

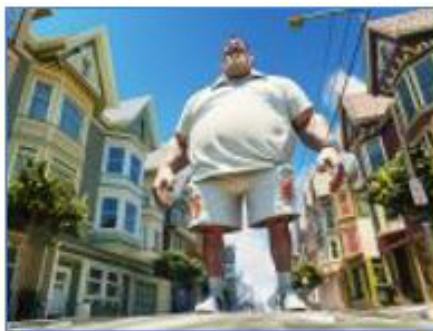
# Community Venture Partners, Inc.

*A Catalyst for Sustainable Solutions*

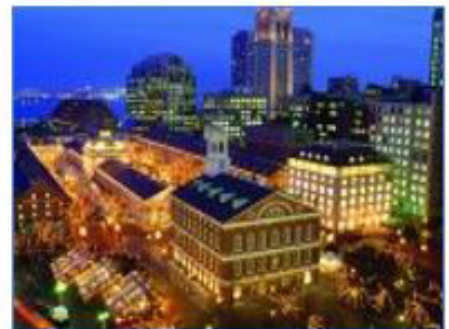


## Paradigm Shift

*Rethinking Housing Affordability*



## Investigative Journalism



# 2024 Annual Report

# COMMUNITY VENTURE PARTNERS

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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### Letter from the President

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

CVP continues to respond to community needs and look for opportunities to make a difference: EDUCATING the public, ADVOCATING for community voices, CHALLENGING government transgressions, and DEMONSTRATING housing and policy solutions and PROMOTING public policies that are economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable and equitable.

We believe the best way to ensure responsible government is through educating and empowering community voices, advocating for change, challenging government transgressions, and demonstrating housing and policy solutions that are economically, socially equitable, and environmentally sustainable. We continue to work for community-serving and community-supported affordable housing solutions and we have increased our emphasis on proposing public policy solutions to this challenge.

### Local control continued to erode in 2024

Hundreds of new state housing laws have been passed in California since CVP was founded in 2013, and almost all of them wrest control of local planning and zoning away from locally elected officials. Yet, in all that time, these laws have failed to produce significant amounts of affordable housing. Despite this, the California State Legislature continues to double-down on its misguided effort to turn growth policy over to private development interests who do all they can to maximize profits and avoid providing low-income housing.

Unfortunately, grassroots community voices are increasingly being drowned out by big-money, real estate development interests and tech billionaire-funded legal challenges. The usurpation of power by unelected state agencies and special interests is running rampant. A decade ago, we could bring legal arguments at the local level. Now, legal challenges involve taking on state agencies and take years in the courts at dramatically increased costs.

Meanwhile, local city and county governments have yet to show any appetite for exercising their Constitutional “police powers” to stop the state’s overreach. And, unfortunately, California courts have determined that residents do not have legal standing to bring legal arguments, and thus are helpless to turn this around unless we elect representatives that will fight for local interests.

### PLEASE SUPPORT CVP

CVP remains a fully independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working across the spectrum of public policy issues, providing free services and assistance to community groups and local government agencies. CVP remains a proactive, *solutions-driven* organization promoting a positive vision for the future of Marin County, the San Francisco Bay Area, and California.

We continue to empower community organizations, promote initiatives and events, publish research and commentary, and provide advisory services to municipal agencies, elected officials, and organizations that seek our assistance. **CVP receives no funding from corporate interests or**

**government entities. We rely solely on donations from individuals and nonprofit foundations.**

2024 has been a challenging year for grassroots fundraising. National and international causes, politics, and disasters have been out-competing small organizations such as ours.

We need your support in the coming year to work on your behalf for government transparency, responsible public finance, environmental protection, sensible growth, and sustainable planning, and to continue to publish the Marin Post, which has become an important source of reliable news for hundreds of thousands of readers.

We are extremely grateful to all who have supported our efforts for more than 11 years. CVP would not exist without their generosity. CVP accepts donations in all forms, including common stock and other negotiable securities.

Please [contact us](#) for more information.

**Please click [HERE](#) to make your annual donation to CVP**

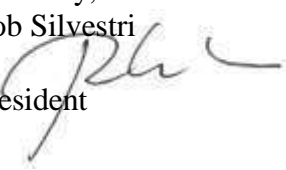
As always, we promise to make every dollar count. I remain available to meet with each of you throughout the year, to hear your thoughts and concerns. Thank you for your continued confidence and support.

**NOTE:** CVP has gone paperless. We will no longer send printed copies of our Annual Reports or Updates unless requested. Please be sure we have your correct email address so you are up to date about our activities.

Throughout this Report, you will find [blue text links](#). Click on the links for more detailed information about each topic discussed.

Sincerely,  
Bob Silvestri

President

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bob Silvestri', is written over the printed name and title.

