

The Commons at Cordata Condominium Owners Association 2020 Strategic Plan



*THE VITALITY OF THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH WE LIVE
CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN OUR
OVERALL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING*



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OVERVIEW

The 2020 Commons at Cordata Condominium Owners Association (COA) Strategic Plan is proud to present a collaboratively built roadmap that will serve to drive Board decision making in the present and for the future.

The vision, mission and goals outlined in this plan are a result of community feedback and board leadership. Thank you to the Strategic Planning Team for contributing your time, ideas and input to make this plan a reality.

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As a basis for communication, a strategic plan provides a focused message to let homeowners and residents know why and what we want to accomplish. It is how we communicate our core priorities, the goals to fulfill those priorities, and strategies to reach those goals. (Community Associations Institute)

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The Cordata Neighborhood was formed in 2006 and is situated north of the City of Bellingham in Whatcom County. The name Cordata is derived from a deciduous tree with distinctively heart-shaped leaves. The boundaries of the Meridian and Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhoods were redrawn to acknowledge the area's changing character, environment and demographics.

Before 2006, this area was home to the Wilder Farm, a 900 acre working farm with cattle, hay, and plantings. In the mid-1980's the Wilder Farm was sold to Dave Syre who had a 50-year vision of creating a planned unit development with the property. He donated land for Whatcom Community College and worked with developers such as Trilium, Jebson, Janicki, and others to create the single and multi-single residences we see today. Land was also acquired for open space, parks, greenbelts and trails through the Greenway Project.

The massive development plan meant cutting down trees which created environmental concerns and increased wetlands. With the development of Bellis Fair shopping mall, The City of Bellingham extended its' city limits. The 900 acres moved from the county to city jurisdiction. The wetlands experienced increased city regulations, mitigation, and oversight for builders and prospective homeowners. The Commons at Cordata was one of the communities built on and with wetlands surrounding the entire development. The Commons is monitored yearly by the City of Bellingham to protect the natural environment and stormwater systems.

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY

The Commons at Cordata community consists of 77 air space or "stand alone" condo homes situated on 27.736 acres. The units (homes) and the private roads (including common parking areas) total 8.932 acres. Wetland buffers and conservation easement tracts total 18.804 acres. The development extends along June Rd. to Aldrich Rd.; from Aldrich to almost the Mahogany St. trail; and completes the square area just west of The Villages at Cordata.

ORGANIZATIONAL MILESTONES

2000	The site plan with conditions was issued by the County
2012	Declaration established by developer for Phase 1
2013	Amended Declaration to include phase 2 and Bylaws
Amendments	
2013 - Amendment 1 - established parking areas	
2015 - Amendment 2 - expanded the development	
2016 - Amendment 3 - added phase 2 to development	
2016 - Amendment 4 - added conservation easements	
2016 - Amendment 5 - corrected survey and plan errors	
2017 - Amendment 6 - added phase 3 and 4 to development	
2017	Rules and Regulations were added by the developer
5/2018	Bylaws Amended and Reinstated by the developer
2018	Windermere Property Management was hired by developer
5/2018	Developer handed the Association over to homeowners
4/2019	Son-Rise Property Management was hired by the Association
9/2019	New Rules and Regulations were Adopted
10/2019	Revised Bylaws were Approved and Adopted by homeowners
7/2020	Revised Declaration and Bylaws Approved by homeowners

COMMUNITY MILESTONES

- Landscaping in the common areas on Fuchsia Loop, Kodiak Lane, and 2 areas on Fuchsia Dr. were enhanced with drought resistant, low maintenance plants and benches.
- The Commons at Cordata entrance stone was installed with surrounding landscape
- Community board for postings was built
- Installed a Little Free Library
- Created website and community newsletter
- Installed 2 speed humps on Fuchsia Drive
- Revised CCRs and Bylaws Approved by homeowners

CURRENT STATUS

The development is governed by The Commons at Cordata Condominium Owners Association.
The development was built by Grandview Homes and completed in 4 phases;

