



CANADIAN CAMPING
AND RV ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DU CAMPING ET DU VR

A STRONG INDUSTRY.
VIBRANT COMMUNITIES.
UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES.

Key Feasibility Questions *for* Municipal Campground Development

A Pre-Development
Readiness Assessment for
Municipal Officials,
Economic Development
Officers, and Planners.



PROTECTING PRIVATE INVESTMENT

Ensuring fair competition
and responsible use of
public resources.



EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

Answer the right
questions with data, not
assumptions.



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Build projects that
deliver lasting economic
and social value.



STRONGER TOGETHER

Supporting communities,
industry partners, and
local economies.



*Rigorous
planning today
leads to stronger
communities
tomorrow.*



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A CCRVA
MUNICIPAL
DEVELOPMENT
RESOURCE

2026



KEY FEASIBILITY
QUESTIONS FOR
MUNICIPAL
CAMPGROUND
DEVELOPMENT



NOTE ON INDUSTRY
PROTECTION



HOW TO USE
THIS GUIDE



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SUMMARY



THE TEN
QUESTIONS



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EXPERTISE



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A Note On Industry Protection



Canada's private campground and RV park operators invest significant personal capital to serve travellers, support local economies, and build tourism infrastructure without public subsidy or the ability to absorb losses through a tax base.

When a municipality enters the campground market without rigorous justification, it risks undermining those businesses, particularly when it does so at below-market rates or with subsidized infrastructure.



CCRVA does not oppose municipal campground development categorically. What CCRVA requests is that municipalities demonstrate, **before committing public funds**, that a **genuine market need** exists that private investment has not or cannot meet - and that the project will be governed and operated with the commercial commitment that protects both taxpayers and the existing industry.



The questions that follow are not a procedural checklist. **They are a substantive test. Municipalities that cannot answer them with evidence are not ready to proceed.**



Protecting the viability of existing private operators is essential to maintaining a healthy, competitive, and sustainable campground industry in your region.





KEY FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS FOR MUNICIPAL CAMPGROUND DEVELOPMENT



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How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help municipalities make informed, responsible decisions about campground development before committing public resources. It provides a structural framework to evaluate need, viability, and long-term community benefit - based on evidence, not assumptions.



Intended Audience

This resource is for municipal council members, planners, economic development officers, parks and recreation staff, tourism leaders, and consultants who are involved in evaluating or advancing campground projects.



Purpose of this Resource

To help you determine whether a municipal campground project is:

- Supported by genuine market need
- Financially sustainable
- Operationally viable
- Aligned with community & tourism goals
- Respectful of existing private investment
- In the best long-term interest of taxpayers

This guide does not promote or discourage municipal campground development. It ensures that the decision to proceed is grounded in due diligence, transparency, and public accountability.

HOW TO WORK THROUGH THE QUESTIONS:

A STEP-BY-STEP PLANNING APPROACH

- 1 Assess Existing Supply**
Determine what private and public campground supply already exists in your region.
- 2 Validate Demand**
Confirm that unmet demand exists using reliable data and seasonal analysis.
- 3 Evaluate Site & Infrastructure**
Ensure the proposed site is viable, properly serviced & aligned with regulations and community plans.
- 4 Review Governance & Financials**
Confirm financial stability at market rates and establish strong governance and oversight.
- 5 Engage Stakeholders**
Consult with indigenous communities, local operators, and key stakeholders early.
- 6 Proceed to Feasibility**
Only when the evidence supports a genuine market need and the project is financially, operationally, and strategically sound.



The strongest campground projects are those that complement existing tourism infrastructure, operate with commercial discipline, and are built on evidence rather than assumptions.





KEY FEASIBILITY
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Executive Summary

A PRE-DEVELOPMENT READINESS ASSESSMENT FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS, AND PLANNERS

Across Canada, municipalities are increasingly exploring campground development as a strategy to support tourism growth, attract visitors, and stimulate local economic activity. At the same time, private campground operators have already invested substantial private capital to build and operate tourism infrastructure in communities across the country - often without public subsidy and while assuming the full financial risk of operation.

The Canadian Camping and RV Association (CCRVA) supports responsible campground development where a legitimate market need exists and where projects are approached with appropriate planning, governance, operational discipline, and respect for the existing tourism marketplace. Municipal campground development should not proceed based solely on land availability, political enthusiasm, or assumptions of demand. Public investment decisions must instead be supported by evidence, financial realism, and meaningful consultation. This resource was developed to help municipalities evaluate whether a proposed campground project is viable, necessary, and aligned with long-term community and tourism objectives before public funds are committed.

