



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Recreational Vehicle (RV) Tourism: Options and Opportunities for Toronto

Date:	May 22, 2007
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	Donald G. Eastwood, General Manager Economic Development, Culture & Tourism
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2007\Cluster A\EDCT\ECON DEV\ed0706-023

SUMMARY

This report reviews options and opportunities to enhance urban recreational vehicle (RV) tourism, as well as to attract RV rallies to Toronto.

There are nine RV-friendly campgrounds/parks within one-hour drive of Toronto, one of which – Glen Rouge Campground - is located within the City. All current facilities operate at close to capacity during peak season, and none offer the level of amenity desired by the upscale RV market.

RVing is a growing tourist market in both the U.S. and Canada. RVers have high income levels, travel extensively, and are willing to spend significant amounts of money on attractions, entertainment and shopping on their vacations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism recommends that;

1. this report be tabled for discussion

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report

BACKGROUND

The Economic Development Committee at its meeting of January 24, 2007 had before it a communication from Councillor Ootes requesting the following issues be addressed in a report back to Committee:

- potential sites near the downtown core that are easily accessible to public transit (e.g., Exhibition Place, Downsview Park)
- assessment of properties that could accommodate RV campsites, providing access to utilities such as electricity, water and sewage disposal;
- ideas on how to effectively promote Toronto as a prime camping destination for RV, trailer and motor home enthusiasts; and,
- consultation with relevant stakeholders to obtain input in this process (i.e., the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association, “Go RVing”, etc.).

Staff from Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division took the lead on preparing this report in consultation with staff from Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division.

COMMENTS

Staff from Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division reviewed existing Recreational Vehicle (RV) operations in urban areas both in Canada and abroad and consulted with a broad range of stakeholders to assess the potential for enhancing opportunities for RV tourism in Toronto. Staff organized and hosted a stakeholders’ meeting on March 21, 2007. Attachment 1 contains the list of participants, together with highlights of this meeting.

Other Divisions and Sections, including Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Culture, City Planning and Legal, and agencies such as TEDCO, the Toronto Port Authority, Parc Downsview Park Inc, Toronto Parking Authority and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, were consulted during the preparation of this report. Staff also contacted private sector stakeholders to gather additional information about RV tourism in Toronto.

The analysis of the upscale RV market and the facilities currently offered in the Toronto area and in other cities in North America and Europe suggests that there may be a potential to add to our current RV facilities.

Urban RV Tourism

The U.S. National Foundation for RVing and Camping defines an RV Resort as a campground or RV park characterized by a superior natural or man-made outdoor environment with professional-quality landscaping throughout, paved or professionally groomed and maintained roads, a professionally designed and staffed registration area, recreation facilities and service areas.

RVing has become increasingly popular in the past number of years. As society becomes older and better educated, people seek increased quality and comfort in their recreation experiences. Unlike the original campgrounds geared to “adventure” travellers, today some RV campgrounds/parks offer the amenities and services of four-star resorts. RVing also enables people to travel more easily with pets and children and to control their own menu preferences and immediate living environment. RVers are relatively free of the scheduling constraints and security procedures and concerns inherent in air, rail and bus travel.

Today’s average RVer is in the 35-54 age range group, owns a \$56,000 to \$ 130,000 RV (in some cases up to \$ 1 Million) and has money to spend. Research indicates an average expenditure of \$100 a day on non-site expenditures.

There are two basic categories of RV tourism that would be attracted to an urban setting:

RV Camping:

An RV campground/park will generally have well defined serviced camping sites, amenities such as swimming pool, administration offices, meeting space, washrooms, and services that vary according to the category of the facility. The length of stay at RV resorts varies according to the purpose of the travellers. Typically these types of accommodation can be classified as transient and/or destination resorts. Destination resorts accommodate travellers for a longer stay e.g. a vacation while transient RV resorts cater to specific-purpose short stays such as a family attending a trade fair .

