

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **“The Villages of Garrison Creek Way”**

**2023**

### **Master Property Management Association (MPMA) of The Villages of Garrison Creek (VGC)**

#### **VGC HOA VISION, MISSION and VALUES**

The homeowners of VGC envision primarily an owner-occupied community that offers an inspiring lifestyle and quality of life and is a desirable place in which to live and enjoy the benefits of family, friends and community.

Our mission is to enhance and preserve the quality of life and sense of community through effective and efficient management of the VGC, enforcement of rules and covenants to preserve property values, and support initiatives and capital Improvements benefiting the greater good of the community. In all our activities to achieve our vision and mission we value integrity, fairness, consistency and common sense, community participation, respect, cooperation and sense of community.

**Member and Board Responsibilities to Vision** - The MPMA board of directors, always acting lawfully, recognizes that actions it takes involving the expenditure of association funds must be in support of the association’s vision. Likewise, association members and VGC Villages also understand that any projects they want the board of directors to authorize must likewise be consistent with one or more of the vision elements before the board can approve action. Accordingly, association goals and initiatives must be planned and vetted so that requested actions are supportable with necessary resources and serve the best collective interests of its members. Associations succeed when they cultivate a true sense of community, active homeowner involvement, and a culture of building consensus.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan is designed to provide guidance to the Master Property Management Association (MPMA) board of directors as it considers decisions impacting the future of the Villages of Garrison Creek (VGC) Homeowners Association (HOA), and it also serves as a guide for the association as it faces the many management challenges in its daily operations. With this plan the board can more effectively draft and implement programs serving association needs and fulfilling the expectations of its members. Additionally, it provides the association's membership with a clearer and more comprehensive summary of the future and how the MPMA board of directors and Village leadership will shepherd the association to that future. Duly elected by the VGC homeowners the Board of Directors is committed to adhering to state laws pertaining to homeowners' associations and to acting in the best interests of the HOA.

The strategic plan is a dynamic document that describes VGC's present situation, outlines future plans, and how to achieve them. The strategic plan is also a cultural document. It reinforces who we are and our aspirations and can serve to preserve and transmit our culture. The title of the plan can aptly be called **"The Villages of Garrison Creek Way"**

It captures the impacts of current and former board members, key volunteers and individuals; not by their names but by their insights, their work, and their priorities.

The vision contained in this plan establishes the direction for initiatives necessary for the association to fulfill its vision. As the membership goes forward with this plan, budget forecasts may change, goals may be modified, and initiatives adjusted or cancelled. All are part of a planning process. This plan serves as the road map to VGC HOA's future.

This plan refers to "Village(s)" in place of "Phase(s)". The nomenclature "Phase" is associated with construction Phases as the Villages of Garrison Creek was developed over time. We are the Villages (not Phases) of Garrison Creek.

## **RESOURCES AND BUDGETS**

As goals and initiatives are considered by the board of directors for inclusion in this plan, required resources and funding for their execution must be programmed. Long range projects require multi-year forecasting of annual costs and the future commitment of other resources. Project plans must include these forecasts balanced against other known or forecasted association needs and obligations. Should resources and budgets not allow for a specific project, the project will be suspended until the necessary support exists.

Budget forecasts are based on anticipated costs and income using known requirements and estimated VGC changes and requirements. These will change over time, and budget forecasts will of necessity be revised. These forecasts are the basis upon which initiative planning must occur.

## **REVISIONS**

This plan is to be revised as conditions warrant and adopted by a majority vote of the MPMA board of directors.

## **ASSOCIATION PRIORITIES**

The MPMA board of directors maintains a working list of the priorities it determines necessary for the board to fulfill its obligations to the association membership and achieve the association's vision. The board may revise this list as it deems appropriate. The priorities are for both short- and long-range planning purposes and serve as guidelines for decisions the board must make as it manages our homeowners association. The priorities are listed without reference to their order of importance, and they include safety issues, updating governing documents and land use standards, VGC and Village management, improving irrigation infrastructure and water conservation, financing annual and Reserve fund needs, resident communications and continuing education, enforcement of standards, recruiting/training necessary volunteers, reducing rental percentages, and strengthening relations with our neighbors.

# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR MPMA & VILLAGES

## Resident Participation “Vital for Success”

All VGC owners and residents should be aware that their participation in Village life is essential. More is said about this throughout this planning document. The key message is this: The quality of life here is directly tied to how well we care for our individual properties and the properties we all share in common such as streets, walkways, landscapes and more. Although we contract for landscape and a few other services most of the management and some of the maintenance work is performed by your neighbors who serve as unpaid volunteers. Without them our monthly dues will increase.

## Volunteers in Leadership Roles

Volunteerism will be discussed more fully in later pages. The focus here is volunteers in leadership roles, which are presented below. Village board directors and elected officers are preferred within some VGC Villages. In some Villages those position do not exist for various reasons. Some current Villages are comfortable with the control they exercise with their governance bodies and want to continue in that fashion. Regardless of formal governance structures, neighborliness can be promoted and maintained by means of volunteer projects, social gatherings, neighborhood directories, and other creative ways.

**Is the “volunteer management” model sustainable?** Several factors influence the levels of volunteerism throughout the Villages. Many volunteers are aging, and their capabilities are diminishing. We also have the problem of going back to the same small core group of volunteers for needed work because, as said before, many neighbors are aged, are infirmed, are time-constrained due to work and family priorities or are simply not motivated to do volunteer work.

Many owners are asking if the “volunteer management” model is sustainable. Many people of all ages have purchased their homes with the understanding that property maintenance burdens would be minimal. It is safe to say most owners, for good reasons, do not wish to be active in committees and boards. Other than the annual VGC HOA meeting most owners do not choose, for good reasons, to attend neighborhood business meetings.

**It should be noted in the “Roles and Responsibilities” below that VGC Board’s roles are mandatory while individual Village’s roles are variable and optional.**

## **MPMA (VGC Board) Governance Roles and Responsibilities**

1. Enforce the governing documents
2. Establish sound fiscal policies and maintain accurate records
3. Develop a budget to serve the requirements and expectations of the Villages
4. Establish and monitor Reserve funds
5. Act on budget items and determine dues and assessment rates
6. Collect dues and assessments
7. Establish, publicize, and enforce rules and penalties
8. Authorize legal action against owners who do not comply with the rules
9. Appoint committees and delegate authority to them
10. Select an attorney, auditor, insurance agent, Reserve professional, accountant
11. Provide required insurance coverage
12. Inform VGC members of important board decisions and transactions
13. Secure protection for the acts of all parties with fiscal responsibilities

## **Village HOA Governance Roles & Responsibilities** (Any Optional Combination)

1. Recruit and select Village leadership team
2. Prepare annual budget and monitor expenditures
3. Appoint a treasurer to monitor Village accounts receivables (dues and fees) and payables (pay the bills) and prepare reports
4. Organize, conduct periodic and annual Village business meetings
5. Provide landscape service for front yards
6. Recommend landscaper & annual budget including “special projects” costs for Village commons to MPMA Board. NOTE: “special project costs” could also include adjacent common areas, i.e., walk trails, south of creek
7. Oversee landscape service for Village common areas – regular maintenance to be paid by MPMA and enhancements paid by Village unless respective Villages have written cost-sharing agreement for partial or total MPMA funding.
8. Manage and pay for landscape service for front yards
9. Promote compliance with CC&Rs, Bylaws, Land Use Standards, Water conservation
10. Organize Village social and special activities
11. Maintain a directory of Village owners/residents
12. Recruit volunteers for MPMA and Village activities and assignments
13. Represent Village in MPMA Board and committee meetings

# VGC RESERVES, COMMON AREAS, IRRIGATION

## Reserves

VGC has Reserve funds set aside for future major expenditures including streets, irrigation systems, ponds and more. The Reserve fund is essentially a savings account. It is where the HOA saves money for more costly repairs and replacements. It is ideal to be 100% fully funded, but it is suggested to have a target goal of at least a 70% funded Reserve. If it is less than 70%, our HOA runs the vastly increased risk of having to implement special assessments or raise association fees to cover costs. The Reserve document relies on the expertise of an external analyst with required expertise to calculate and certify “% Funded”.

**Investment Policy is essential-** Reserve fund accumulations are becoming substantial and offer growth potential. It is prudent to develop and implement an investment policy that may earn lower returns over the long run. That can be agreeable if the goal is to preserve capital and maintain an optimal but steady flow of interest income.

