

Economic Development Element Technical Appendix

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Summary of the Local Economy

Maple Valley is a community of 28,920 residents with 4,871 jobs in King County.¹ As part of King County, Maple Valley plans under the Growth Management Act (GMA). Cities and counties planning under GMA are encouraged to develop an economic development element in their comprehensive plans to “establish local goals, policies, objectives, and provisions for economic growth and vitality and a high quality of life.”² The analysis in this summary is part of Maple Valley’s 2024 comprehensive plan update process and will inform the goals and policies of the Economic Development Element.

The analysis included in this report is informed by guidance provided by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PRSC). In its VISION 2050, the PSRC sets a long-range regional plan for King, Pierce, Kitsap, and Snohomish Counties. This plan outlines a vision for a growing, thriving, and multifaceted regional economy. Maple Valley is part of this vision, and the economic development element of its comprehensive plan will align with the themes and goals of this regional planning vision.

Key Findings

Listed below are this report’s key findings about the assets and weaknesses of Maple Valley’s economy.

■ Assets

- Maple Valley offers a high quality of life and is situated with access to job centers and recreation opportunities in the Puget Sound region.
- The jobs-to-housing ratio shows an increase in jobs relative to housing over the 2010-2021 timeframe.
- Median household incomes in Maple Valley are higher than county-wide numbers despite slightly lower educational attainment.
- Commercial development in Maple Valley maintains low vacancy rates, with two main clusters of retail businesses that bolster local tax revenue.
- Current zoning has the capacity to fulfill Maple Valley’s job targets for 2044 (1,570 net new jobs), with more than half of this capacity coming from the Summit property under current zoning.

■ Weaknesses

- Most Maple Valley residents need to commute over 10 miles to their place of employment outside of the city. Transit connections are not robust, meaning most of those trips will be in private automobiles.
- There is a lack of walkability and pedestrian-scaled design in Maple Valley’s commercial districts. The City’s new Downtown Design Guidelines are intended to help change this.

¹ Population estimate from OFM, 2022. Jobs estimate from [PSRC, 2021](#).

² WAC 365-196-435

- While Maple Valley has many moderate- and high-income households, income disparity in the community remains and a quarter of households make incomes of \$75,000 or less annually. 20% of single mother-led households in Maple Valley are estimated to be below the poverty line, compared to 4% of households overall.
- Retail rents in Maple Valley decreased significantly in 2020.

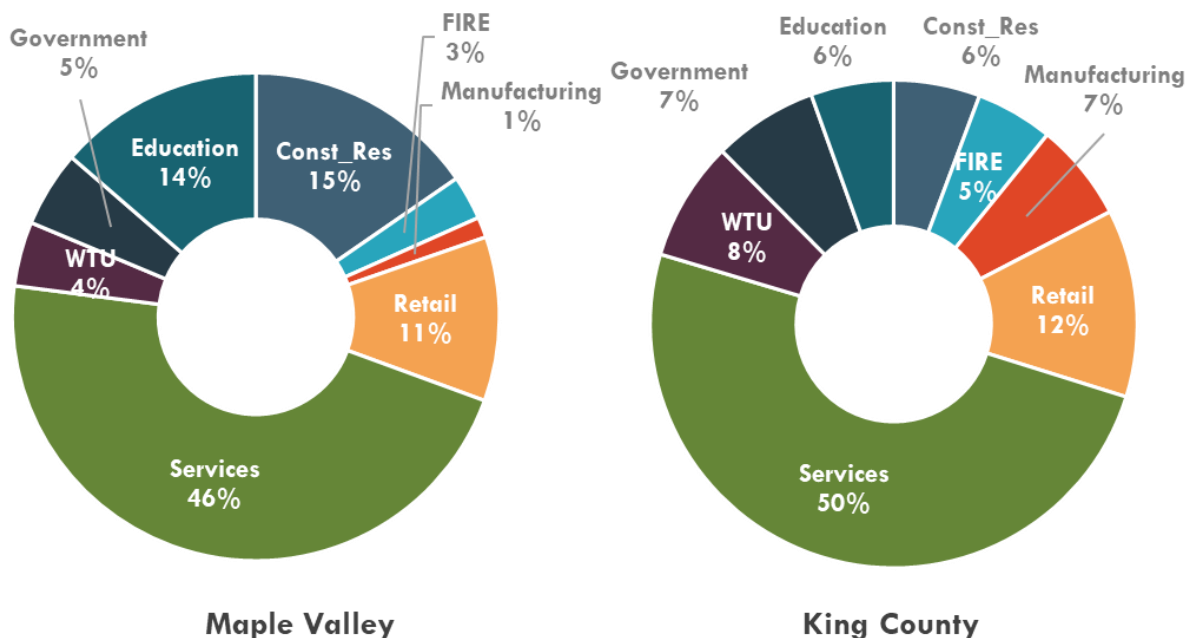
Understanding Maple Valley's Local Economy: Employment

