opened in May.

Boulder Reporting Lab · boulderreportinglab.org

MAY 17, 2026 · BUDGET OFFICE

City forecasts a budget gap, treats Sundance revenue cautiously

Boulder's budget analysts said publicly that Sundance will be added to the sales-tax model only after the revenue actually arrives — taking, in the city's words, "a realistic approach in year one." A useful counter-signal in a season heavy with optimistic forecasts.

Boulder Reporting Lab · boulderreportinglab.org

MAY 21, 2026 · PLANNING

Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan moves toward a final vote

Boulder and Boulder County released the recommended draft of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, which would create capacity for roughly 35% more housing in the valley over the planning horizon. Adoption hearings begin in June. Not Sundance-specific — but the housing supply context the festival will land inside of.

Boulder Reporting Lab · boulderreportinglab.org

THROUGH MAY 2026 · OPERATIONS

The City's "Rules of the Road" page is the official festival operations hub

The City of Boulder maintains a public landing page consolidating special-event operational policy as it is finalized for 2027 — parking, transit, public-safety staffing, road closures. Worth bookmarking; this is where most operational announcements will appear first.

City of Boulder · bouldercolorado.gov

LINEUP WATCH

APRIL 22, 2026 · CU BOULDER

CU venue upgrades begin at Macky, Roe Green, and Muenzinger

The University announced that construction on three campus venues would begin in May. Macky Auditorium gets a Dolby Atmos sound system; Roe Green Theatre and Muenzinger Auditorium receive new screens and speaker arrays. The work is on the same timeline as the festival itself — completion by late 2026, ahead of January 21.

CU Boulder Today · colorado.edu/today

MAY 27, 2026 · SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

A summer of pre-festival programming begins across the Front Range

The Institute opened a slate of summer programming ahead of the January debut — kicking off with *Napoleon Dynamite* on The Green in Boulder on May 23 and *BLKNWS* at Denver's Holiday Theater on May 29, with *Little Miss Sunshine* at Red Rocks still to come on July 13. Bloomerang PR was named the festival's Colorado Agency of Record.

Deadline · deadline.com

MAY 13, 2026 · PEARL STREET

New retailers continue to land on Pearl ahead of the festival

The Pearl Street pedestrian mall has added several new businesses in advance of Sundance and its own 50th anniversary in 2027 — including a Giant Group USA bicycle storefront and a 2nd Street secondhand store. The street's lineup is still settling; expect more announcements through the fall.

Axios Boulder · axios.com/local/boulder

THROUGH MAY 2026 · BOULDER CHAMBER

The Sundance Partner Hub connects local owners to festival sponsors

The Boulder Chamber's Sundance Partner Hub is the centralized portal pairing commercial property owners, caterers, florists, staffing companies, and event venues with film teams and sponsors looking for lease space, services, and activations during the festival. Of particular relevance for owners of commercial or mixed-use property.

Boulder Chamber · boulderchamber.com

“One sentence, if you read nothing else: Boulder has expanded the festival rental program to allow tenants, with landlord consent, to sublease during Sundance.”

PART TWO

What Park City got wrong

Forty years told plainly. The First Edition celebrated what Park City learned; this section examines what didn't pan out. A useful corrective for Boulder homeowners building their own expectations.

THE YEARS THAT DIDN'T DELIVER

The biggest "wrong" was that the festival left Park City at all — but the surprises before that were instructive. In 2021, when Sundance went all-virtual, Park City lodging occupancy fell to **41% during festival week, against 81% in 2019**. Local outlets called it "one more gut punch" to the town's economy; trade and local press estimated the loss at **more than \$100 million**. The 2022 festival was forced virtual partway through by Omicron; occupancy that year ran 48%. Even the first full in-person return in 2023 drew about **89,000 attendees — down more than 25%** from the last pre-COVID year. The 2024 festival drew 72,000-plus.

The numbers recovered. The Institute's official 2025 report cited **85,472 in-person attendees and \$196 million in economic impact** — a record. But Main Street merchants surveyed that same year reported a different story: more than 60% said traffic didn't change or decreased, several reported their worst Sundance on record, and one boutique owner described business as down 50%. Two stories, both true.

