

Community Venture Partners, Inc.

A Catalyst for Sustainable Solutions



Annual Report

COMMUNITY VENTURE PARTNERS

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Letter from the President
November 2017

The Empire Strikes Back

Dear Friends:

They say you can judge the impact you are having by the forces that rise up to oppose you. On that basis, one would have to conclude that Community Venture Partners has arrived as an important voice in Marin County. CVP remains the *only* fully independent, donor supported 501(c)(3) nonprofit, advocacy organization working on a wide variety of public policy issues and providing services and assistance to community groups, throughout Marin County.

Although we often find ourselves aggressively advocating for community rights, CVP remains a solutions driven organization. In all that we do, it is vital that we remain proactive and bring forth a positive vision for the future of Marin.

We've continued to have a solid string of successes since halting the Larkspur Landing Station Area Plan in 2014. Our recent involvement has helped thwart illegal planning decisions and improved the public process in a number of communities, including Mill Valley, Marin City, Strawberry, Larkspur, Corte Madera, Fairfax and Hamilton in Novato.

Ironically, however, our successes have only increased the David v Goliath nature of our challenges. Instead of becoming more transparent and law abiding, local government has, in many cases, become more clever and calculating.

Success breeds more sophisticated strategies

It's clear that many city and county agencies have become more strategic in how they respond to those questioning them. The County's overt hostility toward Public Records Act requests and legal challenges, in particular, has ratcheted up noticeably. I would go so far as to say that the office of the County Counsel has taken on a demeanor more akin to a white collar criminal defense law firm than a public agency.

The Marin County Counsel's office seems to believe that every challenge deserves an aggressive legal response. They have repeatedly demonstrated that they are willing to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal costs at the slightest provocation, trying to bully and out-spend their opponents into submission, even in instances where relatively free settlement and cure options exist. At the same time, the Marin Board of Supervisors has apparently taken a hands-off

approach to their behavior, perhaps to be better able to feign ignorance (plausible deniability) if proven liable for their actions.

State and regional control increasing and the costs to taxpayers is rising

The headwinds coming from Sacramento against community control have increased. The push to urbanize Marin has never been greater. Driven by the explosive jobs growth in the tech sector, increasingly powerful regional agencies such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and ad hoc industry led groups such as the Bay Area Council, aligned with well-funded labor, corporate and housing advocacy groups have recently managed to push through far-reaching, pro-growth legislation.

The myriad of new bills¹, discussed in detail in this Report, significantly remove local control of zoning and project approval for high density housing development, dramatically increase legal liability and penalties for cities that don't approve projects, and adds new fees and penalties and a new bond measure to create multi-billion dollar funding pools to underwrite that development.

We anticipate that this is just the beginning of a long list of new fees, taxes and debt measures that will come forward in the next five years to fund top-down control of local land planning, zoning, housing development and even construction worker's wages. At the same time, we also anticipate the further deterioration of local government services.

The State's increasing need for more taxpayer dollars is further exacerbated by California's unfunded pension liabilities and the state's apparent attempt to take on challenges such as affordable housing and universal healthcare, which have historically been funded by the federal government. While we are sympathetic to the fact that the federal government continues to give us back less and less of our federal tax dollars and provides us with fewer and fewer services and benefits, California is not a sovereign country and so, its grand plans and debt burdens will eventually have to be paid on the backs of its dwindling middle class.

All of this adds urgency to the arguments CVP has been making about the need to be more thoughtful in how we zone and plan for growth, and more realistic in terms of how we address the challenges of housing affordability. Although we clearly have a responsibility to plan for growth and housing demand as best we can in a market driven economy, I believe the methods Marin cities are pursuing are often the worst ways to accomplish that.

CVP continues to speak out

In May of this year, before a gathering at the Marin Coalition, I discussed why we are failing to address housing and growth with our current policies, and what we might do to really make a difference. The Marin Coalition comments are described in the "Educate" section of this Report and can be read in their entirety using [the links provided](#).

¹ See [Broad Affordable Housing Bill Package Signed by Governor](#), on the Marin Post for more information.

The essence of those comments was that local *housing affordability* is not a local problem, but more the result of a combination of historical consequences, tax law, income distribution and national and international market and economic forces far beyond our control. Therefore, attempts to force small cities to resolve their housing challenges at a local and regional level or even at a state level are destined to fail to produce meaningful results and can also do great harm.

In April, I gave the keynote speech at the California Grand Jurors' Association Annual Luncheon. Those comments are described in this Report and can be read in their entirety using [the links provided](#). My comments included themes I've touched on in the past, in particular with regard to government's flagrant disregard for the California Environmental Quality Act and their lack of transparency. Our recent comments on the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Rehabilitation Plan, found in the "Advocate" section of this Report, are a case in point.

Unfortunately, new legislation is being considered at the local, state and national level to limit public access to government information. In addition, based on responses to several Public Records Act requests CVP has initiated in the past year, we now have clear evidence that documents, records and particularly emails are being intentionally destroyed and deleted by county and city agency staff and elected officials to obfuscate their participation in activities of questionable legality.

Government is not keeping up with the times

Although it's clear that a bunker mentality has set in at many of Marin's city and county agencies and also among a number of elected officials, there is equal evidence that this is also driven by a systemic breakdown due to the overwhelming fatigue from simply trying to keep up with our 21st century, 24/7 information-enabled world. Public officials at all levels seem mentally unprepared, technically unequipped and woefully lacking in training to deal with the demands for transparency that the Internet has brought upon them. In a world where state and federal regulations and compliance and reporting requirements are becoming increasingly complex, it seems that our quaint form of local governance just can't keep up.

In my opinion, the County is the worst offender in all this. However, our small cities have their own unique challenges. The very structure of our local city government may need to be called into question. Is our "strong city manager"--"weak elected council" model really adequate to address the challenges that small, under-funded towns face?

As it is, we regularly see staff running roughshod over uninformed elected officials and purposely designing their public "engagement" process to produce pre-determined outcomes. Worse, elected bodies are too often treated on a "need to know" basis by staff. This may be, in part, because real public engagement would be logistically overwhelming without a complete technological overhaul of antiquated records keeping and data management systems. But, how will these changes be implemented, when there is no incentive for staff to change? Despite the pretense of being "accessible" via social media platforms, such as Facebook and NextDoor, most towns have become increasingly opaque.

Do we need to see fundamental changes to our traditional small town governance before we will see substantial improvement? That might include paying elected officials respectable salaries (without benefits) in order to attract a bolder candidates (can we really afford not to pay them, any longer? And, besides, anyone doing those jobs deserves to be paid), and restructuring our cities to have separately elected mayors, who can carry out longer term public policy goals and have the power to recommend the hiring and firing of city staff.

This is not to say that all Marin cities need such change and I can think of scores of past and present council members and staff who have done or are doing incredible jobs. But, many are not and some of our Marin cities are foundering, badly.

New voices are having an impact

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the tremendous work of two emergent public advocacy groups: Citizens for Sustainable Pension Plans (CSPP) and the Coalition of Sensible Taxpayers (CO\$T). It's gratifying to see these tenacious, informed watchdog groups in action on behalf of all Marin taxpayers. CVP has and will continue to do all it can to endorse and empower their work and showcase it on the Marin Post, California's first 100% citizen journalist, online newsmagazine.

