Turning **PLANS** into **PLACES**



Six Capabilities Communities Need to Overcome Complexity and Accelerate Community Infrastructure Delivery



Communities have a DELIVERY PROBLEM, not a planning problem.

Delivery must become a strategic capability.

Communities know what they want to accomplish: More housing. Stronger infrastructure. Economic growth. Greater resilience. Better places for people to live, work, and build their futures.

THE CHALLENGE: turning those priorities into progress.

Every project must move through an increasingly complex web of departments, requirements, reviews, decisions, data, and approvals. Each step serves a purpose. But without shared information and coordination across departments, those safeguards can create handoffs, duplication, and delays that slow the very outcomes communities are working to achieve.

THE RESULT: a widening gap between what communities plan and what they are able to deliver.

Closing this gap requires more than making individual processes faster. It requires strengthening the way people, information, technology, and decisions work together across the full development lifecycle. In other words, it requires treating Community Infrastructure Delivery as a strategic capability.

Community Infrastructure Delivery is everything it takes to move a project from a plan to a place: readiness, planning, review, approval, construction, and the operations that sustain it for decades. Avolve serves as the **connective thread** that closes the gap between design and execution, spanning departments, systems, and roles.

Complexity is getting in the way.

Housing, development, and infrastructure have always required coordination. But the environment surrounding them has become considerably more complex.



Picture a 120-unit apartment project in a mid-sized city. *Over the years, the city has added sensible safeguards to its review process, like a separate stormwater review, a spreadsheet to track plan versions and resubmittals, and a weekly coordination meeting to avoid missing one another's comments. While each of these steps solve a real problem, they also create another place for the project to stall.*

Then the project arrives. The fire department requires a wider access lane, which adds pavement and throws off the stormwater calculations that engineering already cleared. No one catches the conflicting comments until the applicant resubmits.

To keep it from happening again, the city adds one more safeguard: every revision now goes back through all six reviewing departments. But soon after, even minor revisions wait on reviews that have nothing to do with them, the weekly meeting runs long on status updates, and planners spend more time maintaining the version spreadsheet than reviewing plans.

While each safeguard made sense on its own, together, they've made managing the work almost as hard as doing it.

This is the Complexity Trap:
the more difficult the delivery environment becomes, the more time and capacity organizations spend managing the complexity itself. Ultimately, the processes intended to manage complexity can consume the capacity communities need to deliver projects.

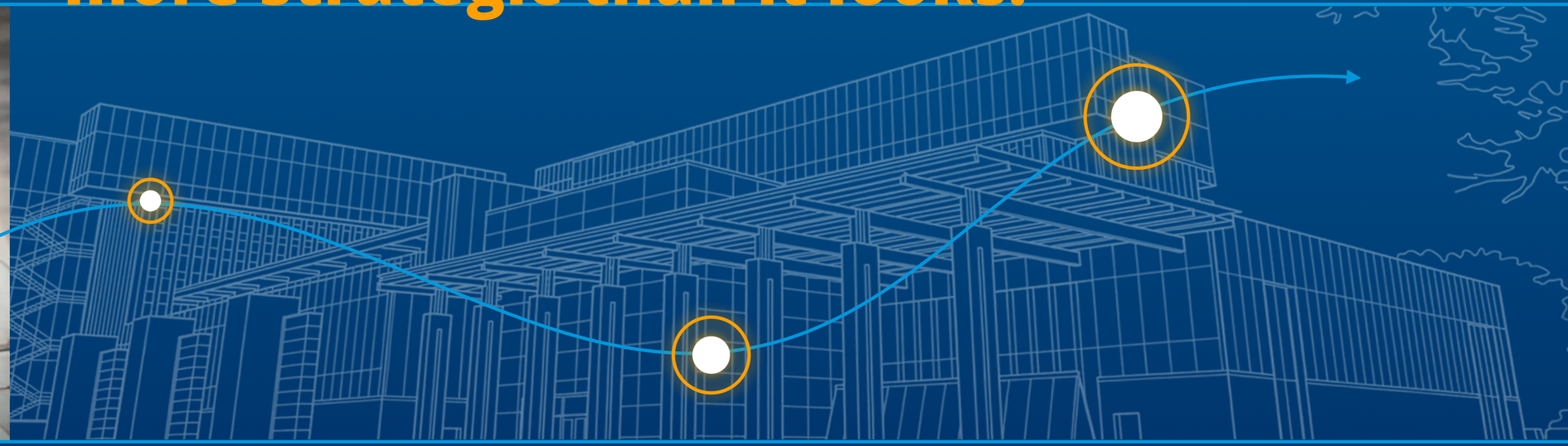
And its effects reach well beyond permitting, compounding at every step.