Rallies:

From time to time RVers get together for a common purpose such as a fair or a conference. They would leave from different locations and gather at a specified place. RV caravans also are popular, where a dozen or more RVs travel an organized route as a group, stopping over in each location along the way for a day or two. The industry also organizes a number of large scale rallies each year. Locations compete with each other to host these rallies, submitting formal bids to the organizer. Rallies and caravans can be accommodated on sites with a more rudimentary level of service than an upscale RV resort. In fact, some retailers such as Wal-Mart and Costco permit this type of activity in some of their large parking lots in the U.S. At the March 21, 2007, stakeholders’ workshop, industry representatives indicated that Toronto is by-passed as a rally and caravan location since it is not perceived as RV-friendly. The Industry also has

attempted in the past to find sites to accommodate RVs for special events such as the Toronto Gran Prix (formerly the Molson Indy). These attempts have been unsuccessful to date.

Attachment 2 contains more details about RV Tourism including its market and business potential.

Urban RV Resorts in Canada, the U.S. and Europe

Staff undertook a comparative analysis of upscale urban RV resorts across Canada, the U.S. and Europe. Facilities reviewed include: Camping Alouette, Saint-Mathieu-de-Beloeil (near Montreal), Quebec; Camping Parc Mont-Laval, Laval (near Montreal), Quebec; Westbay Marine Village, Victoria, BC; Candlestick RV Park, (near San Francisco), U.S.; Green Fields Campground Inc (near Chicago); Liberty Harbour RV Park, (near New York City); San Francisco RV Resort, Pacifica, CA; Camping du Bois de Boulogne, Paris; Camping Paris-Est, (near Paris) and Happy Village (near Rome).

Other campground/parks were investigated, but are not listed in this report because they did not include the features sought for in an upscale urban RV resort.

These facilities all share a remarkable offering of amenities and services catering to the sophisticated RV tourism market. These include spas, personal services, extra security, bars with porches and TV rooms, concierge services, and so on.

The RV campgrounds in Europe seem to offer a higher level of amenity than those in the U.S. Many are located on the periphery of major cities on sites with excellent public transit service to the central core. For instance, both Bois de Boulogne and Paris-Est are adjacent to Paris peripheral highway and very well connected to the local transportation system. Liberty Harbour RV Park enjoys proximity to a marina and is located in New Jersey, a boat or bus ride from Manhattan.

Our review of RV resorts in other locations did not discover any examples located in the central city. However, the industry representatives who attended the March stakeholders meeting stressed that a RV resort would be best located near downtown Toronto, preferably in the waterfront or Portlands.

RV Campgrounds/Parks in the Toronto region

There are nine RV-friendly operations in the GTA, all within one-hour's drive of Toronto (see Attachment 3). These are:

- the City operated Glen Rouge Campground,
- Indian Line- Brampton and Albion Hills- Caledon, operated by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA); and

- Cedar Beach- Stouffville, Grangeways- Sandford, Milton Heights-Milton, Toronto North KOA-Cookstown, Yogi Bear's – Bradford and Summer Place-Grand Valley, all of which are privately operated.

Glen Rouge Campground is located within Rouge Park in Scarborough, adjacent to Highways 2 and 401 and accessible to a TTC bus route. It has 135 sites, of which 87 are suitable for trailers and large RVs. The campground offers public telephones, washrooms, change rooms, showers, a dump station, laundry facilities, vending machines, fire pits, children's play area, volleyball court and horseshoes. The park is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout the camping season. Their location within the 12,000-acre Canada's largest urban natural park renders it unsuitable for expansion. However, additional amenities such as WiFi wireless service and/or a shuttle bus to the GO Station could be feasible.

However, the Glen Rouge campground does not have the capacity to accommodate increased use during the peak season. It is operating at 100% capacity during the peak summer months and much less during the shoulder season. Its average occupancy rate is 65%. Revenues/visitors to Glen Rouge have increased by 45% since the 2002 season with annual revenue of about \$220,000 reported in 2006.

The Toronto Region Conservation Authority operates two campgrounds close to the City: Indian Line in Brampton (the closest to the City's boundaries) and Albion Hills in Caledon. Indian Line offers 247 sites, 40 of which have direct sewer hook up. In 2005 and 2006, Indian Line spent \$650,000 in capital improvements to upgrade existing sites, add new sites, pave roads, upgrade facilities and install WiFi wireless service. An additional \$210,000 capital expenditure is planned for 2007, to complete the paving of interior roads and other site improvements.

