



Convention Center RV Parks

By Dan Martin, Managing Principal, Market & Feasibility Advisors, LLC

Already a growing way to travel and explore, RVs have gotten more popular since the onset of Covid-19. Peer-to-peer rentals, like drive-away Airbnb's, and a stunning growth in commercial rentals following years of sales growth, have put well over 14 million households on the road this summer and this year, they might stay on the road into the fall and winter. In addition, while we swoon over tiny houses, a million households actually live an RV lifestyle on the road most, or all, of the year.

Metro area RV campgrounds are, at best, located in the suburbs and not the inner suburbs – nowhere near beautiful center-cities. This year, there's a way for cities to host RVs like never before. Might they be interested in a little city life? We could convert our largely vacant convention and expo centers and their marshalling yards (adjacent truck parking and loading areas), into temporary RV parks – at least through spring.

Basically, RV parks are landscaped parking lots that hold the weight of a truck and offer distributed utility connections. Without the landscaping, that could be a convention center. They're missing sewage dumps of course, but have offer rest rooms and sewage dump arrangements can be made. Historically, RV parks have offered drive through sewage facilities off to one side. Convention center parking areas could similarly accommodate drive-through temp dump station in a small parking area.

In Chicago, the McCormick Place marshalling yard has already been used for RVs. The four buildings, with 2.6 million square feet all together could host massive Covid-friendly RV meet-ups with Lake Michigan Views (are you listening Good Sam Club and the Airstream clubs?). Currently closed Navy Pier has a huge space, right on the Lake, that could hold a decent sized number of RVs.

Let's see which enterprising cities try this first. The best candidates are cities with some (open) downtown amenities and with sites on or proximate to water - rivers, lakes, the Gulf or an ocean. Possible gross is maybe \$4,500 a night for every hundred RVs. Not a lot, but new life for our recovering cities. Give this, or other places to host RVs some thought. Social media is strong in the RV world. You'll get the word out.

Send ideas, thoughts and comments to me and my MFA colleagues at:

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or call 312.933.7898 to continue the conversation.

Thanks for reading.



About Market & Feasibility Advisors

Market & Feasibility Advisors (MFA) provides timely in-depth data, comprehensive analysis, and sustainable strategies for public, private, and non-profit clients.

Whether working directly for clients or as a part of multi-disciplinary team, MFA executes market, feasibility, master plan economics, and impact studies resulting in strategic planning based on realistic environments and the unique characteristics of each specific site, project, target market, and competition.

The MFA team of professionals brings more than 100 years of consulting and research experience to their projects. Many successfully worked together for years at the former Economics Research Associates, ERA and helped grow that firm prior to its sale.

We often work with firms that provide professional services in Architecture; City and Regional Planning; Exhibit Design; Fund Raising; Landscape Architecture; Legal Services; Survey Research; Civil Engineering; Theatre Design; Museum Planning; Transportation; Education and Branding.