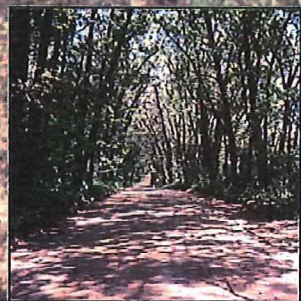


# Master Plan

Yankee Springs Township  
Barry County, Michigan



Yankee Springs Township  
Barry County, Michigan

# MASTER PLAN

Adopted by Township Board: February 21, 2019

Planning Commission Public Hearing: January 17, 2019

**Yankee Springs Township**

Township Hall

284 North Briggs Road

Middleville, MI 49333

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

When the previous Master Plan was adopted in the late 1990's, unprecedented growth was occurring in Yankee Springs Township. The population increased 43.2% between 1990 and 2000. After 2000, however, the Township experienced a marked slowing of that growth, with the 2010 Census indicating a 3.6% decrease in the Township's population. This was not unusual to Yankee Springs Township as throughout the State of Michigan difficult economic times and out-migration resulted in a population slow-down or decline in many communities. With recent improvements in national and state-wide economic conditions, the Township has begun to experience activity in the building sector, with the 2017 American Community Survey estimating a population increase since 2010 of approximately 2%.

Shifts in population growth of this scale illustrate the complexity of population projection, and the importance of updating the Master Plan to effectively direct future growth and development within the Township.

The Township is also motivated by the impacts of large-scale development that has occurred near its boundaries. The Gun Lake Casino and hotel facilities have developed to the west of the Township since the last Master Plan was adopted and has been a major attraction in the area. The expansion of Grand Rapids and its freeway system also brings employees and commuters within reasonable distance of most major employers of the metro area. This combined with the natural beauty of the Township and the access to recreation areas creates a tremendous market for future development in the Township.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008) gives communities the authority to adopt a Master Plan to *'address land use and infrastructure issues and may project 20 years or more into the future.'* This Plan is intended to provide direction for the land within the Township for the next 20 years, based upon the visions and desires of its residents. As such, changing conditions can affect its original intentions. Over time, established goals are achieved and new goals are developed; certain zoning decisions may change the direction of development in a particular area of the Township; or decisions are made that are contrary to the Plan. All of these changes should be acknowledged and addressed through amendments to the Plan.

Further, the Planning Act requires communities to review their current Master Plan every five years to determine whether amendments to the Plan are needed, or if a new Plan should be developed. The current Master Plan was adopted in 2006 and reviewed in 2009 for the inclusion of the M-179 Corridor Plan. In 2015, the Planning Commission determined that an update of the Plan was in order so as to accomplish the following: incorporate current demographic data; respond to new planning law and land use regulatory options; recognize significant residential, commercial and waterfront land use patterns in the area; and, recognize recent planning activity in adjacent communities and take advantage of opportunities for collaboration on regional issues.

The Master Plan update was accomplished in four basic steps. First, updated information about the community was gathered – demographics, land use, and other background material. This data was then used by the Planning Commission to update and confirm the current issues (strengths, concerns, opportunities) for the Township. The third step involved the use of the updated information and current issues to inform a comprehensive review of the goals and objectives/strategies that serve as the foundation of the Plan. Lastly, using the refined objectives and strategies, the Future Land Use Map and Implementation Plan were updated.

### *PLAN CONTENT*

The Master Plan is divided into four basic sections: Community Profile, Analysis, Future Land Use and Implementation. The Community Profile section provides background information on the Township, including history, regional context, and demographics. This profile is important for defining “what is Yankee Springs Township?” The Analysis section analyzes the existing conditions within the Township, including land uses, natural features, circulation, and community facilities and serves to define critical needs within the Township. The Future Land Use section presents the future vision for the Township. The vision is presented through a summary of public input, the goals and objectives, and a discussion of future land uses and the future land use map. The Implementation section sets forth the action plan developed to move the Plan’s goals and objectives forward.



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

The purpose of the Community Profile is to describe the community, as it exists in today. As Yankee Springs Township establishes a plan for the next 10, 20, 30 years, it is important to have a common understanding of who the Township has become and what the Plan is representing. This section presents that description.

### *HISTORY*

Originally an Indian hunting grounds and home to Chief Noonday, the first white settlement was established here in 1836 by William "Yankee Bill" Lewis. Many families followed his encouragement to establish farms in the lush, wooded area. The early development was supported by both the Indian trail between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids as well as the Battle Creek / Grand Rapids Stagecoach route.

In 1943, the State of Michigan took control of about 4,300 acres of land in the Township from the U.S. Park Service, establishing a recreation area that now covers over 5,000 acres of rugged terrain, bogs, marshes, nine lakes, and numerous creeks. Since that time, Yankee Springs Township has been a destination for Michigan residents seeking summer recreation. Vacation spots became summer cottages. Now, summer cottages are becoming year-around homes and retirement havens. Each phase has blended into the other resulting in constant development and construction on small lots near and around the six major lakes within the Township.

Today, new pressures add to the development pressure that has always existed. Road improvements and highway construction between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids have made it easier for commuters to get from Yankee Springs to either city. As this has occurred, the urban areas have grown out, particularly Grand Rapids, bringing residential as well as commercial development closer to the Township than ever.

A major traffic generator was located not far from the Township's borders with the construction of the Gun Lake Casino in Wayland Township, at the intersection of US 131 and M-179, in 2011. The Gun Lake Casino nearly doubled its size in 2017 with a \$76 million expansion that added 73,000 square feet of space to the existing 83,000-square-foot facility and included a new buffet restaurant, a high-limit gaming room, and a new Stage 131 entertainment lounge that offers enough seating to attract regional entertainers. Construction is also underway on a five-story parking deck that will include 1,200 parking spaces, and four covered-floors. The 475,000 square-foot parking structure is slated for completion in the summer of 2018.

Down the street from the casino, approximately 44 acres of land on the south side of M-179, between the railroad tracks and the Wayland Township Hall in Wayland Township, were rezoned to commercial to facilitate the development of the Government Center Campus of the Gun Lake Tribe. The Campus, which opened in

August, 2017, provides a total of 111,500 square foot of floor space and includes the tribal Administration Building, Public Safety Building, Health and Human Services Building, Public Works Building, and Tribal Court Building. The new zoning will also allow for retail uses like restaurants, theaters and gas stations.

### *REGIONAL CONTEXT*

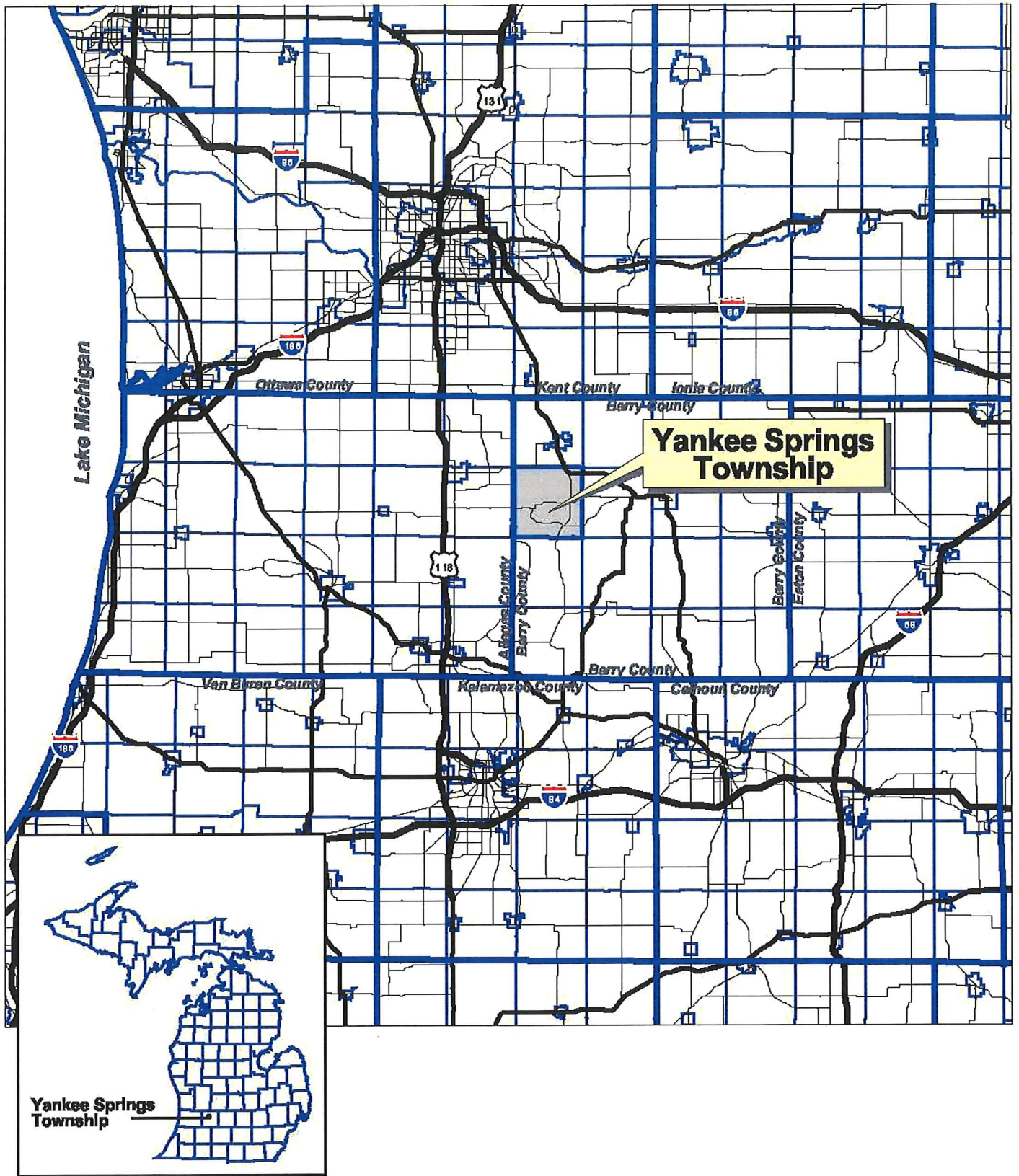
Yankee Springs Township is located in northwestern Barry County in west central Lower Michigan. The western border of the Township is adjacent to Allegan County. There are two state routes that go through the Township: M-37 and M-179. M-37 cuts through the northeast corner of the Township and provides access to Middleville, Grand Rapids, and Hastings. M-179 runs east-west through the center of the Township providing access to Hastings to the east and US 131 to the west. US 131 runs between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids and provides access to Interstates 96 and 94, and the relatively new M-6. Map 1 provides a regional context for the Township.

The County Seat of Barry County is Hastings. Barry County has a Planning Commission that handles the planning and zoning responsibilities for 11 of the 16 Townships within the County (not including Yankee Springs Township). Those Townships in the County experiencing the most growth do their own planning, with the exception of Irving Township, who is under County Zoning. The Barry County Master Plan was adopted in October, 2005.

Approximately 70% of Yankee Springs Township is either water-covered or state-owned as a part of the Yankee Springs Recreation Area or the Barry State Game Area. This certainly restricts the amount of land available for development (less than 11 square miles total). However, it also protects over 25 square miles of open and natural space throughout the Township. This maintains the rural open space and maintains the recreational character of the Township.

A significant part of this area is Gun Lake, the largest of the many lakes in Yankee Springs Township. Gun Lake is 2,680 acres in size with 17.8 miles of shoreline, plus an additional 1.4 miles of island shoreline. The lake has eight inlets and outlets into the Gun River. A dam in the outlet near Patterson Road, constructed in 1905, controls the lake level. It is generally a fairly shallow lake. Although the shoreline is pretty well developed and recreational boat use dominates the summer months, water quality has not traditionally been a problem for the lake.

# Yankee Springs Township, Barry County, Michigan



**Map 1**  
**Regional Context**

Base Map Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources



12/02/2005

## POPULATION ANALYSIS

Analysis of demographic information and statistics can yield insight and perspective on the Township's past, present, and future. It also allows for a comparison between the jurisdiction and its neighbors.

## POPULATION

The population in Yankee Springs Township experienced tremendous growth from 1990 to 2000 (43.2%), as was true in all four of the townships in the northwest corner of Barry County - Thornapple (27.9%), Rutland Charter (30.2%), and Irving (40.9%) Townships. Yankee Springs' other Barry County neighbors to the south – Orangeville (14.1%) and Hope (13.9%) Townships – experienced more modest growth during the same period, similar to the rest of the County. The northwest corner is the portion of the County that is closest to Grand Rapids and US 131. The growth of Grand Rapids during that time and the spread of the population south from the metropolitan area was likely an influencing factor in the growth of the Township's population.

As reflected in Table 1, that rate of population growth did not extend into the following decade for the Township or the County as a whole. Similar to many communities across Michigan, Yankee Springs Township actually lost population during this period, largely due to economic conditions and out-migration patterns related to employment opportunities. Barry County experienced a modest increase in population since 2000 (4.26%) due largely to births and minor in-migration patterns in specific areas of the County.

Table 1  
POPULATION: 2000 & 2010

	2000	2010	Percent Change
Yankee Springs Township	4,219	4,065	-3.65%
Barry County	56,755	59,173	4.26%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010

Given the minimal change in the Township's population from 2000 to 2010, there is little difference in the projected 2020 population for Yankee Springs Township when comparing two commonly-used projection methods.(Table 2) More helpful in attempting to identify short-term trends is the 2014 estimates generated by American Fact Finder (US Census). 2014 estimates for Yankee Springs Township suggest that the minimal loss of population experienced in the Township between 2000 and 2010 has generally continued, and even slowed somewhat from 2010 to 2014. Similarly, the 2014 estimate for the County suggests that the population increase experienced between 2000 and 2010 has slowed since 2010.

Table 2  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Yankee Springs Growth Rate Method (-3.7%)	2,947	4,219	4,065	4,062*	3915
Yankee Springs Arithmetic Method (-156)	2,947	4,219	4,065	4,062*	3,909
Barry County Growth Rate Method (+4.3%)	50,057	56,755	59,173	59,107*	61,717
Barry County Arithmetic Method (+2415)	50,057	56,755	59,173	59,107*	61,588

\*Source: 2014 American Fact Finder.

The reality is that it is difficult to predict the future and that the population growth estimates generated through the US Census may provide a more accurate reading of short-term growth trends.

## AGE

Age is an important demographic component to examine due to the service needs of the population at either end of the age spectrum. Table 4 presents pertinent age information comparing Yankee Springs Township to Barry County.

Table 3  
AGE CHARACTERISTICS: SPECIFIED AGE GROUPS

	Yankee Springs Township		Barry County	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
Median Age	37.3	44.1	36.9	41.2
Percent Under 5	6.8%	5.5%	6.6%	6.0%
Percent Under 18	26.1%	23.1%	27.2%	24.4%
Percent 65 & Over	12.1%	15.6%	11.8%	14.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000 & 2010

Table 3 shows that Yankee Springs Township population is older on average than the County and the State, and has continued to age since 2000, according to the median age. The fact that the Township is older than the County and State is likely attributable to the lakes and recreation area being an attractive retirement area. However, both the County and the State have also experienced an increase in the median age since 2000.

This is a trend that has been seen throughout the Nation as the baby-boomer generation begins to retire. Predictably, this trend can also be seen in an increased share of the population for the Township and the County, as well as for Michigan as a whole, in the 65 & Over cohort.

One-third of the population in the Township is in the 35-55 age group, which is consistent with the County and National age structure. It also worth noting that the percentage of children under 18 has decreased, reinforcing the aging trend of the Township's population. As this plan is implemented and the future plays out, the Township will want to track this population of empty nesters and retiring seniors to assess whether or not their needs are being served. If not, additional services may need to be added.

## HOUSEHOLDS

Household characteristics can be used to describe the character of the community. Households are also important because households fill housing units. As households change, so will the housing landscape of the Township. Current national trends such as the aging of the population, families having fewer children, families having children later in life, and the combining of households (parents and adult children) in search of affordable housing, have led to changes in household composition in many communities. Table 4 describes the households in Yankee Springs Township and Barry County.

Table 4  
HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

	Yankee Springs Township			Barry County
	2000	2010	Percent Change	2010
Average Household Size	2.68	2.47	-7.8%	2.6
Total Households	1,628	1,648	1.23%	22,551
Family Households	1,254 (77.0%)	1,219 (74.0%)	-2.8%	16,587 (73.6%)
Married Couple Family Households	1,069 (65.7%)	1,043 (63.3%)	-2.4%	13,570 (60.2%)
Female Headed Households	113 (6.9%)	109 (6.6%)	-3.5%	1,939 (8.6%)
Nonfamily Households	374 (23.0%)	429 (26.0%)	14.7%	5,964 (26.4%)
Householder Living Alone	295 (18.1%)	352 (21.4%)	19.3%	4,894 (21.7%)
Living Alone 65 & Older	96 (5.9%)	131 (8.0%)	36.5%	2,001 (8.9%)

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000 & 2010.

Most of the statistics show that Yankee Springs Township is following the trends that are being seen in most communities – the number of families is decreasing and nonfamily households are becoming more prevalent. There was also a significant increase in the number of seniors living alone.

