



# COMMUNITY VENTURE PARTNERS

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

---

### Letter from the President

*November 2023*

---

Dear Friends and Supporters,

CVP's reputation as a voice for community values and as a professional advisor to community groups and local government officials continues to grow. We believe the best way to ensure responsible government is through empowering independent voices, advocating for change (which includes filing legal challenges when appropriate), and demonstrating solutions that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. We continue to work for community-serving and community-supported affordable housing that serves those most in need. The scope of CVP's work continued to evolve into more complex undertakings, focusing on issues of seminal importance.

### **2023 has been a disastrous year for “local control”**

Two decades of misguided state housing policy have failed to produce significant amounts of affordable housing, yet the California State Legislature continues to double down on its misguided efforts and has passed dozens of new housing laws that wrest control of local planning and zoning away from locally elected officials and hand it over to private, for-profit development interests. Each law has given housing developers more “rights” to develop high-density projects anywhere they please and the power to sue cities and counties to obtain development approval, while removing almost all requirements for low and very low-income housing. The recent proposal to build a 50-story condo tower in the Outer Sunset District in San Francisco is a case in point.



Actual “by right” 50-story skyscraper proposal in the SF Outer Sunset neighborhood

City and county governments have yet to show any appetite for exercising their rights on our behalf. It's time they stood up and just said “No” to Sacramento. Public education (via the [Marin Post](#)) and strategic litigation remain our best methods to counteract this government overreach.

## 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 bonafide 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. 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.

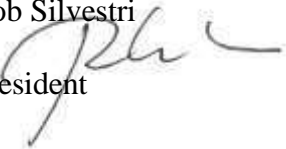
We are extremely grateful to all who have supported our efforts for more than 10 years. CVP would not exist without their generosity. CVP accepts donations in all forms, including common stock and other negotiable securities. Please [contact us](#) for more information.

**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.

Sincerely,  
Bob Silvestri

President



**NOTE:** Throughout this Report, you will find [blue text links](#). You can click on the links for more detailed information about each topic discussed.

**PLEASE 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.

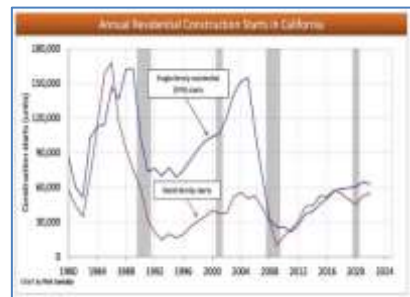
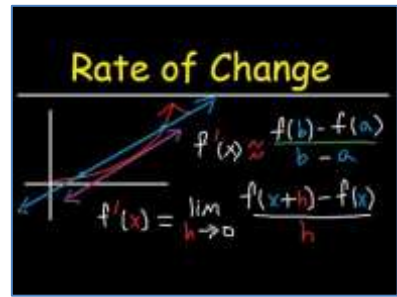
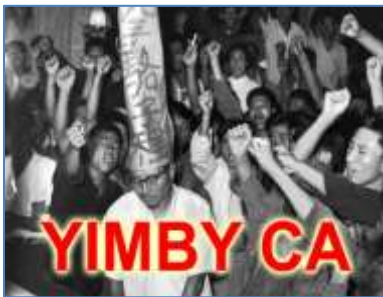


# COMMUNITY VENTURE PARTNERS

## 2023 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.



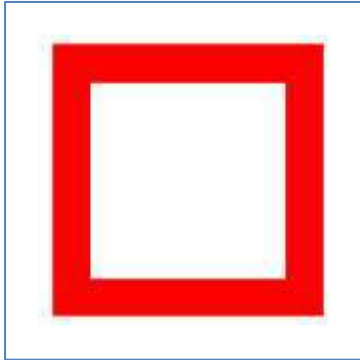
This Report provides an update on our most significant accomplishments and initiatives during the past 12 months.