# COMMUNITY VENTURE PARTNERS

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

### EDUCATE - ADVOCATE - DEMONSTRATE

CVP's community-serving efforts include educating the public and decision-makers about issues of concern, advocating for local voices and government adherence to state and federal law, and demonstrating better solutions to our growth, planning, and affordable housing needs.

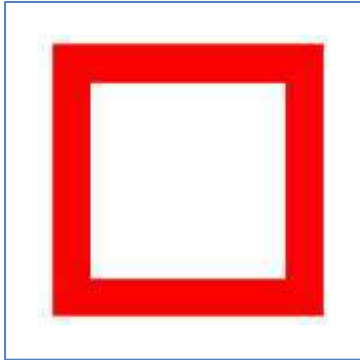


This Report provides an update on our most significant accomplishments and initiatives during the past 12 months.



## THE MARIN POST

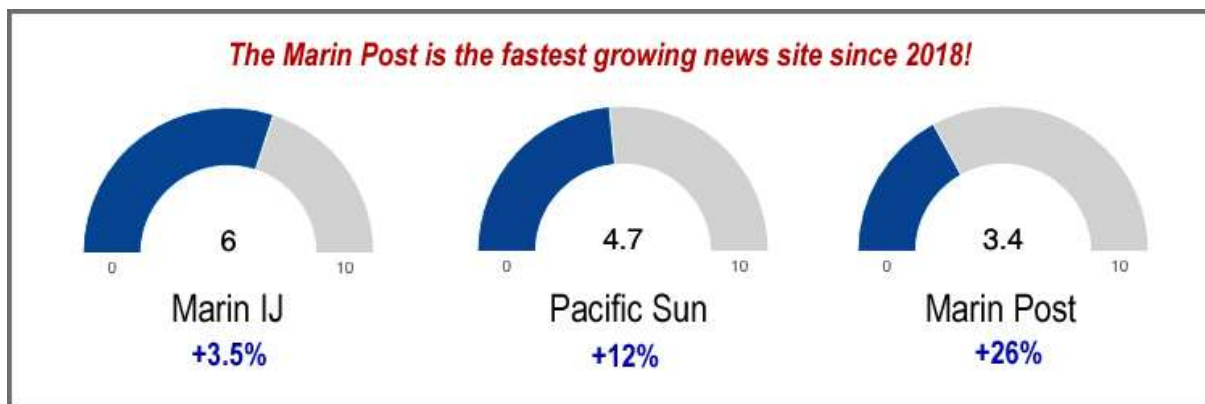
*Keeping the community informed is essential to effective civic engagement.*



The [Marin Post](#) is CVP's most impactful initiative to empower community voices and showcase cutting-edge thought leaders. The Marin Post is a trusted source, user generated content platform for alternative views and investigative citizen journalism and an integral part of how CVP updates our supporters about our activities.

The Marin Post has surpassed 300,000 unique readers of articles by over 234 writers since our launch in June 2015, with readership growing by an average of 2,500 new readers every month (Based on Google Analytics data). The breadth of topics covered continues to expand and we work to keep all accounts safe and secure while delivering 100% uptime throughout the year. Unlike other social media sites *we do not track user behavior or record personal data.*

The Marin Post remains the only fully independent, online, citizen journalist news magazine in California. It is the fastest growing, online, news magazine in the San Francisco North Bay and ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in market share reach, according to the "Web Competitive Index," an independent analysis of website competitiveness.



Statistics based on the "Web Competitive Index" measures market reach (metric is 1-10 with 10 being 100% of the potential market), powered by [MOZ](#), an independent, third party SEO analysis of Internet advertising/marketing.

The Marin Post offers low-cost, cross-platform advertising opportunity that displays on all computers, tablets, and mobile devices. It is arguably the best online advertising value in the San Francisco Bay Area. To learn more about advertising on the Marin Post [CLICK HERE](#)

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE MARIN POST:** Please consider becoming a Contributor of content and making regular monthly donations to help us continue to provide the best possible services. [CLICK HERE TO DONATE](#), and note the "Marin Post" in the "purpose" box when you donate online.

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## AFFORDABILITY AND STATE HOUSING POLICIES

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*CVP is fighting for sustainable growth and planning to serve those most in need*



CVP continues to be an active participant in the statewide debate about growth, social equity, and housing. This includes analysis of specific development proposals and the myriad of new state housing laws.

Increasingly, this also includes innovative public policy proposals to rectify our shared affordability challenges.

Since our inception, CVP has pushed back on failed, “top-down” state housing mandates while proposing new low-income and affordable housing solutions. The decades-long failure of state housing policies and the current over-reach by state and regional agencies, backed by corporate and real estate development interests to wrest control of local planning and zoning away from locally elected officials, destroys the fabric of our communities and could potentially bankrupt small cities that cannot shoulder the financial costs of providing sufficient public services to so many new residents.

CVP acts as an advisor to local government agencies, community groups, and statewide lobbying groups on sustainable housing issues. Despite our opposition to misguided state housing policies, CVP remains a *pro-affordable housing organization*, actively working to develop affordable housing solutions for those most in need.