With the changes that occurred between 2000 and 2010, the household characteristics in Yankee Springs have become very similar to Barry County. The exception is average household size. Though the share of family households is similar in the Township and County (74%), the average household size decreased in the Township from 2.68 to 2.47 from 2000 to 2010, while remaining at 2.6 persons per household for the County. The decrease in household size appears to be common to many communities in Michigan, consistent with the State's recent demographic trends.

### *HOUSING ANALYSIS*

Other than the change in population, the change in the number of housing units is one of the ways to gauge the growth of a community. Not only are the characteristics of the people within the community of importance, but also where and how they live. As the needs of the population change, providing available and affordable housing options becomes very important. The quality and character of the housing stock must be understood and considered when planning for the future of the Township.

### *HOUSING OCCUPANCY & TENANCY*

There are two characteristics commonly associated with housing units: occupancy and tenancy. Housing occupancy describes whether the unit is occupied or vacant. Census results on occupancy can be somewhat misleading because seasonal homes are considered vacant because they are often unoccupied during census periods. Therefore, many of the lake cottages in the Township are considered vacant by the Census. Housing tenancy describes whether occupied units are occupied by owners or renters. A high rate of homeownership is a goal of many communities. It often points to a more stable economy, residents who care for their property and neighborhoods, and a less transient population. Table 5 presents occupancy and tenancy information for Yankee Springs and Barry County.

Table 5  
HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND TENANCY

	Yankee Springs Township		Barry County	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
Total Housing Units	2,370		27,010	
Occupied Units	1,648	69.5%	22,551	83.5%
<i>Owner Occupied</i>	1,483	90.0%	18,891	83.8%
<i>Renter Occupied</i>	165	10.0%	3,660	16.2%
Vacant Units	722	30.5%	4,459	16.5%
<i>Seasonal Use</i>	567	23.9%	2,487	9.2%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010.

Table 5 shows that the Township has a higher vacancy rate than the County, but this is primarily due to seasonal use homes largely located on the lakes. If these are left out of the equation, the occupancy rate is over 91%. Both the Township and the County have high rates of owner-occupied housing, which is consistent with the primarily rural character of the area.

#### AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

Table 6 provides information on the age of the housing stock in the Township and the County. The age of housing can tell us about both the affordability of housing and periods of growth. Older housing is typically more affordable; however, it can also have maintenance problems and cause health concerns. Also, by seeing where primary periods of construction occurred, it is possible for growth trends to emerge.

Table 6  
AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

Year Built	Yankee Springs Township		Barry County	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
2000's	329	14.6%	2,895	10.8%
1990's	422	18.7%	4,402	16.5%
1980's	354	15.7%	3,360	12.6%
1970's	310	13.8%	3,828	14.3%
1960's	168	7.5%	2,773	10.4%
1940's – 1950's	377	16.8%	2,257	8.4%
1939 & earlier	293	12.9%	5,598	20.9%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010.

The results from Table 6 show that approximately one-third of the housing units in the Township have been constructed since 1990. This is consistent with the tremendous



population growth and in-migration that occurred in the 1990's. The growth in Yankee Springs and the other Townships in the northwest corner of the County during the 1990's also had an impact on the County. Although a large percentage of housing units in Barry County were built prior to 1940 (21%), an even higher percentage have been built since 1990 (27%), primarily due to the growth that occurred in the northwest part of the County at this time.

## MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE

Table 7 shows the median value of owner-occupied housing units in the Township and County for 2000 and 2010. Housing value can help to judge the affordability of housing in the community as well as act as a gauge for the economic health of the community.

Table 7  
MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE

	<b>Yankee Springs Township</b>	<b>Barry County</b>
2000	\$185,300	\$107,100
2000 (adjusted to 2010 dollars)	\$234,645	\$135,620
2010	\$167,000	\$147,300
Percent Change (2010 dollars)	-28.8%	8.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000 & 2010.

Note: Adjustment to 2010 dollars made using Midwest Consumer Price Index values: 2000=168.3, 2010=208.46

The housing values in the Township are generally higher than in the County. This is likely due to the increased cost of waterfront housing and the number of houses that exist along lakes in the Township. Over 19% of the homes in the Township are valued over \$300,000 compared to approximately 11% in the County. However, the County experienced a healthy increase in the median housing value whereas the Township saw a sharp decline from 2000 to 2010.

## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

A Master Plan provides an opportunity to review the development potential for employment, shopping, and income producing ventures for individuals, residents, and the Township as a whole. It is also a chance to accommodate desired economic growth that will serve the needs of the residence of the community in appropriate locations. To achieve the above purposes, it is first necessary to become knowledgeable about the employment characteristics and income levels that exist in and around the Township.

## EMPLOYMENT

It is difficult to track unemployment on a broad basis. Unemployment is a microeconomic detail, specific to a particular place and the particular market that is being evaluated. Barry County as a whole began 2000 with an unemployment rate around 3.6%, below the State average. From 2000 to 2010, both the County and State unemployment rates increased dramatically. The County rate soared to over 12% in 2010, but has been on a steady decline for the past five years, with a healthy rate of 3.4% reported for early in 2016.

Table 8 shows the number of people in the Township and County who work in various industrial classifications. Resident occupation information such as this gives a clear indication of the type of jobs in which people of the community are currently engaged. It also shows the skill sets that are available to potential employers as they look to locate to the area. Of note is the 2010 reported mean travel time of 29 minutes for these residents to get to work, indicating that a majority of the labor force work in the Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, or Lansing metropolitan areas.

Table 8  
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

	Yankee Springs Township		Barry County	
	Residents	Percent	Residents	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	14	0.7%	718	2.6%
Construction	177	9.4%	2,038	7.4%
Manufacturing	397	21.2%	6,510	23.5%
Wholesale trade	128	6.8%	1,011	3.7%
Retail trade	147	7.8%	2,845	10.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	129	6.9%	1,024	3.7%
Information	10	0.5%	389	1.4%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	156	8.3%	1,794	6.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	251	13.4%	1,943	7.0%
Educational, health and social services	232	12.4%	5,278	19.1%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	96	5.1%	1,633	5.9%
Other services	77	4.1%	1,400	5.1%
Public administration	60	3.2%	1,081	3.9%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010.

In general, the results for the County and Township in Table 9 are similar. 'Manufacturing' is the leading industry for employment for both the County (23.5%) and

the Township (21.2%). However, 'Educational, health and social services' runs a close second in the County with 19% of the workforce, as compared with 12% in the Township, with 'Retail trade' constituting the third highest percentage for the County (10%). Unlike the County, 'Professional services' represents the second highest employment industry in the Township at 13.4%. These are typically higher paying jobs, which would allow them to afford the more expensive housing in the Township.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The level of education of the resident population will have great importance in the future economic development of Yankee Springs Township and the surrounding area. One of the primary factors in the location decisions of expanding and relocating firms is the quality and skill of the available work force. Table 9 presents information regarding educational attainment for the Township and the County.

Table 9  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	Yankee Springs Township		Barry County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 25 & Over	3,003		40,157	
High School Graduate or Higher	2,730	90.9%	36,342	90.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	640	21.3%	6,666	16.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010.

Both the Township and County are fairly well educated, both having a high rate of high school graduation, and each higher than the State average of 89.3%. The percent with a bachelor's degree or higher is not insignificant, however it is lower than the State average of 26.4%.

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Median household income is another measure that can be used to gauge the state of the local economy. Table 10 shows how the median household income in the Township compares to the County and how each has changed since 2000.

Table 10  
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Yankee Springs Township	Barry County
1999	\$52,661	\$46,820
1999 (adjusted to 2010 dollars)	\$68,926	\$61,281
2010	\$63,220	\$51,869
Percent change (2010 dollars)	-8.3%	-15.4%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000 & 2010.

Note: Adjustment to 2010 dollars made using Midwest Consumer Price Index values: 2000=162.7, 2010=208.46)

The Township has a higher median household income than the County, and experienced a less radical decrease in its median household income from 2000 to 2010 than the County as a whole. In Table 7, the median housing value in the Township was shown to have decreased 28.8% from 2000 to 2010. This decrease is about three times greater than the decrease in household income over the same period. If the cost of housing continues to decrease in higher percentages than household income, housing affordability over the long term will be impacted.

#### COMMUNITY PROFILE CONCLUSIONS

1. Yankee Springs Township has been experiencing development pressures for the last 20 years as summer destination cottages have become year-around homes and retirement havens. Further, proposed developments in adjacent Townships have the potential to increase pressure within the Township for increased development.
2. Only a limited amount of land is available for future development as approximately 70% is covered by water or is state-owned.
3. Population growth in Yankee Springs Township since 2000 has been fairly consistent with that experienced in the County and State as a whole.
4. The Township is following national trends in terms of age and households: the population is getting older and there are a smaller percentage of families.
5. Over one-third of the housing units in the Township were built since 1990.
6. The Township population is fairly well educated and has a high household income.

## **ANALYSIS**

The analysis section of the Master Plan takes a closer look at some significant aspects and characteristics of the Township. By separating out each of these layers and studying them individually, the decision-makers in Yankee Springs can have a better sense of the various impacts that each of their decisions might have on the Township.

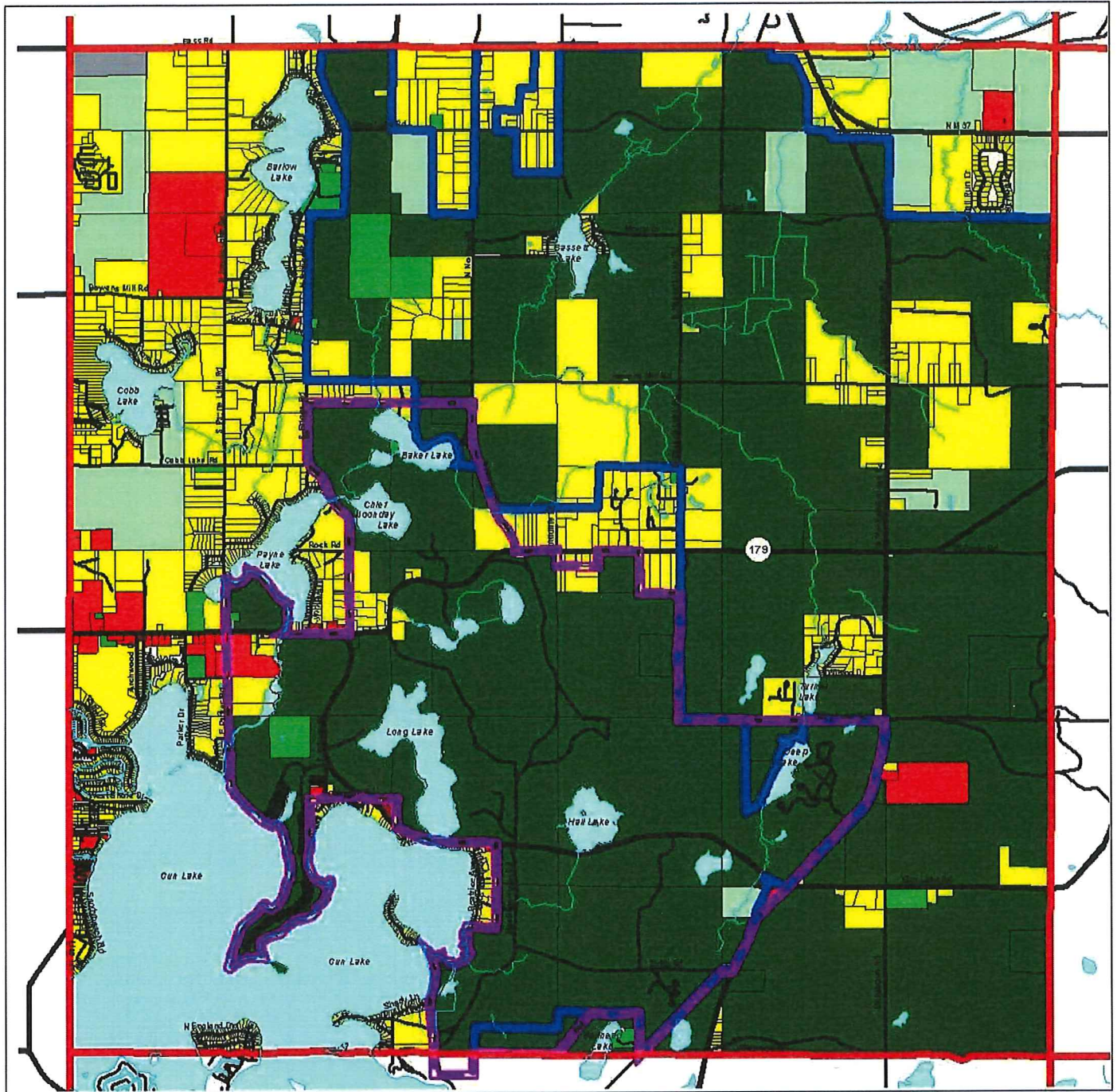
### *EXISTING LAND USE*

The primary land uses in Yankee Springs Township are recreation and open space. Approximately 70% of the Township is covered by water or owned by the State as a part of the Barry County State Game Area or Yankee Springs Recreation Area. Most of the housing development that has occurred is located along the shores of the lakes on small lots. Commercial development is primarily concentrated on M-179 in the western portion of the Township near Gun Lake and the majority of the Township's residents and visitors. Suburban and rural residential development is disbursed throughout the northern part of the Township wherever land is available.

A review of the existing land uses within the Township provides an understanding of the current state of the community and forms an important basis for the Future Land Use Plan. Map 2 presents a map of the existing land uses in the Township. The map was created using Township assessment data provided by the Barry County Equalization Department. Specifically, the set of land use codes assigned by the County for tax purposes was used as a template for creating the land use classifications represented on the Existing Land Use Map. For example, recreational uses such as the golf course and riding stables are shown on the map as commercial since they are taxed as businesses. The following describes each of the land use classifications present in more detail.

### STATE LAND

Due to the amount of land owned by the State of Michigan and occupied by the State Recreation Area and State Game Area, the predominant land use in Yankee Springs Township is clearly recreation / open space. The predominance of this land use on the Township's landscape establishes the culture and character of the community. The amenities of the recreation /open space areas serve as an attraction for many in all seasons – boaters in the summer, snowmobilers and hunters in the winter, and bikers and hikers in the spring and fall. Through the retention of the trees and open space that make up these areas, the State land also protects the rural atmosphere from the pressures of development.



**Existing Land Use**

- Agricultural
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public
- State Land

**DNR Project Boundaries**

- Barry State Game Area
- Yankee Springs Recreation Area

**Map 2**  
**Existing Land Use (based on Tax Assessment Records)**

Base Map Source: Barry County GIS  
Data Source: Barry County Tax Assessment, 2006



06/29/2007

## RESIDENTIAL

Besides being a recreational community, Yankee Springs Township is also a residential community. Conveniently located near Wayland, Hastings, and Middleville and within a short commute from Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Lansing, residents of the Township can enjoy the amenities of Yankee Springs and maintain employment in the surrounding area. Other residents are choosing to retire here, where they may have already had second homes or summer cottages. Finally, many still maintain summer cottages and second homes, primarily around the lakes, for use in the summer months.

The residential land use can be divided into three sub-categories. The first category is comprised of lake residential properties. These properties do not occupy the largest land area, but they represent the majority of the residential land use in the Township. The homes are located on small lots situated tightly along the waterfronts of the lakes within the Township. Many of these lots were platted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the cottages were built shortly thereafter. In the past 10-15 years, a recent trend has emerged as these waterfront lots have become recognized as desirable retirement locations. In many cases, the original cottages have been torn down to accommodate construction of a much larger, permanent home, or a large addition has been placed on the existing home. The improvements help to maintain the quality and value of the housing stock, but they are often made without sensitivity to the water frontage, adjacent properties or the character of the neighborhood.

Many of these existing waterfront lots are only 40 to 60 feet in width. In an effort to provide for building sites of adequate size and to protect the quality of the abutting water body, the Zoning Ordinance has established a minimum lot width standard in these areas of 75 feet (where public sewer is available) and 100 feet (where public sewer is not available). This approach to protecting the Township's valuable water assets and waterfront property has resulted in the creation of nonconforming lots and, in many cases, buildings that are nonconforming due to setback and/or lot coverage. Managing the Township's water resources and protecting the value and use of waterfront properties in the Township remain primary land use objectives for the Township and will likely require the development and application of innovative zoning techniques.

The second category of residential land use in the Township is suburban or medium density residential use. This is where the majority of the growth in the Township has occurred in the past 10 years. These areas are primarily comprised of subdivisions and site condominium developments consisting of ½ - 2 acre lots. It is anticipated that the majority of residential growth in the Township will be in this category as there is little available land in the desirable waterfront areas. The Township should review its land division tools – such as the subdivision ordinance, condominium regulations, and land division ordinance, - and the planned unit development and open space development options, to make sure they are up to date and can effectively accomplish the goals set forth in the Master Plan.

The third category of residential land use in the Township is low density, rural residential use. These areas consist of larger lots – 3-10 acres – that generally are a result of land divisions. These divisions are often unplanned and leave limited options for future development. Furthermore, each parcel is usually provided with an access point onto the abutting road, which then creates traffic concerns in addition to the erratic and consumptive land division patterns. This pattern is largely occurring in the northwest quadrant of the Township and along M-179.

## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is not a predominant land use in Yankee Springs Township, primarily due to the quality of the soil. This pattern is not expected to change as pressure for further residential development in the Township continues to encourage agricultural property owners to sell their land.

