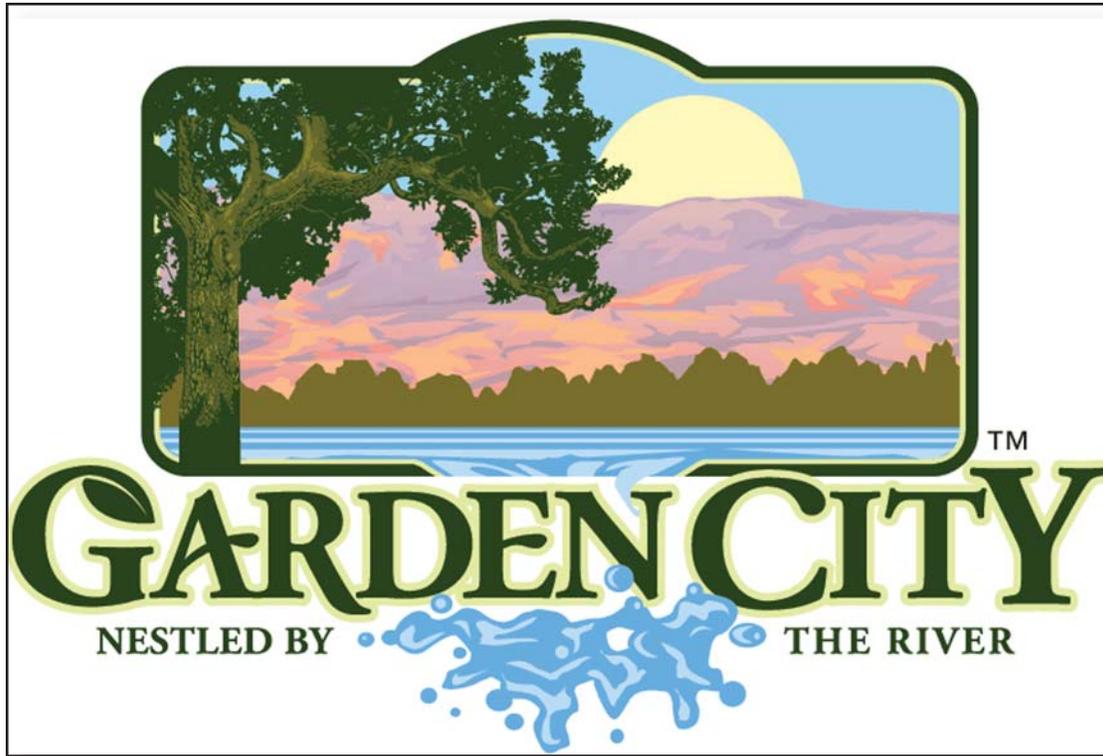


Community Spotlight

Garden City



Garden City Logo

Garden City is a 4.2-square-mile urban enclave surrounded by the City of Boise on the north, east and south and the City of Eagle on the west. The Idaho State Capitol lies 1.6 miles east.

The foothills and mountains of the Boise National Forest outline the sky to the north and east. They provide an ever changing backdrop to the city with a clear view of the 7,582-foot-high Bogus Basin Ski Resort just 18 miles away.

The Boise River runs east to west through the city which has an elongated irregular rectangular shape six miles long and anywhere from a quarter to one and a half miles wide. U.S. Highway 20-26, called Chinden Boulevard, runs through the city parallel to the south side of the river. The river and State Highway 44 form the city's northern boundary.

Historical Tidbits

Garden City is located on the Boise River floodplain. Prior to the construction of the three upriver dams—Arrowrock, Anderson Ranch and Lucky Peak—spring floods were common, promoting growth of black cottonwood and willow tree forests interspersed with

fields of bulrushes and grasses. Salmon and steelhead trout filled the river during their annual spawning migrations. Tribes of American Indians frequented the area during their seasonal encampments.

Explorers and trappers started coming into the area in the early 1800s. After failed attempts by other trappers to establish a trading post in the area, the British Hudson's Bay Company successfully opened a post at the confluence of the Snake River and a river flowing from the east in 1834 near what is now Parma. The French manager of the fort, François Payette, named the fort and the river flowing from the east "Boise," the French word for woods or wooded.

In 1841 the first immigrants en route to Oregon's Willamette Valley passed through the area on what would become known as the Oregon Trail. Fort Boise was a supply station and a landmark on the trail.

The trail ran through the Boise River floodplain, generally following the route of what is now U.S. Highway 20-26 to Fort Boise. The fort continued until 1854 when it was abandoned because of flooding and concern over hostilities with Indians.