New initiatives at CVP

CVP has begun a new chapter in its evolution: seeking to become a self-sustaining organization within three years through a combination of revenue producing real estate development projects, consulting fees and foundation grants. Our goal is to have our basic operating expenses fully covered by project revenues and grants, leaving the need for individual donations to funding specific legal actions, local initiatives and other public policy campaigns.

Toward that end, we have brought on a fundraising consultant to spearhead our grants writing effort, and we have several development projects in the preliminary planning phase (described in the "Demonstrate" section of this Report). One of those is our proposal for a mixed-use development, which includes senior assisted living, low income housing for disabled residents and a luxury, boutique hotel on the 10 acres site, currently owned by the Ross Valley Sanitary District in Larkspur Landing.

Please note that CVP has now gone paperless. We will no longer send out printed copies of our Annual Reports or Updates, unless requested. Please be sure that we have your email address so that you are kept up to date on our activities. Throughout this report you will find blue text links to more detailed information about each topic discussed. Please *click on the blue text links* to learn more.

We remain extremely grateful to all of you who continue to support our efforts. CVP would not exist without your generosity.

Please remember that CVP accepts donations in the form of common stock and other negotiable securities (contact us for more information).

Please also remember to sign up on [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), and .5 percent of the value of all your purchases on Amazon will be automatically donated to CVP, by the Amazon Foundation.

[Please click this link to make an annual donation to CVP](#)

Your annual donations help us continue to work on your behalf.

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 discuss the issues at hand.

Thank you for your continued confidence and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Silvestri', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bob Silvestri
President

COMMUNITY VENTURE PARTNERS 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

EDUCATE - ADVOCATE - DEMONSTRATE



Using CVP's three-pronged approach, we work to *educate* the public and decision makers, *advocate* for local voices and adherence to state and federal laws and regulations, and to *demonstrate* more appropriate and sustainable long term solutions to growth, planning and affordable housing.

To achieve these ends, CVP continues to nurture an effective ecosystem of legal advisors, expert consultants, and collaborative community organizations that can work together in response to shared concerns. We also continue to assist community groups with capacity building, organizing strategies, and referrals to legal counsel and experts in related fields.

EDUCATE

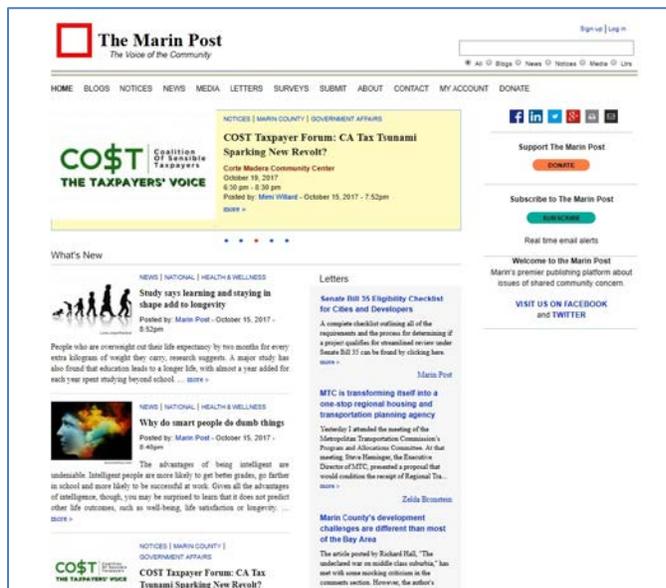
Public education remains essential to cultivating civic engagement. In 2017, CVP continued those efforts through our support of events and our published research and commentary on a wide range of issues. We also continue to offer free consultation and advisory services to municipal agencies, elected officials and community groups.

Here are highlights from some of our major initiatives and accomplishments in 2017 in the area of public education.

THE MARIN POST

Better government decisions are informed by better public access to information.

[The Marin Post](#) is arguably the single most impactful initiative CVP has undertaken to empower community voices. The Marin Post has quickly become Marin's premiere publishing platform for alternative views and investigative journalism.



The Marin Post continues to grow, gain readership and become a trusted source for community news. We have surpassed 39,000 unique visitors / readers and served up over 170,000 page views since our launch in June 2015.

Our readership metrics software provides CVP with a real time window into the interests and concerns of Marin residents. As such, the Marin Post has become an integral part of how CVP serves those interests, as well as how we keep our supporters updated on our activities. Actions undertaken by CVP are regularly published in the Marin Post, and can be accessed through the blue text links found

throughout this Annual Report.

We also continue to add new features such as our community survey app, which now appears on our home page. We launched the "Marin Post Weekly Update" in late 2016 as a means of promoting readership and it has been a great success. Our metrics show that people now anticipate our weekly email and readership skyrockets on the days following its release. In our

quest to make the Marin Post financially sustainable, we've begun to apply for foundation grants and as noted the President's Letter, we now have a grants writing consultant on board to assist.

We also continue to offer subscriptions with which readers can set up customized email alerts about topics that interest them and articles published about their town or by their favorite authors. [Subscription fees are modest](#), starting at \$5 per month, \$10 per quarter and \$30 per year.

CVP and the Marin Post continue to enjoy pro bono, legal support from [Wilson Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati](#). We remain indebted to them for their assistance and guidance.

MARIN 2016 – DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT

Summarizing the challenges of a year in the trenches



In November of 2016, CVP published a [10 part series on the Marin Post](#) and its companion book, [Marin 2016 – Dispatches from the front](#), which detailed the activities and challenges taken on by CVP.

As elaborated in this year's Annual Report, many of these challenges have been continued on into 2017 and a number of these have been successfully resolved.

THE CALIFORNIA GRAND JURORS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Holding local government accountable



In April of 2017, CVP President, Bob Silvestri, delivered a [presentation before the annual meeting of the California Grand Jurors' Association](#), describing legally questionable actions and decisions made by Marin city and County governments in the past year. The presentation was greeted with a mixture of shock and strong support.

Since its inception, CVP's advocacy work has included challenging local government decision making methods and procedures. And the more rocks we have turned over, the more alarmed we have become.

The following is list of significant problems and abuses CVP has encountered in its public advocacy work, and each is described in greater detail in the article linked below:

- Inadequate notice of public hearings and timely availability of documents;
- Inadequate descriptions of agenda items in public notices;
- Something I call "Hide the Ball;"

- Over-use of closed session deliberations and the consent calendar;
- Violations of the State Open Meetings Law – The Ralph M. Brown Act;
- Violations and avoidance of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and
- Obstruction to accessing information under the California Public Records Act.

This doesn't include actual crimes like perjury, political influence peddling, destruction of documents, etc., all of which I've observed in Marin.

For a complete explanation, please click the link below, to the article on the Marin Post:

[Keynote address at the California Grand Jurors' Association Annual Luncheon.](#)

THE MARIN COALITION LUNCHEON ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Addressing the challenges of housing affordability using market forces as incentives



In May of 2017, CVP President, Bob Silvestri, delivered a [presentation before the Marin Coalition](#), enumerating the flaws in conventional thinking about affordable housing and proposing a list of potential solutions.

The essence of the talk was that the belief that we can punish people into building affordable housing: that we can create more affordable housing through more punitive taxes and fees, and penalties, by creating taxpayer funded “housing trusts” and “development funds,” and by creating bigger and state and regional agencies, is wrong-headed and has proven to be a failure.

