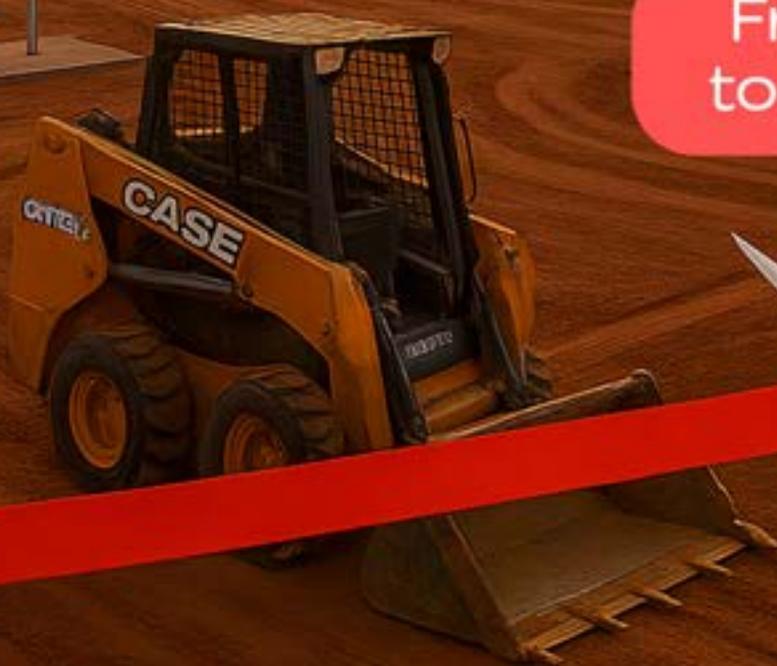


 roverpass

THE RV PARK STARTER GUIDE

From Planning
to Opening Day







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The RV Park Starter Guide

From Planning to Opening Day

Building an RV park from the ground up is both exciting and challenging. This guide walks you through 10 essential steps – think of each one as a chapter in your RV park success story, from initial research to the grand opening – to help campground owners (or soon-to-be owners) plan and execute a successful RV park project. Each “page” below represents a key phase in the process, complete with actionable advice, up-to-date insights, and references to expert resources for deeper learning. Let’s dive in!

Preliminary Research & Concept Development

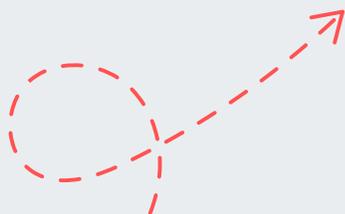
Building an RV park from the ground up is both exciting and challenging. This guide walks you through 10 essential steps – think of each one as a chapter in your RV park success story, from initial research to the grand opening – to help campground owners (or soon-to-be owners) plan and execute a successful RV park project. Each “page” below represents a key phase in the process, complete with actionable advice, up-to-date insights, and references to expert resources for deeper learning. Let’s dive in!

Research Market Trends

Think of this as your reality check and inspiration guide.

Start by diving into national and regional data on camping and RV travel. The RV industry continues to grow – **for example, [RV shipments are projected to rebound in 2025, from 333,400 to 366,800 units](#), signaling strong demand for RV travel.**

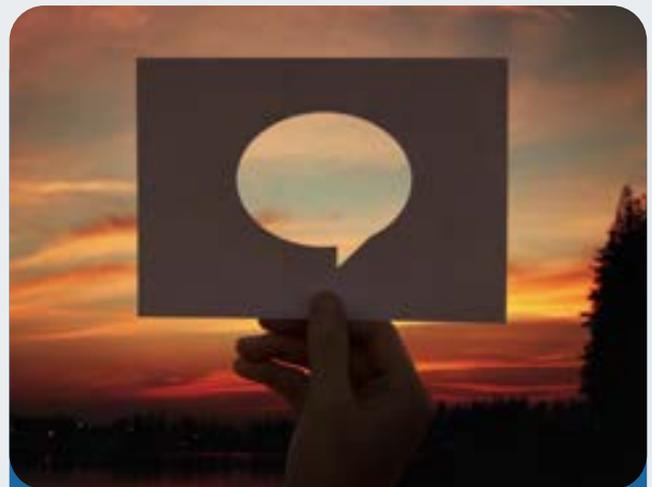
In 2023, 7.4% of [Americans planned RV trips](#), a 10.8% increase from 2022. That means more travelers are hitting the road and looking for great places to stay –





From the [2025 RoverPass Outdoor Hospitality Report](#) we can gather the following:

- ✓ Reservations increased by **5% despite economic pressures.**
- ✓ **One in three reservations came from** first-time campers.
- ✓ **Add-on purchases like firewood, gear, and rentals increased 2.5x,** showing that campers are spending more than just the nightly rate.



What does this mean for you?

There's growing demand not just for places to camp – but for well-designed, guest-friendly RV parks that offer great experiences and services.

Define Your Park Concept

Here, you're going to decide what kind of park you want to build – and for whom? Envision the type of experience you want to offer. Will you build:

- A family-friendly retreat with a pool and playground?
- A quiet snowbird haven with long-term sites and community events?
- A luxury RV resort with Wi-Fi, spas, and glamping options.

Start with your ideal guest. Are they retirees, roadschooling families, digital nomads, or weekend warriors? Build your concept around their needs and preferences.

Also consider emerging preferences, according to the 2025 RoverPass Outdoor Hospitality Report:

94.2% of stays are under 21 days, favoring quick getaways.

Tent sites are growing faster than RV sites, signaling a shift toward more budget-friendly options – or at least flexible site types.

Cabins and glamping accommodations are in demand, meaning RV parks that include “non-RV” options are thriving.

For instance, you might focus on family-friendly features (playgrounds, pool) or cater to long-term snowbird stays with full hookups and community events.

Researching existing parks in various niches can spark ideas and reveal gaps in the market you can fill.



Pro Tip

Use tools like Pinterest or a vision board to gather inspiration. Seeing your park's look, feel, and features in one place helps define your concept and stay consistent with your brand as you move forward.

Leverage Expert Resources

Don't build your dream in a vacuum. Tap into industry knowledge and communities that can guide your early decisions. Useful sources include:

- The RV Industry Association
- State campground associations
- [RoverPass blogs](#) and guides on camper preferences, online booking trends, and pricing strategies.

Also do some "boots-on-the-ground" research:

- Visit other parks and talk to owners – many are open to sharing what's worked and what hasn't.
- [Join RV Facebook groups](#) or forums to hear directly from campers and managers.
- Take notes on features, amenities, or services that stand out – and gaps in the market you could fill.

Explore Financing Early

As you shape your concept, start thinking about how you'll fund this venture. Will you use personal savings, bank loans, investors, or a mix? Even at this early stage, it's wise to get a rough idea of costs and financing options.

Startup costs vary based on size and location, but small to mid-size RV parks typically need \$180,000 to \$450,000 to

open – and larger parks can exceed \$1 million.

Start building a rough financial plan now. Understanding your available capital can shape your park's scale, phasing, and priorities.

Pro Tip



Use tools like Pinterest or a vision board to gather inspiration. Seeing your park's look, feel, and features in one place helps define your concept and stay consistent with your brand as you move forward.



By the end of the research phase, you should have a well-defined concept for your RV park that aligns with market demand and a realistic sense of the investment needed. You're no longer dreaming – you're planning. Now let's turn your vision into a clear, actionable business plan.

Crafting a Solid Business Plan

Now that you've validated your concept, it's time to put your vision into writing with a detailed business plan. This isn't just a formality – it's your roadmap from idea to execution, and it's often a non-negotiable requirement for getting funding.

Executive Summary

This is your elevator pitch on paper – keep it to one page.

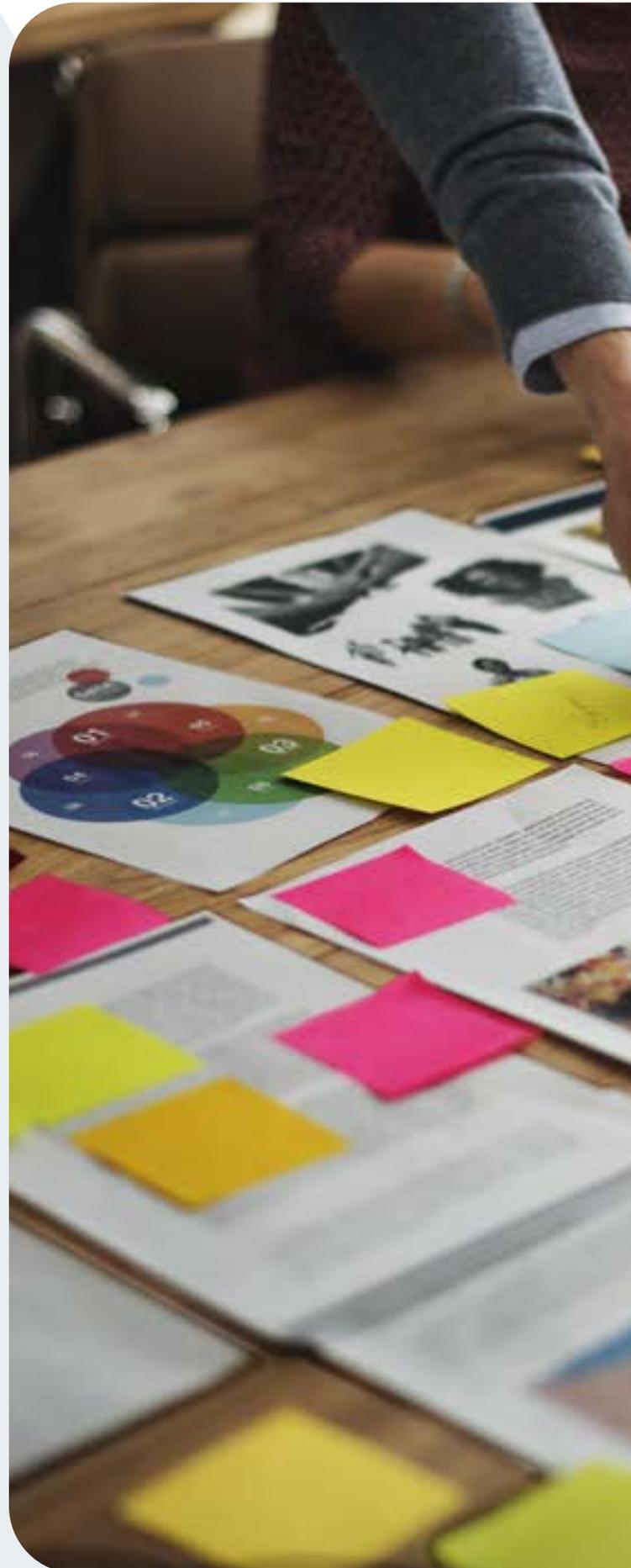
Summarize your RV park idea:

- Your name and park name.
- Planned location.
- Number of sites.
- Target audience.
- Unique features or value (e.g., family-friendly, luxury, long-term stays).

Example

"Sunset Trails RV Resort will be a 50-site, year-round RV park located near [Tourist Destination], offering resort-style amenities including a pool, dog park, and clubhouse. We cater to families and snowbirds seeking a relaxing, nature-focused getaway with modern comforts."

This summary should hook the reader and make them excited to read more.





Company Description

Who are you, what are you building, and why?