## COMMERCIAL

Commercial development is located primarily along M-179 in the western portion of the Township. The pattern of development is primarily strip commercial reflecting the modern pattern of automobile dependency and convenience. Each individual business or collection of businesses has its own large front yard parking lot with individual access points onto the primary road.

Other commercial uses can be found in various locations throughout the Township. There are individual commercial properties located off of M-179 in the Gun Lake vicinity that serve the Gun Lake residents and visitors. There are also commercial lands located on Patterson Road and on other Township lakes that also cater to the lake residents and visitors. Finally, there are a few commercial / recreational uses along Yankee Springs Road throughout the Township.

The commercial uses located in the Township are primarily retail and convenience oriented. These stores serve not only the residents of the Township, but also the many visitors that come to enjoy the lakes and the recreational areas. These uses include restaurants (both fast-food and sit-down), gas stations, a car wash, convenience stores, campgrounds, miniature golf, boat sales and repair and a market. Service uses are also available, which include dentists, salons, realtors, and auto and boat sales and service facilities.

One of the goals of this Master Plan is to provide the foundation for ensuring that future development in the Township is of the highest quality. The M-179 corridor is the gateway to the Township for visitors coming from US-131 and the west. The current appearance of the corridor does not convey the image that Township residents desire. Furthermore, due to the numerous curb cuts onto M-179, traffic congestion has become problematic. Enhanced landscaping, and site layout and design scrutiny should be



applied to these properties to improve the function and appearance of this important community gateway. The Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed to determine opportunities to implement innovative zoning techniques such as a special gateway district, a corridor overlay approach, access management standards and architecture and signage regulations.

## INDUSTRIAL

Industrial development has been limited to the northwest corner of the Township. Middleville Tool & Die is currently the only industrial facility located in this area, although adequate area exists for additional development – two to three equal sized companies. This space provides an opportunity for economic development within the Township and job creation. However, it is unlikely that the Township will require additional industrial lands until this space is no longer available.

## PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC

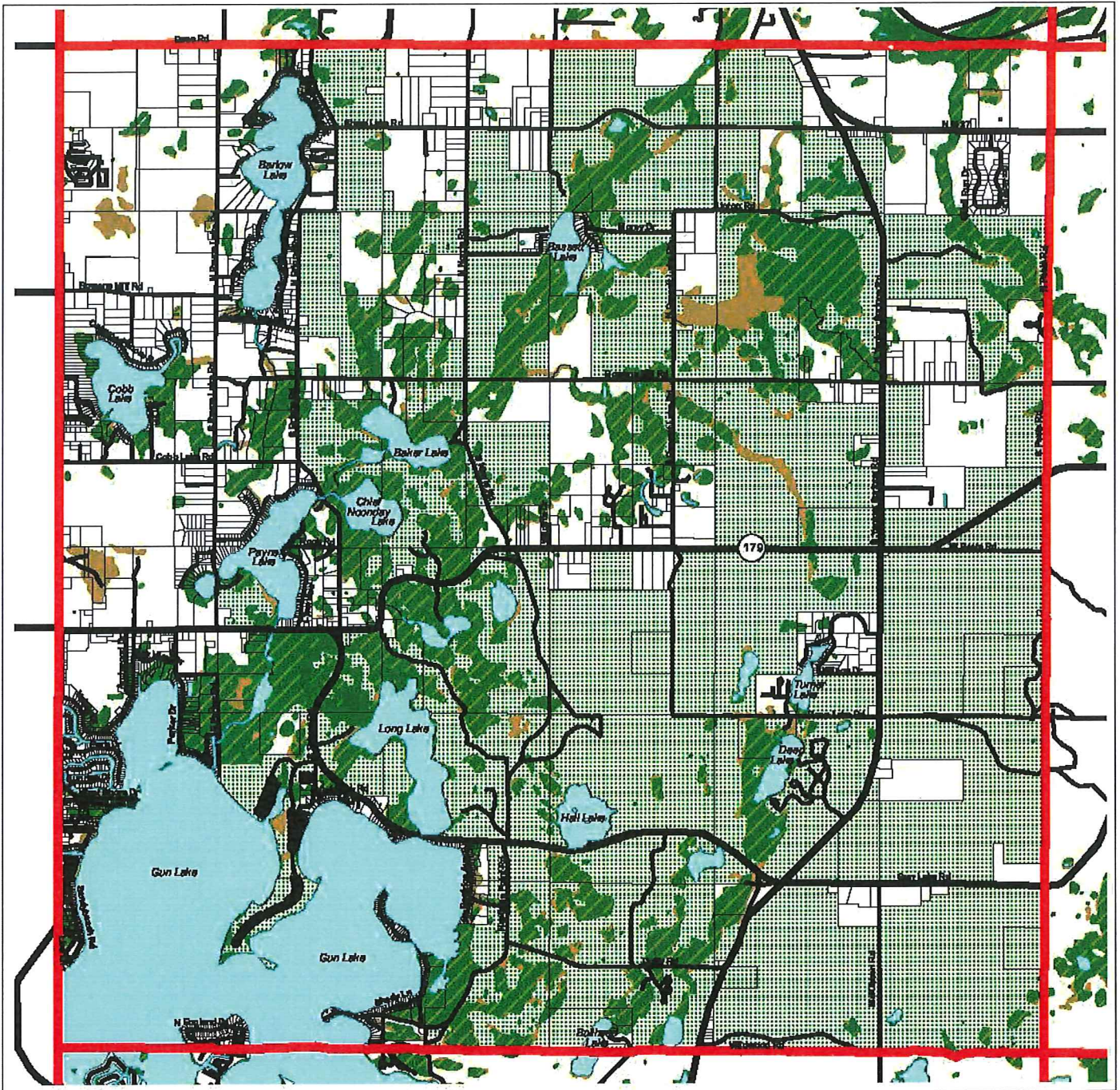
Various parcels in the Township are categorized as public / semi-public. This category includes uses are either public facilities or they are private institutions that serve the public. Examples of public facilities include the fire station, Township Hall, and Township Park. Examples of private institutions that serve the public (or semi-public uses) include the YMCA campground, the wireless communication tower, and the churches in the community.

### **Misak Landfill**





Misak Landfill is a superfund site located on South Patterson in Yankee Springs Township. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies sites such as Misak Landfill because they pose or had once posed a potential risk to human health and/or the environment due to contamination by one or more hazardous wastes. Misak Landfill is currently registered as an archived superfund site by the EPA and does not require any clean up action or further investigation at this time.

## NATURAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES

Yankee Springs Township is defined by its natural features – the lakes, the woodlots, the rolling hills, the open spaces, and the wetlands. Many of these spaces have been protected by the State as a part of the Barry County State Game Area and the Yankee Springs Recreation Area. As a result, the Township is characterized by the open spaces and natural features that are contained within these areas. The terrain is gently sloping with a few rolling hills primarily associated with areas of surface water, except in the southeast corner of the Township where the slopes are much greater. (Map 3)



**Natural Features**

-  Wetlands as identified on NWI and MIRIS maps
-  Soil areas which include wetland soils
-  Wetlands as identified on NWI and MIRIS maps and soil areas which include wetland soils
-  State Owned Land

**Key Legend**

-  Lake
-  Parcel

**Map 3**  
**Natural Features**

Base Map Source: Barry County GIS  
Data Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

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2500 Ft.



12/01/2005

As these resources define the character of Yankee Springs Township, it is important that they be acknowledged and protected for the future in order to maintain that character. These are the very reasons that so many people want to live in the Township, and the development necessary to accommodate those individuals cannot destroy the resources that helped to bring them here.

## SURFACE WATER

There are eight major lakes located in Yankee Springs Township, the largest of which is Gun Lake. These lakes can be clearly identified on the Natural Resources Map, Map 3. Gun Lake is one of the largest inland lakes in the Lower Peninsula and extends into three of the adjacent townships – Orangeville, Wayland, and Martin. It is 2,680 acres in size with about 17.8 miles of shoreline. It is predominately surrounded by dense residential development; although the Yankee Springs Recreational Area is situated on its northeast side, which provides visitors with picnic areas, a boat launch, and beach frontage.

Other significant lakes in the Township with significant waterfront development include Barlow Lake, Cobb Lake, Payne Lake, and Bassett Lake. Baker Lake, Chief Noonday Lake, Long Lake, Hall Lake, McDonald Lake, Shaw Lake and Deep Lake are all located within the State land and are not surrounded by development. The lakes drain either into Gun Lake, which drains into the Kalamazoo River via the Gun River, or into the Thornapple River, which heads north to Grand Rapids and the Grand River.

Fish inventories and reports indicate that Township lakes and streams are fairly healthy and clean. Nonetheless, there is anecdotal evidence of algae blooms and water clarity issues at times throughout the summer, particularly in the more heavily developed areas, partially due to modified shorelines, and during high traffic periods. These conditions also seem concentrated in shallow, warmer waters.

Lake stocking occurred in 1957 and 1961-1963 and again in 1977-1983 to supplement the musky population and enhance the fishery in Gun Lake. Since 1983 and into the early 2000s, natural recruitment of musky continued to support a small fishery in Gun Lake. However, recruitment was greatly limited by the extensive development along the lakeshore and the population gradually declined.

The DNR evaluated the potential for musky stocking and proposed to stock at a rate of 2/acre (5,360 fish) every other year beginning in 2013. Meetings were held to discuss the potential for musky stocking in Gun Lake with the Gun Lake Protective Association, muskellunge angling groups, and the general public. The decision was made to postpone the stockings until the Fisheries Division could conduct a thorough survey to determine if stocking was appropriate. Fisheries surveys were completed during 2015.

The results of the survey are summarized in a Status of the Fishery Resource Report. The following are highlights from the report:

- Predators made up 44% of the total weight; the recommended maximum for predators is 50% of the total weight.
- Relative to statewide guidelines, growth rates were average for bluegill, largemouth bass, and northern pike, above average for pumpkinseed and walleye, and slightly below average for yellow perch.
- Largemouth bass catch rates have increased from 1983 through 2015.
- Bluegill catch rates have been increasing since 1960 but are still low relative to many other lakes in southwest Michigan.
- Yellow perch abundance has remained relatively steady over time. More perch larger than 10 inches were collected than in historic surveys.
- Walleye catch rates were comparable to other lakes in southwest Michigan and lower than observed in large lakes in northern Michigan. There is little natural reproduction of walleye in Gun Lake and continued stocking is prescribed at the current level.
- Northern pike catch rates were in the middle of the range for large lakes in Michigan.
- Near-shore habitat in Gun Lake has been extensively altered and 75% of the shoreline is armored with seawalls or rock riprap.

The musky stocking proposal was reevaluated using the 2015 survey data, scientific literature, and DNR statewide management priorities. Restoration of historic muskellunge populations was identified as one of the objectives in the DNR's Management Plan for Muskellunge in Michigan and is consistent with Fisheries Division's Strategic Plan goal of creating diverse fishing opportunities. One of the major concerns expressed by people who have opposed muskellunge stocking in Gun Lake is potential effects on the yellow perch population. Despite the absence of documented effects of musky on yellow perch, the DNR reduced the proposed musky stocking density for Gun Lake to 1,340 fish (0.5 fish/acre) every other year - a 75% reduction from the 2013 proposal. The revised plan is expected to create a low-density "trophy" fishery for muskellunge while keeping the overall predator-prey ratio in the lake at a sustainable level.

A primary concern remains the introduction of exotic species into Gun Lake, specifically zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil, and has resulted in continued efforts by the Gun Lake Improvement Board to treat the lake and channels to minimize the further spread of invasive species. The installation of boat wash facilities has also received support.

## **Cuddy Drain**

The Cuddy Drain is a spring-fed creek that ties together Mill Pond, Boot Lake and Round Lake in a watershed that is approximately 6 square miles in area. It is the largest tributary entering Gun Lake at Robbins Bay. Parts of it have been dug out and straightened, but it has never run dry and is home to fish and a wide variety of wildlife.

Cuddy Drain, as shown on an 1873 map of Allegan County, was a nameless creek that ran north and drained Boot and Round Lakes; then headed due east towards Robbins Bay in Gun Lake. As tributaries/drains were added to the creek to drain farmland, they were named for the owner of the main piece of property they crossed. The Cuddy Drain ran from NW to SE; the Boot Lake Drain ran from SW to NE to join the Cuddy Drain; there they joined the Gardner Drain as it traveled eastward to Gun Lake. Since the Drain crossed into Yankee Springs Township in Barry County, it ultimately became called the Cuddy Intercountry Drain and is overseen by the Drain Commissioners of both Allegan and Barry Counties.

The platting of land along the channel began in 1957 and much of the residential development within the plats was completed in the late 1950's and 1960's. Today there are over 100 homes using the Cuddy Channel as it runs into Gun Lake!

The lakes and their tributaries are a tremendous resource to the Township, bestowing the community with a number of amenities: scenic views, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. In addition, the lakes are important economically. Many of the residences located around the lakes are used for weekend, seasonal, vacation, rental, and/or recreational purposes. Visitors come from all over because of these amenities. These people spend money at the stores and their properties provide tax revenue to the Township.

Protection of the Township's water features is key to the economic health of the community. Overuse and unmanaged development along surface water shores can create significant environmental damage to the water quality and destruction of the habitat for the plants and animals that reside there. The Gun Lake Protective Association recently commissioned a Recreational Carrying Capacity Study for Gun Lake in an effort to determine the limit to the recreational use of the lake. This study should be used for future development decisions and provide a guide for future studies or decisions on other lakes in the Township. Zoning techniques that establish shoreline buffers and shoreline management standards should also be considered in the preservation of water quality.

## **Gun Lake Dam**

The Gun Lake Dam shows up in 1905 records as an earthen dam. It seems the height was raised, lowered, or obliterated with dynamite through a couple of decades. At some point, a Court Injunction was imposed; and in 1921, the legal lake level was defined as 744.32' above sea level and set by Statute (currently known as the "Lake

Level Control Act”). In 1951, the current concrete dam was constructed under the auspices of the Intercounty Drain Board; but through the years, various entities have paid for its maintenance.

The Gun Lake Dam, located just above Patterson Road at the beginning of the Gun River, experienced a significant failure in May, 2015. According to MDEQ reports, the dam structure was undermined to the extent that water was flowing under the dam foundation compromising the integrity of the dam. Steps were taken to stabilize the structure to prevent further deterioration and protect the downstream road crossing and public safety. The immediate response to the failure prevented a catastrophic flood that could have caused major damage to the roadway immediately downstream, flooded downstream properties, and possibly cause the water level of Gun Lake to drop measurably.

In December of 2017, the Barry County Drain Commission held a public hearing creating a Special Assessment District to replace the Gun Lake Dam. The dam was replaced in early 2018 at a cost of approximately \$270,000 and with the establishment of a two-year special assessment.

## WETLANDS

Wetlands are a very valuable component of the ecosystem. Wetlands and the plant materials within them serve as filters, sifting pollutants and harmful nutrients from the storm water before it reaches the surface water or groundwater. Wetlands also store excess storm water and precipitation during heavy rains thereby minimizing the potential for flooding. Wetlands, and the lands surrounding them, are also important habitat areas providing homes to a rich diversity of wildlife.

There are a large number of wetland areas in the Township. (The wetland areas are identified on the Natural Features Map, Map 3.) They can be found primarily in the center of the Township extending northeast from Gun Lake along the chain of lakes towards Bassett Lake. Many of these are protected by virtue of being located in state owned portions of the Township. Many are also larger than five acres and are therefore large enough to be regulated by federal law. Nonetheless, Township Ordinances should be reviewed for concurrency with these regulations. Having regulations that protect wetlands is also a priority for the County, and it is expected that the County will be developing a wetland ordinance in the near future.

## SOILS

Soils play an important role in the quality of the Township’s natural environment. Some soils are particularly sensitive, either because of their association with an important landform, such as a lake or floodplain, or because they possess a particularly sensitive characteristic, such as erosion potential due to high slope.

