

# **DRAFT - CITY OF KALISPELL GROWTH POLICY PLAN-IT 2030**

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**Adopted by Kalispell City Council  
Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2014**

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# CITY OF KALISPELL GROWTH POLICY

## PLAN-IT 2030

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## Executive Summary

Dear Reader:

Kalispell, Montana is at a turning point in its history – and its future. When the first settlers came upon the fertile prairies north of Flathead Lake, with majestic mountains draped with lush timberlands on three sides, few could have imagined how this remote wilderness would change over the coming century.

Founded in 1891, as a division point for the Great Northern Railroad on its route through the Rocky Mountains, Kalispell’s founders positioned it as the financial, governmental and cultural center of the Flathead Valley. The railroad chose another route and relegated Kalispell to a branch line, but their vision held true and Kalispell has flourished in the intervening years.

As of 2014, Kalispell’s population stands at just over 20,000 residents, with a local and regional economy that belies its modest size. Kalispell is the heart of the Flathead Valley, and serves as the economic, cultural, and governmental center of a region that includes the world class recreational amenities of Flathead Lake, Glacier National Park, Whitefish Mountain Ski Area and thousands of square miles of National Forests.

Kalispell is expected and prepared to grow. “**Kalispell Growth Policy PLAN-IT 2030**” lays out a framework to guide growth in and around the City for the next 20 years. It was developed through a comprehensive outreach effort with scores of community groups with a stake in Kalispell, followed by an in-depth review by the Kalispell Planning Board and Kalispell City Council.

Following the adoption of the Growth Policy by the City Council, the next step is to begin development of the significant and relevant deliverables described in its recommendations. Of them all, there are five key projects that will have a tangible, positive impact on the citizens of Kalispell. They include:

1. The “**Core Area Plan**” that was adopted by the City Council in 2012. Its key components are the establishment of a rail-served industrial park on Kalispell’s northeast border, the relocation of the rail-dependent uses out of the Core Area, the creation of a linear park and trail across town, and the infusion of both private and public resources back into the neighborhood.
2. A “**Downtown Plan**” that takes a careful and considerate look at Kalispell’s historic downtown and courthouse corridor and identify the area’s key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; and then prioritizes and addresses the issues to energize and reinforce the historic downtown’s role as the heart of Kalispell.

3. The “**South Kalispell Urban Renewal Plan**” will explore and evaluate future scenarios facing the residential and commercial areas surrounding the Kalispell City Airport and along the U.S. Highway 93 South Corridor, with the goal of establishing a land use vision that can be fostered and built upon in the coming years.
4. The “**Kalispell Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan**” will use the completed sidewalk and trail inventory to create a conceptual pedestrian and bicycle network, identify and prioritize key missing links in the system, and establish strategies for improving and increasing the community’s non-motorized mobility.
5. The “**Kalispell Transportation Plan Update**” will ensure Kalispell’s road network keeps pace with growth and continues to serve the needs of its residents, businesses, and visitors. Kalispell’s Transportation Plan was last updated in 2008. At that time, the Highway 93 Alternate Route, connecting Highway 93 South with Highway 93 North, was still in the conceptual design phase, and was not certain enough to be included in the transportation models for the community. Now imminent, this project, and many other factors, will be incorporated into traffic demand models and future capital improvement plans.

Throughout its history, the development of the City of Kalispell has been a cooperative effort between its citizens, its businesses, and various government entities; and so has it been with the creation of “**Kalispell Growth Policy PLAN-IT 2030.**” A vision for the future of Kalispell is spelled out in the following pages, but that vision can only be realized through the actions of many people and organizations working for a variety of interests. “**PLAN-IT 2030**” serves to weave these actions into a cohesive fabric that will ensure Kalispell is a unique and vibrant place for people to live, work, and play – now and into the future.

Yours truly,

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Mayor Mark Johnson

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Doug Russell, City Manager

## Introduction: PLAN-IT 2030

The Kalispell Growth Policy is an official public document created and adopted by the City of Kalispell as a plan for future growth in the City. The growth policy is not a law or regulation, but rather a community guide for making land use decisions. The term “growth policy” is synonymous with “master plan,” “comprehensive plan” or “community plan.” Montana statutes require that a growth policy be adopted and that the City Council give consideration to the policies and pattern of development set out in the growth policy. The growth policy is implemented through different methods, including the adoption of zoning and subdivision regulations and the making public resource investments. When considering zoning, subdivisions, and other development issues; the growth policy should be consulted to ensure development is in substantial compliance with its goals and policies. The plan is intended to reflect the economic, social, and environmental visions of the City of Kalispell, its residents and various stakeholders. It is, at its most fundamental level, a blueprint for the physical development of the community.

The growth policy area boundaries shown in Figure 1, “Kalispell Growth Policy Planning Area”, illustrate three distinct planning areas covered by the Kalispell Growth Policy.

- The first is the Kalispell City limits, covering approximately 11.75 square miles. This is the only area the City can implement the growth policy. The future land use designations indicated on the map are only applicable when a property is proposed for annexation and do not have any effect on lands under County jurisdiction with regard to zoning, density, land use, subdivision, or other land use decision.
- The second is the annexation boundary and includes land beyond the city limits where City services are generally available or could be reasonably extended if the property were to be annexed into the City in the next ten years.
- The third is the Growth Policy Planning Area, which generally extends out three miles from the City limits. It is primarily taken from the transportation system and public works facilities plans, adopted by the City Council between 2006 and 2008. This is the area anticipated to be served by City of Kalispell water and/or sewer over the next 30 to 50 years. It has been used in this document to provide a vision for the future.

A vision statement has been developed for the community that is intended to reflect overall ideas about future growth and development in Kalispell.

“Kalispell is the commercial and governmental center of the Flathead Valley with a diverse economy, robust employment, and vibrant neighborhoods offering a variety of housing options; where community history and culture are celebrated, parks are abundant and well-maintained, greenways and trails connect the community, and public services provide for the needs of residents and visitors alike, while looking forward to future growth.”

The essential characteristics of the growth policy are that it is comprehensive, general, and long range. Comprehensive means that the document applies geographically to the entire community in order to coordinate its overall pattern of growth. Comprehensive also means that consideration is given to all of the basic functions that make a community work such as housing, the economy, land use, the environment, transportation, public facilities, and public services.

General means that the policy is broad in scope, focusing more on general principles and philosophy than detailed standards. Accordingly, the format of the document is an outline of issues, goals, policies, and recommendations, rather than legally described locations, engineered solutions, or detailed regulations on specific property.

Long range means that the growth policy looks beyond the present to anticipate future problems and opportunities. The period addressed by this policy is through the year 2030, with a scheduled annual review by the planning board. The growth policy should be updated every five years or sooner as needed. The update may result in a partial or full revision of the document as deemed necessary by the Kalispell City Council.

Legal foundations of the growth policy are found in Montana's Local Planning and Enabling Act (Sections 76-1-101 through 76-1-606, MCA) which outlines the contents and process for the preparation and use of the growth policy. These provisions state that the planning board shall prepare and propose a growth policy for review and approval by the governing body, in this case the Kalispell City Council.

The state statute prescribes the following specific elements be included in the growth policy document:

- A. Community goals and objectives;
- B. Maps and text describing the jurisdictional area;
- C. Projected trends for the duration of the growth policy;
- D. Policies, regulations, and other measures to be implemented in order to achieve the goals and objectives established above;
- E. Development, maintenance, and replacement strategies for public infrastructure;
- F. An implementation strategy that includes:
  - a. a timetable for implementing the growth policy;
  - b. a list of conditions that will lead to a revision of the growth policy; and
  - c. a timetable for reviewing the growth policy at least once every 5 years and revising the policy if necessary;
- G. A statement of how the governing bodies will coordinate and cooperate with other jurisdictions and the county in which the City or town is located on matters related to the growth policy;
- H. A statement explaining how the governing bodies will define, evaluate and make decisions regarding subdivisions and their impacts;
- I. An explanation of how public hearings regarding subdivisions will be conducted;
- J. An evaluation of the potential for fire and wildland fire in the jurisdictional area, including whether or not there is a need to delineate the wildland-urban interface.

### **Past Efforts**

The City of Kalispell adopted its first master plan in 1962. In 1974, the Kalispell City-County Planning Board updated the plan to reflect the changing conditions in the community. The 1974 plan was re-affirmed in 1978 when the County and the three cities of Whitefish, Columbia Falls, and Kalispell jointly undertook the preparation of the Flathead County Comprehensive Plan. In 1984, the Kalispell City-County Planning Board again undertook the task of updating the plan, a process that was completed in 1986, and the Kalispell City-County Master Plan was adopted.

From 1997 to 2001, a draft growth policy was produced through the combined efforts of the former Kalispell City-County Planning Board and the Kalispell City Council, but the draft was not adopted. The Kalispell City-County Planning Board, which represented a jurisdiction area of the City of Kalispell and surrounding county area of four and a half miles, was dissolved by Flathead County in 2001. The Kalispell City Planning Board was created with the City limits as a jurisdictional boundary and they continued work on the growth policy. The Kalispell City Planning Board used the 2001 draft document as a basis for the growth policy that was

ultimately adopted in February 2003. A resource and analysis section of the growth policy was prepared in conjunction with those earlier efforts and updated as new information became available.

### *Kalispell Growth Policy – Plan-It 2030*

In 2012, an outreach effort consisting of community presentations and workshops with various school boards, fire districts, community interest groups, and individuals was conducted. The feedback gathered during this effort was incorporated into the current draft.

The growth policy document is composed of the growth policy text and the future land use map, while the resource and analysis section provides support data dealing with social, environmental, and economic factors.

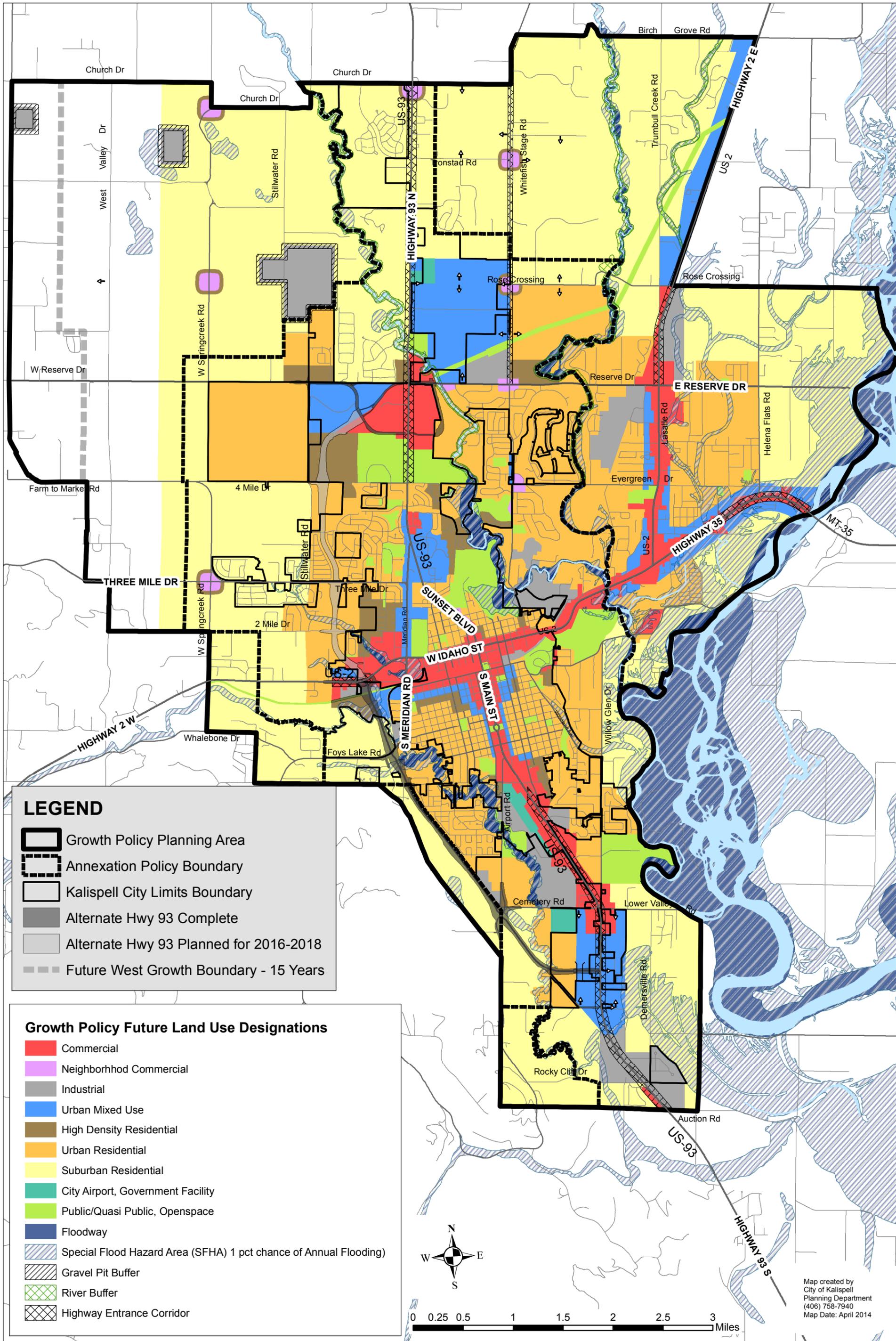
The policy document includes the following chapters:

- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A. Growth Policy Administration | I. Downtown                           |
| B. Community Growth & Design    | J. Historic and Cultural Conservation |
| C. Housing                      | K. Parks and Recreation               |
| D. Business                     | L. Transportation                     |
| E. Industry                     | M. Sand and Gravel Resources          |
| F. Agriculture                  | N. Kalispell Annexation Policy        |
| G. The Economy                  | O. Public Infrastructure              |
| H. Natural Environment          | P. Neighborhood Plans                 |

Each chapter is organized into a format of interrelated issues, goals, policies, and recommendations. The "issues" are statements of important trends, problems, opportunities, and community values. The "goals" are basic statements of the community's aims and priorities. The "policies" are the principles of action that guide the City in making decisions. The "recommendations" are specific actions to be considered by the City as part of an overall implementation strategy.

The future land use map found in the back pocket of this document is a geographic illustration of the plan's goals and policies applied to the growth policy area. The map indicates the types of land uses recommended in various locations, representing the recommendation of an orderly growth pattern. The text includes explanations of these map designations within related chapters. Like the text, the color map designation is part of the growth policy and it is intended to indicate generalized rather than exact locations for anticipated future land uses.

Figure 1  
Kalispell Growth Policy Planning Area Map



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## Chapter 1: Growth Policy Administration

Administration of the growth policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the City of Kalispell. Kalispell has a council / manager form of government with an eight member council and a mayor who votes on all matters. A full-time city manager administers the day-to-day business of the City. There are a number of boards and commissions that advise the council on a range of issues.

### Issues:

1. Cooperation between the City and other public service providers is critical to reinforcing an orderly development pattern in the growth policy area, coordinating the extension of public facilities and services, and addressing the numerous issues that cross over City-county boundaries.
2. There is a need for joint planning between the City and the County.
3. Development standards for the City and County at the urban / rural interface are not consistent.
4. Relationships with adjacent rural fire departments have improved in recent years.

### GOALS:

1. FOSTER CITY-COUNTY COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN MANAGING GROWTH AND COORDINATING PROVISION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES.
2. PROMOTE COOPERATION BETWEEN KALISPELL, UTILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND FLATHEAD BUSINESSES.
3. ENCOURAGE THE COUNTY TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT ZONING CONSISTENT WITH THE GROWTH POLICY LAND USE DESIGNATIONS FOR PROPERTY WITHIN THE POTENTIAL UTILITY SERVICE AREA.
4. ENSURE DECISIONS ARE FAIR, OPEN AND BASED ON GOOD INFORMATION THAT IS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND DECISION MAKERS.
5. THAT A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BE SIGNED BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE COUNTY THAT WOULD FORM AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES TO PROMOTE:
  - URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS.

- ZONE CHANGES, GROWTH POLICY AMENDMENTS, AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS.
  - SUBDIVISION PLAT REVIEW PROCESSES.
  - TRANSFER OF COUNTY ROADS TO THE CITY.
  - EXTENSION OF SERVICES INCLUDING SEWER AND WATER.
  - PUBLIC SAFETY, EMERGENCY SERVICES, AND RELATED FACILITIES.
6. THAT THE CITY AND COUNTY IDENTIFY WAYS TO SHARE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER RESOURCES TO INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS.
  7. THAT THE CITY MEET PERIODICALLY WITH THE COUNTY, SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS TO SHARE AND COORDINATE LONG-TERM PLANS FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS, AND UTILITY EXTENSIONS.
  8. SEEK WAYS TO PROVIDE FOR GREATER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.
  9. COORDINATION BETWEEN THE CITY AND COUNTY PLANNING BOARDS TO DEVELOP CONSISTENT LAND USE GOALS, POLICIES, AND A LAND USE MAP IN AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST

**Policies:**

1. Use this document as a guide for development and growth within the growth policy planning area.
2. Zoning and subdivision regulations should conform and be used to implement the provisions of this document.
3. Initiate City-County agreements or programs that would cooperatively influence the amount and type of growth within the growth policy area.
4. This document should be used when considering all development decisions.
5. Coordinate development codes in the City and outlying areas to promote the orderly expansion of the City.
6. The growth policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every five years by the planning board for relevancy and a report given to the Kalispell City Council who may initiate an update as needed. Amendments can also be made through the general growth policy

amendment process to address specific development projects that have not been anticipated or with a neighborhood plan to address specific areas within the community that have special needs or issues. Amendments outside these updates should be viewed cautiously and be based primarily on unanticipated changes.

7. Comprehensive updates of the growth policy should be considered when there is a major change in circumstances such as a significant increase or decrease in population, changes in economic or environmental conditions, or significant changes in public infrastructure and services.
8. Statements on how the public will be informed regarding development projects can ensure the integrity of the public review process.
9. Provide a mechanism to address large scale projects that have not been anticipated in the growth policy.
10. The City Council should be guided by their core values and vision statement when making land use decisions.

**Recommendations:**

1. Develop a cooperative relationship between the elected officials, government agencies, and utility service providers that results in consistent development standards, efficient use of public infrastructure and resources, and quality development.
2. Find ways to provide greater exposure for the public to the planning process, such as the local media, to encourage improved public involvement and interest.
3. Schedule meetings between the City and County planning boards to discuss goals and policies in areas of mutual interest and coordinate the growth policy to reflect a shared vision of the future.
4. Use the general growth policy amendment process to address large scale and / or complex projects that have not been anticipated in the growth policy.

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Growth in the Kalispell area has been cyclic with bursts of growth and then a leveling of the growth rate. During the early part of the 1990's there was a relatively high level of growth that stabilized during the last half of the 1990's. At the beginning of the 2000's the City experienced a rapid expansion of its boundaries due to both residential and commercial growth. This growth continued until 2009 when development of new homes and commercial businesses slowed dramatically. Within the next several years the number of foreclosed homes increased.

Beginning in 2012, the pace of development began to show signs of recovery, and 2013 has seen this trend continue. There is an emphasis on redevelopment of the existing urban core. Along with this new development and redevelopment, the community still considers the quality of life for its residents a significant issue that must guide the changes and growth of the City.

### Issues:

1. When growth rates fluctuate between moderate and high levels land use and planning must constantly adjust to meet the demand of increased growth pressures. According to the 2010 Decennial Census, of the 10 largest cities in Montana, Kalispell had the highest growth rate since 2000. The City of Kalispell had a population of 19,927 at the time of the 2010 Census. This represents a 40.1 percent increase since the 2000 Census and about a 4 percent average annual population growth during that decade.
2. Growth has both positive and negative effects on quality of life. Along with a good economy and examples of well-designed developments, the impacts of growth have also included disruption of established neighborhoods, strain on public facilities and services, environmental impacts, increasing traffic, escalating housing costs, and changing cultural values.
3. Most of the outlying zoning districts were adopted between 1987 and 1993 and have been applied throughout the growth policy area by the City and County as a result of development pressure. The City and County regulations are not always consistent leading to conflicts in development standards and haphazard development patterns.
4. Low-density development in outlying areas has created difficulties in the City's natural expansion of its infrastructure (streets, parks, water, and sewer lines) to accommodate the increase in the City's population.

5. The lack of coordinated planning between the City and County has led to strip commercial development outside of the City limits along the highways leading into and out of the City. This land use pattern further diminishes the existing commercial areas of the City and adds to the deteriorating functionality of the federal highways system outside of the City limits.
6. Finding ways of making infill growth more attractive and economical is necessary to equalize the trend toward low-density rural scale development typical on the City's fringes.
7. Information technology and the infrastructure needed to support it have changed greatly in recent years and will likely continue to do so in the future.

**GOALS:**

1. RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD COMPLEMENT THE COMMUNITY VALUES OF:
  - a. Creating walkable and bikeable neighborhoods
  - b. Design that integrates the new development into the surrounding neighborhood
  - c. De-emphasizing large parking lots adjacent to the street or highway and making the building the prominent feature from the street or highway
2. IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE, EFFECTIVE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM THAT RECOGNIZES AND UPHOLDS THE GENERAL WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS.
3. ENCOURAGE HOUSING TYPES THAT PROVIDE HOUSING FOR ALL SECTORS AND INCOME LEVELS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.
4. TARGET THE DOWNTOWN AND CORE AREA FOR REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY PROVIDING UPDATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS.
5. COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AND ENHANCE ADJACENT STREETS, PARKS, AND NATURAL FEATURES.
6. ENSURE KALISPELL IS EQUIPPED WITH THE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO CONNECT WITH GLOBAL MARKETS.
7. IMPLEMENT DESIGN STANDARDS AT THE HIGHWAY ENTRANCES TO THE CITY.

**Policies:**

1. Encourage resolution of disputes involving land use policy by broad participation, education, compromise, and consideration of private property rights with that of the neighborhood. Maintain mechanisms to provide for open, well-publicized public processes.
2. Encourage consistent government policies for development and infrastructure within urban areas.
3. Provide for land use changes which are complimentary to well-established residential areas that have significant neighborhood and cultural integrity, such as Kalispell's historic districts.
4. Design and locate development to protect public health and safety; ensure adequate provision of services; and complement the character of its surroundings.
5. Development by the public sector should comply with the same standards and rules as that of private sector development. Encourage, where feasible, development by the private, rather than public sector.
6. Partnering between public and private sector should be considered when greater efficiency of resources can be realized by both parties.
7. Encourage the design of urban public spaces such as local streets and public squares to be central areas framed by buildings, creating a visual quality of partial enclosure.
8. Encourage the design of urban streets to provide for convenient circulation, safe pedestrian access, and avoid excess road width that encourages speeding and makes pedestrian crossing difficult.
9. Encourage the design of new developments to relate to significant features of the surrounding area.
10. Encourage deployment of cutting edge information technology infrastructure to support and attract residents and businesses, while ensuring the preservation of the historic and cultural heritage and natural environmental of the community.

11. The highway entrances into the City should be developed as attractive gateways with broad setbacks, landscaping, and multi-use trails that tie in with the pedestrian and bicycle system.

**Recommendations:**

1. Maintain a municipal annexation program in conjunction with the City of Kalispell Water, Sewer and Storm Drainage Systems Facility Plan to address service to fringe developments.
2. Use the Kalispell potential utility service area plan as indicated in this document and taken from the Kalispell Facility Plan as a guide when deciding the future use and densities in a particular area.
3. Continually monitor, update, and streamline development codes to keep abreast of changing trends and technologies, to better coordinate the development review process, and to avoid unnecessary, costly delays in processing applications.
4. Encourage infill housing where public services are available by allowing guest cottages, garage apartments and accessory dwellings when feasible.
5. All zoning district designations should be reviewed for conformance with this Growth Policy. The City or neighborhoods may initiate zone changes in order to bring zoning into compliance.
6. Develop and adopt design standards for the highway entrances into City.

## Chapter 3: Housing

Affordable housing within the growth policy area is an important issue for the community. Inflation of housing prices, increased demands due to population increases, and an expansion of service related jobs have resulted in a need for additional moderate to low income level homes. There is also a need for more diverse housing types such as townhomes, condominiums and multi-family dwellings to accommodate smaller households.

### Issues:

1. Kalispell's population is expected to grow by up to 38% over the next two decades, increasing the demand for additional housing by as many as 3000 housing units by 2030.
2. The combination of increased housing prices and an expanding proportion of service related jobs have produced a significant shortage of low and moderate-income housing.
3. As housing ownership for traditional detached single-family houses has become increasingly more difficult for low and moderate income wage earners, the definition of what constitutes affordable housing should be re-examined.
4. Kalispell has a high proportion of seniors with special needs. While most local housing consists of single-family detached houses, demand is growing for a mix of housing types, such as more one-person households, assisted living housing for seniors, townhouses, apartment buildings, accessory apartments, and second homes.
5. There are relatively few quality rental housing options that are not single-family residences, duplexes, or townhouses.
6. Residential development in Kalispell has often occurred in a piecemeal manner, resulting in disjointed service delivery and a lack of community cohesiveness, expressed as streets not linking neighborhoods together, limited water line looping, unplanned and expensive sewer lift stations, and localized rather than regional storm water solutions. Additionally, it has been difficult to acquire and develop community and neighborhood parks, trail systems, and non-motorized connections.