REGULATORY WHIPLASH

Park City spent forty years figuring out how to host the festival without trading away the rest of its life. The rules changed often, and several times the change caught early investors. Three neighborhoods were carved out of short-term rental zoning — portions of Park Meadows, Thaynes Canyon, and a small section of Prospector. Investors who had bought there expecting STR income discovered their properties were no longer eligible. In 2022, the Park City Board of Realtors publicly opposed a proposed moratorium on nightly rentals; the debate ran through multiple Council cycles.

The lesson for Boulder homeowners is not that rules are bad. It is that **the rules will continue to change**. The First Edition's Festival Lodging License is a year old. The April 2026 tenant expansion is two months old. The next round is already being drafted somewhere.

THE TREASURE HILL 30-YEAR SAGA

From the late 1980s through 2019, a development partnership held entitlements for more than a million square feet of mixed-use construction on the hillside above Old Town. After three decades of homeowner opposition, the city closed on the land in 2019 for **\$64 million** — the largest conservation deal in the open-space program's history. The investment thesis never paid out for the developer; the neighborhood paid for it together. A reminder that the most expensive bets in a festival town aren't always the ones that look risky going in.

DISPLACEMENT AND THE WORKFORCE

Park City's housing crisis has its own arithmetic. Roughly **85% of the city's workforce commutes in**; the city has 11,000 jobs against 8,500 residents. By the time the 2025 festival happened, buying an average Summit County home required roughly **\$410,000 a year in household income**. Park City has committed to 1,864 affordable units by 2032, and is fighting to keep its service workers within reach of the lifts and the festival they serve.

Boulder enters with stricter base-rate housing rules, a comprehensive plan moving toward more capacity (see Council Watch), and a residential character that is already less seasonal than Park City's. But the mechanism — high-end demand outpacing service-wage supply — is the part to watch. It is the part Park City did not see clearly enough early enough.

A PARK CITY YEAR, IN MONTHS

- **October–December** — prep. Inventory tightens for the following January's Sundance. Council typically reviews and approves festival traffic and parking restrictions in December. Restaurants confirm Sundance hours and private-event bookings 30–60 days ahead.
- **January 21–31** — the festival. A normal seven-minute drive on Park Avenue runs 45–60 minutes. PCPD logs spikes in noise calls, hot-tub disturbances, and parking citations. The Mountain and Deer Valley lift lines, by contrast, are *quietest* during Sundance — film crowds stay in town.
- **February** — recovery. February is historically Park City's highest-rate lodging month — a three-year average of \$915/night — and the Chamber pivots its marketing accordingly.
- **March–April** — the ski season closes mid-to-late April with parades and torchlight runs at both resorts.
- **May–early June** — mud season. The Park City Film Series, Park City Follies, and the Farmers Market open.
- **August** — the Kimball Arts Festival, founded 1969, takes over Main Street the first weekend. Free for Summit County residents on Friday. The summer high season's anchor event.

Park City is not Boulder. The comparison is useful precisely because the two are different — and where the patterns hold across that difference, they're worth taking seriously.

“The numbers recovered. The Institute's official 2025 report cited 85,472 in-person attendees and \$196 million in economic impact — a record. But Main Street merchants surveyed that same year reported a different story.”

PART THREE

Forty years of price

Did Sundance accelerate Park City property values? The answer is more nuanced than the question. A look at the trajectory — and what to read from it.

THE CHART, IN WORDS

The Federal Housing Finance Agency tracks county-level home price indices going back to the early 1980s. The Summit County, Utah series — which contains Park City — begins in 1983, the second year of Sundance in its current form. Indexed to 1985 = 100, Summit County's index ran roughly in line with the broader Mountain West for the first two decades. Single-family median price peaked above \$970,000 in 2007–2008 before the financial crisis, then recovered slowly. Through the 2010s the index tracked the broader luxury-mountain market — not running ahead of it. The sharpest acceleration came after 2020, with the post-COVID migration shock to the West.

