

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Maple Valley has undergone tremendous growth and change since its incorporation in 1997. Since 2000, the City has grown from a population of 14,200 to approximately 24,500 residents in 2014.

In response to the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A), the City adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1999. This update builds off of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan update, and responds to the Growth Management Act (GMA) requirement for periodic review. It also conforms to Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), and is based on Framework Goals created through the planning process.

This 20-year Comprehensive Plan is a vehicle for Maple Valley to logically organize and prioritize the community's needs to maintain a healthy, dynamic and balanced community. City residents and businesses, the Planning Commission, staff and consultants, have worked together during the past year to produce this Plan. It is a commitment to meeting the needs of the greatest number of residents in the City, and to preserving the community's natural beauty and unique character. The creation of this document is based on a comprehensive and inclusive public involvement process, which has led to the creation of a vision, the identification and evaluation of existing conditions, a review of alternative solutions to problems, and the selection of a preferred direction for the City.

COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a policy statement adopted by the City to guide decisions affecting the community's physical development. A Comprehensive Plan indicates how the City envisions the community's future, and sets forth strategies for achieving the desired community. A Plan generally has three characteristics. First, it is comprehensive – the Plan encompasses all the geographic and functional elements which have a bearing on the community's physical development. Second, it is general – the Plan summarizes the major policies and proposals of the City, but does not usually indicate specific locations or establish detailed regulations. Third, it is long-range – the Plan looks beyond current issues and matters confronting the community, to the community's future. Although the planning time frame for this Plan is 20 years, many of its policies and actions will affect the City of Maple Valley well into the future.

Why is a Comprehensive Plan Needed?

The State of Washington adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990. This legislation requires Comprehensive Plans to include specific elements; obligates cities to adopt implementing regulations, and counties to develop Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) to address issues of a regional nature; and establishes protocols and deadlines for these tasks.

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The GMA establishes 14 statutory goals that guide the development of Comprehensive Plans. For a plan to be valid, it must be consistent with these goals and the specific requirements of the Act. Consistency, in this context, means that a Plan must not conflict with the state statutory goals, CPPs, or Plans of adjacent jurisdictions. The fourteen statutory goals identified in the state legislation are summarized as follows:

- 1) Guide urban growth to areas where urban services can be adequately provided;
- 2) Reduce urban sprawl;
- 3) Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems;
- 4) Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population;
- 5) Encourage economic development throughout the state;
- 6) Assure private property is not taken for public use without just compensation;
- 7) Encourage predictable and timely permit processing;
- 8) Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries;
- 9) Encourage retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities;
- 10) Protect the environment and enhance the state's quality of life;
- 11) Encourage the participation of citizens in the planning process;
- 12) Ensure adequate public facilities and services necessary to support development;
- 13) Identify and preserve lands and sites of historic and archaeological significance; and
- 14) Manage shorelines of statewide significance.

Relationship to the Countywide Planning Policies and Vision 2040

The Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) were developed and ratified by King County and the cities in 1994. They are, in essence, a set of common policies and procedures that all jurisdictions in King County have agreed upon to address growth management in a coordinated manner. Taken together, the CPPs try to balance issues related to growth, economics, land use, and the environment. The specific objectives include:

- Implementation of Urban Growth Areas.
- Promotion of contiguous and orderly development.
- Siting of public capital facilities.
- Establishing transportation facilities and strategies.
- Creating affordable housing plans and criteria.
- Ensuring favorable employment and economic conditions in the county.

In addition, Maple Valley's Comprehensive Plan is guided by the multi-county policies of Vision 2040, the regional plan developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). Vision 2040 is an integrated, long-range vision for maintaining a healthy region promoting the well-being of people and communities, economic vitality, and a healthy environment. It contains an environmental framework, a numeric regional growth strategy, policy framework guided by overarching goals, implementation actions, and measurements to monitor progress.

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Organization of the Comprehensive Plan

The Maple Valley Comprehensive Plan is comprised of the following sections:

- Executive Summary: This section includes a description of the comprehensive planning process.
- Vision: Includes the community profile, a brief history of Maple Valley, discussion of the opportunities and challenges, the Community Vision, and Framework Goals.
- Community Plan Elements: This section includes Goals and Policies and Support Analysis for each element. The Support Analysis provides the foundation for the goals and policies, and includes inventories of background data, needs assessments or analyses, and identification of issues. The elements are organized as follows:
 - Economic Development
 - Land Use
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Parks & Recreation
 - Environmental Quality
 - Capital Facilities
 - Utilities
- Appendices -
 - List of Maps
 - Appendix A – Capital Facilities
 - Appendix B – Tahoma School District
 - Appendix C – Maple Valley Fire & Life Safety

Plan Implementation

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that land use regulations and functional plans must be consistent with and implement the Comprehensive Plan. Consequently, once the Plan is adopted, the City will amend its development regulations to ensure consistency with the Plan. Development regulations should also be revisited within six months of the adoption of any Plan amendments.