As of 2021, Maple Valley was the location of 4,871 jobs.³ **Compared to the size of its residential population, Maple Valley can be considered a bedroom community, with a jobs-to-housing ratio of 0.50.**⁴ This figure reports that there are twice as many housing units as locally available jobs. This points to one of Maple Valley's core advantages: it is a quality residential community with access to regional job centers. The jobs ratio has been increasing over time, however, as the 2010 ratio was 0.39. This trend indicates an increased opportunity for local employment. As an example, Amazon has a new distribution center in Maple Valley that employs about 170 associates and 190 contract drivers.⁵

Exhibit 1 shows the share of Maple Valley employment by sector, as well as in King County to provide a point of comparison. Compared to King County, Maple Valley has relatively high concentrations of employment in Construction/Resources and Education. It has relatively low concentrations in Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade, Transportation, & Utilities (WTU).

About half of all employment is in the Services sector for both Maple Valley and King County.

Exhibit 1: Covered Employment by Sector in Maple Valley and King County, 2021.



³ [PSRC, 2021](#).

⁴ Jobs count from PSRC, 2021 and housing unit total from OFM, 2021

⁵ Amazon, December 2022. Personal communication with City staff.

Over the past 10 years, Maple Valley has experienced the greatest proportional employment gains in the Construction & Resources and Services sectors. Employment in Construction & Resources increased from 10% in 2010 to 15% in 2021. Employment in Services increased from 44% to 46%. Maple Valley has experienced the greatest proportional decreases in Government (9% in 2010 to 5% in 2021) and Retail (14% in 2010 to 11% in 2021).⁶ Possible reasons for these trends are listed below.

- **Construction & Resources.** These sectors were hit hard by the 2008 recession, but employment numbers started to bounce back in 2012. There were notable increases in 2015 and 2018.
- **Services.** The Services sector in Maple Valley seems to have experienced relatively consistent gains over the past 10 years.
- **Government.** Employment in government positions (City of Maple Valley, Tahoma School District, King County, etc.) in 2021 is the same, by total numbers, as 2000. There was a notable decrease from 2011 to 2012, a notable increase from 2018 to 2019, and then another drop from 2020 to 2021. The initial drop may be recession-related and the more recent dip could be COVID-related.
- **Retail.** The Retail story in Maple Valley has a few notable dips – the 2008 recession is particularly stark. The COVID pandemic also seems to have impacted these numbers, although it appears that the sector recovered in 2021.

Land Use and the Business Climate

Employment Capacity

Maple Valley's employment growth target for the 2019-2044 comprehensive planning period is 1,570 net new jobs.⁷ Land capacity estimates calculated by King County in 2018 found Maple Valley had adequate capacity to accommodate this target with current zoning. Based on the County's calculations, the City had capacity to provide 1,748 jobs,⁸ or 178 more than its target. Almost all of this capacity exists within Maple Valley's commercial zones, with more than half of this capacity coming from the Summit property.⁹

Recent zoning changes in Maple Valley are intended to support employment capacity. In 2021, the City adopted code amendments for its commercial, mixed-use zones. The code amendments require a slightly higher proportion of commercial development than residential development. Additionally, the City recently adopted Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines. The standards and guidelines are intended to improve walkability and foster a place that can serve at the "community heart" in Maple Valley, with activities for all age groups.¹⁰ Proposed allowed uses for the Downtown emphasize the importance of ground-floor commercial space. The proposed street design promotes pedestrian safety

⁶ [PSRC estimates](#) for sector-based employment reporting, 2000-2021.