## Common Areas and Irrigation

The Reserves document is periodically reviewed to determine its adequacy for future VGC needs. Reserves may not be sufficient for unexpected occurrences. This is being addressed by a Reserve Study specialist, working with volunteers Ray Goff, Barb Larson, Rand Strobel, Dave Siviter, Dave Elliott, Joe Roemer and Jon Messenger. Our Reserve Consultant updates the Reserve Plan annually and conducts an on-site visit every three years.

Extensive documentation for maintaining the commons and irrigation is imperative for future reference. Much information is held informally by individuals like Scott Towslee, Ray Goff, John Jaso, Dick Cook and Jack Gisler and others including our landscape maintenance contractor, Tree Amigos Landscaping. VGC needs a concerted effort to document the common area maintenance that these people have in their memories and/or in miscellaneous personal notes, and John Jaso has undertaken that documentation effort. The specific need is to capture in writing and store on the VGC website the maintenance steps that are underway, including critical contractor contact information. It is critical that future VGC volunteers (or a professional management company in the future) have access to this information to perform maintenance efficiently when our current volunteers and The Tree Amigos Landscaping are no longer available to us.

Volunteer help that maintains and manages the common areas is fragile and sometimes inadequate. VGC has capitalized on volunteer assistance to help the neighborhood reduce the need for HOA assessment increases to pay for outside contractors and to build a sense of “community”.

## VEGETATION, LANDSCAPING & WATER CONSERVATION

A major aspect of life in the Villages of Garrison Creek is the vegetation and how it is integral to the landscape. It is akin to living in a peaceful and beautiful park. A closer look reveals the opportunities to make it more beautiful, and, very importantly, to transform it to become more sustainable. Irrigation practices and plant choices are the two factors that weigh into sustainability.

Excessive irrigation has been occurring in VGC and it is expensive, wasteful and injurious to plants. The operative rule should be water less often and water deeply. The roots grow to the water and deeper watering is better. In addition, the following critical issues need to be addressed including sprinkler placement/patterns, aeration, and insect control.

To address the irrigation issues an Ad Hoc Committee (John Jaso, Ray Goff, Jack Gisler, Kurt Carlson, Linda Olson, Dick Cook) invited representatives from Hunter Industries and Ewing Irrigation to evaluate our common area and front lawn irrigations systems and to provide us with short/long range improvement options that focus on water conservation, affordability, ease of repair, and new technology. To date no specific recommendations have been received.

The ponds can be made healthier with beneficial bacteria, more aeration and more shade.

VGC landscaping can be improved with plant choices that are low maintenance, native-adaptable, attractive to birds and wildlife, and a mix of evergreens and deciduous plants that display more color.

The original setup of Villages 1,2,5,6, and 7 is to have one meter for all city water needs. The one meter makes it very difficult to pinpoint possible leaks in the irrigation system. It is only when the leak is a major leak and visible that it is detected. A look at installing more meters may help with water conservation in the future.

The VGC website provides information about water conservation and plant choices that are compatible with landscaping improvements described above

## PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES

We must seriously consider contracting for professional management services for continuity of maintaining VGC's infrastructure and for community well-being.

As stated above, our volunteers are aging, their capabilities are diminishing and it requires extensive volunteer time to organize and manage volunteer projects that our neighbors can do safely and effectively.

This will require increased HOA assessments but the reality is that the services we need and the management of those services may escalate beyond what can be funded by the current HOA assessment.

## VGC FINANCIALS AND RELATED CONCERNS

The MPMA is responsible for managing the VGC's financial condition including operational and Reserve budgeting, income, payments and reporting. Significant income and expense transactions occur within some Villages and there were few, if any, audits performed. Village financial activities should be part of the annual MPMA audit statement.

VGC and the Villages recently adopted a centralized accounting system. Budgeting and dues rates can be Village specific for their purposes beyond VGC requirements.

There is a delinquent dues policy in place and requires consistent enforcement. Dues, collections and liens should reside with the MPMA, and, with that, the burden of unpaid dues, collections and liens should be spread across the VGC and not borne by individual Villages. *A more formalized collections policy must be developed for reasons of clarity and consistency, and it must be consistently enforced.*

Since contracts for common area maintenance are paid by the MPMA they should be approved by the board and duly signed by an officer. Village common areas contracts should also be signed by a Village representative.