---

## THE MARIN POST

---

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



The [Marin Post](#) remains 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 250,000 unique readers of articles by over 225 writers since our launch in June 2015, with readership growing by over 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 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. According to the "Web Competitive Index," an independent analysis of website advertising competitiveness, the Marin Post is 4th in the North Bay in market reach!

To learn more about advertising on the Marin Post [CLICK HERE](#)

### PLEASE SUPPORT THE MARIN POST

Your continued financial support is critical. Please consider becoming a Contributor of content and [MAKING REGULAR MONTHLY DONATIONS](#) so the Marin Post can continue to provide the best possible services.

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE](#), and note the "Marin Post" in the "purpose" box when you donate online.

## CHALLENGING FAILED STATE HOUSING LEGISLATION

*Fighting for sustainable growth and planning to serve those most in need*



CVP is 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.

CVP's dual efforts push 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 bankrupt small cities that cannot shoulder the financial costs of providing sufficient public services.

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 laws, 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 science-based, exhaustively researched, and strive to provide quality content without sensationalizing the issues. Our fundamental findings are that the myriad of new housing laws passed in the last ten years have done little to make housing more affordable for the average working family in California.

For examples of our research, public policy papers, and program proposals since November of 2022, please see the following published articles:

(CLICK ON THE TITLES TO READ MORE)

[\*\*A Legacy of Flawed Housing Policy -- PART 1: The demise of local control:\*\*](#) November 2022

Local government has now, essentially, been stripped of all control of local planning and zoning for housing and mixed-use housing development, unless municipalities succeed in achieving

increasingly unrealistic housing quotas handed down by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in Sacramento.

### **[A Legacy of Flawed Housing Policy -- PART 2: People reduced to data:](#)**

Apartment projects that large multifamily housing developers are building are increasingly generic, inappropriately sized, and unimaginative. To better understand why, we need to look at the history of 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture.

### **[A Legacy of Flawed Housing Policy -- PART 3: Foreseeable failures:](#)**

When it comes to efforts to create affordable housing Mill Valley is generally no better or worse than other cities its size. But its actions are illustrative of the dysfunction of the typical, municipal housing development process.

### **[Housing Law Failures and YIMBY Bounty Hunters:](#)** February 2023

The State of California's "the punishments will continue until morale improves" approach to the affordable housing crisis continues to be a catastrophic failure. The more the state threatens and penalizes cities and counties that do not and have not ever built housing, the more civic balance sheets will be decimated, public services diminished, and less affordable housing will be built.

### **[Huntington Beach v. Newsom, RHNA, HCD, and state housing law:](#)** March 2023

The City of Huntington Beach in Southern California has been in a battle to push back on the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process. In response to Governor Gavin Newsom's and State Attorney General Rob Bonta's threats to prosecute the City until it submits to the will of the State, the City has taken the bold action of filing a "Complaint for Declaratory Relief: Injunctive Relief" to bring its case before the U.S. District Court in California, with a "Demand for Jury Trial."

### **[Is "Spot Zoning" illegal?](#)** May 2023

The term "spot zoning" is thrown around in discussions about planning and development and the vast majority of the time the term is misused and misunderstood. So, what is spot zoning and how is it applied to local planning decisions?

### **[Moving the goal posts to conceal housing policy failures:](#)** June 2023

Every article we read about affordable housing legislation presents formulas about what percentage of units need to conform to "median-income" or "middle-income" or "area median-income" or other such standards to qualify for government subsidy, waivers, bonuses, and other developer incentives. These rules require things like 10% of new units must be for 30% of median-income households or 20% of new units must be for 80% of middle income households or 100% of new units must be "affordable," defined as households earning some other percentage of area median-income or whatever.

If you find this confusing, you have lots of company.

**“You can’t push a river” - California's Housing Element process is a bust:** August 2023

A reporter left me a message the other day, wanting to get my opinion of the Housing Element process. From his voicemail, I could tell he was out to write a story about ‘those standing in the way’ of the state’s wonderful housing laws. Unfortunately, there aren’t many real reporters in mainstream media anymore: just writers out to propagate black-and-white tales of good and evil with naively simplistic endings and characters cast as heroes and villains in California’s current “build-baby-build, damn-the-torpedoes,” housing narrative.

