



**PVISION
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COMMUNITY HISTORY

Understanding a community's history is critical to effectively plan for its future. Historic patterns of development and community events provide a basis upon which to plan. This section provides a brief overview of Maple Valley's past. Additional information about the community's history can be obtained by contacting the Maple Valley Historical Society.

The City is located approximately 10 miles southeast of Renton and 20 miles southeast of Seattle, in the foothills of the Cascade Range. Historically, the area has been recognized as a community of abundant natural resources. Early residents were rooted in resource-based economies such as mining, logging, and farming. The area was most known for its abundance of coal, which essentially fueled the development of Seattle for many decades. Also, the first hydroelectric development in the country was built in the Cedar River watershed, a watershed which itself was likely the largest forest area ever owned by any city in the United States.¹

Duwamish Indians

Prior to the settlement of Europeans, Duwamish Indians inhabited southeast King County. The village located in Maple Valley was *Duwe'kwulsh*.² The Cedar River, which is near the northeastern edge of the City, played a central role in Duwamish culture. It was the easiest and shortest route across the Cascades for Puget Sound and Eastern Washington Indians, and eventually for traders and prospectors. The Cedar River was also the primary fishing territory for the Duwamish.

European Settlement³

Homesteaders arrived in Maple Valley in 1876 and began clearing land by ax and bucksaw. The first non-Indian family to settle the Maple Valley area was the Maxwells. In 1879, George Ames arrived and claimed land on the present Hobart Road and was soon joined by his brother-in-law C.O. Russell and later Henry Sidebotham. These three men named the area *Vine Maple Valley*, which the U.S. Post Office later shortened to *Maple Valley*.

In 1885, the Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad built a line through Maple Valley to Black Diamond and the coal mines. This brought settlers to the area in larger numbers. Residents not employed at the mines engaged in logging, farming, dairying and raising poultry.

Historic Landmarks⁴

Coal mining at the base of Cedar Mountain began in 1884. The first mine produced large amounts of bituminous coal for 24 years. A mining camp was built in the valley below the mine. Today, the old

¹ Slauson, Morda. *One Hundred Years Along the Cedar River*. Slauson, 1971.

² Maple Valley Historical Society Map with watershed history.

³ Barbara Nilson, Maple Valley Historical Society, July, 1998.

⁴ Barbara Nilson, Maple Valley Historical Society, July, 1998.



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mine offices on Maple Valley Highway (SR 169) are historical landmarks. Mrs. McDonald opened the first store on Maxwell Road, but sold it shortly to W.D. Gibbon in 1891. The Gibbon's store, and house next door, had to be moved in 1907 when they were found to be in the path of the new Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. The house is still in existence one block off the Maple Valley Highway (SR 169), and is used as an office today. The Gibbons Store was designated as a historical landmark by the City in 1998 and relocated to the Maple Valley Community Center Campus in 1999. In 1905, Mr. and Mrs. Olaf Olson purchased 80 acres on 216th and built an unusual four-story solid concrete home with 2,200 square feet on each floor and a tunnel-shaped barn. Both are King County or City recognized historical landmarks and are now part of New Community Church.

In 1910, a site north of the village was selected by Maple Valley citizens to build a two-story wooden structure to serve as both a grade school and high school. Parents donated time and equipment to level the site and to prepare the building. It is still standing, but scheduled for demolition. In 1920, a three-story brick school house was built on the same site. The top floor is now the location of the Maple Valley Historical Society's museum, a King County historical landmark. The first school established in Maple Valley proper was held in a log cabin near the Hobart Cemetery. In 1940, the site was dedicated with a monument inscribed with the names of the teachers, and a vault containing souvenirs, pictures, report cards, and a list of those pioneers present at the dedication.

Three King County historic landmarks exist inside the City limits: 1) the Fire Engine Museum; 2) the W.D. Gibbon Store and Post Office; and 3) Lake Wilderness Lodge. The museum was built by volunteers, coordinated through the Maple Valley Historical Society, to house the community's first fire engine. The Gibbon Store built in 1903 was moved from its original location in historic old Maple Valley near the Cedar River. It is now located next to the museum. Lake Wilderness Lodge is a relic of Maple Valley's past era as a resort community. The lodge was run by the Gaffney family for 60 years, when Lake Wilderness was a popular weekend and summer recreation destination for Seattle residents.