The Toronto area campground facilities offer a range of services such as washrooms, common rooms (some), children playgrounds, etc. They all provide a combination of serviced and non-serviced sites, with accommodation for a broad range of RV sizes and styles. Staff interviewed a number of RV campground/parks operators, including Cedar Beach and Toronto North KOA to inquire about the level of occupancy of these facilities. They all appear to do well in the summer with a 70%-80% occupancy rate, but they have extra capacity in the shoulder season when the occupancy rate is about 40%.

There appear to be no sites in the Toronto area that accommodate rallies or caravans. The RV industry representatives who attended the March 21st stakeholders' meeting expressed the view that none of the facilities in the Toronto area met the requirements of an upscale urban RV resort. Although they appear to provide a good level of basic camping facilities, amenities such as on-site spas, private washrooms, adult lounges, etc. such as are provided in some of the resorts in Europe and the U.S. are absent. The industry representatives suggested that resorts offering such facilities can charge more than \$100 a night for accommodation versus the \$30-\$35 charges typical of serviced sites in Toronto area campgrounds.

Key Considerations

The current campgrounds operating in the Toronto region have little surplus capacity during the peak season. None of them offer “four star” amenities such as on-site spas. None of them accommodate caravans or rallies.

Serving the upscale urban RV market could attract a new category of tourist to the Toronto area. Wealthy RV owners are increasing in number both in the U.S. and Canada. They currently are by-passing Toronto in favour of other locations that offer upscale RV resorts.

There are a number of issues to be taken into consideration when planning an RV resort:

Land availability and Site Design

A serviced 6-10 acre site would be required to provide the amenities expected in an upscale RV resort with 50 to 100 spaces. The site has to be easily accessible to a highway, be near public transit and offer an attractive landscape. Proximity to a water feature is an asset. There are strong synergies with marina operations since boaters and RVers can share the same amenities. Compatibility with uses in the surrounding area is very important. Appropriate screening, whether natural or man-made, is needed to ensure both the privacy of the RV campers and any potential conflicts that may exist with adjacent uses. For instance, the Liberty Harbour RV Park near New York City offers excellent public transit access to the city but warns campers of night weekend noise from the nearby Sandbar Nightclub.

Access to the site and on-site circulation needs to meet the movement requirements of large RVs. The site needs to be serviced with basic infrastructure e.g. water/sewer hook ups, hydro, garbage disposal. Additional services such as WiFi access is expected in urban RV resorts. While out of town RV campgrounds/parks benefit from beautiful natural surroundings, an urban RV resort’s success depends on offering amenities and services such as a meeting room, spa, and concierge service, as well as an attractively designed site and facilities and convenient access to the city centre and urban attractions by public transit.

Zoning:

There are no sites zoned to permit commercially operated RV resorts in the City of Toronto. Glen Rouge Campground is considered a recreational use within Rouge Park. A RV resort on privately-owned property would be considered a commercial operation, and as such it would have to be zoned accordingly. Sites currently zoned to permit accommodation uses such as hotels and motels may need additional zoning permission should owners wish to add RV activities to their sites. Zoning issues, whether for temporary activities such as rallies or for permanent uses such as a RV resort, would need to be dealt with on a site by site basis.

The operation of RV campgrounds on privately owned sites may be cause for concern since the City has limited control over the actual activities that take place once zoning permission is granted. For instance, the Zoning By-law would afford little protection in precluding private operators from renting RV sites to people seeking long term locations for trailers as a residential use. However, if the City owned the underlying land and leased it to a private operator, it would be able to build operating conditions specifying maximum lengths of stay into the lease agreement.

Sites with Potential for RV Facilities

EDCT Tourism Section staff, in consultation with the Parks, Recreation and Forestry, Culture, Planning and Legal Divisions and Sections and TEDCO, Toronto Port Authority, Parc Downsview Park Inc., Toronto Parking Authority, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and other relevant stakeholders, investigated a number of sites within the City of Toronto to evaluate their potential to accommodate RV facilities

The following sites have been reviewed:

Downsview Park - Site area 572 acres (mostly vacant) –Ward 09

Owner: Parc Downsview Park Inc., an agency of the Federal government.