The clean way to ask the Sundance question is to compare Summit County against a mountain-town control. Teton County, Wyoming — Jackson Hole — has the same second-home demand and outdoor identity but no marquee festival. Across the period for which both FHFA series exist, the two counties have moved together more often than they have diverged. Multiple Park City realtors — and the city's own historical market trackers — credit the **2002 Winter Olympics**, not

Sundance, with the bigger step-change in property values. The Games generated \$5 billion in economic impact and a 72% increase in skier visits through 2019.

SUMMIT COUNTY, IN MARKERS

- **1983.** Sundance moves to Park City. FHFA Summit County HPI series begins the same year.
- **1985.** Index = 100 (baseline).
- **2002.** Salt Lake Winter Olympics. Skier visits to the resort rise 72% through 2019; the broader mountain economy is permanently re-rated.
- **2007–08.** Summit County single-family median peaks above \$970,000; the financial crisis erases roughly four years of appreciation.
- **2014.** Median recovers; mountain markets re-accelerate broadly.
- **2020–22.** Post-COVID migration shock; the sharpest run in the series' history.
- **2025.** Park City single-family median inside city limits exceeds \$5M; the Salt Lake Tribune reports it now costs more to buy in Park City than on Cape Cod or in the Hamptons.

WHERE SUNDANCE SHOWS UP

Sundance shows up where you'd expect — concentrated in an eleven-day window each January — and not where you might. The Institute's own 2019 impact study put the festival at \$182 million, 3,052 jobs, and \$94 million in wages for that year. That's significant for a town of 8,500 residents. It is also *seasonal*: a January spike against an annualized base. The cumulative effect on long-run property values is real but smaller than the headline numbers suggest. The headline numbers describe eleven-day activity, not forty-year compounding.

What the Olympics did differently was structural. It built infrastructure, reset the resort's national reputation, and pulled a permanent step-change in skier visits. Sundance brought a recurring January event — culturally significant, economically meaningful, but operating on a different mechanism. **The festival, by itself, did not move the long-run trend line. The 2002 Games did.**

“The headline numbers describe eleven-day activity, not forty-year compounding.”

THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE

One number worth carrying back to Boulder: Park City's **effective property tax rate is roughly 0.39%** of market value, depending on tax area — Utah grants a 45% primary-residence exemption, so second homes pay on 100% of value. Boulder County's effective rate is typically higher (Colorado's residential assessment ratio is recalculated periodically), and Boulder homes do not benefit from a comparable second-home distinction. The takeaway is not that Park City was a bargain. It wasn't. By 2025 the Salt Lake Tribune was reporting that buying there cost more than buying on Cape Cod or in the Hamptons. The takeaway is that **the festival, by itself, does not bend the long-run property-tax line.** Bigger forces — the Olympics, post-COVID

migration, the broader Western mountain market — do.

WHAT IT MIGHT MEAN FOR BOULDER

Boulder enters its festival year with a baseline Park City never had. A research university, a tech industry, a federal-lab footprint, an outdoor-equipment cluster, year-round restaurant and music economies. The 2025 economic forecast had Boulder County's growth running among the strongest rates in Colorado *before* Sundance was on the calendar. The festival adds to a base already moving — it does not start one.

The honest forecast, then, is narrower than the marketing suggests. We should expect a sustained January premium for festival-adjacent properties — the Tier One blocks identified in the First Edition. We should

expect a modest, durable bump in Boulder's national visibility, similar to what Park City got from its first decade of Sundance. We should *not* expect the festival, on its own, to bend Boulder's long-run price trajectory in the way the 2002 Olympics bent Park City's. The forces that move the long line are bigger than any single event — and many of them are already in motion here.

Read this section as a counterweight, not a forecast. The cumulative *cultural* effect of forty Sundances on Park City is undeniable. The cumulative *price* effect, isolated from everything else, is harder to see in the data than the marketing would suggest. The First Edition is right that Boulder's January will be transformed. This section is the corollary: Boulder's *long-run* property values will be shaped by many things, of which the festival is one.

PART FOUR

The Boulder Atlas

Six neighborhoods, profiled for festival utility — walking distance, character, what to know. With the hidden Boulder alongside, for the homeowners staying put.