### GOALS:

1. PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY AND MIX OF HOUSING THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF PRESENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS IN TERMS OF COST, TYPE, DESIGN AND LOCATION.

**Policies:**

1. All residents should have the opportunity to live in neighborhoods that provide safe and affordable housing.
2. City regulations should maintain standards to provide for varied affordable housing types, including detached single-family housing on small lots down to 2,500 square feet, townhomes, multi-family apartment buildings, and mixed use buildings.
3. Encourage the development of urban scale residential neighborhoods as the primary residential land use pattern in the growth policy area. These developments should incorporate design features that are either consistent with or anticipate the changing character of the area.
4. Encourage the provision of an adequate supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of low and moderate-income residents.
5. Give special consideration to functional design to accommodate seniors and disabled residents who have various special needs regarding housing, transportation, handicapped access, and services.
6. High-density housing developments and senior housing should be located in close proximity to other necessary services and incorporate bus stops and shelters in their design.
7. Allow low-impact home occupations that do not undermine a neighborhood's residential character.
8. Maintain the integrity of existing residential districts so they are bicycle-safe and pedestrian-friendly.
9. New residential subdivisions and multi-family developments should provide a full set of urban improvements, including paved streets, curbs, sidewalks, landscaping, street lighting, public water and sewer, and other public services. When possible, neighborhoods should connect to and complement the community's trail system.

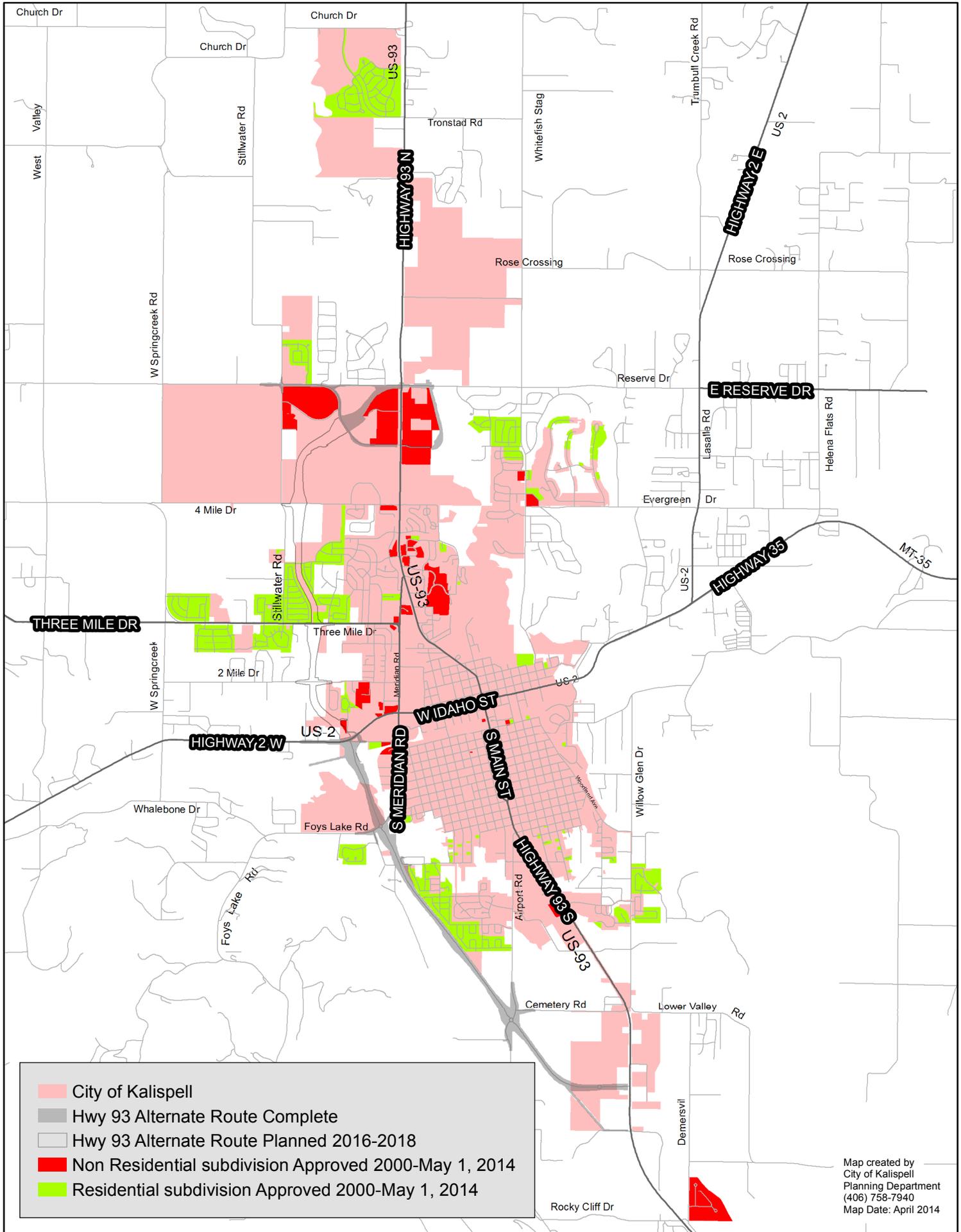
10. On larger tracts of land, creative design and a mix of housing types is encouraged within the overall density requirements to create more dynamic neighborhoods, to provide more open space, and to protect sensitive resource areas.
11. Low-density residential (suburban) neighborhoods should be developed at a density that does not exceed 4 dwelling units per acre on an overall site basis. An integrated development plan within a suburban neighborhood could include:
  - a. Single-family homes on lots down to 5,000 square feet,
  - b. Zero lot line and patio homes, when accompanied by generous open spaces and common areas, and
  - c. Townhomes.
12. Medium-density residential (urban) neighborhoods should be developed at densities between four and twelve dwelling units per acre on an overall site basis. An integrated development plan within an urban neighborhood could include:
  - a. Single-family homes on lots down to 2,500 square feet,
  - b. Zero lot line and patio homes, when accompanied by ample open spaces and common areas,
  - c. Duplexes and triplexes,
  - d. Townhomes; and
  - e. Limited mixed uses.
13. High-density residential neighborhoods should be developed at densities up to 20 units per acre, with some as high as 40 units per acre. An integrated development plan within a high-density neighborhood could include:
  - a. Zero lot line and patio homes, with open spaces and common areas,
  - b. Triplexes and Four-plexes,
  - c. Multi-family, and
  - d. Mixed uses.
14. Residential neighborhoods should have convenient access to the transportation network, business districts, parks, and schools via streets sidewalks and multi-use paths.
15. A variety of housing types and compatible land uses are encouraged in residential areas and should be designed to fit scale and character of the neighborhood. Where necessary, developers should utilize the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process to craft development proposals that are both innovative and creative, while maintaining the integrity and values of the community.

16. Encourage and promote the use of second floor residential units in the historic downtown and in the redevelopment of the core area.
17. Invest in the creation of neighborhood plans that seek to revitalize and energize deteriorated or blighted areas.

**Recommendations:**

1. Develop and implement an affordable housing strategy to effectively provide for the needs of low and moderate-income residents.
2. Develop programs for rehabilitation of deteriorating and historically significant housing and infrastructure.
3. Periodically review the zoning text and map to remain current with changing technologies and policies.
4. Develop a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle network in the community that includes the installation of new sidewalks and trails and the replacement of dilapidated sidewalks and trails to better serve and connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas.
5. Support the ongoing efforts of the Kalispell Community Development Department to encourage the creation of affordable housing options and programs.
6. Maintain the integrity of the historical east and west side districts by recognizing the existing streets as local streets rather than as collectors or minor arterials, specifically 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue East.
7. Foster the creation of neighborhood groups that are concerned with protecting and promoting the character of their neighborhoods and can serve a resource for revitalization efforts.
8. Encourage mixed uses to include residential units within the core area as it redevelops.
9. Identify older neighborhoods and areas of deteriorated or blighted housing stock and develop programs to assist in their stabilization and repair.

Figure 2  
Kalispell Subdivision Activity Map



<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:lightcoral; border:1px solid black;"></span>	City of Kalispell
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:gray; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Hwy 93 Alternate Route Complete
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; border:1px solid gray;"></span>	Hwy 93 Alternate Route Planned 2016-2018
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Non Residential subdivision Approved 2000-May 1, 2014
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Residential subdivision Approved 2000-May 1, 2014

Map created by  
City of Kalispell  
Planning Department  
(406) 758-7940  
Map Date: April 2014

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## Chapter 4: Business

Kalispell is the retail, commercial, and government center for the Flathead Valley. Four major commercial centers have developed through Kalispell's history. The first being Kalispell's downtown, which emphasizes historic character and architecture while being more pedestrian oriented. As an extension of the historic downtown, a redevelopment plan was recently completed for the "Core Area," which calls for the removal of the rail lines and transitions the district away from industrial uses toward a vibrant mixed-use, commercial, and retail environment. The second commercial center is south of Kalispell's original residential neighborhoods and the Flathead County Courthouse on Highway 93 South. This area has the hallmarks of an auto-oriented commercial district where individual properties developed independently with little thought given to pedestrians, landscaping or coordinated site design. The third commercial district, located on the westside of downtown on Highway 2 West, has declined significantly over the past twenty years, but reinvestment and redevelopment is beginning to occur and more seems imminent given construction plans for the Alternate Highway 93 (Kalispell Bypass), which crosses Highway 2 West on the west edge of the district. This area serves as transitional zone to high-density residential neighborhoods to the northwest. The fourth major commercial district has developed on Highway 93 North over the past decade. This area is also auto-oriented, but incorporates coordinated site and landscape designs that promote safety, functionality and aesthetics. In addition to the four major commercial centers, the Kalispell Regional Medical Center provides an important contribution to the economic diversity and prosperity of the area and has stimulated professional office development in the neighborhood area surrounding the hospital.

### Issues:

1. Although the main advantages of commercial corridors for businesses, such as highway visibility and high vehicle traffic, present design problems, because they lack secondary street access, bike and pedestrian access, and general aesthetic appeal.
2. Land with commercial zoning is available in the community but is sometimes located in undesirable areas where infrastructure is either lacking or in need of upgrades.
3. Downtown Kalispell has been impacted by the loss of department stores and general commercial dispersion.
4. Downtown Kalispell has been reinforced by the downtown shopping mall, expansion of specialty stores, and rehabilitation of existing historical structures.

5. Auto-oriented design of commercial areas that lack pedestrian and bicycle access and landscaping, have poorly designed parking lots, obtrusive signage, and reflect franchise architecture contribute to visual clutter that diminish the quality of life in the area.
6. Design standards are sometimes inadequate in producing desirable results at a district or neighborhood scale, especially in regards to community entrances and when districts develop in a piecemeal way.

**GOALS:**

1. ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF PROSPEROUS COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS, EACH WITH A VIABLE MIX OF BUSINESSES, SUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND A COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT PATTERN THAT REDUCES BUSINESS COSTS AND INCREASES SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES.
2. ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CORE AREA NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN.
3. LARGE SCALE RETAIL SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP IN AN ARCHITECTURALLY COMPATIBLE WAY AND WITH AN INTEGRATED SITE DESIGN INTERCONNECTING DEVELOPMENTS WITH EXISTING DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS RATHER THAN AS AN ISOLATED DEVELOPMENT.
4. PROVIDE ADEQUATE AREAS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY FOR COMMERCIAL EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT.
5. MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF WELL-ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL AREAS BY AVOIDING THE ENCROACHMENT OF INCOMPATIBLE USES AND PROVIDING SIGNIFICANT BUFFER AREAS BETWEEN INCOMPATIBLE USES.
6. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT STANDARDS THAT ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENTS ARE SAFE, ATTRACTIVE, AND FUNCTIONAL.

**Policies:**

1. Central business district (Downtown and Core Area neighborhoods):
  - a. Recognize the downtown and core area neighborhoods as the center of the community.
  - b. Work to create and support a prosperous core of retailers, restaurants and entertainment uses that keeps the central business district active and vibrant.

- c. Reinforce and take advantage of downtown's strengths including its higher concentration of people, investment in buildings and infrastructure, intricate mix of land uses, historic and architectural character, pedestrian orientation, and visitor attraction.
  - d. Recognize that there are special parking considerations downtown which differ from other areas. Encourage innovative parking management, effective regulation of on-street parking, shared parking provisions, parking standards that encourage reuse of upper floors, and provision of public parking lots and structures.
  - e. Encourage rehabilitation and reuse of existing downtown buildings.
  - f. Redevelopment in the downtown should consider the downtown's historic character and be compatible with the existing built environment.
  - g. Support redevelopment by improving infrastructure to assist the development community.
  - h. Encourage development and redevelopment by creating incentives for developers to off-set infrastructure and other site costs.
  - i. Redevelopment is encouraged to integrate a variety of residential housing types to accommodate people of different age groups and income levels.
  - j. Support and encourage the concentration of community events, civic functions, and activities in the downtown.
2. Neighborhood Commercial Areas:
- a. Establish neighborhood commercial areas designed to provide convenient goods and services that address the daily needs of the immediate neighborhood.
  - b. Neighborhood commercial areas should generally be three to five acres in size and be spaced one-half to one mile apart. Sites should be configured to enable clustering of neighborhood commercial businesses, emphasizing bike and pedestrian access.
  - c. Uses should be architecturally designed, landscaped and buffered to fit the surrounding neighborhood.
3. General Commercial
- a. Established commercial districts along major arterials are anticipated to provide areas for commercial uses that require space for outdoor display of merchandise, storage of materials and / or equipment and outdoor sales areas as well as general retail.
  - b. The expansion of additional commercial districts along major arterials is anticipated to occur at such time as the development or redevelopment of existing commercial

districts have significantly developed to avoid the creation of new commercial district and leapfrog development.

- c. Expansion of commercial areas should be contingent upon the provision of public services and adequate infrastructure with consideration given to anticipated impacts on the neighborhoods, streets and the natural environment.
- d. Accommodate traffic circulation and access in ways that are safe for both motorized and non-motorized users, and that complement the street environment, rather than detract.

#### 4. Highway Community Entrance:

- a. Emphasize the objective of a pleasing entrance to the City that encourages highway landscaping.
- b. In designated mixed use areas, allow for a compatible mix of office, commercial, light industrial, residential, and public facilities.
- c. Encourage the use of innovative land use regulations to achieve a pleasing community entrance.
- d. Encourage highway commercial development to adhere to the following design guidelines:
  - i. Encourage access by a secondary street or use of shared driveways and interconnected parking lots where secondary street access is not feasible.
  - ii. Increase building and parking lot setbacks.
  - iii. Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities into landscaped frontages.
  - iv. Landscape highway frontage and parking lots to enhance development sites and reduce visual impacts of development.
  - v. Keep signs simple to reduce clutter and allow rapid comprehension by highway motorists without undue distraction. Encourage variety and creativity in sign design.
  - vi. Outdoor storage, machinery, utilities, trash dumpsters, service bays, antennas, rooftop equipment, and similar accessory facilities should be hidden or screened from public view to protect aesthetic qualities.
  - vii. Outdoor lighting should be low intensity, directed downward and shielded to prevent glare.
  - viii. Allow for storm water facilities in landscaped areas when consistent and complementary with the overall design.

#### 5. Urban Mixed-Use Areas:

- a. Encourage the development of compact, centrally located service and employment areas that provide easy connections between existing commercial and residential neighborhoods.
- b. A complete system of pedestrian and bike paths is important in mixed-use areas.
- c. Expand the depth of urban highway commercial areas as mixed-use corridors, in order to provide an alternative to linear commercial development, concentrate more intensive uses along traffic arterials, improve business district circulation and transportation efficiency areas, by secondary street access, provide flexibility for larger development sites, and expand small business opportunities.
- d. Within these corridor areas, provide for higher-intensity, mixed-use areas roughly two blocks on both sides of urban highways. As distance from the highway increases, create a gradual transition into the residential neighborhoods by encouraging multi-family, offices and other compatible uses as a transition tool with sensitivity to compatible design.
- e. Avoid encroachment into established, intact residential areas.
- f. Allow a compatible mix of higher-intensity uses including office as well as some commercial and light industrial; medium and high-density residential and public facilities.

**Recommendations:**

1. Historical character of the downtown area should be enhanced with compatible architectural design of buildings.
2. Adequate consideration should be given to parcel boundaries to avoid splitting lots into different zoning districts when reasonable.
3. Develop design standards for highway community entrance areas that incorporate design guidelines outlined in this section.
4. Encourage the development of compact, centrally located service and employment areas in order to provide easy access to existing commercial and residential neighborhoods.
5. When large-scale development may have significant impacts on the community, studies should be provided to assist in assessing impacts including analysis related to traffic, infrastructure and the cost of providing services.

6. Establish development standards that encourage residential mixed-use development in established commercial and light industrial areas.
7. Reinforce the major strengths of downtown which are its central location; its density and intricate mix of land uses, its historic districts and appealing pedestrian environment, its civic functions as the seat of City and County government, and its symbolic importance as the center of community.
8. Explore ways the City of Kalispell can create financial and other incentives to encourage improvements that lead to the redevelopment of unused existing commercial and downtown housing space.
9. Continue to monitor and enforce sign standards and policies so non-conforming signs are removed and replaced with conforming, attractive signage.
10. Encourage design standards for commercial projects that contribute to community character.

## Chapter 5: Industry

Kalispell's downtown and core area was once the hub of industrial activity for the City. Over the last 50 years this industrial hub has changed to a mix of commercial, retail and service-based businesses. The City is now encouraging industrial development at a planned “rail park” on the east side of the City, north of U.S. Highway 2, and near the south boundary of the City away from the historic downtown and residential neighborhoods, where industrial land uses are less likely to impact residential and retail areas.

### Issues:

1. As technology and the economy have evolved the demand for traditional industrial/manufacturing sites with rail access have declined, and the need for areas with full urban services in high-tech industrial park settings have increased.
2. Traditional higher paying construction and manufacturing jobs are have declined steeply since 2008, while lower-paying retail, service and tourist oriented jobs have held steady or increased somewhat.
3. The health care and social assistance employment sector has improved steadily over the past decade.
4. There is a need for light industrial property as part of the future growth of Kalispell, but no quantifiable information is available that assesses market conditions, absorption potential and vacancy rates.

### GOALS:

1. ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF PROSPEROUS INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS, EACH WITH A VIABLE MIX OF BUSINESSES, SUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND A COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT PATTERN THAT REDUCES BUSINESS COSTS AND INCREASES BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES.
2. HIGH TECH INDUSTRIAL BUSINESSES ARE ENCOURAGED TO LOCATE WITHIN INDUSTRIAL AREAS.
3. PROVIDE ADEQUATE AREAS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY FOR INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT.

4. MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS BY AVOIDING THE ENCROACHMENT OF INCOMPATIBLE USES.
5. IMPLEMENT STANDARDS THAT ENSURE A HIGH QUALITY FUNCTION AND DESIGN IN NEW DEVELOPMENT.
6. DEVELOP A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF FUTURE INDUSTRIAL NEEDS IN ORDER TO BE RESPONSIVE TO POTENTIAL GROWTH.

**Policies:**

1. Designate adequate and suitable areas for industrial uses.
2. Consider the addition of some high-tech industrial uses within commercially zoned areas.
3. These areas should have adequate access to rail, highway, and airport facilities and be of sufficient size to allow for future expansion.
4. Continue to work with the Flathead County Economic Development Authority on the development of the former McElroy and Wilkins gravel pit site into now a rail served industrial park.
5. Encourage non-rail served industrial businesses to locate in the appropriately-zoned areas along the Highway 93 South corridor.

**Recommendations:**

1. When large-scale development may have significant impacts on the community, studies should be provided to assist in assessing impacts including analysis related to traffic, infrastructure and the cost of providing services.
2. Explore ways the City of Kalispell can create financial and other incentives to encourage improvements that lead to the redevelopment of underutilized lots with zoned for industrial uses.

## Chapter 6: Agriculture

The preservation of agricultural lands within the Growth Policy Planning Area is important for maintaining the rural character of the Flathead Valley and for the fulfillment of a logical, efficient pattern of planned growth. When land is developed at low densities, just outside the City limits, but within the Growth Policy Planning Area, without the benefit of City services and other required subdivision improvements, these areas become a hindrance for future urban scale development within the City and take viable agricultural lands out of production. When new urban scale developments are proposed that require Kalispell's services, the City must often "leap frog" past these subdivisions, compounding infrastructure development costs and straining public services. The western and northern portions of the planning area have a significant amount of agricultural land. However, since the year 2000, it is estimated that 1,200 acres (just under 2 square miles) of agricultural land was converted to mainly medium-density residential subdivisions.

The last several decades have seen the emergence of "urban agriculture" as a concept that seeks to foster and maintain local food systems where all aspects of food production and processing are carried out in relatively close proximity to the consumers. The belief is that when local food systems are supported it enhances the health, economy, society and environment of that area. Maintaining agricultural areas adjacent to the City of Kalispell

### Issues:

1. Development of agricultural lands that provide a source of food and wood products, export income, scenic open space, wildlife habitat are at risk because of economic and development pressures.
2. Agriculture in the urban / rural fringe areas although a traditional component of the regional economy, is in transition resulting in the conversion of agricultural land to residential subdivisions that can create conflicts between existing agriculture and expanding City urban and suburban scale densities.
3. Rural lands close to the City are an important part of the City's future urban expansion area and can be vulnerable to untimely low density development that is not supported by urban services and facilities.
4. Conservation easements and similar voluntary mechanisms have become successful methods of conserving agricultural land, but no local government programs currently exist to purchase development rights.

5. High land costs are a major impediment to maintaining and expanding the farming business.

**GOALS:**

1. MAINTAIN A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY BASED PRIMARILY ON SMALL SPECIALITY CROPS INTENDED FOR A LOCAL MARKET.
2. ENCOURAGE VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS.
3. ENCOURAGE HIGHER DENSITY MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS ON LANDS WITHIN AND CLOSE TO THE CITY LIMITS.
4. DISCOURAGE SUBURBAN AND EXURBAN PATTERNS OF GROWTH ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS SURROUNDING THE CITY.
5. WORK CLOSELY WITH THE COUNTY ON PRESERVING AGRICULTURAL LANDS WITHIN THE GROWTH POLICY PLANNING AREA.

**Policies:**

1. Encourage and create incentives to conserve agricultural lands.
2. Encourage urban growth only on agricultural lands entirely within the City's annexation policy boundary.
3. Encourage the use of conservation easements to protect productive agricultural lands outside of the City's annexation policy boundary.
4. Encourage infill development within the existing City limits to maintain the important agricultural lands on the City's fringe.
5. Agricultural lands classified as prime farmland, prime farmland if irrigated or farmlands of statewide importance should only be developed to urban scale densities at such time municipal services are available to the area and they are within the City's annexation policy boundary.
6. Support right to farm language in developments adjacent to or in close proximity of farmland.

**Recommendations:**

1. Cooperation between the City and county governmental bodies should be fostered so that development or redevelopment of the agricultural and rural areas close to urban services can be easily accomplished.
2. Suburban and rural areas that are in close proximity to the City limits and public services should be developed in such a way that accommodates future redevelopment to a higher density.

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## Chapter 7: The Economy

The Kalispell area has a diverse economy with health care, retail trade, tourism, manufacturing, and construction being the largest contributors to the local economy, followed closely by professional and administrative services and wholesale trade. Farming and forestry are still important in the overall economic picture in the Flathead Valley, although there has been a decline in these sectors over the past several decades. In recent years, the largest gains in the local economy have been in the health care and financial services fields.

### Issues:

1. Although Kalispell functions as the commercial, retail, health care, educational and government center of Flathead County, it comprises only 22% of the area's population.
2. In 2012, the population in Kalispell over 16 years of age was estimated at 15,271 people with an estimated 10,213 (67%) of those people in the labor force. By comparison, Flathead County has 72,254 people over 16 years of age, with 46,661 (65%) in the labor force.
3. The unemployment rate for Flathead County in 2013 was the lowest it has been since 2008, with a low of 5.9% in September.
4. Median household income for Kalispell was estimated to be \$39,371 in 2012.
5. The traditional economic base of the Kalispell area industries including wood products manufacturing, metal refining, railroad, and agriculture was replaced during the 1990's with more service and tourism based, lower paying jobs and this continues today.
6. The retail (5,504 jobs), health care (5,125 jobs), government (4,998 local, state & federal jobs) and accommodations/food services (4,830 jobs) sectors of the economy provide 55% of the employment base for the Kalispell and are responsible for creating most of the new jobs in the area.
7. The average health care position (\$42,000 per year) and government position (\$40,000 per year) pays above Flathead County's average annual per capita wage of \$34,458, but the retail and food service sectors are below the average at \$25,000 and \$14,700 per capita, respectively.

8. The lack of a joint planning policy between the City and County for the area around Kalispell presents challenges in providing sound infrastructure, growth management, and environmental protection, but also offers an opportunity to strengthen the local economy if a joint policy can be agreed upon.