The MPMA should negotiate all contracts for the maintenance of the common areas within the Villages of Garrison Creek. When this is handled by individual Villages there often have been inconsistencies in service and costs. Village representatives should be the point in negotiating the Village common areas. It may not be in the best interest of the Association to have one single lawn maintenance company for whole area. Village participation is crucial to the effective management of the Village common areas maintenance.

Copies of the contracts for front yard maintenance in the Villages are to be submitted to the MPMA and kept on file with the Finance Committee.



As the sole legal entity of the Villages of Garrison Creek, the MPMA issues any liens that may be necessary to collect delinquent dues, contracts with collection agencies as necessary to collect delinquent dues and be the sole agency to communicate with the homeowner that is delinquent with their dues.

The Operating Budget and Village accounts should be audited yearly-as required by Washington State Law.

Village dues are to be paid at the same time as the MPMA dues and kept in a separate account by the MPMA Board Accountant. Each Village is responsible for compensation to the accountant for this service.

**VGC and the Villages has successfully adopted a centralized accounting system.** Under this system budgeting and dues rates can continue to be Village specific if desired. All dues, assessments and payments are performed by the accounting services contracted by the MPMA board of directors. The reasons for this include liability, accountability and efficiency. Liability – The MPMA is the only incorporated VGC entity legally authorized to conduct financial transactions on behalf of the Villages. Accountability – Annual audits are required for financial transactions on behalf of the Villages. Efficiency – one accounting source employed by the MPMA can provide the services necessary for collecting dues and assessments, satisfying all payments, producing financial reports, and access to records for audits.

**Some Villages depend on VGC for budgeting and contracting.** Some Villages have relied on MPMA to prepare and oversee their budgets and to contract for their front yard landscaping services, and it appears that trend will continue. With few exceptions the owners historically have accepted and trusted their elected VGC Board of Directors to act in the best interests of the owners. This has increasingly shifted more responsibilities to the VGC Board and its committees. If these services are more centralized in the future, what are the options for staffing additional centralized functions and at what cost?

## VGC GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

**Revised Documents** - The Villages of Garrison Creek uses several types of governing documents to guide its operations including Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs), Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Land Use Standards. These have been reworked to reflect the changes that have occurred because the VGC construction is completed and the developer's work is done. VGC ownership is fully in the hands of the homeowners and the documents have been recast with that in mind.

**CC&Rs** - describe the rights and obligations of each owner and those of the association itself. The CC&Rs are the rules of the VGC. They describe the requirements and limitations about what can be done with property. The goal of the CC&Rs is to protect, preserve, and enhance property values in the community. Revisions to CC&Rs require homeowners' approvals.

**Articles of Incorporation** - include updated essential information such as legal name of our HOA, address, the association's corporate status including a few basic association functions. In the order of association's legal document hierarchy, the Articles supersede VGC Bylaws though they are subservient to federal/state law, recorded plat maps, and our VGC CCRs (Covenants). *Revising the Articles of Incorporation provides the opportunity to adopt Villages of Garrison Creek, Inc. to replace Master Property Management Association.*

**Bylaws** - describe the procedures and mechanics of VGC management and decision-making. This includes officer and director positions and how they are filled, the way meeting, voting and notification are undertaken for owners' and board members' decisions and the methods of record-keeping and reporting. Revisions of Bylaws require homeowners' approvals.

**Land Use Standards** - These rules cover things such as restrictions on how much a house or lot may be altered, pets, waste disposal and the use of signage, parking and recreational facilities and much more. LUS revisions require MPMA board approvals.

**Washington State Law – Chapter 64.38 RCW** - This Washington State law dictates how homeowners associations must conduct themselves. VGC must conform with requirements contained in this law.

# SUSTAINING THE COMMUNITY OF VILLAGES

Sustaining the community of Villages is the foremost contributor to property values for homeowners. Like democracy positive efforts are required by the members for the Villages of Garrison Creek to be sustained for years and decades ahead.