In this section, include:

- Business name and legal structure (LLC, sole proprietorship, etc.).
- Ownership and management details.
- Your background and what led you to start the park.
- Your mission and long-term vision.

For example, perhaps you're a long-time RVer who noticed a lack of well-equipped parks in a certain region, or you have hospitality industry experience and saw the opportunity to bring professional-level service to the outdoor lodging space.

Clearly state your mission statement and long-term vision.

Example Mission:

"To create a welcoming RV park that combines nature, comfort, and community for travelers of all ages."

Example Mission:

"To become the most-loved campground in [region], known for outstanding service, clean facilities, and memorable guest experiences."

Also include a high-level description of your park: planned size (number of sites), key features and amenities, whether it's open seasonally or year-round, and any plans for future phases of development (like adding cabins or glamping options).

Finally, discuss your location strategy and why your chosen area is ideal. Mention any market research you've done that indicates demand or low competition. Tie this section back to your research – explain how your idea fills a real need in the market.

Market Analysis

Who are you, what are you building, and why?

Start broad, then get specific:

- National and regional trends in camping, RV travel, and outdoor hospitality.
- The rise in short-term stays, online bookings, and luxury amenities.
- Your target guest profile (families, retirees, digital nomads, etc.).
- Local tourism stats and campground demand in your area.

Evaluate your competition thoroughly. Identify all nearby RV parks and campgrounds, detailing the number of sites, nightly rates, types of amenities offered, customer reviews, and general quality of service.



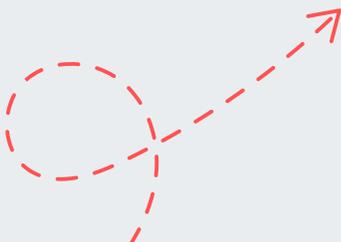
Then highlight your competitive edge:

“While other parks offer basic hookups, we’ll offer private patios, high-speed Wi-Fi, and onsite activities for kids.”

Finally, outline the opportunities and risks. Opportunities may include tapping into a growing glamping trend or partnering with local tourism operators. Risks might involve seasonal fluctuations, local economic downturns, or regulatory hurdles.

End this section with a brief [SWOT analysis](#):

- Strengths (great location, unique amenities)
- Weaknesses (first-time owner, rural location)
- Opportunities (growing RV demand, lack of local luxury parks)
- Threats (seasonal dips, nearby competition)





Services and Amenities

What exactly will your guests get when they stay with you?

Outline:

- Number and types of sites (pull-through, back-in, premium).
- Hookups (30/50 amp, water, sewer).
- Size and layout of each site.

These might include essentials like restrooms, hot showers, laundry facilities, and a dump station, but you should also highlight anything that enhances comfort—reliable high-speed Wi-Fi, ADA-accessible sites, or shaded picnic areas.

From there, describe premium or value-added amenities that create a standout guest experience, things like:

- Pool or splash pad
- Clubhouse or game room
- Dog park
- Nature trails or pond
- Outdoor kitchens or fire rings
- Glamping tents or cabins (if applicable)

Families might value a splash pad or weekend movie nights or playgrounds, while long-term guests could appreciate community events and mail service. Don't forget about secondary revenue generators like a camp store, firewood sales, propane refills, gear rentals, and vending machines.



Pro Tip

A touch on cleanliness, landscaping, and design aesthetics—beautifully maintained grounds and thoughtful design can significantly elevate the perceived value of your park.

Marketing & Sales Strategy

You built it, now how will they find you?

Define your brand: Are you laid-back and rustic? Upscale and modern? Family-first? Explain how this brand identity will be reflected across all touchpoints, from signage and staff uniforms to your online presence

Then, focus on digital strategy with core marketing elements:

- Then, focus on digital strategy with core marketing elements:
- Professionally designed website with online booking.

Listings on platforms like [RoverPass](#), Campendium, The Dyrty, and Google Maps.

- Active social media accounts (Instagram and Facebook).
- Local outreach to tourism boards, visitor centers, and local businesses.

Use targeted paid ads on Google and Facebook to reach travelers interested in your region. Local marketing is also essential—build relationships with visitor centers, tourism boards, and nearby attractions to create referral networks.

Develop cross-promotions with local restaurants or tour operators to enhance value and visibility.

Sales strategies:

- Opening promotions
- Referral or loyalty programs
- Cross-promotions with local attractions
- Email marketing and seasonal campaigns

Pro Tip



A touch on cleanliness, landscaping, and design aesthetics—beautifully maintained grounds and thoughtful design can significantly elevate the perceived value of your park.

Operations Plan

How will you run the park day-to-day?

Include:

- Staffing plan (owner-operated vs. full team).
- Job descriptions for key roles (front desk, maintenance, cleaning).
- Scheduling: high season vs. low season staffing needs.
- Software and tools (e.g., [RoverPass](#) for reservations and guest management).
- [POS system](#) for retail sales (if applicable).
- Daily routines and checklists (cleaning, landscaping, check-in procedures).
- Park rules and guest policies (quiet hours, pet rules, fire safety, etc.)

Describe how you'll enforce these policies and handle conflicts or emergencies.

Touch on your standard operating procedures for cleaning, repairs, and maintenance schedules to ensure consistency.

You should also address guest experience initiatives like:

- Welcome packets
- Campground maps
- Loyalty cards or guest perks
- Event calendars or activity boards

Financial Plan and Projections

Show you know your numbers

Your financial plan should begin with a comprehensive breakdown of startup costs. Include land acquisition, site preparation, infrastructure installation, buildings (we'll detail these on Pages 3 and 7), initial marketing, permits, etc.

State how you plan to fund these costs. E.g. "50% bank loan, 30% personal savings, 20% investor equity". Follow this with a summary of funding sources:

Startup costs: land, site development, utilities, construction, permits, marketing, etc.

Funding sources: bank loans, SBA loans, personal savings, investor capital.
Revenue projections: based on site count, rates, seasonal occupancy, and extras.
Operating costs: labor, utilities, insurance, maintenance, software, and taxes.

Create a revenue forecast based on the number of sites, seasonal occupancy rates

nightly rates, and ancillary income from extras like retail sales or rentals.

Provide monthly projections for the first year and annual forecasts for at least three years. Include assumptions about growth in occupancy or rate increases over time.

Include:

- Breakeven analysis
- Cash flow forecast
- 3-year revenue and expense projections
- ROI estimate for lenders or investors

If you're presenting this plan to lenders or investors, include a repayment plan and highlight financial safeguards, such as an emergency fund or insurance policies. Your plan should convey fiscal

Appendices (Optional)

If applicable, attach supporting documents to strengthen your plan. Include a professionally drafted site plan showing your park's layout and utility infrastructure. Provide demographic or market survey data that supports your projected demand. You may also include preliminary quotes from contractors, letters of interest from investors or partners, and a [*SWOT analysis*](#) that highlights your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These materials enhance your credibility and make your plan more actionable.

Pro Tip



Focus on your USP (Unique Selling Proposition). In each section of the plan, reiterate what makes your RV park special – whether it's the prime location, exceptional amenities, eco-friendly design, or your team's expertise. A strong USP woven throughout your business plan will make it more compelling and cohesive.

With your plan in hand, you're now ready to dive deeper into the financial side – how much money you'll need, where it will come from, and how to plan for profitability.

Financial Planning and **Funding Strategy**



With your business plan drafted, it's time to tackle one of the most important steps: figuring out how to fund your RV park and make the numbers work. For many first-time owners, this phase can feel intimidating – but it doesn't have to be. This stage is where your dream becomes practical. You'll dive into startup costs, explore funding options, and build a roadmap toward profitability. Having solid financial planning now prevents future surprises – and gives confidence to banks, investors, or partners you may work with

Detail Your Startup Costs

By now, you should list all the one-time expenditures required to open your park. These typically include land acquisition, site development, construction, permits, initial marketing, equipment, and contingency funds. Research current cost estimates for each category.

- **For example, land can range widely in price:** an acre of land suitable for an

RV park can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$50,000 depending on location.

- **Construction costs also add up quickly:** industry estimates suggest each RV site can cost \$15,000 to \$50,000 to develop (including utilities and pads), though the high end might include luxury amenities.
- **Summing everything, small to mid-size parks often need \$180,000–\$450,000** to get up and running, while larger parks can exceed \$1 million

These numbers are ballpark – your specific plan may fall outside these ranges – but citing such data in your plan shows you're aware of typical costs. Importantly, build in a buffer for overruns: it's common for projects to exceed initial estimates due to unexpected hurdles. Setting aside a 10–15% contingency in your budget for surprises (like soil issues requiring extra grading, or material price increases) is a wise move.

With your business plan drafted, it's time to tackle one of the most important steps: figuring out how to fund your RV park and make the numbers work. For many first-time owners, this phase can feel intimidating – but it doesn't have to be. This stage is where your dream becomes practical. You'll dive into startup costs, explore funding options, and build a roadmap toward profitability. Having solid financial planning now prevents future surprises – and gives confidence to banks, investors, or partners you may work with

Project Ongoing **Expenses and Revenue**

Once your startup costs are outlined, shift your focus to what it will take to operate the park day-to-day – and how you'll earn money from it.

Operational costs include labor, utilities (electricity, water, sewer), trash pickup, maintenance, insurance, software tools, marketing, and loan payments. Even small parks require seasonal staff or part-time help during busy weekends. If you're using well water or septic, factor in regular testing and pump-outs.

On the revenue side, estimate how many sites you'll offer, your average nightly rate, and expected occupancy. For example, with 50 sites at \$50/night and 50% average occupancy over a year, you'd generate roughly \$456,250 in gross revenue.

Also account for secondary revenue – retail sales, propane, gear rentals, or premium add-ons like firewood bundles and early check-ins. The 2025 RoverPass report shows that guests increasingly book and pay for these extras online, boosting total revenue per reservation.



A good way to test your numbers is to build three financial scenarios: conservative (low occupancy), realistic (expected performance), and optimistic (ideal growth). This helps you plan for the best and prepare for the worst.

Plan Your Funding Strategy

With costs and revenue estimates in hand, the next question is: Where will the money come from?

Most new park owners use a mix of personal savings, loans, and investors. Start by identifying how much capital you can contribute yourself. This strengthens your position with lenders by showing you have “skin in the game.”

From there, explore financing options: Bank loans are common. In 2025, interest rates may still be higher than pre-pandemic levels, but banks remain open to funding campground projects because of the sector’s strong performance. Be prepared to show your business plan and credit history.

SBA loans (Small Business Administration) often offer lower down payments and longer repayment terms. Many campground owners successfully fund through SBA 7(a) or 504 loans.

Private investors can be friends, family, or partners who believe in your vision and want a share of the returns.



Some park owners use crowdfunding platforms or raise funds through local real estate networks. Others phase their park development, opening with a portion of sites and reinvesting revenue to expand later.

Depending on your location, you might qualify for state or county grants or tourism incentives – especially in areas focused on rural development or eco-tourism.

Pro Tip

Ask around your region to see if ***local officials*** offer tax breaks, reduced impact fees, or infrastructure assistance for new parks. It never hurts to ask – and sometimes these programs aren't well





Lender/Investor Guidance

Whether you're working with a bank or pitching to a private investor, they'll want to see three things: a clear plan, realistic financials, and a confident path to profitability.