View of Garden City, circa 1920

In 1862 a group of 11 prospectors found large quantities of placer gold in the mountains of the Boise Basin. The following year, 16,000 prospectors and miners invaded the mountains, creating such boomtowns as Idaho City, Placerville, Centerville and Pioneerville.

In 1863 the U.S. Army directed Major Pickney Lugenbeel and a detachment of troops to establish a military post in the Boise River Valley. The post was to provide protection to Oregon Trail immigrants and the rapidly growing population of prospectors, miners and settlers in the Boise Basin and, a hundred miles southwest, in the Owyhee Mountains.

On July 4, 1863, Lugenbeel accepted the advice of settlers and selected a low sagebrush-covered plateau overlooking the river where Cottonwood Creek left the foothills. Fort Boise Park, located two and a half miles east of Garden City, is part of that original site. Lugenbeel named the post Fort Boise, retaining the name of the abandoned trading post landmark on the Oregon Trail 40 miles west. Three days later, area settlers platted a town next to Fort Boise and called it "Boise City."

When the U.S. Army established Boise Barracks in 1863, it established a "hay reserve" at what became known as "Government Island." From this reserve, the Army harvested food for its horses. Eventually, the military reduced its presence in the region, and in 1884 the Army relinquished the reserve, making it available for private ownership.

At the time of incorporation, the town was a peaceful garden area that covered approximately 100 acres between what are now 32nd and 37th Streets. The next year, annexations doubled the population of the village to approximately 800.

Garden City became an incorporated city in 1967 in accordance with the new Idaho law changing the legal status of incorporated villages to cities.

City of Gardens and Gambling

George Breidensteen bought a large parcel of Government Island land and diverted Boise River water into a canal that he built to irrigate the land. Other farmers bought smaller parcels.

In 1890 cattle rancher Thomas J. Davis, proprietor of the Bar O Ranch then operating in the Bruneau River area and owner of other land in the valley, bought over 600 acres of Government Island land that he called the GI Ranch.

Davis had a history of leasing property to Chinese immigrants who came to mine for gold but preferred gardening and selling their produce and did the same with the GI Ranch.

The Chinese farms were located on the upstream end of the property closer to Boise. They raised strawberries, onions and other produce and, eventually, hogs. They also started a garbage collection service. They went through Boise area neighborhoods picking up solid waste, sorting out the edible garbage and feeding it to their hogs.

The Chinese community that once inhabited Garden City is largely gone, but it made an important contribution to the heritage of the city. The Chinese gardens and their row-crop farming acumen are the basis of the city's name as well as that of the city's principal thoroughfare, Chinden Boulevard

On May 22, 1949, Ada County commissioners approved incorporation of the village named Garden City, the name ostensibly derived from the village's Chinese gardens. A group of Boise businessmen promoted incorporation so they could build a small "amusement center." However, their true motives were to build gambling houses just outside the Boise city limits because the Boise City Council had just passed an ordinance banning gambling.



In Circle M Club at Garden City, Policemen and the manager count a \$600 take from the machines. The village got 45% of the profits plus the license fee.

Garden City police force, equipped and salaried through Garden City's 45% cut, stands in front of \$27,000 City Hall, also made possible by one-armed bandits.



It was not long before numerous gambling establishments lined what is now Chinden Boulevard. The popularity of the gambling houses prompted restaurants, bars and related businesses. Residential areas that provided housing for the people working in these establishments began to develop just off Chinden Boulevard.

Amenities and Attractions Today

Every resident is within easy walking distance of the abundant wildlife and recreational opportunities afforded by the clear, cold water of the wooded Boise River.

The legal boundaries between Garden City and Boise blend so smoothly that they are transparent to all but the knowledgeable observer. The multitude of amenities offered in Boise is also available to Garden City residents.

Plantation Country Club, located on the north edge of the city, is one of the longest continually operating golf courses in Idaho.

The city's greenbelt path runs almost continuously from its eastern boundary along the south side of the Boise River to the western city limits, where it meets up with the Boise City leg.

On the north side of the river is a 1.5-mile nature walking path that winds through wildlife habitat from Glenwood Street to Eagle Island.

Thousands of visitors come to the Western Idaho Fair held each August. Thousands more come to enjoy the races offered at Les Bois Horse Racing Track and the ball games at the Boise Hawks Baseball Stadium. Many business organizations use the fairground facilities for sales events and shows.

The City Hall and library complex are major attractions. When the library moved to its new location, the number of patrons increased 25 percent.

