

Creating a Home Town for Boaters

by *André Spino-Smith*

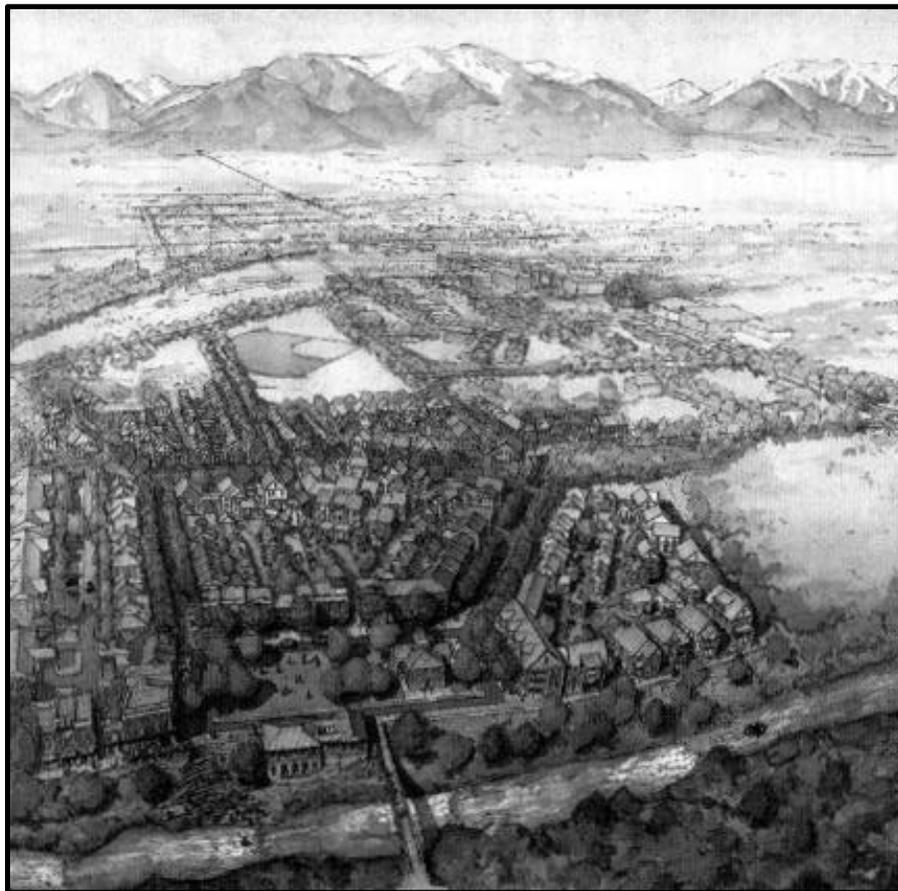
Jed and Katie Selby, both part of team Wavesport and longtime members of the kayaking community, are building a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) on the banks of the Arkansas River Headwaters in the town of Buena Vista, CO, a small mountain community about 100 miles west of Colorado Springs.

The brother and sister team bought a 40-acre parcel adjacent to the towns existing whitewater play spot. The new development has 315 homes, which ultimately is expected to add 800 residents to the town of 2,200.

On behalf of the Town of Buena Vista, they've applied for, and received, a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant to expand Buena Vista's existing whitewater park by up to five features. GOCO grants are awarded to towns to acquire, enlarge, or improve outdoor recreation and environmental education facilities. This grant of \$186,975, along with a donation of \$30,000 by the Selbys, \$30,000 by the town and \$10,000 by the Buena Vista Whitewater Project committee, will be used to construct one of the longest whitewater parks in the world, which will be a multi-use park for people of all different interests and abilities.

In typical real estate sprawl developments of today, all uses including office parks, schools, shopping, recreation, and civic buildings, are physically separate and are connected by arterial roads. This system makes almost everyone completely dependent on cars.

In contrast, Traditional Neighborhood Development TND is the practice of building towns the way they used to be built, around the needs of pedestrians instead of cars. This is done in part by creating mixed-use buildings (with apartments above and store fronts below) and enough density so that there are people within walking distance to support these stores. The next step is to make an attractive public space that encourages



SKETCH BY JAMES DOUGHERTY

The new housing development in Buena Vista, Colorado, designed by paddlers, will front on a whitewater park on the Arkansas River just a 10-minute walk from downtown.

walking by creating wide tree-lined sidewalks, narrowing streets to slow down traffic, having alleys for garages and trash pick up, and featuring front porches that are built close right up next to the sidewalk.

The South Main project combines TND principles with world-class paddling, environmental responsibility and outdoor recreation. For example, the homes will be certified Built Green, which encourages energy and water efficiency, among other things. All lots will be within a short walk from the public whitewater park, and the focal point of the project will be the central riverfront square. The Whitewater Park will include seating and raft access. Also, The main play spot will eventually be complete with a foot/bike bridge above and a restaurant next to it, making it ideal for hosting kayaking events. The Selby's are dealing with the challenge of re-

writing current town zoning by making their addition to Buena Vista a Planned Unit Development, or PUD.

Luckily, The Buena Vista Board of Trustees is very excited that projects like this is being built, and are more than willing to grant the Selby's the approvals they need. These approvals will enable South Main to be a true extension of the historic Main Street, instead of another sprawling subdivision.

Jed and Katie's website, www.southmainriverpark.com shows the whole layout and is very informative. If living in a great community where you know your neighbors and walking from your house to an awesome play spot interests you, please check it out.

André Spino-Smith is currently ranked third in the world in freestyle kayaking. He recently moved to Buena Vista to help his best friend Jed with the project.