THE SIX

Geography, in Boulder, is destiny — at least for ten days in January. The closer to Pearl or CU, the more the festival matters.

Mapleton Hill · 5–15 min walk to Pearl

Boulder's third — and largest — designated historic district, immediately northwest of downtown. Victorian and Queen Anne houses built 1895–1910, plus Craftsman bungalows and Tudor Revivals. Exterior changes require a Landmark Alteration Certificate. Aggregator data places single-family homes broadly in the \$1.5M–\$5M range; recent five-bedroom listings have reached \$4M–\$6M.

Coffee. *Spruce Confections.* **Restaurant.** *Salvaggio's Deli.* **Trailhead.** *Mt. Sanitas, at 4th & Mapleton.* **Transit.** *Walk to Downtown Boulder Station; RTD SKIP along Broadway.*

Newlands · 1–1.5 mi to Pearl

Tree-lined streets between roughly Iris and the foothills, mixing 1920s–40s cottages with mid-century post-war single-family homes and a layer of high-end new builds. Aggregator-reported median around \$2.1–\$2.3M over the trailing twelve months. Families converge at the Ideal Market shopping center for coffee and pastries.

Coffee. *Ideal Market plaza.* **Restaurant.** *Lucky's Bakehouse Cafe.* **Trailhead.** *Wonderland Lake, at the neighborhood's north edge.* **Transit.** *RTD SKIP on Broadway, 204 on north Broadway.*

Whittier · 5–10 min walk to Pearl

Directly abuts the east end of the Pearl Street Mall — one of Boulder's original residential neighborhoods, about 4,000 residents on a little over half a square mile. Bungalows, Craftsmans, Victorians, plus farmhouses dating to the late 1800s. Aggregator-reported median around \$1.16M, up sharply year-over-year. Dense, walkable, a hot Festival Lodging target.

Coffee. *The Laughing Goat on Pearl.* **Restaurant.** *Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse.* **Trailhead.** *Boulder Creek Path.* **Transit.** *Walk to Downtown Boulder Station; HOP and SKIP nearby.*

North Boulder (NoBo) · 1.5–2.5 mi to

Pearl

Mid-century brick ranches and post-war bungalows, with newer modern townhomes and mixed-use condos along Broadway in the NoBo Art District. Anchored by First Friday Art Walks. Aggregator-reported median around \$1.1M, with the Holiday/Boulder Meadows micro-neighborhood running close behind. A more lived-in feel than Mapleton or Whittier, and a regular focus of STR coverage.

Coffee. *Lucky's Bakehouse, Amante.* **Restaurant.** *Proto's, Tangerine, Verde.* **Trailhead.** *Wonderland Lake; Foothills via Lee Hill.* **Transit.** *RTD SKIP; HOP extended to Boulder Junction in late 2025.*

Table Mesa · 10–15 min drive to Pearl

South Boulder, roughly 3.5 miles below Pearl. Mid-century ranches, split levels, and newer semi-custom Craftsmans. Zillow puts the typical home value for Table Mesa South near \$1.1M, up sharply year-over-year. Quieter than Mapleton or Whittier; lower-density STR market, but a strong base for filmmakers and longer-stay pass-holders who want distance from the festival's center of gravity.

Coffee. *The Cup, OZO.* **Restaurant.** *Southern Sun Pub.* **Trailhead.** *NCAR–Table Mesa, into the Mesa Trail and Flatirons.* **Transit.** *US36/Table Mesa Station — AB1/AB2 to DIA, Flatiron Flyer to Denver, DASH, 204, 206.*

Chautauqua · 1.5 mi to Pearl

Established 1898 as an adult-education campus; the Chautauqua Auditorium itself is a confirmed Sundance venue. Historic stone bungalows and cottages on hilly streets, plus mid-century and a handful of custom modern builds. Listings broadly \$1.5M–\$5M+. The Colorado Chautauqua Association also operates historic cottage rentals on its own land — a separate lodging system not subject to the city's STR ordinance.