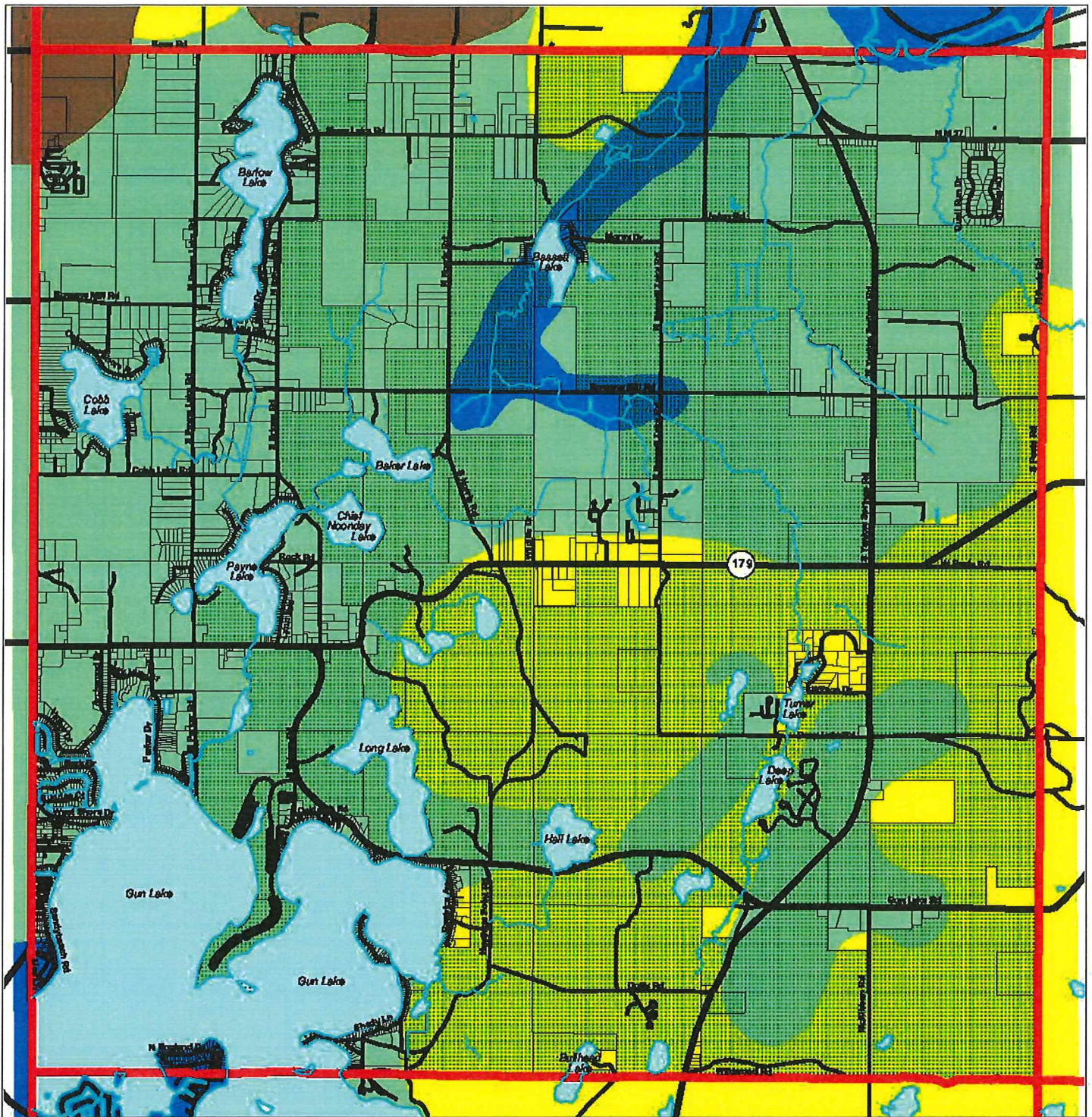
The U.S. Department of Agriculture has mapped the location of the various soil types found throughout the County and created the Soil Survey of Barry County, Michigan. This book is a valuable resource for identifying the general characteristics of the soils found throughout the County. Features of soil types, such as yields per acre of crops, development potential, and septic tank capabilities are identified. The survey, however, is a general overview and is intended for planning purposes. Site-specific analyses are required for most site-specific development purposes. The major soil associations in Yankee Springs Township are shown on Map 4.

There are four soil associations identified in Yankee Springs. Soil associations are groups of various soils with similar characteristics that are named based on the major soils in that association. Additional minor soils may also be included in the association. The majority of the Township is covered by the first two associations described below. The descriptions below are generalized based on all of the soils included in the association. Site-specific research will need to be conducted to determine the exact characteristics of the soil at a particular location.

The Coloma-Boyer Association is the predominant soil association in the Township. Over two-thirds of the Township is covered by these soils. These are nearly level to gently sloping sandy soils, which range from excessively to well-drained. The major soils are found primarily on outwash plains. Most areas within the association can be used for crop cultivation, although erosion and drought are variables that determine crop success. These soils are well suited to building site development and fairly well suited to septic tank absorption. However, a poor filtering capacity can limit development capability. The majority of land that is earmarked for development or has been developed in the Township is on this type of soil.

The Coloma-Boyer-Spinks Association is located primarily in the southeast portion of the community and occupy a significant portion (20%) of the Township. These moderately sloping to steep sandy soils are well drained and are located on outwash plains and moraines. Those that are more gently sloping are used for crop production in some parts, although erosion is a limitation. Also due to the slope, this association is poorly suited for septic tank absorption and building site development. Most of this area is located in the State Game Area primarily due to the fact that the steep slopes make this land undevelopable and quite scenic.

Near Gun Lake and along some of the streams that connect the chain of lakes to the northeast are a few areas of the Houghton-Sloan Association. These are nearly level, very poorly drained, loamy, and mucky soils found in flood plains. The Houghton soils are in the lower portions; the Sloan soils are in the higher lands. These areas are almost always covered by vegetation and are used primarily for recreation or wildlife habitat. These soils are generally unsuitable for farming or development, primarily due to concerns for flooding. Nonetheless, that has not prevented houses from being built along the shores of many of the lakes in the Township.



**Soils**

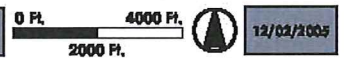
- Kalamazoo Osherno Association
- Coloma Boyer Association
- Houghton Sloan Association
- Coloma Boyer Spinks Association
- State Owned Land

**Key Legend**

- Lake
- Parcel
- Township Boundary

**Map 4  
Soils**

Base Map Source: Barry County GIS  
Data Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources



12/02/2005



The Kalamazoo-Oshtemo Association appears only in the very northwest corner of the Township. These soils vary from nearly level to moderately sloping and are well drained. The major soils are mostly found on broad flat areas with some small knolls and sharp ridges. The majority of these areas are used for croplands, as they are well suited for cultivation. As a result, they are also well suited for building development.

These soils descriptions are generalized and based on the Countywide Soil Survey. Site-specific conditions will dictate whether the soils at a particular location are well suited for crop production or building development. However, generally these are the characteristics of the predominant soils in the Township. Understanding these characteristics and their location in the Township is critical to managing and planning future development.

## WILDLIFE HABITAT

Habitat capable of supporting wildlife can come in nearly any form: open water, rivers, wetlands, fields, and forests. Regardless, there are a number of factors that affect the relative quality of habitat that a particular area provides. Generally, larger areas can support larger populations and greater diversity of plants and animals, which tends to result in a healthier ecosystem overall. Habitat is also of a higher quality when it is contiguous and has not been infiltrated by development or human interaction. Areas on the fringe of a habitat tend to be of lower quality due to the impacts from humans. Therefore, as development limits the amount of habitat area around the region, more edges are created, thereby reducing the quality of the habitat as well as the quantity.

The wildlife of Yankee Springs Township is fortunate that a large portion of the Township is state owned. This land, which provides excellent habitat areas for many plants and animals, is protected and will not be developed. As pieces along the fringe are developed or privately owned pieces that separate areas of state land become developed, a priority will be placed on providing connections between habitat areas and natural spaces.

In 2007, the DNR visited Barry County as a part of their statewide Land Management review process. The State assessed the boundary of the State Game Area and the State Recreation Area and evaluated lands that are available and not owned by the State inside those boundaries, as well as land currently owned by the State that is located outside those boundaries. The purpose of the review was to make sure the State is efficiently meeting their goals and to determine if there are opportunities to acquire additional land to further their objectives.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A primary purpose of municipal government is delivery of services designed for the health, safety, and welfare of the local population. The responsibility for providing public

services to the residents of Yankee Springs Township is shared by several public entities, including the Township itself, Barry County, the State of Michigan, three different school districts, and other agencies.

## PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES

Yankee Springs Township is served by three different school districts. The Thornapple-Kellogg School District covers the majority of the Township. The district is based outside of Middleville and serves the central, northern, and northeastern portions of the Township. There are five buildings in the district: Thornapple-Kellogg High School, Thornapple-Kellogg Middle School, Page Elementary, Lee Elementary School, and McFall Elementary School. There are approximately 3,000 students in the Thornapple-Kellogg School District.

The Wayland Union School District serves the western portion of the Township including Gun Lake. It is based in Wayland out of Allegan County. There are more than 2,885 students in the 97 square mile Wayland Union School District. The District is served by six buildings: Wayland Union High School, Wayland Union Middle School, Pine Street Elementary School, Steeby Elementary School, Dorr Elementary School, and Baker Elementary School.

Finally, the Delton Kellogg School District covers the southeast corner of the Township. The district is based in Delton and covers over 100 square miles in Allegan and Barry Counties. There are three buildings in the district: Delton Kellogg High School, Delton Kellogg Middle School, and Delton Kellogg Elementary School. There is also an Alternative High School. There are 2,020 students in the district, including special education and adult education.

## PUBLIC RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Yankee Springs Township derives its character from the recreational opportunities it offers its residents and visitors. From the open fields to the open waters, numerous options are available in Yankee Springs.

The State of Michigan operates two major recreational facilities: Yankee Springs State Recreation Area and the Barry County State Game Area. The State Recreation Area consists of 5,200 acres of rugged terrain, lakes, streams, and marshes open to multiple forms of recreation. The Recreation Area includes shoreline along both Gun Lake and Deep Lake. In total, there are nine lakes located within the boundaries of the Recreation Area. Activities include hunting, swimming, fishing, picnics, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, snowmobile riding, boating, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and camping. There is camping available on both Gun and Deep Lakes. Boat launches are available at both Deep Lake and Gun Lake. A permit is required to access the Recreation Area.

Immediately adjacent to the Recreation Area is the 13,000-acre Barry County State Game Area. The State Game Area is managed by the Wildlife Division of the Department of Natural Resources. The Area is protected and managed primarily to provide habitat area for the abundant wildlife that live in the area. There are some trails through this area and many bodies of water allowing for additional recreational opportunities. However, the extent of these activities is limited by DNR rules in State Game Areas regarding camping, motorized vehicles, and public access.

Including those mentioned above, there are six organized campgrounds in the Township. The rest of the campgrounds are privately operated.

There are no County Parks located in the Township.

The Township has developed its first organized park at the corner of Parker Drive and Vista Point. The park is located on a 9-acre site and includes a ball field with a backstop, soccer field, multi-sport tennis, basketball and pickle ball court, playground, restroom facility, and walking track. A picnic shelter and paved parking lot are also provided. The Township operates and maintains the Park.

Yankee Springs Township adopted the 2013 – 2017 Community Parks & Recreation Plan in March, 2013 and set forth 5-year recreation goals and objectives and a specific action plan for the Parker Drive Township Park. The current Recreation Plan is scheduled for review and update in 2017.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

As with many rural Townships, the primary utilities of concern are sanitary sewer and water service. Yankee Springs Township participates in the Gun Lake Sewer and Water Authority (GLSWA), which is under contract to provide water and sewer service to portions of the Township.

Public water service is provided to the west and northwestern portions of Gun Lake only. All other properties in the Township are served by private wells. This is a relatively new service and there have been discussions about expansion, but those discussions have not moved forward.

The GLSWA was started to provide sanitary sewer service to homes surrounding Gun Lake and the other densely developed lakes in Yankee Springs Township. Septic tank failures on properties close to lakes can get into the lake water and create significant environmental problems. All of Gun Lake, including the properties in the adjacent three Townships, and the majority of the property in the west half of the Township is served by the public sewer. This public sewer system is operated by GLSWA under contract with the participating communities. The Wastewater Treatment Facility was built in 1979 with EPA funding and was engineered and constructed to be oversized thus

requiring no additional expansion for many years. The remaining portions of the Township provide their own sanitary service via septic systems.

Other utility providers in the Township include Great Lakes Energy (electric), Consumers Energy (electric), Verizon Communications (telephone), Charter Communications (cable television), and SBC (telephone).

## EMERGENCY SERVICE FACILITIES

### **Hospital/Ambulance**

Yankee Springs is a member of the Wayland Area Emergency Medical Services (WAEMS) organization. WAEMS provides first responder training for Yankee Springs Township Fire Department volunteers, as well as full ambulance service for the area. WAEMS is a public body created under the Urban Cooperation Act with 11 governmental units in the area participating, in addition to providing services through a contract to the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Tribe of Pottawatomi Indians (Gun Lake Tribe). Yankee Springs has a representative on the Board of Directors which is responsible for the governance of the organization. WAEMS administrative offices are located in Wayland.

Spectrum Health out of Grand Rapids recently purchased the former Pennock Hospital located in Hastings, which is the nearest acute care facility to the Township. The purchase is anticipated to result in an increase in resources and an improved level of care. The Gun Lake Clinic was also recently established and provides a limited level of medical services for area residents.

### **Police**

Law enforcement services are provided by the Barry County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police located in the Cities of Hastings and Wayland

### **Fire**

The Yankee Springs Township Fire Station is located at the northeast corner of M-179 and Payne Lake Road and houses various emergency apparatus. The property and equipment, owned by the Township of Yankee Springs, have been revitalized and updated to ensure an improved level of service for residents. Fire protection for Yankee Springs Township is provided through an inter-local agreement with the City of Wayland which uses volunteers recruited and trained to service this area. A Deputy Chief from the Wayland Fire Department is on duty a minimum of 20 hours a week.

## TOWNSHIP HALL

Yankee Springs Township Hall is located on Briggs Road north of Bowens Mill Road. The Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Township Board all meet at this location. The Township Hall is used as a polling place and public meeting facility. The Township Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, Zoning Administrator and Code Enforcement Officer all use the Hall for office space and have regular office hours for Township business.

The Township recycling center is also located on the site of the Township Hall and includes a papergator, a metal recycling container, and a general recycling container. The containers are emptied weekly.

## ZONING & BUILDING PERMITS

Zoning permits are approved by the Planning Commission. However, the Planning Commission may delegate this task for all or certain types of development to the Township Zoning Administrator. Once the Yankee Springs Township Planning Commission, or its delegate, has issued a zoning permit, applicants can apply for a building permit through Professional Code Inspections (PCI), the Township's contracted inspection service.

## CEMETERIES

There are six cemeteries that serve Township residents. They range in size and are located throughout the Township. The six cemeteries are Yankee Springs Cemetery, Coman Cemetery, Robbins Cemetery, Bowerman Cemetery, Hill Cemetery, and the Roman Catholic Cemetery of the Archdiocese of Kalamazoo Cemetery.

## CIRCULATION

The transportation network of Yankee Springs Township is vital to the daily function, safety, and vitality of residents, visitors, and commerce. This network consists of streets, roads, and trails. There are no railroad tracks, airports, or mass transit stops in the Township. In order to most efficiently plan for future land uses, it is necessary to categorize and analyze the transportation characteristics that currently exist within the Township.

The Barry County Road Commission is the entity primarily responsible for road maintenance within Yankee Springs Township. The Township shares the cost of maintenance for the local and residential roads. However, a number of residential roads within developments are private and are maintained by the homeowner's

association within the development. There are also a number of trails on the state land within the Township that are maintained by the State Department of Natural Resources.

Though there are no mass transit stops in the Township, Barry County Transit has become an important part of the overall transportation system in Barry County. Currently, they carry over 120,000 customers per year throughout the area. Additionally, they have recently modified routes to improve service to all areas of Barry County, including the outer and rural communities of the County.

Map 5 displays the road network in Yankee Springs Township and the classification of each road.

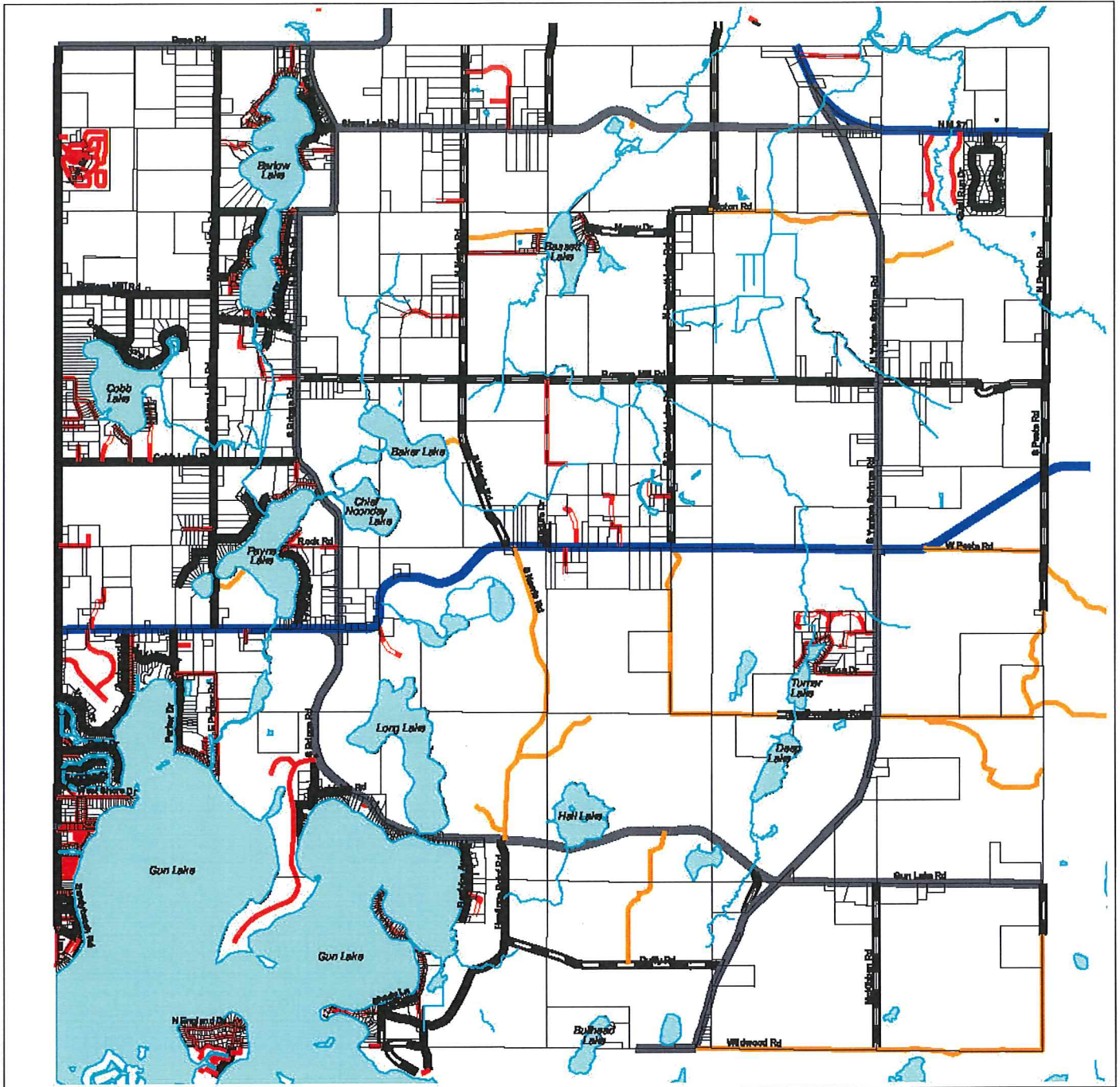
## EXISTING CIRCULATION NETWORK

Whether or not the existing transportation network in Yankee Springs Township adequately supports the growing population and demand that is placed on it depends on the person being asked and the time of year they are asked. The majority of the population lives in the western portion of the Township, where traffic concerns and backups are an issue. Most of the eastern portion of the Township is State owned land with few roads cutting across it. With limited development to participate in the creation and improvement of a road network and the financial limitations of the Township's road budget, these roads are often unpaved, which is an issue for some of these residents in the Eastern portion of the Township. With a number of lakes interrupting circulation patterns as well, the road network does have its issues.