Conventional wisdom also believes that removing local control and forcing development “streamlining” provisions, annual growth “quotas,” and state mandated, “by right” zoning control and even growth itself will produce affordable housing. There is simply no evidence of this. However, there remains a long list of potential methods available, using market forces, to incentivize developers to build affordable units that have never been tried. The presentation at the luncheon goes on to describe them in detail.

A complete explanation of CVP's proposals for change can be found in a series of articles on the Marin Post (click title to read):

[Housing Issues in Marin: Marin Coalition Luncheon comments: Part I](#)

[Housing Issues in Marin: Marin Coalition Luncheon comments: Part II - New Ideas.](#)

ADVOCATE

The following are some examples of our achievements and efforts in advocating for community voices, in 2017.

MARIN COUNTY SUPERVISORS ATTEMPT TO RESTRICT ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS

CVP successfully defends the public's right to know

Access to public records remains one of the most essential rights the public has to be able to monitor government activities. It has proven to be an invaluable resource in constructing public policy and legal arguments in all CVP's efforts.



In Marin County's quest to avoid public transparency and meaningful public interaction, in August of 2017, the Marin Board of Supervisors proposed a new ordinance to make it more expensive (and therefore more difficult) for taxpayers to obtain information about what our government is doing, under the California Public Records Act ([read the full article here](#)).

This was a purely discretionary decision on their part and there is no evidence whatsoever that those requesting access to public records are creating a financial hardship for the County. In addition to currently charging 25 cents per page for copies of any public document (when the actual cost is far less), the County was proposing to charge \$114.63 per hour for staff time to copy or print out any public records requested.

For a typical public records request on a single government action or activity within a single department, this could potentially cost several hundred dollars in extra fees. For a request on a more complex issue, such as planning and development, or in doing investigative journalism or researching a violation of the law, this could potentially add thousands of dollars in extra fees.

CVP was the first to alert the community of this pending decision, through articles in the Marin Post, and we led the legal commentary against it. As a result, the proposal was withdrawn.

The facts and circumstances of this story can be found on the Marin Post (click title to read):

[Supervisors want to restrict public access to records by raising the cost](#)

MARIN COUNTY'S RETALIATORY CROSS COMPLAINT TO LIMIT ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS

Fighting against Marin County's attempt to intimidate the public into submission



As noted in the President's Letter, above, county attorneys have become increasingly hostile in their dealings with the general public. However, recent actions under the leadership of new County Counsel, Brian Washington, are unprecedented even for them. This should be of great concern to every resident of Marin County.

CVP has been supporting [the efforts of the Friends of West Tam Valley](#) to stop the approval of an illegal subdivision development, since 2015. The developer in question is attempting to build on an antiquated 1919 map, which has never been certified as compliant with current development standards. Central to the public's efforts has been their Public Records Act request for all the relevant documents on file at various County Agencies, and County communications with the developer.

For more than a year, the County failed to adequately address that request or provide all the documents required. This failure is explained in detail, in a Marin Post article (click title to read):

[What's Happening in Your Backyard? Public Records Act: An Invaluable Tool.](#)

As a consequence of the County's failure to act, public advocate attorney Ed Yates filed suit in Marin Superior Court on behalf of Friends of West Tam Valley. However, in an unprecedented action, the County of Marin then counter-sued Ed Yates, personally, under the pretense that his case is fallacious and accused him of perjury for the wording of *one sentence* in his allegations, in his Friends of West Tam Valley Petition.

This is the first time that the County has brought an action against a public advocacy attorney in order to shut down the public's probing of County affairs. This is particularly concerning to us, because Mr. Yates was referred to this case by CVP and has successfully been our lead counsel on a number of actions in the past three years, including our successful petition against the Board of Supervisors for their willful [violation of the Brown Act](#).

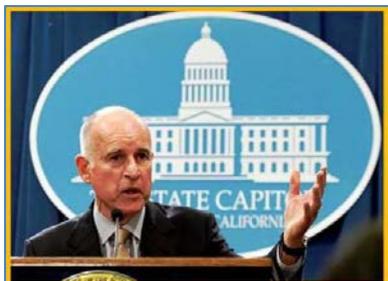
Ed Yates has now been forced to retain defense counsel and [file an "Anti-SLAPP" suit](#) against Marin County ("Strategic lawsuit against public participation").

The facts and circumstances of this story are fully explained in the article on the Marin Post (click title to read):

[Marin County's Retaliatory Cross Complaint to Limit Access to Public Records.](#)

STATE HOUSING LAW AND THE LOSS OF LOCAL CONTROL

Questioning the constitutionality of new legislation



CVP continues to follow the actions taken by our state legislature and increasingly powerful unelected, state and regional agencies such as the Department of Housing and Community Development (“HCD”) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (“MTC”). We are grateful that we have benefited in this endeavor from the work of community members, investigative journalists, and others with whom we regularly share information.

Since 2013, we’ve consistently pointed out the flaws of Plan Bay Area and the regional push to urbanize Marin County. We have discussed how urbanism [will not reduce greenhouse gases](#) or [solve our affordable housing challenges](#). A basic overview of our position on this issue is found in [Marin 2016 – Part I: Is representative government slipping away](#), [Marin 2016 – Part X: Endgame](#), and [Marin 2016 – Part IX: Regionalism](#), published on the Marin Post.

By January of 2017, MTC [had consumed](#) most if not all of the planning functions of the Association of Bay Area Governments (“ABAG”), and it remains essentially unaccountable to our locally elected governments. ABAG was the last tenuous link local government had to influence regional growth and planning funding decisions.

As noted above, no less than 11 new bills have recently been pushed through the state legislature and signed by Governor Brown. The essence of this legislation² is to eviscerate local zoning and high density development project approval, by

- Mandating “ministerial” review and approval of housing projects without public hearings or local design control, and in instances where residential zoning already exists, creating “by right” zoning for multifamily housing for qualifying projects ([SB35](#)),
- Forcing municipalities to provide infrastructure and services for higher density development and to ignore CEQA compliance or risk fines and lawsuits ([AB678](#), [SB167](#), [AB1515](#), [AB1505](#), [AB1397](#), [SB166](#)),
- Forcing greater compliance with approved Housing Elements and creating voluminous, new reporting requirements, under penalty of revocation of certification ([AB72](#) and [AB879](#)), and
- Creating multi-billion dollar pools of taxpayer funds, controlled by unelected agencies, to underwrite housing development ([SB2](#) and [SB3](#)).

These laws include critical changes to the very foundation of state law. The implications cannot be over-emphasized.

² See [Broad Affordable Housing Bill Package Signed by Governor](#), on the Marin Post for more information.

This legislation has for the first time, created a legal and punishable nexus between housing “plans” and actual housing construction: between Housing Element “goals” and completed development. Now, if enough housing is not built in a city to meet state housing quotas (its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) quota), during any given state-mandated housing cycle, any developer, housing advocate or individual can conclude that a city is out of compliance and can file suit, and courts can now assess financial and legal penalties, even though cities in Marin don’t build housing: private developers do.