Projects take longer. Capital waits. Housing and infrastructure are delayed. Developers face greater uncertainty. Public employees have less time for higher-value work. Civic leaders have less visibility into whether strategic priorities are actually moving forward.

Ultimately, communities wait longer to see plans become places.

Electronic plan review is more strategic than it looks.





For many organizations, electronic plan review is still viewed primarily as an administrative process: receive plans, review them, collect comments, make revisions, and secure approvals.

But look at what actually happens there.

Plan review brings together the people, information, requirements, spatial context, and decisions that determine whether and how a project moves forward. It sits at a critical intersection between what is proposed, what is approved, and what ultimately gets built.

Six Capabilities That Change How Communities Deliver

To escape the Complexity Trap, agencies need to think beyond adding another layer of process or piece of technology. Rather, they need the capacity to make better decisions and move work forward across the entire delivery system.

1. ***Make Infrastructure Delivery a Leadership Priority***
   Connect delivery capacity directly to the community's strategic priorities, from housing and economic development to infrastructure investment and public trust.

2. ***Orchestrate Decisions Across Departments***
   Connect the people, processes, information, and priorities behind every project, so decisions don't lose momentum at organizational boundaries.

3. ***Own One Authoritative Record***
   Maintain a trusted source of project and spatial data that survives every handoff, from review and approval through downstream operations.

4. ***Build Spatial Intelligence into Every Decision***
   Give plans, projects, and infrastructure the geographic context needed to understand impacts, dependencies, and opportunities.

5. ***Apply AI to Expand Human Capacity***
   Use AI and automation to reduce repetitive work, surface insights, and give experienced staff more time for judgment and higher-value decisions.

6. ***Unlock Capital Velocity***
   Enable capital to create public benefit sooner by helping the community anticipate needs and turn investment into functioning infrastructure faster.

Together, these capabilities help communities see where projects are slowing, preserve decisions across handoffs, evaluate plans in their geographic context, focus staff expertise where it matters most, and connect development activity to future infrastructure investment. When communities consistently deliver what they have promised, they build something valuable: **PUBLIC TRUST**.

1 Make Infrastructure Delivery a Leadership Priority

It's an executive issue.

Housing goals, economic development, capital investment, resilience, and public trust all depend on a community's ability to move projects forward.

Yet the processes behind that delivery are often treated as operational concerns rather than strategic priorities. Permitting, plan review, approvals, and cross-department coordination may sit several layers below the leaders accountable for the outcomes they enable.

That disconnect matters.

When leaders focus on the outcome without looking at the system responsible for delivering it, bottlenecks can persist unnoticed. Projects stall between departments. Staffing constraints become chronic. Technology decisions optimize individual workflows rather than the broader delivery process. And ambitious community priorities run into the same underlying capacity constraints again and again.



Infrastructure delivery deserves the same executive attention as the priorities it makes possible.

1 Make Infrastructure Delivery a Leadership Priority

Connect delivery capacity to community priorities.

Making infrastructure delivery a leadership priority doesn't mean executives need to manage individual reviews or approvals. It means recognizing delivery capacity as a strategic civic capability and creating visibility and accountability around it.

Leaders should be able to understand where projects are slowing down, where decisions are getting stuck, and where limited capacity is constraining progress. They should also be able to connect those issues to the outcomes that matter at the community level.



***In the apartment project story**, the additional review cycles compounded into a much larger and more costly challenge. When similar dependencies continue to surface late, they delay housing production, consume scarce reviewer capacity, and make project timelines less predictable. A leadership view connects those recurring delays to the city's broader housing goals and makes it easy to spot what's causing them.*

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Elevate delivery performance.
Make the ability to move projects from plan to place part of executive conversations about housing, infrastructure, economic development, and capital priorities.

Look across the system.
Identify where organizational boundaries, handoffs, technology, or information gaps are creating friction across the development lifecycle, not just within individual departments.

Measure what matters.
Look beyond activity and processing metrics to understand how delivery performance affects project timelines, investment, staff capacity, and community outcomes.