CVP has worked on planning, zoning, and public policy issues in every major town and city in Marin County including Mill Valley, Marin City, Sausalito, Strawberry, Tiburon, Belvedere, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Kentfield, San Rafael, Fairfax, and Novato, and in Danville, Lafayette, Vallejo, Burbank, Sherman Oaks, Glendale, Santa Monica, Los Angeles, and Redondo Beach, among others.

CVP publishes original analysis and commentary on the state’s current affordability challenges and proposed legislation. CVP’s analyses are data-based, exhaustively researched, and strive to provide workable solutions without sensationalizing the issues. For examples of our research, public policy papers, and program proposals since November of 2022, please see the following published articles, below:

(CLICK ON THE TITLES BELOW TO READ MORE)



### [Paradigm Shift: Rethinking Housing Affordability](#)

*“Paradigm Shift” presents an entirely new, fact-based way to understand our shared “un-affordability” challenges.*

If success is defined by the response to policies and programs by those it claims to serve, one has to ask, why then is the resistance to state affordable housing laws greatest at the bottom (e.g., South

Central LA, Marin City, etc.)? Is it because these communities see things for what they are: just another scheme to promote gentrification and drive poor folks out of their homes?

Similarly, if success is defined by the number of homes being built, then we must look at the data to judge the efficacy of California’s trickle-down/supply-side policies. The data suggests that trickle-down economics remains a theory in search of facts.

We must also ask, how local and state governments, particularly small to medium-sized counties and cities whose revenue-raising options are extremely limited, will cover the costs of roads and infrastructure improvements and maintenance, new schools, public utility improvements and expansion, public services and public amenities, police and fire protection, environmental protection, and all the other socioeconomic impacts of unplanned and unregulated growth.

The following presentation was given at a Marin Coalition event held on April 10th at the Club Restaurant at McGinnis Park... ... [click here to learn more](#) »



### [Addressing the Infill, Low-Income Housing Challenge with Private Capital & The 1031 Exchange Law](#)

#### ***A CVP Housing Policy Initiative***

The “Holy Grail” of affordable housing is small-scale, infill, low-income-serving development located near vital public services, employment opportunities, essential retail (food, pharmacy, etc.), public transportation, and in locations where sufficient physical infrastructure exists to enable that development (water, sewer, power, and adequate roadway/traffic capacity).

For every opportunity to develop one large, multifamily, housing project in suburban and ex-urban communities there are dozens of opportunities for these smaller, infill projects. So, why aren’t those opportunities being realized?

Since it remains axiomatic that neither nonprofit nor for-profit developers can build low-income housing without some type of financial subsidy and government subsidies and tax credits remain grossly inadequate to address the need, the lack of availability of private investment capital is the single biggest obstacle.

So, how can we flip the script and increase financing liquidity and private capital investment in low-income housing? ... [more](#) »



## [RHNA Quotas, Unfunded Mandates, Buffer Sites, and the CA State Constitution](#)

As more people wake up to the fact that new housing laws have forever changed the way our communities will grow and reduced the say California residents have in their town's planning, zoning, and development decisions to pretty much zero, many are asking questions about how this new regulatory landscape came to be and the legality of all these new laws under the California State

Constitution. I'm sorry to say, the short answer is, yes, it is all legal.

But as a practical matter, the long answer is much more convoluted. ... [more »](#)



## [Unbounded Bullying by HCD](#)

The [stated mission](#) of the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is to,

“Promote safe, affordable homes and vibrant, inclusive, sustainable communities for all Californians. HCD helps to provide stable, safe homes affordable to veterans, seniors, young families, farm workers, tribes, people with disabilities, and individuals and families experiencing homelessness.”

This is their marketing pitch: portraying HCD as an approachable government assistance and support agency, ready and willing to do what it takes to work with California cities, counties, communities, and families. The reality of how HCD treats local city and county government stands in stark contrast to this carefully crafted image... [more »](#)



## [How trickle-down/supply-side economics fails to fulfill its \(housing\) promises](#)

[Trickle-down economics](#), also known as supply-side economics, was a product of the early 1980s, most prominently promoted by economist Arthur Laffer (the "Laffer Curve," which should have been named the “Laugher Curve” because that’s what the rich did all the way to the bank when it was implemented). It was embraced

with great fanfare by the Reagan Administration. Its advocates argued that by cutting taxes on the wealthy and reducing government regulations on big businesses, wealth will "trickle-down" to the rest of society, ultimately benefiting everyone.