Be ready to explain:

- Your startup and operating budgets
- Your projected revenue and timeline to break even
- Your experience (or how you'll compensate if you're new)
- What collateral you can offer (land often qualifies)
- Your contingency plans and financial cushion

For private investors, clarify the ownership structure, profit sharing, and potential exit strategies. A simple arrangement might be: "Investor contributes \$100k for a 25% equity share and receives quarterly profit distributions."

And remember – preparation builds trust. A clean, well-presented plan shows professionalism, even if you're new to the industry.

2025 Insights to consider

Economic conditions can shift, so it's important to plan using up-to-date context.

[Construction costs](#) have been volatile, especially for lumber, concrete, and utility installation. Get multiple quotes and updated estimates.



On the financing side, interest rates may remain elevated – so factor in higher monthly loan payments and consider locking in a fixed rate if possible.

That said, RV park profitability remains strong. Campground owners in the U.S. currently report average net annual income between \$50,000 and \$90,000, with established parks often earning significantly more depending on size and location.

Break-Even and ROI

Your break-even point is the moment when your revenue equals your expenses. For many parks, this occurs in year two or three – depending on how quickly you fill sites and control costs for your project.

Let's say your total startup investment is \$300,000. You estimate gross revenue of \$180,000 in Year 1, and \$240,000 in Year 2, with net margins of 30%. Your break-even point could fall midway through Year 2, with profitability ramping up from there.

RV parks typically have healthy margins once stabilized – around 25%–35% net profit in many cases. Estimating your ROI over 3–5 years gives lenders and investors confidence, and gives you clarity on when your efforts will truly start to pay off

With your finances in focus and your funding strategy underway, you're ready for one of the most exciting parts of the journey: choosing the perfect site for your future RV park.

In the next chapter, we'll walk through everything you need to know about finding, evaluating, and acquiring land. Let's turn your financial plan into a real-world location.

Pro Tip

Consult a professional. Engage an accountant or financial advisor familiar like **Parikh Financial** with campgrounds to review your financial plan. They might catch unrealistic assumptions or suggest improvements (like tax-efficient ways to structure your financing). It's an upfront expense that can save costly mistakes and give more credibility to your figures.



Site Selection & Land Acquisition

The land you choose influences nearly everything: how easy it is to develop, how appealing it will be to campers, how much it costs to build and operate, and how profitable it will be in the long term. This is the foundation (literally) of your entire park – so choose carefully and strategically.

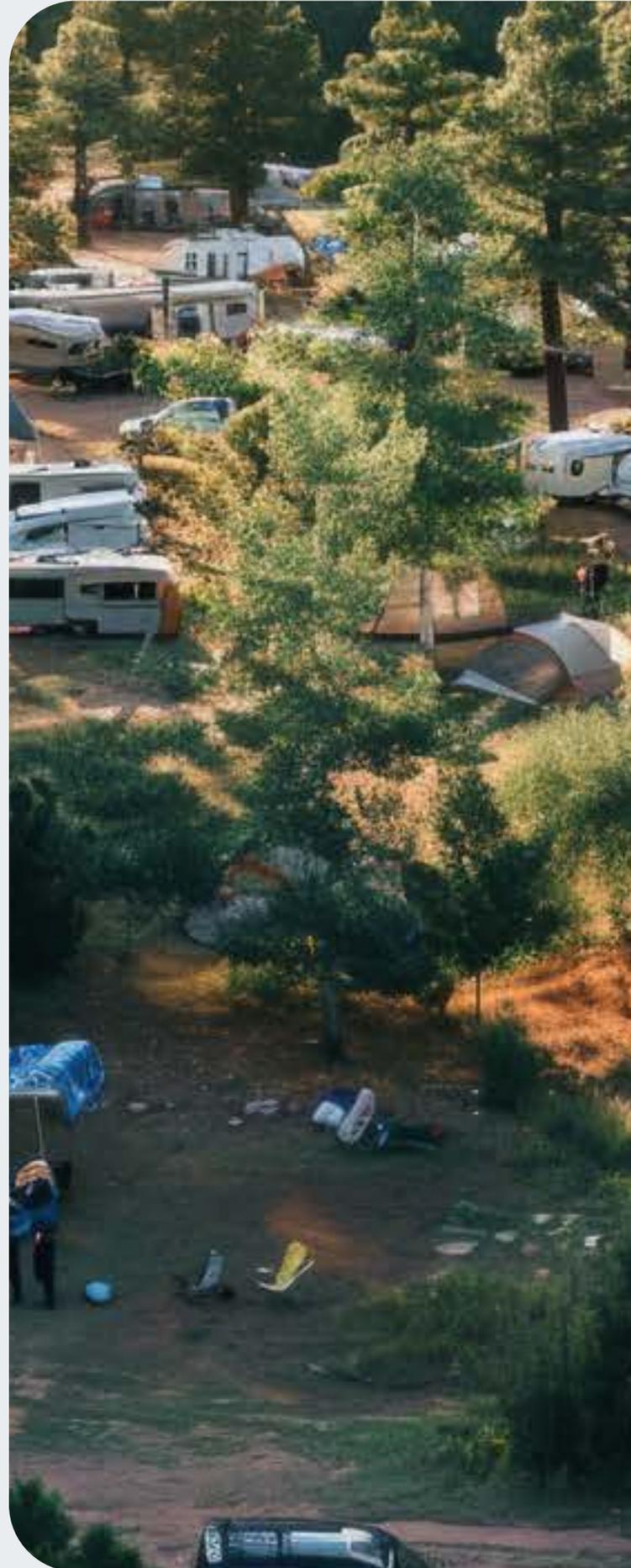
Define Your Criteria

Before you start browsing listings, take time to define what you're looking for. What does the ideal property look like for your park?

Location and accessibility should be high on the list. Campers want convenience, so land near a major highway or tourist route is ideal – but not so close that noise becomes an issue. Look for land that's easy to get to, yet feels like a getaway.

Proximity to local attractions like lakes, parks, or charming towns also boosts appeal. Being within a 30-minute drive of something interesting – whether it's a national forest, hiking trail, or winery – can increase your occupancy and justify premium rates.

Size and shape also matter. You'll want enough acreage for your sites, amenities, roads, buffer zones, and possible future expansion. A common rule of thumb is about 10 sites per acre for comfortable spacing, but this varies depending on your design and natural features.





Flat or gently rolling land is usually best. Steep or rocky terrain may look beautiful but can drive up grading and development costs.

Check for Utilities & Infrastructure

Before you fall in love with a parcel, find out what's already in place – or nearby.

Does the land have access to electricity, water, and sewer? If not, how far are the nearest connections? Installing utilities on raw land can get expensive fast – especially if you have to extend power lines or drill a well.

If municipal utilities aren't available, you'll likely be installing a well and septic system. In that case, make sure to perform a soil percolation test to ensure the land can support septic drainage.

Also check cell coverage and internet options. Modern RVers expect connectivity, and guests often rely on mobile service for navigation and communication. Even rural parks should consider Wi-Fi, especially for digital nomads or long-term guests.

Pro Tip



Ask utility companies for development cost estimates before purchasing. That \$10,000 cheaper property could cost \$50,000 more to develop.



Understand Zoning and Land Use Regulations

This is a deal-breaker area.

Make sure the property is zoned for commercial or recreational use, or that the local county allows RV parks under a special or conditional use permit.

Check with your city or county planning office and get written confirmation if possible. You'll want to know:

- The current zoning designation
- Whether RV parks are permitted or need special approval
- Any restrictions (like density limits, setbacks, or use limitations)

Also ask about the local comprehensive plan – if your RV park doesn't align with their long-term land use vision, your permit could be denied, even if zoning technically allows it.

More on permits and zoning processes is coming in Page 5, but for now, just ensure you're looking at land you can actually build on.

Conduct On-Site Visits and Due Diligence

Online listings and maps are great, but nothing replaces boots on the ground.

Visit each property in person.

Drive the access roads. Is the path in good condition? Can big RVs easily turn or enter? Check for any nearby nuisances – like industrial noise, bad odors, or neighboring land uses that could affect the guest experience.

Evaluate the natural features too. Is the soil workable? Does the land drain well, or are there low spots that hold water? Are there existing trees that can provide shade or buffer zones?

If the property looks promising, bring in professionals to help with due diligence:

- An engineer can assess infrastructure feasibility
- A surveyor can confirm boundaries
- An environmental consultant can identify issues like wetlands, flood zones, or contamination
- These checks cost money upfront, but can save you from very expensive surprises later.

Pro Tip

Camp on or near the property if you can. Experiencing it overnight gives you insight into the views, noise levels, and overall guest feel. Trust your instincts – if it doesn't feel right to you, it may not feel right to your guests either.

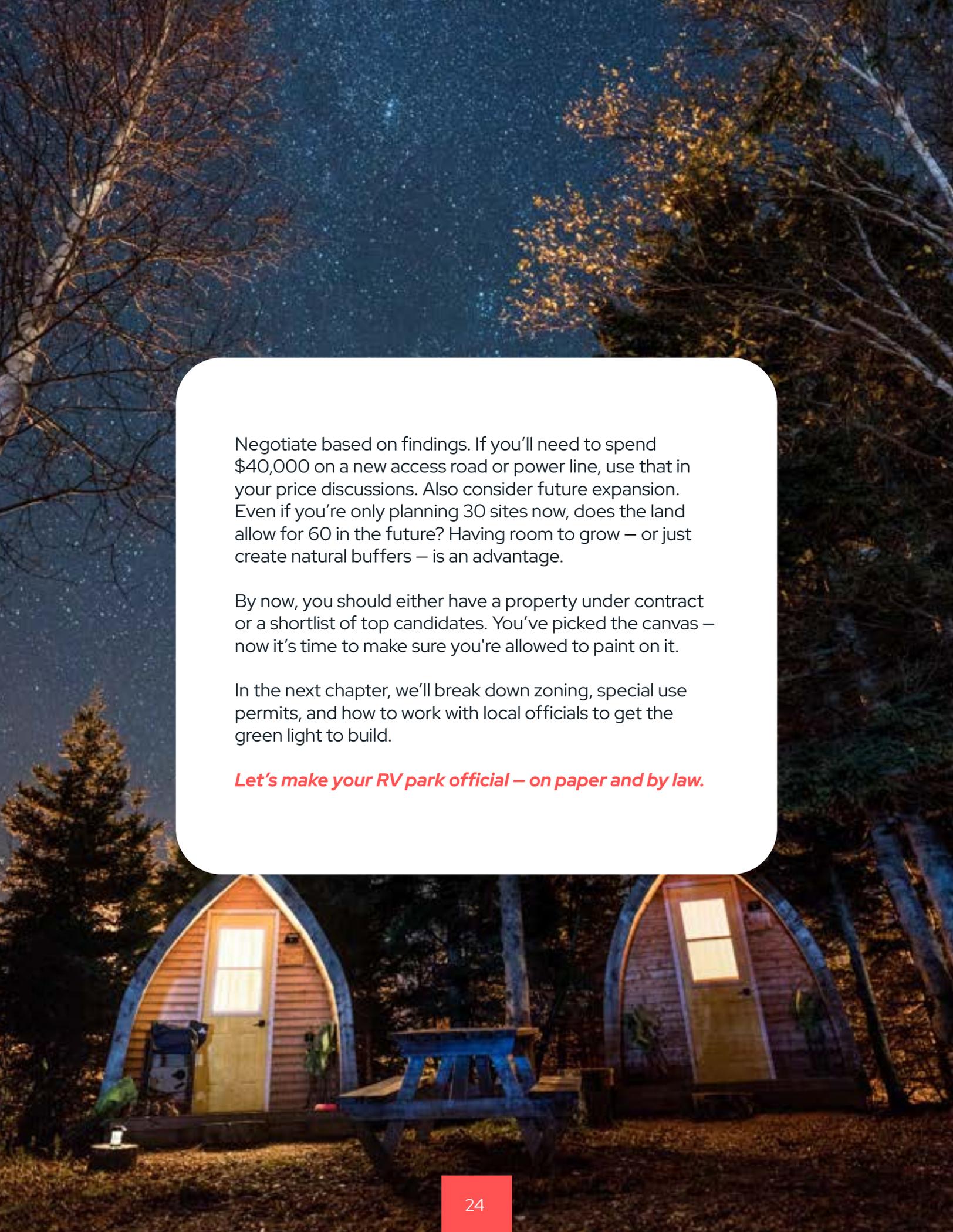


Evaluate the Investment and Negotiate Wisely

Once you find “the one,” it’s time to do the math. Consider the full cost of acquiring and developing the land – not just the asking price.