⁷ King County Countywide Planning Policies, 2021. Page 24.

⁸ King County Urban Growth Capacity Report, 2021. Page 51.

⁹ King County Urban Growth Capacity Report, 2021. Page 209.

¹⁰ <https://www.maplevalleywa.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/30322/637914072216470000>

and connectivity. Successful projects that align with the Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines will create a new format for commercial development in Maple Valley. Existing development formats are explored below.

Commercial Development Patterns

Local business license records from 2022 identify 269 businesses in Maple Valley. Of these, 62% identify as home-operated, with examples such as artists, home daycare providers, or interior design services. Existing commercial space in Maple Valley is clustered in two primary locations: the area directly east of SR-18 around Witte Road SE and the area surrounding the intersection of SR-169 and SE Kent Kangley Road. There is an additional small cluster at the highway exit of Renton-Maple Valley Way. Satellite image views of these areas reveal suburban, auto-oriented development patterns, as shown in Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3. Buildings are mostly class B and C, grouped along arterial roads and major intersections.¹¹ Building age is fairly equally split across the decades of the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s.¹² Retail uses are the primary form of commercial development in Maple Valley, comprising 77% of commercial square footage. See Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 2: Satellite view of commercial development around Witte Road SE (Wilderness Village).



Image Source: Google Maps, 2023.

¹¹ Commercial building classes are described as class A, B, or C. These subjective categories capture elements such as the price, age, quality and available amenities of the building. Class A is the highest tier reflecting new and state-of-the-art buildings. Class B buildings are older but in good shape, and Class C are usually buildings in need or renovation or improvements.

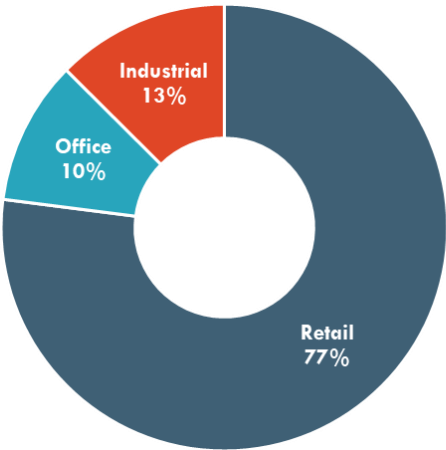
¹² Data source for building age and class: Costar, 2023.

Exhibit 3: Satellite view of commercial development along SR-169 and at SE Kent Kangley Road (Four Corners).



Image Source: Google Maps, 2023.

Exhibit 4: Commercial Space in Maple Valley (measured in square feet), 2023.