**GOALS:**

1. PROVIDE FOR AND ENCOURAGE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF JOBS, HIGHER MEDIAN INCOME FOR THOSE JOBS, AND A STABLE, DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY.
2. ENCOURAGE THE LOCATION OF HIGH TECH INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS AND WEB BASED INDUSTRIES IN THE COMMUNITY.
3. STRENGTHEN KALISPELL AS A REGIONAL RETAIL CENTER THAT STRIVES TO CAPTURE MORE LOCAL AND OUT OF COUNTY DOLLARS.
4. STRENGTHEN KALISPELL AS A REGIONAL HEALTH CARE CENTER THAT PROVIDES A BROAD SPECTRUM OF HEALTH CARE RELATED SERVICES WITH DIAGNOSTIC, THERAPEUTIC, AND VARIED MEDICAL SERVICES AVAILABLE.
5. NEW BUSINESS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO LOCATE IN THE DOWNTOWN AND CORE AREA NEIGHBORHOODS.

**Policies:**

1. The growth policy should be a key element in guiding economic development efforts.
2. Encourage a land-use pattern that supports viable business and industrial districts that integrate a residential component but does not negatively impact or encroach into well-established residential neighborhoods.
3. Provide adequate space for growth that carefully considers the type, location, and design of industrial sites, shopping areas, and tourist facilities.
4. Provide for adequate infrastructure and public services to support viable business and industrial districts.
5. Work with educational institutions such as the Flathead Valley Community College to provide technical education and training programs that meet the needs of new or expanding job markets.

6. Work with business and industrial associations to promote and coordinate business and industry in accordance with the growth policy.
7. Work with economic development organizations to further growth policy goals and policies and to encourage countywide coordination of their efforts.
8. Support the Kalispell area's position as a regional commercial center and a location of major health care, government, industrial facilities and retail services.
9. Support activities to ensure that the Central Business District remains strong and viable by protecting and promoting the historic district; make downtown more aesthetically appealing; cater to the needs of the pedestrian; promote downtown events and activities; encourage a compatible mix of retail, restaurants, services, entertainment, and housing.
10. Support amenities and activities that promote the Kalispell area as a retirement, tourism, convention, and arts destination.

**Recommendations:**

1. Support the business improvement districts (BID) to strengthen commercial districts within the City.
2. Coordinate with Flathead Job Service and other organizations to develop jobs within the City.
3. Pursue grants to help with economic development and locating businesses within the City.
4. Develop incentives for business and industry that offer higher paying wages to encourage them to locate within the City.
5. Focus efforts on the downtown and core area neighborhood for grants to assist in business retention, expansion and attraction.

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## Chapter 8: Natural Environment

Important natural resource and environmental factors in the growth policy area include hydrology, floodplains, air quality, steep slopes, soil limitations, wildfire hazards, trees, forest cover, wildlife habitat, and agricultural lands. The topography and geography of the Kalispell growth policy area presents certain development constraints due to wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, and hydric soils. Most of the growth policy area consists of nearly level alluvial lands, bottom lands, and low terraces. The Flathead, Whitefish, and Stillwater Rivers in the eastern half of the growth policy area are part of a large riparian complex which creates a large floodplain area. Steep slopes in the southwest portion of the growth policy area pose limitations to development. The steep slopes in combination with timberlands create wildfire hazards. Productive farmlands in the southern and northern part of the growth policy area contribute to the cultural, economic, and historic character of the growth policy area.

### Issues:

1. The natural environment is an important part of what makes the area an appealing place to live which may be jeopardized as unplanned growth occurs.
2. Various key sectors of the area's economy depend upon and impact the natural environment.
3. Development of the farming, ranching and woodland areas reduce open space that functions in a practical and productive manner.
4. The 100-year floodplain is prevalent in many areas and poses significant development limitations due to federal permitting requirements, fill limitations, and subdivision restrictions.
5. Soil stability and erosion pose limitations on development on or near sloping sites, particularly along the high banks of the Whitefish and Stillwater Rivers.
6. Water quality continues to be an important issue to the community and ways to avoid nutrient loading and other forms of water contamination to the Flathead River Basin become critical.
7. Water quality has the potential to be degraded by development due to erosion, storm water discharge and on-site sewage treatment systems.

8. Wildlife and wildlife habitat is being displaced by residential development resulting in the loss of important habitat.
9. Areas disturbed during development of subdivision roads, building sites and other construction activity can contribute to erosion and the spread of noxious weeds if not properly restored and maintained.
10. There is a high degree of exchange between the surface and groundwater in the Flathead River system. The shallow aquifer is connected to the Flathead River and helps to maintain high water quality in the river and is particularly vulnerable to contamination by human activities.
11. The City's street tree inventory is largely split between very mature trees and young trees installed as part of new subdivisions in the past ten years.
12. The City's street tree population was heavily impacted by Dutch Elm Disease, and the removal of the dead trees has exceeded the Parks Department's financial and personnel resource capacities creating a backlog of deferred maintenance

**GOALS:**

1. ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH OR ENHANCES NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES INCLUDING AIR, WATER, SOIL, AND VEGETATION.
2. DEVELOPMENT NEAR ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED SO THAT THESE FEATURES ARE LEFT IN A RELATIVELY UNDISTURBED STATE.
3. HIGH LEVELS OF AIR QUALITY AND WATER QUALITY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED THROUGH DESIGN STANDARDS.
4. DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH IMPORTANT WILDLIFE HABITAT CORRIDORS.
5. PROTECT THE HEALTH AND INTEGRITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BECAUSE OF ITS IMPORTANCE IN MAINTAINING A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE WITH OTHER REGIONS.
6. PROTECT WETLAND AND RIPARIAN AREAS SINCE THEY ARE IMPORTANT IN FLOOD PROTECTION, MAINTAINING WATER QUALITY, AND PROVIDING HABITAT.

**Policies:**

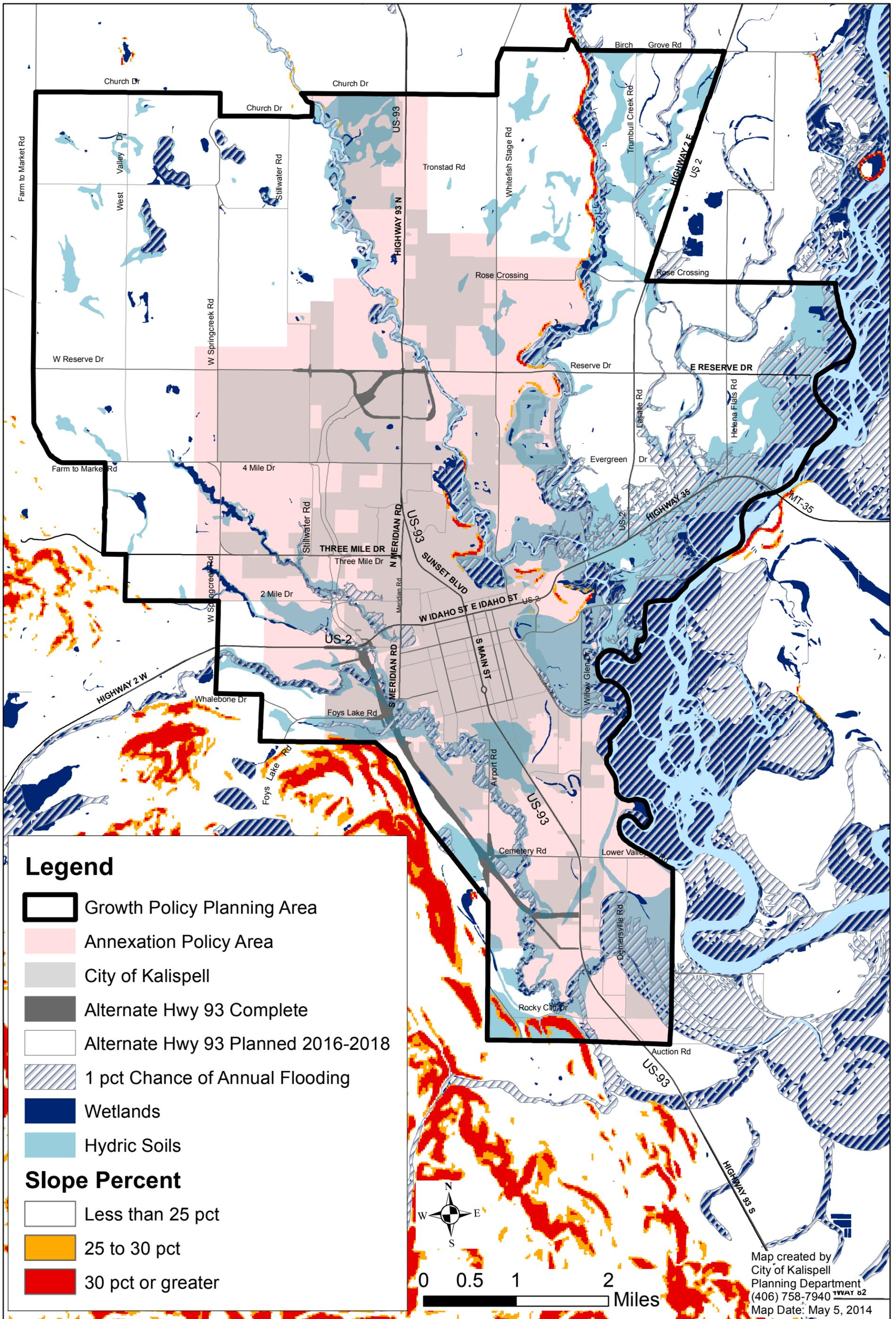
1. Encourage infill, clustering, and other compact development patterns to lessen impacts on sensitive lands.
2. Implement measures to assist in maintaining high water quality and load reduction for the Flathead Basin.
3. Development in areas that have known high groundwater in close proximity to public utilities should be discouraged until such time as public sewer is available.
4. Filling of wetlands and the 100 year floodplain should be avoided.
5. Noxious weed controls should be implemented through revegetation of disturbed areas immediately after development along with adequate controls after development.
6. Diversion, channelization, and diking of natural rivers and streams are generally prohibited by federal and state regulations and should be prohibited.
7. Protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat should be encouraged through conscientious actions such as not feeding large wild animal species, maintaining important habitat areas, and limiting loose dogs.
8. Wildlife travel corridors should be conserved and maintained possibly through easements or other voluntary restrictions.
9. To prevent compromises to the built and natural environment, utilities shall be placed underground in new developments, hilltop or ridgetop development should be avoided, signage should be simple and unobtrusive, and lighting shall be dark-sky compliant.
10. Development should be designed to avoid and minimize impacts to the environmentally sensitive areas including:
  - a. The 100-year floodplain
  - b. Wetlands, riparian areas and shallow aquifers
  - c. Streams and rivers
  - d. Steep slopes
  - e. High bank areas adjacent to the Whitefish and Stillwater Rivers and their tributaries.

11. A healthy, sustainable urban forest along city streets, in parks and open space lands, and on private property is vital to the quality of life in the community, the value of property, and mitigating other environmental impacts.

**Recommendations:**

1. The City should coordinate with the County in developing a community-wide drainage plan encompassing the City and surrounding suburbs, to reduce water pollution and flooding.
2. Coordinate regulatory programs involving floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas, including unstable river banks, steep slopes, wildlife habitat, and water quality.
3. Limit and mitigate impacts related to outdoor lighting by enforcing dark sky compliant lighting regulations.
4. Protect the shallow aquifers as sensitive water quality zones and establish performance standards.
5. Develop and implement a non-point source pollution abatement plan for the growth policy area.
6. Develop an Urban Forestry Management Plan for the City that describes the tree inventory of the City, identifies short and long range management prescriptions, lays out the resources needed to manage the resource, and proposes strategies for maintaining and managing the City's tree and forest cover.
7. Work with developers early in the process to maintain and protect existing trees when development is proposed and consider providing parkland credits when significant trees or stands of trees are protected in long-term conservation easements.

Figure 3  
Environmentally Sensitive Resources Map



**Legend**

-  Growth Policy Planning Area
-  Annexation Policy Area
-  City of Kalispell
-  Alternate Hwy 93 Complete
-  Alternate Hwy 93 Planned 2016-2018
-  1 pct Chance of Annual Flooding
-  Wetlands
-  Hydric Soils
- Slope Percent**
-  Less than 25 pct
-  25 to 30 pct
-  30 pct or greater



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Map created by  
City of Kalispell  
Planning Department  
(406) 758-7940 TW 62  
Map Date: May 5, 2014

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Kalispell's downtown and core area both developed in the late 1800's and early 1900's, and have played a prominent role in the City's history and development. The downtown, located along Main Street south of Center Street to the Flathead County Courthouse and several blocks to the east and west, remains the heart of the community and serves as an important economic contributor in the City as a tourism destination and as a home to a number of local businesses. The core area, situated between First Street and Washington Street and the City-limits on east and west, was once the vibrant industrial center of Kalispell. In recent years, with the general exodus of industry and decline of rail accessibility, the core area has begun to show signs of blight and neglect and is ripe for redevelopment. The downtown and core area are the historic and cultural identity of the community with a history museum, an arts museum, and numerous historic buildings constructed during the City's early years.

### Issues:

1. Excessive through traffic in the downtown and core area detracts from the preservation and maintenance of the historical and cultural character and undermines pedestrian and bicycle safety and access.
2. The central business district lacks cohesiveness and a strong cultural center.
3. Water mains are absent on the west side of Main Street making it challenging to install fire suppression systems to meet current fire safety codes.
4. Retrofitting existing buildings in the Downtown to meet City building code requirements can be excessive in costs and be detrimental to maintaining the historic integrity of the building.
5. Development and other changes in the downtown can be incompatible with the scale, patterns, landmarks, and architecture of its surroundings.
6. The railroad corridor in the core area was once a major economic contributor to the City, but is now a barrier to vehicle and pedestrian movement that is deterring reinvestment and redevelopment.

### GOALS:

1. ENCOURAGE DESIGN THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN AND THAT PROMOTES SAFE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS.

2. DIVERT HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC FROM THE DOWNTOWN AND SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS.
3. NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE AND ITS ATTRACTIVENESS AS A RETIREMENT AND TOURISM DESTINATION.
4. STRENGTHEN THE DOWNTOWN AS A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CENTER OF THE COMMUNITY AND A VIABLE COMMERCIAL CENTER FOR RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS.
5. PRESERVE AND ENHANCE KALISPELL TRADITIONAL TOWNSCAPE OF MAIN STREET AND NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS DESIGNED FOR SLOWER VEHICLE TRAFFIC, WALKING, BICYCLING AND HISTORIC TOWN ATMOSPHERE.
6. ENCOURAGE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF BUILDINGS IN THE DOWNTOWN TO INCLUDE A MIX OF USES.
7. CREATE A VIBRANT MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE CORE AREA BUILT AROUND THE RAIL-TRAIL CORRIDOR.

**Policies:**

1. Development and other changes in downtown should be compatible with the scale, patterns, landmarks, and architecture of its surroundings.
2. Promote a mix of uses in downtown buildings emphasizing retail uses on the main floor and offices or residential uses on upper floors.
3. Encourage residential density in the downtown and particularly in the core area as it redevelops.
4. Encourage the design of urban streets to provide for convenient circulation, safe pedestrian and bicycle access and avoid excess road width that encourages speeding and makes roadway crossings difficult.
5. Encourage the design of new development to relate to significant features of the surrounding area.
6. Promote street reconstruction that includes upgrading water mains and fire suppression lines to individual buildings.

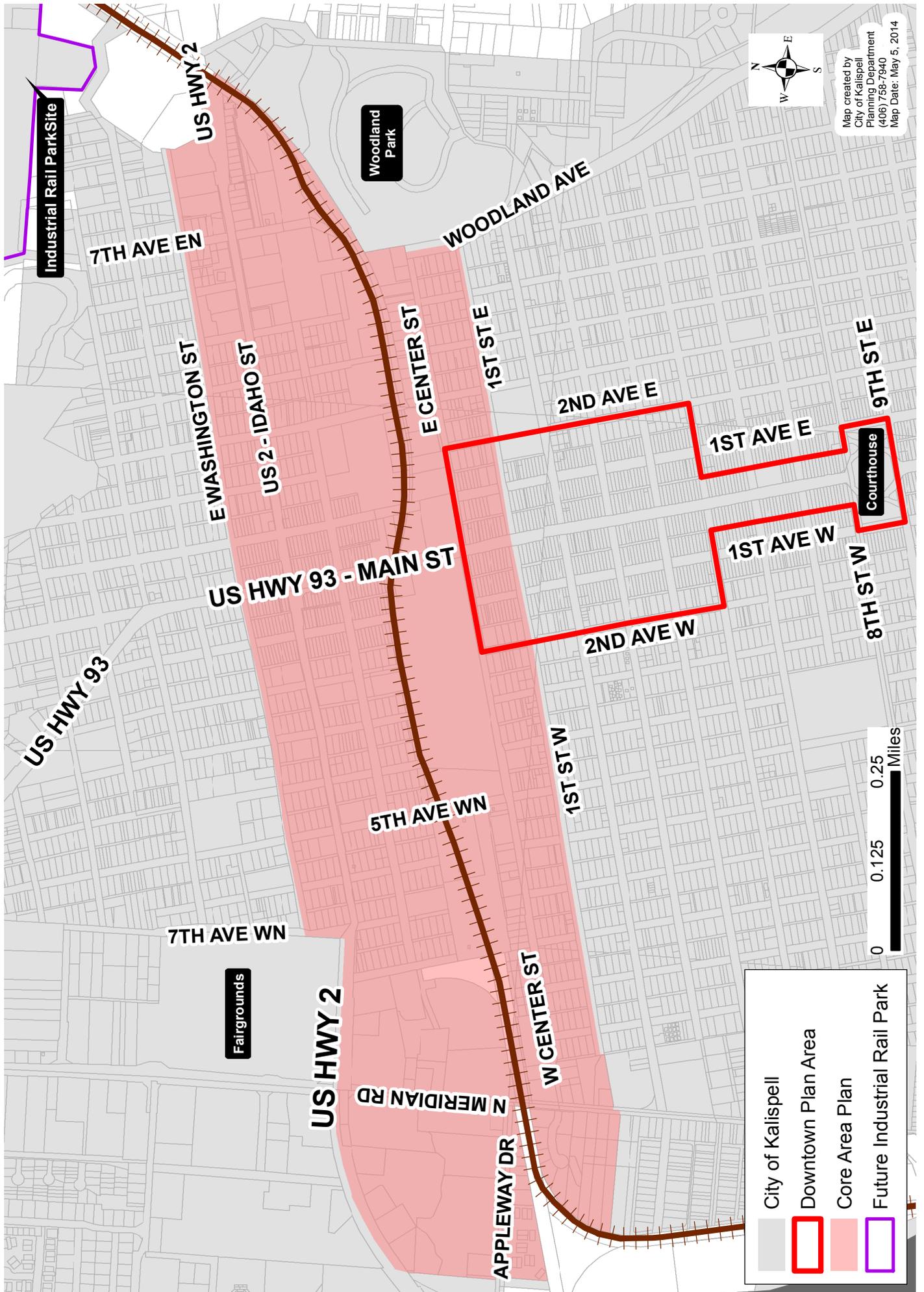
7. Implement the Core Area Plan, including its goals, strategies, and policies.

**Recommendations:**

1. Encourage completion of the Highway 93 Alternate Route that will divert through traffic from the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
2. Upon completion of the Highway 93 Alternate Route, work with the Montana Department of Transportation to turn control of Main Street back to the City.
3. Enhance safe pedestrian and bicycle access through the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods by reconstructing streets to include wider sidewalks, on-street parking, bulb-outs at designated intersections and bike lanes.
4. Provide for the redevelopment of existing and historic buildings in the downtown through the use of historic building codes in addition to the International Building Codes.
5. Establish a capital improvement fund for Main Street in the downtown to enhance its character as a traditional “Main Street” versus its function as a federal highway.
6. Undertake a study and develop a plan for the downtown area to identify and address concerns associated with parking, utilities, traffic flow, pedestrian and bicycle safety, building maintenance, and economic vitality.
7. Seek funding opportunities to spur redevelopment and reinvestment in the core area.
8. Develop specific design standards for the downtown and core area in order to give better guidance to the development community and the Kalispell Architectural Review Committee.

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Figure 4  
Kalspell Downtown and Core Area Map



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## Chapter 10: Historic and Cultural Conservation

The Flathead Valley is rich in cultural and natural history. The Kalispell townsite was initially developed in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Many of the historical buildings that were constructed during that time still remain and play an important role in defining the rich historical and cultural character of the community and neighborhoods.

### Issues:

1. Excessive traffic detracts from the historical and cultural character of the downtown and surrounding areas, and undermines pedestrian safety.
2. Historic landmarks have been identified inside the City of Kalispell but have not been identified outside of the City.
3. Rapid local growth and change, as experienced in recent years, can undermine local character of the built environment as well as its patterns, landmarks, and familiar features and can detract from the community's quality of life.
4. The central business district lacks cohesiveness and a strong cultural center.
5. Development and other changes in neighborhoods, historic districts, and downtown can be incompatible with the scale, patterns, landmarks, and architecture of its surroundings.
6. The downtown and surrounding neighborhoods have aged infrastructure that limits or prohibits the redevelopment of certain blocks in this area of the City.

### GOALS:

1. DOCUMENT AND CONSERVE OUR HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE BENEFIT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.
2. ENCOURAGE DESIGN THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND THAT PROMOTES SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND MOVEMENT.
3. ENCOURAGE THROUGH TRAFFIC TO USE THE HIGHWAY 93 ALTERNATE ROUTE INSTEAD OF MAIN STREET.

4. NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE AND ITS ATTRACTIVENESS AS A RETIREMENT AND TOURISM DESTINATION. STRENGTHEN THE DOWNTOWN AS A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CENTER OF THE COMMUNITY.
5. PRESERVE AND ENHANCE KALISPELL'S TRADITIONAL TOWNSCAPE OF MAIN STREET AND NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS DESIGNED FOR SLOWER VEHICLE TRAFFIC, WALKING AND HISTORIC TOWN ATMOSPHERE.
6. PRESERVE KALISPELL'S NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT THAT INCLUDES MORE THAN 1,000 HOUSES, MAIN STREET AND COURTHOUSE CIRCLE, ALL CONSTRUCTED DURING THE EARLY YEARS.

**Policies:**

1. Development and other changes in neighborhoods, historic districts, and downtown should be compatible with the scale, patterns, landmarks, and architecture of its surroundings.
2. Identify historic and cultural resources, and encourage the upkeep and rehabilitation of historically and culturally significant structures and sites, consistent with national rehabilitation guidelines.
3. Discourage the demolition of historically or culturally significant structures and sites.
4. Support the efforts of private owners and conservation groups to identify, protect, rehabilitate, and reuse historic and cultural resources.
5. Support the Hockaday Museum, Conrad Mansion, the Museum at Central School, and the Library as cultural centers in the downtown and historic districts, and maintain their presence in the downtown and core area.