Recent History

After the mining and logging boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Maple Valley grew slowly as a rural agricultural community. Maple Valley was considered a rural and country resort community up until the 1970s when it began to accommodate an increasing amount of growth. Improvements to the area's major roads and highways opened the area up to new residents who could commute to work in nearby cities and employment centers.

The type of rural atmosphere that characterized Maple Valley — single homes on large tracts of forest, grassland or pasture land — was quickly being replaced by urban subdivisions and planned developments, which now cover much of the City. Between 1990 and 2014, the overall population of the area increased from 6,660 to 24,240, and it was transformed from a rural area to an urban growth area.



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In 2007, King County proposed an amendment, through the 2008 King County Comprehensive Plan update, that would change their rural designated property to an urban designation. This property is identified by King County as the “Summit Pit Property”. The property, now known as “Summit Place” was annexed into the City of Maple Valley in 2013 and currently has a land use designation of Master Planned Community.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Maple Valley’s Vision of its desired future is rooted in the community’s values and priorities. It considers recent and projected trends, builds on the City’s assets and opportunities, and recognizes the importance of a fiscally sustainable city government to protect and promote Maple Valley’s quality of life. The Vision Framework Goals (VFGs) and policies (VFPs) provide high-level direction to shape the community’s future, and are carried forward in the provisions of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Vision – Maple Valley 2035

Maple Valley will work as a community to provide a safe, aesthetically pleasing city that operates in harmony with its natural environment, rural history, and provides multi-generational opportunities for economic growth, community involvement, recreational activities, and cultural expression. Our city will be a regional focus for health, business, good government, and education, and will provide opportunities for regular interaction in all spheres of human endeavor with our neighbor communities and visitors from outside our region. We will make this possible with a vital economic base, a multi-faceted transportation network, and an emphasis on the quality of life for our residents.

Puget Sound Regional Council Vision 2040

Our city’s comprehensive plan advances a sustainable approach to growth and future development. We have incorporated a systems approach to planning and decision-making that addresses protection of the natural environment. The plan commits to maintaining and restoring ecosystems, through steps to conserve key habitats, clean up polluted waterways, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The plan includes provisions that ensure that a healthy environment remains available for future generations in our city

Our city’s comprehensive plan has been updated based on residential and employment targets that align with VISION 2040. Through the targeting process we have identified the number of housing units in the city for the year 2031. Residential and employment targets have also been identified for our city. The comprehensive plan addresses each of the policy areas in VISION 2040. We have policies that address habitat protection, water conservation, air quality, and climate change. We advance environmentally friendly development techniques, such as low-impact landscaping. Our plan calls for more compact urban development and includes design guidelines for mixed-use development.. The



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housing element commits to expanding housing production at all income levels to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents. We have an economic development element in the plan that supports creating jobs, investing in all people, creating great communities, and maintaining a high quality of life. Our transportation element advances cleaner and more sustainable mobility.

Vision Framework Goals (VFG) and Policies (VFP)

Goal VFG-1: Promote economic vitality, job creation, and local access to goods and services.

- Policies:**
- VFP-1.1** Development and redevelopment in the North and South Activity Centers are the primary means and optimal locations for achieving this Framework Goal. The City should review and revise, as necessary, its development regulations to make the permit process in these centers as timely, fair, flexible, and predictable as possible.
 - VFP-1.2** The City should pursue an aggressive economic development strategy, including public/private partnerships and targeted capital investments to create incentives for development and redevelopment in the North and South Activity Centers as well as the Legacy property.
 - VFP-1.3** Focus new jobs-based commercial, retail and service uses in the Activity Centers throughout the City.
 - VFP-1.4** While the Activity Centers are the main focus, the City should also be open to opportunities to facilitate development and redevelopment in commercial districts outside of the Centers.
 - VFP-1.5** Develop and/or support a business retention and expansion program and support efforts that foster small business development and entrepreneurship.
 - VFP-1.6** Build and promote existing and new relationships with workforce development organizations, training providers and educational institutions to strengthen the City's workforce pipeline and its reputation for skilled workers.