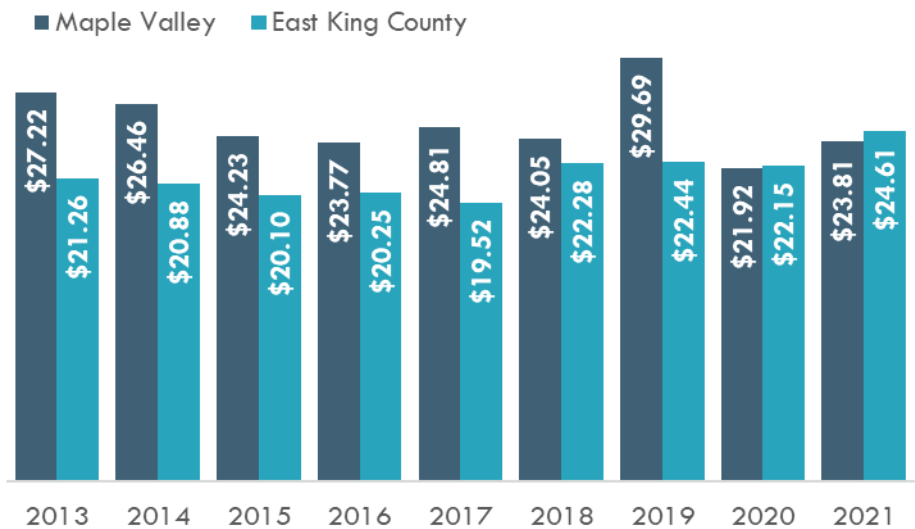
Sources: Costar, 2023; BERK, 2023

Retail Rents

Retail rent in Maple Valley has historically been strong. 2013 rents per square foot in Maple Valley were 28% higher than the East King County average, as shown in Exhibit 5. There was a sharp decrease in retail rents per square foot in Maple Valley in 2020, resulting in figures that much more closely track with regional averages in 2020 and 2021. This shift aligns with the timing of the COVID-19 pandemic,

which likely had a downward effect for retail rents in Maple Valley. Overall, both retail and office space in Maple Valley maintain low vacancy rates – 0.8% and 1.1%, respectively, in Q1 2023.¹³

Exhibit 5: Retail Rent per Square Foot in Maple Valley and East King County, 2013-2021



Sources: Costar, 2023; BERK, 2023

Business Survey Responses

As part of the City’s work to update the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan, a local business survey was distributed to all registered business license holders in Maple valley. Seventy-two (72) responses help to provide a finer-grain understanding of the local business climate in Maple Valley. A few findings of note from this engagement:

- Respondents praise Maple Valley as a place to do business due to its access to customers and its growing residential developments.
- About a quarter (26%) of respondents mention the cost of doing business in Maple Valley negatively while 30% give positive ratings to the same question.
- Top COVID-19 impacts are reported as increased supply costs (58% of respondents), supply shortages or disruptions (42%), and labor shortages or turnover (32%).

Demographics

Resident Incomes

The median household income in Maple Valley is \$125,092.¹⁴ This is 18% higher than the King County overall median, at \$106,326. Income brackets in Maple Valley reveal a large proportion of households who fall into middle-income groups: 57% at \$75,000-\$200,000 compared to 42% countywide. Smaller proportions of households fall into the highest and lower-income brackets. This “wide middle” income

¹³ Source: Costar, March 2023

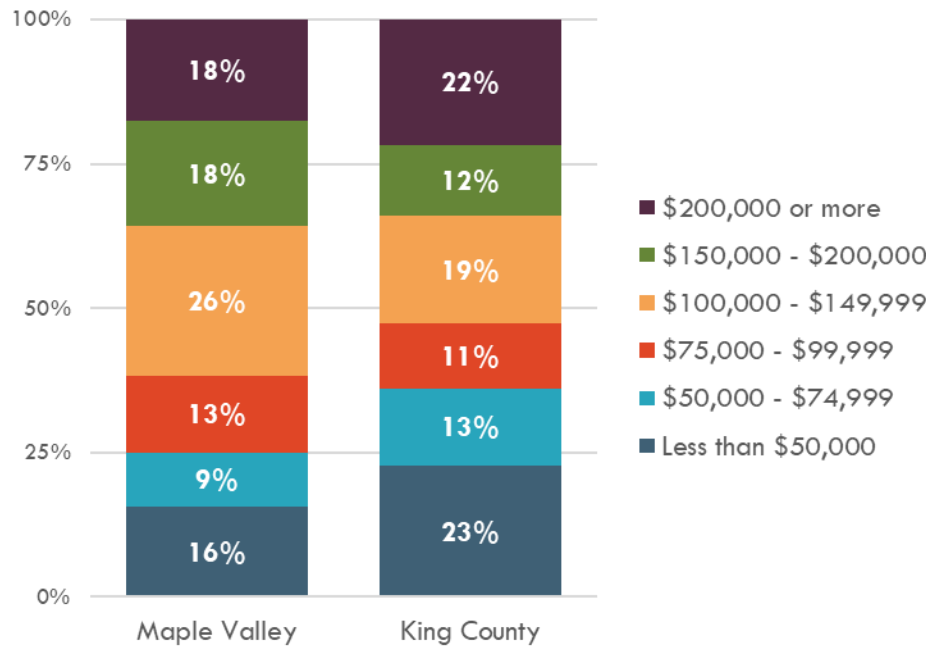
¹⁴ ACS 5-year estimates Table S1901, 2021.

spectrum reflects Maple Valley’s identity as a relatively affordable community in a region with access to well-paying employment opportunities. See Exhibit 6 for details.