In 2025, land prices continue to rise in many areas, especially near national parks and tourism corridors. Sometimes it’s better to pay more for a better location or existing infrastructure than to save on acreage and spend more developing it.

If you're making an offer, include contingencies for zoning approval and satisfactory inspections. That way, if something unexpected comes up (like wetlands or a denied permit), you can back out without losing your deposit.



Negotiate based on findings. If you'll need to spend \$40,000 on a new access road or power line, use that in your price discussions. Also consider future expansion. Even if you're only planning 30 sites now, does the land allow for 60 in the future? Having room to grow – or just create natural buffers – is an advantage.

By now, you should either have a property under contract or a shortlist of top candidates. You've picked the canvas – now it's time to make sure you're allowed to paint on it.

In the next chapter, we'll break down zoning, special use permits, and how to work with local officials to get the green light to build.

Let's make your RV park official – on paper and by law.

Navigating Zoning Laws and Permitting



So you've found the land – or you're close. Now comes one of the most important and often misunderstood steps in building an RV park: getting the right zoning and permits.

This part can feel bureaucratic, and yes, sometimes frustrating. But it's absolutely essential. Without the correct approvals, you can't legally build or open – no matter how perfect your land is.

Think of this phase as a bridge. It connects your concept with actual construction. With a little patience, the right experts, and clear communication, you'll cross it successfully

Understand Local Zoning Requirements

The first step is figuring out how your land is currently zoned and whether RV parks are allowed.

Zoning categories vary by city and county, but your property might be zoned as residential, agricultural, commercial, or recreational. RV parks are usually permitted in commercial, mixed-use, or recreation-zoned areas, but even within those, there are differences.

If your parcel is already zoned appropriately for a campground – great! You'll likely just need a site plan review and basic development permits.

If not, there are two main paths forward:

- Rezoning, where you request the county to reclassify the property
- [Special or conditional use permits](#), which allow RV parks as exceptions in certain zones

Both options usually involve public hearings, detailed applications, and meetings with zoning boards or county commissioners.

Prepare for the Process

The approval process can take anywhere from a few weeks to over a year, depending on your location. Start early and build relationships with key people at your city or county office. Being polite, prepared, and proactive goes a long way.

Most zoning or permit processes require:

- A detailed site plan (often drawn by a civil engineer or land planner)
- A narrative explaining your project and how it fits the area
- Public notice to neighbors
- A hearing or presentation before a planning commission or board

At the hearing, be ready to answer questions like:

- How will traffic be managed?
- What impact will the park have on the neighborhood?
- Will there be excessive noise, light, or wastewater concerns?

Focus on how your park benefits the community – tourism revenue, jobs, beautification, or safe, well-managed outdoor lodging. Show that you're a responsible owner, not just a developer.

Pro Tip



Always confirm zoning details with your local planning or zoning office. Don't rely on what the seller or listing agent says. Ask for a copy of the zoning code or land-use ordinance in writing.

Checklist

Checking Zoning

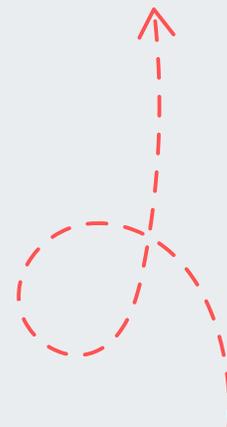
Before purchasing land or committing to development, conducting a thorough zoning check is a foundational step. Once you have the zoning classification, request the full text of the land use ordinance or zoning code to review permitted, conditional, and prohibited uses for that zone.

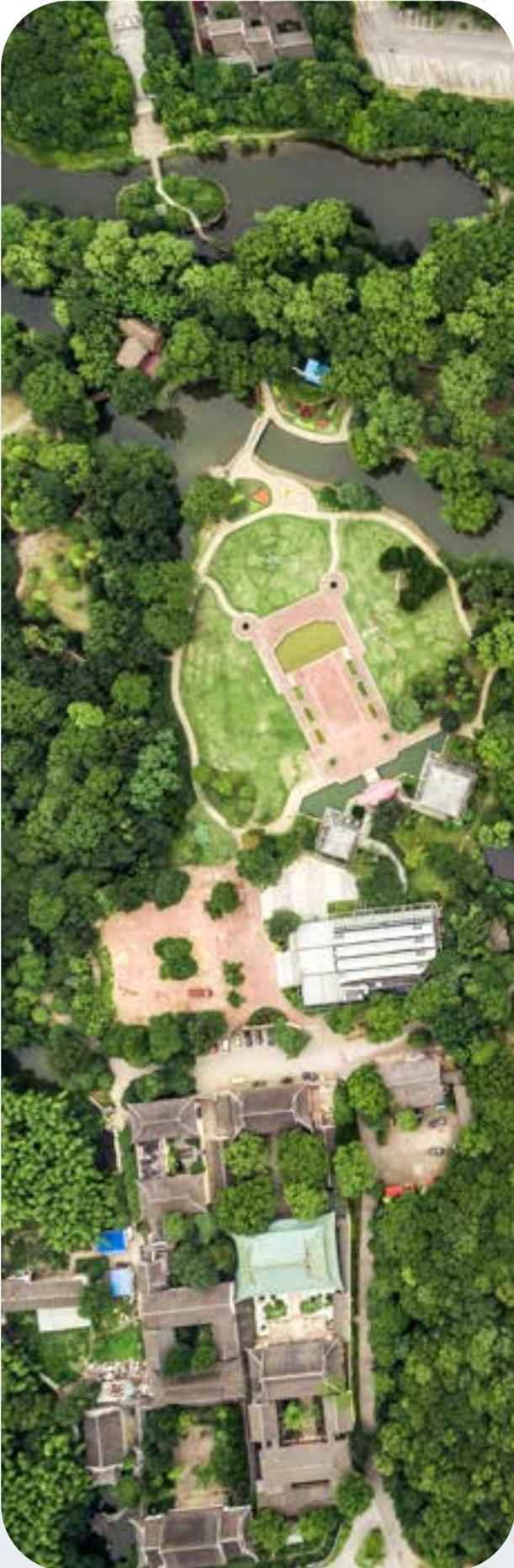
You'll want to confirm setback requirements, minimum parcel sizes, parking ratios, road access standards, utility connection policies, and environmental constraints. Some areas may restrict development near flood zones, wetlands, or protected habitats.

Document all correspondence and request written confirmation when possible. Keep a checklist that includes:

- Current zoning classification and description
- Permitted and conditional uses
- Zoning requirements for parcel size, setbacks, access roads
- Necessary applications for rezoning or special permits
- Restrictions related to environmental features
- Contact information for city or county planners

Having this detailed zoning analysis early on helps avoid costly surprises and guides the rest of your permitting and design process





Prepare Your Site Plan and Application

Whether rezoning or seeking a permit, you'll need a detailed site plan to submit with your application. This is a scale drawing showing the layout of the park, it should include:

- Roadways and access points
- Location of each RV site
- Utilities (water, sewer, electrical lines)
- Drainage plans
- Buildings and amenities
- Landscaping buffers
- Setbacks from property lines or water features

A licensed civil engineer or surveyor will typically create this. Some jurisdictions also require a traffic study or environmental review, especially if your development is large or near sensitive areas.

Keep your plan realistic and phased if needed. You can always propose Phase 1 with 30 sites and leave room for Phase 2 later – this often makes approvals easier.

Permitting Beyond Zoning

Zoning approval clears your use of the land, but you also need various permits to build and operate:

- **Building Permits:** These are issued by the local building department for any structures you'll construct (bathhouses, office, cabins, etc.). You'll need to submit architectural drawings and specifications for review to ensure they meet building codes.

Similarly, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits will be needed for installing utility systems – for example, running electrical lines to pedestals at each site, or plumbing for water/sewer lines and any septic system. Expect multiple inspections (foundation, electrical, plumbing, final inspection, etc.) during construction.

- **Septic and Well Permits:** If you aren't on city utilities, you'll need health department permits for wells and septic systems. The health/environmental department will review your plans for things like septic tank size, leach field placement (often dictated by percolation test results and required separation from water sources), and well construction. These processes often require separate applications and inspections.
- **Environmental Permits:** If your land requires any special environmental consideration (e.g. stormwater management in certain states, wetlands permits from the Army Corps of Engineers), ensure those are secured. Many areas require a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and associated permit for disturbing more than a certain acreage of land (to manage erosion and runoff during construction).
- **Occupancy/Operating Permits:** Once construction is done, you usually must get a final certificate of occupancy (CO) for buildings and, in some locales, an operating license for the campground itself. The fire marshal might inspect for safety compliance (adequate fire extinguishers, emergency exits in buildings, proper spacing between RVs as per fire code, etc.). The health department may inspect water quality or pool safety if you have a pool.





Actionable Checklist - Permits & Compliance:

Make a list of every permit required (your general contractor or consultants can help). Create a timeline for applications to ensure none are forgotten.

Keep records organized – a binder or digital folder for permits, applications, and correspondence with officials. You'll thank yourself later.

Plan for fees – [zoning applications can cost](#) a few hundred to few thousand dollars, and they can vary depending on the state you're in; building permits and impact fees can also be significant. Include these in your budget.

Follow all codes and conditions – if the zoning board approves your park contingent on certain conditions (say, adding a fence or limiting the number of sites in phase 1), document those and incorporate them. Non-compliance could derail your opening.

Schedule required inspections ahead of time to avoid delays in construction.

Engage the Community & Address Concerns

In most jurisdictions, RV park proposals trigger public notice requirements – meaning neighbors will be informed and allowed to comment.

Don't panic. Community pushback isn't uncommon, but it's manageable if you're proactive.

Typical concerns include:

- Increased traffic
- Noise
- Property values
- Wastewater and septic safety
- Wildlife or environmental impact

Here's where your preparation pays off. Show how you'll:

- Create natural buffers with trees or fencing
- Enforce quiet hours and good behavior
- Maintain clean, modern facilities
- Support local tourism and the economy
- Be open to feedback and willing to make reasonable compromises. Winning over the community – or at least neutralizing opposition – makes the path much smoother.