There are three roads that provide primary east-west access across the Township: M-179, Gun Lake Road, and Shaw Lake Road. Bowens Mill Road does as well but is unpaved. Only M-179 actually spans the entire Township. There are also three roads used for primary north-south travel: Yankee Springs Road, Briggs Road, and Patterson Road. However, only Yankee Springs Road spans the entire Township, and is located away from the highest density of development and serves as much through traffic as internal traffic. Patterson Road also extends the entire length of the Township, but the southern portion follows the Gun Lake shoreline into Wayland Township. M-37, the only other highway in the Township, cuts through the very northeast corner of the Township.

The road network not only connects residents within the Township, but it also connects them to communities outside the Township. M-179 runs east to Hastings and west to US-131, which provides freeway access to Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo. M-37 also provides access to Hastings as well as to Middleville, Caledonia, and Grand Rapids. Yankee Springs Road, Gun Lake Road, and Patterson Road are all significant roads that can be used to travel between adjacent communities.

There is no railroad in Yankee Springs Township. The Hastings City / Barry County Airport is the only airport facility in the County. It is in neighboring Rutland Charter



**Road Classification**

-  County Local (Paved)
-  County Local (Gravel)
-  County Primary (Paved)
-  Highway
-  Residential (Gravel)
-  Residential (Paved)
-  TR

**Key Legend**

-  Lake
-  Parcel

**Map 5  
Road Classification**

Base Map Source: Barry County GIS  
Data Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources



12/02/2005

Township and provides corporate and recreational services to the County. It has one paved runway and two grass runways, but there are plans being made for expansion of the facility and an additional paved runway. Commercial jet service is available through the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (Grand Rapids) and the Kalamazoo-Battle Creek International Airport.

## ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Of the nearly 119 miles of roads in the Township, only the 8.45 miles of M-179 and M-37 are classified as highways. These roads are under the jurisdiction of M-DOT. Almost 22 miles of roads are considered County Primary Roads and are under the jurisdiction of the Barry County Road Commission. These roads are paved and maintained by the County. They serve as arterials to move traffic from point to point in and out of the Township. There are nearly 45 miles of County local roads, which serve to deliver vehicles from residential roads and neighborhoods to the Primary Roads and Highways. Local Roads are under the jurisdiction of the Barry County Road Commission and are maintained by the Township using a cost-sharing approach.

There are also a significant number of private roads in the Township, particularly around the lakes and in the residential developments. It is the responsibility of abutting property owners to maintain the private drive according to their homeowner's agreements. Private roads can be problematic. New homeowners often do not understand that they are now responsible for the maintenance of the road, not the Township. This can be particularly confusing when assessments are charged for maintenance costs. Private roads also tend to be built below Road Commission standards, which can create maintenance problems as well as problems for emergency providers. The Township may want to consider requiring all future developers to dedicate their roads to the County in order to avoid these problems in the future.

There are two types of private roads in the Township. There are 27.75 miles of private roads that are located in subdivisions and around the lakes that are developed. About half of these are paved and half are non-paved. There are also 15.6 miles of unpaved trails located on the State property. The trails are used to access various portions of the property and are maintained by the State.

## NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Non-motorized transportation refers to bicycles, pedestrians, and other forms of transportation other than motorized vehicles. Due to the large amount of land available for recreation in the Township, there is a significant amount of non-motorized transportation in the Township. Although most of the roads in the Township do not have sidewalks, including the new subdivisions and developments, this does not deter pedestrians from getting out of their houses and walking around the Township. Typically, these walks are for pleasure and recreation more so than for transportation



purposes, and pedestrians are more often found in the neighborhoods surrounding the lakes than in the less densely populated portions of the Township.

Bicycle riding is another popular form of recreation in the Township. Again, most people will ride bicycles for enjoyment and exercise on nice days. However, the State Recreation Area is well known for its system of mountain bike trails and hosts annual races in the summer. This brings bikers from throughout the state to the Township for biking. Besides these unpaved paths on the State land, there are no dedicated pathways for bicycling. However, some of the roads have recently been widened slightly during repairing projects to accommodate space for bicycling, including Patterson Road and M-179.

## OTHER TRANSPORTATION

As a large recreation area, there are other forms of transportation that are a factor in Yankee Springs Township that sometimes are not considered in other areas. In the winter, snowmobiling is a significant activity in the Township. The State Recreation Area and State Game Area are popular areas for people from throughout the region to drive their snowmobiles.

The twin brother of snowmobiles is boats. Boats are a very popular form of summer recreation on the many lakes in Yankee Springs Township. Most of the residents that live on the lakes have their own boats, and most lakes have a public access site for others to drop-in boats. Anecdotal evidence indicates that Gun Lake is the busiest lake and has become almost dangerous on warm summer weekends.

Both of these forms of recreational transportation can have positive and negative impacts on the Township. Having the ability to utilize these “toys” and take advantage of these natural resources is wonderful for the Township residents to enjoy. Plus, as visitors come to enjoy it, they spend money at Township businesses. But both snowmobiles and boats can be dangerous and can impact the beauty and serenity that attract many to the Township to begin with. If there are ways to limit these impacts, those should be explored.

An ordinance allowing Off Road Vehicles (ORVs) to travel on some Barry County roads came into effect on May 1, 2016. By this ordinance, only the Recreation Area, including all park roads, along with non-designated County roads and highways, are closed to ORVs.

## ISSUES

### **Access Management**

It is very important to manage points of access (driveways, curb cuts) to any highway or primary road to ensure traffic safety and efficiency, as well as to maintain the function of the roadway. As new development and redevelopment occurs within the Township, attention must be given to driveway spacing, design, potential for shared access, number of driveways per site, sight lines, and the need for acceleration and deceleration lanes. These items are ideally addressed during the site plan review process.

Access management is of particular concern along M-179 and M-37. These are the areas of the Township most likely to see commercial growth and expansion. Whether the Access Management solution is as simple as a shared driveway or as sophisticated as a secondary access road, the objective is reducing roadway conflict points and maintaining traffic flows on the major arteries within the Township. The M-37 Access Management Plan, created by MDOT and some Barry County communities, can provide assistance in establishing an access management approach in the Township.

### **Circulation Pattern**

The road system in Yankee Springs Township is fairly well established. Due to the bodies of water and the State protected lands, it is unlikely that any collector or arterial roads could be constructed that would significantly improve the circulation pattern in the Township.

However, on a more local level, circulation patterns could be improved. The road networks in most developments and subdivisions that have been approved and constructed over the past ten years are all self-contained and exit to the primary road out of only one or two places. There are no opportunities to connect adjacent developments or neighborhoods with an internal street network. So, in order for neighbors in adjacent developments to drive from one house to the other, they would have to go out to the primary road. Requiring the extension of roadways to project boundaries allows for the eventual connection of roadways and the establishment of an internal street network that serves a larger neighborhood, provides connectivity within the community, alleviates traffic and congestion on the main roads, and reduces time spent driving.

### **Recreation Heritage Route**

M-179 is designated as a Recreation Heritage Route by MDOT. It gets special signage, recognition in official state maps, and a write-up on the MDOT website. The Township should seek other opportunities to leverage this designation. For example, the Township could apply for an MDOT Enhancement Grant to improve the signage at the corner of M-179 and Patterson Road. The Heritage Route designation, as well as the

fact that this corner was designated by the State in its inventory of Aesthetic Project Opportunities in 2001, would support such an application.

Regardless of grant potential, the Recreation Heritage Route is also a marketing possibility that is not being fully utilized. Without identifying specific businesses, lakes, or parks, simply identifying this route signals that there are a wealth of recreational possibilities in the Township.

The M-179 Pure Michigan Byway Plan, adopted by the State in 2017, was developed to promote assets related to tourism by showcasing Michigan's natural, cultural, and recreational attractions. The Plan was a joint effort involving several communities located in Allegan and Barry counties, the Gun Lake Tribe, the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC), and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Township attention should be given to the Byway Management Strategy set forth in the Plan in the development of land use objectives for the areas along the M-179 corridor.

A copy of the M-179 Pure Michigan Byway Plan is provided in the Appendix.

### **Natural Beauty Roads**

MCL 247.381 gives County Road Commissions the authority to designate stretches of roads as Natural Beauty Roads. By doing this, the landscape and scenery along the roads is protected during road improvements and other periods of development. The Planning Commission and Township should engage in a process to designate potential Natural Beauty Roads and then work with the Barry County Road Commission to have these roads designated. Potential Natural Beauty Roads in the Township include Yankee Springs Road, Shaw Lake Road, Bowens Mill Road, Peets Road, Norris Road, Briggs Road, and Bassett Lake Road.

### **Non-Motorized Traffic**

As the Township grows, an increased demand for non-motorized traffic will be created. This demand will continue to increase as commercial areas grow and uses expand and successfully attract more residents and visitors. The Township should encourage the installation of sidewalks, bike paths, pathways, and crosswalks in appropriate areas of the Township. New residential and non-residential development should be required to provide accommodations for non-motorized traffic, or other pedestrian amenities, along internal and external roadways. An emphasis on non-motorized planning/development should be reflected in the Township's Capital Improvement Plan.

### **Future Right of Way**

There is a possibility in the future, maybe distant future that one or more roads in the Township will need to be expanded to accommodate additional traffic demands. The

most likely is M-179, as well as possibly M-37 and Patterson Road. When roads need to be expanded, a significant part of the cost is the acquisition of right of way. The right of way is very valuable to property owners when the road expansion will cause them to have to move from their home or relocate their business. However, if the right of way that is being acquired is “unusable” setback land that is far away from their structure, the value is diminished.

As properties and corridors redevelop, this is a tool to consider when establishing setbacks in order to preserve land for future right of way use and limit the costs of future road expansion projects.

### *ANALYSIS CONCLUSIONS*

1. Although the majority of the land in the Township is dedicated to recreation and open space by virtue of it being owned by the State, the amount of residential land has remained constant as development within the Township continues at a stable pace.
2. Natural features define the Township, particularly the many bodies of surface water. These provide recreational, economical, and residential benefits for all to enjoy.
3. Soil descriptions from the Soil Survey accurately describe existing use conditions; soils should be used to further influence land use decisions.
4. Recreation facilities are a predominant community asset with many visitors drawn each year to the Yankee Springs Recreation Area and the Barry County State Game Area.
5. The existing circulation network is generally acceptable, although improvements could be made on a development level to improve connectivity between neighborhoods.
6. Additional efforts should be made to provide safe and adequate routes for pedestrians, bicycles, and other forms of non-motorized transportation.

## PUBLIC INPUT

The input of Township residents is fundamental in crafting land use goals, objectives and policies that reflect their desires for their community. The following chapter outlines the community input received from Township residents and stakeholders through the Public Input Survey in the update of the Master Plan Update. The results of this input were utilized to review and update the goals and objectives presented later in the Plan.

The review of the 2006 Master Plan conducted by the Township in 2011 revealed that the comprehensive approach used in 2005 in obtaining public input resulted in the formulation of goals and objectives that provided a basic direction for growth in the Township that continued to be supported. With limited change having occurred in the Township since 2005, it was anticipated that the basic structure of the Plan would not require substantial modification at that time.

In the 2016 update of the Plan, it was determined that a follow-up to the 2005 public input survey was in order to check the pulse of the community and confirm support for the direction established in 2005. To that end, a questionnaire was distributed and the results used to update and fine tune the goals and objectives set forth in Chapter 5. Public input was also garnered through standard work meeting and public hearing channels to provide sufficient feedback into the planning process.

### 2016 CITIZEN SURVEY

In Fall, 2016, a Citizen Survey was sent to all property tax payers within Yankee Springs Township to gain citizen input on a variety of land use and other important topics for the Master Plan. Over 200 surveys were returned and the results of the 145 surveys that could be tabulated were used to inform the update of the future goals and objectives set forth in the Plan. A complete copy of the survey and a full summary of the results are provided in the Appendix.

The results of the 2016 Citizen Survey revealed six key areas as priority issues for Township citizens:

- Limit Additional Boat Traffic on Gun Lake

Survey results pointed out resident concerns about the high level of boat traffic on Gun Lake that creates potentially unsafe situations. Survey results revealed 'overdevelopment of the lake areas'; 'too many boats on the lakes from public launch sites'; and, 'non-property owners docking on lakes' as issues of 'high concern'.

- Options for Waste Collection & Recycling

Responses to the several survey questions related to this topic, as well as the resulting wear and tear on local roads, indicate that the idea of central and curbside recycling and road maintenance are 'high priority' topics for a large percentage of Township residents.

- Boat Wash to Prevent Spreading of Invasive Aquatic Species

Responses to survey questions and the individual written comments received regarding invasive aquatic species support the important efforts of the Gun Lake Improvement Board's (GLIB) program to treat the lake and channels to minimize further spread of invasive species. The additional opportunity to address this issue through the installation of boat wash facilities was also supported. Township resident support of these initiatives is consistent with the *Clean, Drain, Dry* campaign supported by MSU, MDNR and the Gun Lake Tribe.

- Groundwater and Wellhead Protection

Survey responses identified a 'high concern' for 1) groundwater quality/protection, 2) lack of public water, and 3) failing septic systems. This suggests support for Plan goals related to protection of surface and groundwater quality and possible consideration of land use techniques geared toward groundwater and wellhead protection.

- Multi-Family Housing

The Township does not currently have a lot of multi-family housing development. However, citizen response to questions regarding direction for future high-density residential development, noted 'near commercial areas' and 'only where public sewer and water are available' as clear locational preferences.

- Roads

The topic of 'roads' ranked as a 'high priority' issue in the results of several survey questions. While roads are not necessarily a primary function of Township government, they are very important to Township citizens. The contributions to the Barry County Road Commission and assistance with establishing Assessment Districts provides assistance at the current level, but survey responses suggest that the Township may wish to consider doing more with roads.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The existing characteristics of the Township, the results of the 2005 Township survey and 2016 Township questionnaire, and a study of land use patterns and development trends in the Township since 2006, provide the foundation for the future vision for the Township. This vision serves as the inspiration for the specific goals and objectives that will then be implemented through the Future Land Use Plan.

A *goal* is a general statement of a desired outcome – it should be realistic and obtainable. Each *goal* is followed by a set of *objectives*. An *objective* is a specific action that accomplishes the outcome set forth in the *goal*. The *objectives* provide the basis for the Implementation elements of the Plan.

### COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND COORDINATION

1. Recognize the role of Yankee Springs Township in the larger Gun Lake area community, as well as the County and the Region.
  - a. Establish a relationship with Barry County planning officials to enhance communication and participation in land use programs and grant opportunities.
  - b. Plug in as a partner of Region 4 – West Michigan Prosperity Region.
  - c. Consider County and Regional plans in local land use decisions.
  
2. Collaborate with adjacent jurisdictions, such as Orangeville, Martin, and Wayland Townships and Allegan County, as well as the communities surrounding Gun Lake and the Gun Lake Tribe, on land use issues common to the jurisdictions, such as planning, transportation, infrastructure, recreation, and natural resource protection.
  - a. Work with neighboring communities and the County in the development of an asset inventory to serve as the foundation for planning initiatives and future collaboration.
  - b. Work in conjunction with neighboring communities that share valuable assets with the Township to adopt a common approach to the use and preservation of the assets.
  - c. Adopt zoning ordinance elements that coordinate with and/or complement zoning standards along jurisdictional boundaries.