Disaggregated for housing tenure, a stark disparity in incomes for renters versus homeowners is found in Maple Valley. Renter households have median incomes less than half the size of homeowner households (\$64,167 compared to \$133,233).¹⁵ While margins of error are high for small communities such as Maple Valley, disaggregation by race and ethnicity suggest that BIPOC residents have much higher representation among renter households in Maple Valley.¹⁶ Outreach to renter households could fill in important data gaps to understand the employment profiles and aspirations of these residents. Job training and employment access programs could focus on renter households to address racial disparities and provide benefits to those in greatest financial need.

An additional metric of income is the established national poverty level. In Maple Valley, 3.8% of families have incomes that fall below this line. This rate, however, is particularly high for single mother-led households: 19% of these families in Maple Valley are below the poverty level.¹⁷ In addition to renter households, single mother-led households are another important focus group for expanding and improving employment opportunities or assistance programs.

Exhibit 6: Percent of Household by Income Bracket in Maple Valley and King County, 2021.



Sources: ACS 5-year estimates Table S1901, 2021; BERK, 2023.

¹⁵ ACS 5-year Estimates Table S2503, 2021

¹⁶ Ibid. See Housing Inventory and Needs Assessment, Exhibit 11, for detail.

¹⁷ 2020 ACS 5-year data, summarized by [PSRC](#)

Workforce Demographics

The unemployment rate in Maple Valley is slightly higher than King County overall: 4.2% versus 3.0% in 2020.¹⁸ Maple Valley's working-age population (25+) has a strong high school completion rate, but lower college and graduate degree rates, than King County overall.

- Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the population over 25 has a high school diploma or higher, compared to a rate of 93% for King County.
- Forty four percent (44%) of adults have their high school degree as the highest level of diploma while 53% have a Bachelor's, Associate's, or higher Graduate degree.
- In King County, 62% of the population have a Bachelor's, Associate's, or Graduate degree.¹⁹

Maple Valley's median household income is higher than King County's, despite a lower concentration of the highest degree attainment. This suggests that residents are employed in family-wage, blue collar jobs or white collar jobs that don't require as much specialized education.

Spatial Analysis

Opportunity Mapping

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) uses an Opportunity Index to characterize the communities within its region. Census tracts that are considered "high" or "very high" opportunity areas have relatively more resources than the regional average, while those that are considered "low" or "very low" have relatively fewer resources. Resource categories included in this index are: education, economic health, housing and neighborhood quality, mobility and transportation, and health and environment.²⁰

The census tracts within Maple Valley are identified as "high" opportunity areas. With the exception of transportation, all observed categories receive ratings of "Moderate" to "Very High". This reflects strong access to amenities and a high quality of life across the community in Maple Valley. Transportation is the one index metric where the area receives "Low" ratings. Maple Valley does not have access to high-speed transit or RapidRide bus service but is served by King County Metro. The Maple Valley Park and Ride is located at the north end of town by Highway 18; bus service at this location was temporarily suspended as part of COVID-19 service reductions.²¹

Commute Patterns

Maple Valley is primarily a bedroom community, with many more residents than jobs. This is visualized in Exhibit 7 with data from the Census OnTheMap inflow/outflow analysis. This analysis reports that only 6% of working residents both live and work in Maple Valley. As a result, almost 4,000 employees who work in Maple Valley commute in from outside the community for work. On the whole, these commuting workers have lower incomes than those commuting out. Half (47%) come from nearby locations, within 10

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ ACS 2020 5-year data, summarized by [PSRC](#).