The document outlines ten foundational questions every municipality should answer before advancing a campground proposal:

- 1 EXISTING SUPPLY**
Has the private campground supply been objectively assessed?
- 2 UNMET DEMAND**
Can the unmet demand be quantified using verifiable data?
- 3 STRATEGIC PURPOSE**
Does the project align with a clear municipal objective?
- 4 SITE VIABILITY**
Is the site suitable, feasible, and compliant?
- 5 FINANCIAL REALITY**
Is the project financially sustainable and affordable?
- 6 GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY**
Are governance and oversight structures in place?
- 7 OPERATIONAL CAPACITY**
Does the municipality have, or can it access, the operational expertise required?
- 8 REGULATORY & BYLAW COMPLIANCE**
Can the project meet all regulatory and approval requirements?
- 9 DUTY TO CONSULT**
Has the duty to consult been addressed?
- 10 COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**
Is there genuine community, stakeholder, and business support?



KEY FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS FOR MUNICIPAL CAMPGROUND DEVELOPMENT



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NEXT STEPS

The guide emphasizes that campground development is not simply a parks or land-use initiative — it is a hospitality and tourism business requiring specialized operational knowledge, infrastructure planning, and long-term financial accountability.

CCRVA also highlights the importance of avoiding unintended market distortion. Municipal campgrounds that rely on below-market pricing, subsidized infrastructure, or ongoing operational support can negatively impact existing private businesses that already serve the region and contribute to the local economy. Municipalities should first consider whether identified supply gaps could be addressed by supporting or enabling private sector investment before entering the market directly.

Municipalities that can answer these questions with evidence - not assumptions - are better positioned to make informed decisions that support sustainable tourism growth while maintaining constructive relationships with the private campground sector.

CCRVA encourages municipalities to engage qualified campground development and operations expertise early in the feasibility process and to consult with regional campground operators before proposals are advanced to council or procurement stages.

For additional guidance, municipalities can access CCRVA's broader Municipal Campground Development Guide, industry definitions resources, operational benchmarks, and connections to experienced campground operators and consultants across Canada.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



EVIDENCE BEFORE INVESTMENT

Public campground proposals should be supported by objective market analysis and realistic financial modelling.



CONSIDER PRIVATE SECTOR SOLUTIONS

Regulatory reform, bylaw updates, or enabling private investment may deliver new supply more effectively than municipal ownership.



PROTECT LONG-TERM COMMUNITY INTERESTS

Good planning reduces financial, operational, legal, and reputational risks and strengthens community relationships.



TEN QUESTIONS EVERY MUNICIPALITY MUST ANSWER FIRST

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2 UNMET DEMAND QUANTIFICATION

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1 Has private supply been objectively assessed?

This is the threshold question. Before any other analysis proceeds, municipalities must conduct a rigorous assessment of existing private campground supply in the region - not just within municipal boundaries.

Counting sites is not enough. The assessment must determine whether existing operators are turning campers away, what site types and amenity levels already exist, and critically, whether any identified gaps could be addressed by supporting private operators rather than creating a competing public facility. If private supply is adequate and performing, the case for municipal market entry has not been made.

“Municipalities must demonstrate, before committing public funds, that a genuine market need exists that private investment has not or cannot meet.

— CCRVA POSITION



CONSIDER:



How many private campgrounds operate within the region - not just within municipal boundaries?



What are peak-season occupancy rates at existing facilities, and are operators turning guests away?



What sites types and amenity levels already exist, and where are the documented gaps?



Could identified supply or quality gaps be addressed by supporting private operators rather than competing with them?



Have CCRVA member operators in the region been formally consulted as a primary data source?



CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Failure to conduct a rigorous supply assessment can lead to unnecessary competition, market distortion, and the potential displacement of established private operators who have invested significant capital in serving your community & region.

A strong campground decision starts with respect for the industry that is already successfully serving your community.

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“Data is the foundation of responsible decision-making. Assumptions are not a strategy.”

2 Can Unmet Demand be Quantified?

Perceived demand is not evidence of demand. Municipalities must demonstrate unmet need using verifiable data: regional tourism traffic volumes, accommodation gap analysis, seasonal visitation patterns, and origin-destination data where available.

The analysis must identify not just that demand exists, but what type of campers are underserved: tent campers, trailer and fifth-wheel users, motorhome travellers, or groups, and whether the proposed site and product can realistically capture that demand. A municipality that cannot answer these questions with data is proposing to spend public money on an assumption. That is not an acceptable basis for market entry in a sector where private operators have already committed their own capital.