The new criteria for over-riding local planning and zoning have now become arbitrary and subjective. Per [SB1515](#), the state has reduced the threshold for legally challenging compliance from specific violations of a city’s General Plan or Housing Element (objective standards), to allowing a lawsuit based simply on the opinion of “any reasonable person³” that the city is noncompliant (subjective standards). This means virtually anyone now has legal standing to file suit against a city in order to force it to rezone and approve high-density multifamily housing to suit their own needs.

These new state laws have now essentially turned housing law compliance into a witch-hunt.

A local government can now also effectively lose control of multifamily, high density zoning decisions, because a state agency such as HCD, determines, in their sole opinion, that the local government is out of compliance with state regulations, regardless of whether that city has a certified Housing Element or not.

Armed with state funding, new fast-track statutory review periods, [requirements for ministerial review](#) and the elimination of requirements for public hearings, developers, union labor and housing advocacy groups have more sway than ever to force local planners to approve their projects, regardless of local impacts or costs to those municipalities.

As written, these new laws also require cities to approve housing development, regardless of the costs of providing infrastructure and public services. This will undoubtedly have profound, long term financial impacts on cities and consequences for taxpayers.

It is widely acknowledged that housing development, as opposed to commercial and retail development, is a net financial loss for cities. The public services (fire, police, administrative, etc.), infrastructure (roads, trails, water, sewers, power, etc.), and costs of schools far outweigh the property taxes and sales taxes generated by housing development. This is particularly true in the past decade as fewer and fewer local real estate tax dollars come back to small cities from the state, and the federal government continues to cut back on funding programs. It has gotten to the point that it seems our entire local government is now being run on extra sales taxes, special fees, and bond measures.

³ See AB678 - <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/AB678/2017>

How then can small cities possibly afford to build and maintain the infrastructure, public services, schools and public safety agencies needed to serve large-scale housing development? How, for example, can a town like Mill Valley, with approximately 10,000 adult taxpayers, one third of whom are at retirement age or older, support affordable housing to meet unrealistic state quotas, rebuild our aging infrastructure and maintain high quality public services?

It is on this point of increased costs and negative financial impacts to local government that CVP takes issue.

CVP questions the constitutionality of this new legislation with regard to unfunded mandates

The California State Constitution notes a very list of instance, when the state can impose unfunded mandates on local government. Under *Article XIII. B. Government Spending Limitation [Sec. 1 – Sec. 14] Sec. 6(a)*: ([click here to read original text](#))

(a) Whenever the Legislature or any state agency mandates a new program or higher level of service on any local government, the State shall provide a subvention of funds to reimburse that local government for the costs of the program or increased level of service, except that the Legislature may, but need not, provide a subvention of funds for the following mandates:

- (1) Legislative mandates requested by the local agency affected.*
- (2) Legislation defining a new crime or changing an existing definition of a crime.*
- (3) Legislative mandates enacted prior to January 1, 1975, or executive orders or regulations initially implementing legislation enacted prior to January 1, 1975.*
- (4) Legislative mandates contained in statutes within the scope of paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) of Section 3 of Article I.⁴*

And under Sec. 6(c) it clarifies that:

(c) A mandated new program or higher level of service includes a transfer by the Legislature from the State to cities and counties, or special districts of complete or partial financial responsibility for a required program for which the State previously had complete or partial financial responsibility.

There is nothing unclear about the Constitution's intent. There is nothing in the language that allows the state legislature to continue to pass regulations that pile endless financial obligations onto the shoulders of local government (i.e., its residents and taxpayers), despite disclaimers in that legislation that reimbursements of direct and indirect costs are not required. And, there is certainly nothing in the spirit of this section that would allow the state to impose the magnitude of negative financial impacts potentially created by this new legislation.

The ability of the state to mandate programs for local government without monetary compensation to cover costs, all rests on actions taken in the 1990's, when the legislature

⁴ "The people have the right of access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business, and, therefore, the meetings of public bodies and the writings of public officials and agencies shall be open to public scrutiny."

adopted a new twist on an 1869 court ruling called Dillon’s Rule⁵. Simply put, Dillon’s Rule said that cities derive their powers from the state (it had nothing to do with unfunded mandates). But, the California State Legislature decided that meant unfunded mandates were okay, because the State can say it is. And so, the legislature has continued to abuse the practice and unfunded mandates have been a bigger and bigger problem for our cities ever since.

When is enough, enough?

CVP is currently seeking legal counsel to undertake a comprehensive review of the constitutionality of these new laws and research the feasibility of challenging them at the State Commission level or through the courts, to cure this inequity.

THE SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BOULEVARD REHAB PLAN DRAFT EIR

The County’s attempt to avoid analysis of traffic congestion in violation of CEQA



In the summer of 2014, Marin County planners began investigating a proposal to rehabilitate Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from the Highway 101 interchange to Kentfield. This was followed by community workshops and studies, which culminated in the issuance of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (“DEIR”) on October 11th of 2017. A full list of the pertinent documents [can be found at this link](#).

The proposed changes to the roadway include reconfiguration of all the major intersections and “modifications” (narrowing) of the vehicular traffic lane widths. As we know, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard is one of the most important thoroughfares in the county and it is well known for its intolerable traffic congestion. After reviewing the DEIR, CVP questions whether the improvements being proposed won’t in fact make traffic congestion even worse.

The Plan is purportedly described in the recently published [DEIR](#). However, this document is extremely problematic. Our review of the DEIR and its attachments finds them to be deficient and in violation of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”).

The findings from our initial review are numerous. The County has (1) failed to provide any specific information about what the “modifications” of vehicular traffic actually entail (i.e., it provides no dimensions or other specifics about how much lane narrowing will actually occur or where it will occur), (2) failed to provide any analysis of the potential significant impacts of the proposed traffic lane narrowing, and (3) is attempting to illegally avoid addressing CEQA requirements by claiming a fictitious exemption.

⁵ For a more detailed discussion see [The Best Laid Plans: Our affordable housing challenges in Marin](#), Chapter IX, pg. 100.

Traffic congestion has been the number one concern expressed by the public throughout the public workshop and design scoping process. Yet, the County's DEIR fails to even show the public, clearly, what the "before" and "after" widths and conditions of the rehabilitated roadway will be. Increased traffic congestion can have significant air quality impacts, which must be projected, calculated and analyzed under CEQA, for the proposed design. The County is basically attempting to pull off a bait and switch, using the performance of the existing lane widths as the basis for the proposed plan's projected congestion performance, even though the proposed design has narrower lanes. The County is justifying this by claiming to be adhering to an unrelated highway design standard.

The County is claiming that it is exempt from CEQA requirements simply because it intends to follow the guidelines noted in the Caltrans Design Manual. This claim by the County is patently false. In fact, CVP questions whether the lack of any traffic congestion analysis in the DEIR is not intentional; in order to avoid public scrutiny about this highly charged issue.

Unless the County is forced to adhere to CEQA and analyze and disclose the impacts of their Plan, after the Board of Supervisors has certified the Final EIR and the 30 day statutory legal filing period has ended, the County could essentially engineer and build *any design* they choose to--because the diagrams in the DEIR do not contain any specific dimensions--and the public will not even know about it until the roadway rehabilitation is completed.

