Small California City Looks to AI To Help Alleviate Bottlenecks and Growing Demands on a Small Staff

City of Villa Park turns to DataON & Strategic Online Systems for an AI solution

Customer
City of Villa Park (CA)

Solutions & Services
Azure Local
Azure Virtual Desktop
Azure Hybrid Services
Azure Arc
StrategicVision Assistant

Industry
State & Local Government

Organization Size
10

Location
Villa Park, CA, USA

The City of Villa Park is the smallest city in Orange County, California with about 6000 residents. Nestled in the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains, Villa Park has a hilly terrain which provides scenic views. It offers a semi-rural feel, despite being just a few miles from large cities such as Anaheim and Orange. The City of Villa Park employs a small staff of approximately ten people.

Manual Processes and Complex Documentation Create Bottlenecks

The City of Villa Park's planning department is tasked with guiding residential and commercial development within the city limits. City planners administer the City's comprehensive planning, zoning, and subdivision ordinances and review all development site plans.

Reviewing proposed developments plans against laws, zoning ordinances, and regulations can be a lengthy process, especially with a small staff. With increasing demands on the staff, Ray Pascua, Planning Manager, City of Villa Park, was exploring solutions that could improve efficiencies and accuracy of retrieving codes and regulations, and provide a way to navigate through voluminous local and state documentation. Manual review of complex regulations can create workflow delays and bottlenecks for projects.

He also wanted to preserve a knowledge base for junior employees and to implement workflow automation to streamline review and approvals for the land use entitlement process.

Looking to AI to Help Increase Staff Productivity

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is today's big thing. It's changed the way we gather, process, and act on information. Pascua wondered if AI could assist his team and alleviate workload and workflow issues.

The Challenge

- Manual reviewing of development plans against laws, ordinances, and regulations created workflow bottlenecks
- Need a solution to simplify document processing to find codes and regulations, and navigate through dense documentation
- Need to implement workload automation to process for documentation to be sent to the state of California
- Need to preserve a knowledge base for junior employees

The Solution

- StrategicVision Assistant for on-premises enterprise-grade AI
- Azure Local for on-premises Microsoft hybrid cloud infrastructure
- Azure Virtual Desktop for Azure Local for secure and productive remote desktop experience on-premises
- Azure hybrid cloud services that extend Azure Local capabilities to include monitoring & management, virtual desktop infrastructure, containers, security, and backup & disaster recovery

The Result

- Dramatic simplification and acceleration of responding to public inquiries and reviewing documents
- Planning staff demonstrated strong adoption of AI tools
- Planners integrated AI assistance in daily workflows

Pascua was introduced to DataON through an industry contact as a potential partner to develop an AI tool for Villa Park. DataON is a Microsoft partner that specializes in on-premises Microsoft Azure Local solutions and partners with Strategic Online Systems (SOS) for AI solutions.

DataON and SOS proposed doing a proof-of-concept (PoC) for Villa Park using SOS's StrategicVision Assistant (SVA), Azure Local, and Azure Virtual Desktop.

SVA is an enterprise-grade generative AI solution designed for secure, on-premises deployment. It's built on the foundation of NVIDIA's hardware (data center GPUs) and software toolkits. NVIDIA's GPU hardware provides world-leading AI inferencing with low latency and seamless scalability. Also critical to the software architecture are NVIDIA's NIMs™ (neural inference microservices), which are performance-optimized, portable inference microservices designed to accelerate and simplify the deployment of AI models.

Being on-premises helps to satisfy data locality and performance requirements. Azure Local extends Microsoft Azure to on-premises infrastructure for a hybrid cloud solution. Azure Virtual Desktop on Azure Local is a service that allows users to host virtual desktops and applications on their on-premises infrastructure.

AI-Driven Efficiency from StrategicVision Assistant on Azure Local and AVD

DataON and SOS collaborated with Pascua to create a document repository that included city zoning ordinances, capital improvement plans, development agreements, state regulations, environmental impact reports, subdivision regulations, and more. They created an interface for automated document processing so the planning department can simply ask a question to SVA to find relevant ordinances, eliminating the need to sift through dense, complex documentation.

After the month-long PoC, Villa Park reported that AI solution from SOS and DataON had dramatically simplified and accelerated reviewing documents and responding to public inquiries. The planning staff had also demonstrated strong adoption of the AI tools and had integrated AI assistance into daily workflows.

"The StrategicVision platform on Azure Local and Azure Virtual Desktop showed great potential in supporting our daily workflows," said Justin Urbanski, Assistant Planner, City of Villa Park. "Our team quickly adapted to using AI assistance, and we're excited about automating routine tasks while preserving our department's institutional knowledge."

"Strategic Online Systems and DataON were fantastic to work with on this PoC," said Pascua. "SOS customized the AI tool for us — the workflow and the UI. They

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Steve Franks, City Manager, City of Villa Park

spent a lot of time with us to fully understand our operational and functional needs, then built the solution accordingly. Additionally, they took the time to explain and demonstrate how to properly and effectively use the system in real-time. The hands-on approach and support we received from SOS and DataON provided us with the confidence needed to use the AI tool, and was the primary reason why the PoC was successful."

Villa Park is now working with DataON and SOS to expand SVA's AI capabilities for other planning workloads, implement document automation systems, develop a knowledge preservation system, and scale the solution across department operations.

As the NVIDIA NIM catalog for AI grows, SOS will able to quickly support new capabilities such as image analysis, video descriptions, and audio analytics.

Steve Franks, City Manager, City of Villa Park, said, "As a small city, we're proud to be early adopters of AI technology. The proof of concept demonstrated how AI can enhance our planning operations while maintaining data security. This technology represents the future of municipal government efficiency."

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> Ray Pascua, Planning Manager, City of Villa Park

www.dataon.io

sales@dataon.io

1.714.441.8820

About DataON and Strategic Online Systems

DataON is a hybrid cloud computing company that leverages Microsoft technologies to build hybrid cloud solutions that help companies and organizations achieve more with less. Our solutions utilize Azure Local for on-premises compute and storage and are designed so you can implement Azure hybrid cloud services such as Azure Arc, Azure Virtual Desktop, Azure Kubernetes Service, Arc-enabled data services, and more. Our Microsoft expertise and white glove service & support is the DataON difference.

DataON has deployed over 1500 Azure Local (Azure Stack HCI) clusters with over 1000 enterprise customers. Our enterprise-level solutions, delivered as a complete, turnkey experience, are designed to provide the highest level of performance, manageability, and security offered. DataON is a Microsoft Gold Partner, Microsoft Cloud Service Provider (CSP), and an Intel Platinum Partner.

DataON partners with Strategic Online Systems (SOS) for AI solutions that empower companies and organizations to help others in the most efficient manner possible. SOS provides an innovative, secure, and scalable on-premises AI framework for security and large language models.