CONSIDER:

- ✓ What evidence shows demand exceeds current supply?
- ✓ Is the data recent, credible, and seasonally relevant?
- ✓ Have you analyzed weekday, weekend, and peak periods separately?
- ✓ Does the analysis include future supply in the pipeline?
- ✓ What is the realistic capture rate for a new municipal campground?

WHAT STRONG DEMAND ANALYSIS INCLUDES:



Occupancy Data
Historical occupancy rates from local campgrounds in the region, segmented by season and site type.



Length of Stay Patterns
Trends in average length of stay, repeat visitation, and changes over time.



Visitor Origin & Purpose
Where visitors come from, why they travel, and what drives their camping decisions.



Market Growth Indicators
Population growth, tourism trends, RV ownership rates, and economic factors.



Committed & Planned Supply
Existing approvals, expansions, or new private campground developments in the pipeline.



DATA SOURCES TO CONSIDER

- Provincial and regional tourism organizations (eg. Destination Canada, provincial agencies, Canadian Camping & RV Association)
- Tourism HR Canada - accommodation occupancy data
- Private campground operators
- Municipal accommodation tax/visitor data
- Industry reports and market studies
- Seasonal traffic and visitation trends
- Local surveys and visitor feedback



CRITICAL CONSIDERATION

If the identified gap can be met through existing private operators or future private investment, municipal entry into the market is not justified. Municipalities should first enable or support private sector solutions.



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MUNICIPAL WORKSHEET: UNMET DEMAND SUMMARY

Document the evidence. Be specific. Attach supporting resources.

METRIC	CURRENT FINDINGS	DATA SOURCE	IMPLICATIONS
Peak Season Occupancy (%)			
Shoulder Season Occupancy (%)			
Average Length of Stay			
Annual Visitor Nights			
Identified Demand Gap (Site Nights)			
Future Demand Projections			
Pipeline Supply (Approved/Proposed)			

“ A validated gap in demand is the foundation for a defensible project. **”**



“A clear purpose leads to better decisions, stronger outcomes, and community support.”

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3 What is the Projects Strategic Purpose?

A campground built to drive regional tourism requires different sizing, amenities, marketing, and financial expectations than one built to capture overflow demand on peak weekends. These are not the same project. Municipalities must define the strategic purpose with specificity: What visitor problem does this facility solve? What gap in the existing product mix does it fill that private investment has not addressed? What is the defined target market - site type, traveller profile, length of stay - and how was that market identified?

Vague objectives produce generic facilities. Generic facilities compete across all segments without excelling in any, eroding private operators' market share without delivering meaningful public benefit in return.

COMMON STRATEGIC PURPOSES



Grow Tourism Visitation

Increase overnight stays, extend the tourism season, and attract new visitor segments.



Support Local Economic Development

Stimulate local spending, support jobs, and enhance community revenue.



Fill a Geographic or Service Gap

Provide camping access in an underserved area or support dispersal of visitors.



Protect/Enhance Community Assets

Improve parks and recreational offerings or protect environmentally sensitive areas through management.



Social & Community Benefits

Improve quality of life for residents or provide affordable recreation opportunities.



CONSIDER:



What specific need or opportunity will the project address?



How does it align with official plans, tourism strategies, and economic development priorities?



Who is the primary target market and how will they be served?



What outcomes will define success?



Could this purpose be achieved by supporting private sector investment instead of direct municipal operation?



ALIGNMENT CHECK

Clearly link the project purpose to:

- Official community plan
- Tourism/Destination Strategy
- Economic Development Plan
- Parks & Recreation Master Plan
- Regional or Indigenous Partnerships



PITFALL TO AVOID

Vague or multiple purposes often lead to shifting priorities, scope creep, and community confusion.

QUESTIONS TO CLARIFY PURPOSE

- What problems or opportunity does this project solve?
- Why can't this need be met by the private sector or with partnerships?
- What is the expected community benefit?
- How will this project be measured and evaluated over time?
- What happens if the purpose is not achieved?

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4 Is the Proposed Site Physically and Operationally Viable?

A great concept on the wrong site can lead to high costs, operational challenges, environmental impacts, and poor guest experiences. A rigorous site evaluation ensures the location can support the intended use now and in the future.

KEY SITE VIABILITY FACTORS



Location & Access

Proximity to key markets, highways, attractions, and services. Evaluate road access, signage opportunities, and wayfinding.



Servicing & Utilities

Water supply, wastewater disposal, hydro, internet, solid waste, and fire protection availability or feasibility.