Coffee/Restaurant. *Chautauqua Dining Hall, Victorian-era, operating since 1898.* **Trailhead.** *Chautauqua, at 900 Baseline.* **Transit.** *RTD HOP, RTD 204; festival shuttles likely to supplement.*

THE HIDDEN BOULDER — WHERE TO RETREAT DURING FESTIVAL WEEK

For homeowners staying put, a short field guide to the Boulder that locals defend from tourists.

- **Trails.** Flagstaff Road's network is reliably emptier than Chautauqua. Betasso Preserve for shaded creekside singletrack. Marshall Mesa for big sky off Highway 93. Shadow Canyon out of South Boulder for a steep climb most people skip. Flatirons Vista off Douby Draw — three-mile loop, wildflowers in early June.
- **Restaurants the regulars protect.** Il Pastaio, tucked in a shopping center off Arapahoe. Carelli's, open since 1991. Rincon Argentino for empanadas. Aloy Thai. Blackbelly out at 55th and Arapahoe. Zoe Ma Ma on 10th Street, off the west end of Pearl.
- **Coffee away from the Pearl Street crush.** Boxcar Coffee Roasters for in-house roasting. OZO for a Boulder-roasted staple. Beleza Coffee Bar for what some locals consider the best cup in town. Trident Booksellers and Café, the longest-running coffeehouse in Boulder. Alpine Modern Café.

PEARL STREET, A TIME CAPSULE

Sundance arrives in Pearl Street's 50th anniversary year. The pedestrian mall opened in 1977; in the half-century since, the storefronts have turned over many times — and yet the rhythm has held. The sandwich-board chalk, the buskers between 11th and 14th, the line for ice cream on a hot night, the kid-on-shoulders parent in front of the pop-jet fountain. The 1990 Pearl Street was Peppercorn and Pasta Jay's; the 2000s added the Dushanbe Teahouse just off the west end in 1998 and the Boulder Theater's marquee restoration; the 2026 Pearl Street has added Giant Group USA and 2nd Street in the last six weeks. **The festival is the latest chapter, not the first one. The mall has been a stage for a long time.**

“The mall has been a stage for a long time. Sundance is the latest chapter, not the first one.”

PART FIVE

The numbers

The bedroom gap, and three honest worked examples. Every figure here is sourced. Every projection is a range, not a forecast.

THE BEDROOM GAP

The single most important question for a Boulder homeowner with festival ambitions is whether the demand is real. The math says it is.

The cleanest way to frame Boulder's lodging math is this. Park City's final Sundance — the 2025 festival — drew **85,472 unique in-person attendees** over the eleven-day window, of whom roughly **28,000 came from out of state** (about a third of total attendance). The same year's economic impact study put the festival at \$196 million. Out-of-state attendees in the prior year's study attended **4.14 festival days on average**, with an average non-resident lodging spend of \$1,603 over their visit.

Boulder enters its first year with **approximately 2,900 hotel rooms** across the city, per City of Boulder estimates reported by Boulder Reporting Lab in September 2025. The city had issued **600-plus standard short-term**

rental licenses as of the same date. The Festival Lodging License — the new program created specifically for Sundance — was projected by city staff to add **more than 1,000 additional festival rentals** by 2027. The tenant-sublease expansion approved in April 2026 widens that pool further; by April, Boulder had already received roughly 225 Festival Lodging applications.

Run the math at the high end. If 28,000 out-of-state attendees average four nights, that's roughly 112,000 visitor-nights to absorb. At two to three guests per room — a reasonable assumption for industry travelers — that suggests Boulder needs to host somewhere in the range of 35,000–55,000 room-nights over the festival window. Boulder's 2,900 hotel rooms across ten festival nights produce a ceiling of 29,000 hotel room-nights. The existing 600 STRs add another roughly 6,000 STR-nights. The combined existing supply, in

other words, is roughly **35,000 room-nights against an estimated need somewhere in the 35,000–55,000 range**. The gap is real. The Festival Lodging License — projected to add 1,000-plus units — is the city's bridge.