Unfortunately, “trickle-down” has resulted in the opposite effect, with wealth “surging up” to the top while doing little to improve the financial well-being of the average American family and even less for the bottom 50%. ... [more »](#)





### [A win is a win but keeping it in perspective is important](#)

On March 29, 2022, the cities of Carson, Redondo Beach, Torrance, Del Mar, and Whitter (City of Redondo Beach, et al) filed a petition for writ of mandate in Los Angeles Superior Court against California Attorney General Rob Bonta and the state of California (Rob Bonta, et al) alleging that, “SB 9 [Senate Bill 9] violates the California Constitution because it is neither reasonably related to its stated concern of ensuring access to affordable housing nor narrowly tailored to avoid interference with local government.”

Almost 2 years later, on April 24, 2024, Pam Lee, one of the attorneys on this case, sent an email to those who have been following it, saying that they had won the lawsuit.

On its face, this is certainly good news since it is one of the few lawsuits that has successfully pushed back on the tsunami of [ridiculous](#) state housing laws (140 in the past 10 years, by some counts) and the attorneys at Aleshire & Wynder and moreover the cities that initiated this suit should be commended for their commitment to the law and their tenacity to see it through. Suing the state is not for the faint of heart.

Yet, all things considered, I’m not sure anyone should be popping champagne corks just yet. To understand why I’m saying this, it’s important to know what this case is and is not about. ... [more »](#)



### [The Colossal Collapse of the Regional Measure 4 Boondoggle](#)

The [Bay Area Housing Finance Authority](#) (BAHFA) was created by the California State Legislature in 2019. Its stated purpose is to administer programs and projects in the San Francisco Bay Area that are “focused on production, preservation, and protections to help all Bay Area residents have a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.”

BAHFA announced Regional Measure 4 (RM4) with great fanfare on June 26th. The agency’s proposed 20 billion dollar, general obligation, property tax measure, set to be placed on the November 2024 election ballot. They claimed that they spent more than 4 years and invested significant financial resources in the creation of RM4, including extensive collaboration with regional stakeholders and hiring teams of expert consultants.

MTC’s marketing pitch was that RM4 would address the housing shortage in the San Francisco Bay Area by funding the development of new affordable housing, the preservation of existing affordable housing, and protect residents from displacement.

However, on the eve of the ballot registration deadline, an ad hoc, grassroots group calling themselves “20BillionReasons” [accused MTC/BAHFA of making serious misleading statements](#) and outright false claims in the ballot measure’s language as well as some [really dumb, 5<sup>th</sup> grade-level math errors](#). ... [more »](#)



### [Bay Area Housing Finance Authority Pulls Regional Measure 4 from the November Ballot](#)

On August 8, 2024, the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) held a special meeting of its Executive Committee and voted to pull Regional Measure 4, the \$20 billion dollar regional bond measure, off the November ballot, under the advice of General Counsel Kathleen Kane.

In their comments on the withdrawal, BAHFA attempted to tarnish the opposition as being "anti-housing." Nothing could be further from the truth. ... [more »](#)

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## **THE ECONOMICS OF AFFORDABILITY**

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California state government has fully embracing the long-discredited theory of “trickle-down” economics to justify its giveaway of zoning rights to major corporate and real estate finance and development interests. In contrast, CVP takes a community-supported, community-serving, solutions-based approach. In concert with our critique of state housing programs, we simultaneously work to promote and highlight sustainable affordable housing solutions and real-world success stories.

As explained in [Paradigm Shift: Rethinking Housing Affordability](#), “affordability” is not simply a housing problem. It is a widespread systemic problem that impacts all aspects of our lives, including the costs of healthcare, education, and quality food, as well as housing. As such, the lack of housing affordability cannot be addressed simply by tinkering with planning and zoning because housing affordability is just a symptom of our overall affordability challenges, which are income inequality, tax policy inequities, and systemic failures to provide equal access to education, healthcare, and opportunity.

One part of the overall affordability and income inequality challenges has to do with how the government runs our economy. For some examples of our research and public policy commentary this year, see;



### [Is there a point where raising interest rates increase inflation?](#)

Everywhere you look, everyone is talking about is “inflation.” And, even though the term is often used incorrectly in the press (if inflation stops, it doesn’t mean prices fall), runaway inflation is economically destructive in the long run.

In [Paradigm Shift: Rethinking Housing Affordability](#), weI talked about how California housing laws intended to increase housing construction has, paradoxically, failed to do so. And, since housing construction and real estate prices are greatly impacted by high interest rates and the cost of borrowing, is it is something that should be on the minds of all California legislators. ... [more »](#)



### [The Federal Reserve is making housing more unaffordable and fueling inflation - Something's gotta give soon](#)

By most traditional measures, “housing” accounts for 15%-18% of our national GDP. However, when one takes into account all of the secondary and tertiary economic impacts (“multiplier effects”) on other industries and services that make up the extended housing industry ecosystem and its ancillary and subordinate industries and

businesses, it is arguable that the housing industry is the largest single contributor to our national economy.