Topography & Soil Conditions

Terrain sustainability for development, drainage, flood risk, erosion potential, and soil stability.



Environmental Considerations

Wetlands, wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems, tree cover, and environmental protection requirements.



Site Size, Layout & Expandability

Adequate space for current needs and future growth, internal circulation, setbacks and buffering.



Regulatory & Zoning Compliance

Land use designation, zoning, permits, and alignment with municipal plans and policies.



CONSIDER:



Is the site suitable for the intended campground type & scale?



Can the site be safely accessed by all user-types?



Are services, utilities and infrastructure available or achievable?



Will the site meet environmental, regulatory, and community expectations?



Are there physical constraints or hidden costs that could impact feasibility?



COMMON CHALLENGES

- Limited or costly servicing extensions
- Seasonal access limitations
- Floodplain or drainage issues
- Steep slopes or difficult terrain
- Environmental restrictions
- Neighboring land use conflicts
- High development or remediation costs





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MUNICIPAL WORKSHEET: SITE VIABILITY OVERVIEW

Summarize the key findings of your site assessment.

FACTOR	FINDINGS/DETAILS	RATING (LOW/MED/HIGH)	NOTES/NEXT STEPS
Location & Access			
Servicing & Utilities			
Topography & Soil Conditions			
Environmental Considerations			
Site Size & Layout			
Regulatory & Zoning Compliance			
Overall Site Viability			

“ A thorough site assessment today
prevents costly surprises tomorrow.”



“ *A financially realistic plan today prevents costly surprises and reduces risk to taxpayers.* ”

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5 Do the Financial Projections Reflect Commercial Reality?

Municipal campground financial projections are frequently optimistic and structurally incomplete. A credible pro forma must include fully loaded per-site capital development costs benchmarked against comparable projects; operating costs at multiple occupancy scenarios including a realistic downside case; Revenue Per Available Site (RevPAS) projections based on demonstrated market rates - not rates the municipality intends to charge; break-even occupancy expressed as a percentage and as an absolute number of site-nights; and a sensitivity analysis showing the impact of a shortened peak season, a below-forecast first year, or a capital cost overrun.

Critically, the financial model must be built on market-rate pricing. A municipal campground that prices below the private market to drive occupancy is not financially self-sustaining - it is being subsidized by taxpayers and is actively harming the operators it is competing against. CCRVA can provide industry benchmark data to support pro forma development. The pro forma must also define performance thresholds and exit conditions. Minimum occupancy rates, RevPAS targets, and operating cost ceilings should be established before the project is approved and built into the governance structure. Council must determine in advance what happens if the facility underperforms: at what point does the municipality intervene, restructure operations, transition to a private management model, or close the facility?

A campground with permanent electrical infrastructure, sewer connections, and committed reservation bookings is not easy or inexpensive to shut down. Establishing wind-down conditions at the outset is not pessimism - it is the same commercial discipline that every private operator applies when committing capital, and it is the minimum standard taxpayers should expect before public funds are committed.



CONSIDER:

- Are revenues based on realistic occupancy and market rates?
- Does the plan assume any ongoing municipal subsidy?
- Are operating costs complete and accurate?
- Have capital and life cycle costs been fully included?
- Is there a clear plan to achieve long-term financial stability?



COMMON FINANCIAL RISKS

- Overly optimistic occupancy or rate assumptions
- Incomplete operating cost estimates
- Underestimating maintenance and lifecycle costs
- Ignoring seasonal demand fluctuations
- Reliance on grants or one-time funding
- No contingency for inflation or cost escalation
- Lack of reserves for capital replacement



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KEY FINANCIAL ELEMENTS TO EVALUATE



Revenue Assumptions

Site mix, seasonal occupancy, nightly rates, ancillary revenue and growth projections.



Operating Expenses

Labor, utilities, marketing, repairs & maintenance, insurance, administration, and supplies.



Capital Costs

Land (if applicable), site development, infrastructure, amenities, equipment, and soft costs.



Life Cycle & Replacement

Long-term asset management, renewal cycles, and major capital reserves.



Financial Sustainability

Break-even analysis, cash flow, debt capacity and return on investment (if applicable).

MUNICIPAL WORKSHEET: FINANCIAL REALITY CHECK

Provide a high level summary of key financial assumptions and results.