**Recommendations:**

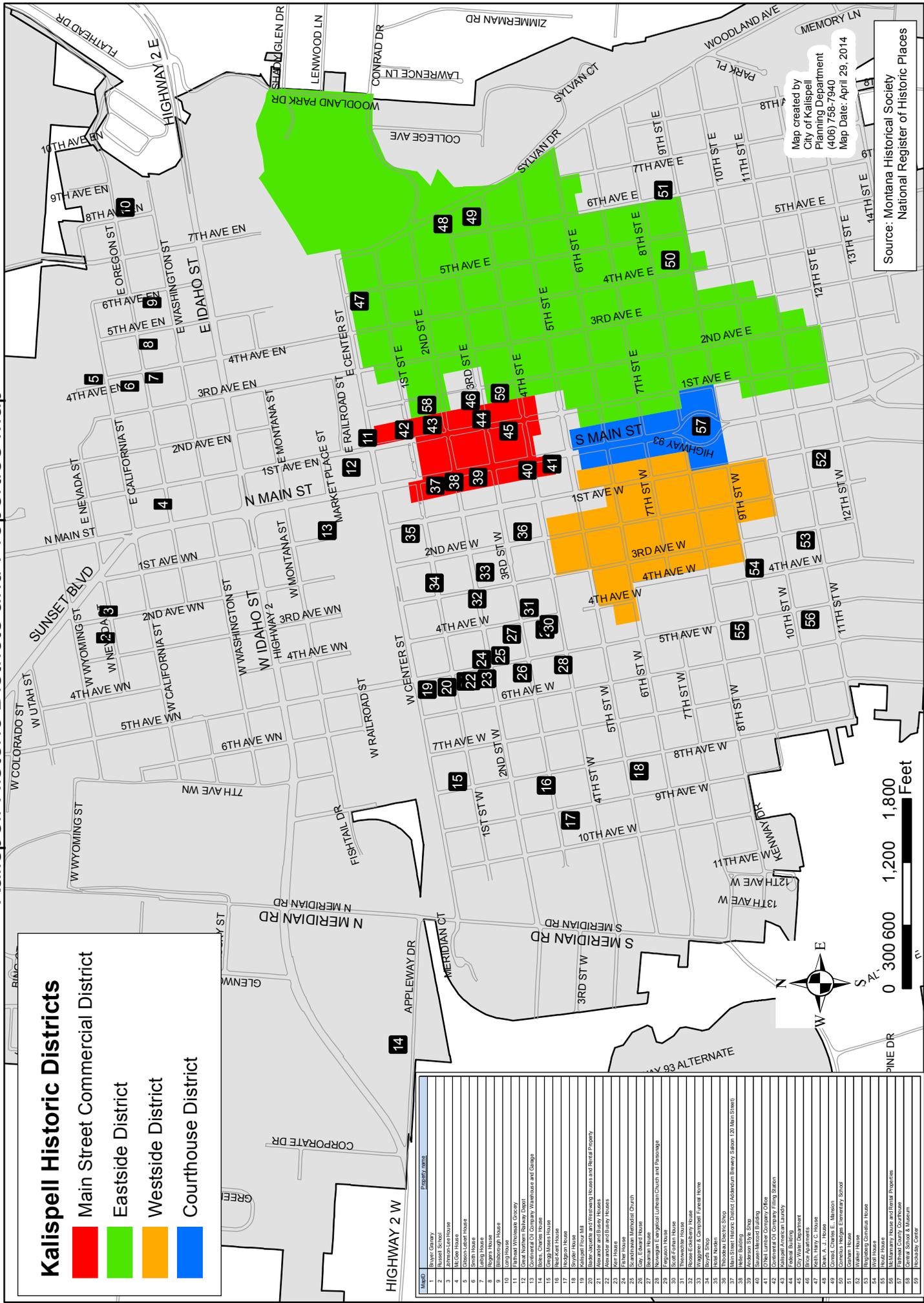
1. Establish a local heritage commission to identify local landmarks, review alterations of these landmarks, expand public outreach and education and further historical and cultural conservation goals.
2. Encourage development of alternative arterials that will divert through traffic from the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

3. Enhance safe pedestrian access through the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
4. Review and update as necessary the City of Kalispell Architectural Design Standards in relation to reflect the best management practices for historic and cultural preservation.
5. Develop and implement way-finding strategies for the downtown and historic districts.

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Figure 5  
Kalispell Historic Districts and Properties Map



**Kalispell Historic Districts**

- Main Street Commercial District
- Eastside District
- Westside District
- Courthouse District

Marker	Name	Historic Address
1	Blaine County	
2	Rural School	
3	Johnson-Lane House	
4	McCool House	
5	Green-Lane House	
6	Wright House	
7	Wright House	
8	Wright House	
9	Wright House	
10	Long House	
11	Wright House	
12	Wright House	
13	Commercial Oil Company Warehouse and Garage	
14	State, Charles House	
15	Spring-Meese House	
16	Wright House	
17	Wright House	
18	Wright House	
19	Kidwell Flour Mill	
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0 300 600 1,200 1,800 Feet

Map created by  
City of Kalispell  
Planning Department  
(406) 758-7940  
Map Date: April 29, 2014

Source: Montana Historical Society  
National Register of Historic Places

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## Chapter 11: Parks and Recreation

The Kalispell park system consists of both active and passive recreational areas, including a variety of park types, pathways, and facilities. The City of Kalispell manages approximately 406 acres of parkland, including 138 acres under permanent easement from the State of Montana for the Kalispell Youth Athletic Complex (Kidsports). The parkland inventory includes 321 acres of active parkland and 73 acres of natural open space. Kalispell also owns 12 acres of undeveloped land.

In 2006, the City of Kalispell published the “Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan” in response to the rapid growth occurring in Kalispell and the Flathead Valley in the first five years of the new millennium. The Master Plan addresses the Kalispell’s anticipated parks and recreation needs until the year 2020. Much of the content for the Growth Policy was taken from the master plan.

### Issues:

1. Park system renovations have been historically under-funded and the deferred maintenance is leading to an overall decline in recreation assets.
2. Minor improvements and repairs are sometimes deferred due to insufficient staffing and financial resources.
3. Quality park land is being lost to development and land values are increasing, making it more difficult and costly to acquire on the open market.
4. Trails consistently rank high in community surveys, yet the City lacks a comprehensive network of trails, sidewalks and bike lanes.
5. Although wetlands, creeks and, river corridors create barriers to development, they can provide ideal locations for regional greenways and trail systems.
6. The City lacks public indoor recreation spaces, a performing arts center, and public meeting spaces.
7. As of 2013, nearly 25 percent of Kalispell’s population is under the age of 18, highlighting the need for youth recreation activities.

8. As of 2013, more than 15 percent of the City's population is over the age of 65, and this age group has increased by over 70 percent since 1980. This trend is expected to continue.
9. Based on National Recreation and Parks Association standards, the City is currently under-serving the needs of its citizens relative to parklands and recreation facilities. The deficit becomes more pronounced as the City boundary and population expand.

**GOALS:**

1. COMPLETE PARK RENOVATIONS IN A TIMELY MANNER.
2. ENSURE THE PARK SYSTEM IS SAFE, USABLE, AND ATTRACTIVE IN ALL SEASONS.
3. CREATE A PARK VOLUNTEER PROGRAM THAT LEVERAGES DEPARTMENT RESOURCES AND ACCOMPLISHES NEEDED PARK IMPROVEMENTS ACROSS THE SYSTEM.
4. DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT A MULTI-FUNCTION COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER EITHER THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE INVESTMENT.
5. PLAN FOR AND INVEST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CITY-WIDE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SYSTEM WITH PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS AS THE FOUNDATION.
6. ESTABLISH A PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT THAT CREATES A STABLE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MECHANISM FOR PARK MAINTENANCE AND FUTURE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT.
7. PROVIDE CONVENIENT AND SAFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES AND INCOME LEVELS.
8. IMPROVE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT (ADA) ACCESS AT PARK SITES AND FACILITIES, AS WELL AS THROUGH RECREATION PROGRAMS.

**Policies:**

1. Enhance and develop public/private partnerships with non-profits, private organization and other governmental agencies to provide necessary park and recreation services to the community.

2. Demographic and economic information should inform and support the development of current and future park facility plans.
3. Commercial and residential developments should provide parks and recreation amenities as a condition of approval. Planned unit developments (PUDs) should provide both land and park improvements to mitigate the impacts of increased density. Cash in-lieu is an acceptable substitute for direct improvements when a neighborhood's park needs are already met.
4. Greenways and trails should be supported for their social, economic, environmental, and public health benefits.
5. Parks, recreation, and, dedicated open spaces are essential to the quality of life in Kalispell and should be professionally administered and managed.
6. The City should keep pace with industry trends in Parks and Recreation programs; exploring and adapting to the changing culture of active adults, using social media, and other technical opportunities to enhance our community.
7. Encourage the use of conservation easements that include public recreation access in order to provide open spaces that complement the park and open space system.

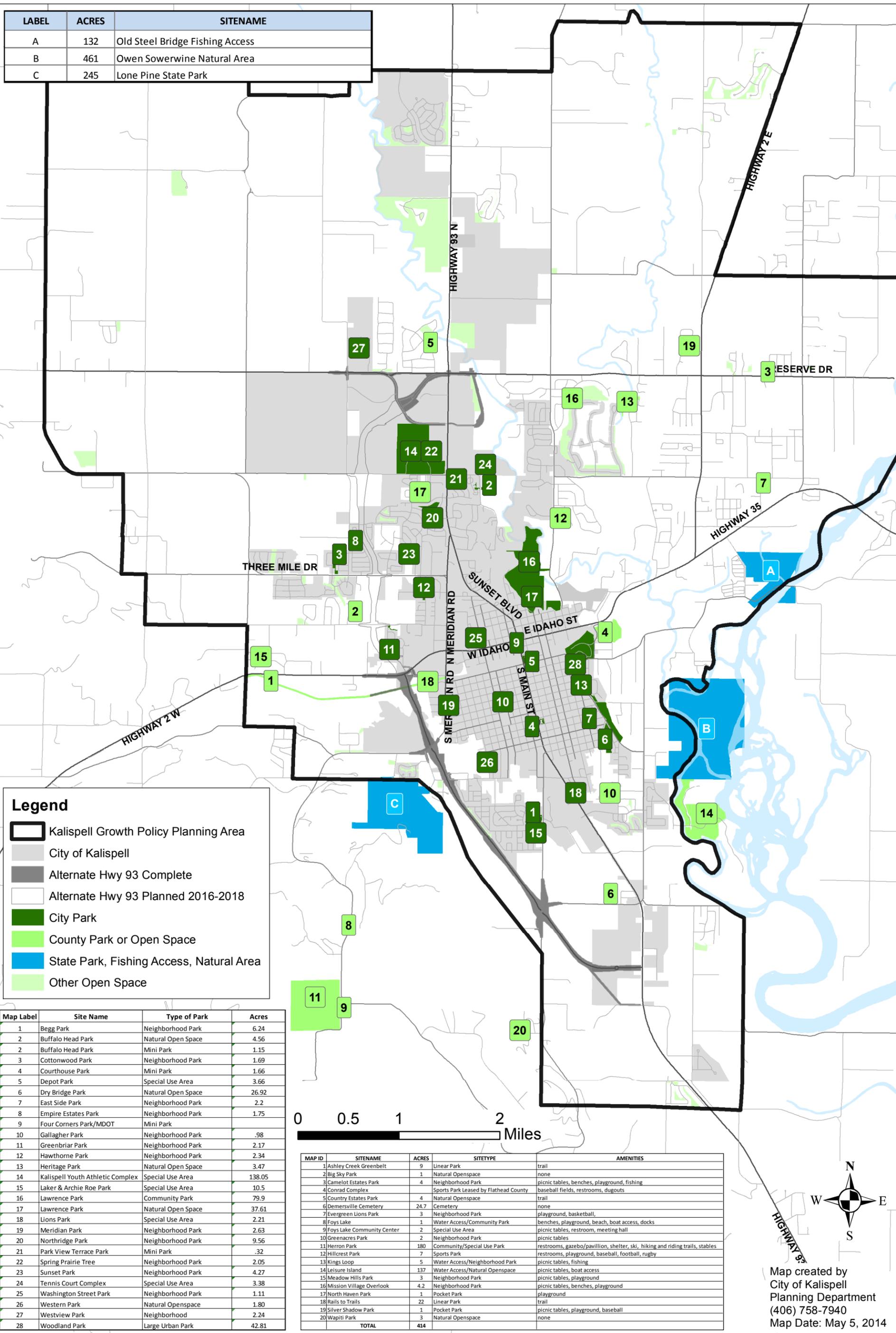
**Recommendations:**

1. Establish a park renovation fund that ensures park renovations are conducted so as to prevent major deterioration of park assets that would necessitate complete replacement.
2. Enhance and develop a park and recreation volunteer program that leverages community assets and improves residents' understanding and appreciation for the park system and its programs.
3. Plan for and invest in the current and future park needs in the community.
4. Update the Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan in the year 2015.

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Figure 6

# Kalispell Growth Policy Planning Area Parks and Recreation Facilities Map

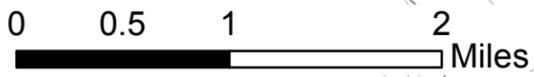


LABEL	ACRES	SITENAME
A	132	Old Steel Bridge Fishing Access
B	461	Owen Sowerwine Natural Area
C	245	Lone Pine State Park

**Legend**

- Kalispell Growth Policy Planning Area
- City of Kalispell
- Alternate Hwy 93 Complete
- Alternate Hwy 93 Planned 2016-2018
- City Park
- County Park or Open Space
- State Park, Fishing Access, Natural Area
- Other Open Space

Map Label	Site Name	Type of Park	Acres
1	Begg Park	Neighborhood Park	6.24
2	Buffalo Head Park	Natural Open Space	4.56
2	Buffalo Head Park	Mini Park	1.15
3	Cottonwood Park	Neighborhood Park	1.69
4	Courthouse Park	Mini Park	1.66
5	Depot Park	Special Use Area	3.66
6	Dry Bridge Park	Natural Open Space	26.92
7	East Side Park	Neighborhood Park	2.2
8	Empire Estates Park	Neighborhood Park	1.75
9	Four Corners Park/MDOT	Mini Park	
10	Gallagher Park	Neighborhood Park	.98
11	Greenbriar Park	Neighborhood Park	2.17
12	Hawthorne Park	Neighborhood Park	2.34
13	Heritage Park	Natural Open Space	3.47
14	Kalispell Youth Athletic Complex	Special Use Area	138.05
15	Laker & Archie Roe Park	Special Use Area	10.5
16	Lawrence Park	Community Park	79.9
17	Lawrence Park	Natural Open Space	37.61
18	Lions Park	Special Use Area	2.21
19	Meridian Park	Neighborhood Park	2.63
20	Northridge Park	Neighborhood Park	9.56
21	Park View Terrace Park	Mini Park	.32
22	Spring Prairie Tree	Neighborhood Park	2.05
23	Sunset Park	Neighborhood Park	4.27
24	Tennis Court Complex	Special Use Area	3.38
25	Washington Street Park	Neighborhood Park	1.11
26	Western Park	Natural Openspace	1.80
27	Westview Park	Neighborhood	2.24
28	Woodland Park	Large Urban Park	42.81



MAP ID	SITENAME	ACRES	SITETYPE	AMENITIES
1	Ashley Creek Greenbelt	9	Linear Park	trail
2	Big Sky Park	1	Natural Openspace	none
3	Camelot Estates Park	4	Neighborhood Park	picnic tables, benches, playground, fishing
4	Conrad Complex	4	Sports Park Leased by Flathead County	baseball fields, restrooms, dugouts
5	Country Estates Park	4	Natural Openspace	trail
6	Demersville Cemetery	24.7	Cemetery	none
7	Evergreen Lions Park	3	Neighborhood Park	playground, basketball
8	Foys Lake	1	Water Access/Community Park	benches, playground, beach, boat access, docks
9	Foys Lake Community Center	2	Special Use Area	picnic tables, restroom, meeting hall
10	Greenacres Park	2	Neighborhood Park	picnic tables
11	Herron Park	180	Community/Special Use Park	restrooms, gazebo/pavilion, shelter, ski, hiking and riding trails, stables
12	Hillcrest Park	7	Sports Park	restrooms, playground, baseball, football, rugby
13	Kings Loop	5	Water Access/Neighborhood Park	picnic tables, fishing
14	Leisure Island	137	Water Access/Natural Openspace	picnic tables, boat access
15	Meadow Hills Park	3	Neighborhood Park	picnic tables, playground
16	Mission Village Overlook	4.2	Neighborhood Park	picnic tables, benches, playground
17	North Haven Park	1	Pocket Park	playground
18	Rails to Trails	22	Linear Park	trail
19	Silver Shadow Park	1	Pocket Park	picnic tables, playground, baseball
20	Wapiti Park	3	Natural Openspace	none
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>414</b>		

Map created by  
 City of Kalispell  
 Planning Department  
 (406) 758-7940  
 Map Date: May 5, 2014

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## Chapter 12: Transportation

This chapter is based on the findings and recommendations contained within the 2006 Kalispell Area Transportation Plan, updated in 2008. The 2006 Kalispell Area Transportation Plan was a major update to the City's 1993 Transportation Plan. The 2006 Plan was written in direct response to the rapid growth Kalispell experienced in the years from 2000 to 2006, and includes the US Highway 93 Bypass in the modeling of future traffic impacts for the growth policy area. The 2006 Plan contains a comprehensive inventory of the transportation system, along with a discussion of travel demand, traffic calming, system management, and recommended street network improvements. The issues, goals, policies, and recommendations below are summarized from the 2006 Kalispell Area Transportation Plan.

### Issues:

1. Overall traffic volumes in Kalispell have grown considerably over the last 10 years and are forecasted to continue to increase over the next 20 years.
2. A number of local, collector, and, arterial streets lack pedestrian and bicycle facilities and pose significant safety problems.
3. Some areas both inside and outside of the City lack a gridded, interconnected street system, which limits route options for local residents and business, and concentrates traffic onto one or two access roads.
4. A significant amount of traffic, including truck traffic and seasonal tourist traffic, passes through the City on US Hwy 93 without making a stop and contributes to traffic congestion in key areas.
5. At times, traffic volumes overwhelm the capacity of the transportation system and associated traffic control devices to adequately maintain system performance.
6. The local climate and snow and ice removal operations cause lane markings to rapidly degrade.
7. As of 2014, only the south four miles and the north half-mile of the Alternate Highway 93 route have been constructed. A gap of three miles still exists from Highway 2 at the south to Reserve Loop on the north, which is expected to be constructed by 2017.

8. Pedestrian safety issues are especially problematic the further one travels from the core of the community, especially in the older and middle-aged neighborhoods, due to the almost total lack of sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use trails.
9. The community lacks an overall pedestrian and bicycle travel plan connecting schools, parks, shopping areas, and community facilities with neighborhoods.
10. The narrow two-lane segment of Whitefish Stage Road between Oregon Street and West Reserve Drive is substandard with volumes of traffic expected to nearly double in the next 15 years.
11. There is no east / west connection between Highway 93 and Whitefish Stage Road north of Oregon Street and south of West Reserve Drive, which inhibits free flowing access between Kidsports, Flathead Valley Community College, the Highway 93 North retail area, and Fire Station #62 with the Edgerton School neighborhood and Evergreen.
12. No funding program is in place to upgrade substandard existing or newly annexed streets to urban standards.
13. Excess traffic along Third Avenue East and Fourth Avenue East degrades the residential character of the East Side Neighborhood.
14. Congestion from commuter traffic and on-street parking in and around the Flathead High School degrades the residential character of the West Side Neighborhood.
15. Public transportation is limited.
16. Woodland Avenue and Seventh Avenue East do not connect.
17. Funding and construction of roadway improvement projects is time consuming, expensive, and subject to delays.
18. The railroad tracks running east-west through core area significantly restricts north-south vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency responder access.
19. There are approximately 150 miles of roadway (125.5 miles of city streets and alleys + 23.5 miles of MDOT secondary and urban routes) in the City and their conditions range

from excellent to poor, based on the City's Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) System.

**GOALS:**

1. PROVIDE A SAFE, EFFICIENT, ACCESSIBLE, AND COST EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT OFFERS VIABLE CHOICES FOR MOVING PEOPLE AND GOODS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.
2. ADOPT A COMPLETE STREETS APPROACH TO RIGHT-OF-WAY DEVELOPMENT THAT BALANCES VEHICLE USAGE WITH TRANSIT AND NON-MOTORIZED MODES OF TRANSPORTATION, SO THEY MAYBE SEEN AS VIABLE ALTERNATIVES TO AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL IN AND AROUND THE COMMUNITY.
3. PROVIDE AN OPEN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS WHERE COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND VALUES, SUCH AS AESTHETICS AND NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION, ARE INCORPORATED.
4. PROVIDE A FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN THAT IS ACTIVELY USED TO GUIDE TRANSPORTATION DECISION-MAKING THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE NEXT 20 YEARS.
5. IDENTIFY AND PROTECT FUTURE ROAD CORRIDORS THAT WILL SERVE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND PUBLIC LANDS.
6. PROVIDE AN ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION CONNECTION BETWEEN KIDSPORTS AND WHITEFISH STAGE ROAD.

**Policies:**

1. Use a complete streets approach to the planning and development of capital improvements in the public right-of-way and in the review of development proposals that include dedication of transportation improvements.
2. Coordinate land use and transportation so higher-intensity development is located in well-established areas near arterial and collector streets.
3. Discourage routing heavy traffic and through-traffic in residential areas by creating a more thorough grid system when possible.

4. Utilize and reserve principal and minor arterials for through-traffic.
5. Provide access to individual lots by way of local streets to the maximum extent feasible and avoid granting individual access onto collectors and arterials.
6. Reserve adequate right-of-way for designated arterial and collector roads on lands proposed for new development.
7. Support the expansion of public transit services to meet the mobility needs of seniors, disabled persons, and the general public.
8. Develop a pedestrian-bicycle system to supplement the auto-oriented street system and to meet local transportation and recreation needs.
9. Recognize the need to maintain and protect the residential and pedestrian character and integrity of the Woodland Avenue area by avoiding the construction of a roadway connection to 7th Ave East and developing a bike and pedestrian trail instead.
10. Support the development of either a motorized or non-motorized bridge over the Stillwater River to connect the Flathead Valley Community College to the neighborhood surrounding Edgerton School.
11. Coordinate major capital improvement projects on the transportation system and other public infrastructure to minimize “throw-away” costs and make the most efficient use of public resources.
12. Support the acquisition of grants to study and improve traffic system performance.
13. The 2006 Kalispell Area Transportation Plan identifies a major street network classification system. Each functional classification is defined below. The classifications are listed in a hierarchy intended to describe the function and traffic-carrying capacities of each road, relative to other roads in the system.
  - a. **Principal Arterials:** The purpose of principle arterials is to serve the major activity centers, the highest traffic volume corridors, and the longest trip distances in an urbanized area. Significant intra-area travel, such as between central business districts and outlying residential areas. Principal arterials

generally connect to other principal arterials, minor arterials and some collector streets. Speeds can vary between 25 and 65 miles per hour (MPH), depending on the setting. Traffic volumes would carry between 10,000 and 35,000 vehicles per day (VPD). Principal arterials in the planning area include:

- i. US Highway 2 (including Idaho Street and LaSalle Road)
- ii. US Highway 93 (including Main Street and Sunset Boulevard)
- iii. Alternate US Highway 93 (new bypass road west of City)
- iv. MT Highway 35
- v. Reserve Drive, from US 93 to LaSalle Road (US 2)

b. **Minor Arterials:** Minor arterials interconnect with and augment the principal arterials. They accommodate moderate length trips and distribute traffic to smaller geographic areas. Speeds typically range from 25 to 55 MPH. Traffic volumes carry between 5,000 to 15,000 VPD.

c. **Collector streets:** Collectors serve a joint purpose of traffic movement and access to residential, commercial and industrial areas. These roads may traverse residential neighborhoods and distribute trips from arterials to ultimate destinations or local streets. Traffic is slower, with speeds of 25 to 45 MPH. Collector streets typically serve a defined neighborhood and carry 2,000 to 10,000 VPD.

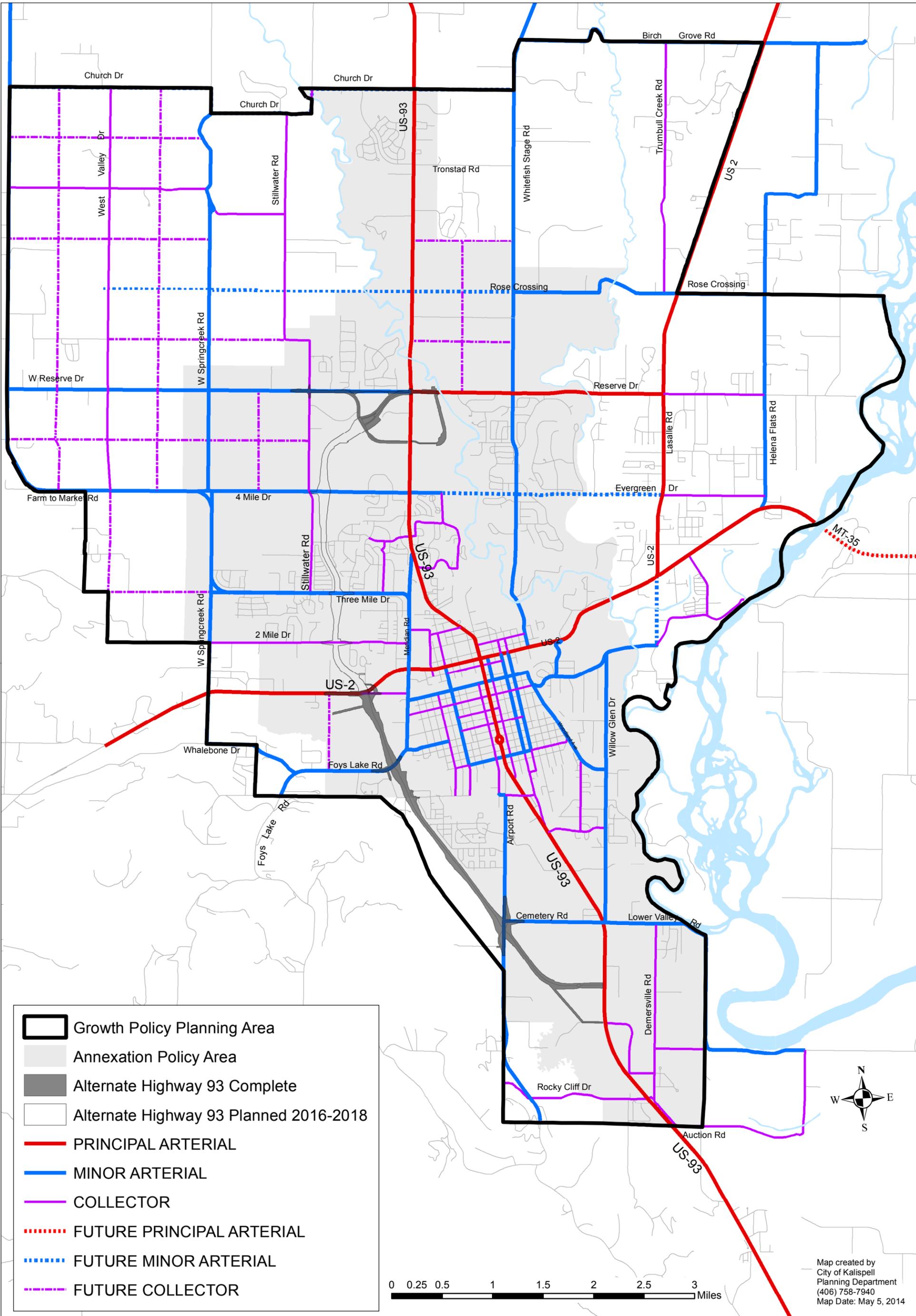
d. **Local:** The local street system includes all other roadways not included in the higher levels. They provide direct access to abutting lots and buildings and higher level roads. Speeds are usually 25 MPH. Volumes are expected to be less than 2,000 VPD.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Review and update the Kalispell Area Transportation Plan in 2016 with an emphasis on identifying and updating important components, rather than a comprehensive update.
2. Study and consider alternatives to using Third Avenue East and Fourth Avenue East as minor arterials north of 14<sup>th</sup> Street East to Second Street East in order to protect the integrity of the residential areas.
3. Explore alternative funding sources and methods for developing alternative modes of transportation.