It has large paved and gravel areas. The site is partially serviced. There are 1.7 Million sq. ft of floor space contained in various buildings, 800,000 sq. ft of which are available for lease. Land is available for special events, such as “World Youth Day” celebrations in 2002 and the “SARS” concert in 2003. Current plans do not include provisions for RV operations. However, senior staff indicated that they might consider accommodating a RV rally event, subject to the Board’s review. Although there is no existing or planned infrastructure for RVs, services potentially could be made available on a temporary basis.

Portlands – SE corner of Commissioners St and Cherry St. Site area: 7-8 acres – Ward 30

Owner: TEDCO

Surface being upgraded. Serviced with water and hydro, but not sewers.

Expected land revenue \$2/sq.ft (rental cost includes property taxes) plus utilities. Currently this property is committed to the Cirque du Soleil on a temporary basis. It will become available after October 2007, at which time TEDCO might consider other temporary uses, including a RV rally. This site is not suitable for a RV resort since TEDCO is seeking more intensive development opportunities which could be impeded by a lease with an RV resort operator.

TEDCO also owns lands south of the Ship Channel, which will eventually be redeveloped. However, most of these lands currently are leased, except for a 6-acre block which is serviced with hydro and water but not sewers. This parcel is not recommended for a RV resort, even as an interim use, since it is inaccessible both to the highway system and public transit and is surrounded by incompatible uses such as salt and aggregates storage, which might be there for the foreseeable future.

The Toronto Waterfront Secretariat further advises that the Port Lands are not suitable for a RV resort because the lands are subject to both a tri-government vision for waterfront renewal under the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation as well as to TEDCO/TWRC/City Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that places this site under TWRC control in the short term. Further, the Port Lands are earmarked to undergo precinct planning shortly.

Woodbine – Site area: 640 acres – Ward 2

Owner: Woodbine Entertainment Group

Woodbine is the most famous name in Canadian horseracing history. The track is home to the \$41 million Queen's Plate, North America's oldest continuously run stakes race; the \$1 million ATTO Mile; the \$1.5 million Canadian International and the \$1 million North America Cup for Standard Breds. Large tracks of land are still vacant and awaiting development. Woodbine Entertainment is planning a major hotel-retail-entertainment complex on this site. Plans are in the early stages and it will take some time until they are implemented. Staff interviewed senior staff at Woodbine Entertainment and were advised that while a RV resort might not be compatible with the long term objectives for the site, a rally might be considered as an interim use. The City would have to consider the risk of unsuitable residential uses being introduced by its lack of operational control if it rezoned the site to permit an RV resort.

A more detailed examination on a site by site basis would be necessary to ascertain the merits and feasibility of each of the sites listed in this section.

Other Sites

The following sites were reviewed as well, but various considerations suggested that they would be inappropriate as RV resort locations:

- the 542-acre York University campus, North York;
- the 20-acre Westwood Theatre Lands, Etobicoke;
- the 88-acre Guild Inn site;
- the Toronto Parking Authority various sites across the city;
- the Toronto Port Authority lands and
- Exhibition Place / Ontario Place.

The operators of some of these sites may wish to consider the future installation of services for RVs in ground vaults with access covers in surface parking lots. This would permit RVs to be accommodated on a temporary basis, for example during special events. Candlestick Park in San Francisco has found this advantageous.

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division controls a large inventory of land including some sites that potentially could meet the site requirements for RV resorts. However, the strategic direction for parks properties has been set out in "Our Common Grounds" after extensive consultation with community stakeholders. The operation of additional RV resorts is not contemplated, and accommodating this use could require compromising other community priorities for parks and recreation facilities.

The concept of accommodating RVs on underdeveloped hotel/motel sites also was raised. Potential opportunities to do so require further investigation.