Methodology note: Park City attendance is from the Institute's official 2025 Attendance Recap and Economic Impact Report. Boulder hotel room counts are from the City of Boulder, reported by Boulder Reporting Lab. Visitor-night calculations assume 2.5 guests per room and apply the Y2 Analytics 2024 average-stay figure. The 28,000 out-of-state assumption uses the 33% share documented in 2025 and 2024. This is an estimate, not a forecast.

THREE BOULDER HOUSES — ILLUSTRATIVE MATH

Three example homes. These are *illustrative*, drawn from Park City comparable data, with conservative ranges; not commitments, not promises, not a recommendation for any specific home. Treat the back-page disclaimer as binding.

Home	Modest 3BR · ~\$1.2M	Mid 4BR · ~\$2M	Premium 5+BR · ~\$5M
Festival nights	7	10	10
Estimated nightly range	\$700 – \$1,400	\$1,500 – \$3,000	\$3,000 – \$6,000
Estimated gross range	\$4,900 – \$9,800	\$15,000 – \$30,000	\$30,000 – \$60,000
Less lodging taxes	-7.5% city + state/county stack	-7.5% city + state/county stack	-7.5% city + state/county stack
Less platform fees	Airbnb 15.5% or Vrbo ~8%	Airbnb 15.5% or Vrbo ~8%	Airbnb 15.5% or Vrbo ~8%
Less cleaning + license	~\$400 + \$215	~\$600 + \$215	~\$800 + \$215
Less insurance + reserve	variable	variable	variable

The nightly rate ranges are drawn from Park City bedroom-tier Sundance-week data (2021–2025), as compiled in published industry analysis. They are *upper bounds*, not midpoints; Boulder's year-one rate ceiling will likely run below Park City's most established weeks. The platform fee structure has changed — Airbnb's old "split" model has largely been replaced by a host-only 15.5% fee; Vrbo's

commission plus payment processing totals about 8% to the host, with a separate guest service fee. Boulder's accommodations tax is 7.5%, on top of the standard state and county lodging stack — the all-in lodging tax to a guest typically lands near 12.8%. Insurance riders for short-term rental, when held outside the property's standard policy, vary by carrier; some hosts add a per-night reserve.

The honest summary is that a **well-located four-bedroom Boulder home, marketed early and run cleanly, has a realistic shot at a five-figure festival-week gross**. After taxes, fees, cleaning, and a sensible reserve, the net runs meaningfully lower than the gross. The First Edition's pre-festival checklist still applies: furnace, hot water, Wi-Fi, roof, detectors, a neighbor or manager within thirty minutes.

“The single most important question for a Boulder homeowner with festival ambitions is whether the demand is real.”

PART SIX

From now to January

Seven months, in order. A revised pre-festival timeline for the Second Edition reader — and the contract language worth understanding before you sign.

SIX MONTHS OUT

A revised timeline, with the most decision-heavy months marked. The choices made in

July and August set most of the year that follows.

TIMELINE — JUNE 2026 → FEBRUARY 2027

June 2026 — Now Review HOA documents. Confirm the right license path (standard STR, Festival Lodging, or tenant sublease). Pull an insurance quote — a written STR endorsement, not a verbal assurance.

July 2026 Submit the Festival Lodging License application. The city's processing window is several weeks. Photograph the home in summer light if you plan to list.

August 2026 List on Airbnb, Vrbo, or through a manager. Open early-bird booking. Industry and press book the first weekend first; sponsors and brand activations book the longest stays. Pricing in this window sets the anchor.

September 2026 Lock the cleaner, the handyman, and the emergency contacts. Refine the listing copy based on early inquiry questions. Watch for the festival's lineup-watch announcements — venues firm up here.

October 2026 Furnace serviced, filter replaced. Hot water heater inspected. Roof and gutters before the first snow. Wi-Fi upgraded if needed. Smoke and CO detectors — fresh batteries, all tested.

November 2026 Guest packet complete. House rules, parking, emergency contacts printed at the house. If you're using noise monitoring (Minut, NoiseAware), disclose it in the listing and the packet.

December 2026 Programming announcement. A booking spike follows. Inventory tightens visibly. Final walk-through with the cleaner; stock consumables and stow valuables.