4. Develop alternative funding sources and expanded programs for transportation upgrades.
5. Develop a comprehensive pedestrian / bike plan for the community.
6. Develop and support a comprehensive pavement management system that ensures roadway conditions are inventoried periodically, and repairs and maintenance of the pavement surface and lane markings are performed in a timely manner to avoid costly replacement projects.
7. Connect Woodland Avenue and Seventh Avenue East with a bike and pedestrian trail.
8. Develop a capital improvement program that provides a plan for implementing the Transportation System Management and Major Street Network improvements presented in the 2006 Kalispell Area Transportation Plan with 2008 update.
9. Complete the Alternate US Highway 93 route from US Highway 2 to Reserve Loop as four lane principal arterial, complete with interchanges at US 2, Three Mile Drive, Four Mile Drive, and Reserve Loop.
10. Develop Four Mile Drive from Stillwater Road to Kidsports as the number one priority of “urban funding” from the Montana Department of Transportation.
11. Apply for and obtain grants to study and improve the traffic control system performance.

Figure 7  
 City of Kalispell Growth Policy Planning Area  
 Transportation System Map



Map created by  
 City of Kalispell  
 Planning Department  
 (406) 758-7940  
 Map Date: May 5, 2014

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## Chapter 13: Sand and Gravel Resources

Sand and gravel are important natural resources found throughout Flathead County. While large amounts of gravel are located throughout the Flathead valley, sand is a resource that is more limited. Sand and gravel provide the foundation upon which our infrastructure is built. While there is currently no active gravel extraction in the City limits of Kalispell, there are several active gravel resources on the outskirts of the City limits. With a continued high level of construction activity and with major projects such as Hwy 93 reconstruction looming on the horizon, the pressure to provide nearby sources of sand and gravel will only intensify.

### Issues:

1. Sand and gravel extraction operations within the planning area generally conflict with residential land uses.
2. Sand and gravel resources are essential for infrastructure development and having them conveniently located is financially beneficial for the community.

### GOALS:

1. SAND AND GRAVEL RESOURCES WITHIN THE GROWTH POLICY PLANNING AREA ARE MANAGED TO ENSURE THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS ARE MITIGATED.

### Policies:

1. Sand and gravel resources should be granted generous buffers while the resource is being actively managed.
2. Reclamation of expended resource extraction areas should be encouraged so that the land can be converted to a beneficial second use.
3. Create performance standards for the existing and future gravel extraction operations that mitigate impacts from incompatible land uses. Standards should include, but not be limited to road maintenance, dust abatement, noise control, and vegetative buffers.
4. Designate areas on Kalispell's Future Land Use Map where mineral resource extraction is most appropriate and will have the least impact on other resources and land uses.

**Recommendations:**

1. Encourage and cooperate with sand and gravel extraction operators to develop plans for operation, eventual decommissioning, and reclamation of extraction sites.

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## Chapter 14: Public Infrastructure & Services

One of the main benefits of living in or operating a business within the City of Kalispell is access to public infrastructure, such as water, sewer, and storm drainage, and the municipal services of police and fire protection, along with solid waste management. The provision and reliability of these public services is of paramount concern for current residents and for the orderly growth of the City's population and boundary.

Individual facility plans for each of the components of public infrastructure were developed in 2008, as an update to a 2002 combined Water, Sewer and Storm Water Management Plan. This chapter reinforces the findings and recommendations in those updated plans and provides the basis for their implementation and periodic update. The first three sections of this chapter address each public infrastructure component listed above.

This chapter's last three sections address the municipal services of police protection, fire and ambulance services, and solid waste management.

**WATER:** Clean, safe drinking water is arguably the most precious resource the City offers its residents. It is also one of the most vital services it provides. The City of Kalispell and the Evergreen Water District are the primary providers of drinking water in the Growth Policy Planning Area, but there are a number of private, community water systems owned and operated by homeowners associations within residential subdivisions. The demand on the current and future water system is based on land use, population density, the magnitude and type of commercial and industrial activity in the area, visiting population and employment impact, the condition of the existing system, and regulatory requirements.

### Issues:

1. Historic population growth has been cyclic with alternating periods of rapid expansion and years of slower growth, making forecasting difficult and inexact.
2. Aging water mains and fittings, many installed over 75 years ago, have outlived their design life, leading to an increase in water main breaks and needed pipe replacements.
3. The City of Kalispell possesses significant water rights with respect to priority dates, volumes, and flow rates for both groundwater and surface water sources.

4. The threat of bioterrorism and associated federal mandates requires system vulnerabilities identified and mitigated.
5. Based on population forecasts and the demand on existing system facilities, the overall water system supply is anticipated to reach capacity by the year 2018.
6. The timing and need for water main extensions or expansions, wells, and tanks to serve growth is dependent on how fast and where growth occurs. The City water system has two separately managed pressure zones. The growth in a particular pressure zone dictates the types of expansion for the zone. Proactive expansion of infrastructure can facilitate growth in certain areas.
7. Limited fire flow capacity in some areas of the City hinders redevelopment and reinvestment.
8. There are areas adjacent to the City of Kalispell on private water systems that would not be easily upgraded to meet fire flow requirements and are currently without hydrants.
9. Some areas outside of the City limits use water lines for their domestic water supply which do not meet minimum City standards.
10. Some areas have water mains which are not looped, limiting fire protection potential and water service redundancy.
11. There are some areas in the City whose residents use individual wells.

**GOALS:**

1. UPDATE THE WATER FACILITY PLAN IN 2015 TO REFLECT THE CURRENT POPULATION TRENDS AND ANY TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS IN WATER FACILITIES OR PROVISION.
2. CONTINUE TO IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE LOCATIONS WITH MAINS THAT ARE AT THE HIGHEST RISK OF FAILURE.
3. MAINTAIN AND UPDATE WATER RIGHTS TO ENSURE CURRENT AND FUTURE WATER NEEDS ARE ACCOUNTED FOR.

4. IMPLEMENT WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AIMED AT EDUCATING THE PUBLIC AND PROLONGING THE USEFUL LIFE OF THE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE.
5. WORK TO INCORPORATE ALL USERS OF CITY WATER SERVICES INTO THE CITY.
6. LOOP ALL WATER LINES TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FIRE FLOWS FOR HYDRANTS.
7. CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SAFE, POTABLE WATER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL USERS.
8. CONSIDER FUTURE NEEDS WITH THE REPLACEMENT OR INSTALLATION OF MAINS.
9. PROVIDE ADEQUATE PRESSURE AND FLOWS TO MEET FIRE FIGHTING AND FIRE SPRINKLER NEEDS.

**Policies:**

1. Water lines and utility easements should be extended to the farthest extent of new developments to facilitate orderly growth to adjacent lands in the future.
2. Dead-end lines should be avoided.
3. Water mains should be looped when practical and feasible.
4. Annexation to the City of Kalispell should be required when water is extended to provide service to an unincorporated area.
5. New water mains should be sized to accommodate current and potential future user in the area.
6. The use of individual wells within the City is discouraged.
7. When individual wells are abandoned, they shall be properly decommissioned in order to protect groundwater resources from contamination.

**Recommendations:**

1. Update and adopt a capital improvements plan addressing City water system demands.
2. Areas within the unincorporated area of Kalispell receiving water services should be annexed to the city as part of a comprehensive annexation plan.

3. Update the Kalispell extension of services plan every five years, at a minimum.

**SEWER:** The City's sanitary sewer system includes over 100 miles of sanitary sewer main, 41 sanitary sewer lift stations, and an advanced wastewater treatment facility. All infrastructure is managed and maintained for overall system health. Much of the original infrastructure installed in the original townsite is still in place and functioning today. The newest infrastructure in the system is primarily in the growth areas on the north and south side of the City.

**Issues:**

1. High groundwater infiltration and storm water runoff inflow are having a significant negative impact on the City's waste water treatment plant.
2. New development may require upgrades to the existing collection systems including possible upsize, upgrade or replacement of existing sewage pumping facilities.
3. Throughout Kalispell some neighborhoods still use on-site sewage treatment for sewage disposal.
4. Outside the city limits, Kalispell is surrounded by areas of residential and commercial development using on-site sewage treatment systems.
5. By contract, the City of Kalispell is required to allocate a portion of wastewater treatment capacity to the Evergreen Sewer District.
6. Suburban residential subdivisions developed using on-site sewage treatment systems are difficult to convert to public sewer.
7. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is expected to tighten Total Maximum Daily Limits (TMDLs) for Ashley Creek and Flathead Lake. These changes are expected to include nutrient and temperature limits unreachable by current technologies. Any new MDEQ requirements may require costly upgrades to the treatment plant.

**GOALS:**

1. CONNECT AREAS OF THE CITY CURRENTLY USING ON-SITE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEMS TO PUBLIC CITY SEWER WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

2. MAKE PUBLIC SEWER AVAILABLE TO AREAS THAT ARE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO SERVICES AS DIRECTED BY THE EXTENSION OF SERVICES PLAN.
3. WORK TO INCORPORATE ALL USERS OF CITY SEWER INTO THE CITY.
4. ENSURE THE CITY HAS THE ABILITY TO COLLECT IMPACT FEES FROM DEVELOPMENTS USING CITY SEWER SERVICES THROUGH THE EVERGREEN SEWER DISTRICT.
5. ELIMINATE INFILTRATION OF HIGH GROUND WATER INTO THE CITY'S SEWER COLLECTION SYSTEM.
6. ENSURE THE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT AND THE SEWER COLLECTION SYSTEM HAS ADEQUATE CAPACITY TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

**Policies:**

1. New sewer mains should be designed and constructed to accommodate the future extension and expansion of the sewer system.
2. Annexation to the City of Kalispell should be required when sewer is extended to provide services to an unincorporated area.
3. Impacts from new development requiring upgrades to the sewer collection system, such as the upsizing of mains and lift stations should primarily be the responsibility of the developer rather than existing users.
4. Sewer service to new developments should follow the Extension of Services plan.

**Recommendations:**

1. Continue the study and analysis of the wastewater treatment and collection facilities.
2. Update the Sanitary Sewer Capital Facilities Plan in 2016.
3. Identify and correct instances of groundwater and storm water inflow and infiltration.
4. Continue to update the capital improvements plan.
5. Update the Kalispell extension of services plan every five years, at a minimum.

6. Unincorporated areas of Kalispell receiving either sewer services should be annexed to the city as part of a comprehensive annexation plan for the area.

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT:** Stormwater is rainwater and melted snow that runs off streets, lawns, and other sites. When stormwater is absorbed into the ground, it is filtered and ultimately replenishes aquifers or flows into streams and rivers. In developed areas, however, impervious surfaces such as pavement and roofs prevent precipitation from naturally soaking into the ground. The runoff from these impervious surfaces is often contaminated with various pollutants, which can negatively affect receiving waters, and the concentrated flows can cause downstream flooding, stream bank erosion, habitat degradation and numerous other problems. There are several stormwater systems in the City of Kalispell, but few in the unincorporated urban areas of the community.

**Issues:**

1. There are no public storm drainage systems in most of the planning jurisdiction.
2. Storm water management and treatment can be problematic for new development where no public facilities exist.
3. Some areas of the community are especially prone to flooding and ponding because of inadequate storm water management facilities.

**GOALS:**

1. ENSURE ADEQUATE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FACILITIES FOR ALL INCORPORATED URBAN AREAS.
2. IMPROVE THE DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN PROBLEM AREAS OF THE COMMUNITY.
3. REQUIRE ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT TO HAVE ADEQUATE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FACILITIES FOR STORM EVENT ATTENUATION AND WATER QUALITY TREATMENT.

4. ENSURE MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING STORM WATER MANAGEMENT FACILITIES IS BEING PERFORMED ON BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTIES TO MAXIMIZE THEIR USE.

**Policies:**

1. As new city streets are constructed, and as existing streets are improved, storm drainage infrastructure will be installed or improved.
2. The rate of runoff from a developed piece of property should not exceed that which would occur had the property remained undeveloped.
3. Best management practices should be implemented on new and redevelopment to reduce the discharge of pollutants.
4. Encourage the use of low impact development techniques as part of an overall storm water management plan for new development rather than the use of traditional, engineered storm water management practices.

**Recommendations:**

1. As the City's street reconstruction program continues, storm drainage should be improved.
2. Develop a storm water management system for the northwest areas of Kalispell, the Spring Creek drainage and operators to develop successional plans.
3. Explore the expansion of existing storm water management facilities to accommodate new development.
4. Seek greater cooperation between public entities such as the City, County, and State to recognize and address storm water management issues in the community.

**POLICE PROTECTION:** Within city limits, police protection is provided by the Kalispell Police Department; outside of city limits, the Flathead County Sheriff's Office has jurisdiction. The city and county provide mutual aid upon request.

**Issues:**

1. The Flathead County Jail located in Kalispell serves both the city and county and is continually overcrowded.
2. The existing jail facility, located in Kalispell, was opened in 1987, was built to house up to 64 beds, and it currently has 85 beds and it is anticipated that up to 125 – 130 beds will be needed within the next five years.
3. Increasing problems with methamphetamine production in the community poses a threat to residents and public at large.
4. Limited space with the police department office creates problems with attempting to bring on additional staff.
5. There have been difficulties in negotiations between the police bargaining units and the City of Kalispell.

**GOALS:**

1. ENSURE THAT WE HAVE SAFE AND HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS.
2. ELIMINATE THE ABILITY OF MANUFACTURERS AND USERS OF METHAMPHETAMINE TO EXIST OR OPERATE IN THE COMMUNITY.
3. BUILD ON ESTABLISHED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DRUG TASK FORCE.
4. ENSURE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF PUBLIC SAFETY WHILE PROTECTING THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF THE CITIZENS OF THE COMMUNITY.
5. INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS REGARDING THE PRODUCTION AND USE OF DRUGS.
6. STRIVE TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE SKILLS, EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY.
7. COLLABORATE WITH THE PUBLIC TO IDENTIFY CAUSES OF CRIME AND TO REDUCE CRIME.
8. CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNITY POLICING MODES AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.

**Policies:**

1. Adequately staff law enforcement agencies.
2. Officers and staff conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, professional competence, compassion and respect for the public.
3. Apply unbiased enforcement of the laws.
4. Conduct all negotiations between the City of Kalispell and bargaining units in good faith and fairness.

**Recommendations:**

1. Coordinate between law enforcement agencies to provide a seamless service of law enforcement in the community.
2. Continue to pursue grants to provide funds for staffing and equipment.
3. As the community grows, ensure that the law enforcement agencies have adequate staffing and resources.
4. Complete the transition to an enhanced 911 protocol.

**FIRE AND AMBULANCE SERVICE:** The Kalispell Fire Department with automatic aid from surrounding fire districts provides fire response to the community. The City of Kalispell operates an Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport ambulance service that is staffed by cross-trained firefighter/paramedics and responds for emergency medical calls for service to the City of Kalispell and portions of the county EMS districts upon request. Other duties provided for the community are confined space rescue, hazardous materials technician level response team, community fire safety education, residential fire safety inspections and fire code compliancy in the commercial occupancy setting.

**Issues:**

1. Fire protection provided by the Kalispell Fire Department is currently limited to the area of the city limits of Kalispell. Geographical, population, protection class types and other variables continue to challenge the department in providing an effective and timely response to incidents located on the outer perimeter of the city limits of Kalispell.

2. Continued Development on the northern, southern and western boundaries of the city limits of Kalispell add to the constraints of effective fire protection and EMS response.
3. Call demand, frequency, and call type quickly exceed current fire department capabilities, relying on outside agencies other than Kalispell Fire to provide response and care.
4. To achieve full Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating points the department needs a training facility that has live fire capabilities with a smoke room, drill tower at-least 3 stories in height, and a training area of at least 2 acres in size.

**Goals:**

1. ADEQUATELY STAFF AND OPERATE FIRE COMPANIES TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE CALL DEMAND AND PROVIDE EFFECTIVE FIRE AND EMS RESPONSE AND MITIGATION.
2. MAINTAIN THE CITY'S ISO RATING AT A CLASS 3.
3. MAINTAIN MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS WITH SURROUNDING FIRE DISTRICTS AND RESPONDING AGENCIES.
4. ASSIST THE COMMUNITY IN REDUCING AND PREVENTING EMERGENCIES THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION, FIRE CODE AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT, AND COMPLYING WITH CURRENT ENGINEERING STANDARDS BY ADOPTING CURRENT FIRE, BUILDING, AND ELECTRICAL CODES.

**Policies:**

1. All new construction, occupancy remodeling and/or change of documented occupancy use shall be required to comply with adopted fire, electrical and building codes.
2. All fire department actions will be implemented to provide the greatest need for the greatest number to the community.
3. The fire department will attempt to provide the safest working environment available for fire department staff and assisting agencies.
4. The Kalispell Fire Department will protect our community with the highest level of professionalism.

5. Provide adequate training and resources to all fire department personnel.

**Recommendations:**

1. The City of Kalispell should strive to achieve an appropriate response model to facilitate the needs of ISO. According to ISO deployment analysis “The built-upon area of the fire protection area should have a first-due engine company within 1.5 road miles and a ladder-service company within 2.5 miles. As an alternative to determining the number of needed engine and ladder/service companies through the road-mile analysis, a fire protection area may use the results of a systematic performance evaluation. This type of evaluation analyzes computer-aided dispatch (CAD) history to demonstrate that, with its current deployment of companies the fire department meets the time constraints for initial arriving engine and initial full-alarm assignment in accordance with the general criteria of in NFPA 1710, standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the public by career fire departments.”
2. Continue providing appropriate training needed to fire department personnel and maintain training records as needed per National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) and ISO.
3. Continue necessary multi-company, multi-jurisdictional involvement in training and response.
4. Continue fostering better working relationships with other responding agencies and provide the necessary means to support mutual and automatic aid.

**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT:** The City of Kalispell provides residential and commercial solid waste transport service. All of the solid waste in the area is taken to the Flathead County Landfill. All recycling is done through the private sector.

**Issues:**

1. There are limited opportunities for recycling for the general public through community-wide recycling programs.
2. Out of city residents often bring their garbage to be placed in City dumpsters overburdening their capacity.

3. Residents place large pieces of furniture, construction materials and other debris for solid waste pick-up rather than taking them directly to the landfill.

**GOALS:**

1. EXPAND RECYCLING EFFORTS IN A COST EFFECTIVE WAY TO REDUCE TONNAGE AT THE LANDFILL.
2. KEEP THE CITY'S STREETS AND ALLEYS CLEAN AND FREE OF DEBRIS.
3. MAINTAIN HIGH LEVELS OF SERVICE FOR SOLID WASTE PICK-UP.
4. REDUCE WASTE AT THE LANDFILL BY SEPARATING COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS FROM HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE.
5. MAINTAIN REASONABLE AND COMPETITIVE RATES FOR SOLID WASTE REMOVAL.

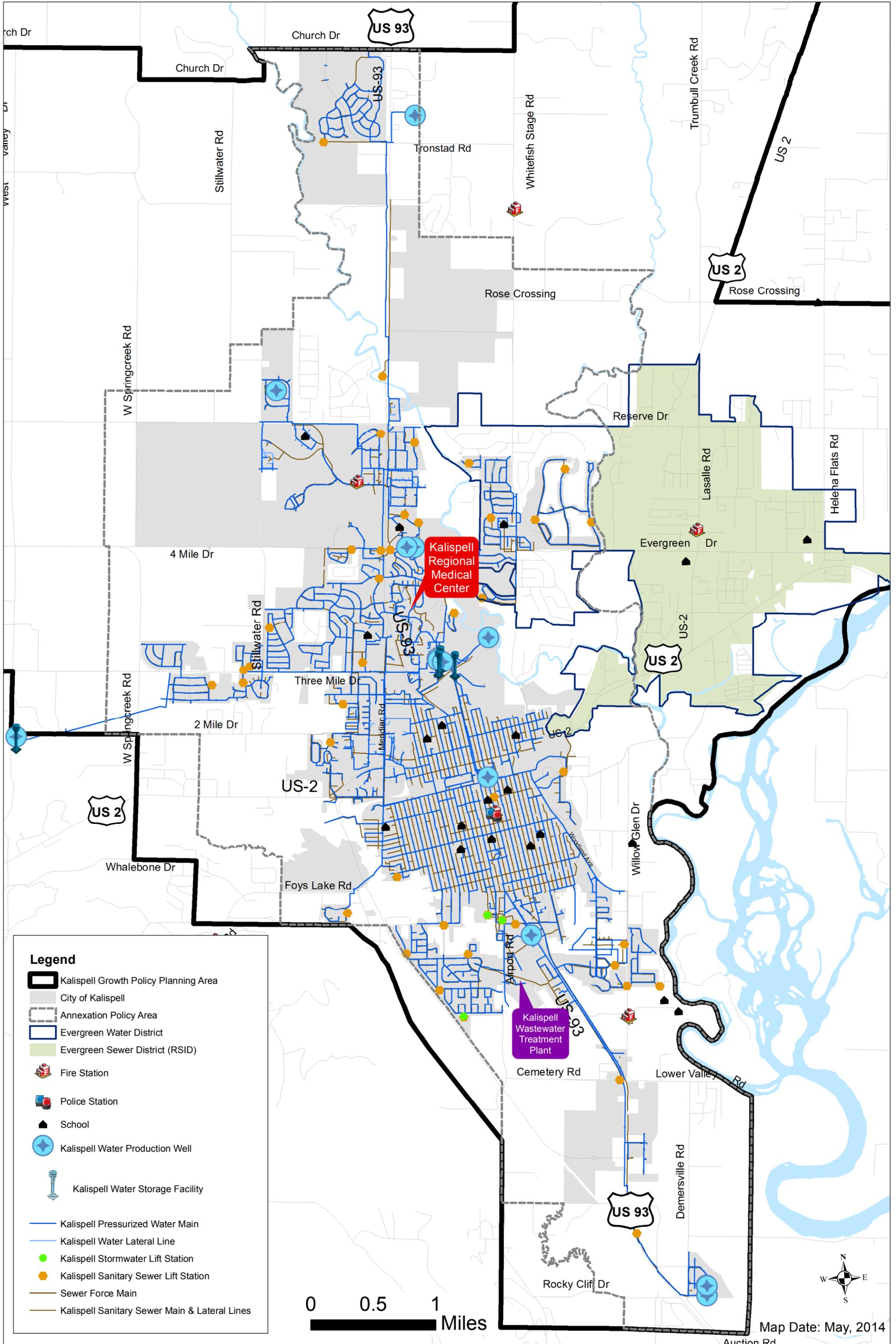
**Policies:**

1. Encourage citizens to recycle items that can be taken by the local recycling facilities.
2. Encourage citizens to remove large objects such as furniture and construction material from the alleys rather than pick-up and disposal by the City.
3. Encourage and work with the County landfill to develop a composting program.

**Recommendations:**

1. Expand residential and commercial services to new areas in the City.
2. Develop a proactive program that substantially expands recycling.

Figure 8  
Growth Policy Planning Area Public Infrastructure Map



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The Kalispell Annexation Policy is crafted to address and balance the competing demands of developments proposed in those areas adjacent to the City with the timing and provision of municipal services that accompany any development that occurs in the greater Kalispell Growth Policy area. The Annexation policy consists of a map and text. The map graphically portrays those areas adjacent to the City where requests for annexation would be routinely embraced and conversely those areas further out where requests for annexation or municipal service may be provided using alternative measures. The associated policy text provides further guidance in interpreting the map and providing suggested procedures to follow. The focus of the annexation policy is threefold:

1. To provide for the most efficient pattern of growth in and adjacent to the City.
2. To provide for the most efficient extension of municipal services to lands proposed for annexation either now or in the future.
3. To provide for the viable future growth of the City of Kalispell unhindered by the encroachment of substandard rural development.