---

## **OUR SHARED “AFFORDABILITY” CRISIS**

---

California state government is 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.

“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 for all.

As a 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.

For examples of our research, public policy papers, and program proposals since November of 2022, please see

**10 Things We Can Do Now To Promote Affordable Housing:** November 2022

California has failed to produce enough affordable housing because the state continues to pursue a tax and spend, demand and punish approach to growth that refuses to accept that its ideologically-driven policies are misaligned and divorced from [the realities of our markets](#).

**RHNA v Reality:** January 2023

On June 21, 2021, the Orange County Council of Governments (OCCOG) filed a Petition for Writ of Mandate (“Petition”) in Superior Court, to which the cities of Redondo Beach, Lakewood, Torrance, Cerritos, Downey, and Whittier were subsequently added as petitioners, alleging that the California Department of Housing and Community Development’s (HCD) determination of regional housing needs administered by the Southern California Association of Governments



(SCAG) was incorrect, lacking substantial evidentiary support, and the result of a process that violated procedures prescribed by state law. Transgressions noted included HCD's failure to calculate population and household statistics, correctly, among other things.

**The Dumbest Smart People:** July 2023

There's no lack of fact-denying, anti-science people in the world bent on holding onto really dumb ideas and resisting all attempts to be educated. At the same time, there's no shortage of hyper-aggressive, high-minded, over-educated people whose positions on housing and growth and the importance of environmental protection laws win them the award for being the dumbest smart people on the planet.

---

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

---



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 must 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 program proposals since November of 2022, please see

**Community Venture Partners challenges the legitimacy of the Richardson Terrace approval process:** November 2022

Although Richardson Terrace is a local housing project in Mill Valley, the issues discussed are relevant to other projects throughout the State. Its processing is indicative of the aggressive overreach by the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in local planning matters.

**Housing and the Future of Municipal Financial Solvency:** December 2022

The impacts of unbridled development have the potential to drive many small California cities and counties into bankruptcy. Ironically, the current economic slowdown may be the only thing holding back more rapacious development interests and forestalling that coming day of financial reckoning.

**Inflation, deflation, and housing affordability:** December 2022

History shows that human beings tend to double down on losing strategies just before they are forced to abandon them. It seems we can't accept defeat until we have inflicted the maximum punishment upon ourselves for being wrong. This is the only way to make sense of our Federal Reserve's current monetary policy overshoot and similar behavior by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) with its issuance of grossly unrealistic Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) housing quotas in the current planning cycle, at a time when interest rates are high and the nation is teetering on the brink of a recession. The latter will undoubtedly result in a widespread [failure of California municipality's ability to meet their latest housing quotas.](#)

**The Richardson Terrace proposal fails to address Mill Valley's affordable housing needs:** January 2023

CVP is supportive of the need to increase affordable housing, but we are not pleased when we see City Staff misstating and otherwise incorrectly conflating legal terms and language in an attempt to bully and intimidate the voices of opposition. Sacramento agencies cannot successfully challenge a city's well-reasoned decisions to request modifications to a project if the number of units is not reduced or if the percentages of low-income units are increased, while development costs remain feasible.

**CVP Appeals Mill Valley Planning Commission Approval of Richardson Terrace:** January 2023

Nothing in state housing law allows a private developer to ignore the goals, policies, and zoning regulations in a city's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance or supersede the requirements for a project to be "consistent" with those documents or to assess significant impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act. The legal concepts and issues discussed in CVP's appeal are of seminal importance and are relevant to numerous development projects throughout the state of California.