Refer to the first page of this plan and the Vision statement.... “We envision primarily an owner-occupied community...” **First and foremost, VGC must be a community of owner-occupied homes with enforced rental restrictions.** Rentals deplete the volunteer pool necessary to maintain and manage VGC and lead to higher dues to pay for costly professional management services. Excessive rental properties also negatively impact the sale of owner-occupied homes, because prospective buyers can be faced with higher mortgage rates.

**Many Ways to Serve** - A sense of community can be achieved in various ways including activities and events within the Villages and Village-wide. Social media and other electronic communications can be used to interact with each other.

Many homeowners will benefit from a valid list of bonded contractors and service personnel to assist them with their home and personal needs.

**Homeowner participation in VGC maintenance and management is essential.** Steps are required to identify and recruit them to become involved. Individuals also can help with recruiting volunteers, welcoming newcomers and organizing events and activities. The MPMA board of directors has established committees that offer members various ways to serve their neighbors. The committees are included here:

- Finance (Operating Budget/Reserve)
- Communications (website, emails, newsletters, flyer postings, etc.)
- Safety (crime prevention, walker/traffic safety)
- Common Areas & Landscape (includes South of Creek, Reserve Fund)
- Strategic Planning (vision, mission, priorities, strategies)
- Nominations, Recruitment, Elections (MPMA and Village leaders)
- Standards Review (Help homeowners with LUS compliance)
- Volunteers (Recruitment, Recognition)
- Social and Welcoming (social activities, information for new residents)
- **AD HOC** Legal and Insurance (association’s legal documents, liability insurance)
- **AD HOC** Botimer/Fisher Phase V LLC Property OVERSITE (re-negotiate with new owner)
- **AD HOC** Irrigation Infrastructure, Water Conservation & Equity Costs

## EVALUATING PROGRESS

Evaluation is an important tool for assessing how well The Villages of Garrison Creek performs relative to its vision, mission and priorities. Periodic evaluation is necessary to reflect on achievements and shortcomings and useful for examining priorities, which are included below:

PRIORITY ISSUES	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	LEAD PERSON
GOVERNING DOCUMENTS	Finalize documents in 2023	Achieve no less than 170 homeowner votes for adoption	
ACCOUNTING CONTRACTS JIM HALL REPLACEMENT FOR MASTER & VILLAGES	Finalize in 2023 If necessary	Include with PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES for 2024	
LEGAL FEES MARIE EVANS PREPLACEMENT AS LEGAL POINT	Finalize in 2023 If necessary	Include with PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES for 2024	
LAND USE STANDARDS	Revise and Contract for enforcement	Revise to comply with adopted governing documents by 2023; Include with PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES for 2024	
IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATER CONSERVATION,	Repair and replace lines, sprinklers, valves, and timers; aerate surfaces	Complete 50% in 2023; Complete 100% in 2024	
RESERVE FUNDS	Build Reserve funds recommended by analyst	Grow fund balance to 40% in 2024; to 50% by 2025; and increase by 10% annually to reach 70%.	

<b>PRIORITY ISSUES</b>	<b>GOALS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>LEAD PERSON</b>
PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES	Assess MPMA requirements & explore external management options	By 2024 contract (s) for outside services that complement the knowledge and skills of available volunteers	
SOUTH OF THE CREEK PROPERTY TRANSFER	Finalize with Bob Rugar, Myra Road Commercial	Complete transfer in 2023	
RESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION	Increase MPMA (Board and Committee) Communications homeowners and residents	Distribute messages to homeowners at least once each month in 2023; Explore and adopt smart phone communications software	
RENTAL PROPERTIES	Decrease rental properties	Decrease rental properties to no more than 20% in each Village by 2025	
STRENGTHENING RELATIONS WITH OUR NEIGHBORS	PFD, City of College Place, Village 10, WW Housing Authority, Regency, Myra Road Commercial and area realtors	Meet with each at least once in 2023	
RESALE INFORMATION RCW 64.90.6490	Develop VGC policy consistent with RCW. Consider added charges.	Complete in 2023	

## LOOKING FORWARD

This plan provides the association's membership with a clearer and more comprehensive summary of the future and how the MPMA board of directors and Village leadership will shepherd the association to that future.

The vision and mission contained in this plan establishes the direction for initiatives necessary for the association's success. As the membership goes forward with this plan, budget forecasts may change, goals may be modified, and initiatives adjusted or cancelled. All are part of a planning process.