



COUNTY OF LOUISA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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www.louisacounty.gov

To: Members, Planning Commission
From: Staff, Community Development Department
RE: Proposed Draft Amendments – Camping & Campgrounds
Date: September 3, 2026

At the August Planning Commission meeting, the public hearing on proposed amendments related to Camping and Campgrounds was removed from the agenda and a work session scheduled for the September 10, 2026 meeting.

In the interim, staff have met with the appointed work group members, Commissioners Quarles and Painting; and received input from Commissioner Goodwin on this topic.

Items Tentatively In Agreement

- Neighbor input before initial approval
- Public health and safety standards
- Water, sewer/septic, and electrical compliance
- Buffers, setbacks, and landscaping
- County registration and tracking
- Temporary occupancy only
- Employment verification for workforce stays
- Greater review/standards for 3 or more sites
- Prevent long-term storage of unused or abandoned RVs/campers
- Consider a 29-day maximum stay

Items Needing Discussion

- One campground definition or separate recreational/workforce categories
- Approval process for 1–2 sites
- Standards for 3 or more sites

- Minimum acreage requirements
- Maximum density / number of campsites
- Buffer and setback requirements
- Whether workers must provide their own RV/camper
- Whether RVs/campers may remain on-site between occupants
- Whether tents should be allowed
- Length-of-stay rules
- Transient occupancy tax and/or fees

Included in for your reference are the following documents:

- August 13th Draft Scheduled for Public Hearing
- August 13th Draft Scheduled for Public Hearing with Comments
- Regulation Information – Surry County Ordinance
- Campsite Acreage, Clustering and Buffer Example

We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to your input.

August 13th Draft Scheduled for Public Hearing

DRAFT AMENDMENT

Chapter 86. Land Development Regulations Use of Travel Trailers, Campers, Etc. and Campgrounds

The purpose of this draft is to amend the definition of campground to add major and minor campgrounds and campsites; add a definition of a recreational shelter; clarify the use of recreational shelters (tents, campers, recreational vehicles, etc.); clarify that recreational shelters may not be used as a short-term rental; and amend the zoning districts where a campground may be permitted with the issuance of a conditional use permit.

THESE REGULATIONS APPLY THROUGHOUT ALL OF LOUISA COUNTY; and are proposed pursuant to Va. Code §§ 15.2-2285 and 15.2-2286.

Section 86-13 Definitions

~~Campground, major. Facilities providing camping or parking areas and incidental services for travelers in recreational vehicles and/or tents. An area or parcel of land, managed as a unit, providing accommodations for a minimum of three (3) campsites for recreational shelters (tents, tent trailers, travel trailers, recreational vehicles and campers, etc.). Campgrounds must comply with regulations for sanitation imposed by the Virginia Department of Health and Statewide Building Code; and a conditional use permit shall be obtained in every case.~~

At a minimum a campground, major shall meet the following requirements:

- a. Minimum of ten (10) acres for the first three (3) to five (5) campsites; an additional two (2) acres shall be required for each additional campsites;**
- b. Onsite administrative offices OR main entrance signage providing dedicated phone number to manager on duty, the physical address of the campground, campground layout, and emergency procedures.**
- c. Landscape plan containing a minimum of 200-foot of landscaping and buffers to screen the facility from all adjacent properties and public right-of-way.**
- d. Major campground site and landscape plans submitted for projects that exceed five (5) campsites, must follow the provisions of Article IV Supplementary Regulations, Division 1. Site Plans; and, at a minimum, must include the number of campsites, location of proposed/existing auxiliary buildings and facilities, and location of proposed/existing utilities on-site. At a minimum, an Administrative Site Plan is required.**
- e. The permanent campground address shall not be used to register school age children with the Louisa County Public Schools.**

A campground shall not allow siting of mobile/manufactured homes or trailers.

Overnight RV Parking - The overnight parking of recreational vehicles shall be a permitted accessory use at **approved** parking facilities, and shall not be classified as a campground, provided that the following criteria is met:

- (1) Recreational vehicles shall only be parked on a temporary overnight basis, and shall not be parked for more than 12 continuous hours at a time;
- (2) Parking facilities shall not provide incidental services principally for recreational vehicles, and
- (3) The parking of recreational vehicles shall not interfere with the movement of traffic or create a safety hazard.

Campground, minor. An area or parcel of land, managed as a unit, providing accommodations for less than three (3) campsites for recreational shelters (tents, tent trailers, travel trailers, recreational vehicles and campers, etc.). At a minimum, a minor campground shall meet the following requirements:

- a. **Minimum of three (3) acres.**
- b. **Main entrance signage providing dedicated phone number to manager on duty, the physical address of the campground, campground layout, and emergency procedures.**
- c. **Landscape plan containing a minimum of 100-foot of landscaping and buffers to screen the facility from all adjacent properties and public right-of-way.**
- f. **Minor campground site and landscape plans submitted for all projects must follow the provisions of Article IV Supplementary Regulations, Division 1. Site Plans; and, at a minimum, must include the number of campsites, location of proposed/existing auxiliary buildings and facilities, and location of proposed/existing utilities on-site. At a minimum, an Administrative Site Plan is required.**
- d. **The permanent campground address shall not be used to register school age children with the Louisa County Public Schools.**
- e. **The owner shall provide the current Louisa County Code chapters relating to noise (51) and solid waste (62) as part of the rental contracts.**
- f. **The campground must comply with all Virginia Department of Health regulations.**
- g. **The campground must comply with all applicable state building code and safety regulations.**
- h. **Campground owners must register with the Community Development Department and provide contact information for the owner and/or any authorized property manager to Louisa County; along with copies of approved inspections from the Virginia Department of Health and the Building Division of the Community Development Department.**
- i. **Owners unable to meet all of the above requirements shall be prohibited from operating a minor campground without obtaining a conditional use permit from Louisa County Board of Supervisors.**
- j. **A violation under this section shall be enforced as provided in section 86-11 and section 86-11.1.**

Campsite. A designated plot of ground within an **approved** campground intended or used for the exclusive occupancy by ~~a tent, recreational vehicle, or a vacation cottage~~ **recreational shelters (tents, tent trailers, travel trailers, recreational vehicles and campers, etc.)**

Recreational shelter. Units designed as temporary living quarters for camping and travel (whether recreational or work related); including tents, tent trailers, travel trailers, recreational vehicles, campers, and similar units.

DRAFT

Section 86-109. Matrix table.

Proposed Amendments to <u>Section 86-109 Use Matrix</u> to amend and identify the districts in which a campground (major and minor) is permitted with restrictions and with the issuance of a conditional use permit.																			
Defined Use	A-1	A-1 GAOD	A-2	A-2 GAOD	R-1	R-1 GAOD	R-2	R-2 GAOD	C-1	C-1 GAOD	C-2	C-2 GAOD	IND	IND GAOD	I-1	I-1 GAOD	I-2	I-2 GAOD	RD
COMMERCIAL																			
<i>Campground, major</i>	C	C	C	C	X	X	X	X	X-C	X-C	X-C	X-C	X	X	X	X	X	X	B
<i>Campground, minor</i>	B(R)	B(R)	B(R)	B(R)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	B
The proposed amendments affect only those uses listed above to be amended; and makes no changes to any other listed uses in Section 86-109																			
B = Allowable by-right																			
B(R) = Allowable by-right (with restrictions)																			
C = Conditional use permit																			
X = Not allowable																			

Section 86-111. - Use of travel trailers, campers, etc., for dwellings prohibited.

Travel trailers, campers, motor homes, tents, camp cabins, **recreational vehicles**, and the like (also known as **recreational shelters**) shall not be used for permanent or full-time dwellings in any district. ~~unless otherwise permitted, whether or not connected to utilities, wells or septic systems.~~ For the purposes of this section, ~~permanent means available for occupancy for 30 consecutive days regardless of actual use.~~

For purposes of this section:

“Used as a dwelling” includes any of the following:

1. Occupied by any person as their primary or secondary residence;
2. Occupied for sleeping purposes;
3. Connected to permanent utilities (water, sewer, or electric); or
4. Rented, leased, or provided for compensation to any occupant.

“Connected to utilities” includes both physical connection and regular use of water, sewer, or electrical services via extension cords, hoses, or other temporary means.

This section does NOT prohibit:

1. **Storage:** Parking or storing a qualifying recreational shelter on private property when not occupied.
2. **Temporary Recreation:** Using any qualifying recreational shelter on the owner’s property for recreational purposes not exceeding 10 days in any 30-day period, provided it is not used as anyone’s primary or secondary residence.
3. **Campgrounds:** Use of a qualifying recreational shelter in properly zoned and permitted campground facilities.

Sec. 86-114. - Short-term rental of a dwelling.

For only this section GAOD means all properties zoned residential limited (R-1); residential general (R-2); and resort development (RD) located within the boundaries of a designated growth area as shown on the 2040 comprehensive plan. The following are requirements for use in R-1 GAOD; R-2 GAOD; and the RD zoning districts:

- (1) Owners of dwellings used for short-term rental shall provide contact information for the owner and/or any authorized property manager to Louisa County and the dwelling's subdivision governing body, if one exists.
- (2) The owner shall provide the current Louisa County Code chapters relative to noise (51) and solid waste (62) as well as the definitions for special occasion facilities and gatherings as part of short-term rental contracts.
- (3) Owner must notify tenants that events, rentals, special occasion facilities and related uses are prohibited, except with valid conditional use permit according to Louisa County Code.
- (4) Owner must comply with all Virginia Department of Health regulations.
- (5) The dwelling must comply with all applicable state building code and safety regulations.
- (6) Owners unable to meet all of the above requirements shall be prohibited from operating a short-term rental of a dwelling without obtaining a conditional use permit from Louisa County Board of Supervisors.
- (7) A violation under this section shall be enforced as provided in [section 86-11](#) and [section 86-11.1](#).
- (8) **Tents, tent trailers, travel trailers, recreational vehicles and campers, and the like shall not be used for short-term rental occupancy.**
- ~~(8)~~(9) The effective date of this Code shall be January 1, 2025.