Policy Determination

In developing a Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission and the City Council set forth a coherent set of policies. This process has two functions. First, it encourages City officials to look at the big picture and step away from current issues and matters to develop overriding policy goals for their community. Second, it allows the City Council to make explicit the policies that are guiding their decisions so that those policies may be viewed critically and subjected to open and democratic

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review. The Plan serves to focus, direct, and coordinate the efforts of the departments within city government by providing a general comprehensive statement of the City's policies and goals.

Policy Implementation

A community can move more effectively toward its goals and implement its policies after they have been agreed to and formalized through the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a basic source of reference for officials as they consider the enactment of ordinances or regulations affecting the community's physical development (e.g., a zoning ordinance or a particular rezone), and when they make decisions pertaining to public facility investments (e.g., capital improvement programming or construction of a specific public facility). This process ensures that the community's overall goals and policies are implemented.

The Plan also provides a practical guide for City officials as they administer City ordinances and programs. This ensures that the day-to-day decisions of City staff are consistent with the overall policy direction established by the City's legislative body.

Communication/Education

The Comprehensive Plan communicates to the public and to City staff the policy of the City Council. This allows the staff, the public, private developers, business people, financial institutions, and other interested parties to anticipate what the decisions of the City are likely to be on any particular issue. As such, the Plan provides predictability. Everyone is better able to plan activities knowing the probable response to their proposals and to protect investments made on the basis of policy. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan educates the public, the business community, the staff, and the City Council itself on the workings, conditions, and issues within their City. This can stimulate interest in community affairs and increase citizen participation in government.

PLAN AMENDMENTS

For the Plan to function as an effective decision making document, it must be flexible enough to accommodate changes in public attitudes, developmental technologies, economic forces, and legislative policy, yet be focused enough to ensure consistent application of development principles. The Growth Management Act requires that the Comprehensive Plan be amended no more than once a calendar year. All of the proposed amendments submitted during the year by the City Planning Commission and City Council should be considered concurrently to determine the cumulative effect of the proposals.

Annual Plan Amendment Process

The Annual Plan Amendment Process provides an opportunity to refine and update the Comprehensive Plan and to monitor and evaluate the progress of the implementation strategies and policies incorporated therein. The process is also developed to meet the requirements of the GMA. RCW 36.70A.130 addresses Comprehensive Plan amendments. The GMA requires that

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Comprehensive Plans be amended only once a year, except for certain exemptions and “emergencies.” Under the law, the following amendments may be considered more frequently than once every year:

- Initial adoption of a subarea or neighborhood plan.
- Adoption or amendment to a shoreline management program.
- When an emergency exists (“emergency” is not defined).
- To resolve an appeal of a Comprehensive Plan filed with a growth management hearings board or with the court.

The major requirements of the GMA regarding plan amendments are described below:

- Establish a means by which cities and counties will “docket” (i.e., compile and maintain a list) suggested plan or development regulation amendments and consider them during the annual amendment process.
- Cities and counties must include in their development regulations a procedure for any interested person to suggest Comprehensive Plan or development regulation amendments.
- Public participation programs must be developed for proposed amendments or revisions to the Comprehensive Plan.

This process is the vehicle by which the City, private property owners, developers, community groups or individual citizens request changes to the planned land uses on property or propose changes to the goals and policies of the Plan. The process includes the review of proposed expansions to the Urban Growth Area (UGA) thus allowing the City to evaluate the necessity for further urban expansion and growth. The process affords the opportunity to refine the Plan based on changing conditions and community needs.

The following policies reflect the annual Plan review and amendment process:

- I-P1** The City shall schedule annual review of the Comprehensive Plan to allow for docketing of Plan amendment requests and to consider the need for amendments. At that time, City-initiated and private party or developer-initiated amendment requests will be considered.
- I-P2** All Comprehensive Plan amendments shall be processed together with any necessary zoning, subdivision or other ordinance amendment, to ensure consistency.
- I-P3** Amendment procedures shall be fully outlined in the City of Maple Valley land development regulations.

All amendment proposals shall be considered concurrently (in a package) first by the Planning Commission and then by the City Council so that their cumulative impacts can be ascertained. Provisions for the joint City/County consideration of Plan amendments of mutual concern within the Urban Growth Area shall be included in the appropriate interlocal planning agreement (as established in the Countywide Planning Policies), or other appropriate agreement.

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Emergency Plan Amendment Consideration

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended outside the normal schedule if findings are adopted (by City Council resolution) to show that the amendment was necessary due to an emergency situation of neighborhood or Citywide significance. Plan and zoning amendments related to annexations may be considered during the normal annexation process and need not necessarily be coordinated with the annual Plan amendment schedule. The nature of the emergency shall be explained to the City Council, which shall decide whether or not to allow the proposal to proceed ahead of the normal amendment schedule.