These other industries and businesses include everything from natural resource extraction, materials and products manufacturing, and transportation to wholesale and retail sales of furniture, appliances, household goods and furnishings, landscaping, and thousands of other household things that are sold at Home Depot that result from new “household formation,” plus the economic activity in supporting businesses like banking, brokerage, housing stocks and bonds, and derivatives trading.

That considered, the level of interest rates set by the U.S. Federal Reserve and the methods it uses to measure what is going on in our economy *really* matter. ... [more »](#)



### [Can we really tax wealth and unrealized gains?](#)

*It might surprise many people to know that very wealthy people pay a lot of taxes.*

In California, for example, it's estimated that the top 1% of taxpayers pay 50% of the state income taxes collected. However, at the same time, it's no secret that the this same one percent *pay far*

*less in taxes than the average working person as a percentage of their overall income and/or net worth.*

Worst still, many taxes and fees in California are highly regressive, hurting low income people the most -- gas taxes, sales taxes, state income taxes, legal filing fees, and much more. Because of this, there's a great deal of chatter about how to “tax the rich.” One such proposal now being thrown around is to tax the *unrealized* gains on “assets.” But is that really feasible or should we consider other options? ... [more »](#)

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING AND GROWTH



As a “bottom-up,” solutions-driven organization, CVP believes that housing and growth and land-use decisions must remain grounded in localism and incorporate locally-driven processes that enable communities to address growth, affordable housing, and planning challenges in environmentally, economically, and locally sustainable ways. Affordable housing goals would be more achievable if the state and the federal government provided funding directly to local governments rather than by enacting unfunded mandates and enforcing housing quota compliance from afar.

CVP promotes fair and transparent local government decision-making. To do this effectively, we need to increase public awareness and an understanding about why our public institutions are failing to address shared social equity needs. It is only when the public has sufficient knowledge about the issues that they can vote to support comprehensive and durable solutions.

Many of the remedies we need at the local level are symptomatic of greater challenges on a statewide and national level. As such, we help public policymakers connect the dots to address our socioeconomic, sustainability, and equity challenges.

CVP strives to remain a voice of reason and an advocate for middle-class and working-class residents in California. We work with elected officials and community organizations, including CO\$T, Livable California, Friends of West Tam Valley, Citizens for Sustainable Pension Plans, MADD, United Neighbors Los Angeles, Sustainable TamAlmonte, California Catalysts, and others.

For examples of our research, public policy papers, and support programs this year, please see;



### [Has a Sleeping Giant Awakened?](#)

The San Francisco Standard recently published an article (“[Angry San Francisco homeowners plot to kill city’s rezoning plan](#)”) about grassroots groups in San Francisco who are speaking out in opposition to state housing mandates that are driving city planning officials to propose sweeping changes to the allowable density and height of new housing throughout the city.

The article describes how one resident, who is labeled “an anti-development firebrand,” is arguing that the city’s plan to add 82,000 units of high-density housing (to fulfill the state housing quota) is “unnecessary, punitive and ineffective.”

For those of us who have been following state housing law for decades and questioning its Escher-like illogic, it’s heartening to see this emergence of new protests from what has mostly been the “silent middle class” (a group that is notoriously busy and over-scheduled, working, raising children, supporting their local communities and its institutions, and paying their taxes) recognizing the severe consequences of the 140 housing laws passed in the last decade. ... [more »](#)





### [When is a “plan” not a Plan?](#)

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Sausalito City Council met to consider a proposed ballot initiative called the “[Marinship Blue Economy Innovation District Initiative](#).” It was ostensibly drafted by the [Working Waterfront Coalition](#) and their attorney and consisted of lengthy rewrites of the Sausalito General Plan.

Its stated intention was to *preserve* the Marinship and *protect* the Marinship businesses from the market forces making it difficult for small, existing businesses and artisans to afford rising rental costs. These are, of course, very worthy goals. The Marinship is much more than meets the eye and its economic vitality [has been studied and debated](#) for decades. The Marinship is [home to a diverse and eclectic mix](#) of maritime industries, small manufacturers, artisans, artists, tradesmen, and tech startups. As one participant in the City’s 2017 Marinship Workshop commented, “The Marinship contains the culture of this town.” ... [more »](#)



### [San Rafael development appealed on traffic and public safety concerns](#)

On April 18, 2023, San Rafael resident, Vikram Seshadri, [filed an appeal](#) of the San Rafael Planning Commission's approval of the proposed mid-rise, mixed-use housing project at 1515 4th Street.

The appeal does not seek to stop the project. Rather, it is based on concerns about pedestrian and traffic safety and the inadequacy of the assessment of public safety hazards by the project's traffic consultants, AMG. ... [more »](#)



### [Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association files Lawsuit to correct false statements in Prop. 5](#)

As reported in the [Sacramento Courthouse News Service](#), the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association filed a lawsuit (a [Petition for Peremptory Writ of Mandate](#)) in Sacramento County Superior Court. The suit challenges the wording of the condensed version of the title and summary of Proposition 5 on the November ballot

(which would reduce the threshold for voter approval of certain types of bond measures from 66% to 55%).

