

## **The Growth Policy Area**

The Kalispell “Growth Policy Area” (Map 1.1) has also been referred to as the “Potential Utility Service Area”. The area includes the city of Kalispell and adjacent areas that are expected to experience development pressure that would substantiate annexation to receive municipal services, or that would have a significant impact on the public infrastructure of the city of Kalispell. The Growth Policy of 2003 refers to the “Utility Service Area” and the “Growth Policy Area”, which did not cover the same geographic area. To eliminate confusion, the Growth Policy document and maps are being updated to reflect these two areas as being identical. For the purpose of this document, the “Growth Policy Area” and the “Utility Service Area” are one of the same.

Currently the Growth Policy Area extends north to Church Drive, south to Auction Road, east to West Springcreek Road and east to the Flathead River. The area encompasses approximately 27,800 acres or 43.4 square miles. As a result of the rapid development of lands adjacent to Kalispell, the Growth Policy Area has increased by 6,671 acres or 10.4 square miles since adoption in February of 2003. In late 2005, the area was expanded southward adding 1,420 acres. In mid 2006 the area was expanded again taking in about 5,250 acres or 8.2 square miles north of the city along Highway 93, between the Stillwater River to the west and U.S. Highway 2 (LaSalle Rd) to the east. (Map 1.2) A recent amendment for all of Section 35, west and south of Stillwater Road and West Reserve Drive changed the landuse designation from suburban residential to urban residential, allowing for a higher density development that will also be annexed into the city of Kalispell. As property owners request annexation and development pressure continues, there may additional areas added to the “Growth Policy Area.”

It is important to note that the city of Kalispell has planning authority for only those properties within the city limits and has no direct control over properties outside of the city, even though these areas may be in the defined “Growth Policy Area”. However, it is almost always economically and environmentally desirable for developers with extensive plans, to annex into the city to utilize the municipal water and sewer systems, allowing for higher density development. The city can require development plans to adhere to the growth policy and the desired land use designated in the policy before annexation. If a development proposal requires a change in land use as defined in the Growth Policy, the proposal must be accompanied by an amendment to the Growth Policy. Public review is required for any amendments to the Growth Policy text or future land use map.