In response, CVP has retained legal counsel and traffic and other environmental experts to evaluate and comment on the Draft EIR, prior to the December 6, 2017 deadline. In addition, we continue to [question the County](#) on their claim of CEQA exemption. More on this can be found by clicking the link below, to the article on the Marin Post.

[County attempts to avoid CEQA analysis of traffic congestion on Sir Francis Drake Blvd.](#)

MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT (MCOSED) DECISION TO ALLOW MOUNTAIN BIKING ON SINGLE TRACK HIKING TRAILS IN THE ALTO BOWL

Challenging Marin County's illegal decision making behind closed doors



Beginning in 2015, strong community opposition formed around the County's proposal to open single track hiking and equestrian trails to mountain biking, in the Mill Valley and Corte Madera open space. The area affected, known as the Alto Bowl Preserve, had been saved for hiking and horseback riding in perpetuity, by donations from local residents, decades before.

The documents and reports resulting from a comprehensive Public Records Act request, underwritten by CVP, clearly showed that illegal mountain biking was rampant on our Marin County Open Space single track trails, and that enforcement of prohibitions was almost non-existent.

Comprehensive state and federal studies and ranger reports show that mountain biking and motorized biking on single-track trails is incompatible. The mix of hikers, horses and speeding mountain bikes poses a significant hazard to elderly hikers and children, and increases damage to the environment and destroys the peacefulness and isolation that so many seek when they hike in our open space. Because of this, both the [National Parks Service](#) and the [California Parks Department](#) have regulations, which ban mountain biking from all single-track hiking trails in state and national parks.

After many months of carefully orchestrated “public workshops,” on November 29, 2016, the Marin County Open Space District (“MCOSD”) announced that they had made the decision to open the single-track Bob Middagh Trail to use by mountain bikers and to decommission the existing Gasline Trail and build an entirely new trail through the Alto Bowl Preserve.

The new Gasline trail was designed in such a way that local residents commented that it would be “catnip” to mountain bikers, because it created a seamless connection to other existing mountain biking trails and the new Bob Middagh trail. The creation of the new Gasline Trail also involved construction on virgin forest areas that are identified in the Countywide Plan as high impact environmental habitat.

This decision by MCOSD was made by staff, without a public hearing or public notice.

CVP’s position is that this decision was illegal. In December of 2016, CVP filed the first of two Public Records Act requests (“PRA”) seeking all documents related to the County’s decision to allow mountain bikes. CVP’s Open Space Fund had begun submitting comments and legal analysis in September of 2016. Our initial comments can be found by clicking the link below, to the article on the Marin Post.

[CVP comment letter on proposal to open the Bob Middagh Trail to mountain biking.](#)

The County’s response to our PRA was an endless series of delay tactics, which continued right up until the end of the statutory period by which we had to file an action. In response, [CVP was forced to file a Petition for Writ of Mandate](#) and request for a Temporary Restraining Order and Permanent Injunction to stop the trail work. CVP also filed a second PRA for all documents related to their decision from the date of our December PRA to June of 2017, when work commenced. The facts and circumstances of the CVP legal action can be found by clicking the link below, to the article on the Marin Post.

[CVP files Petition for Writ of Mandate v MCOSD](#)

The critical issue and precedent involved in this case is what is called “improper tiering” from a Program EIR. This occurs when an agency (city or county) relies on a program EIR that was done for a large-scaled, overall planning initiative such as a General Plan (or in this case, the Roads and Trails Management Plan for the entire Marin Open Space District), in order to approve a specific local “project,” without ever doing a separate Project EIR.

This technical-sounding legal issue directly impacts actual housing and development in Marin. Improper tiering was the exact mechanism by which the Town of Corte Madera was able to approve the WinCup project, without ever doing any environmental investigation or any reasonable assessment of the project's impacts. This is of particular concern since the prior use on the WinCup site, for 40 years (the production of Styrofoam), used and produced a number of EPA listed carcinogens. Yet, no EIR was ever done to analyze latent residual chemicals on the site.

CVP feels that it is extremely important take a stand on the legal principles at stake here, because if we prevail in this case, it could have a profound impact on how agencies in Marin process project approvals and how much access the public would have to that information. It would result in greater transparency and disclosure to the public.

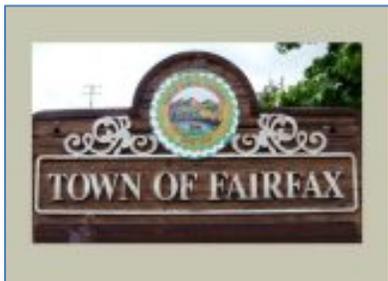
Marin County Superior Court denied our Temporary Restraining Order, but has allowed our case to proceed on the merits.

At this time, our briefing schedule continues to be delayed by the County's foot-dragging and their recent admission that the County failed to provide us with more than 1,000 pages of documents as required under our December 2016 PRA. This has forced CVP to revise the already voluminous Administrative Record (over 2,000 documents) and evaluate if we need to file an amendment to our Petition.

All this pushes back our court dates and adds significantly to our costs. We appreciate all those who have donated to this initiative. If you are interested in donating to this effort, please notify us that you wish to earmark your funds, when you make your donation.

FAIRFAX HIGH DENSITY ZONING ORDINANCE

CVP opposes illegal zoning approval procedures



CVP has been advising the Fairfax community group, SaveFairfax, for several years with their opposition to the Town Council's proposal to create "by right" multifamily zoning in all commercial areas in their downtown.

At the request of several members of the Fairfax community and with the help of legal counsel, Michael Graf, CVP filed arguments alleging violations of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). This successfully halted the illegal attempt to up-zone the downtown main street area as part of the approval process for one specific project: Victory Village senior housing.

This was yet another case of improper tiering from a previous program EIR and what is called "piece-mealing" of analysis of impacts - when analysis of the cumulative impacts of a plan are avoided by considering them in pieces, rather than as a whole. Although CVP strongly supports

the need for affordable senior housing in Marin County, the project processing and approval procedures used by Fairfax were in our opinion, improper and illegal. To not contest such procedures would have set a bad precedent for all future development and negatively impacted Fairfax and other towns in Marin.

Victory Village was finally approved without the approval of overriding zoning changes in other parts of the Town. The facts and circumstances of CVP's arguments in this case can be found by clicking the link below, to the article on the Marin Post.

[Community Venture Partners comments on improper planning review in Fairfax](#)

THE CORTE MADERA INN REHAB PLAN

Working for more appropriate development solutions



Since the redevelopment of the Corte Madera Best Western Inn was proposed in 2014, CVP's goal has been to ensure that a unique, high-quality hotel is developed on the site. Working with the community and the Town of Corte Madera, we've argued for redevelopment that adheres to all state and federal regulations, regarding protected wetlands and habitat, while maximizing value for the developer.

We understand the town's obligation to process all proposals thoroughly. However, the Best Western Inn developer's refusal to accommodate planning concerns and requirements of state law has precluded this project's approval from the beginning. CVP's opposition has never been about being for or against property rights. The developer does not presently have the zoning rights to do what is proposed. Instead, it would require a zoning exception and a General Plan Amendment.

This 5.4-acre parcel at the intersection of Tamal Vista Boulevard and Madera Boulevard, bordering on highway 101, is arguably the number one hotel location in all of southern Marin.