Jon Coupal, the president of the [Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association](#) told the court,

“It is misleading because it withholds vital information from the voters, namely that it would reduce the current two-thirds vote approval requirement to 55% voter approval. Without this necessary information, a voter would likely be misled or confused as to whether Proposition 5 increases the voters' approval requirement from a simple majority vote to a 55% vote, rather than decreasing the voter approval requirement from two-thirds to 55%.”

Coupal asked the court to force the state to rewrite the ballot wording.... [more »](#)



### [Dominican Valley Residents are Steaming Mad for Good Reason](#)

Deep in the heart of Dominican Valley sits a unique and spectacular piece of property: one of the last remaining, large parcels of wilderness land in the Black Canyon area, located at the access point to the Harry Barbier Memorial Park and the gateway to China Camp State Park open space, beyond. Until recently, it was owned by Dominican University, for decades.

Residents in the surrounding area have always believed and have been told, repeatedly, by city officials, that every effort would be made to preserve this precious 20+-acre parcel and that it might someday become a public park..... [more »](#)



### [Save Friends Field at the Mill Valley Community Center](#)

The first in a series of articles investigating a misguided and ill-fated proposal by the Mill Valley School District (MVSD) Board to break its time-honored shared-use and maintenance agreements with the City of Mill Valley and eliminate the most important public, outdoor team sports and public events space in the City; Friends Field at the Mill Valley Community Center.

On Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, with just 24 hours of advanced notice, the Mill Valley School District Board convened a meeting to announce a massive, multi-year development proposal to demolish the Mill Valley Middle School buildings (except for the gym) on Sycamore Avenue and build a new and entirely new middle school on Friends Field. ... [more »](#)



### [Known Knowns, Known Unknowns, and Sleeping Dogs -- Decisions before the MVSD Board of Directors](#)

The Mill Valley School District Board recently made the surprising announcement that they want to demolish the Mill Valley Middle School on Sycamore Avenue and replace it with a new middle school on Friends Field at the Mill Valley Community Center.

This immediately set off a chorus of opposition from a cross-section of Mill Valley residents, sports organizations, and the City of Mill Valley, itself. However, despite the multitude of arguments that have been presented by city officials and respected members of the community (who have decades of experience in real estate development and construction cost analysis), the MVSD Board seems determined to double down on their intentions. ... [more »](#)



### [The Mill Valley School Board Pivots](#)

One need only look at the chaos in Washington DC these days to be reminded that when our rules-based system is ignored to assuage one group's feelings or beliefs or alternative "facts," truth flies out the window. And though this trend is writ large on a national stage, it's happens right here in Mill Valley.

At the Special Board meeting of the Mill Valley School District Board, on February 27th ([Click to view the video](#)), the Board begrudgingly reversed its decision to pursue the development of a new Middle School on Friends Field at the Mill Valley Community Center and, instead, consider the redevelopment of a new school in its existing location.... [more »](#)

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## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

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In times of economic crisis, our planet always gets short shrift. This is evident where significant environmental protections established over the past 50 years are being set aside, daily. In California, new state housing laws are incrementally dismantling the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), ironically, in the name of the environment.

***This is tantamount to societal suicide.***

Global and local environmental degradation are inextricably intertwined and remain growing concerns for everyone. CVP's president has decades of experience in environmental advocacy, education, and science-based investigation that guides our outreach about environmental challenges and explains what community members can do to address them.

Simply put, we cannot hope to have an equitable, sustainable society without addressing the enormous environmental challenges that our planet is facing. For examples of our research, public policy papers, and program proposals this year, please see;



### [The Greenest Building Ever Built is Already Standing](#)

The saying, "The greenest building is the one that is already built" is attributed to architect and sustainability expert Carl Elefante. This refers to the fact that new buildings consume more natural resources and energy to build than the renovation or [adaptive reuse of existing buildings](#), therefore reuse results in lower greenhouse gas emissions.

According to Autodesk, the global leader in architectural design software,

"Experts predict that [90%](#) of real-estate development in the next decade will focus on renovating and reusing existing structures."

This is a trend that we should fully embrace, but it is being completely ignored by Sacramento lawmakers. In fact, the entire Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process, administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development in Sacramento (HCD) actively discourages renovation of existing housing units, particularly those that are for low and very-low income renters, while simultaneously encouraging the development of luxury housing to fulfill local quotas... [the "trickle-down" economics](#) solution, whereby according to HCD and Gavin Newsom, supply and demand solves everything. ... [more »](#)



### [Marin Water's "Water Supply Roadmap"](#)

According to the Marin Water's (formerly known as the Marin Municipal Water District - MMWD) latest "[Update on the Water Supply Roadmap, April 30, 2024](#)", among the three proposals the agency will be evaluating to increase our water supply is the expansion of the capacity of the Soulajule Reservoir by raising the height of its earth-fill dam 39 feet. This would provide an additional storage of 20,000 acre-feet.