- d. Establish joint meetings with officials of adjacent communities to establish a productive and collaborative relationship.
3. Be responsive to changing conditions and trends to ensure that growth in the Township remains consistent with the overall desire and vision of the community.
    - a. Conduct the required 5-Year Review of the Master Plan to respond to changing conditions and priorities.
    - b. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to remove provisions that prohibit implementation of the Plan and include successful Plan implementation techniques.
    - c. Review and initiate amendments to the Zoning Map that will implement the Plan.
  4. Educate and inform Township residents about planning successes in the community and important planning and zoning regulations in an effort to increase the level of planning awareness.
    - a. Establish the Township website as a reliable and accessible conduit of Township information
    - b. Institute a mechanism for providing assistance to residents and stakeholders regarding Township plans and ordinances.

#### *ENVIRONMENT / NATURAL FEATURES / OPEN SPACE*

1. Recognize the unique physical, environmental, economic and social attributes of the surface water bodies and watercourses in the Township.
  - a. Require impact studies for significant development near surface water to gauge impact on lake capacity, water quality, and the general health of the aquatic habitat and ecosystem.
  - b. Utilize the existing recreational carrying capacity study for Gun Lake when reviewing applications for development on the lake to assess impacts.
  - c. Explore the preparation of similar capacity studies for the remaining lakes within the Township.
  - d. Work with local and State agencies, the Gun Lake Improvement Board, and lake associations to implement programs and/or apply techniques,



including the establishment of boat wash stations that control the spread of invasive species, such as Eurasian milfoil, zebra mussels, and purple loosestrife.

- e. Establish limits and/or controls on the use of certain pesticides or fertilizers in waterfront areas that could harm surface waters.
  - f. Apply zoning techniques designed to manage shoreline development and control storm water runoff such as a waterfront overlay approach that establishes guidelines for plant removal, slope stabilization, unmowed/undisturbed buffers along shorelines, and/or reduced pavement and impervious surfaces.
  - g. Educate waterfront property owners about environmentally-friendly practices and low-impact development solutions.
2. Preserve the wetlands in Yankee Springs Township.
- a. Encourage the protection of wetland areas through the use of clustered or open space developments.
  - b. Establish setback standards and buffers from critical natural features, including unregulated wetlands less than 5 acres in size, in order to protect them from the impacts of development.
3. Protect the fragile soils of the Township.
- a. Work with the Barry County Health Department to restrict residential development to areas where the soil will provide proper filtering for septic tanks.
  - b. Consider soil conditions and properties when reviewing development applications for approval in the Township.
  - c. Monitor sources of soil-based pollution, including those that exist or are proposed beyond the Township boundaries, such as development along the Cuddy Drain in Allegan County.
4. Work with the MDNR to maintain quality open space in the nearly 70% of the Township that is either surface water or owned by the State of Michigan.

- a. Establish a Rural Preservation zoning district for application in areas of the Township occupied by State-owned land in order to retain quality open space should that land be transferred to private ownership in the future.
  - b. Maintain a good relationship and open communication with the State of Michigan regarding their plans for and use of State land located within the Township.
5. Protect the Township and its resources from the damaging impacts of storm water runoff.
- a. Adopt storm water management standards and appropriate review procedures to control the runoff of silt and chemicals from developed and developing properties.
  - b. Establish standards and permitting procedures designed to control the erosion and runoff related to construction activity and driveway installation
6. Protect the Township's groundwater resources.
- a. Continue implementation of the Yankee Springs Township Wellhead Protection Program.
  - b. Establish development standards and site plan review criteria designed to prevent hazardous discharge into groundwater resources.
7. Encourage brownfield cleanup and reuse of contaminated and infill sites.
- a. Direct development and/or investment toward infill areas and the re-use of previously developed sites.
  - b. Work with Barry County to conduct an inventory and map contaminated sites within the Township and adjacent communities.
  - c. Work with Barry County and/or surrounding communities to develop a Brownfield Redevelopment Plan to encourage redevelopment of contaminated properties.
8. Consider creative approaches to protection of natural features and farmland as development and economic pressures place demands on these important areas.

- a. Consider purchase or transfer of development rights programs for designated areas in the Township.
  - b. Utilize cluster development regulations in rural districts to protect these resources.
9. Provide for recreational opportunities that take advantage of the Township's natural environment.
- a. Develop a non-motorized pathways plan that ties into the regional trail system and connects existing recreational spaces within Yankee Springs Township.
  - b. Consistent with the non-motorized pathways plan, identify and use public spaces to establish trailheads and connections to existing recreational and commercial areas that will attract visitors and promote business.

## RESIDENTIAL

1. Provide for a variety of housing stock in well-planned, quality residential neighborhoods in the Township.
  - a. Maintain and improve the quality of existing neighborhoods through the consistent application and enforcement of Township blight ordinances and the zoning ordinance.
  - b. Incorporate sound neighborhood design elements into the land division and development review process.
  - c. Provide for mixed-density residential development options that allow for the growth of a diverse housing stock designed to attract all age groups and encourage residents to remain within the Township throughout their lifetime.
  - d. Direct high density residential development to areas with adequate services and located in close proximity to and connected with existing development and infrastructure.
  
2. Accommodate growth in housing and population without sacrificing the rural/recreational character of the Township or the quality of the Township's natural resources.

- a. Apply zoning standards designed to discourage land consumptive land divisions and promote compact development patterns.
- b. Direct high density of residential growth to areas supported by the necessary infrastructure, such as, public sewer, paved roads, emergency services, commercial uses, etc.
- c. Maintain the integrity and intent of the Master Plan through consistent application of the Plan policies and the future land use map.

## COMMERCIAL

1. Limit commercial strip development within the Township and advance the concept of small-scale, compact, mixed use developments in areas identified for commercial growth.
  - a. Apply a form-based approach in commercially-zoned areas that requires attention to building form and establishes a predictable pattern of development.
  - b. Work with MDOT to create access management standards to limit the number of curb cuts in these planned commercial areas, specifically along M-179 and M-37. This will reduce the traffic impacts of the commercial uses and encourage the use of shared driveways, shared parking lots, and access roads.
2. Create a Mixed Use area at the northeast corner of Patterson Road and M-179 and north along Patterson Road, to be the focus of commercial development in the Township.
  - a. Require coordinated, planned development of the entire area in order to result in an integrated, well-designed community commercial center.
  - b. Establish design guidelines within the development area that are consistent with the rural / recreational character of the Township.
  - c. Apply development standards that are oriented toward advancing pedestrian-friendly and walkable site designs.
  - d. Provide non-motorized connections to this area from the other commercial areas along M-179 as well as the major neighborhoods surrounding Gun Lake and in the Township.

- e. Allow for a mix of residential densities and housing options in order to provide a place for residents to live, work, and play, and to create an exciting and vibrant environment.
  - f. Allow for residential uses on upper floors above commercial uses.
3. Clean up existing signage in the Township.
- a. Develop proper Ordinance standards to maintain and regulate existing signage in the form and style desired by the Township.
  - b. Work with property and business owners whose signs do not conform to the new regulations to bring them into conformance.
4. Create a gateway to the Township at the west entry point at Patterson Road and M-179.
- a. Work with existing property owners to remove the signage at the northeast corner of Patterson and M-179.
  - b. Seek grant money to assist with gateway, signage, and streetscape enhancements identified here.
  - c. Create a significant feature or sign that notifies residents and visitors that they are entering Yankee Springs Township.
  - d. Work with MDOT to enhance the M-179 corridor recognizing its status as a Pure Michigan Byway.
5. Encourage the development of a synergy of commercial uses that reflect the character of the Township and serve the full-year residents as well as the seasonal visitors.
- a. Provide incentives for Mom and Pop stores and local businesses to establish in the community as opposed to chain stores and large franchises.
  - b. Develop a mix of uses that encourage people to stop and visit the other uses while in the area thus creating a synergistic relationship (i.e. ice cream, restaurant, bank, and store).

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES / INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Maintain the quality of existing recreational opportunities in the Township and preserve those opportunities for future generations.
  - a. Limit noise and light pollution that disrupts the quality of the rural experience.
  - b. Direct new recreational development to the eastern portion of the Township to areas in close proximity to other similar developments so that the open land can remain connected and habitat areas and wildlife corridors can be maintained.
  - c. Work with the MDNR, MDEQ, Barry County, Allegan County and surrounding communities (such as Orangeville, Wayland, and Martin Townships) to understand the impacts of development and increasing volumes of use on Gun Lake and the available options to mitigate high use levels in the future.
  - d. Work with MDNR to maintain or improve the quality of the recreational experiences had by residents or visitors at the State Game Area or the State Recreation Area.
2. Provide neighborhood-based recreational opportunities for residents of the Township.
  - a. Incorporate playground and neighborhood park guidelines in residential development options.
  - b. Provide pedestrian or non-motorized pathways around the major residential lakes in the Township – Gun Lake, Barlow Lake, Cobb Lake, Payne Lake – and to and from major activity centers in the Township – State Park, M-179 commercial center, Gun Lake Road commercial center, YWCA camp, etc.
3. Limit the expansion of public sewer and water in order to limit the expansion of high density development in the Township.
  - a. Work with Gun Lake Sewer and Water Authority to establish an urban services boundary based on the future land use map, existing service extensions, and required bond payments.

- b. Work with the Barry-Eaton County Health Department to determine guidelines for on-site wastewater treatment systems for large developments located outside the boundary.
4. Maintain the natural beauty and rural character of Township roads – narrow corridor, tight hills, overhead tree canopy, low speed limits, etc. – as they are improved.
  - a. Work with the County Road Commission to establish Natural Beauty Roads on designated County roads within the Township.
  - b. Establish deep front setback and natural buffer standards along County roads for land use in the Rural/Agricultural and Rural Residential zoning districts.
5. Apply pedestrian-friendly design standards within residential and commercial developments to achieve walkable neighborhoods. These design standards will include building placement and form considerations, sidewalk requirements, crosswalks, and pedestrian-scale improvements such as signs, lighting, etc.
6. Investigate County or regional solid waste management plans and practices.
  - a. Target planning efforts toward community composting facilities and household hazardous waste disposal programs.
  - b. Engage in community education efforts regarding best management practices in solid waste disposal.
  - c. Improve and encourage the use of recycling opportunities for Township residents.

#### *M-179 CORRIDOR*

1. Create an improved gateway into Barry County and Yankee Springs Township that highlights the commercial and recreational opportunities in the community, increases the desirability of this two mile corridor to a level above the surrounding area, improves the image and appearance of this part of the Township, and is consistent with the goals of the M-179 Pure Michigan Byways Plan.

- a. Develop an overlay district along M 179 from Patterson Road to Briggs Road requiring higher standards of appeal and setbacks that the community can take pride in.
- b. Incorporate access management standards into the overlay district to ensure safe traffic flow is maintained along M 179.
- c. Include standards in the overlay district that address setbacks, screening, landscaping, lighting, signage, and construction standards.

*M-37 CORRIDOR*

1. Recognize that M-37 represents a second gateway into the Township, as well as serving as a major transportation corridor in Barry County, and already serves a mixture of residential densities.
  - a. Actively discourage sprawl in the Township by directing residential growth and non-residential opportunities to this Township gateway through a 'mixed use' approach where design standards can be applied that achieve coordinated growth and protect the integrity of the corridor.
  - b. Apply a 'gateway' strategy to the M-37 corridor to effectively announce Yankee Springs Township as a 'destination' community.
  - c. Recognize the safety-based strategies set forth in the M-37 Corridor Study in Township land use decisions along M-37.



## **FUTURE LAND USE**

The Future Land Use Map (Map 6) is the culmination of months of effort by the Planning Commission, Township Board, Township Administration, and the citizens of Yankee Springs Township. Based on a comprehensive planning process, the plan serves as a guide for the community's vision of the next 20 to 30 years. It is based on an analysis of land use issues facing Yankee Springs Township, existing uses and conditions, demographic and housing statistics, physical constraints and resources, circulation patterns, the community visioning session, and the goals and objectives set forth by the community.

In order for the Plan to function effectively, it has been crafted to be both flexible and general. A number of possibilities for future development have been left open, and the land use proposals identified on the Future Land Use Map should be considered generalized areas for development which do not need to follow current property lines or define specific sites. To that end, the boundaries of the Future Land Use Classifications should be interpreted to be 'soft' and not establishing specific borders or limits between classifications.

This Future Land Use Map constitutes the development policy of the Township, and as the Township grows, the Map should be updated to address how the growth has impacted the infrastructure and existing conditions.

### *PLANNING PRINCIPLES*

Land use planning principles are used as a guide in evaluating development alternatives and public policy decisions. The following are general planning principles that should be applied to all land use categories:

#### **1. Consistency with the Plan**

Development should be reviewed for general consistency with the intent of the Master Plan, as well as sub-area or regional plans. In addition, other governing bodies, such as the State or County, should be encouraged to use the Master Plan in considering programming or decisions for Yankee Springs Township.

#### **2. Concurrence and Compactness**

Growth should generally be compact and in most cases directed to areas that maximize the use of the existing public investment in capital improvements. Development should occur concurrently with the provisions for infrastructure, like roads and utilities.

### 3. Sustainability of Natural Systems

Special consideration should be given when development is proposed in environmentally sensitive areas and open space, particularly around the many valuable lakes and surface water resources of the Township.

### 4. Human Scale

The community should be designed on a human scale with a land use pattern balanced around activity centers such as commercial uses, existing neighborhoods, community facilities, or some similar amenities. Pedestrian access should be considered in all new development projects.

### 5. Compatibility of Uses

Special attention should be given to developing transitions between uses of greater intensity (e.g. commercial uses) to uses of lower intensity (e.g. residential uses).

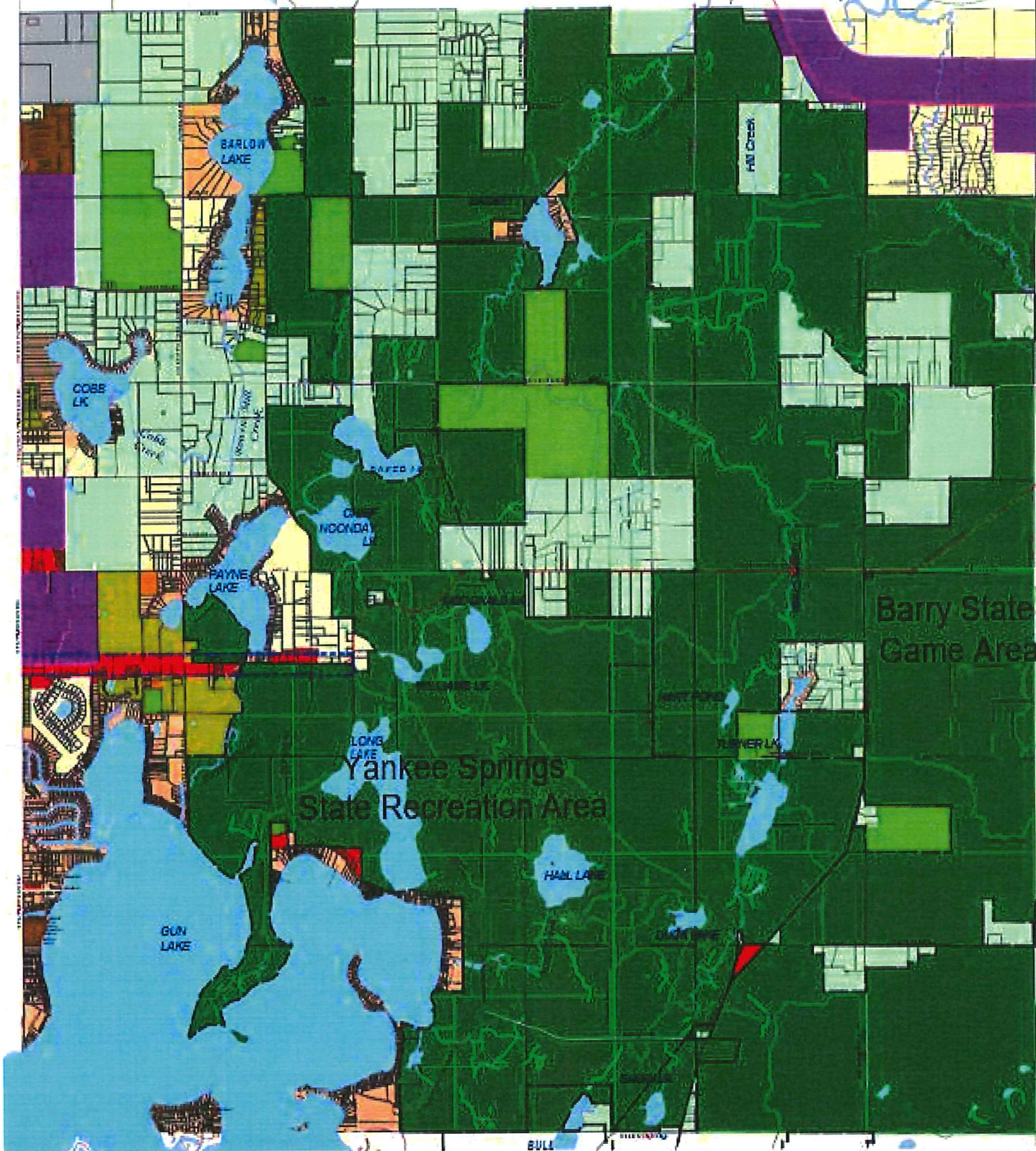
## *FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS*

The land use classifications are graphically displayed on the Future Land Use Map (Map 6) and are described in this section of the Master Plan.