Goal VFG-2: Create a fiscally sustainable city government.

- Policies:**
- VFP-2.1** Develop and promote an organizational culture within City Hall that is oriented to economic development in City services and communicate that priority to residents and external to City government.
 - VFP-2.2** Utilize an approach to land use, transportation and infrastructure development that promotes the generation of family-wage jobs and diversifies the City's revenue base.
 - VFP-2.3** Attract family-wage employers to the City in order to diversify the City's revenue base, provide employment opportunities for Maple Valley



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residents, and increase the City's daytime population.

Goal VFG-3: Promote Maple Valley as a multi-generational community.

- Policies:**
- VFP-3.1** Increase the range of housing choices in Maple Valley for families, young singles, and seniors.
 - VFP-3.2** Improve mobility choices for all members of the community.
 - VFP-3.3** Protect and enhance the character of existing single-family neighborhoods.
 - VFP-3.4** Grow multi-family housing opportunities in mixed-use districts and corridors.
 - VFP-3.5** The City should consider incentives to provide a greater variety of housing options for all members of the community.

Goal VFG-4: Celebrate Maple Valley's place in the region.

- Policies:**
- VFP-4.1** Promote Maple Valley as the economic center of the Greater Maple Valley primary market area.
 - VFP-4.2** Promote Maple Valley as a "destination" for users of the regional trails network in southeast King County.
 - VFP-4.3** Strengthen the visual and functional edge between Maple Valley and the unincorporated rural and resource lands that surround it.
 - VFP-4.4** Encourage and maintain partnerships with county government, other jurisdictions, the Tahoma School District, the Maple Valley Black Diamond Chamber of Commerce and economic development associations to give Maple Valley a voice in regional decisions

Goal VFG-5: Create a Catalyst for Economic Development and Civic Expression on the Legacy property.

- Policies:**
- VFP-5.1** Create a primary gathering place that is a focal point, a civic center, and a meeting place for the whole Maple Valley community. Additionally, enhance the identity of the City of Maple Valley and distinguish the image of the City within the Puget Sound region.
 - VFP-5.2** Include commercial, retail, and other uses to develop mutually beneficial relationships that enhance and support adjacent, on-site public uses. Consider uses that generate revenue for the City of Maple Valley or that stimulate appropriate private development on adjacent property.
 - VFP-5.3** Provide bicycle and pedestrian connections to nearby natural areas and public uses as well as to adjacent residential and activity centers.
 - VFP-5.4** Use investments in public facilities as a catalyst to private investment on the Legacy Property.

Goal VFG-6: Increase multi-modal mobility options within Maple Valley and connections to the



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greater region.

Policies: **VFP-6.1** Provide for a safe transportation network that is well maintained, accessible, and enhances traffic flow and safe mobility for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians alike.

VFP-6.2 Partner with Metro, other jurisdictions, and major employers to improve transit options into Maple Valley on SR 169, SR 18 and SR 516.

Goal VFG-7: Provide a physical environment that enables residents to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives.

Policies: **VFP-7.1** Design, develop, and enhance parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities.

VFP-7.2 Design new mixed-use and multi-family projects to maximize pedestrian and bicycle access and amenities onsite and connectivity to nearby sites, walkways, and trails.

Goal VFG-8: Promote context-appropriate physical form and character to create a sense of place.

Policies: **VFP-8.1** Maintain the low-rise feel of the City's established single-family neighborhoods.

VFP-8.2 Encourage building heights up to five stories to accommodate new mixed-use and multi-family development in centers and along arterial corridors.

VFP-8.3 Adopt development regulations and standards that enable a transition over time, allowing long-standing uses to continue until the market justifies conversion to more dense or intense land uses.