Legal Compliance Tips

Keep in mind other regulations too:

- **ADA Compliance:** Ensure your facility plan accounts for the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) – e.g., accessible parking/sites, ramps into buildings, and at least one ADA-compliant restroom/shower. This isn't just ethical, it's legally required for public accommodations.
- **Fire Safety Codes:** Often there are rules for how closely RVs can park to each other (to prevent fire spread), requirements for fire pits, etc. Follow local fire code guidance on hydrant placement or having fire extinguishers on site.
- **Signage and Lighting Regulations:** Some places have ordinances on signage size/placement or "dark sky" lighting (to reduce light pollution). Check these to design accordingly.

- **Insurance:** While not a permit, make sure you line up proper insurance (liability, property, etc.) before construction and certainly before

Pro Tip



Build relationships with regulators. It helps to approach the planning and permitting process cooperatively. Meet in person with the zoning administrator or building inspector early on. Ask for their input and show you want to do things by the book. When they see you as a proactive, respectful applicant (not someone trying to skirt rules), they're often more helpful and can even expedite advice or approvals. Remember, these folks can be great allies in ensuring your park is safe and compliant.

Once you've got zoning approval and permits in hand (or in progress), it's time to start the fun part – designing your RV park.

In the next chapter, we'll show you how to create a functional, attractive layout that guests love and that supports smooth daily operations.

Let's start turning that land into a real, welcoming destination.



RV Park Design and Layout Planning



Now that you've cleared the zoning and permitting phase, it's time to design your RV park – the step where your vision becomes visible.

This phase is part creative, part technical. A great design is more than just aesthetics; it's about creating a smooth, enjoyable experience for your guests, maximizing your land use, and making day-to-day operations easier for you and your team.

Whether you're building a cozy 20-site park or a 100-site resort-style destination, thoughtful design now will pay off for years to come.

Assemble Your Team *(Consultants and Designers)*

You don't need to design the whole park by yourself – and you shouldn't.

You don't need to design the whole park by yourself – and you shouldn't.

Start by hiring a civil engineer who's familiar with RV park or campground development. They'll ensure your site plan meets local codes for grading, drainage, setbacks, and utility routing. You may also need:

- A land planner or architect to shape the guest experience
- A landscape designer to help with aesthetics and natural buffers
- An environmental consultant, especially if your land includes sensitive areas like wetlands or steep slopes

Hiring the right professionals early helps you avoid expensive rework or compliance issues later.

Pro Tip



Ask if they've worked on RV parks before. Someone who understands the turning radius of a Class A motorhome will design very differently than someone who's only done residential neighborhoods.

Design for Flow and Function

Your layout should be intuitive, efficient, and guest-friendly. Start by mapping out your entrance and access roads. Your internal roads should be:

Wide enough for big rigs to navigate (at least 20–24 feet for two-way traffic)
Easy to follow, with a clear loop or directional flow
Free of dead ends or tight corners that require awkward turnarounds

If space allows, design one-way loops with angled back-in sites – these are easier to navigate and often safer.

Next, consider your check-in process. Will you have a staffed office? A self-check-in station? Leave enough space for rigs to queue safely without blocking incoming traffic.

Plan Your Sites Thoughtfully

Modern RVs are large and varied. A good rule is to make sites at least 50 feet long, with some pull-throughs extending to 70

feet or more. Make sure sites are wide enough to allow for slide-outs and a picnic setup without crowding neighbors.

Use a mix of site types:

- Pull-through sites for convenience and overnight travelers
- Back-in sites along tree lines or edges for longer stays
- Premium sites with extras like private patios or scenic views

Follow local spacing requirements (often 10–15 feet between RVs for fire safety) and add a bit of buffer for privacy. Trees, shrubs, or fencing can enhance the guest experience dramatically.

Also plan for future trends: Electric vehicle (EV) charging, larger Class A rigs, and glamping units are growing in popularity. Even if you're not adding these now, design with space and flexibility to do so later.

Lay Out Utilities Efficiently

Your park's design must include underground routes for electricity, water, and sewer. Cluster your sites so that utility corridors can be shared where possible – this saves money on trenching and materials.

At each site, make sure utility hookups are:

- On the driver's side (left side of the RV)
- Close to each other for easy connection
- Clearly labeled and safely installed

If you're using septic, group sites around shared tanks and leach fields based on your engineer's advice. If you offer dump stations, place them near exits and allow easy drive-through access.

Strategically Place Amenities and Common Areas

Where you place your restrooms, laundry, or recreation areas matters. Ideally, central locations work best so they're accessible to everyone. For larger parks, consider multiple smaller facilities to reduce walking distances.

Use natural land features to your advantage. If you have a creek, grove of trees, or scenic view, design your layout around those assets. Put picnic areas by the pond. Place glamping units on the ridge. Let nature enhance the value of your sites.

Keep kid-focused features (like playgrounds) away from roads and visible to parents. Locate the dog park in a corner to reduce barking near quiet areas. If you're adding a pool or clubhouse, allow for parking and spacing.

Use Design Software and Tools

Once you have your consultant team in place, using design software can dramatically enhance both your planning process and your communication with stakeholders. Modern design tools allow you to visualize your park before construction begins, making it easier to adjust site layouts, improve traffic flow, and identify potential bottlenecks. Programs like AutoCAD Civil 3D, SketchUp, and GIS mapping tools are commonly used by engineers and planners to model the land, utilities, and structures in three dimensions.



Design software enables precise measurement of distances, elevation changes, and utility runs, which is essential for accurate cost estimating and permit approval. For owners who want a more hands-on approach, there are also RV park-specific planning platforms that allow you to experiment with layouts, amenities, and infrastructure placement using drag-and-drop tools. Sharing these models with your team—engineers, contractors, and even city officials—ensures everyone is aligned and reduces the likelihood of miscommunication or delays.

Accessibility and Safety

Even small parks must plan for ADA compliance. This includes:

- Accessible parking spots and pathways
- At least one ADA-compliant restroom and shower
- Level, firm surfaces at sites and common areas

Safety is also key. Make sure there's space for emergency vehicles, add clear directional signage, and plan for lighting in key areas. Designate fire pit zones and follow spacing rules to prevent hazards.

In fire-prone areas, use defensible space design principles and consult local fire departments for best practices.

Aesthetics and Landscaping

A well-designed park doesn't just function efficiently—it also creates a sense of place that resonates with your target audience. Consider the impact your landscaping, materials, and signage have on the overall guest experience. Use natural elements like native plants, trees, and stone to blend with the surroundings and reduce maintenance costs.



- Landscaping can be used to divide spaces, create privacy between sites, and buffer noise or light from adjacent areas. Adding aesthetic touches such as pergolas, flower beds, boulder groupings, or water features elevates your park and helps it stand out in a competitive market.
- Your signage and branding should be visually consistent and reflect the style of the park—rustic, modern, family-friendly, or luxury. Lighting design is also essential: use soft lighting to illuminate paths and communal spaces while minimizing light pollution.

Think about first impressions. The entrance, check-in area, and main road should be clean, attractive, and intuitive to navigate. A welcoming environment not only earns great reviews but also drives word-of-mouth referrals.

Sustainability & Eco-Friendly Design

Eco-conscious design is becoming increasingly important to modern campers and can also reduce your operating costs over time. Start by choosing materials and building methods that have low environmental impact. Like permeable pavers, [solar-powered lighting](#), and recycled or locally sourced materials whenever possible. Consider a park-wide recycling and composting program to appeal to environmentally minded guests.

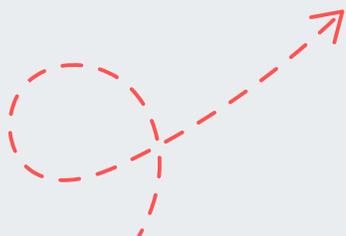
Water conservation is especially important. Install low-flow fixtures in restrooms and use drought-tolerant landscaping to minimize irrigation needs. If feasible, incorporate rainwater harvesting or graywater systems for landscape use.

Many RV parks also use solar panels to offset electrical costs, especially in sunny regions. If you're near a sensitive natural area, working with an environmental consultant can help you build responsibly without disturbing local ecosystems.

Review and Iterate

Don't rush the design phase. Make a draft layout, then review it from different perspectives – as an owner (is it efficient to maintain?), as a guest (will I enjoy this space?), and as a regulator (does it meet requirements?).

Run it by a few trusted folks – perhaps other campground owners or friends who RV – for feedback. You might get great suggestions like adding a second exit for safety, or moving the propane fill station to a more accessible spot, etc. Iterate on your design until it feels just right.



Pro Tip

Map the guest journey. Mentally walk through your park as if you are a first-time guest. From pulling off the highway – is the entrance obvious? At check-in – is there enough room? Driving to the site – is it intuitive or are there confusing turns? Setting up camp – is the site level and hookups easy to reach? Going to the restroom – is it a reasonable distance and well-lit at night? Leaving – is the dump station easy to access on the way out? By mapping out each step of a guest's experience and visualizing it in your design, you can catch potential pain points and fix them now.

Many RV parks also use solar panels to offset electrical costs, especially in sunny regions. If you're near a sensitive natural area, working with an environmental consultant can help you build responsibly without disturbing local ecosystems.



Construction & Site Development



Design approved? Permits in hand? Let's build your RV park.

Construction is where your project finally shifts from planning to doing. It's exciting – and intense. This phase transforms raw land into a functional park ready to welcome guests. But it's also where things can get delayed, go over budget, or veer off plan if you're not careful.

This chapter will help you understand the construction process, manage it effectively, and stay on track from the first dig to the final inspection.

Step 1:

Land Clearing and Grading

The very first task is to prepare the land:

You'll begin by clearing trees, brush, rocks, or old fencing from areas where roads, sites, and buildings will go. Preserve as much existing tree cover or landscape as possible – it adds value and shade later.

Next comes grading. Your construction crew will level each RV pad area, shape the internal roads, and ensure proper drainage. This step is crucial to avoid flooding or erosion later. Your civil engineer should guide this process based on your site plan and topography.

Save and reuse topsoil for landscaping where possible. And don't forget to compact soil under roadways and pads – poor compaction now means potholes and settling later.

Pro Tip



Coordinate trenching for utilities with grading. If you're digging for roads anyway, it's smart to lay water or electric lines at the same time – this saves both time and money.

Step 2: Infrastructure Installation

Build the skeleton of your park:

- **Roads and Driveways:** Construct your internal roads according to the layout. Typically this means laying a gravel base, compacting it, and then adding a top layer (more gravel, asphalt millings, or pavement depending on your plan). Ensure roads have proper crowning or ditches for drainage. This is a priority because roads enable all other work (contractors need them to move around). If paving, you might do that later, but at least have a solid gravel roadbed during construction.
- **RV Pads and Campsites:** Develop each site's pad. Many parks use gravel pads with a border (like treated lumber or concrete curbs) to keep gravel in place. Some high-end parks pour concrete pads for each RV – more expensive but very attractive to guests. Make sure each pad is level side-to-side and slightly sloped end-to-end (so rain sheds off). Provide a firm surface that can handle heavy vehicles without sinking (this often means a compacted gravel foundation even under concrete). Also install any patios or decks at this stage if you plan them for each site.
- **Utility Hookups:** Now the critical lifelines – water, sewer, electricity:
 - **Water:** Lay water lines underground to each site (below frost line in colder climates). Include shut-off valves in logical sections so you can isolate leaks later without shutting the whole park. Install hose bibs or hookups at each site (usually a shared post with the electrical outlet). Don't forget backflow preventers if required by code.
 - **Sewer:** If on a municipal sewer, install the sewer lateral pipes from each site connecting to the main. If using a septic system, install septic tanks and drain fields as designed. Each site will have a sewer drop (in-ground PVC connection). Slope is key: sewer lines must have proper fall so waste flows correctly. Venting might be needed per plumbing code.
 - **Electricity:** Trenches will carry electric cables to each site. Typically, you'll place a utility pedestal at each site (or one shared between two sites) with the appropriate outlets (30 amp, 50 amp, etc.). Work with a licensed electrician for this – it involves setting up sub-panels, breakers, and connecting to the main power grid. The electrician will also handle street lighting wiring, if any, and hookup your buildings. By the end, each campsite should have a functioning power pedestal.

