

PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
August 11, 2026
6:30

- 1. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL**
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA and MINUTES OF July 14, 2026**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Limit to 3 minutes
- 4. NEW BUSINESS:** Welcome to Lake Association Officers and guests
- 5. OLD BUSINESS:** Discussion and input on Master Plan
 - Discussion of the Future Land Use section(see attachment)
- 6. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Limit to 3 minutes
- 7. Adjournment**

****Next Master Plan meeting September 8, 2026**

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).

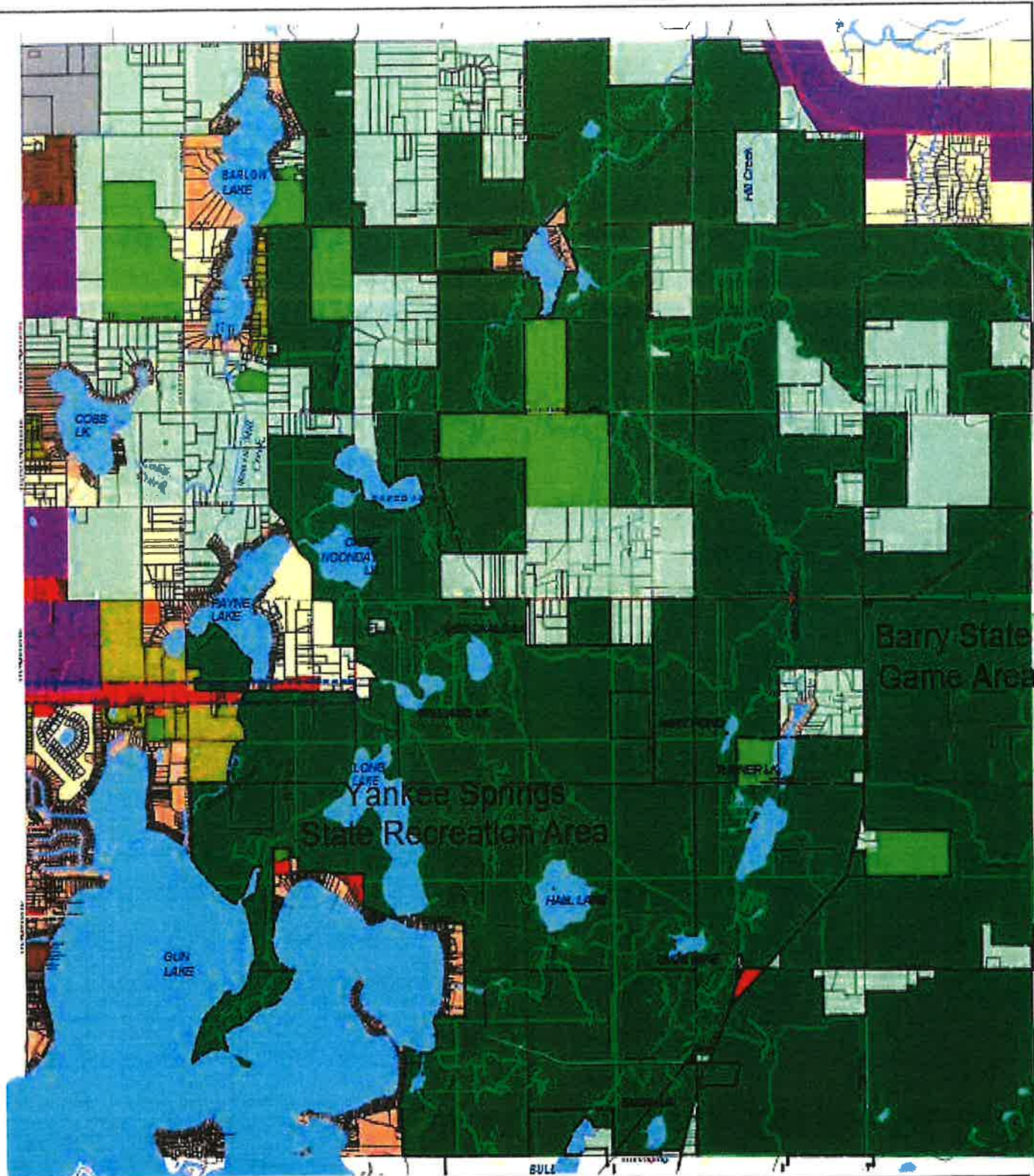
FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

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 Family Residential | Industrial |
| Rural Estate | Manufactured Housing | Recreation |
| Rural Residential | Mixed Use / Community Overlay | |
| Suburban Residential | Commercial | |
| Lake Area Residential | | |

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%
Total	20,117.9	100.00%

Source: Barry County Land Information Syst, 2018.