CVP's market research has shown that a high-end hotel in this location would be an extremely attractive investment opportunity for any number of local and regional hotel developers. Yet, the property owner and the Town of Corte Madera have continued to push forward an ill-fated plan to build a generic, mid-range, dual-branded Marriott Residence Inn / Springhill Suites hotel complex that is completely out of character with the community, fails to maximize development profit potential, and would require the illegal destruction of the existing wetlands.

None of this makes any sense, economically or from a planning perspective.

CVP's activities on this project in 2016 were summarized in the Marin Post article, entitled, *[Marin 2016 - Part IV: Dispatches from the front – Corte Madera](#)*. Since that time, our involvement has increased significantly. CVP has continued to work with officials at the SF Bay

Regional Water Quality Control Board (“RWQCB”) and the US Army Corps and officials at EPA Region IX, to educate the Corte Madera Planning Commission about the regulatory restrictions that apply to this project. We have been fortunate to have the counsel of two attorneys, Ed Yates and Michael Graf, both CEQA and municipal law experts.

Summary of CVP’s comments and actions in 2017:

In late November of 2016, the Town of Corte Madera released a second revised EIR for the hotel proposal with a public comment period ending January 3, 2017. Simultaneously, the SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board announced its own public comment period, which ended one week later.

In anticipation of these events, CVP had submitted a comment letter to the Army Corps of Engineers: one of the two agencies responsible for issuing a grading permit to fill any federally protected wetlands. In that letter, we reminded the Army Corps that the Region 9 Office of [the EPA had weighed in against the issuance of a permit](#) to fill in the pond, and of their obligations to adhere to the federally mandated, permit review process Guidelines. This comment was published on the Marin Post in late November of 2016 (click title to read):

[CVP comments to the Army Corps regarding recent statements about the Corte Madera Inn Rebuild](#)

CVP also requested that highly recognized experts in wildlife and wetlands habitat, John Kelly and Scott Jennings, submit comment letters to the Corte Madera Planning Commission, attesting to CVP’s arguments about the importance of the wetlands’ bird habitat. Both Kelly and Jennings corroborated CVP’s position in their letters, that the treed habitat surrounding the wetlands constituted a critical site for Black-crowned night heron roosting. Their comment letter was published on the Marin Post in late December of 2016 (click title to read):

[Wildlife experts argue against the plan to destroy the Corte Madera Inn pond habitat](#)

In response to the Final Draft EIR, CVP retained biologist Peter Baye to submit his analysis. Dr. Baye continued to point out numerous erroneous assumptions and false statements in the applicant’s proposal and the DEIR, and explained in great detail, why the filling in of the wetlands would be in violation of federal law. Peter Baye’s comment letter was published on the Marin Post on January 4, 2017 (click title to read):

[Biologist Peter Baye, PhD, comments on the Corte Madera Inn Rebuild DEIR](#)

At the same time, CVP submitted extensive comments to the Town of Corte Madera and to the RWQCB, pointing out, among other things, the applicant’s failure to submit a required market alternatives analysis, to adhere to the requirements of the Corte Madera General Plan, and the fallacies contained in the applicant’s financial feasibility analysis. These comment letters were submitted on January 4th and January 15th respectively, and can be found on the Marin Post (click titles to read):

Community Venture Partners submits comments on the Corte Madera Inn Recirculated DEIR

CVP General Comment to RWQCB on Corte Madera Inn Rebuild

CVP Comment to RWQCB - Offsite Alternatives - Corte Madera Inn Rebuild

CVP Comment to RWQCB - Onsite Alternatives - Corte Madera Inn Rebuild - Part A

CVP Comment to RWQCB - Onsite Alternatives - Corte Madera Inn Rebuild - Part B

In late January, CVP followed up its comments to RWQCB with additional comments, summarizing arguments as to why the proposed project was not approvable under federal law. That letter can be found on the Marin Post (click title to read):

CVP comments on the Application to RWQCB for the Corte Madera Inn Rebuild

On February 7, 2017, RWQCB issued a statement rejecting the proposal as “incomplete,” based primarily on the arguments made by CVP. That letter can be found on the Marin Post (click title to read):

SF Regional Water Quality Control Board rejects Corte Madera Inn application as incomplete

Undeterred, the developer applicant continued to request that the project be approved by the Corte Madera Planning Commission, apparently in the hope that this local approval would allow him to successfully argue that regional, state and federal agencies should look the other way and allow the project to move forward. Disappointingly, the Town of Corte Madera Planning Department continued to process the project, against all evidence showing that it could never be built.

In response, from April 2017 through June of 2017, CVP wrote a series of comments, regarding the applicant’s lack of good faith in their dealings with the town, its residents and other third parties, and their continued refusal to acknowledge the authority of regional, state and federal agencies. Those comment letters were published in the Marin Post (click on titles to read):

Community Venture Partners comments on the RFEIR for the proposed Corte Madera Inn Rebuild

CVP Comments on the revised alternatives for the Corte Madera Inn Rebuild Proposal

CVP comments on the current proposal for the Corte Madera Inn Rebuild project

Suddenly, in July of 2017, Planning Commission Vice Chair Phyllis Metcalfe, surprised everyone by announcing that she could no longer, under any circumstances, approve the proposed project, and that the developer needed to start from the beginning to create a

completely new proposal. It was clear that this would be impossible without the developer accepting the full weight of all the legal arguments CVP had been making for more than three years. A summary of the events of that hearing was published on the Marin Post (click on the title to read):

[A voice of reason rises on the Corte Madera Planning Commission](#)

As of the date of this Report, the developer has not submitted a new proposal. In the meantime, CVP has continued to work with local hotel developers who are eager to purchase the property, should the owner wish to entertain offers.

THE MILL VALLEY / MILLER AVENUE PLANNING CHALLENGE

Exposing corruption by local elected officials



Starting in 2007, Mill Valley undertook a public process to produce a Miller Avenue Streetscape Plan. All totaled, it included 1 million dollars in consultant's time, hundreds of hours of workshops, hearings, public input and four different volunteer task forces, all of which resulted in a plan that was unanimously approved by the City Council. However, in the 11th hour, a small group of bicycle activists led by city council member Stephanie Moulton Peters hijacked the approved planning process.

In July and August of 2017, the Mill Valley City Council met to consider a proposal to reduce traffic capacity in the Parkway section of Miller Avenue (from Millwood St. to Willow St.) by 50 percent: reducing traffic lanes on the city's main arterial, from two lanes in and out of town, to only one lane in each direction. This was ostensibly being done as a "pilot project" to improve bicycle safety even though there was no evidence that this would result and the Miller Avenue Streetscape plan already included equally safe bicycle lane designs.

Since this last minute change would potentially increase traffic congestion (the number one complaint of Mill Valley residents) and, since the reduction of the road width would be out of compliance with FEMA's widely accepted emergency evacuation safety standards, the outpouring of protest was significant.

CVP led this effort and filed a series of comment letters in opposition to the ill-conceived plan, which were published on the Marin Post (click the titles to read):

[To the Mill Valley City Council on the importance of honoring the public's trust](#)

[The Mill Valley City Council must honor the approved Miller Avenue Streetscape Plan](#)

However, despite the fact that the community outrage included a petition signed by almost 900 Mill Valley registered voters, in August of 2017, the City Council voted three to two to approve the plan. In addition, despite extensive evidence to the contrary, the City illegally claimed that their approval was exempt from environmental impact review under CEQA.