January 21–31, 2027 Festival.

February 2027 Recovery. Catalogue what worked. The lessons compound. If you intend to rent for 2028, the data you collect this month is the foundation.

THE CONTRACT GLOSSARY

A short field guide to the terms most often misunderstood until they matter. Read every contract, ask a lawyer for the language you do not understand, and write down what you are agreeing to.

Force majeure

A clause that excuses non-performance because of events outside reasonable control — fire, flood, public health emergency, government order. Read for two things: what triggers it, and what happens to deposits when it does. Airbnb's "extenuating circumstances" policy is its platform-level version; it has changed several times.

Security deposit

A refundable amount held against damage. Festival-week deposits typically run 25–50% of the total rental. Some hosts collect by card hold, others by separate transfer; the platform's damage protection program is *not* a substitute for a real deposit on a high-value booking.

Cancellation window

The schedule of refunds tied to days-out. A common festival-week pattern: 100% refund 60+ days out, 50% at 30–60 days, nothing inside 30. Aggressive schedules (Vrbo "no refund," Airbnb "Super Strict") protect the host but reduce booking volume.

Refund triggers

The specific events that compel a partial or full refund — usually a habitability failure (no heat, no hot water, no Wi-Fi at advertised speeds). Spell them out in the listing and the contract, with a process for resolution.

Damage clause

Defines what counts as damage (versus normal wear), who decides, and how disputes are escalated. The platforms' resolution centers can take days; for a high-stakes festival week, a separate written agreement saves time.

Occupancy cap

The maximum number of overnight guests. Boulder's defensible-occupancy framing — what the home can actually handle, not what you can fit on mattresses — applies here. Overcrowded listings draw complaints from neighbors, and complaints become your problem.

Quiet hours

Typically 10pm–8am in Boulder city limits. Write them into the listing, the contract, the welcome packet, and a printed card at the house.

Indemnification

A clause where one party agrees to cover the other's costs if a third party sues. Read carefully; some property-manager agreements push more indemnification onto the homeowner than is comfortable.

PART SEVEN

The bookshelf

Four titles. None of them about Boulder real estate. All of them useful context for what's coming.

Down and Dirty Pictures · Peter Biskind (2004)

The canonical narrative of how Miramax, the Weinsteins, and Sundance built the independent film business of the 1990s and 2000s. Long, gossipy, sometimes unkind. The single best book on the festival's place in American film.

Sundance to Sarajevo: Film Festivals and the World They Made · Kenneth Turan (2002)

The Los Angeles Times film critic's tour of the world's festivals, with Sundance at the head of the line. A slim, lucid argument for why festivals — Park City, Cannes, Telluride, Toronto — became the central plumbing of contemporary cinema.

Boulder: Evolution of a City · Silvia Pettem (revised 2006)

The definitive local history, written by the local historian. Tells how the town came to look the way it does. A useful frame for understanding which parts of Boulder are about to feel familiar to outside visitors and which won't.

Park City: Mountain of Treasure · Larry Warren (2005)

An older Park City history — silver mining, the long bust, the ski-resort revival, the festival arriving on top of all of it. Worth reading as a primer on the town Boulder is about to inherit a piece of.

A NOTE FROM JOEL

Why a second edition

I sent out the First Edition in April. A few hundred copies, by mail and by hand. The response told me two things. The first was that

there is a real appetite, in Boulder, for a publication that takes the festival seriously without treating it as a sales event. The second

was that **the appetite gets sharper, not duller, as the festival gets closer.** People want fewer headlines and more specifics.

“The appetite gets sharper, not duller, as the festival gets closer. People want fewer headlines and more specifics.”

So this edition goes narrower. Less introduction, more detail. The closer we get to January, the more useful the specifics become — what the rules actually say, what Park City actually saw, what the math actually works out to for a home like yours.

The most important change since April is the one in Council Watch: tenants can now sublease during the festival, with their landlord's consent. If you rent, that's a door that wasn't open in our First Edition. If you own and your tenants are likely to ask, it's a conversation worth having before they do.