METRIC	ASSUMPTION/INPUT	RESULT/OUTPUT	NOTES
Average Nightly Rate (By Site Type)			
Expected Occupancy (%)			
Annual Revenue			
Annual Operating Expenses			
Net Operating Income (NOI)			
Capital Investment Required			
Break-Even Occupancy			
Payback Period (Years)			
Debt Service Coverage Ratio (if applicable)			
Required Operating Subsidy			



A realistic forecast builds confidence and supports responsible decisions.

6

How Will the Campground be Governed and Held Accountable?



“A campground with permanent infrastructure and committed reservations is not easy or inexpensive to close.”

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GOVERNANCE IS NOT AN ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL

It is the mechanism that determines whether a municipal campground operates with commercial discipline or becomes a recurring draw on the public budget. A campground absorbed into a parks department has no standalone financial accountability. Losses are diffused across departmental budgets, rates are set by political consideration rather than market analysis, and the facility has no structural incentive to perform. CCRVA’s position is that municipal campgrounds must be governed by an independent body with its own mandate, its own budget, and explicit performance targets. That body must be required to charge market rates, report publicly on financial performance, and operate without cross-subsidization from municipal revenues. Where a municipality is unwilling or unable to establish this structure, a management agreement with a qualified private operator is the appropriate alternative. A campground that cannot sustain itself at market rates is not filling a market gap - it is creating an unfair competitive advantage at taxpayer expense.

STANDALONE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

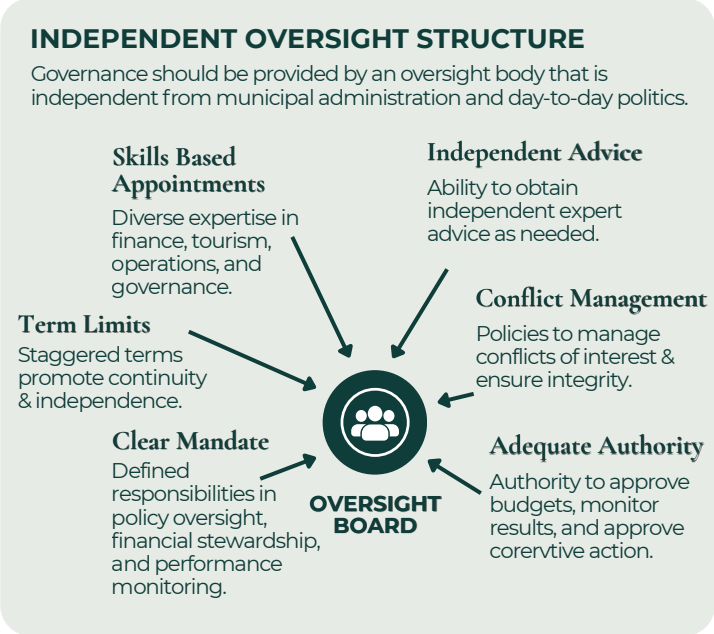
The campground must operate as a separate financial entity with its own budget, revenue, and reporting.

- Separate Cost Centre & Accounting
- All revenues & expenses captured transparently
- Full financial statements reviewed annually
- No cross-subsidization from other municipal programs.

REPORTING & TRANSPARENCY

Regular, accessible reporting ensures accountability and supports informed decision making.

- Annual operating and financial review
- Performance metrics against clear targets
- Public access to key results and reports
- Timely disclosure of material issues



COMMERCIAL DISCIPLINE IS ESSENTIAL
A municipally operated campground must be managed like a commercial business.



Rates set by market analysis, not by political consideration.



Full cost recovery, including capital and life cycle costs.



Avoids unfair competitive advantage over private sector operators.



Protects the integrity of the marketplace and taxpayer resources.

PROTECT THE PUBLIC INTEREST. PROTECT THE FUTURE.

Strong governance prevents financial losses, maintains public trust, and ensures a level playing field with the private marketplace.



A CCRVA RESOURCE

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GOVERNANCE RISKS

IF GOVERNANCE IS ABSORBED INTO GENERAL MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

-  Financial losses may be absorbed and not visible to council.
-  Rates may be set by political consideration rather than market analysis.
-  Accountability can become diluted with no specific department assigned responsibility for results.
-  Cross-subsidization from other municipal programs may occur.
-  Private market competitors are undermined, creating an unfair advantage at taxpayer expense.

WHEN TO INTERVENE

Municipalities should define clear triggers for intervention, which may include:

-  Consistent financial losses beyond approved thresholds
-  Failure to meet service or maintenance standards
-  Breach of agreement terms or policies
-  Negative environmental or operational impacts
-  Reputational or legal risk to the municipality

CROSS-SUBSIDIZATION MUST BE AVOIDED

Using funds from other programs to cover campground deficits creates:

- Unfair advantage over private operators
- Distorted market signals
- Risk of long-term taxpayer exposure
- Reduced pressure to operate efficiently



MANAGEMENT & OPERATING MODEL OPTIONS

The governance structure should align with the municipalities risk tolerance, resources, and long-term objectives.