This led CVP to undertake an extensive investigation of how such an ill-conceived proposal was processed and how it could have been endorsed without any regard for public safety and emergency evacuation considerations.

Our discoveries about the abuses of power by Mill Valley City Council members were astonishing, even by Marin's "loose with the law" standards. Not only was the public repeatedly lied to and intentionally misled, but it is clear that the city staff colluded with various council members, behind the scenes, in order to orchestrate the illegal decision.

The investigative report was published on the Marin Post in a three part series (click the titles to read):

[*17 years later, the Miller Avenue Streetscape Plan was illegally hijacked in the 11th hour - Part I*](#)

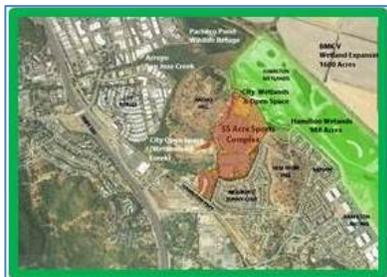
[*The hijacking of the Miller Avenue Streetscape Plan - Part II*](#)

[*The hijacking of the Miller Avenue Streetscape Plan - Part III*](#)

At this time, community members are considering the filing of a voter initiative to permanently reverse the "one lane" plan.

SUCCESSFUL HAMILTON SPORTS COMPLEX CAMPAIGN

Supporting community demands for appropriate development solutions



CVP has supported Preserve Novato, a community group opposing the Sports Complex project, since the project was first announced. In March 2015, Marin Sports Academy LLC submitted a proposal to Novato City officials to build a 1,000 seat baseball stadium and travel-league sports training complex on the former Army Landfill at Hamilton Field.

The proposed 55-acre, for profit, commercial development was in clear violation of the original land use plan designating Hamilton Field as a community park for the use and benefit of all Novato residents.

The subject property was the old Hamilton Base landfill, which was "capped" by the Army Corps due to the presence of a variety of EPA listed toxic chemicals buried under the ground.

The contents of the landfill were placed there in the 1940's and 1950's, when environmental regulations were all but nonexistent.

In an October 2006 assessment, the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board also noted a long list of chemical contaminants associated with the landfill.

In early 2017, CVP, Preserve Novato and the Bel Marin Keys community group led by Sue and Vince Lattanzio, succeeded in their challenge when the developer withdrew their proposal from consideration. CVP had created the Hamilton Fund to raise public awareness and increase public engagement, assist in crafting comment letters to the City and legal arguments against the development plan. CVP's arguments are summarized in an article on the Marin Post (click title to read):

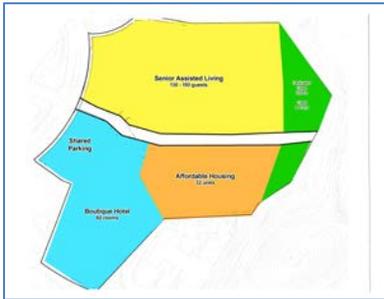
[Marin 2016 – Part VI: Dispatches from the front – Hamilton Field](#)

DEMONSTRATE

From our inception one of our major goals has been to demonstrate innovative, sustainable solutions to address planning, growth and housing. At the same time it remains important that we continue to do charitable work in our County. In 2017, we were engaged in four projects.

LARKSPUR LANDING SENIOR ASSISTED LIVING / AFFORDABLE HOUSING / HOTEL / DEVELOPMENT

Working with cities to promote low impact, appropriate, infill development solutions



In 2014, after successfully helping defeat the Larkspur Landing Station Area Plan, CVP promised elected leaders in Larkspur that we would work to bring about a more sustainable solution for the last remaining development parcel at Larkspur Landing: The 10 acre parcel east of Bed Bath & Beyond, owned by the Ross Valley Sanitary District (“RVSD”).

Our original concept was to locate senior assisted living housing and our aquaponic farm and educational research center prototype on the property. However, the agricultural use failed to meet the requirements of the Larkspur General Plan. This is particularly true now, in light of the new legislation that is discussed in this Report. The aquaponic project is now targeted to be developed either in the City of Richmond or in Half Moon Bay.

Our present proposal includes a 140 room senior assisted living housing facility, developed and managed by [Aegis Living](#), a 60 room luxury, boutique hotel developed by a local Marin partner, and approximately 36 units of very low income housing for the disabled, in collaboration with [Lifehouse](#) of Marin. The land requirements of this combination of uses also leaves open the possibility to provide additional overflow parking for the Ferry Terminal and the Larkspur Landing Country Mart.

RVSD has indicated that it intends to sell the entire 10 acre parcel, outright, once the EPA cleanup is completed (Mid 2018). It is essential that any development on the property must:

- (1) Demonstrate very low impacts on traffic congestion and school over-crowding; and
- (2) Provide the City of Larkspur with sufficient tax revenues to justify approval.

The CVP mixed use, development proposal is arguably the best combination of compatible uses to address those requirements. We are proposing a local serving, sustainable development model that would avoid increasing traffic at the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard / Highway 101 intersection, or adding a significant number of new students to Larkspur's already crowded school system. The combination of proposed uses would arguably create the lowest impacts of any type of development possible at this location.

CVP intends to present a cohesive, community supported master plan solution to RVSD and the City of Larkspur in the spring of 2018. From the beginning, CVP has been working with community leaders and organizations that were instrumental in opposing the former Station Area Plan, to ensure their support.

GOLDEN GATE VILLAGE COMMUNITY GARDEN RENOVATION

Supporting those most in need in Marin County



CVP has provided advisory services to the Golden Gate Village Residents Council for several years. CVP published a 5 Part exposé on the tragic state of affairs at the apartment complex, which was published on the Marin Post ([click this link to read the series](#)).

However, in the course of our work there, we recognized that some of the deferred maintenance issues at the project go far beyond the kind of assistance we can provide. The project's community garden was a case in point. It was so broken down and overgrown that it was no longer functional. So, when we were approached by a member of Boy Scout Troop One to help raise funds and assist in managing a renovation of the community garden, we agreed to help.

In one long weekend at the beginning of April, CVP helped coordinate a diverse group of community volunteers, residents and members of Boy Scout Troop One to undertake a complete transformation of the garden. The event was chronicled in the Marin Post and the Marin IJ (click on titles to read).

[CVP supports Boy Scout's rehabilitation of Golden Gate Village community garden](#)

[Marin City volunteers give community garden a makeover](#)

Community Venture Partners wants to thank Royce McLemore and the Golden Gate Village Residents Council, and everyone who donated their time and effort to make this project possible. We also want to thank the donors, Golden State Lumber, Martin Brothers Supply, Mill Valley Refuse, Bay Cities Refuse and Goodman's Lumber, whose discounts and donations of materials made the difference. And, last but not least, we want to acknowledge the scouts and scout leaders of Troop One of Mill Valley for their tireless community service.

“PLUG & PLAY” HOUSING

Infill affordable housing with car-share included



CVP continues to explore the concept of developing compact, affordable, infill housing with first class, work-from home electronic amenities (high speed internet, high speed printers / scanners, etc.) and tech support, and car-share services included in the rental costs and available to all tenants.