Pro Tip



Consider adding extra conduit runs for future upgrades (like if you want to add cable TV or fiber internet later, it's easier if a conduit is already in place).

- **Other Utilities:** If offering TV cable hookups, Wi-Fi access points, or gas lines (for a propane station), those get installed now as well. For Wi-Fi, running fiber or Ethernet to distributed antennas can drastically improve connectivity over just relying on one central router.
- **Common Buildings & Amenities Construction:** As the site infrastructure is going in, you can concurrently build your structures:
 - Construct the office/check-in building and any bathhouses, laundry, or rec hall. These will need their own foundation, framing, etc., like any small commercial building. Ensure contractors follow the timeline so these buildings are done by opening (you'll need them operational for guests).
 - Install amenities like a pool (which might involve separate contractors for pool installation), playground (assemble equipment and ensure proper safety surfacing), picnic shelters, etc. These can sometimes be done even after opening if non-critical, but best to complete beforehand if you marketed them.

Step 3: Finishing Touches and Systems Setup

Once the heavy construction is done, the devil is in the details:

- **Landscaping:** Bring in topsoil to dress sites and common areas, then plant grass, trees, and shrubs as planned. Landscaping is usually one of the last steps to avoid damage during

construction. Pay attention to grading around newly poured concrete (like pads or sidewalks) so water doesn't collect. Plant shade trees (if not already present) in strategic spots – future guests will thank you. Consider installing irrigation in landscaped areas (or at least hose bibs throughout) if the climate needs it.

- **Signage and Site Markers:** Erect your entry sign and any internal directional signs (e.g. site number markers, signs to office, rules signs, etc.). Clear signage is important for that first guest arrival. Also number the sites (on posts or pedestals) so guests and emergency services can identify locations easily.
- **Safety and Convenience Features:** Install things like fire pits or grills at sites (if offering them), picnic tables, fire extinguishers at designated points, etc. Put up perimeter fencing if needed, and security gate if part of your plan. Ensure exterior lighting (like streetlights or building lights) are all working for nighttime.
- **Testing and Inspections:** Before opening, you'll have a series of inspections. Proactively test everything yourself:
 - Pressure test water lines for leaks.
 - Flush and test each sewer connection.
 - Have an electrician do a load test on random pedestals to ensure stable voltage.
 - Walk the entire property for any hazards (nails, construction debris, uneven ground that might trip someone).
 - If possible, do a "soft test" by inviting a few friends with RVs to camp for a night. Let them use the hookups, drive the roads, etc.,

and give you feedback if something was hard to use or confusing.

Throughout the construction process, project management is key. You or a hired project manager should coordinate trades (so the electricians aren't digging up what the plumber just buried, for example), keep the timeline on track, and handle any surprises (weather delays, material shortages, etc.). Monitor your budget closely; change orders can pile up, so only alter plans if absolutely needed or if they significantly improve the outcome.

Final Testing and Inspections

Before opening, every system should be tested – and retested.

Run water through every line and check for leaks. Test electrical pedestals under load. Walk each sewer connection and flush for functionality. Walk or drive the full park to look for any hazards or touch-ups.

Most jurisdictions will require final inspections from the building department, health department (especially if you have a well or pool), and fire marshal. Once everything passes, you'll receive a Certificate of Occupancy or equivalent documentation – and that means you're legally allowed to open.

Pro Tip

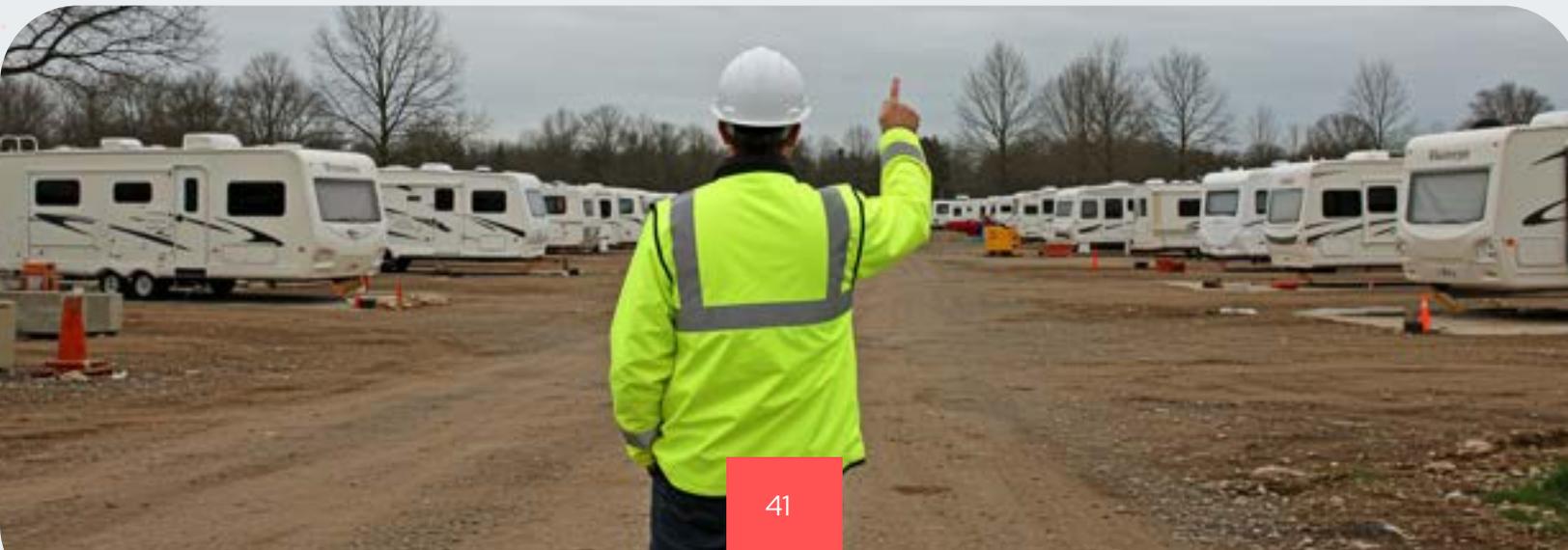


Do a "soft opening." Invite a few friends or family members with RVs to stay for a night or two. Let them use the hookups, navigate the check-in process, and provide feedback. This helps uncover small fixes before paying guests arrive.

Before opening, every system should be tested – and retested.

Run water through every line and check for leaks. Test electrical pedestals under load. Walk each sewer connection and flush for functionality. Walk or drive the full park to look for any hazards or touch-ups.

Most jurisdictions will require final inspections from the building department, health department (especially if you have a well or pool), and fire marshal. Once everything passes, you'll receive a Certificate of Occupancy or equivalent documentation – and that means you're legally allowed to open.



Setting Up Operations & Systems



Your RV park is built. The sites are ready, the utilities are working, and the signs are up.

Now it's time to get your internal systems in place – the behind-the-scenes work that ensures a smooth, professional experience for your guests. Even the most beautiful park will struggle without the right operational setup.

This phase is about answering key questions:

- How will guests book?
- Who's checking them in?
- How do you handle maintenance, emergencies, or reviews?

With a little structure and a few great tools, you can run a tight ship without being overwhelmed.

Staffing and Training

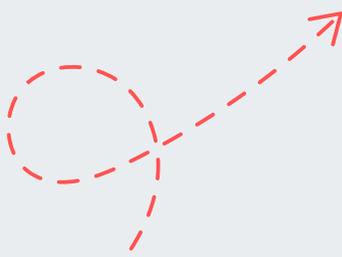
Start by deciding how much of the daily operation you'll handle yourself, and where you'll need help.

For small parks, many owners take a hands-on approach – answering calls, checking guests in, and handling maintenance personally. Others bring on part-time or seasonal staff to cover busier times.

Typical roles include:

- Front desk or reservations manager
- Groundskeeper or maintenance tech
- Housekeeping (for restrooms, laundry, or cabins)
- Guest services for managing check-ins, events, or emergencies

Once you know your staffing model, create simple job descriptions. They don't have to be formal HR documents – just clear expectations of who does what, when, and how.



Pro Tip



Even if you're the only employee at first, write down your daily routines. A basic checklist (like "Morning prep: restock bathrooms, walk park, check reservations") helps ensure nothing gets missed on busy days – and it'll be essential once you start delegating.

Train for Guest Experience and Safety

No matter your team's size, customer service is everything. Every staff member should know how to:

- Greet guests
- Handle complaints calmly
- Enforce rules fairly
- Respond to common questions ("Where's the dump station?" or "Do you sell firewood?")

Also, make sure they're trained in emergency protocols: what to do in case of a medical issue, a fire, or a severe weather alert. Review locations of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and emergency contact numbers.

If you use carts or equipment, teach staff how to operate them safely and store them properly.

Implement Reservation and Management Systems

It's almost impossible to run a modern RV park on pen and paper. A cloud-based reservation and property management system makes life easier for both you and your guests.

With a system like RoverPass, you can:

- Accept online bookings 24/7
- Manage availability in real-time
- Process credit card payments securely
- Send automated confirmation and reminder emails
- Track revenue and occupancy reports
- Communicate with guests via text or email

Beyond reservations, you might also consider point-of-sale (POS) systems if you have a camp store or rental services, and accounting software tailored to campgrounds for tracking expenses and income (some campground management suites include basic accounting, or you can use [QuickBooks](#) with a campground chart of accounts).

Also consider syncing with OTAs (Online Travel Agencies) or listing sites like RoverPass Marketplace, Campendium, or The Dyrft to increase visibility without double-booking risks. Having these digital systems in place from day one will make operating much easier.

Establish Your Online Presence

In parallel with setting up internal systems, ensure your external online presence is ready. This means:

Website

Launch a professional website for your RV park (if you haven't already during the marketing phase). Include essential information: location (with directions/map), site types and amenities, clear pricing, park rules/policies (pet policy, check-in/out times, etc.), photo gallery, and contact info.