Next Steps

There would appear to be untapped demand for an upscale RV resort in the marketplace and the potential to operate a profitable facility, however, there is limited potential to upgrade any of the region's current RV facilities to attract the upscale market. WiFi wireless service and a shuttle bus service to the Go Train could be added to the Glen Rouge Campground. But there is no space available to add additional recreational elements or amenities, and the facility currently operates at peak capacity during the summer months. The best opportunity would appear to be to lie in developing a new RV resort in an attractive, suitable location.

A RV resort could be an attractive interim use for some of the locations reviewed, while the long term development concept and build-out unfolds. However, each site has to be assessed on its own merits. Possible opportunities for rallies were identified on privately owned sites, on TEDCO lands and in Parc Downsview Park, should the City and/or the operators of these sites determine that bidding to host rallies would be worthwhile. Zoning By-law considerations would need to be addressed to permit either temporary rallies or permanent RV resorts on most of the sites reviewed.

Staff could facilitate further discussions of RV resort or rally opportunities with the owners of potential sites. Considerable research and information has been assembled about the RV market and resort operational and financial considerations. This information can be made publicly available to any interested parties.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Donald G. Eastwood, General Manager
Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Stakeholders Meeting Notes – March 21, 2007
Attachment 2. RV Resort
Attachment 3. Campgrounds in the GTA

RV Tourism

**Notes of the Stakeholders' Meeting held on March 21, 2007
at City Hall**

Host: City of Toronto Economic Development, Culture & Tourism Division
Duncan Ross, Executive Director, Tourism

Speakers:

Councillor Case Ootes (City)
Rob Engman – Executive Producer RVTV
Paul Ronan, Director Parks, PFR
M.B. & Karen Wilson – Wagon Trains

Participants:

<p>Alexandra Anderson – Ontario Private Campgrounds Association (OPCA) Bruce Baker – Counc. Moeser's Office (City) Rosalie Beckford – City Parks Jerry Belan – City Parks Dave Boddington - Ontario Parks Tom Boudreault – Glen Rouge Campground Keith Brown - Ontario Place – Alicia I. Bulwik – City Economic Development Derek Edwards – Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) Jeff Gay – CNE- Penelopi Gramatikopoulos – Toronto Waterfront Secretariat Glen Harden - Ontario Place - Bill Harding – City Parks Mariusz Hladun - City Tourism Richard Innes - Brain Trust Marketing –</p>	<p>John Kelly – Air Stream enthusiast Alan Kearsey - TEDCO Mark Lowell – Ontario Private Campgrounds Association (OPCA) Jamie Maxwell – City Tourism Doug Miller – Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) Thomas Mokrzycki - Parc Downsview Park Judy Morgan – City Tourism Bernie Oeltjen - City Parks Sunny Petrujkic – Counc. Ootes's Office (City) Rob Richardson – City Parks Ned Sabev – City Tourism David Sammut – Motorhome Travel Canada Ray Stukas – City Parks Sheila Wiebe - Ontario Parks Chris Wilson – Student (City)</p>
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Key Messages

- This is not the “traditional” camping tourism, rather a concept for an upscale urban RV resort;
- There is a growing market for upscale RV tourism;
- Toronto is perceived as RV unfriendly;
- RV Caravan routes by-pass Toronto. Would stop if suitable venue is available;

- RV tourism has not been marketed in Ontario as much as in other North American locations; there is untapped potential in the market;

Facts

- There are over 800,000 RVs in Canada;
- RVers have discretionary income, they spend an average of \$100 a day;
- RVs have all the comforts of home... including furnaces for off-season use;
- This is an upscale market that expect top notch facilities;
- RVing is experiencing double digit growth in spite of price of gas;

Location Needs

- Easy access to expressways/arterial roads is essential;
- Public transit is key;
- A location near water is highly desirable;
- There is synergy between RV Resorts and marinas;
- “Green space” is not a priority in attracting urban RVers.