**Fear & Loathing in Fairfax - Rent Control and Council Members Out of Control:** September 2023

It is axiomatic that in a market-based economy returns on investment are the driver of housing development and operating expenses are subject to unpredictable and un-mitigatable inflation, supply chain issues, and other circumstances. *This is not arguable.* One either accounts for market forces in development planning or everyone suffers the consequences. Because of this, rent control can only be a short-term fix for affordable housing and only for those most in need because it increases operating costs relative to revenues challenging a property's financial viability.

**A Community Effort to Save Dominican Valley:** September 2023

A developer purchased 18+ acres of forested open space in Dominican Valley, zoned for housing, from the Dominican Sisters for a mere \$2.5 million in a private, unadvertised sale. They intend to clear-cut much of the forest to build high-density housing. As such, they have applied for "fastrack" processing under Senate Bill 330. However, the Applicant and the City of San Rafael made significant errors in submitting and reviewing this project's SB 330 Preliminary Applications.

Neither the Applicant nor the City should assume that “vested rights” are automatically granted simply because the Applicant filled out a form, signed it, and delivered it to the City. The City cannot reasonably establish a date for the granting of vested rights without reviewing the factual accuracy of the information submitted, particularly as it relates to violations of the City’s General Plan, Zoning Code, and state and federal regulations.

**[Save Dominican Valley explains the "Builder's Remedy"](#)** October 2023

In June of 2023, Dominican Valley LLC submitted five SB 330 Preliminary Application proposals to develop the 20-acre (approx.) parcel surrounded on three sides by Deer Park Avenue, Gold Hill Grade, Highland Avenue, and Margarita Drive in San Rafael. The developer claimed eligibility for what is known as the “Builder’s Remedy” for 4 of the 5 proposals.

This claim is without merit. CVP applauds the enormous effort being made by the [Save Dominican Valley](#) community group (SDV) to educate the public and elected officials about the pertinent issues at hand and to ensure that any development in the Dominican Valley is appropriate, environmentally sustainable, and legally compliant.

**[Strawberry resident challenges the approval of the Marin County 2023-2031 Housing Element](#)** October 2023

In April of 2023, attorneys for Strawberry resident Bruce Corcoran filed a Petition for Writ of Mandate and Complaint for Declaratory Relief against the County of Marin, challenging the County’s approval of the 2023-2031 Housing Element, based on their failure to comply with state Planning and Zoning law, Government Code 65000 *et seq.* (See copy attached)

That filing stated that the “project” (the Housing Element), “...violates state law, which requires that the CWP and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the County of Marin.”

---

**HOUSING THE HOMELESS**

---

CVP participates in the public debate about how to address the homeless housing crisis in our communities. Our development background and legal expertise bring a unique perspective how best to address successful solutions, locally and nationally.

For examples of our research, public policy papers, and program proposals since November of 2022, please see

**[Housing, the Homeless, and the Clueless](#)**: March 2023

In a recent LA Times news article, California Attorney General Rob Bonta said, “An estimated 170,000 Californians sleep in shelters or on the street, each night, and housing scarcity is driving prices higher and higher. We’re in an existential housing crisis. One that our state is committed to solving. In 2021, I created a DOJ unit focused on protecting housing laws, and *we’re ready to take action* if local communities don’t do their part and instead choose to violate them.”

Despite Mr. Bonta’s tough talk and self-confidence, there is nothing about this statement that is true, and within it lie all of the reasons California has been unable to do anything about its homeless crisis.

---

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

---



In times of economic crisis, our planet always gets short shrift. This is evident, particularly at the federal level, where significant environmental protections established over the past 50 years are being set aside, daily. In California, new state housing laws are also 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 since November of 2022, please see

**[CO2 Emissions: We control our own destiny](#)**: November 2022

Representatives from countries around the world gathered in Egypt for the [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) (“COP 27”) to address the global challenges and negotiate agreements to reduce CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions. The outcome was lots of bold talk and concern, but little substantive action.

**[Global environmental breakdown? Who cares](#)**: July 2023

In the investment world, they say ‘talk is cheap but money is dear.’ So, what people are doing with their money, how they spend it, and where they invest tells you everything you need to know about what’s really going on, who they really are, and what they really believe.