It's still free. Share it with a neighbor. This is the revised copy I told you in April I'd send — there'll likely be one more before January. If a question in here points at a real decision you're about to make, call me. I'll come walk through it with you in person.

— Joel Ripmaster

SOURCES

Where the numbers come from

Every figure in this issue is pulled from public reporting or official city, county, and festival documents.

Links current as of late May 2026.

Boulder Reporting Lab — Tenant sublease ordinance (April 2026) boulderreportinglab.org	BizWest — Longmont and Lyons gird for spillover bizwest.com	Sundance Institute — 2019 Economic Impact Report sundance.org
KUNC — Tenant sublease coverage kunc.org	Sundance Institute — 2025 Attendance Recap and Economic Impact Report sundance.org	Visit Boulder — Mapleton Historic District bouldercoloradousa.com
Boulder Reporting Lab — Budget gap, cautious Sundance revenue (May 2026) boulderreportinglab.org	Sundance Institute — 2024 Attendance Recap and Economic Impact Report sundance.org	Visit Boulder — North Boulder neighborhood guide bouldercoloradousa.com
Boulder Reporting Lab — Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (May 2026) boulderreportinglab.org	Park Record — Main Street merchants on 2025 Sundance parkrecord.com	Visit Boulder — Boulder Creek Path bouldercoloradousa.com
Boulder Reporting Lab — Festival Lodging License approval (Sept 2025) boulderreportinglab.org	KPCW — Park City businesses on Sundance changes kpcw.org	City of Boulder — Wonderland Lake trailhead bouldercolorado.gov
City of Boulder — Festival Lodging Rental License bouldercolorado.gov	Salt Lake Tribune — "Sundance made Park City the It town. Not anymore" sltrib.com	City of Boulder — Chautauqua Park bouldercolorado.gov
City of Boulder — Standard Short-Term Rental Licensing bouldercolorado.gov	Variety — Park City lodging rates during Sundance variety.com	Colorado Chautauqua Association — Cottage rentals chautauqua.com
City of Boulder — Sundance Operations "Rules of the Road" bouldercolorado.gov	Variety — 2021 virtual Sundance economic loss variety.com	About Boulder — Hidden hikes and lesser-known trails aboutboulder.com
City of Boulder — Tax rates bouldercolorado.gov	Park Record — Treasure Hill 30-year saga (Tallman) insideparkcityrealestate.com	About Boulder — Hidden-gem restaurants locals love aboutboulder.com
CU Boulder Today — Macky, Roe Green, Muenzinger venue upgrades colorado.edu/today	Park Record — Hillside Avenue traffic, 2019 parkrecord.com	About Boulder — Boulder's 2026 coffee scene aboutboulder.com
Deadline — Sundance summer programming, Bloomerang PR appointment deadline.com	Park Record — Nightly rental moratorium opposition, 2022 parkrecord.com	Sundance Institute — Boulder announcement (March 2025) sundance.org
Denverite — Sundance summer events across Front Range denverite.com	Park City Affordable Housing FAQ parkcity.gov	Boulder Reporting Lab — Boulder lands Sundance boulderreportinglab.org
Boulder Chamber — Sundance Partner Hub boulderchamber.com	Park City Moderate Income Housing Plan, 2025 update parkcity.gov	Boulder Reporting Lab — \$34M incentives package detail boulderreportinglab.org
Axios Boulder — New Pearl Street businesses axios.com	Federal Housing Finance Agency — Summit County, UT HPI fred.stlouisfed.org	Boulder Reporting Lab — 2027 dates set boulderreportinglab.org
BizWest — Sundance & Boulder market analysis bizwest.com	Federal Housing Finance Agency — Teton County, WY HPI fred.stlouisfed.org	9News — Listed rental prices ahead of Sundance 9news.com

IF THIS ISSUE HELPED

Share it.

Send it to a neighbor, a friend with a second home, a client thinking about Sundance week. If they have questions, I'm the right first call.



JOEL RIPMASTER

Broker · Madison & Company Properties
Boulder, Colorado

303.641.3377 · joelripmaster@madisonprops.com · sundancegazette.com · bouldersluxuryleader.com

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