#### **I. ANNEXATION POLICY MAP**

The Annexation Policy Map (attachment 1) provides a graphic policy statement showing a boundary around the City where direct annexation upon request by a property owner would likely be supported. Those areas beyond the annexation boundary would require additional scrutiny and possibly be subject to various alternative methods both in terms of the method of annexation as well as the timing and provision of municipal services.

The annexation boundary map is a general policy statement not a fixed regulatory document. The boundary addresses the impacts of logical development patterns and growth within the City that would occur over the next 5 – 10 years. It was noted that the City has experienced an historical boom during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in which the City's population grew by 40% and its area grew by 110%. At the same time the end of this decade brought one of the greatest recessionary periods experienced by our residents that literally brought development in the City to a standstill. While neither should be used to predict the future of our community, the ramifications of both must be factored into our planning considerations.

In developing the annexation boundary map, a series of factors were melded together to create a unified policy. The boundary was intended to reflect growth that would occur in the next 10 years. Many factors were considered in developing this map. First, obvious topographic boundaries were used: Flathead and Stillwater Rivers and Ashley Creek and Lone Pine Sate

Park. Where geographic boundaries were not evident, a boundary that generally extended ¼ mile beyond the current City limits was incorporated to allow for efficient annexation adjacent to the City without a hard and fast policy that new growth had to touch the City. In addition, the availability of City services including the 5-minute fire response service area and presence of municipal water and sewer lines were factored into the process.

The annexation policy map needs to be reviewed at least every 5 years to keep it relevant as the City grows.

## **II. ANNEXATION POLICY FRAMEWORK:**

The policy statements below must be used to interpret the annexation policy map. This policy is intended to apply to all annexations of land as well as requests for municipal services for lands outside the City. This would include both obvious annexations as shown within the annexation policy boundary map, lands outside the annexation boundary area and wholly surrounded lands inside the City limits proposed for annexation. This framework describes two options for annexation, direct annexation and the use of waiver of protest to annexation, and when it is appropriate to consider each.

### **A. Annexation Options**

1. Properties inside the Kalispell Annexation Boundary Area when an owner petitions for annexation:
  - a. The property owner submits a written petition for annexation to the Planning Department.
  - b. City would follow the “Direct Annexation” process.
2. Properties outside of the Kalispell Annexation Boundary Area when an owner petitions for annexation:
  - a. The property owner submits a written petition for annexation to the Planning Department.
  - b. The Planning Board would review the merits of the annexation and make one of the following recommendations based on promoting a logical and efficient development pattern for the City:
    - 2) Direct annexation:
      - i. Available if the property meets two or more of the following criteria:
        1. The property lies in the immediate path of additional annexations which will form a logical extension of the City.
        2. The property lies within the existing service area of the Fire Department.

3. The annexation achieves one or more key goals of the growth policy or provides a necessary community connection, facility or infrastructure component.

3) Petition to Waive Right to Protest Annexation:

i. Available if the property meets a majority of the following criteria:

1. The property is outside of the City's annexation boundary.
2. The property lies in the immediate path of additional annexations.
3. The property is in an area that may possibly be adjacent to existing City infrastructure (sewer, water, fire service area) in the next 10 – 20 years.
4. The property is within the service area of the Kalispell fire department and is serviceable by existing or proposed extensions to municipal water or sewer services.
5. Services within the property can be provided in the near term by other than municipal means (private road user's agreements, private homeowner's association maintenance of parks and open space, contracting with rural fire districts, etc.) until the time that the City actually annexes the property.
6. Development of the property achieves one or more key goals of the growth policy or provides a necessary community connection, facility, infrastructure component or community benefit.

4) Recommend not to proceed:

- i. If the planning board determines that the property does not address an adequate number of criteria and is not suitable for annexation or a waiver of right to protest, the planning board would notify the property owner and forward a recommendation to the City Council.

**B. Annexation Processes**

**1. Direct Annexation Process (Property owner petitions):**

- a. The property owner submits a petition for annexation to the Planning Department.
- b. Staff would prepare a cost of services plan.
- c. The Planning Board determines that direct annexation is appropriate.
- d. The Planning Board holds a hearing for the purpose of recommending the most appropriate zoning.

- e. Planning Board recommendations on annexation and zoning are forwarded to the City Council.
- f. The City Council would act on the annexation request and if appropriate approve the appropriate zoning.

**2. Petition of Waiver of Right to Protest Annexation: (Property Owner Petitions)**

- a. The property owner submits a petition for annexation to the Planning Department.
- b. Staff would prepare a cost of services plan.
- c. The Planning Board makes a recommendation on the most appropriate process to follow – in this case waiver of protest to annexation - to the City Council.
- d. The City Council acts on the Planning Board recommendation. If the Council concurs that a waiver of annexation is most appropriate the following procedures occur:
  - 1) The property owner enters into an inter-local agreement with the City and the County stating that the City will provide specified services (typically water and/or sewer) extended at the property owner’s expense and that in exchange:
    - i. The property owner will agree to submit a waiver of protest of annexation to the City.
    - ii. The property owner ensures that the development will be built to Kalispell Urban Standards and allow City inspection of the improvements as they are installed to ensure that all future public infrastructure is built to proper standards.
    - iii. Finally, the property owner agrees to require that all structures will be built in accordance to the building codes adopted by the City of Kalispell at the time of construction and that they will provide for proper inspections.
    - iv. At such time as the property owner requests connection to the municipal water or sewer utility, all applicable connection fees, including impact fees, shall be paid in full to the City of Kalispell. Upon such payment, and within a reasonable time, the necessary taps shall be made only by authorized personnel of the City or utility into which the tap is to be made.
  - 2) Kalispell Site Review Committee will review the development proposal to ensure that the development is built to Kalispell Urban Standards.
  - 3) Kalispell Site Review Committee passes these recommendations on to the Flathead County Planning Board to incorporate into their staff review.

- 4) If infrastructure is not built to Kalispell Urban Standards, the requested municipal public services will be withheld.
  - 5) Under this policy, the City will annex this property at its own discretion, without protest from the property owners, after giving due notice to the property owners of the intent to annex.
- e. The City staff would then monitor the development over time and make a recommendation to the City Council when actual annexation would appear to be appropriate. As a justification for annexation, an updated “Cost of Services Plan” would be prepared by staff.

### **3. Annexation Of Wholly Surrounded Areas (City Council directed annexation)**

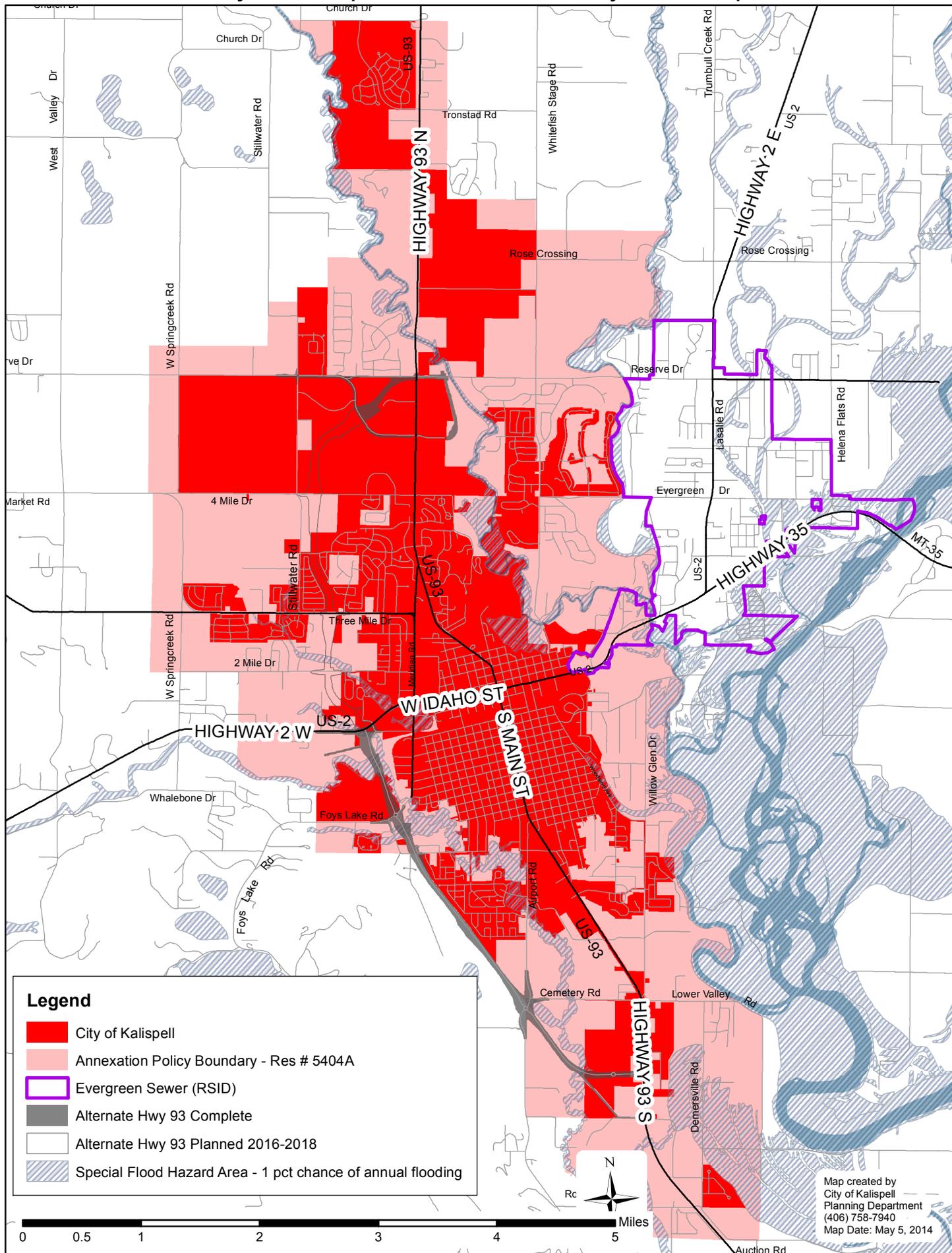
Part 7-2-45 MCA provides a process for the City to annex wholly surrounded land. The law provides that the City shall pass a resolution of intent, give notice to the affected property owners and precede with annexation without a petition or request from the affected surrounded property owners. The basis of this law is that properties, because of their location within the boundaries of a City are in effect already receiving some municipal services without paying their fair share in support. The residents drive City streets, have access to City parks, have City police patrolling in and around their neighborhoods, have access to fire protection in case of a major incident, etc. In addition such annexations simplify the provision of emergency services creating a clear line of agency primary responsibility when an emergency does arise.

- a. The City Council directs the Planning Board to proceed with the annexation of properties wholly surrounded per 7-2-(4501-4511) MCA.
- b. The planning staff notifies the affected property owners within the wholly surrounded area to be annexed.
- c. Staff would prepare an extension of services plan showing how all municipal services can be provided to the properties, either immediately in the case of fire, police, road maintenance, park maintenance or where major utilities or facilities are missing such as water mains, fire hydrants or sewer mains, financing options that would be available to extend such facilities.
- d. Informational materials are made available to the property owners explaining the process, the type of zoning proposed and the impacts this annexation would have on their property.
- e. The Planning Board holds a public hearing for the purpose of recommending the most appropriate zoning.
- f. Planning Board recommendation is forwarded to the City Council.

- g. The City Council would act on the Planning Board recommendation for annexation and approve the appropriate zoning classification or classifications.

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Figure 9  
 City of Kalispell Annexation Policy Area Map



**Legend**

- City of Kalispell
- Annexation Policy Boundary - Res # 5404A
- Evergreen Sewer (RSID)
- Alternate Hwy 93 Complete
- Alternate Hwy 93 Planned 2016-2018
- Special Flood Hazard Area - 1 pct chance of annual flooding



Map created by  
 City of Kalispell  
 Planning Department  
 (406) 758-7940  
 Map Date: May 5, 2014

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## Chapter 16: Implementation Strategies

Implementation of this Growth Policy is primarily the City of Kalispell's responsibility, but to be completely effective a significant amount of coordination with other public agencies, the business community, and Kalispell's citizens will be required.

There are three primary tools used to implement the Growth Policy. They include: the adoption and enforcement of appropriate land use zoning classifications, subdivision regulations, and the adoption and application of development standards. Along with, and in support of, these three primary tools there are a number of additional, secondary tools and programs the City should use as needed in order to realize the vision, goals, and policies contained in the Growth Policy. The following sections describe these tools and programs and provide a framework for their implementation.

### 1. Zoning Regulations:

The Growth Policy serves as a basis for assigning appropriate zoning when land uses change or development occurs. The policy document anticipates future development patterns, i.e. residential, commercial, and industrial. However, this is a policy document, not a regulatory document. The zoning ordinance functions as an important tool in implementing the Growth Policy and is generally used to develop the long range development goals. Appropriate zoning is generally based upon the Growth Policy recommendations and policies. Zoning is intended to regulate the types of uses that may occur on a particular piece of property by establishing different types of zoning districts. In addition to the types of uses, zoning also regulates building height to avoid shadowing or blocking views. Zoning also sets standards regarding the density or minimum lot size requirements as well as where a structure is located on a piece of property by establishing setbacks and lot coverage limits.

Montana's Planning Statutes, Title 76, outlines the requirements for establishing zoning, zone amendments, and public hearing requirements.

The City of Kalispell has zoning authority over land within the City through the Kalispell Zoning Ordinance. Flathead County, has adopted the Flathead County Zoning Regulations that are applied in all areas outside the city limits and enforced by the County. All of the property inside the growth policy area has been zoned, either by the City or the County.

### **Zoning Regulations Implementation Strategy:**

- a. Development of the suburban and rural lands in the growth policy area should be coordinated with Flathead County and the appropriate assignment of zoning. The zoning should be substantially in compliance with the land use designations of the growth policy.
- b. There should be coordination and consistency between the Kalispell and County zoning regulations in areas just outside the city limits.
- c. Enforce the City's subdivision design standards and standards for design and construction development to address impacts related to conditionally permitted uses and incorporate them into the Kalispell Zoning Ordinance.
- d. Use the Planned Unit Development zoning overlay process for mixed-use development and other large or complex land projects where appropriate.
- e. Inside the City of Kalispell, zoning should be based upon the land use designation of the growth policy map.
- f. Develop highway entrance corridor development standards to address development in the entryways to the community.

### **2. Subdivision Regulations:**

The Montana Subdivision and Platting Act was adopted in 1973 and authorizes local governments to adopt subdivision regulations and outlines the public hearing and review process. Cities and counties must adopt subdivision regulations in accordance with state statutes. The City of Kalispell administers subdivision regulations for lands within the city limits and for all lands proposed to be annexed. Flathead County has jurisdiction for lands outside the city limits. The subdivision regulations govern the division of land into lots that can be individually conveyed. Standards are outlined in the subdivision regulations for road design, access, water and sewer extensions, storm water management, parkland dedications, fire access, and more.

The state statutes governing subdivision review also outline a notification and public hearing process for major subdivisions, subdivisions with six or more lots. Minor subdivisions, or subdivisions with five or fewer lots, fall under an expedited review process or a "summary review" process that does not require notification of property owners or a public hearing.

The City of Kalispell subdivision regulations include a section devoted to design standards, that when followed should result in an overall development pattern that is consistent with the goals and policies of the Growth Policy. In situations where there may be ambiguity or a need for interpretation of the standards, the Growth Policy should be consulted to help guide staff and the public.

### **Subdivision Implementation Strategy**

- a. Enforce design standards for roads, water, sewer and other infrastructure for new development.
- b. Encourage public interest and participation in the review process when major subdivisions are scheduled for public hearing by notifying property owners within 150 feet from the property, excluding any public right of way or waterways, to be subdivided via certified mail at least 14 days prior to the meeting.
- c. When subdivisions are anticipated to have high impacts to an area, a traffic analysis may be required to identify mitigation.
- d. Property that is anticipating receiving City services should be annexed prior to or concurrent with preliminary plat review.
- e. Subdivision road designs should be based primarily on a gridded and/or interconnected street system with a provision for anticipated future roadway extension that should be indicated as a future roadway on the final plat.
- f. Subdivision design should maintain the quality and integrity of the natural environment particularly in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, riparian corridors, and floodplain which should be integrated rather than eliminated.
- g. Subdivision regulations should provide greater encouragement for locating new parks within reasonable distances of each other particularly areas with higher density development.
- h. Major subdivisions shall be reviewed in accordance with the public interest criteria outlined in the statutes and will be required to have an environmental assessment and public hearing before the planning board.

- i. Minor subdivisions shall be eligible for summary review provided they meet the criteria outlined in the Kalispell Subdivision Regulations and state statutes.
- j. Some minor subdivisions may be eligible for an exemption from review provided they meet the criteria outlined in the Kalispell Subdivision Regulations and state statutes.

### **3. Growth Policy Update Amendment:**

Kalispell's Growth Policy should be periodically examined for relevance under the current economic, social, cultural, and market conditions of the community. The state statutes require that a growth policy be reviewed every five years. An update, whether it is general or based on one or several issues, should be initiated by the Kalispell City Council and based on a recommendation from the Kalispell City Planning Board from their annual review.

#### **Growth Policy Update Implementation Strategy**

- a. Whenever there is a major change in the socio-economic conditions of the community such as a large increase or decrease in population, a new industry entering or exiting the market; consideration should be given to updating the Growth Policy.
- b. The Planning Board should schedule a formal work session in the fall of each year to conduct a review of the Growth Policy and evaluate it for relevancy. The planning board should prepare a report to the City Council as to whether or not it should be amended with consideration being given to changes in the legal framework, factual errors or contradictions, significant changes in the community or new and relevant information that would affect specific policies and goals.
- c. Based on the Planning Board's review, the Council may conclude that an update or amendment to the Growth Policy is warranted. A report from the Planning Board should include a description of proposed changes and rationale, impacts of changes, necessary revisions to growth policy implementation strategies, and resulting revisions to regulations if needed.
- d. Amendments should include a public hearing before the Planning Board with the level of public involvement depending on the scope of the proposed changes or amendments.
- e. Evaluation criteria should include:
  - 1. Consistency with the goals and policies of the growth policy, state law, and other established policies adopted by the city council;

2. Demonstration of the public need and support for the change;
  3. The proposed change is the most effective means of meeting the need; and
  4. The public, as a whole, benefits, rather than one or a few property owners at the expense of others.
- f. Additional plans should be initiated as recommended by the Planning Board to address specific areas or needs in the community, such as: a bike and pedestrian plan or redevelopment plan for certain areas or neighborhoods.

#### **4. Neighborhood and Area Plan Amendments:**

Neighborhood Plans and Area Plans are tools to provide greater clarity for future development within a specific neighborhood or area of the City. The land area for this type of plan generally covers approximately 20 acres or more. These plans should be evaluated within the framework of the Growth Policy and follow the same review and approval process. They should be adopted as an addendum to the Kalispell Growth Policy in Appendix A. A neighborhood or area plan should expand on the goals and policies of Growth Policy and provide guidance at the neighborhood or project-level. Typically a group of property owners would initiate a neighborhood plan in order to address unique situations or specific neighborhood concerns. The state growth policy statutes require that they be in compliance with the goals and policies of the municipality's growth policy.

#### **Neighborhood Plan Amendment Implementation Strategy**

- a. The governing bodies within the Growth Policy area shall coordinate public hearings when neighborhood or area plans cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- b. New and existing neighborhood plans and area plans should be consistent with the Growth Policy document.
- c. Neighborhood plans and area plans should be reviewed every three years to determine whether they are still relevant and whether or not changes should be made or the plan should sunset. The plans are area found to be irrelevant they would be rescinded by a resolution passed by the City Council.
- d. A neighborhood or area plan will become the policy for the geographic area it addresses and any land use ordinances or regulations, such as zoning or subdivision review, should be based on this plan. The plan is conceptual in nature and not an engineering or construction document.

- e. An application for a neighborhood or area plan amendment should be developed to include required information and public hearing process. The information should include a plan identifying significant issues, goals, and, policies associated with the area
- f. If there is a zone change that can be anticipated or recommended as part of a neighborhood or plan, the plan amendment shall be acted on by the City Council to accept, revise, or reject it prior to the initiation of the zone change.

## **5. General Growth Policy Amendment:**

An application to amend the Growth Policy can be made to provide a basis for evaluating a development proposal including large or complex development projects or projects that have not been anticipated under the Growth Policy. The amendment proposal should provide clear and detailed information regarding a project for the purposes of evaluation and basis for future development. The proposal should be evaluated within the framework of the Growth Policy and should be adopted as an addendum to the Kalispell Growth Policy in Appendix A. The amendment proposal should serve to expand on the goals and policies of the Growth Policy and provide guidance at project level. The amendment proposal should be required to further the goals and policies of the Growth Policy document as a whole and would not preclude the changing of the anticipated uses on the future land use map.

### **General Growth Policy Amendment Implementation Strategy**

- a. The governing bodies within the Growth Policy area shall coordinate public hearings when amendments cross-jurisdictional boundaries.
- b. Amendments should be consistent with the Growth Policy document.
- c. Amendment proposals involving a specific development should be reviewed every three years to determine whether the document is still relevant and whether or not changes should be made or the plan should sunset.
- d. The amendment to the Growth Policy will become the policy for the area it addresses and any land use ordinances or regulations, such as zoning or subdivision review, should be based on this plan. The amendment proposal would be conceptual in nature and not an engineering or construction document.

- e. An application for an amendment should be developed to include required information and public hearing process. The information should include:
  - 1. A plan identifying significant issues, goals, and policies associated with proposed development;
  - 2. The feasibility of the development;
  - 3. A phasing plan, if appropriate;
  - 4. Conformance with the growth policy overall;
  - 5. A convincing showing of need;
  - 6. Neighborhood compatibility;
  - 7. Transportation impacts;
  - 8. Environmental impacts;
  - 9. Site hazards;
  - 10. Adequate provision of local services; and
  - 11. The appropriateness of the proposed location of the project.
  
- f. If the amendment is associated with a specific development and the proposed project is abandoned, the land use designation shall revert back to its prior land use designation and the development proposal would sunset. Abandonment shall be deemed to have occurred when no substantial improvements or substantial progress has been made on the development for a period of three years and the Planning Board has made a recommendation to the City Council for rescission. The plan would be rescinded by a resolution passed by the City Council.
  
- g. If there is a zone change that can be anticipated as part of the development proposal, the amendment shall be acted on by the City Council to accept, revise, or reject prior to the initiation of change in zoning.

## **6. Building and Fire Codes:**

Building codes apply to all construction (e.g., new construction, additions, alterations, conversions, improvements, remodels, and repairs), except that which is specifically exempted by the code or state law. Building codes set minimum standards for plumbing, electrical, and mechanical installations; construction techniques; and materials, etc. Building codes are not developed at the local level. Instead, the State adopts nationally recognized codes, which are developed and updated by national code committees. Cities and counties administer the state adopted codes.

Kalispell's building jurisdiction extends to the city limits. Within that building jurisdiction the Kalispell Building Department administers the Uniform Building Code, the Code of American Building Officials (CABO), One and Two Family Dwelling Code, the Uniform Mechanical Code and the Uniform Plumbing Code. Beyond the City's building jurisdiction, the Montana Department of Commerce has responsibility.

Within its resource capabilities the State permits and inspects five-plex or larger residential construction and all commercial construction; however, single-family through four-plex residential construction, which is the bulk of rural construction, is exempt. All electrical wiring requires an electrical permit from the State whether inside or outside of the Kalispell Building Jurisdiction.

### **Building and Fire Code Implementation**

- a. Building codes administered by the City of Kalispell and the State of Montana should strive to be consistent.
- b. Coordination and cooperation between the City, County and rural fire districts should be sought to share resources and building on individual strengths.
- c. Access and fire code requirements should be part of a preliminary development review process.
- d. Paving driveways, alleys, and parking lots should be required to be completed prior to an occupancy permit being issued. If weather or other conditions do not permit completion of parking or driveway paving, a temporary certificate of occupancy may be issued by the Building Official.
- e. A building code enforcement program should be coordinated between the City and the County.

### **7. Extension of Services Plan:**

The City of Kalispell is required by Montana annexation statutes, to maintain and keep current its Extension of Services Plan for the extension of City services to areas of the City not currently served and to lands to be annexed. The Extension of Services Plan addresses policies regarding the extension and construction of new City infrastructure including streets, water, sewer, and storm drainage. It also addresses the provision of fire, police, and other emergency services. The plan establishes a potential utility service area beyond the city limits, which is mapped. The

plan establishes various policy requirements for extension of services within that boundary including an important policy statement that developers shall be responsible for constructing all infrastructure to serve proposed development in accordance with City design standards.