However, many things people believe are based on wishful thinking, fantasy, and total nonsense (e.g., [Tulip Mania](#), the world is flat, and Mars is worth trying to live on) and divorced from reality. Thus, the propensity of economies to go through sudden boom and bust cycles triggered by tipping points that the vast majority of participants never see coming.

[Click here for a complete list](#) of the 75 articles and studies published on the Marin Post about environmental issues since November 2022.



---

## CVP 2023 CASE STUDIES

---

### SAUSALITO'S WORKING WATERFRONT

---



“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.

CVP has 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. These groups believe that the Marinship has a very important role to play in attracting high-paying, 21<sup>st</sup>-century jobs to the City.

However, the Marinship’s formidable challenges include 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.

CVP convened a team of experts and legal advisors to analyze the City’s Draft General Plan Update and Draft EIR, resulting in our submission of analysis and comments. CVP’s analysis included our “Public Lands” study in 2021 (See the CVP 2021 Annual Report), which led to [our analysis and commentary](#) of the Sausalito 2023-2031 “Housing Element” planning cycle. 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 CVP Plan promoted bottom-up, community-serving, community-supported planning solutions. The proposal focused on the city’s affordable housing needs and the need to preserve and support its vibrant maritime, industrial, manufacturing, arts, and artisan working waterfront and business community.

However, *we are extremely disappointed* to announce that despite the years of work and grassroots support for our proposals, in 2023, the City Council voted 3 to 2 against adopting our proposal for reasons that remain unexplained. The backroom politics that caused this to happen remain a mystery. Several community activists are extremely uphappy with this result and continue to lobby for CVP’s plan.

The future of the proposal is now unknown.

---

## PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

---



### **Belvedere Lagoon high density, luxury housing (2015 to 2023)**

CVP continues to advise the *Belvedere Residents for Intelligent Growth (BRIG)* in their effort to preserve 22 units of affordable housing on the Belvedere Lagoon, created in the 1950s for local seniors. The new owner of the property has stubbornly stuck to his plan to tear down the existing units, displace the residents, and build large luxury homes and a 24-unit apartment building that will only contain 4 small “affordable” units, even though the property is

not zoned for apartment buildings.

The developer’s attempt to take advantage of the “streamlining” approval provisions, under Senate Bill 330, should have been dead on arrival. However, the state Department of Housing and Community Development recently defended the developer’s claims, going so far as to override the California State Constitution and claim authority to interpret a city’s General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

This action will likely end up in court. Its outcome could be a seminal case to affirm a city’s authority to interpret their own General Plan despite state housing laws that favor private developers.

---

## INNOVATIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

---

### **CVP Generative Design Initiative**



Last year, we reported on the CVP “[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.

These virtual tools are particularly beneficial to address infill, affordable housing opportunities. Our prototype design demonstrates infill, live/work affordable housing for artists, artisans, designers, and small business professionals.

Future prototypes will address “active elderly” senior housing (the “downsizing” market) and ex-urban infill, micro-unit housing for young professionals. An Alpha version of our technology was demonstrated at USC in May of 2023: 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 infill, mixed-use, affordable housing development opportunities. This represents the vast majority of the affordable housing development opportunities in all major metropolitan areas in the U.S.

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.

Trained on federal, state, and local codes, regulations, zoning, design standards, housing typologies, and specifications, essential capabilities would include visualizing the consequences and opportunities of a community’s existing land use regulations (a major challenge for most cities) and 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 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.

# GENERATIVE AI PLANNING TOOLS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## 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 are generally too expensive, too difficult to learn, unnecessarily complex, and exceed the needs of local city and county agencies for their planning of local development initiatives (e.g., In the San Francisco Bay Area, of the 110 local planning agencies, only Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose might be able to utilize them, in-house).

## 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.

## GENERATIVE AI PLANNING TOOLS FOR CIVIC 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)