2 Orchestrate Decisions Across Departments

Projects move across departments. Decisions need to move with them.

Community infrastructure rarely follows a single workflow. Planning, building, engineering, fire, utilities, public works, and other teams may all contribute expertise and decisions as a project moves forward.

The problem is what happens **BETWEEN** them.

When departments operate through separate processes, systems, and information, coordination depends on manual handoffs. Teams spend time tracking down statuses, reconciling comments, and determining who needs to act next. Applicants encounter conflicting information. Decisions made in one part of the process may not be visible in another.

Design for the whole project, not individual workflows. Orchestration connects the people, processes, information, and priorities behind a project so teams can work from shared context across the development lifecycle.

That doesn't require every department to work the same way. It requires enough visibility and continuity that each team understands what has happened, what has been decided, and what needs to happen next.

2 Orchestrate Decisions Across Departments

Projects move across departments. Decisions need to move with them.



***For the apartment project**, orchestration would mean the stormwater reviewer sees Fire's access-lane comment when it's made. Then, the applicant gets one coordinated request instead of two rounds of revisions.*

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Look for friction at departmental handoffs, create shared visibility into project status and decisions, and evaluate technology based on how well it connects the broader delivery process, not just how efficiently it automates one workflow.

3 Own One Authoritative Record

Every handoff creates an opportunity to lose context.



A project accumulates critical information as it moves through review and approval: plans, comments, revisions, decisions, conditions, spatial data, and ultimately a record of what was approved.

When that information is fragmented across systems, files, and departments, teams can spend significant time determining which version is current and what decisions have already been made. More importantly, valuable project context can disappear as responsibility changes hands.

A community needs one authoritative record that moves with the project.

Preserve what you know from plan through operation.

A trusted project record creates continuity across the development lifecycle. Reviewers work from current information. Decisions and revisions remain connected to the plans that produced them. And downstream teams can inherit an accurate record of what was approved rather than reconstructing it later.

3 Own One Authoritative Record

Every handoff creates an opportunity to lose context.



***For the apartment building example**, one authoritative record means the version that finally clears Fire and Stormwater is the one the inspector, the utility, and the GIS team all inherit.*

That continuity becomes increasingly valuable over time. The information created during plan review becomes part of the community's long-term infrastructure intelligence.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Identify where project information is duplicated or recreated, establish clear ownership of the authoritative record, and ensure critical data and decisions survive departmental and lifecycle handoffs.

4 Build Spatial Intelligence into Every Decision

Every project exists somewhere.

Plans don't exist in isolation. They exist in neighborhoods, parcels, transportation networks, utility systems, flood zones, development corridors, and communities.

Yet project review and geographic information are often treated as separate disciplines or accessed through separate systems. That forces reviewers to toggle between plans and maps to understand the real-world context surrounding a decision.

Embedding spatial intelligence directly into plan review changes that.

Put decisions in their real-world context.
When project information and GIS come together, reviewers can see whether a proposed site intersects with a flood zone, sits near existing utility assets, affects an existing transportation corridor, or overlaps other planned public or private work. They can evaluate the plan in relation to the parcel, surrounding infrastructure, and development already underway nearby.

That context helps reviewers identify geographical conflicts and dependencies earlier and understand how an individual project relates to surrounding infrastructure and planned development.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Identify decisions that depend on geographic context, reduce the separation between plan and spatial data, and make location intelligence available within the workflows where decisions are actually made.

5 Apply AI to Expand Human Capacity

Use technology to give expertise back to experts.

Government teams are being asked to manage greater complexity while skilled staff and specialized expertise remain limited resources.

AI creates an opportunity to free experienced staff from administrative work and focus more of their time on review, analysis, and decision-making.

Applied to the right work, AI and automation can help reviewers compare plan versions, identify material changes between submittals, surface relevant requirements and historical decisions, organize comments across disciplines, and make large, complex plan sets easier to navigate. Staff can spend less time on administrative review tasks and more time applying the expertise communities depend on them for.

Start with the work that gets in people's way. The most useful question for leaders isn't simply, "Where can we use AI?" It is, "Where is administrative work consuming capacity we need elsewhere?"

That keeps AI grounded in practical problems and puts human expertise at the center of the strategy.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Identify repetitive work that consumes expert time, prioritize AI applications grounded in trusted domain data, and keep people responsible for the judgments and decisions that require experience, context, and accountability.