The Update notes,

"The volume of material needed to complete the raise of Soulajule is approximately 1.2 million cubic yards of fill. At a cost of \$291M, this alternative appears economically and financially feasible."

If this proposal is advanced to the MMWD Board later this year, it will be a major undertaking and represent a significant change in the source of Marin's drinking water. However, few people know much about the Soulajule Reservoir or its history. ... [more »](#)



### [Red tides, dead zones, and other reasons for concern about climate change](#)

When I was a kid, I used to love to get up in the morning and go down to the beach in the summer, on the North Shore of Long Island, and with nothing more than a seining net, a spear gun, and a wire basket I could bring home a feast of smelts, small rock fish, flounders, and mussels for my mother to make for dinner.

But, that's all gone now.

There is no longer any serious debate among credible scientists that the climate and just about everything else is changing because of our collective, seemingly, insatiable need to extract, transform, and consume everything in our planet's fragile ecosystems. As such, there have been many articles in the mainstream media about global heating and climate change. But, much of that coverage has focused on severe weather events, sea level rise, and occasionally on endangered species. ... [more »](#)



## CVP 2024 CASE STUDIES

### THE SAGA OF SAUSALITO'S WORKING WATERFRONT



The evolving story of CVP's involvement with masterplanning the Marinship waterfront district in Sausalito continues. The Marinship lies east of Bridgeway and North of Napa Street and is Marin's only remaining large-scale, industrial-zoned, working-waterfront community. It is a historically significant site, once the largest shipyard building "Liberty Ships" during WWII. Many of its original buildings still stand today and are a defining characteristic.

As noted in our Annual Reports since 2019, CVP spent years working with resident groups, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders representing a diverse mix of commercial enterprises, maritime industries, manufacturers, artisans, artists, tradesmen, and technology providers to develop a master plan. We continue to believe that the Marinship has a very important role to play in attracting high-paying, 21<sup>st</sup>-century jobs to the City. And despite growing pressure to plan for change and the growing risks of failing to do that, the City can't seem to get out of their own way. As such, Sausalito has made zero progress in planning for workforce housing or promoting a vibrant business community for half a decade.

Meanwhile, the Marinship's formidable challenges continue to grow, including sea level rise, land subsidence, and failing infrastructure. Sustainably addressing these issues is critical to the Marinship's property values and its ability to attract private investment capital, retain jobs, and even for the solvency of the City itself since the Marinship is the City's biggest tax revenue generator and has the potential to be much more.

In 2022, in response to the City's publication of a Request for Interest (RFI) for master planning by the city, CVP submitted the ["Marinship Master Plan."](#) The Plan promoted bottom-up, community-serving, community-supported planning solutions. It focused on affordable housing needs and the preservation and support of its maritime, industrial, manufacturing, arts, and artisan working waterfront and business community.

We were *extremely disappointed* that despite the years of work and broad-based, grassroots support for our proposals, in 2023, the City Council voted 3 to 2 against moving forward on any of the various planning options presented, for reasons that remain baffling. From the start, the entire RFI process was undermined by the egos, backroom politics, and well-poisoning by several City Council members whose personal agendas overrode community benefits.

However, in spite of all this, a coalition of business owners and land owners have begun discussing reviving the CVP Marinship Masterplan proposal. As such, we are awaiting their proposal. Meanwhile, the upcoming November election offers a chance for new leadership to emerge that better understands that the clock is ticking on the existential threats to the Marinship.

## INNOVATIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

*Generative AI planning tools for Public engagement*

### CVP Generative Design Initiative



CVP continues to move forward on our “[Generative AI Housing Initiative](#),” a proposal that combines Generative AI, computer-aided design software with “off-site” componentized construction to produce inexpensive and highly flexible housing design / development tools and cost-effective solutions that are easily adaptable to the requirements of any site in any location and for any preferred housing typology - a generative AI tool to help government agencies enhance community participation in city planning.

City and county planning agencies need simple and easy-to-use visualization tools tailored to local use-cases to help them quickly conceptualize, visualize, and iteratively test and assess the physical impacts, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic feasibility of housing development opportunities: the vast majority of the affordable housing development opportunities in all major metropolitan areas in the U.S.

Virtual tools are particularly beneficial to address idiosyncratic, infill, affordable housing opportunities. Our [first prototype](#) demonstrates infill, live/work affordable housing for artists, artisans, and small business professionals. Future prototypes include those for “active elderly” senior housing (the “downsizing” market) and suburban and urban-infill housing for young professionals.

CVP proposes a suite of subscription-based, cloud-hosted, generative AI applications (“the APP”) running on Autodesk Forma, interoperable with the Autodesk ecosystem of CAD and BIM tools, with UI/UX architecture specifically designed for local planning agencies and elected decision-makers collaborating with community stakeholders and housing developers shaping planning/affordable housing initiatives.