MUNICIPAL OPERATION

- Direct control and alignment with public goals
- Requires strong internal capacity
- Highest risk of political influence and cost exposure

THIRD PARTY OPERATOR

- Professional expertise and commercial discipline
- Performance tied to contract terms & expectations
- Requires oversight & clear agreements

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

- Leverages private investment & innovation
- Shares the risk and reward appropriately
- Requires clear governance, roles, and accountability



INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT IS ESSENTIAL

The oversight body must be independent from day-to-day politics and have the authority to hold management accountable.

PROTECT TAXPAYERS. PROTECT THE MARKET.

A campground is a commercial enterprise. It should be governed, operated, and held accountable with the same discipline as any private business.



Commercial Discipline

Operate at market rates and recover full costs.



Financial Sustainability

Ensure long-term viability without reliance on taxpayer support.



Fair Competition

Avoid advantages that crowd out or undermine private sector operators.



Future Generations

Protect public assets and ensure the campground is an overall benefit.



Operational readiness determines whether a campground delivers a positive experience and performs sustainably.

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7 Does the Municipality Have the Operational Capacity to Run a Campground?

A campground is a hospitality business, not a parks maintenance function. The skills required to operate a campground professionally - guest relations, conflict resolution, online reservations management, rate-setting, seasonal hiring and training, after-hours incident response, and ongoing maintenance of electrical pedestals, washrooms, and road surfaces - are distinct from those of a parks department.

Municipalities that assign campground operations to existing parks staff without additional training, resources, or a dedicated operator routinely produce facilities that underperform financially and deliver a guest experience that reflects poorly on the community. A poorly operated municipal campground does not just lose money - it sets a low standard that shapes visitor expectations for the region. Municipalities must identify, before development begins, who will operate the campground, what qualifications they bring, and how performance will be measured and enforced.



CONSIDER:



Do we have the staff or ability to hire the right expertise?



Do we have the systems, tools and technology needed?



Can we provide a high-quality guest experience consistently?



Do we have a plan for maintenance, cleaning & asset management?



Are we prepared for seasonal demand and peak periods?



Can we monitor performance and respond to issues quickly?

CORE OPERATIONAL COMPETENCIES



Hospitality & Guest Service

Reservations, check-in, guest relations, retail sales, rentals, conflict resolution.



Reservations & Systems

Online booking, payments, site allocation, policies, waiver management.



Facilities & Infrastructure

Electrical pedestals, water, sewer, washrooms, dump stations, roads & sites.



Maintenance & Grounds

Preventative maintenance, repairs, snow removal, waste management, site upkeep.



Safety & Emergency Response

After-hours support emergencies, first aid, weather events, communications.



Cleanliness & Sanitation

Washrooms, showers, laundry, garbage, recycling, water quality, pest control.



Financial & Administrative

Rates, deposits, refunds, reporting, inventory control, vendor management.



Team Leadership & Training

Staffing, supervision, training, accountability, scheduling.

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6 GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

7 OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

8 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

9 DUTY TO CONSULT

10 COMMUNITY SUPPORT ASSESSMENT



OPERATIONAL SUCCESS ENABLERS



Clear Operating Standards



Systems & Technology



Skilled & Trained Staff



Continuous Improvement



Partnerships & Support

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Performance must be measured and enforced.



Standards & Service Levels Defined



Monitor & Measure (KPI's)



Report & Review Regularly



Intervene & Remediate if Needed

KEY TAKEAWAY

Operational excellence protects guests, the community, the camping industry, and the region.

STAFFING & EXPERTISE OPTIONS



Municipal Staff

- Direct Hire
- Requires Training
- Highest Control
- Higher Cost Exposure



3rd Party Operator

- Professional Expertise
- Commercial Discipline
- Performance-Based Contract
- Shared Risk



Public-Private Partnership

- Municipal Oversight
- Private Management
- Innovation & Efficiency
- Clear Roles & KPI's



Seasonal/Peak Support

- Seasonal Staff Plans
- On-Call Maintenance
- Contracted Specialist
- Flexible Coverage