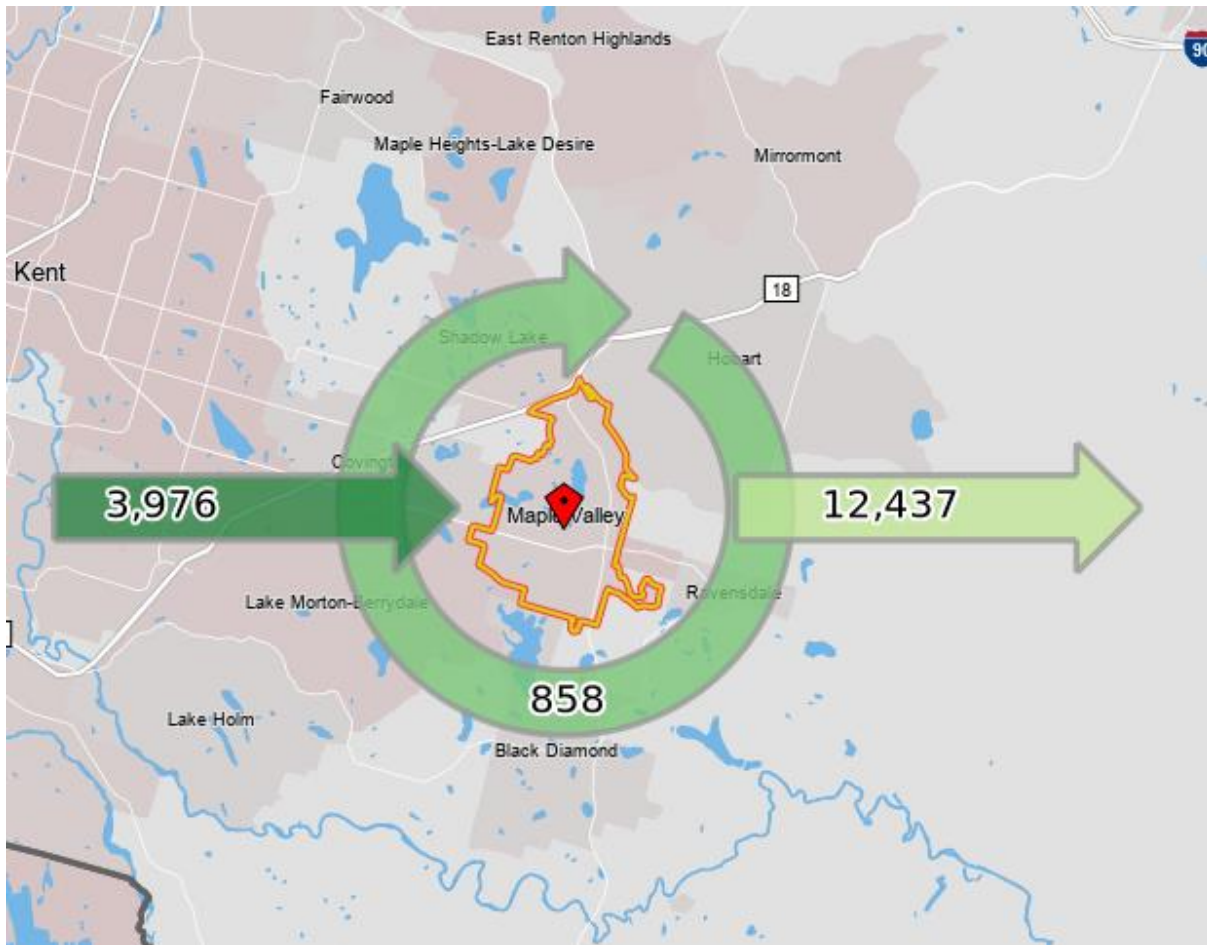
²⁰ [PSRC Opportunity mapping](#), accessed 2023

²¹ <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/travel-options/parking.aspx>

miles, while 53% commute from 10+ miles away. There are many reasons why one might choose to live in a different city from one works, but lower-wage workers commuting in from long distances points to a segment of the local workforce that find local housing unaffordable.²²

Of the workforce that lives in Maple Valley, 94% commute elsewhere for work. Three-quarters (76%) of these commute over 10 miles to their place of employment. Popular destinations include Seattle, Renton, Redmond, Issaquah, and Bellevue. With limited bus connections, it is likely that most of these workers drive to their place of employment. Maintaining transportation connectivity for these commuters is an important component to Maple Valley's economy.