Ideally, integrate your online booking engine so guests can check availability and book directly on your site. If building a website seems daunting, services like [RoverPass Premium Website Design](#) can create a custom campground website for you. A good website lends credibility and helps guests self-serve the

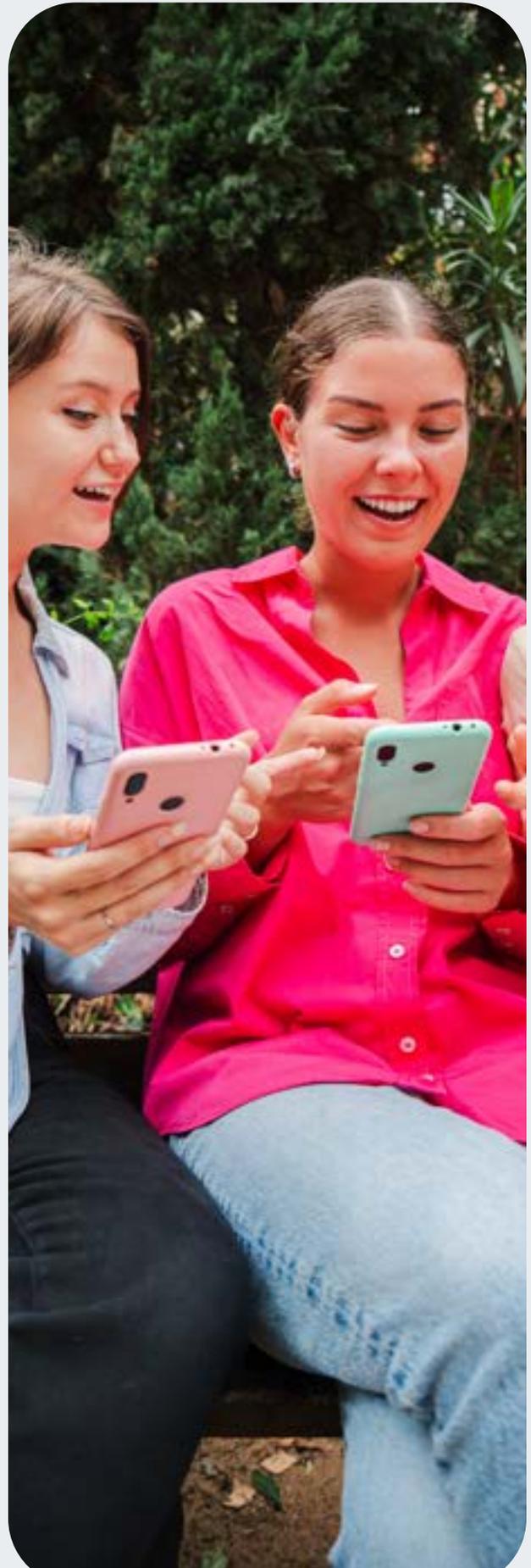
Social Media

Set up social media pages (Facebook, Instagram at least). Before opening, populate them with some teasers – photos of the park under construction, introduction of you (the owners) and the story behind the park, countdown to opening day, etc. Social media will be a key marketing and communication tool (more on marketing in Page 9), but operationally it's also how many customers will reach out with questions. Be ready to respond promptly via these channels.

Listings and Directories

Make sure you've listed your park on major platforms: create or claim your Google Business Profile (so you appear on Google Maps and search – update it with correct address, phone, website, and some photos).

List on campground directories and travel sites (some examples: RoverPass [Marketplace](#), [Good Sam](#), [Campendium](#), The Dyrt, etc.). This is partially marketing, but also operational because you'll start



getting inquiries or bookings from these channels. Ensure the info (like number of sites, amenities) is accurate across all listings. Set up a system to monitor these platforms for reviews or questions (e.g., get notified when someone posts a review so you can respond).

Communication Lines

Get a dedicated phone line for the campground and an official email address. Even if you'll answer the phone on your cell, having a distinct number for the business looks professional. Record a friendly voicemail greeting with the park name.

Many reservation systems can automate confirmation emails and even pre-arrival messages to guests – customize those to include helpful info (directions, after-hours check-in instructions, Wi-Fi password, etc.). Essentially, be ready to communicate efficiently with guests through multiple channels.

Operational Policies and SOPs

Operational policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) form the backbone of a smooth-running RV park. While it's easy to focus on the physical aspects of the business—like infrastructure and aesthetics—your long-term success will heavily depend on how effectively your operations are managed.

A well-crafted policy ensures consistency, safety, and a quality guest experience, especially as your team grows and responsibilities are delegated. SOPs help avoid confusion among staff, minimize mistakes, and reduce reliance on any single person to keep things running. This includes:

- Check-in and check-out times (common is check-in 1pm, check-out 11am, but choose what works for your cleaning schedule).
- Quiet hours (e.g., 10pm–7am no loud noise).
- Pet policies (leash requirements, areas they can/can't go, max number of pets, etc.).
- Campfire rules (allowed in designated fire rings? Bans during burn bans?).
- Speed limit in the park (post signs, usually 5–10 MPH for safety).
- Visitor policy (are outside guests allowed to use facilities, any extra fees, parking for them, etc.).
- Cancellation policy for reservations (how far in advance for refund, any fees).
- Emergency procedures (what should staff do if there's a medical emergency, a fire, a missing child, etc. – have a plan and make sure staff know the location of fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and emergency contacts).

Write these policies down – perhaps in a “Guest Guidelines” handout or on your website – and also in an internal document for staff. Consistency is key; everyone on the team should enforce rules uniformly to be fair and avoid confusion.

Set Up Maintenance Schedules

A huge part of operations is maintenance. As you open, establish routine schedules:

- Daily: Clean restrooms, pick up any litter, check garbage bins, test the pool chemicals (if applicable), and note any site issues.
- Weekly: Mow the grass, refill propane stock (if selling), check facility supplies (toilet paper, etc.), water landscaping.
- Monthly or Seasonal: Preventative maintenance on equipment (e.g., service lawn mower, golf cart), check

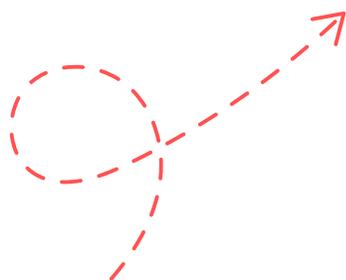
smoke alarms/extinguishers, inspect septic or sewer cleanouts, treat the pool, trim trees, etc.

Using a simple calendar or maintenance log can ensure nothing gets overlooked. Also plan for seasonal tasks – winterizing water lines if in a freeze area, or closing certain facilities in off-season if you won't be open year-round.

Test Run Your Systems

Before the official opening, do a full simulation of operations:

- Have a friend act as a guest: take a reservation through your system, have them “arrive” at your gate, go through a check-in as if they were real. This will test your processes and the functionality of your reservation and payment systems.
- Run a credit card payment (use a test mode or a small charge) to ensure your card processor is working.
- Simulate a few different scenarios: a walk-in guest with no reservation, a phone booking, a cancellation. Make sure you and your staff know how to handle each using your system or manual backup if needed.
- Make sure Wi-Fi is working across the park and that you know how to reboot it if needed.
- Essentially, shake out any bugs now. It's much less stressful to fix an issue when you don't have a line of RVs at the office.



Prepare for Opening Day

Have all the supplies and materials ready: printed park maps to hand out, welcome pamphlets or info sheets, receipt paper for your card machine, a stash of basic items guests might ask for (like extra fuses, or the ability to make change for laundry machines if using coins). It's those little operational details that can catch you off guard – try to anticipate common requests. For instance, have a list of local emergency contacts handy (vet, hospital, tow service) to assist guests if needed. Double-check that insurance policies (liability, property) are active and that you have permits visibly posted if required.

Pro Tip



Use technology to your advantage. Consider setting up a simple self-service kiosk or after-hours box for late arrivals – a locked box with site map and their name on an envelope, for example. Also, communication tools like a messaging app or text alert system can help you stay in touch with guests (some reservation systems let you text all checked-in guests for announcements like “Tonight's s'more social at 7pm!”). These small operational tech tweaks can enhance guest experience without much extra work on your part.

With your park built and your systems in place, it's time to let the world know you're open for business.

In the next chapter, we'll walk through exactly how to promote your park – online, locally, and everywhere in between – to drive bookings from day one.

Let's make your grand opening one to remember.



OPENING DAY

Marketing and Pre-Launch Promotion

With your RV park ready and your systems in place, it's time to get the word out. Marketing is what turns your dream into a business – and your empty sites into reservations.

A solid marketing plan helps campers discover you, trust you, and choose you over the competition. This is especially important at launch. The sooner you build awareness, the sooner you'll see bookings (and revenue) roll in.

The good news? You don't need a big budget – just the right strategies, some consistency, and a few smart tools.

Create a Marketing Plan

Start by identifying who you're trying to reach. Go back to your business plan: Are your target guests families on vacation? Retired snowbirds? Digital nomads? Once you know your audience, outline how you'll reach them. A mix of digital and local marketing works best for most parks. Here's how to structure your launch approach:

Website and Online Booking Are Non-Negotiable

Today's campers expect to book online – often from their phone. Make sure your website is:

- Mobile-friendly
- Easy to navigate
- Includes high-quality photos
- Clear about pricing, amenities, and policies
- Integrated with your reservation system for seamless booking

If your site isn't ready yet, [*RoverPass can help you launch a fast*](#), custom-built campground website with online booking built-in.

Pro Tip



Add a "Book Now" button prominently on every page. The easier it is to reserve, the more conversions you'll see.

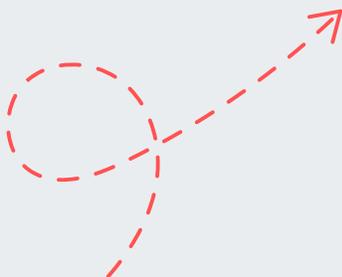
Set Up Your Google Business Profile

This is how you appear on Google Maps and search results when people type "RV park near me."

Make sure to:

- Use your real business name and location
- Add your website, phone number, and hours
- Upload at least 5 high-quality photos
- Include your opening date and a short, friendly description

Encourage your first guests to leave reviews – they dramatically boost your visibility and



Launch Social Media the Right Way

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Email Your Early Supporters

If you’ve been collecting emails – from your website, a local RV show, or interested leads – now’s the time to reach out.

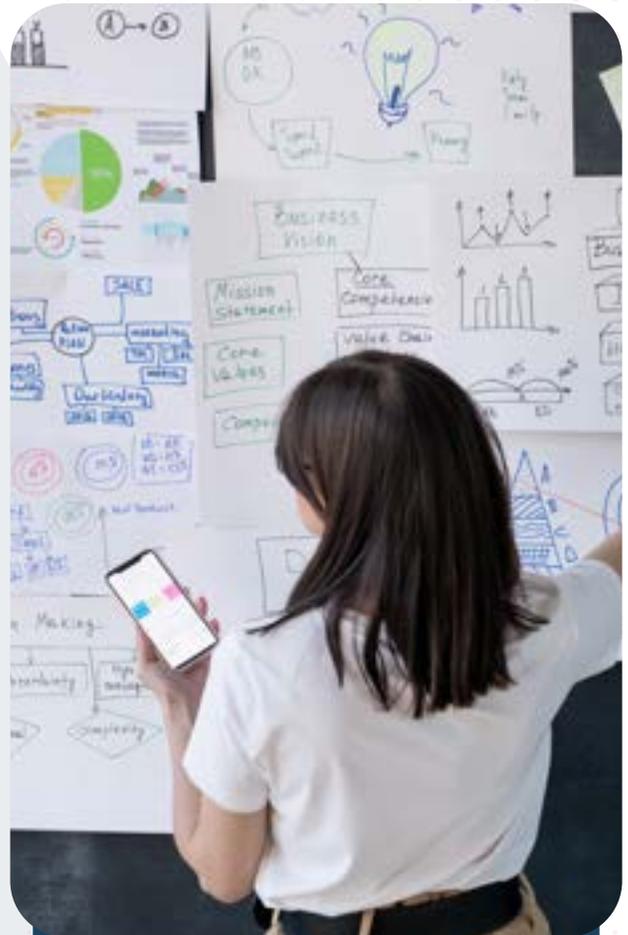
- Send a simple pre-launch email announcing:
 - Your opening date
 - An early booking discount
 - A photo of the finished park

A call-to-action to “Book Your Site Now” Even a small email list can generate early momentum and word-of-mouth.