The APP is trained on federal, state, and local codes and regulations, including design standards, housing typologies, and specifications. Essential capabilities would include visualizing the physical consequences of development proposals and iteratively assessing regulatory changes and variable inputs (geology, hydrology, utilities, unit costs, market demands, etc.), and planning concepts in a virtual environment responsive to iterative input manipulation and prompts, in real-time. The APP’s “extended-reality” workspace will enhance collaborative engagement. Outputs include exportable files that architects, engineers, builders, and developers can use to create responsive proposals.

The APP bridges the gap between local planning initiatives and industry professionals to enable planning and development processes from conceptual and development proforma phases through to AEC documentation and project management, including manufactured, componentized housing

outputs (e.g., Factory OS, an Autodesk/Google venture investment). A prototype of the App for infill, live/work affordable housing for artists, artisans, designers, and small business professionals was recently incorporated into the CVP Marinship Master Plan proposal, in Sausalito,

The following Proposal is now seeking grant funding to further develop the Alpha version of the CVP APP.

## THE CHALLENGES

- The primary participants who determine what we build, where we build, and how we build are (a) federal and state lawmakers and regulatory agencies, (b) local city officials and planning agencies, and (c) community stakeholders, private property owners, and real estate developers. This triumvirate of participants shape all local development opportunities.
- These primary decision-makers lack the digital tools needed to properly assess the practical implications of their planning decisions, often resulting in codes, zoning, and planning protocols that fail to produce equitable, financially feasible, and sustainable development outcomes that best serve the needs of impacted communities.
- Architects, engineers, and builders/project managers are typically excluded from this primary decision-making process, other than as advisers to planning consultants hired by civic agencies.

## AVAILABLE DIGITAL TOOLS

- The majority of CAD and BIM software tools are designed to serve the collaborative and productivity needs of architects, engineers, builders/project managers, and planning consultants.
- New tools, such as Autodesk *Forma* and *Delve* by Google/Sidewalk Labs, provide valuable, real-time visualization capabilities, enable greater planning team collaboration, increase external data input integration, and offer enhanced parametric and generative AI modeling capabilities.
- These sophisticated tools can often be too expensive, too difficult to learn, too complex, and exceed the needs of local city and county agencies for their in-house planning of local development initiatives.

## EMPOWERING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In *Platformization in the built environment: the political techno-economy of building information modeling*, by Yana Boeva, Kathrin Braun & Cordula Kropp, the authors ask,

“What agendas, logics, and constellations of forces shape the co-productive interplay between the digital transformation and the political-economic reconfiguration of the AEC sector? And what [are the] social implications for the future of architecture, construction, and the built environment... from these intersecting processes?”

At this “intersection,” civic arbiters of planning decisions are underserved by the digital software tools currently available.

## **THE NEED FOR GENERATIVE AI PLANNING TOOLS FOR GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS**

City and county planning agencies need a suite of simple and easy-to-use software tools tailored to local use cases and circumstances to help them quickly conceptualize, visualize, and iteratively test and assess the physical impacts, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic feasibility of new and infill, mixed-use, affordable housing development opportunities in local contexts.

These represent the vast majority of the affordable housing development opportunities in all major metropolitan areas in the U.S.

## **GRANT PROPOSAL**

The CVP team is seeking grant funding to continue the development of a suite of subscription-based, cloud-hosted, generative AI applications (“the APP”) running on Autodesk *Forma*, interoperable with the Autodesk ecosystem of CAD and BIM tools with UI/UX architecture specifically designed for local planning agencies and elected decision-makers collaborating with community stakeholders and housing developers in shaping planning/affordable housing initiatives.

Trained on federal, state, and local codes, regulations, zoning, design standards, housing typologies, and specifications, the APP’s capabilities would include things as basic as visualizing the consequences and opportunities of a community’s existing land use regulations (a major challenge for most cities), to iteratively assessing regulatory changes and variable inputs (geology, hydrology, utilities, unit costs, market demands, etc.), planning concepts, varying unit type requirements, etc. in a virtual environment responsive to iterative input manipulation and prompts, in real-time. The APP’s extended reality workspace will enhance collaborative engagement. Outputs include exportable files that architects, engineers, builders, and developers can use to create responsive proposals.

The APP bridges the gap between local planning initiatives and industry professionals to enable planning and development processes from conceptual and proforma phases through to AEC documentation and project management, including manufactured, componentized housing outputs (e.g., Factory OS, an Autodesk/Google venture investment).

## **CONTACT**

Bob Silvestri

President

Community Venture Partners, Inc.

73 Surrey Avenue Mill Valley, CA 94941

Office: 415.381.3887

Cell: 415.342.7877

<https://www.communityventurepartners.org>

[communityventurepartners@comast.net](mailto:communityventurepartners@comast.net)

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