OPERATIONAL READINESS CHECKLIST

- Operate as a hospitality business with commercial discipline.
- Hire or contract experienced campground professionals.
- Manage reservations and payments with reliable systems.
- Deliver excellent customer service and resolve conflicts promptly.
- Maintain infrastructure: electrical pedestals, water/sewer, washrooms and any other guest amenities, roads and sites to high standards.
- Provide after hours response and emergency planning and support.
- Plan for seasonal demand spikes and peak occupancy.
- Measure performance with clear standards and KPI's.
- Enforce performance requirements and address deficiencies.
- Maintain insurance, occupational health and safety, and any other regulatory compliance





TEN QUESTIONS EVERY MUNICIPALITY MUST ANSWER FIRST

- 1 PRIVATE SUPPLY ASSESSMENT
- 2 UNMET DEMAND QUANTIFICATION
- 3 STRATEGIC PURPOSE
- 4 SITE VIABILITY
- 5 FINANCIAL REALITY
- 6 GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY
- 7 OPERATIONAL CAPACITY
- 8 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**
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8 Have Regulatory and Bylaw Requirements Been Confirmed?

Municipalities sometimes discover mid-project that their own zoning, land-use bylaws, or licensing requirements prohibit or significantly constrain what they are proposing - on land they own. A full regulatory review must be completed before a feasibility process advances, including confirmation of campground-compatible zoning or the realistic prospects of rezoning; applicable provincial health and safety regulations governing campground development and operation; licensing requirements under provincial legislation; and any environmental assessment obligations triggered by site preparation or servicing.

Where existing bylaws are creating barriers to quality private campground operations in the region, municipalities should also consider whether regulatory reform - rather than public investment - is the more appropriate and cost-effective response to a supply gap.

WHAT MUST BE CONFIRMED?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use designations & zoning permissions. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance with official plan and municipal policies. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental assessments and permits. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building & fire code compliance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health unit approvals (water, sewer, food service if applicable). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessibility Requirements (ACA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Servicing capacity & connection approvals. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access, roads, and transportation requirements. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Signage, lighting and noise regulations. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Insurance and liability requirements. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seasonal operation restrictions (if any). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other local, provincial or federal approvals.
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CONSIDER:

- Start early. Approvals can take months.
- Engage the right departments and agencies up front.
- Document all requirements and correspondence.
- Ensure timelines align with your feasibility schedule.
- Budget for compliance costs and professional support.

MUNICIPAL DECISION FRAMEWORK

**OPTION A:
REMOVE BARRIERS**

OR

**OPTION B:
SUPPORT PRIVATE SECTOR EXPANSION**

OR

**OPTION C:
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

OR

**OPTION D:
MUNICIPAL CAMPGROUND DEVELOPMENT**

“ Smart regulation removes barriers. Good policy creates opportunity. Together, they deliver results. ”





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9 Has the Duty to Consult Been Addressed?

Municipalities must determine whether the proposed site sits on or adjacent to unceded or treaty territory and whether the Crown's duty to consult has been triggered. This is a legal obligation, not a courtesy. Early and genuine engagement with the relevant First Nation or Indigenous community can identify cultural and environmental sensitivities, reduce project risk, and in some cases surface partnership opportunities that strengthen both the project and long-term community relationships.

Proceeding without this step has delayed and cancelled campground projects across Canada and exposed municipalities to significant legal and reputational consequences. Where Indigenous communities are pursuing their own campground or tourism development, CCRVA can provide resources and connections to support those initiatives.

WHY THE DUTY TO CONSULT MATTERS:

- It is a legal obligation under Canadian Law.
- Proceeding without consultation can delay or cancel projects.
- Reduces legal, financial, and reputational risk.
- May identify opportunities for partnership, collaboration, and shared benefits.
- Helps identify cultural and environmental sensitivities early.

KEY STEPS FOR MUNICIPALITIES



BEYOND OBLIGATION: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Respect & Relationships
- Partnership Opportunities
- Economic Benefits
- Sustainable Communities

CCRVA SUPPORT

- CCRVA can help facilitate and support respectful engagement with:
- Templates & Planning Tools
 - Connections to Indigenous Tourism and Campground Networks
 - Support for partnership and capacity-building initiatives.

10 Is There Genuine Community & Stakeholder Support?




Community support for a campground concept in the abstract is not the same as support for a specific facility on a specific site.

Municipalities must engage residents, neighbouring landowners, local businesses, and existing campground operators before a proposal is advanced. Private campground owners are legitimate stakeholders in this process. Their concerns about unfair competition are substantive and must be addressed with evidence.