Smaller footprint units and micro-lofts with first class living amenities address two major demographic groups in need to more compact and/or affordable housing: (1) young adults seeking to live in Marin and (2) our “active elderly” population of seniors who are still fully engaged in their lives but are looking to downsize, because they no longer need the large home they raised a family in.

Many young adults coming from more urban areas such as San Francisco or the East Coast don’t own cars. Seniors typically own the fewest cars per household. Both can find Marin’s small, walkable downtown’s a desirable place to live, but housing is typically scarce. The development of federal and state funded affordable housing typically requires large tracts of land, which is equally scarce in Marin. Small infill projects better address these challenges and smaller unit sizes ensure greater affordability due to reduced construction costs per unit. Construction would employ green, zero carbon building techniques and units would be equipped with state-of-the-art communications networks, and energy saving appliances and mechanical systems. By offering car sharing vehicles with the unit rental, projects can help reduce overall parking impacts.

CVP AQUAPONIC FARM & EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER.

Advancing the science of aquaponics and supporting those in need in the community



The CVP aquaponics farm and educational research facility project is a demonstration of sustainable, community benefiting design that provides low impacts on traffic and schools, and food to those in need, and its profits offer CVP the potential to become a self-funding, privately endowed nonprofit.

Having a consistent and reliable funding source to cover our ongoing general operating costs, would dramatically increase our ability to take on multi-year advocacy campaigns and free up donors to more aggressively support specific, local initiatives.

R&D of aquaponics systems and technology

This project is a collaboration of CVP and [Oroborous Aquaponic Farm](#), the largest aquaponic facility in Northern California, located in Half Moon Bay. We have continued the design

development phase for our 26,000 square foot prototype and have achieved a number of significant milestones in the past year.

Some of these include:

Grow lighting design development: CVP is working with [LumiGrow Lighting](#) of Emeryville, to design a state of the art LED lighting system for the growhouse facilities. LumiGrow's technology will allow programmable "lighting recipes" tailored for each individual plant type, to enhance growth and productivity and profits.

Advanced fisheries design with AST Aquaponics: CVP is working with [AST Aquaponics](#) of New Orleans, Louisiana to design / build an innovative air-driven fisheries system for the facility. AST's technology uses only 10% of the overall energy consumption of conventional aquaculture systems and produces solid waste in a form that can be more easily sold as high quality fertilizer to consumers. CVP and PhD researchers at AST also recently submitted a grant request to the USDA to further our research into advanced aquaponics systems.

Solar power project development: CVP is working with [Graybar Solar](#) of Pleasanton, CA, one of the largest and oldest full service solar engineering and installation companies in the US, to design and install a rooftop solar on the farm's greenhouse structure. At this time it is estimated that the facility's 128 KW rooftop array will be enough to power all the energy needs for the lighting and fisheries/aquaponics systems, year round.

Scientific research: CVP is collaborating with research biologists at UC Berkeley, to assist in systems design specifications and planning and seeking grants and research funding.

Site search: CVP is presently considering locations in the City of Richmond and in Half Moon Bay. We continue to see assistance and grants to underwrite predevelopment costs. In addition, most locations in Richmond, qualify for federal New Market Tax Credits.

Project financing: CVP has had indications of interest from private investors. The project's innovative hybrid nonprofit / for profit corporate structure will allow CVP to spin out the Aquaponic Farm facilities as a stand-alone, for profit venture, while retaining non-taxable income exemption on revenues received.

Please note that general fund donations and donations ear-marked for other initiatives *are not being used to fund the R&D of this project.*

SUPPORT COMMUNITY VENTURE PARTNERS

Facing the significant challenges ahead will only be possible with continued financial support from the community. Help us continue to push back on flawed government decision-making and ill-conceived planning. Please help us continue to build an expanding network of collaboration for change.

Community Venture Partners is solely dependent upon donations from individuals like you.



Donations by Mail

Make checks payable to:
Community Venture Partners, Inc.
73 Surrey Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941

We accept donations of common stock and other types of securities.

[Contact us](#) to make special arrangements for transfer and delivery. Donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. We advise all donors to seek financial advice from a qualified tax professional.

The names of all CVP donors are kept strictly confidential.

SUPPORT THE MARIN POST EVERY TIME YOU PURCHASE ON AMAZON!

The Amazon Foundation will donate 1/2% of the total value of your purchases to Community Venture Partners, every time you buy something on their site -- at no additional cost to you!

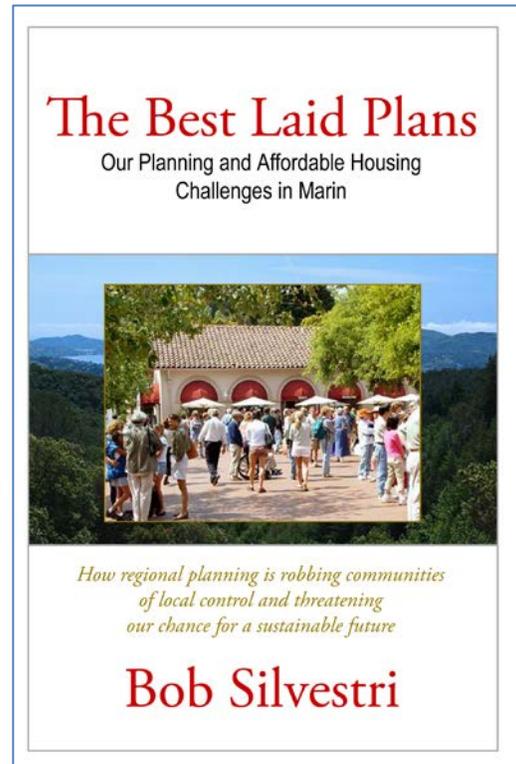
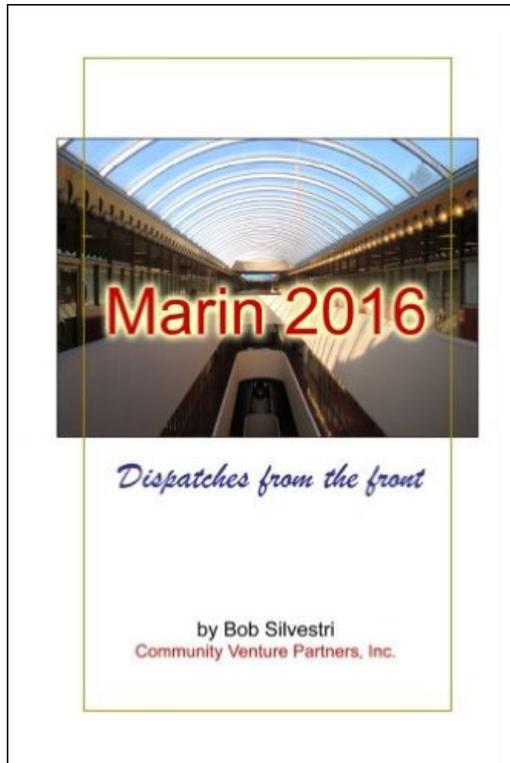
Just go to <https://smile.amazon.com>

Select Community Venture Partners as your designated charity...
...then shop the same way you normally would. It's easy and free!

Books by Bob Silvestri, President of CVP

[Online at smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)

Click on the images to order.



[Thank you for supporting CVP](#)