Phase 1 (Completed in 2012) - 12 condo homes, Lots #1 - 12

Beginning Fuchsia Dr. and Verbena Lane

Phase 2 (Completed in 2017) - 25 condo homes, Lots #13 - 37

Middle Fuchsia Dr. and Fuchsia Loop

Phase 3 (Completed in 2018) - 22 condo homes, Lots #38 - 59

All Kodiak Lane

Phase 4 (Completed in 2019) - 18 condo homes, Lots #60 - 77

Fuchsia Dr. past the bridge and all Dandelion Lane

2020 INFRASTRUCTURE

Stormwater System	25 catch basins, 4 culverts, 1 pump, 1 retention pond Owned and maintained by the Association
Sewer System	20 sewer manholes Owned and maintained by the Association
Roads	1.5 miles of private road Owned and maintained by the Association including sidewalks
Mailboxes	3 banks of mailboxes Owned and maintained by the Association
Streetlamp poles	Currently the 5 Fuchsia Loop poles are owned and maintained by PSE 12 poles in phase 3 and 4 Owned and maintained by the Association
Retention Pond	Located on June Rd. and serves the Commons and Cottages developments. The pump station is owned and serviced by the city of Bellingham. The Commons COA is responsible for 58% of any June Rd. pond maintenance cost. The Cottages COA is responsible for 42% of any June Rd. pond maintenance cost.
Easement	Conservation/Wetland Mitigation Easement/Buffers total 18.804 acres

2020 FINANCIALS

The monthly assessment to each of the 77 homeowners is \$78 per month.
The yearly budget is \$72,072.

Yearly Expenses include:

- Management Fees
- Legal Expense
- Yearly Audit
- Reserve Study
- Insurance
- Office Supplies/Meetings/Website
- Licenses
- Board Education
- General Maintenance/Community Projects
- Social
- Electric - street lights and pump station
- COB impervious Surface Stormwater
- Winter Services
- Common Grounds Maintenance
- Tree Assessment & tree removal
- Stormwater Maintenance
- Reserves

2020 DEMOGRAPHICS

Population approximately 140 residents

- 78% homeowners in residence
- 22% renters in residence, (18 in number)
- 35% of population over 60 years old
- 6% families with children
- 26% single households
- 21% diverse population

ASSOCIATION GOVERNANCE

The governing body of the COA, the board of directors, enforces the provisions of the declaration, articles, and bylaws for the ownership and management of the development. The board establishes rules and regulations, oversees finances, maintenance, insurance, and keeps owners informed. Current Bylaws call for 5 board members; president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and at-large member.

The property manager communicates with the board, responds to owners' complaints, collects dues, pays bills, drafts budgets, maintains general maintenance and upkeep, ensures tax forms and taxes are paid, researches insurance, processes claims and provides resale documents. The main point of contact with the property manager is with the president. However, all board members and homeowners are free to communicate with the property manager.

VALUES

In fulfilling our Mission and achieving our Vision we value Integrity, Respect, Fairness, Transparency and Inclusiveness in all decisions and actions.

VISION

We envision a highly desirable place to live that is friendly, safe, attractive, and well-maintained. Healthy communication encourages all who live here to participate in the governing of the Association and enjoy the inclusive social life of the community.

MISSION

Our mission is to enhance and preserve the quality of life and sense of community through effective and efficient management of the Association. Ethical and fiscally responsible solutions promote a safe and neighborly environment, optimize our property values, support environmental stewardship, and represent the interest of all homeowners.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT - HOMEOWNER CONCERNS

1. **SAFETY:**

To preserve and enhance the safe, tranquil nature of the community

- a. Reduce Speeding
- b. Crime prevention
- c. Fire Lane regulation
- d. Community safety

2. **MAINTENANCE OF COMMUNITY:**

- a. Wetlands management and maintenance
 - Process and regulations for tree cutting and log removal
 - Process and plan for blackberry management
- b. Common areas maintenance and beautification
 - Regular landscaping maintenance
- c. Maintenance of unit properties
 - Proper lawn care and landscaping
 - Enforcement and regulation
 - Education and resources for proper maintenance

3. **COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- a. Maintenance and enhancement of website, newsletter, and community board
- b. Outreach and community events
- c. Education of CC&Rs (specifically for rentals)

4. **ENFORCEMENT OF CC&Rs AND GOVERNANCE**

- a. Philosophy of enforcement. Enforce CC&Rs to align with our mission and values
- b. Process for tracking complaints
- c. Time management of the board

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

What makes The Commons amazing? What ways do we deliver on our Mission?

- Friendly and safe community
- Well-managed association
- Multiple communication methods (website, newsletter, emails, open board meetings, community board)
- Appealing common areas
- Proximity to shopping, medical, freeways, etc
- Natural wetlands and surrounding trails

WEAKNESSES

What isn't quite that way it should be yet? What is missing?