Exhibit 7: Inflow/Outflow Analysis for Maple Valley



Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD; 2020 data

²² Census OnTheMap Inflow/Outflow and Distance/Direction analysis based on 5-year ACS data, 2020.

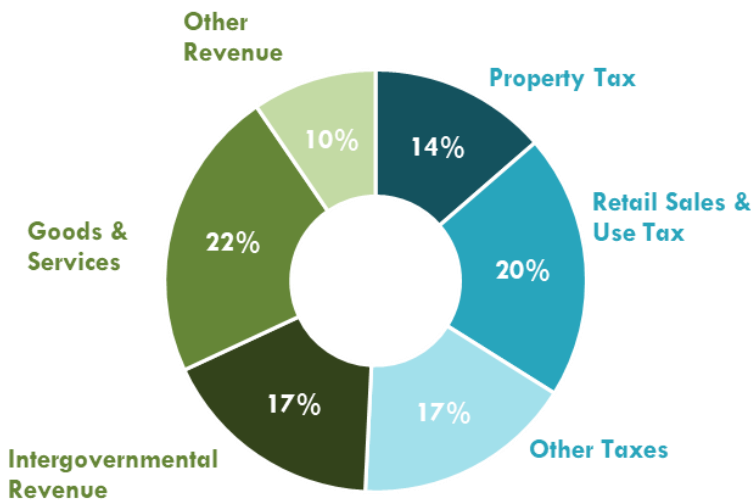
Taxes and City Revenues

The following discussion and figures are inclusive of all City of Maple Valley revenues, including General Fund and non-General Fund dollars and including Proprietary revenues for the Surface Water Management Program and the Lake Wilderness Golf Course Program.

Revenues to support City of Maple Valley services and capital investments come from a variety of taxes and other revenue streams such as state grants and utility charges. Revenues from the Retail sales and use tax is the largest source of tax revenue for the City, contributing 20% of City revenue in 2021, which points to the importance of retaining or growing the City’s commercial base. Property tax contributed 14% of total City revenues. In non-tax revenues, intergovernmental revenues and charges for goods and services such as utility charges and development fees contributed 17% and 22% of revenue, respectively, in 2021. See Exhibit 8.