### STATE LAND / RURAL PRESERVE

The State Land / Rural Preserve classification consists of all of the land currently owned by the Michigan DNR, including the Barry State Game Area and the Yankee Springs State Recreation Area.

The Plan calls for this area to remain in its current state throughout the planning period. Although this represents a large portion of the Township and limits the area available for the Township to collect tax revenue, the rural nature of this land and the recreational opportunities provided by it define the character of the community. The benefits of living adjacent to these areas are what attracted many to here in the first place. It is the Township's desire that the State continue to operate these two park facilities long into the future in order to preserve these lands from the growing demands of residential development. The Yankee Springs State Recreation Area/Barry State Game Area Master Plan is included as Appendix A for reference.



MAP LOCATOR



BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN

YANKEE SPRINGS FUTURE LAND USE

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2019

- |                             |                                                 |            |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| State Land / Rural Preserve | Medium-High Density<br>Multi-Family Residential | Industrial |
| Rural Estate                | Manufactured Housing                            | Recreation |
| Rural Residential           | Mixed Use<br>Community Center                   |            |
| Lake Area Residential       | Commercial                                      |            |

BARRY COUNTY LAND  
INFORMATION SERVICE  
FEBRUARY 2019

SCALE 1" = 1000'

In the event that the State does sell land within this area sometime within this planning period, it will remain in this planning classification until the Plan is properly amended. This classification will allow for limited single family detached home development as well as agricultural use, as if this were open space. But, the density of residential development will be maintained at low levels and clustered to provide for large continuous areas of open space. Recreational use will be permitted on these lands in an effort to promote a similar use of the land even if it is no longer owned by the State.

## RURAL ESTATE

The Rural Estate classification is reserved for some of the more rural and open portions of the Township that are not included in the State Land classification. Some of this land is agricultural and is actively farmed today. Many of these parcels are large and are on some of the best soils in the Township. Other portions of this designated area have been split into individual lots for development. Lot sizes range from 3 acres to very large parcels.

The Rural Estate lands are primarily interspersed between and among the large areas of State owned land in all but the southwestern corner of the Township. This area is characterized by rolling hills, heavily wooded lots, small ponds and wetlands, streams, and many wild animals. Residents of the area cherish the open spaces and the proximity to nature. Through the public input process, they identified these items along with the dark skies, peace and quiet, and rural atmosphere as key reasons why they located in this area.

This area is also characterized by a lack of urban services. The majority of the area is not served by public water or sewer. Some of the parcels require travel on gravel or dirt roads. Nonetheless, development activity in this area has increased in recent years as the western portion of the Township becomes more densely built. In order to retain some of the rural character in the western portion of the Township and protect the larger, undeveloped parcels from dense development pressures, these areas have been placed in the Rural Estate classification.

It is envisioned that the Rural Estate areas will maintain their rural character and appeal regardless of future development activity. Whether development occurs in the form of individual lot splits or multi-unit developments, care should be taken in the planning and design of the development to ensure that the resulting site layout will have minimal impact on the surrounding properties, natural features, and character of the area. This shall be done through protection of natural features, preservation of setbacks and buffers along primary roadways, minimal disturbance to the existing site, and use of flexible zoning tools such as Open Space Zoning and Planned Unit Development.

Flexible zoning techniques such as Open Space Zoning and Planned Unit Development allow for more creative development of land and make it easier to protect important natural features. While these techniques are available and encouraged for use throughout the Township, they are particularly valuable in the Rural Estate areas because of the amount of land within the site and the ability to creatively develop the property and maintain the rural character and natural features. Density incentives and bonuses may be used as a means to encourage the use of these techniques.

It is envisioned that the density in the Rural Estate area will be approximately three acres per unit.

## RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Much of the Rural Residential area is undeveloped or could be redeveloped. These lands are characterized by the natural features that surround them: open space, rolling hills, heavy woods, lakes, etc. They are also located in highly desirable areas of the Township. The M-37 corridor provides easy, quick access to Hastings and Middleville, as well as Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Battle Creek. The other area is near the M-179 commercial corridor as well as various lakes, and is served by public water and sewer. Therefore, either area is a prime development location. However, it is clear from the public input and meetings that protecting the rural character of the community is a critical objective of this plan. While there is an opportunity in these areas to accommodate a greater density of population due to the services and infrastructure provided, development should not occur in ways that are in conflict the rural character of the area.

It is envisioned that the density in the Rural Residential area will be approximately one unit to the acre. This will allow for rural development in these areas while still protecting the character of the area and the surrounding natural features. Again, creative development approaches such as Open Space Development and Planned Unit Development should be encouraged to permit flexible planning and design. This will allow for more creative design and layout than is permitted under conventional zoning standards. Creativity should be utilized to protect the rural atmosphere.

## SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Suburban Residential areas are located in areas provided with urban services and provide opportunities for single family residential development at neighborhood densities (1-2 units per acre). Some of this land is already developed with single family homes on small lots consistent with the intent of this area. Other portions are vacant or have single family homes on large lots, which could be redeveloped in the future.

These areas are located in the western portion of the Township near the densely developed lake areas and the M-179 corridor. It is not the intent of the Township to

encourage any further development at densities similar to what exists along the lakeshores. The Suburban Residential category therefore represents the highest density single family residential category intended for new development.

It is envisioned that development in these areas will be neighborhood-oriented. Streets will be interconnected and pedestrian friendly. Homes and home sites will be oriented to encourage a sense of community and place among neighbors and residents. This includes front porches; decreased front yard setback requirements; and recessed, detached, or side or rear loading garages. Densities in this area will be about one to two units per acre.

### LAKE AREA RESIDENTIAL

The Lake Area Residential classification includes all waterfront property, and those lots behind and around many of the waterfront properties in the Township. Yankee Springs Township is proud of the many lakes in the Township and understands how precious a resource they are. Many regulations and ordinances have been adopted to regulate the use of lake area property in an effort to limit or control the impact of the dense development that has occurred along the shores of the Township's lakes. Therefore a separate category has been created to apply to those properties alone.

The Lake Area Residential classification includes predominately single family residential uses, although there are some attached single family uses and resort uses as well. Average lot sizes in this area are less than 12,000 square feet because most of the lots were platted or divided prior to zoning standards being created for the Township. The remaining large parcels in the Lake Area Residential category are largely undevelopable due to wetlands or swampy soils.

It is not intended that there be land rezoned to this classification or any new development at this density in the Township. However, many property owners in this area are tearing down homes and building new homes that are bigger than the old cottages that existed previously. This has led to numerous variance requests and challenges to the Zoning Ordinance requirements for this area, primarily relating to setbacks and accessory structures.

The Township should review the standards in this area to ensure that they continue to represent the vision and intent of the Land Use Plan and to determine if any adjustments need to be made to the dimensional standards for this area.

### MULTIPLE FAMILY MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Multiple Family Medium-High Density Residential classification consists of single and two family dwellings on smaller lots and multiple family dwellings. Generally, multi-family development within this classification will include apartment complexes, multi-unit

condominiums, townhouses (and similar attached housing types), and senior housing (independent/assisted living and continual care). Some of these uses may also be approvable as a part of a PUD under certain conditions in other parts of the Township, but are permitted by right in these areas.

Two areas are classified Multiple Family Medium-High Density Residential and are currently zoned appropriately to accommodate such development due to a court order. Those parcels are located on the west side of the Township north and south of M-179. Another area is provided for potential future development. That area is located off of Yankee Springs Road near the intersection with M-37.

## MANUFACTURED HOUSING

Manufactured houses and mobile homes are a segment of the housing stock in Yankee Springs Township. Whether these are full-time residences, seasonal homes, or mobile campers, they have an impact on the Township and must be considered in the planning for the future.

The Manufactured Housing classification provides locations for manufactured home parks, built to the specifications of the Yankee Springs Township Zoning Ordinance and the Michigan Manufactured Housing Commission. There are two existing manufactured home parks within the Township.

## MIXED USE

The Mixed Use classification is envisioned as a mixed-use, commercial / residential designation, encouraging higher quality development than is provided under conventional development standards. Higher quality is desired due to the location of the sites. The sites planned for this use are located along major gateway corridors of the community and provide a first impression of the community. The higher quality is in exchange for flexibility with the conventional zoning standards. This designation allows for a mix of commercial and residential uses and encourages the use of Planned Unit Development (PUD), which allows for flexible application of zoning standards.

Two areas are set aside on the Future Land Use map for the Mixed Use classification. Each area has a slightly different character. Along M-37 in the northeast corner of the Township, is the first Mixed Use area. This area is currently defined by rural and rural residential uses. The Mixed Use classification intends to maintain this character through quality design and development; increased buffers, screening, and setbacks from roadways; and clustered development of non-residential uses. In this area, these uses will include primarily office and neighborhood commercial services. Architecture, signage, and design will be coordinated. Access will also be coordinated, including shared parking to limit impervious surfaces, pathways to adjacent residential areas, and access points to M-37 limited to one every 1,320 feet.

Along with the office and neighborhood commercial services, there may be a residential component to development in this area. This residential component may include a variation of building types, such as attached housing or live/work units, and is intended to be integrated into the development through design, access, and circulation. The intent is the creation of a neighborhood within the development.

This Plan and the Township understands the importance of preserving the capacity of M-37 and protecting the rural character along this corridor. It is not intended for this to become a high density area of development. While there may be pockets or clusters of dense development within this area, it will be required to be offset by sufficient undeveloped areas and open space to maintain an overall density for the area commensurate with adjacent development. This will not only protect the rural character of the area, but it will also prevent the existing services, or lack thereof, from being overloaded. Without public water and sewer in this area, there is a limit to the amount of non-residential development that can be accommodated before the services and/or resources are negatively impacted.

The other Mixed Use area is located at the western entry to the Township along M-179 and north along Patterson Road. This key gateway is envisioned as the future commercial center in the Township. It is desired that the majority of future retail development in the Township will occur in this area. The residential uses planned for this area shall be integrated into the overall development to create a cohesive design scheme. Overall, the development shall create a grand, welcoming gateway into the Township, representative of the character and vision of its people.

Commercial uses for this area are primarily retail and service related uses, geared towards both full-time and seasonal residents and visitors of the Township. There will likely not be room for much outdoor storage in this area. Offices may be located here, although it would be better for this to be primarily a destination for those seeking retail and entertainment options than for employees leaving every day at 5:00. Residential uses might include apartments above stores, townhouses, condominiums, and senior housing as well as single family homes. These would be located behind the commercial uses, which would occupy the road frontage of the site, primarily near the intersection of Patterson and M-179.

Within the development, as with the development on M-37, the architecture, design, and signage would all be coordinated. Access and circulation would be coordinated as well with limited access points onto the primary roads.

Currently, this area is dominated by large, uncoordinated signs that detract from the appearance of the area. Overall, the effect is not very welcoming or positive for visitors to the Township.

The desire for both of these Mixed Use areas is to create a place that residents and visitors alike will recognize as distinct to Yankee Springs Township – a unique development allowing residents to live, work, and play. Planned unit development



(PUD) is the desired tool to be used for development of these areas. This would allow for the appropriate amount of flexibility and creativity necessary to fully deliver what is intended for these areas. Form-based zoning standards may also be used to implement the intent of this district, particularly at the M-179 site.

The overall design plan for these areas is to create development that is of a rural, small-town scale and pedestrian friendly. This is particularly true of the non-residential uses. Although adequate parking must be provided, it should not dominate the development or the view from the road. The majority of the parking shall be relegated to the side and rear of the main buildings. The buildings shall be oriented towards the public roads, internal roads, and pedestrian paths. This shall create the desired community atmosphere and allow for the inclusion of several opportunities for public spaces, gathering spots, and other places for social interaction and exchange. If the Township recognizes that an adequate amount of land has been developed at either site to satisfy the intent of the district and the rural character is being threatened, it will immediately review the Plan and strongly consider amendments at that time.

Developments in the Mixed Use area should address the following:

- High quality, traditional architecture coordinated with the other buildings on the site
- Limited access points onto the adjacent primary road
- Design that is pedestrian friendly and includes internal pedestrian and non-motorized amenities and connections to any paths on adjacent properties, if applicable
- Design that is harmonious with natural features and sensitive areas on site
- Connection to the public water and sewer system, if available
- Internal vehicular connections to adjacent developments and centers, thereby creating an alternative road network
- Landscape, streetscape, traffic, and architectural solutions that are superior to typical design and visually enhancing the local community

## CORRIDOR OVERLAY

The Corridor Overlay classification is a special designation created for unique corridor areas within the Township. Presently, only a two-mile stretch of M-179 between Patterson Road and Briggs Road is designated as Corridor. The purpose of the overlay

in this particular area is to improve the experience of driving along this section of the corridor.

The M-179 corridor represents the gateway to Yankee Springs Township and to Barry County. It is also the hub of most of the commercial activity in the community and the location of the majority of the parcels available for development or redevelopment. This is a critical stretch of highway for the Township.

It is currently populated with a wide variety of uses, structures, and building types and styles, and they all have very different relationships to the highway. In additions, all of these elements have experienced varied levels of maintenance over the years. Although there are not glaring examples of blight or negligence along the corridor, the lack of continuity between the individual elements and the corridor as a whole takes away from the experience of driving or walking along this roadway.

The purpose of the Corridor Overlay classification is to establish a higher set of standards that will apply to those parcels located within the designated area and to begin to establish a consistent streetscape along the corridor. These standards will be in addition to and/or in place of the standards already in place for their underlying zoning district. They will address access management, screening, landscaping, signage, lighting, and other elements necessary to satisfy the objectives described above.

## COMMERCIAL

The Commercial classification includes those uses currently allowed in the C-1, C-2 and C-3 Zoning Districts and areas intended to be used for similar purposes. Commercial includes office uses as well as restaurants, entertainment, clothing stores, hardware stores, other commodities, and general retail and service uses.

Most of the Commercial area is located along M-179. Many of the parcels in this area have developed over time with uses servicing the recreational/tourist market. These include miniature golf, marinas, boat repair, convenience stores, and restaurants. Other uses serving full-time residents have also developed including markets, a hardware store, and a health club. Some of these uses could be redeveloped for a higher and better use, while others represent the best use of the property.

As these have developed, so have the zoning standards that guide them. Therefore, many of these uses have one or more non-conforming elements. Due to their location along a prominent corridor, bringing the properties, or at least the signage, into compliance should be a priority for the Township.

Access management standards should be included along this corridor to improve traffic flow and safety. Currently, uses along M-179 each have their own driveway or multiple

driveways. Opportunities to share parking, share driveways, create alternate access roads, and eliminate conflict points and reduce left turns should be sought.

**INDUSTRIAL**

The Industrial classification is provided in the northwest corner of the Township. A portion of this area is already zoned and developed for industrial use. Additional land is provided for expansion of the present industry or development of an additional industry. Industrial uses include warehousing, manufacturing, assembly, research and development, and similar uses. Heavier uses can be approved with a special land use permit. In order to limit the potential impact of industrial uses on surrounding neighbors, standards will be provided to require buffering, additional setbacks, etc. as necessary.

**RECREATION**

A key element of the character of Yankee Springs Township is the focus on recreation. Due to the presence of Yankee Springs State Recreation Area and the Barry State Game Area, many people visit the Township every year to partake in recreational activities. In addition, other recreational uses have been created to take advantage of that market that has been identified. These include a golf course, campgrounds, and stables. These are identified on the future land use map as “recreation” because of their unique identity and purpose in Yankee Springs Township.

Table 11 below summarizes the amount of land designated on Map 6, Future Land Use, for each of the Future Land Use classifications.

Table 11  
FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

CATEGORY	ACRES	PERCENT
State Land / Rural Preserve	12,355.4	61.41%
Rural Estate	3726.7	18.52%
Rural Residential	891.5	4.43%
Suburban Residential	281	1.40%
Lake Area Residential	1036.6	5.15%
Multiple Family Medium-High Density Residential	14.2	0.07%
Manufactured Housing	79.4	0.39%
Mixed Use	678.5	3.37%
Commercial	135.9	0.68%
Industrial	144.2	0.72%
Recreation	774.5	3.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,117.9</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: Barry County Land Information Syst, 2018.

## ZONING PLAN

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) requires the Master Plan to include a Zoning Plan, which 'includes an explanation of how the land use classifications on the land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map.' Table 12 summarizes the land use classifications and identifies related zoning districts as outlined in the Yankee Springs Zoning Ordinance, as well as providing recommendations for implementing the Master Plan through the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance.