Operational Needs

- Usual operating season is May to October with growing interest in off season;
- Basic options are “permanent” RV resorts or temporary sites serving RV rallies;
- Rallies are major industry events for which cities submit bids to host

About Sites

- Glen Rouge Campground is the City’s only current option for RVers;
- Indian Line Campground (TRCA), the closest facility outside Toronto, has been making substantial capital investments to enhance its facilities;
- Land in downtown Toronto might be too expensive for this kind of use;
- Downsview Park has space available, might consider a rally event;
- CNE/Ontario Place are currently at capacity. Could consider Candlestick Park (in San Francisco) idea to convert a portion of parking lot for temporary RV use. This would require installing services for RVs in ground vaults with access covers in existing or future parking lots;
- Industry representatives considered that the Portland area would be good location for some type of RV facility; Development plans for the area currently do not contemplate such a use;

What to do

- Recurring workshop themes:
 - *“If you build it (RV Resort/Park)... they (RVers) will come!*
 - *“go high end... or go home!”;*
- Private industry would be interested in developing urban RV tourism opportunities in Toronto if suitable sites could be made available;
- Toronto currently would have little credibility as a host for a major RV rally; if it is interested in attracting such an event, it should first build a reputation as an RV-friendly jurisdiction by operating high quality campgrounds/resorts

RV Resort

Description

The U.S. National Foundation for RVing and Camping defines an RV Resort as a campground or RV park characterized by a superior natural or man-made outdoor environment with professional-quality landscaping throughout, paved or professionally groomed and maintained roads, a professionally designed and staffed registration area, recreation facilities and service areas.

RV operations vary with respect to ownership, length of season, types of camping units, services provided and overall size. In general terms, they can be classified as public or private, overnight or seasonal, and/or transient or destination.

Types of RVs

A RV is a vehicle that combines transportation and temporary living quarters for travel, recreation and camping. Some provide a simple place for sleeping and eating, while others are virtually luxury lodges on wheels. Conveniences range from the basics –like running water, cooking and bathroom facilities, and a power source- to added comforts such as air conditioning, entertainment systems and slide out rooms.

Two main categories of RVs are motorhomes (motorized) and towables (towed behind a car, van or pickup). Type A motorhomes are generally the largest; type B motorhomes or van campers are the smallest and type C motorhomes generally fall in between. Types of towable RVs are folding camping trailers, truck campers, conventional travel trailers and fifth-wheel travel trailers.

Site requirements

Unlike in “standard” RV parks, amenities expected at an upscale RV resort include fitness center, private jacuzzis, clubhouse with bar & lounge, quality eating-places on site, newspaper delivery, patio furniture, gas grills, wireless internet, public spas or hot tubs and other amenities typical of a luxury resort. This is the type of facility that is not available in Toronto.

Fifty two RV sites require about 3 acres with minimum amenities, while 100 RV sites with clubhouse, pool, playground, etc will need about 10 acres.

Stats

- Over 70% of camping today is RV camping (RVing)
- A 2005 University of Michigan study found out that one out of every twelve vehicle-owning households in the United States now owns an RV;

- The majority of RVs are owned by those in the 35-54 age group;
- One-half of RVers travel without children;
- 54% of RVers travel with pets;
- 80% of RVers in the U.S. report that they are on the road at least one month per year;
- 80% of camping activity occurs during the summer i.e. May to October, but the season extends in the south.
- Average RV retail values range from \$7,000 for a tent trailers; \$14,000 for truck campers; \$ 15,000 for conventional travel trailers; \$56,000 for type C motorhomes and \$ 130,000 for type A motorhomes. A luxury motorhome, however may reach \$1 Million.
- One in five households in the U.S. intend to purchase an RV in the future;
- 14% of Canadian households own a RV, while a further 12% want to;
- While the overall U.S. population will grow slowly through the year 2010, the number of consumers aged 45-64 - the RV industry's prime ownership market - will increase by 27 million;
- The University of Michigan projects the number of RV owning households will rise from the current 9.3 million to 10.4 million in the year 2010 – a gain of 21%.

Market

RVs have all the amenities of home: complete living, cooking, dining, sleeping and bathroom facilities, while on the road. This is attractive to those who prefer to sleep in their own beds and prepare their own meals, while enjoying travelling through different destinations. Cost is also a significant factor, in particular for families travelling with children. (A vacation cost comparison study by PKF Consulting found that a family gets 30% to 80% more vacation for their money when traveling/camping in a RV regardless of the distance, duration or region).

