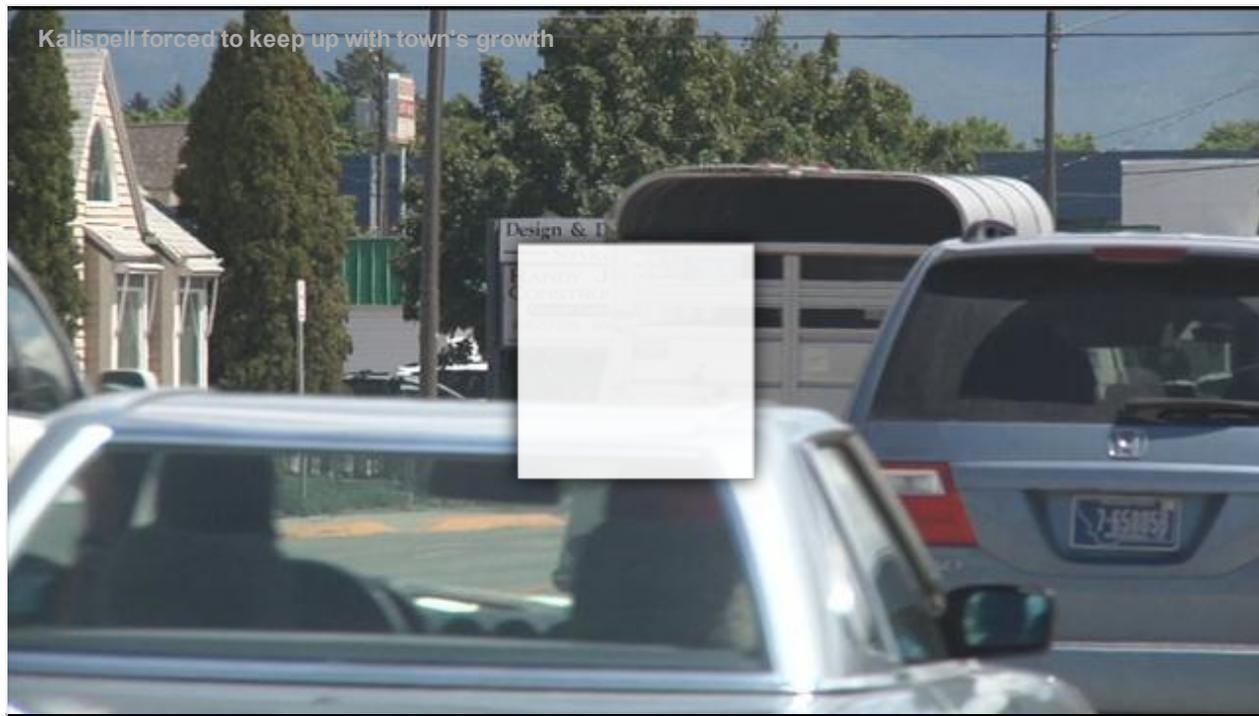


Rapid growth forces Kalispell to keep up

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By Maren Siu **CONNECT**



KALISPELL - According to the Montana Census, the Flathead Valley is one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Montana.

Jarod Nygren, Kalispell Senior City Planner tells us the number of items on City Council's agenda has doubled compared to last year and so has the dollar amount in construction projects.

Nygren tells us, "130 million dollars worth of construction which is more than last year which was a record year for us and as far as years past it's about double."

With more people moving to the area in search of jobs, the city is adding several new apartment complexes. One on Airport Road, another on the west side of Kalispell by Meridian and one towards the north end of Kalispell off of highway 93.

Nygren explains, "Upwards of a thousand units here in town for multifamily that will give a lot of the workers that are coming to town a place to live."

But Chad Graham with the planning board reminds us that apartments aren't the only part of Kalispell that's growing and changing. Those with the city of Kalispell have been focusing on developing the Kalispell "core" which runs through Idaho Street in downtown Kalispell. Recent re zoning to a B3 would allow new buildings to be built taller, giving more room for retailers to move in.

Graham explains, "We're right at the precipice of things where we're right about to hit the start button and start letting the free market come through and start to take over some of this stuff and re develop it."

The ultimate goal is to make downtown Kalispell into a destination location.