List on Major RV Travel Platforms

Campers often search for parks through specialized apps and websites. Make sure your park is listed on:

- [RoverPass Marketplace](#) (included when you use the RoverPass reservation system)
- Campendium
- The Dyrtr
- RV Life / RV Trip Wizard
- Good Sam



Use Local and Offline Marketing

Digital is essential, but don't ignore the power of your local community.

Create simple brochures or flyers and leave them at:

- Gas stations and truck stops
- Local diners and coffee shops
- Tourist centers and chambers of commerce
- RV dealerships and service centers

Introduce yourself to nearby business owners. Offer cross-promotions, like guest coupons for a local restaurant or discounted kayak rentals. Many will be happy to collaborate if you're bringing in travelers.

You can also reach out to local media with a short press release about your grand opening. Highlight your story: "Family-Owned RV Park Set to Open Near [Town Name]" might get picked up by a regional paper or online news outlet.

Offer an Opening Promotion

Promotions give guests a reason to book now – and help you get reviews and word-of-mouth faster.

Some ideas:

"Opening Month Special: 20% Off All Stays"

"Stay 2 Nights, Get 1 Free"

"Be one of our first 50 guests and get a Founders' Discount for life"

"Leave a review after your stay, and get entered to win a free weekend"

Make the offer visible on your website, social media, and reservation page. Track results so you can see which promotions bring the most bookings.

Monitor, Respond, and Adjust

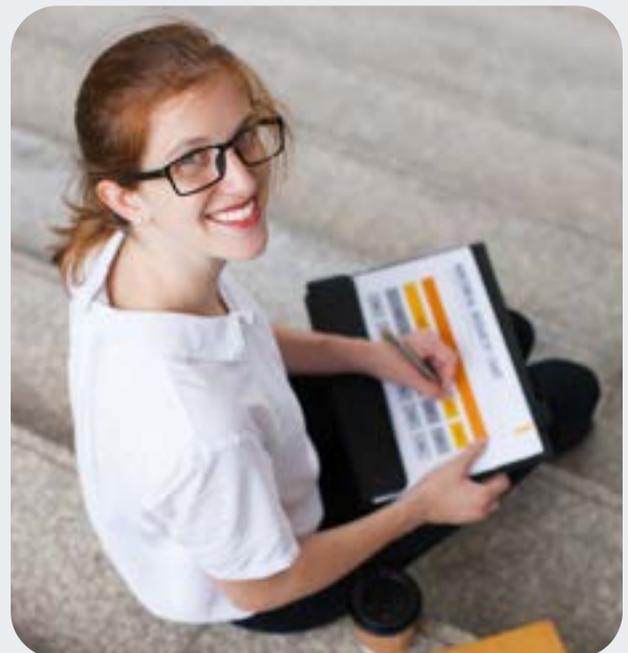
Once your marketing is live, stay engaged. Respond quickly to:

- Inquiries on Facebook or Instagram
- Reviews (good and bad)
- Guest emails and booking confirmations
- Ask every guest: "How did you hear about us?" This gives you valuable data to refine your marketing over time.

Use your reservation system's reporting tools to track where bookings are coming from, and shift more energy to what's working best.

Track Marketing ROI

Especially as a new business, you'll want to know where guests heard about you. Ask at check-in "How did you find us?" and keep a simple tally (e.g., 10 said website, 5 said Facebook, 8 said saw our sign, etc.). This anecdotal data, combined with analytics from your website and social media, can help you focus on the channels that bring the most visitors.



Pro Tip



Don't ignore online community buzz. Engage with niche communities: join RV forums (like iRV2, RVillage) and participate genuinely – perhaps share your journey of building the campground (people find that interesting) and mention your opening.

Platforms like Reddit (r/GoRVing or r/camping) might allow a soft mention or AMA (Ask Me Anything) about being a new campground owner. The key is not to spam, but to authentically connect; the marketing benefit will come naturally as people become aware of your park.

You've built the park, created the systems, and launched the marketing. Now it's time to open your gates and welcome your first guests.

In the final chapter, we'll walk you through the grand opening day and how to build long-term success – one happy camper at a time.

Let's go live!



Grand Opening & Ongoing Operations

Congratulations – your RV park is built, your systems are live, and your marketing is working. All that’s left is the best part: opening your gates and welcoming your very first guests.

But your grand opening is more than a date on the calendar. It’s your first impression. And how you handle the first few days, weeks, and months will shape your reputation, your reviews, and your revenue long after opening day.

This final chapter walks you through how to make your grand opening successful – and how to grow from there.

Grand Opening Day Preparation

Leading up to opening day, ensure everything is triple-checked. Do a final walkthrough of the entire park the day before: are all signs up, sites clean, bathrooms sparkling, and systems (water, electric, Wi-Fi) functioning properly? It’s normal to have some butterflies, but trust the preparation you’ve done.

Have your ribbon-cutting or opening ceremony if you planned one – perhaps invite a few friends or dignitaries for a small morning ceremony and photo op. Local press or social media coverage from this can amplify your launch. You might also plan a small welcome gift for your first day’s guests – a welcome bag with maybe a local map, some snacks, or a souvenir with your park logo – as a token of appreciation for being your inaugural campers.



Wow Your **First Guests**

Those first guests are more than just campers – they’re your first reviews, your first referrals, and your first chance to build a loyal base.

Personally greet them if you can. Offer a welcome gift (even something simple like s’mores kits or a park sticker). Ask them how their stay is going, and let them know you care. Your goal isn’t perfection – it’s responsiveness. If something goes wrong (a hookup issue, a noisy neighbor), how quickly and kindly you solve the problem is what they’ll remember.

Encourage happy guests to leave a review on Google or social media. One great review can lead to ten bookings.

Post-Launch **Checklist**

Once open, create a daily and weekly post-launch checklist to keep operations smooth. This might include:

- ✓ Each morning, walk or drive the park to greet any guests you see and check for overnight issues.
- ✓ Check bathrooms multiple times a day initially – new facilities might have teething issues (a faucet leak, etc.) to fix promptly.
- ✓ Monitor your reservation system for any double-bookings or errors – the first couple of weeks are a learning curve.
- ✓ End-of-day reconcile: check that all arriving guests got checked in properly in the system, and prepare any check-out paperwork for the next day.

Having a routine helps maintain order and catches problems early.



Gather **Feedback** Early

After a guest's first night or two, kindly ask how their stay is going. Encourage suggestions. As a brand-new park, you might even give out a short feedback form or a link to an online survey. Perhaps offer a small incentive like entry into a drawing for a free night if they complete it. Early feedback is gold for fine-tuning. You might learn campers want an extra trash can near a far cluster of sites, or that signage could be improved at an intersection. Show that you're receptive and quick to act on reasonable suggestions – this will impress guests and likely earn you positive word-of-mouth.

Build **Online Reviews** and Reputation

In the hospitality world, reviews are everything. Start building your reputation from day one. Politely encourage happy guests to share their experience online. You can say something like, "We're so glad you enjoyed your stay! As a new small business, we'd really appreciate it if you leave us a quick review on Google or Facebook." Many will oblige, and those initial 5-star reviews will help attract more guests. Monitor review sites regularly.

Thank reviewers publicly, and address any negative points calmly and proactively. By being responsive, you turn even a critical review into an opportunity to show excellent customer service.

Maintain **Quality** and Improve

The weeks after opening are critical to maintain the quality standards you set. It's easy, for instance, to let cleaning standards slip when you get busy – don't. Stick to your schedules and keep the park in top condition. Over time, institute a preventative maintenance plan (if you haven't already) to



avoid major breakdowns.

For example, schedule the septic tank pump-outs proactively, service your lawn equipment, and periodically check all rental equipment. Keeping a log can help track when things were last done. Also, continue to innovate: maybe you notice guests love a certain spot for sunsets – you could add a few benches there. Or if kids are often looking for things to do, maybe add a horseshoe pit or cornhole game.

Seasonal Planning

Campgrounds have natural rhythms: busy summers, slower winters, spring clean-ups, fall maintenance.

- Create a year-round calendar that includes:
- Maintenance milestones (mow, winterize, pump septic, etc.)
- Local events or holidays to build promotions around
- Staff planning for peak periods
- Marketing campaigns by season

This turns your business from reactive to proactive – and helps you avoid surprises.

Community and Camper Engagement

As you get into the groove, think about building a camping community feel. Engaged, happy campers become repeat customers. Consider organizing small events: a weekly campfire night with s'mores, a morning coffee meetup, or a nature walk if you have trails. These don't have to be elaborate, but they enhance the guest experience and set you apart. Also get involved in the broader RV community – maybe host a rally for an RV club (great exposure) or sponsor a local event (like a booth at a county fair to promote your park).



Financial Monitoring and Adjustment

Keep a close eye on the business side. Use your reservation platform and accounting tools to track:

- Site type performance (are premium sites worth it?)
- Extra revenue from retail or rentals
- Labor vs. income in peak vs. slow seasons
- Breakeven points and ROI over time

As real data rolls in, compare it to your original financial plan. This helps you know when it's time to raise rates, reduce expenses, or invest in that next phase.

Grow and Evolve

Ongoing operation isn't static. Stay attuned to trends (maybe more people want monthly stays; maybe there's a surge in EV campers needing charging). Continue networking with other campground owners through associations or forums; there's always something to learn to improve your park.

Plan for enhancements – keep a wish list of upgrades or new amenities and tackle them as finances allow. Perhaps year 2 you add a dog wash station, year 3 you install some rental cabins, etc. These improvements can both attract new guests and give previous guests reasons to return

Stay Compliant and Safe

As time goes on, don't let compliance lapse. Renew any licenses or permits annually if required. Keep up with health department checks (especially if you have a pool or serve food).





Refresh staff on safety training periodically. Update your emergency plans (for instance, have a plan for severe weather – know where you’d shelter campers if a tornado warning or how to evacuate in a wildfire scenario, etc., and communicate that plan clearly with signage or guest info).



Pro Tip

Take care of yourself too. Running a campground, especially in the early days, can be all-consuming – you’re wearing many hats and on call 24/7. It’s important to establish a bit of work-life balance so you don’t burn out. Set boundaries like “office hours” even if you live on-site, so guests know when non-urgent matters can be handled. Maybe schedule a day or afternoon off once a week where a trusted staff or family member covers for you. A rested, happy owner will translate to happier guests.

You Made It and You're Just Getting Started

Opening day may be the end of this guide, but it's the beginning of something bigger.

You're now the host of a place where people will make memories: families on road trips, couples finding peace in nature, solo travelers watching the stars. And it all started with your idea, your planning, and your persistence.

Your RV park will grow and evolve – just like you. Use what you've built as a strong foundation, and keep learning, adapting, and connecting with your guests and community.

Here's to a full calendar, glowing reviews, and many seasons of success.

Happy hosting. And happy camping.