RVs offer a convenient, hassle free way to travel. RV travelers enjoy the freedom and flexibility to go where they want, when they want –without the worry and stress of inflexible schedules, advance reservations, airport lines and luggage restrictions. There are other reasons why people would chose RV tourism i.e. to enjoy nature and outdoor scenery, to spend more quality time with the family, to participate in a hobby, sport or recreation activity, for social reasons (visiting family), to participate in special events such as festivals, and so on.

RV owners can be compared to boat owners in that with each new purchase, they tend to go for something bigger and nicer. A typical path takes them from a towable to a smaller, front-engine gas motorhome and finally to the premium end of the market: rear-engine diesel RVs.

U.S. ownership of RVs has reached record levels. Nearly one in 12 U.S. vehicle-owning households now owns an RV. That is nearly 7 million households – a 7.8 percent increase in the past four years and a 42 percent gain over the past 21 years.

Today's typical RV owner is 49 years old, married, with an annual household income of \$56,000 - higher than the median for all households, according to a University of Michigan study. RV owners are likely to own their homes and spend their disposable income on traveling – an average of 28-35 days annually.

Although the bulk of the RV tourism season is in the summer, the mature market likes to travel in the shoulder seasons. The length and timing of RV travel depends on the purpose of the trip i.e. golf, trade fair, etc.

Business Potential

The revenue generation of an RV operation depends on a number of factors, including, availability of capital, required capital investment, cost of land and utilities, length of operating season, average site occupancy rate for the area, as well as services and amenities provided.

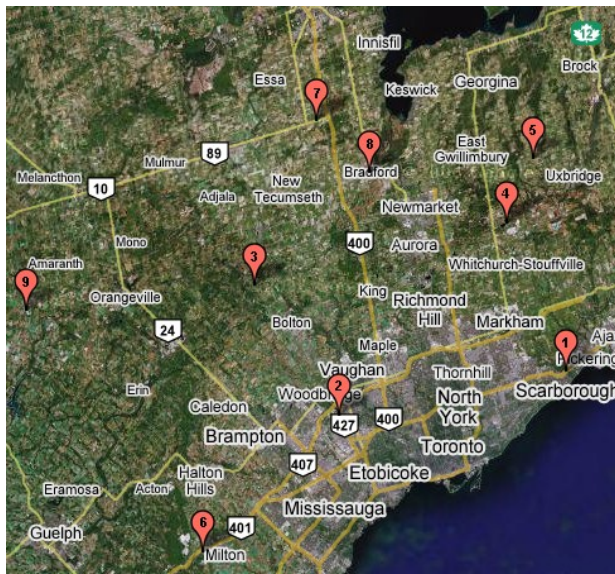
According to the information available, typically a 125 site campground at a 60% occupancy level and \$20 site fee should yield \$225,000, however, this amount might increase if other sources of revenue i.e. laundromat, on-site spa, grocery store are added. To determine the revenue potential of an RV operation, each proposal needs to be evaluated on its own merits.

Changes in the frequency and duration of vacations favour the RV industry. Weekend traveling is increasing and travelers are traveling shorter distances. Given the proximity of Toronto to the U.S. border and the market available within a few hours' drive, this trend benefits the potential for RV tourism in the Toronto region. Furthermore, demographic trends favour substantial RV market growth.

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Campgrounds in the GTA



1. Glen Rouge, Scarborough (Toronto)
2. Indian Line, Brampton (TRCA)
3. Albion Hills, Caledon (TRCA)
4. Cedar Beach, Stouffville (Private)
5. Grangeways, Sandford (Private)
6. Milton Heights, Milton (Private)
7. Toronto North KOA, Cookstown (Private)
8. Yogi Bear's, Bradford (Private)
9. Summer Place, Grand Valley (Private)

Nine campgrounds exist within a one hour drive of the City of Toronto. Glen Rouge, operated by the City Parks, Forestry & Recreation Department, is Toronto's only campground. The TRCA operates two additional campgrounds near the City: Indian Line in Brampton and Albion Hills in Caledon.