AN EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

			
Plan Identify stakeholders & engagement objectives.	Engage Use multiple methods to reach and involve stakeholders.	Respond Address concerns, adapt the plan and provide clear response.	Communicate Share outcomes and next steps openly and consistently.

WHY GENUINE SUPPORT MATTERS:

-  Builds trust and strengthens relationships.
-  Identifies concerns early and reduces project risk.
-  Ensures concerns are heard, understood and meaningfully considered.
-  Supports fair competition and a level playing field for private operators.
-  Reduces political, legal, and reputational risk.
-  Improves project design and long-term success.

WHO TO ENGAGE AND WHY

					
RESIDENTS & NEIGHBOURS Understand local perspectives, potential impacts, and community priorities.	NEIGHBOURING LANDOWNERS Identify land-use concerns, impacts, and opportunities for collaboration.	LOCAL BUSINESSES Assess economic impact, opportunities for partnerships, and potential synergies.	CAMPGROUND OPERATORS Address concerns about competition, pricing, and market impact with evidence and transparency.	COMMUNITY GROUPS Build awareness, gather input, and identify shared interests and concerns.	INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES Engage early and meaningfully in accordance with the Duty to Consult.

A PROJECT'S LEGITIMACY DEPENDS ON IT

A project that proceeds over the objections of established private operators, without demonstrating that those concerns have been heard and meaningfully considered, carries avoidable political and reputational risk for the municipality.

 Strong engagement creates stronger projects, better outcomes, and lasting support.

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KEY FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS FOR MUNICIPAL CAMPGROUND DEVELOPMENT

NOTE ON INDUSTRY PROTECTION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE TEN QUESTIONS

SEEK QUALIFIED EXPERTISE

NEXT STEPS

Seek Qualified Expertise

The questions in this document are necessary. They are not sufficient. Answering them well requires expertise that most municipal planning, engineering, and administrative staff do not possess. Campground feasibility sits at the intersection of tourism market analysis, hospitality operations, civil site development, and financial modelling - and the consequences of getting it wrong fall not only on the municipality but on the private operators whose market is affected. Municipalities considering campground development should engage consultants with direct, hands-on experience in campground ownership, development, and operations, not general tourism planners or municipal engineers working outside their area of expertise. The distinction matters. An experienced campground consultant brings market knowledge, operational benchmarks, financial modelling grounded in actual industry performance, and the credibility to provide council with an honest assessment rather than a project-confirming one. That independence protects the municipality, protects taxpayers, and protects the integrity of the feasibility process.

CCRVA can assist municipalities in identifying qualified resources and connecting them with member operators who can provide regional market context. Engaging that expertise before a proposal is drafted - not after - is the single most effective step a municipality can take to improve the quality of its decision-making and its relationship with the industry.

WHY EXPERTISE MATTERS:



Market Analysis

- Demand forecasting
- Visitor behaviour
- Competitive Landscape



Campground Operations

- Hospitality operations
- Guest experience
- Revenue management



Site Development

- Infrastructure planning
- Utility requirements
- Development costs



Financial Modelling

- Commercial assumptions
- Performance benchmarks
- Risk assessment



Campground feasibility sits at the intersection of tourism market analysis, hospitality operations, civil site development, and financial modelling.



CCRVA CAN HELP

CCRVA can support municipalities by:

- Connecting you with experienced campground operators
- Providing regional market context and industry insights
- Identifying qualified consultants and specialists
- Sharing industry benchmarks
- Supporting evidence-based decision making
- Strengthening relationships between municipalities and the camping industry.



KEY FEASIBILITY
QUESTIONS FOR
MUNICIPAL
CAMPGROUND
DEVELOPMENT



NOTE ON INDUSTRY
PROTECTION



HOW TO USE
THIS GUIDE



EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY



THE TEN
QUESTIONS



SEEK QUALIFIED
EXPERTISE



NEXT
STEPS

Next Steps

The more rigorously municipal officials work through these questions before drafting a proposal, the better the outcome for their community - and the more constructive their relationship with the private operators who are already serving it. CCRVA offers tools, benchmark data, and connections to qualified expertise to support municipalities in moving forward responsibly. Contact CCRVA before your feasibility process begins.



BENCHMARK DATA

CCRVA provides access to:

- Industry benchmarks
- Operational insights
- Market intelligence



QUALIFIED EXPERTISE

CCRVA can connect municipalities with:

- Campground consultants
- Experienced operators
- Subject matter experts



INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

CCRVA can help facilitate:

- Regional introductions
- Stakeholder engagement
- Private sector collaboration

CONTACT THE CANADIAN CAMPING AND RV ASSOCIATION



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