Table 12  
ZONING PLAN

Future Land Use Classifications	Corresponding Zoning Districts
State Land/Rural Preserve Rural Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RA Rural/Agriculture District</b></li> <li>• This district is intended primarily to preserve lands best suited for rural/agricultural use from the encroachment of incompatible uses or for eventual development in other uses, pending proper timing. A density of 1 unit/3 acres is envisioned.</li> <li>• It is envisioned to establish a new district applicable to those lands classified as State Land/Rural Preserve.</li> </ul>
Rural Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RR Rural Residential District</b></li> <li>• The primary purpose of this district is to provide attractive residential areas solely for low-density single family residential use at a density of 1 unit/acre.</li> </ul>
Suburban Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SR Suburban Residential District</b></li> <li>• This district is designed to provide for single family residential dwellings set on large building sites (1-2 units/acre) with limited low-impact community facilities.</li> </ul>
Lake Area Single Family Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>RLF Lake Front Residential District</b> and the <b>RSF Residential Single Family District</b> are designed to manage the riparian development around inland lakes in the Township and the heavy single family residential development behind and around lakefront areas.</li> <li>• The intent of both districts is to manage the existing single family residential development at a density of 3 units/acre.</li> </ul>
Multiple Family Medium-High Density Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RMF Multi-Family Residential District</b></li> <li>• This district is intended to provide for single and two family residential units and varying multi-family building types at medium-high densities consistent with rural type facilities and services.</li> </ul>
Manufactured Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MHC Manufactured Housing Community District</b></li> <li>• This district is intended to facilitate the development of</li> </ul>

	<p>manufactured home communities and be located to serve as a transition and in recognition of accessibility and public facility needs.</p>
<b>Gateway Mixed Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no corresponding district to this classification.</li> <li>• It is envisioned to apply the Planned Unit Development (PUD) approach to achieve the goals and objectives of the Gateway Mixed Use classification.</li> </ul>
<b>Corridor Overlay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chief Noonday Corridor Overlay District</b></li> <li>• This district was developed for the M-179 corridor and provides design guidelines for development consistent with the goals/objectives of the Corridor Overlay classification.</li> <li>• Additional corridor overlay districts will be established as additional corridor areas are designated.</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>C-1 Commercial Office District, C-2 Commercial District, and C-3 Commercial District</b> are designed to provide for retail sales and service businesses that serve the convenience shopping needs of the local community.</li> <li>• These districts are intended to supplement the planned approaches developed for the Township gateways and M-179 and M-37 corridors.</li> </ul>
<b>Industrial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LI-1 Light Industrial District</b></li> <li>• This district is intended to provide for ‘clean’ industrial activities that produce minimal adverse impact on surrounding properties.</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Resort and Recreation District</b></li> <li>• This district is designed to allow outdoor recreational uses that take advantage of the area’s natural resources while preserving a resort nature and appearance of the neighborhood</li> </ul>

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following section presents tools and techniques community leaders, Boards and Commissions, Township Administration, and the general public can use to implement the Master Plan. The techniques can be used individually or in tandem to achieve the objectives and eventually the overall goals of the Plan. While the direct impact of some techniques cannot be immediately assessed, over time these procedures can effectively guide land use and development in Yankee Springs Township.

### CONTINUOUS PLANNING

The first implementation strategy is the adoption of the Master Plan by the Yankee Springs Township Board of Trustees (after recommendation by the Planning Commission). However, planning is a continuous process, which does not terminate with the completion of the Plan. The Township will continue to undergo change over time. Planning is an on-going process of identification, adjustment, and response to problems or opportunities that arise. In order to sustain the planning process and generate positive results, maintain momentum, and respond to change; the Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years, at a minimum.

Periodic adjustment to the Master Plan may be required as population, economic trends, and local and regional development patterns fluctuate and change. In addition, the Planning Commission or other designated committees, under the direction of the Township Board, can prepare organizational plans for specific issues or areas of concern as amendments to the Land Use Plan. Such supplemental plans may include corridor plans, housing maintenance programs, or a recreation plan.

As discussed throughout this planning process, the Planning Commission's work really *begins* with the completion of the Master Plan. Every year the Planning Commission should establish/update its annual work plan based in part on this implementation section. These elements are intended to be suggestions for items to be included on the Planning Commission's work plan. Other items will surface throughout the planning process.

### PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

A successful Master Plan must educate the citizens of the community on both the overall goals desired for the Township and the individual regulatory measures that are available to implement the desired goals. An informed public can then offer its support to establishing regulations designed to further the vision that they helped establish for the community. It became clear through the public input process that there are a number of misconceptions in the community regarding the planning process and the authority of the Township related to land use. Nonetheless, their interest in planning is high, and they have valuable and creative insight that should be shared with the

Township. In order for these ideas to be communicated to the right people in the proper manner, the Township must educate its citizens on general planning procedures.

For example, the public input results demonstrated that residents do not want any more housing in the Township, but the Township recognizes the reality that growth is going to occur. The goal is to lawfully manage growth and allow it only in conformance with the Township's guidelines. In order to prevent long delays at public hearings and an unfriendly atmosphere for developers, the Township should work with the public so that they are aware of the Township's authority and adopted standards and all parties can work together.

### *TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE*

The Zoning Ordinance is the primary regulatory tool used by the Township to implement the Master Plan. Districts are established through zoning for the purpose of regulating the use of land and buildings, their height and bulk, the proportion of the lot that may be covered by them, and the density of development. This classification through regulation assists in the orderly development and growth of the community. In addition, zoning is used to protect property values and investments. Because of the real and/ or perceived impact zoning has on the use of land and related services, a direct relationship must exist between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

Land use classifications on the Future Land Use Map and the corresponding land use category descriptions in the text of the Master Plan provide the basis for evaluating future zoning amendments, decisions initiated by the Planning Commission, or rezoning requests presented by petitioners.

Based on the recommendations in the Plan for the residential, commercial, and industrial areas, and based on the ever-evolving zoning tools that are available, the Township should consider a technical review of the Zoning Ordinance. A technical review will determine which provisions of the Ordinance are no longer consistent with the policies of the Land Use Plan, provisions that should be included to implement the policies of the Land Use Plan, and which provisions can be more clearly written to withstand legal scrutiny.

The technical review will be a methodical process that results in a list of suggested text amendments necessary to update the Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the Plan.

Beyond this initial review, there should also be continuous review of the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that it continues to satisfy the goals and objectives of this Plan and meet the Community's vision. In particular, site plan review and special land use approval standards should be maintained to ensure they stay current with the Community's objectives. Similarly, the Township Zoning Map should also be consistently reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in the Community consistent with the future land use plan. This is typically done on an annual basis.

## *REZONING*

A review of the Zoning Map should be conducted to determine consistency with the Future Land Use Map. While the two will likely not be the same, the Future Land Use Map provides the template or direction for future changes to the Zoning Map. Therefore, property zoned for a higher intensity or density than designated on the Future Land Use Map, would be of particular interest. Rezoning these properties prevents a vacant lot from being developed in a manner that is no longer consistent with the Township's vision.

Other parcels that are zoned at a lower intensity or density, for instance a parcel zoned Rural Residential in the Gateway Mixed Use area, do not necessarily need to be rezoned at this time. A developer would likely seek such a rezoning when they submitted an application to develop the property.

## *SUBDIVISION AND PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS*

Land division regulations are an important tool for the implementation of this Plan. The Township has regulations to cover all of the various forms of land division – land divisions, subdivisions, site condominiums, and planned unit developments – but these regulations should be reviewed to ensure that they continue to represent the vision and intent of the Township.

For example, the subdivision regulations contain design standards that regulate the design and layout of lots, streets, and developments. It is critical that these standards require the necessary amenities and stipulations on development to protect the rural character that residents here treasure. While traditional subdivision plats have become much less popular in the advent of site condominiums and planned unit developments, the design guidelines are universal and apply to many forms of development.

A more specialized form of development has evolved recently that will be critical to future development in the Township. Planned Unit Development (PUD) is cited frequently in this Plan as a tool that can be used to realize the goals of various land use categories and achieve a higher quality of development than might otherwise be possible. This tool allows for flexible application of the zoning standards in exchange for higher quality development and preservation of valuable open space areas. This section of the current regulations should be carefully reviewed and updated. This will allow for PUD's to most effectively implement the goals and objectives of the Plan and will provide incentives so they are more likely to be used to create such development in the future.



## *OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT*

Rural open space development is an alternative to conventional site development that is intended to promote the preservation of rural character. Conventional site development often results in residential sprawl that consumes large amounts of land and divides open spaces into fragments that do not contribute to a rural appearance and are not conducive to agriculture, wildlife habitat, or other rural open space uses.

Conventional site development places lots on every available acre of the site. Open space development (also known as cluster zoning) allows for the grouping of dwellings onto part of the site so that the remainder can be preserved as open space. The clustering of dwellings can be placed either within woodlands, to preserve agricultural land and open space, or on the open space, preserving the woodlands and other existing natural features.

The development also typically has a large setback from the road allowing rural view sheds along the corridor to be preserved. The goal is to devise better use of undeveloped property resulting in higher quality development as opposed to destroying natural features to create conventional development.

Zoning Ordinance requirements must be revised to be no more difficult for rural open space developments than for conventional residential development. This development alternative is most effective when the Township offers a small incentive for open space development to the developer in the form of a small density bonus. A density bonus is contingent upon the developer preserving a sufficient amount of natural features and open space and appropriate infrastructure for the dwellings.

## *FINANCING TOOLS*

Successful implementation of the Master Plan will depend on the ability of the Township to secure necessary financing for proposed improvements. Besides the general fund, the following sources of revenue are available to the Township:

### *DEDICATED MILLAGE*

Special millage rates can be approved to generate revenues for a specific purpose.

### *SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS*

Special assessments are compulsory contributions collected from the owners of property benefited by specific public improvements (paving, drainage improvements, etc.) to defray the costs of such improvements. Special assessments are apportioned

according to the assumed benefits to the property affected. Special assessment funding would prove useful to implement utility and road improvements in those areas with substandard and unimproved roads.

#### MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND

This fund replaced the Michigan Land Trust Fund in October 1985. All proposals for local grants must include a local match of at least 25 percent of total project costs. Projects eligible for funding include: acquisition of land or rights in land for recreational uses or for protection of the land for environmental importance or scenic beauty; and development proposals for public outdoor recreation or resource protection purposes (i.e., picnic areas, beaches, boating access, fishing and hunting facilities, winter sports areas, playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, and trails, etc.). Indoor facilities are considered only if their primary purpose is to support outdoor recreation. Proposed local government fund recipients must have a recreation plan no more than five years old and approved by the Department of Natural Resources.

#### LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

These grants are 50/50 matching grants for land acquisition or outdoor recreation development funding. Eligible projects could receive a reimbursement from the Federal government equal to half the total project cost. The other half would have to be in the form of cash outlay, donation of land, or by credit for certain locally assumed costs. To be eligible, the Township must have an approved, up-to-date recreation plan that has been formally adopted by the Township Board.

Facilities which may be developed with these funds include, but are not limited to, picnic areas, beaches, boating facilities, fishing and hunting facilities, winter sports areas, playgrounds, ball fields, and tennis courts.

#### BOND PROGRAMS

Bonds are one of the principal sources of financing used by communities to pay for capital improvements. General obligation bonds are issued for specific community projects and are paid off by the general public with property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for construction of projects that generate revenues. The bonds are then retired using income generated by the project (for example, water and sewer service charges).

## TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

The Downtown Development Authority Act, Local Development Finance Authority Act, and Brownfield Redevelopment Act authorize tax increment financing. When a tax increment finance district is established, the state equalized value of all properties in the district is recorded. Every year thereafter, the property tax revenue generated by any increase in the total state equalized value is "captured" by the DDA (Downtown Development Authority), LDFA (Local Development Finance Authority), or BRA (Brownfield Redevelopment Authority) to finance the improvements set forth in a Master Plan. Often, revenue bonds are issued to finance the improvements, and the tax increment revenues are used to repay the bonds. A brownfield area may be the most likely to be effective in the future for Yankee Springs Township. The County already has a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority with a plan in place. That plan would simply need to be adopted to include potential brownfield sites in the Township. Then, if approved, brownfield funds may be made available to applicants at this site for purposes of redevelopment, environmental cleanup, and other high costs that prohibit development because of the status of the site. There are a few potential sites that may be included in such an effort, including an old gas station site on Chief Noonday Road and the former Misak Landfill.

## ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan outlines and prioritizes specific actions identified to successfully implement the Plan. Each implementation action is listed with a 'priority number' and assigned a general time frame for completion. The body primarily responsible for moving the action forward is also identified.

The 'prioritization scheme' applied within the Action Plan is as follows:

**Priority 1:** These projects should be given immediate and concentrated effort. They are the first projects that should be started after the Master Plan has been adopted.

**Priority 2:** These projects are those necessary to implement the Plan, but either depend on the completion of Priority 1 projects or require more complex or coordinated effort.

**Priority 3:** These projects implement elements of the Plan but are not urgent and can be delayed for a longer period of time. Further, these projects may be limited by budgetary constraints.

## PLANS, POLICIES AND ORDINANCES

Action	Responsibility	Time	Priority
1. Review the Zoning Ordinance to determine if any existing provisions inhibit or prohibit implementation of the Plan. Make amendments as necessary.	Planning Commission Township Board	1 Year	1
2. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include successful Plan implementation techniques (ie. 'gateway' or corridor overlay district)	Planning Commission Township Board	1-5 Years	1
3. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan that coordinates Township funding with implementation priorities.	Township Board Planning Commission	1 Year annually	1
4. Work with adjacent Gun Lake	Planning Commission	1 year	2

communities to adopt waterfront/shoreline protection approaches into land use regulations that encourage low-impact development, waterfront setbacks and vegetative buffers.	<i>Township Board</i>		
5. Review and initiate Amendments to the Zoning Map that will implement the Plan.	<i>Planning Commission Township Board</i>	<i>As Needed</i>	<i>2</i>
6. Work with the adjacent communities and Barry County to adopt a joint recreation Plan to create funding opportunities for planned improvements.	<i>Planning Commission Township Board Barry County</i>	<i>2-4 Years</i>	<i>2</i>
7. Incorporate a 'pathways plan' In the Recreation Plan that coordinates planned bike lanes and non-motorized paths with area-wide trail systems and provides connectivity between community activity centers.	<i>Planning Commission Township Board Barry County</i>	<i>2-4 Years</i>	<i>2</i>
8. Conduct the required 5-Year Review of the Master Plan to respond to changing conditions and priorities.	<i>Planning Commission Township Board</i>	<i>Annually or as needed</i>	<i>3</i>

## TRANSPORTATION

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Priority</b>
1. Adopt a Resolution of Support as a Complete Streets Community	<i>Township Board</i>	<i>1 year</i>	<i>1</i>
2. Work with MDOT to incorporate 'complete streets' elements on M-179 and M-37	<i>Staff Township Board</i>	<i>1-2 Years</i>	<i>1</i>
3. Develop a 'sidewalk plan' that achieves walkability and connectivity objectives	<i>Planning Commission Township Board</i>	<i>2-3 Years</i>	<i>2</i>

established within identified gateway and mixed use areas.

- |                                                                                                                          |                                               |           |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Adopt a sidewalk ordinance that will implement the 'sidewalk plan' and work to maintain connectivity within the network. | <i>Planning Commission<br/>Township Board</i> | 2-4 Years | 3 |
| 4. Develop, fund and implement a wayfinding sign program.                                                                | <i>Township Board</i>                         | 2-4 Years | 3 |

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Action	Responsibility	Time	Priority
1. Review and amend sign ordinance to establish coordinated signage at Township gateways and along gateway corridors.	<i>Planning Commission Township Board</i>	1 year	1
2. Work with State of MI in Pure Michigan campaign to establish recreational/ tourism marketing initiatives.	<i>Township Board</i>	1 year	2
3. Engage in brownfield planning with Barry County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.	<i>Township Board</i>	On-Going	2

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP  
BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Resolution No. 02-02-2019

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT UPDATED MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township; and

WHEREAS, on 2-14- 2019, the Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the requirements of Section 41 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008), notice was sent on 1-30-2019 and the draft plan was distributed to the adjoining municipalities, the Barry County Planning Commission, and others in accordance with the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 17, 2019 to consider public comment on the proposed updated Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed updated Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board finds that the proposed updated Master Plan is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township; and

WHEREAS, the MPEA authorizes the Township Board to assert by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Adoption of 2018 Master Plan.** The Township Board of Yankee Springs Township hereby approves and adopts the proposed 2018 Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps and tables contained therein. Pursuant to MCL 125.3843, the Township Board has asserted its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan and therefore the approval granted herein is the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843 and therefore the plan is effective as of February 14, 2019.
2. **Distribution to Notice Group.** The Township Board approved the distribution of the adopted plan to the Notice Group as identified in the Act.

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*PAGE 1 of 2*

3. *Findings of Fact.* The Township Board has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, input received from the Planning Commission and public hearing, and with the assistance of a professional planning consultant, and finds that the updated Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of land in Yankee Springs Township.
4. *Effective Date.* The Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this resolution.

**Record:**

The foregoing resolution offered by Township Board Member Trustee Knowles

Second offered by Township Board Member Treasurer Jerome

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

"Aye" Lippert, Englert, Jerome, Knowles, Vandenberg

"Nay" 0

Absent: 0

The Township Supervisor, Mark Englert, declared the resolution adopted/rejected.  
(circle one)

Janice C. Lippert  
Janice C. Lippert, Clerk

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Janice C. Lippert, the duly elected Clerk of Yankee Springs Township, do hereby certify that the above is a true and exact copy of a Resolution, passed by the Yankee Springs Township Board, on 2-14- 2019, the original of which is on file at the Yankee Springs Township Hall

Date: 2-14- 2019

Janice C. Lippert  
Janice C. Lippert, Clerk

*Resolution  
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