6 Unlock Capital Velocity

*Capital creates value when communities can put it to work – **quickly**.*

Communities make significant investments in housing, infrastructure, and development. But funding alone doesn't create progress. Projects still need to move through planning, review, approval, construction, and ultimately into use.

When the Complexity Trap slows that process, capital waits along with everything else.

Improving delivery capacity helps communities shorten the distance between investment and impact.



That is the practical meaning of capital velocity: *converting public and private investment into functioning infrastructure and community benefit **faster**.*

Move from reacting to demand to building ahead of it.

Better information, spatial context, and visibility across the development lifecycle can help leaders understand what's coming, anticipate infrastructure needs, and make more informed decisions about where and when to invest.

It isn't simply about speed. It's about putting resources to work effectively so communities can support growth rather than continually catching up to it.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Connect project and infrastructure data to capital planning, identify where delivery friction is delaying investment, and use better visibility into future demand to make earlier, more informed decisions.

When the pieces work together, ***communities move forward.***

Greater Transparency ➡ Actionable Insights ➡ Better Decisions ➡ Faster Capital Velocity ➡ Greater Public Trust



Each of the six capabilities addresses a different source of complexity. Their real power comes from working together.

When leaders make infrastructure delivery a strategic priority, departments have a shared mandate to improve it. When decisions and information move across those departments, teams gain greater visibility into the full project lifecycle.

The result is a **Community Infrastructure Delivery** system that gets smarter and more effective as work moves through it.

The impact isn't limited to faster processes. Staff have more capacity for work that requires their expertise. Applicants have greater clarity. Leaders have better visibility into progress and constraints. Investment moves into productive use sooner. And communities are better equipped to deliver the housing, infrastructure, and development their residents expect.

That is the difference between simply processing plans and turning **PLANS** into **PLACES**.

Where is complexity slowing your community down?

Escaping the **Complexity Trap** starts with understanding where complexity is consuming time, capacity, and momentum today.

You don't need six "yes" answers to get started. The places where the answers are least clear often reveal where complexity is creating the greatest drag on delivery.

1. ***Is infrastructure delivery treated as a strategic priority?***
   Can leaders see how permitting, review, and approval capacity is affecting housing, infrastructure, economic development, and capital priorities?

2. ***Can decisions move easily across departments?***
   Do teams share enough context to move projects forward, or do departmental handoffs create delays, duplication, and uncertainty?

3. ***Does every project have one authoritative record?***
   Can teams confidently identify the current plans, data, decisions, and approvals, and does that information remain intact as the project moves forward?

4. ***Is spatial context available where decisions are made?***
   Can reviewers understand a project's real-world geographic context without moving between disconnected plans, maps, and systems?

5. ***Is administrative work consuming expert capacity?***
   How much staff time is spent searching for information, completing repetitive tasks, and managing processes rather than applying expertise and judgment?

6. ***Can you anticipate where investment will be needed next?***
   Do leaders have enough visibility into development and infrastructure demand to plan ahead, or are they continually reacting after needs emerge?

Turning **PLANS** into **PLACES**



Communities aren't short on ambition.

They have plans for more housing, stronger infrastructure, economic opportunity, resilient neighborhoods, and better places for people to live and work.

The challenge is building the capacity to deliver them. Strengthening Community Infrastructure Delivery lets communities expand that capacity without continually expanding government.

That means looking beyond individual workflows and strengthening the connections between people, processes, information, technology, and decisions across the development lifecycle.

Electronic plan review can play a critical role in that transformation. When it becomes part of a connected delivery system rather than an isolated administrative process, communities can reduce complexity, make better decisions, and move projects forward with greater confidence.

Because ultimately, success isn't measured by how efficiently a plan gets reviewed. It's measured by what gets built.

How avolve® helps.

Avolve helps government agencies modernize electronic plan review and strengthen the way projects move from **PLANS** to **PLACES**.

BUILT ON **20+ YEARS** of domain expertise & insights

FROM **350+** GOVERNMENT CUSTOMERS

Avolve brings together plan review, automation, spatial intelligence, mobility, actionable insights, and applied AI to help teams cut through complexity and make better decisions.

The result is more than a better workflow. It's a greater capacity to deliver the housing, development, and infrastructure communities need.

Expert Guidance for Infrastructure Delivery