**Extension of Services Plan Implementation Strategy:**

- a. Developers should be responsible for the installation and cost of utilities needed to serve their development. Any upsizing or extra extensions should be reimbursed by the City.
- b. The City’s extension of services plan should be based on information from the various Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Plans.
- c. Use the Kalispell Extension of Services Plan to clearly articulate annexation policies and the extension of new City utilities.
- d. Provide adequate information to Flathead County regarding the extension of service plan so that they can assist in facilitating policies.
- e. Review the extension of services plan periodically for specific updates that might be needed as a result of changes.
- f. Explore the use of development agreements for the reimbursement of utility extension costs to encourage the extension of utilities to areas without services.

**8. Capital Improvement Plan.**

A capital improvement plan prioritizes needed improvements to existing infrastructure and identifies priorities for upgrades, new construction and location of utilities.

**Capital Improvement Plan Implementation Strategy**

- a. Utilize the information from the specific facility plans to identify needed improvements to existing infrastructure.
- b. Maintain a capital improvement fund to pay for replacement and extension of utilities.
- c. Maintain an equitable user rate and fee program to adequately fund and maintain existing infrastructure.

## 9. Urban Renewal Districts:

As of the adoption of this plan in May of 2014, the City of Kalispell has three urban renewal districts in the city limits aimed at eliminating blight and assisting in upgrades to infrastructure in order to encourage new development and redevelopment. Also sometimes referred to as “tax increment finance districts,” TIFs, or urban renewal districts allow local governments to capture additional tax revenue from new development to be reinvested into the district. The state statutes clearly outline the purposes for which the funding may be used as well as the specific activities that must be identified in a redevelopment plan. The City of Kalispell has several programs that have been used to assist in development in the urban renewal districts, including: a 3%-interest commercial loan program for renovation work on existing structures and off-site infrastructure improvements, which benefit the majority of residents and compliment or assist new development projects. Developers may also, in some instances, seek a low interest loan for certain on-site infrastructure activities.

The first of the three is the Westside Urban Renewal District adopted in 1997. This District was significantly expanded in 2012 to include Kalispell’s Core Area. The “Core Area Plan” details the specific goals and strategies for the Westside Urban Renewal District, which is focused on the revitalization and rehabilitation of area located north of Downtown spanning the width of the city limits. The main strategies in the Core Area Plan are the relocation of the railroad dependent users to a “rail-industrial park” on the east side of the City, the removal of the railroad tracks, the development of a non-motorized promenade running east-west across the City. The Westside Tax Increment Finance District, which is a key financing tool for the district has been extended for 25 years with a sunset date of 2037.

The second is the Airport/Athletic Complex Urban Renewal District that was established in 1996. The district generally encompasses an area surrounding Kalispell’s City Airport. It was developed for the purpose of providing a financial mechanism to provide the necessary infrastructure support to encourage the growth of secondary, value-adding businesses in the City and the development of an expanded and updated airport complex. The Airport/Athletic Complex Tax Increment Finance District is set to expire on July 1, 2020.

The third and final urban renewal district is the Old School Station District that was established in 2005. The district is focused on high-technology and light-industry growth in an area located at the far southern limits of the city. The industrial park has been developed and public utilities extended to the park. The Old School Station Tax Increment finance district is set to expire on January 1, 2020.

### **Urban Renewal District Implementation Strategy**

- a. Continue to support and operate the Community Development Department and the various economic development programs it either administers or has access to.
- b. Explore the creation of additional urban renewal district in other areas of the city to encourage redevelopment.
- c. Continue to develop specific improvement plans for the districts and promote the plans to encourage coordinated and desirable development within the districts.

### **10. Intergovernmental Cooperation:**

A spirit of cooperation and understanding between the City of Kalispell and Flathead County is critical to reinforcing an orderly development pattern, including coordinating public facilities and services, and addressing the numerous issues that cross over city-county boundaries. Relations between the City and County have been strained and there has been a lack of joint planning between these government entities.

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation Implementation Strategy**

- a. Develop a cooperative relationship between the elected officials, government agencies, service and utility providers that results in consistent development standards, efficient use of public infrastructure and resources, and quality development.
- b. Coordination between the City and the County is needed to create consistency in development standards for both zoning and subdivision design standards at the urban / rural interface.
- c. Encourage the County to recognize the land use designations for property within the potential utility service area and adopt zoning consistent with the land use designation.
- d. Coordinate a public review process that involves both the city and the county residents when there are major projects that have impacts in both jurisdictions.
- e. The city council and the county commissioners should meet periodically to discuss issues of joint concern.

- f. Schedule meetings or work sessions between the city and county planning boards to facilitate understanding and consistency in goals and policies.

## **11. Interlocal Agreement:**

Interlocal agreements have been used by cities and county and also between cities, counties, and rural fire districts. These agreements are recognized under the Montana Planning Statutes as a tool for the creation of joint planning boards, mutual aid agreements and agreements between the sewer districts and the City of Kalispell. These agreements spell out the responsibilities and expectations as well as limits of the parties.

### **Interlocal Agreement Implementation Strategy**

- a. An interlocal agreement should be sought between the City of Kalispell and the rural fire districts for automatic aid agreement to further reinforce the commitment between the parties to provide life and safety assistance to all citizens of the community regardless of boundaries.
- b. Explore a renegotiated interlocal agreement with the Evergreen Sewer District to expand their service area.
- c. An interlocal agreement be signed between the City and the County that agrees on a joint planning jurisdiction and the reestablishment of a city-county planning board for Kalispell.

## **12. Memorandum of Understanding:**

A memorandum of understanding can be used as a tool to spell out specific obligations, agreements and cooperative efforts between parties, either public or private. They have been used between government and private entities to clearly articulate responsibilities and expectations of the parties involved.

### **Memorandum of Understanding Implementation Strategy**

- a. In lieu of or as an interim measure, a memorandum of understanding should be sought between the City of Kalispell and Flathead County to recognize certain goals and policies outlined in the Kalispell Growth Policy for land use decisions on the urban fringes.

- b. In order to better coordinate and address the fringe area impacts associated with development, a memorandum of understanding between Kalispell and Flathead County should be entered into that describes the relationships and responsibilities for each party relative to development on the fringes of the City.
- c. The following policies should be incorporated in such an agreement:
  - Urban and rural development standards.
  - Subdivision plat review processes.
  - Annexation policies including transfer of County roads to the City.
  - Extension of municipal services including sewer, water.
  - Public safety and emergency services and facilities.
  - Coordination of geographic information systems, building codes and health department resources.

### **13. Floodplain Development Permits:**

The City of Kalispell and Flathead County participate in the national flood insurance program developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and administered by the local governing bodies in accordance with federal laws. The 100 year and 500 year floodplain has been mapped in all of the growth policy area which has significant floodplain. The Flathead River to the east along with the Whitefish River and Stillwater River create a significant amount of area that is restricted to development because it lies in the 100 year floodplain. Whenever any type of fill is proposed in the 100 year floodplain, a floodplain development permit is required to be obtained in accordance with the federal program. Both the City and the County have personnel designated as the floodplain administrator for the respective jurisdictions.

#### **Floodplain Development Permit Implementation Strategy**

- a. Continue to participate in the national flood insurance program to keep flood insurance rates low for all the residents of the community.
- b. Discourage fill in the 100 year floodplain when other viable options are available for development.
- c. Do not allow the creation of new subdivision lots in the 100 year floodplain when fill would be required to establish a building site.

#### **14. Conservation Easements:**

Conservation easements are a voluntary tool for conserving and setting certain development standards on a piece of private property for the benefit of the public, environment and future use of the property. The Montana statutes have specific criteria for conservation easements and the entity for which an easement may be given. There are several non-profit organizations in the community that manage conservation easements such as the Flathead Land Trust, the Montana Land Reliance, the Nature Conservancy as well as public agencies.

##### **Conservation Easement Implementation Strategy**

- a. Encourage the use of conservation easements to protect environmentally sensitive areas or areas that have unique characteristics or qualities that are worthy of conservation and / or preservation.
- b. Provide broader education of the public and private sectors of the community regarding the use and value of conservation easements as a land management tool.

#### **15. City, Federal and State Grant Programs:**

The City of Kalispell's Community Development Department currently administers and monitors numerous state and federal grant programs as well as City program income funds. These have been used for affordable housing activities such as rehabilitation and/or new construction and down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time homebuyers as well as housing for groups or individuals with special needs. Additionally these funding sources provide low-interest commercial loans for rehabilitation or renovation of commercial/retail structures within our urban renewal districts as well as support economic development through business retention and/or expansion. The City also provides funding for surveys and studies identifying growth and planning needs.

##### **Grant Program Implementation Strategy**

- a. Continue to support the programs and staffing of the Community Development Department to ensure the City's high rating and ranking in the grant arena is maintained and enhanced.
- b. Continue to utilize program income from previous grant funded projects as well as urban renewal projects as matching funds as various grants require.
- c. Continue to promote public/private partnerships wherever possible.

## **16. Public Participation and Public Hearing Process:**

A process for notice and scheduling of public hearings for land development proposals such as zone changes and subdivisions is outlined in the Montana Annexation and Planning Statutes. The City of Kalispell is required, at a minimum, to meet those notice requirements, but has actually adopted additional notice requirements that are part of the Kalispell Zoning Ordinance and the Kalispell Subdivision Regulations. The extent and degree of public involvement should depend on the scale of the project or proposed changes. A general growth policy amendment, neighborhood plan amendment, or update of the growth policy involving a large area, major policy changes or major changes to land use designations may include collecting opinions, assessing community needs, an inventory of services and resources and providing the opportunity for meaningful public involvement.

### **Public Participation and Public Hearing Process Implementation Strategy**

- a. Notice requirements for items that are subject to public hearings before the planning board or board of adjustment should be consistent for all types of project applications such as major subdivisions, conditional use permits, zone changes and variances.
- b. Adequate facilities need to be available to accommodate public seating and participation when specific issues or projects draw a large audience.
- c. Public notification requirements for annexations and initial zoning should be handles the same as a zone change when there is substantial acreage, a significant increase in density or significant increases in traffic anticipated.
- d. When a public hearing is required for subdivision, zone changes, conditional use permits or variances; property owners within 150 feet of the subject site will be notified by mail 15 days prior to the scheduled hearing.
- e. When there is a proposed change in land use, the property should be posted for 30 days prior to consideration of the proposed land use change.
- f. Information regarding public hearings, development proposals and staff recommendations should be available with adequate time for review and consideration.

- g. Information regarding development proposals, zone changes or other projects should be available on the internet for easy access by the public.
- h. Develop information systems that allow easier access to planning, zoning and subdivision information.
- i. Major subdivisions shall be reviewed in accordance with the public interest criteria outlined in the statutes and will be required to have an environmental assessment and a public hearing before the planning board.
- j. Minor subdivisions shall be eligible for summary review provided they meet the criteria outlined in the Kalispell Subdivision Regulations and state statutes.
- k. Some minor subdivisions may be eligible for an exemption from review provided they meet the criteria outlined in the Kalispell Subdivision Regulations and state statutes.
- l. Work with homeowners associations and neighborhoods with areas are intended to be annexed by the City to identify issues and explain the process.
- m. Meet with water and sewer boards, school districts or other agencies to facilitate a better understanding of mutual concerns and needs.
- n. Conduct public opinion surveys to solicit a better understanding of the community's desires and concerns.
- o. Work with the media to provide accurate information for the public and to provide additional exposure to land use issues.

#### **17. Other Plans, Studies and Reports:**

Additional plans, studies or reports can be performed to provide additional information, guidance or support for the growth policies. These plans would typically be designed, funded and performed by the City of Kalispell or other government entity to provide additional guidance or information regarding a particular issue. These additional plans, studies or reports would not typically be considered if they are in conjunction with a development project or performed by or on behalf of a developer or special interest group. For example additional drainage studies, bike and pedestrian plan, capital improvements plan, transportation plan updates and urban renewal plans can all be used as an implementation tool for the growth

policy. Appendix B, the Resource and Analysis Section, of the growth policy should be updated as new information becomes available on the economy, population, housing trends or other information from the State, US Census Bureau or other reliable sources.

**Plans Studies and Reports Implementation Strategy**

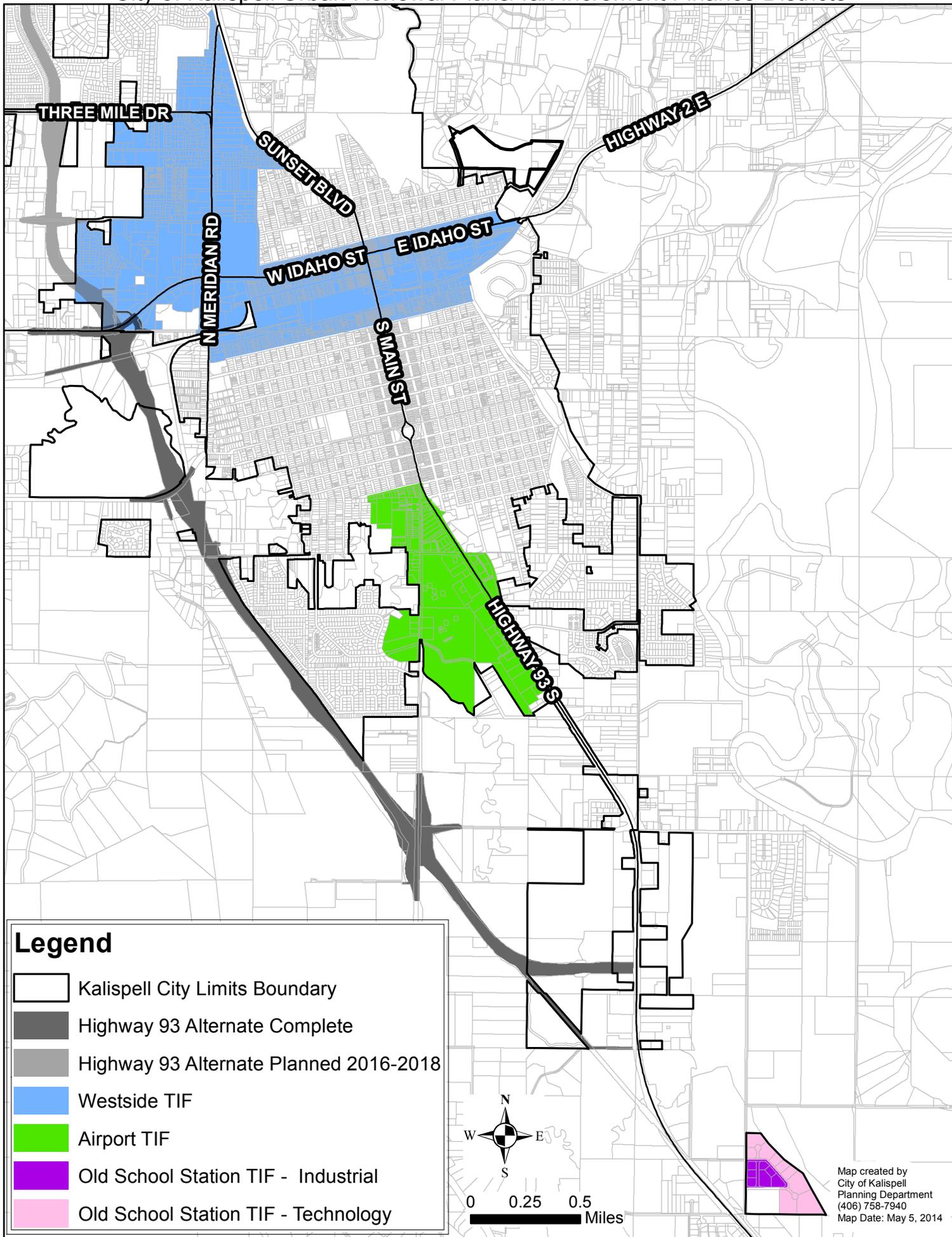
- a. Rely on unbiased reports, studies and information as an additional tool in the decision making process.
- b. Plans, studies and reports used for decision-making purposes should provide unbiased, objective, quantifiable information rather than being sponsored in connection with a specific development project or by a special interest group or organization.
- c. Update Appendix B, the Resources and Analysis Section; as additional information becomes available.

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Figure 10

City of Kalispell Urban Renewal Plans/Tax Increment Finance Districts



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## **APPENDIX A**

**Neighborhood and Area Plans**

**&**

**Growth Policy Amendments**

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## Highway 93 North Area Plan

This Growth Policy amendment was adopted February 18, 2003, and is in addition to the existing goals, policies, text, and maps.

The area included in the Highway 93 North Growth Policy Amendment includes all lands bounded by the Stillwater River as the western boundary, Church and Birch Grove Drives as the northern boundary, LaSalle to Rose Crossing over to the Flathead River as the eastern boundary, and Reserve Drive as the southern boundary, and generally includes Sections 13, 24 and 25 in Township 29 North, Range 22 West, and Sections 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 29 and 30 in Township 29 North, Range 21 West, P.M.M., Flathead County, Montana.

**GOAL - 1:** Gateway entrances to Kalispell that enhance the community through improved design.

### Policies:

1. Gateway Entrance Corridors (areas of special concern) would extend up to 150 feet of either side of the existing R/W for primary highways and up to 50 feet for secondary highways.
2. The following roadway corridors are identified as gateway entrances to Kalispell.
  - a. Highway 93 North corridor north of Four Mile to the County Landfill.
  - b. US Highway 2 (LaSalle) from Reserve Drive to Birch Grove
  - c. Whitefish Stage from Reserve Drive to Birch Grove. (minor entrance way)
3. The following design standards are intended to enhance the gateway entrances to Kalispell
  - a. Access control is important along the gateway entrance roads.
  - b. Access should be coordinated so as to allow only collector or arterial streets to intersect. The judicious use of right-in right-out approaches, frontage roads and good internal development street design should be the rule to reduce or eliminate the need for direct access onto major gateway roads.

- c. With the construction of the Church Drive overpass on US 93, every effort must be taken to fully utilize this interchange and conversely limit direct access onto US 93 for at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile along areas north and south of this facility to avoid congestion points and the need for future traffic signals. The judicious use of right-in right-out approaches, frontage roads and good internal development street design will mitigate the need for direct access out.
- d. Extra setbacks, buffering and landscaping along US Highway 93 North and US Highway 2 and to a lesser degree along Whitefish Stage Road are the norm.
- e. In those areas planned for general commercial development on a gateway entrance, it should occur as an integrated development utilizing and enhancing the property back from the gateway as opposed to occurring as a shallow linear strip. Significant individual business highway exposure, individual access points, and pole signage would not be the norm. Out parcels of commercial businesses would be anticipated within the improved design of a PUD along the corridors.
- f. Additional design standards should be developed to ensure that signage enhances development, not detracts from it. Wall signage integrated into the overall building design is preferred over free standing signage. Monument signs are preferred over other types of free standing signage. Where development entrance signage or monument signage is proposed, it should be done so as part of a unified planned unit development concept.
- g. Where the adjacent gateway road speed is posted at 35 mph or lower:
  - i. A minimum 20 foot landscape buffer should be provided abutting the gateway road.
  - ii. Street trees should be incorporated into the landscape buffer.
  - iii. A pedestrian trail or sidewalk should be incorporated into the landscaped buffer area.
  - iv. Four sided architecture would be the norm adjacent to gateway entrances.
- h. Where the adjacent gateway road speed is posted from 36 – 45 mph:
  - i. A minimum of 40 feet of landscaped buffer area should be provided.
  - ii. Street trees and berming should be incorporated into the landscaping.

- iii. A pedestrian trail or sidewalk should be incorporated into the landscaped buffer area.
    - iv. Four sided architecture would be the norm adjacent to gateway entrances
  - i. Where the adjacent gateway road speed is posted above 45 mph:
    - i. A minimum 100 – 150 foot impact area should be provided for major entrances and a 50 foot entrance for minor entrances.
    - ii. Within this impact area, a combination of berming, landscaping using live materials and trees as well as grass, a pedestrian trail system, limited parking and frontage roads should be incorporated.
    - iii. Primary buildings should not be located in this impact area, unless specifically approved in a PUD.
    - iv. Four sided architecture should be the norm for development adjacent to the impacted area.
    - v. Monument signs would be anticipated to occur in the rear portion of the impacted area, other free standing signs would not.
    - vi. Whenever parking or signage is proposed in the impact area, it shall only be done under a PUD process where the impacts of these actions are anticipated and provided for.
  - j. Where smaller parcels cannot meet the setback areas, a PUD will be utilized.
- 4. Neighborhood commercial should be used as a means to buffer key intersections and to meet immediate local needs, not to serve as a destination shopping area.
- 5. Neighborhood commercial areas would in turn be buffered from lower density and intensity residential areas through the use of higher density residential uses and office uses.
- 6. Pedestrian and trail systems should be incorporated into berming, landscaping, greenbelts, park areas and setback standards along gateway entrances to enhance or maintain the scenic value of the entrance corridor from public facilities, neighborhoods, schools and commercial services.

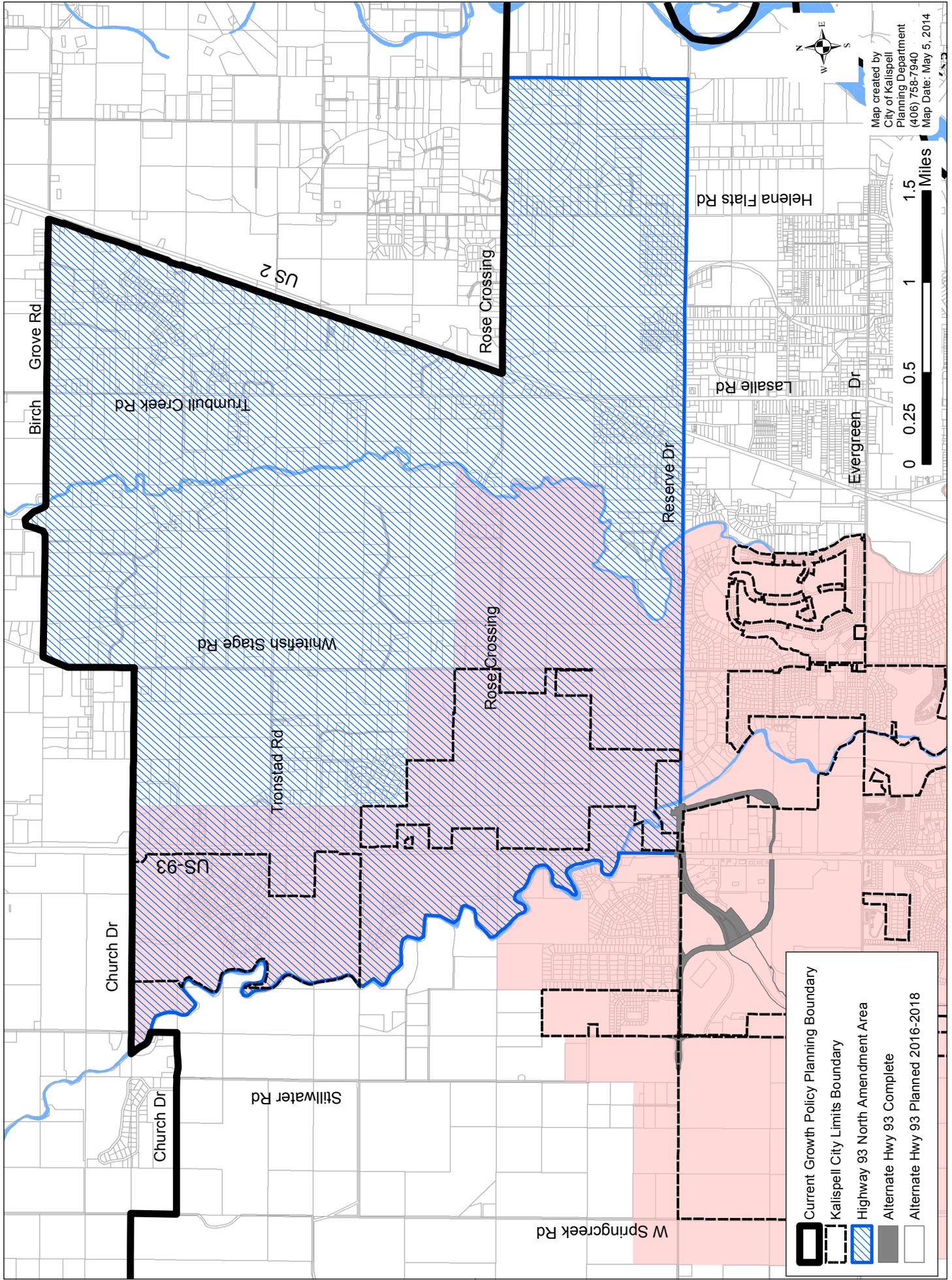
**GOAL - 2:** The development of an integrated residential/commercial neighborhood (Designated KN-1 on Growth Policy Map) between US 93-Reserve Drive and Whitefish Stage.

**Policies:**

1. Development will be mixed use in nature creating an overall integrated neighborhood as opposed to linear strip commercial development fronting the Gateway entrances.
2. Access onto the major Gateway roads would be limited.
3. Development in this 600 acre site would typically be:
  - a. Up to 45% general commercial,
  - b. Up to 25% urban mixed use area.
  - c. Up to 20% in various residential configurations.
  - d. 10% open space uses
4. Commercial activity would be generally distributed throughout the development designed to serve both the adjacent neighborhood as well as the greater community.
5. Development within the KN-1 area will be required to be presented to the Planning Board and the City Council in the form of a Planned Unit Development so that the impacts of this development can be planned for and if necessary mitigated through improved design.