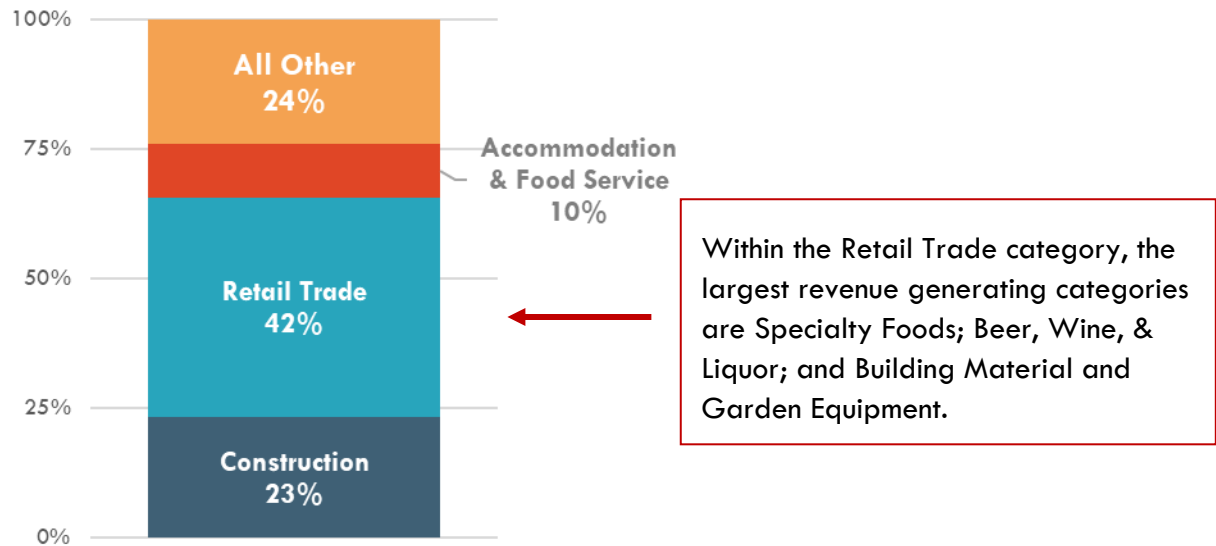
Taxable retail sales (TRS) data for Maple Valley from 2021 are summarized in Exhibit 9. Retail trade revenue accounts for 42% of TRS, followed by Construction (23%), and Accommodation and Food Services (10%). All other sources combine for the remaining 24%. Taxable retail sales have been growing. There was a significant jump in TRS related to Construction in 2021, likely related to construction of the Amazon facility, which increased almost \$60 million from 2020. This indicates a bump in real estate activity, similar to an increase in this category in 2016. See Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 8: City of Maple Valley Revenues by Category, 2021, all funds.



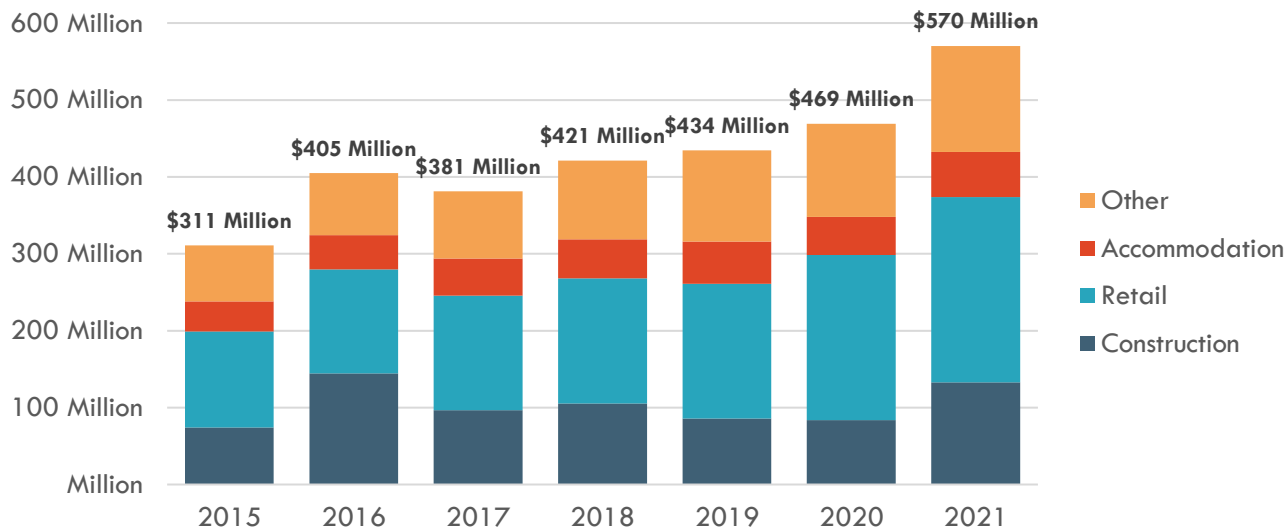
Sources: Office of the Washington State Auditor, 2023; BERK, 2023.

Exhibit 9: 2021 Taxable Retail Sales in Maple Valley, by 2-Digit NAICS.



Sources: Washington DOR, 2023; BERK, 2023.

Exhibit 10: Taxable Retail Sales Data, by 2-Digit NAICS in Maple Valley 2015-2021.



Sources: Washington DOR, 2023; BERK, 2023.