- Property management accuracy and follow-up
- Homeowner, renter and absentee owner apathy regarding home maintenance, community and board participation
- Management of wetland trees, blackberries and Bellingham environmental restrictions
- Homeowners and residents unaware and resentful of association governance, rules and enforcement
- Resident speeding on community streets and parking in fire lanes.
- Communication methods for renter and homeowner occupancy and contact information.

OPPORTUNITIES

What are some ways we can push our Vision and Mission forward?

- Succession board planning and new board training
- Community events that interest residents and homeowners
- Welcoming of new residents and homeowners to encourage community participation
- Working with property manager to meet our governing and complaint issues
- Increase education about association governance, wetlands, and landscaping maintenance
- Educating homeowners to use technology for board meetings and community information

THREATS

What might get in the way of The Commons achieving its Mission and Vision?

- Economic downturn resulting in monthly delinquencies, liens, foreclosures, and home vacancies
- Complacent future boards of directors
- Increased traffic and speeding on June Rd. and within our community
- Wetland Flooding, stormwater problems and expenses
- Increased crime with growing Cordata population and economic downturn
- Climate events and natural disasters

SHORT TERM GOALS - 1 Year

1. CREATE A NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR POLICY

- Manage issues between neighbors in accordance with CC&R Dispute Resolution Statute
- Neighbors seek one another first to resolve issues before board or property manager
- Board or property manager can refer neighbor issues back to neighbors

2. UPDATE YEARLY MAINTENANCE PLAN

- Maintenance will be on a schedule with a checklist
- Easier to budget for maintenance costs, keeps board fully informed
- Ad-hoc maintenance will be rare and less burdensome

3. IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING AND COMPLIANCE WITH RULES AND CC&R's

- Send all homeowners and renters Revised Rules
- Highlight benefits of belonging in an Association in board meetings. Point out that many rules are regulated by state and local laws
- Highlight one rule and regulation in a newsletter. Post on community board
- Discuss one rule before a board meeting starts
- Board remains open to community suggestions and resolutions

4. CREATE A BOARD TRAINING FOR INCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Insure a well-managed association with informed and active incoming board of directors
- Incoming board will be ready to take on board responsibilities with confidence
- Allow consulting opportunities with outgoing board
- Board training to be developed as standard practice in board transitions
- Training includes a succession plan to encourage community participation on the board

5. BUILD A COMMUNICATION PLAN

- Maintain open/transparent board meetings that encourage community members to attend.
- Ask for volunteers to lead community activities/events. More resident involvement will increase a sense of belonging in the community
- Improve website content as a key resource for all community members
- Create a social media presence to post information for the community. Content should be owned and managed by the board. Recommend starting with Facebook as a communication platform
- Develop an annual communication schedule to ensure consistent communication from the Board

6. "Living in the Wetlands" BOOKLET FOR THE COMMONS

- Every homeowner and renter receives a detailed booklet describing ways a homeowner can live with, preserve and sustain our natural environment
- Owners/renters become more conscious and responsible for the wetlands
- Heightens awareness of our natural environment. Encourages protection and stewardship of our natural habitat

LONG TERM GOALS - 2 to 5 Years

1. DECREASE COMMUNITY APATHY

- Form a hospitality team to engage community members in ways such as:
 - Organizing community events like parties, interest groups, community clean-ups
 - Inviting inactive community members to board meetings and other events in the neighborhood
 - Serving as tech mentors to help people who have trouble joining online meetings
- Invite speakers on topics of interest
- Invite potential board members to shadow a current board member

2. WELCOMING NEW NEIGHBORS VOLUNTEER GROUP

- To create a special hospitality team to welcome all new residents
- Group members to volunteer visit new residents (perhaps with a small gift) and go through a welcoming, orientation check list of important information, resources, and community engagement
- Encourage new residents to participate at events and functions. Promote active membership in our community. Invite them to the next board meeting
- Engage with the broader community and realtor groups to increase home values.
- Develop an information flow chart between property management, board, and the volunteers

3. SAFETY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

- Encourage neighbors to host Map Your Neighborhood Disaster Preparedness events using program from Whatcom County Disaster Preparedness office
- Invite law enforcement officer from local police, Whatcom Community College, or other government entities to speak about safety and crime in the Cordata area and the possibility of forming a Neighborhood Watch Program
- Add sign at entrance that says “Not a Through Street”
- Work with city to increase traffic safety on June Road

STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING

Board reviews strategic plan and goals yearly and revises the strategic plan in 5 years (2025)

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION

- Strategic Plan sent to homeowners via email
- Mission, Vision, and Values posted on community board
- Newsletter is to always have the Mission of the association printed