**GOAL – 3:** Cooperate with Flathead County in the development of a transfer of development rights (TDR) program. The emphasis should be to provide opportunities to conserve and protect important farmlands, sensitive lands (high ground water, flood plain, wetlands, and critical wildlife habitat) and rural open space.

Figure 11  
Highway 93 North Area Map



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## Highway 93 South Corridor Area Plan

This Growth Policy amendment was adopted February 18, 2003, and is in addition to the existing goals, policies, text, and maps.

The Highway 93 South Corridor is recognized as a major arterial within the larger Kalispell area and as such its integrity in moving traffic is a primary goal. It is recognized that development will occur along this corridor that will contribute to a local economy in commercial, industrial and residential aspects. The area in the Highway 93 South Corridor Growth Policy Amendment includes from Highway 93 west on Cemetery Road to Ashley Creek and following Ashley Creek south to the point where Ashley Creek is in the vicinity of Rocky Cliff Drive. At this point the boundary continues east on Rocky Cliff Drive to Highway 93 with the boundary line continuing east of Highway 93 along the southern boundary of Old School Station subdivision to a point just east of the subdivision to the 100 year floodplain line of the Flathead River. From the floodplain line the boundary continues north along the floodplain until the floodplain intersects with Demersville Road. The boundary then continues north along Demersville Road until its intersection with Lower Valley Road. The boundary then continues west on Lower Valley Road to its intersection with Highway 93. This area includes portions of sections 28, 29, 32, and 33 of Township 28 North, Range 21 West.

### Issues:

1. Development along the Highway 93 South corridor has the potential to compromise the primary objective of the roadway to move traffic because of additional accesses associated with new development.
2. Highway 93 and the Highway 93 Bypass serve as entrance corridors to Kalispell and the viability and scenic nature of these corridors need to be protected and enhanced.
3. The Highway 93 corridor generates considerable traffic noise which will negatively impact any development along the roadways.
4. Corridor development can oftentimes lack quality landscaping, parking, lighting and architectural design.
5. Municipal water and sewer have recently been extended south from Kalispell along Highway 93. Adequate capacity is available to serve all lands within the Highway 93 South Corridor Growth Policy Amendment area.

6. Lack of an existing grid street system contributes to the potential problems associated with additional accesses being created along Highway 93 as new development occurs.
7. Lack of any pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Highway 93 South neighborhood.
8. Topography and other natural features in this area such as the 100 year floodplain adjacent to the Flathead River on the east side and Ashley Creek on the west limit where development can occur.
9. Lineal development along highway corridors generally contributes to traffic problems and conflicts associated with single accesses, visual clutter and a diminished quality of life.
10. The city airport impacts properties immediately south of the future runway in the area south of Cemetery Road. Impacts include limitation on building heights, need to plan for appropriate uses, noise, and air traffic.
11. Proposed airport expansion plans may cause the re-alignment of Cemetery Road.
12. The proposed Highway 93 Bypass will serve as a barrier to local north-south traffic flow for properties on the west side of Highway 93. There is a need to maintain a north-south connection so as to provide an alternate to Highway 93.
13. There is an apparent remnant strip of former railroad right-of-way owned by MDT which extends from the future Highway 93 Bypass south to the existing Highway 93 right-of-way. Use/re-use of this land needs to be planned for.
14. The city's 40 acre biosolids land application site located on the south side of Cemetery Road is an important part of the Kalispell sewer treatment facility. It is important to provide long term protection of this site from the intrusion of incompatible land uses.
15. There appears to be a future need for a school site serving the north end of the Somers/Lakeside School district to accommodate new development in the area.
16. As commercial and industrial development occurs along the Highway 93 South corridor there will be impacts with proposed future residential property immediately behind and adjacent to this development pattern.

17. Noise impacts associated with Industrial uses, Highway 93 and the future Highway 93 Bypass on adjacent residential development negatively impact the quality of life for these residents.
18. Fire and EMS services to this area exceed the minimum response times the Fire Department holds itself to because the closest fire station is located over 1 ½ miles north of the Highway 93 South Neighborhood.
19. There are no neighborhood or regional parks to serve the immediate needs of existing or future residents.

**GOALS:**

1. A CONCENTRATED COMMERCIAL CENTER BISECTED BY HIGHWAY 93 TO SERVE THE IMMEDIATE COMMERCIAL NEEDS OF THOSE PEOPLE LIVING AND WORKING IN THE GENERAL AREA OF THE SOUTH 93 CORRIDOR.
2. EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SOUTH OF CEMETERY ROAD/LOWER VALLEY ROAD NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED UNDER A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT IN ORDER TO ADEQUATELY ADDRESS VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS, SIGNAGE, SETBACKS, AND OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO PROTECTING AND PRESERVING THE COMMUNITY ENTRANCE WAY TO KALISPELL.
3. PRESERVING THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE INTERSECTION OF HIGHWAY 93 AND THE HIGHWAY 93 BYPASS SHOULD BE A PRIORITY.
4. DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE HIGHWAY 93 SOUTH CORRIDOR SHOULD OCCUR IN AREAS WHERE PUBLIC SERVICES, UTILITIES AND FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE OR CAN BE PROVIDED.
5. NEW DEVELOPMENT WHETHER COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL OR RESIDENTIAL SHOULD BE OF HIGH QUALITY IN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY.
6. FREE FLOWING TRAFFIC ON HIGHWAY 93 SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AND NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INCORPORATE DESIGN AND TRAFFIC FEATURES THAT WILL ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR PRESENT OR FUTURE TRAFFIC SIGNALS BETWEEN FOUR CORNERS AND HIGHWAY 82.

7. A GRID STREET SYSTEM SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AS NEW DEVELOPMENT OCCURS.
8. DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INCORPORATE DESIGN FEATURES AND LAND USES APPROPRIATE TO ADJACENT AIRPORT TRAFFIC.
9. MDT OWNED EXCESS OR SURPLUS RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY NOT NEEDED FOR THE HIGHWAY 93 BYPASS SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN OF THE AREA.
10. THE FUTURE VIABILITY OF THE CITY OWNED BIOSOLIDS LAND APPLICATION SITE IMMEDIATELY SOUTH OF CEMETERY ROAD NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED. APPROPRIATE DESIGN, SETBACKS AND MITIGATION FEATURES SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO ANY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED ADJACENT TO THIS SITE.
11. WORK WITH THE SOMERS/LAKESIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO LOCATE A FUTURE SCHOOL SITE IN THIS AREA.
12. THE HIGHWAY 93 BYPASS, THE INTERSECTION OF HIGHWAY 93 AND THE BYPASS AND HIGHWAY 93 ARE GATEWAY ENTRANCES AND SCENIC CORRIDOR ENTRANCES TO OUR COMMUNITY AND AS SUCH NEED SPECIAL TREATMENT AND PROTECTION.
13. PRESERVE THE TRANQUILITY OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS BY MINIMIZING POTENTIAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN NOISE ASSOCIATED WITH THE HIGHWAY AND INDUSTRIAL USES.
14. BUILD A NEW FIRE STATION TO SERVE CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA.
15. PROVIDE FOR THE ONGOING ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PARKS, BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAILS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.
16. PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE TRAILS SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO NEIGHBORHOODS AND CONNECT WITH OR PROVIDE FOR FUTURE CONNECTION WITH EXISTING OR FUTURE TRAILS.

**Policies:**

1. Recognize the need within the community for high paying, high quality industrial based jobs and business. Promote and encourage those businesses in this area.
2. Create incentives for development of industrial based businesses, including e-commerce based businesses, along the Highway 93 South Corridor.
3. Avoid a pattern of one lot deep linear commercial and industrial development along the Highway 93 South Corridor; instead encourage development patterns that extend horizontally back from the highway creating commercial or industrial centers and parks.
4. Require high quality development as it relates to the provision of services, utilities, facilities and amenities.
5. Additional accesses onto Highway 93 shall be limited and a grid street system shall be developed when possible.
6. Frontage roads shall be developed as part of a grid street system to avoid additional accesses onto Highway 93.
7. Provide alternative north/south roadways parallel to Highway 93 on both the east and west sides of the highway.
8. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be avoided and protected when possible.
9. High quality design standards shall be applied to new development along the corridor related to architecture, parking lot layout, lighting, landscaping, setbacks and signage.
10. All parking lots shall be paved and landscaped.
11. Recognize the need for the provision of fire and police services to the Highway 93 South Corridor area.
12. Ensure that there is a well-informed public and property owners along the corridor regarding the implications of the extension of public services to that area.

13. Aviation easements should be required for all new development or redevelopment in the Highway 93 South Corridor area.
14. Whenever a property develops or changes ownership the developer/owner should be alerted that the property is in the airport affected area.
15. Because of the presence of the municipal airport, residential uses are not deemed to be appropriate within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of the easterly  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of Cemetery Road (the south end of the proposed runway).
16. Height of personal, commercial or public communication towers or antennas should be restricted to reduce conflicts with the existing and proposed Kalispell Airport expansion.
17. Development around the city's 40 acre biosolids land application site located on the south side of Cemetery Road should take into consideration mitigating measures such as fencing, extra setbacks and an acknowledgement that they abut a sludge injection site. In addition, in the event that this site becomes surplus to the city, some provision should be made to provide for access to the site from the east, south and west to provide access for future development at that time.
18. The following design standards are intended to enhance the gateway entrances to Kalispell:
  - a. Access control should be the norm along the 93 corridors.
  - b. Access should be coordinated so as to allow only collector or arterial streets to intersect Highway 93. The judicious use of right-in right-out approaches, frontage roads and good internal development street design should be the rule to reduce or eliminate the need for direct access onto major gateway roads.
  - c. Areas planned for commercial development along Highway 93 should occur as an integrated development utilizing and enhancing the property back from the highway as opposed to occurring as a shallow linear strip. Significant individual business highway exposure, individual access points, and pole signage would not be the norm.
  - d. Monument signs are preferred over pole signs.

- e. Four sided architecture should be the norm for all properties abutting the gateway entrances.
  - f. Billboards should be prohibited in the commercial and residential zones. Existing billboards in these zones should be considered a primary use. Such existing billboards should be phased out in these zones under the following schedule: at the end of their current lease or when another primary use is proposed on the same parcel or tract of land.
  - g. The scale of any commercial development should be sized to serve the immediate neighborhood (i.e. Somers, South Kalispell) as opposed to regional in scale.
19. Development in the commercial areas should be mixed use in nature creating an overall integrated neighborhood as opposed to linear strip commercial development fronting the gateway entrances.
20. Additional setbacks along with fencing, berming and landscaping should be used to buffer new residential and school development adjacent to existing land zoned for industrial uses.
21. A vehicular/pedestrian connection should be provided connecting properties to the north and south of the proposed Highway 93 Bypass to provide the following:
- a. Offer a parallel route to Highway 93
  - b. Reduce traffic on Highway 93
  - c. Provide options for internal travel within developments to the north and south of the Highway 93 Bypass
  - d. Reduce the need for additional access points on Highway 93
22. Advocate the design and site layout of new residential development adjacent to industrial zoned property, Highway 93 and the future bypass to incorporate noise reduction techniques so that the new development will not be affected by noise that exceeds 60 dBA at the property line.

23. Encourage the use of setbacks and earth berms as noise reduction techniques in residential development to mitigate noise impacts and discourage the use of sound walls.
24. A future fire station site should be provided in the area. The site should include an area no less than 2 ½ acres.
25. Park and trail locations should be located and developed in accordance with the parks and recreation comprehensive master plan.

**Recommendations:**

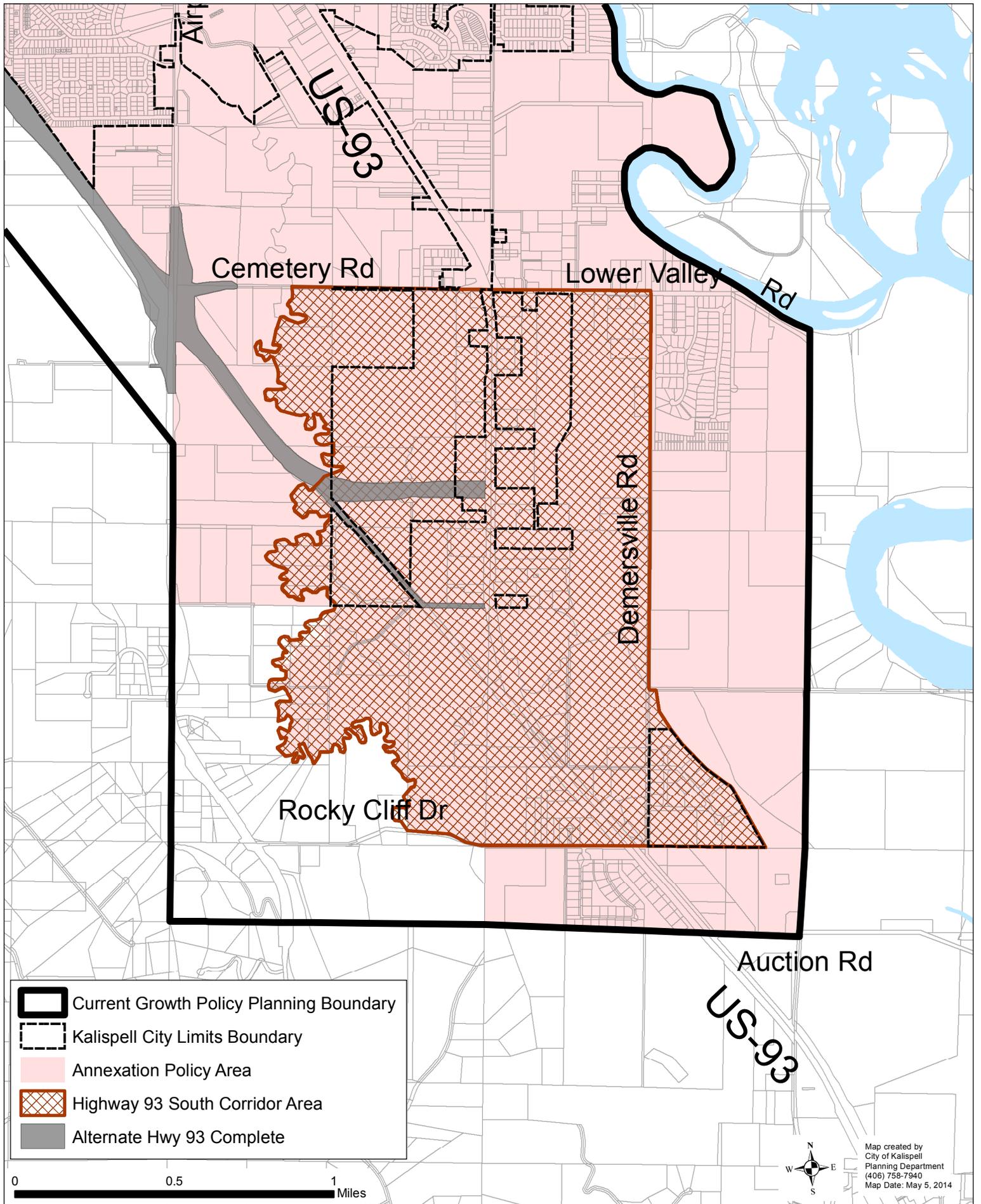
1. New development along the Highway 93 South Corridor shall be required to connect to public services and utilities.
2. The City of Kalispell shall explore incentives to encourage appropriate industrial development and expansion of existing businesses in this area.
3. Architectural design standards should be adopted that require high quality design in architecture including four sided architecture, landscaping, lighting, signage and parking lot design.
4. Coordinate an overall access plan with the Montana Department of Transportation to avoid the haphazard placement and approval of new access onto Highway 93 South.
5. Ensure that large scale developments adequately mitigate impacts associated with traffic and the provision of services to the area.
6. Avoid inappropriate development of general commercial type uses along the highway corridor south of the Four Corners commercial POD and favor the development of light industrial and e-commerce based businesses instead.
7. Continue to coordinate land use policies with Flathead County and Lakeside Sewer District to insure that new development along the Highway 93 South Corridor is served by public water and sewer.

8. Plan for the future provision of fire and police services and facilities for the Highway 93 South Corridor area.
9. Continue to review, revise and update standards, policies and regulations that will insure high quality development that meets the needs of the local and regional economies and communities.
10. Continue working on a phased approach to the expansion of the potential utility service area with the Lakeside/Somers inter-governmental bodies as well as the local community.

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Figure 12  
Highway 93 South Corridor Map



-  Current Growth Policy Planning Boundary
-  Kalispell City Limits Boundary
-  Annexation Policy Area
-  Highway 93 South Corridor Area
-  Alternate Hwy 93 Complete

0 0.5 1 Miles



Map created by  
City of Kalispell  
Planning Department  
(406) 758-7940  
Map Date: May 5, 2014

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## Kalispell West Neighborhood Plan

This Growth Policy amendment was adopted February 18, 2003, and is in addition to the existing goals, policies, text and maps.

### **GENERAL NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING BOUNDARY**

The Kalispell West neighborhood is described as an area generally whose south boundary is Two Mile Drive extended westerly to West Valley Drive, then north on West Valley drive 1/2 mile to Three Mile drive, then west ¼ mile on 3 Mile Drive, then north one mile to Farm to Market Road. At this point the boundary follows westerly and northerly along Farm to Market Road to Church Drive, then following Church Drive easterly over to the Stillwater River, then extending south along the Stillwater River to US 93, then south to Reserve Drive, then west on West Reserve Drive to Stillwater Road, then on a line along Stillwater Road south to Two Mile Road. The site is primarily in the West Valley School District.

**GOAL:** The orderly westward expansion of the City of Kalispell.

#### **Policies:**

- 1) Provide for a three-tiered system of long range planning around the City of Kalispell.
  - a) Provide for the immediate or short term development plans in the areas adjacent to the city by providing reasonable uses and densities to accommodate growth for the next 15 – 20 years. This would be graphically reflected by a future land use map
  - b) Provide a second tier area around the city which is beyond the immediate (15 – 20 year window) development trends or needs of the city or desire of the city to extend services at this time. This area would be anticipated to see urban development in the 20 – 40 year window. Because this area anticipates development so far in the future, a development area boundary is shown as a faint line on the future land use map but individual land uses and densities are not called out at this time.
  - c) Provide an overall planning boundary around the city which encompasses the initial and secondary area as well as some lands beyond for the purpose of gathering data such as development trends, land use changes, traffic trends and volumes, etc., to use as a

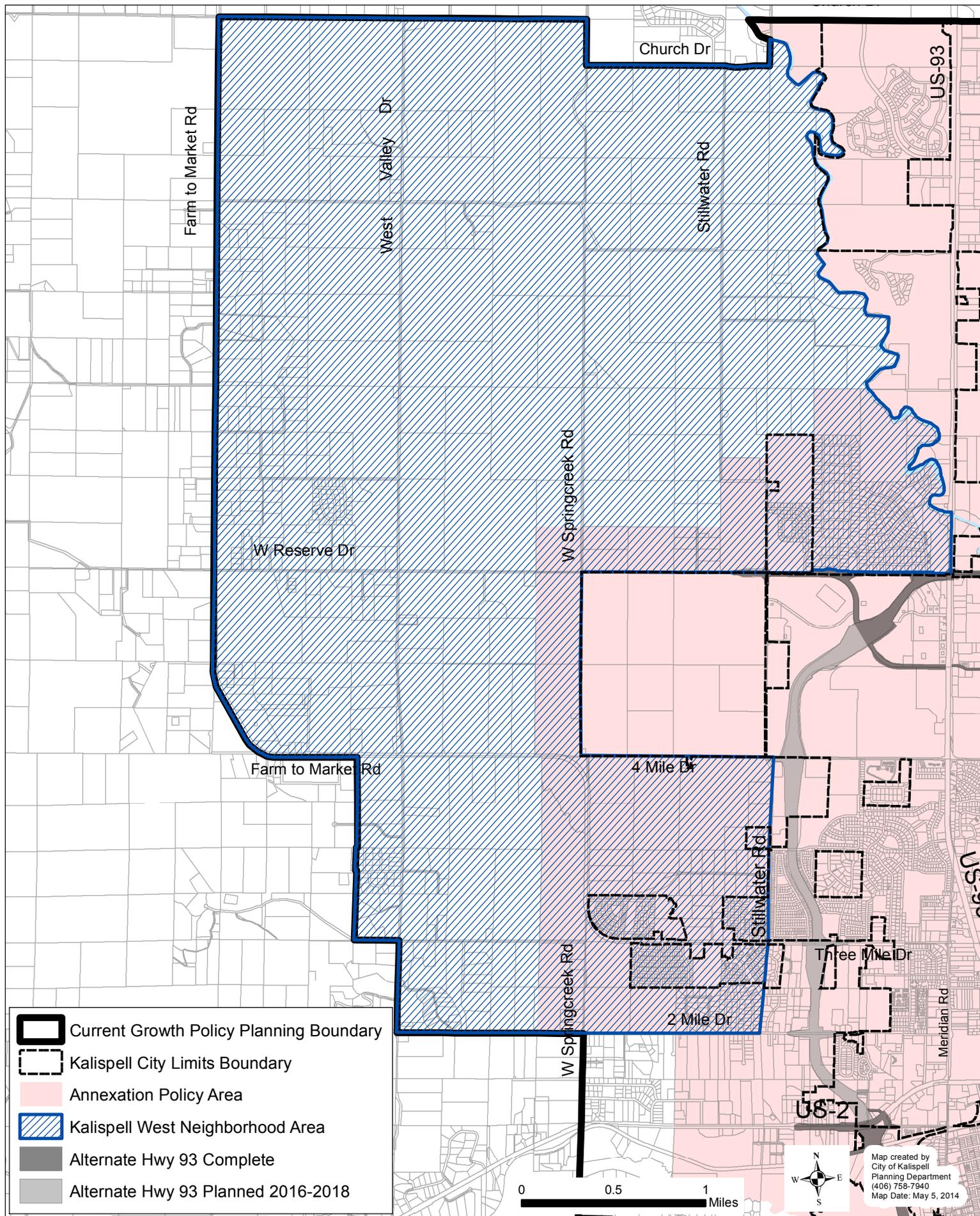
baseline to determine the rate and type of development in and adjacent to the City of Kalispell.

- 2) Provide for traffic corridors (east-west and north- south) to carry traffic through the future neighborhoods using the existing and proposed arterial system. This would include Stillwater Road north from Reserve Drive to Church Drive.
- 3) Provide for the orderly expansion of future neighborhood and regional parks as residential development expands into the West Valley area.
- 4) Protect the immediate Stillwater River corridor because of its unique scenic, wildlife and environmentally sensitive characteristics. Note that the Stillwater River has been designated as one of four “impaired streams” in the Flathead by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.
  - a) Development should be set back from the river and particularly the steep slopes adjacent to the river due to unstable soils, deep sloughing and slumping, and the need to provide vegetative separation for treatment for storm water runoff.
  - b) Attention should be given to protecting the unique wildlife habitat and floodplain corridor.
  - c) Appropriate uses would include parks, linear trails and natural areas.
- 5) Provide for neighborhood convenience shopping centers.
  - a) Neighborhood commercial centers should be sized to serve the immediate neighbors within a one mile radius.
  - b) Discourage any attempt to expand commercial development beyond the immediate neighborhood service level.
  - c) Buffer the neighborhood shopping centers with higher density housing, offices, etc., to transition away from commercial to areas of lower impact such as moderate and low density residential.
- 6) Provide for the suitable location of new satellite fire stations as the city grows and the boundaries are expanded.
- 7) Protect the existing gravel industry sites in the West Valley and allow for their future expansion
  - a) Define the existing developed gravel extraction and processing locations in the West Valley area.
  - b) Provide for the future expansion and development of the existing sites.

- c) Provide buffers around existing developed sites accommodating their future expansion so as to avoid a conflict between incompatible land uses such as gravel extraction and residential development.
  - d) Plan for the re-use of gravel extraction areas once the gravel resource has been depleted.
  - e) Identify future gravel resource areas.
- 8) Anticipate that when residential development or other low intensity uses are proposed adjacent to an active or proposed gravel site, good design techniques should be incorporated to mitigate the associated impacts.
- a) The level of mitigation should be based on the actual and anticipated impacts of the particular property.
  - b) Mitigation could include fencing, berming or landscaping to limit noise or views, strategic placement of open space or parkland, location of frontage roads or use of alleys to move development further away from the gravel extraction site, the employment of transitional uses such as well screened boat and recreational vehicle storage or residential mini-storage

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Figure 13  
Kalispell West Neighborhood Area Map



-  Current Growth Policy Planning Boundary
-  Kalispell City Limits Boundary
-  Annexation Policy Area
-  Kalispell West Neighborhood Area
-  Alternate Hwy 93 Complete
-  Alternate Hwy 93 Planned 2016-2018

0 0.5 1 Miles

Map created by  
City of Kalispell  
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Map Date: May 5, 2014

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