DIVISION 6. - ZONING DISTRICTS AND LAND USES

Sec. 86-134. - Permitted uses – Generally (A-1)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-151. - Permitted uses – Generally (A-2)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-206. - Permitted uses with a conditional use permit (C-1)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, major

Sec. 86-224. - Permitted uses with a conditional use permit (C-2)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, major

Sec. 86-295. - Permitted uses – Generally (RD)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-337. - Permitted uses – Generally (A-1 Growth Area Overlay District)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-357. - Permitted uses – Generally (A-2 Growth Area Overlay District)

COMMERCIAL

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TEXT LEGEND

Bolded Text = To Be Added

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Campground, minor

Sec. 86-412. - Permitted uses with a conditional use permit (C-1 Growth Area Overlay District)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, major

Sec. 86-431. - Permitted uses with a conditional use permit (C-2 Growth Area Overlay District)

COMMERCIAL

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DRAFT

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Needs Review and Consensus –

- **One campground definition or separate recreational and workforce categories**

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- **Approval process for 1-2 sites**
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COMMERCIAL																			
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- (6) Owners unable to meet all of the above requirements shall be prohibited from operating a short-term rental of a dwelling without obtaining a conditional use permit from Louisa County Board of Supervisors.
- (7) A violation under this section shall be enforced as provided in [section 86-11](#) and [section 86-11.1](#).
- (8) **Tents, tent trailers, travel trailers, recreational vehicles and campers, and the like shall not be used for short-term rental occupancy.**
- ~~(8)~~(9) The effective date of this Code shall be January 1, 2025.

Needs Review and Consensus –

- **One campground definition or separate recreational and workforce categories**
- **Approval process for 1-2 sites**
- **Same for 3 or more sites**

DIVISION 6. - ZONING DISTRICTS AND LAND USES

Sec. 86-134. - Permitted uses – Generally (A-1)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-151. - Permitted uses – Generally (A-2)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-206. - Permitted uses with a conditional use permit (C-1)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, major

Sec. 86-224. - Permitted uses with a conditional use permit (C-2)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, major

Sec. 86-295. - Permitted uses – Generally (RD)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-337. - Permitted uses – Generally (A-1 Growth Area Overlay District)

COMMERCIAL

TEXT LEGEND

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~~Strikethrough~~ = To Be Removed

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-357. - Permitted uses – Generally (A-2 Growth Area Overlay District)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, minor

Sec. 86-412. - Permitted uses with a conditional use permit (C-1 Growth Area Overlay District)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, major

Sec. 86-431. - Permitted uses with a conditional use permit (C-2 Growth Area Overlay District)

COMMERCIAL

Campground, major

Needs Review and Consensus – Add a new section of design guidelines for defined campground or separate recreational and workforce categories

- **Minimum acreage requirements**
- **Maximum density / number of campsites**
- **Buffer and setback requirements**
- **Whether workers must provide their own RV/camper**
- **Whether RVs/campers may remain on-site between occupants**
- **Whether tents should be allowed**
- **Length-of-stay rules**
- **Transient occupancy tax and/or fees**

ARTICLE IV. - SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS

Division 6. Campgrounds

Regulation Information Surry County Ordinance

Surry County – Section 2-202 Use type descriptions.

COMMERCIAL USE TYPES

Campground. Any site, lot, parcel or tract of land on which accommodations for temporary occupancy are located or may be placed, including cabins, tents, and recreational equipment, recreational vehicles, and which is primarily used for recreational purposes and retains an open air or natural character.

Campground, workforce. A small **campground** facility intended for the temporary **workforce** routinely required by establishments in the community for periods of up to four months at a time, and are intended to have only the minimum essential services necessary for recreational vehicles. (See [section 4-705.](#))

- A. The following uses are permitted by right subject to all other applicable requirements contained in this ordinance. An asterisk (*) indicates additional, modified or more stringent standards are listed in article IV, Use and design standards, for those specific uses.

AGRICULTURAL USES

Agriculture*

Farm employee housing*

Greenhouse, private

Roadside stand*

Sawmill*

Silvicultural activities*

Stable, commercial*

Stable, private*

RESIDENTIAL USES

Accessory apartment*

Dwelling, single-family, detached

Dwelling, single-family, farm

Family day care home

Group home

Guest house*

Home occupation, community*

Home occupation, rural*

Kennel, private*

Manufactured home, Class A

Manufactured home, Class B

Temporary emergency housing*

CIVIC USE TYPES

Camp*

Cemetery

Club

Community center

Community recreation

Cultural service

Day care center

Park and ride facility

Post office

Public facilities

Public maintenance facility*

Public park and recreational area

Religious assembly

Utility service/minor

COMMERCIAL USE TYPES

Agricultural service*

Antique shop

Construction office, temporary

Golf course

Real estate office, temporary

Studio, fine arts

Taxidermy*

MISCELLANEOUS USE TYPES

Amateur radio tower*

Hunt club

Hunting preserve

Outdoor gathering*

Parking facility

Turkey shoot*

Windmill*

B. The following uses are allowed only by special exception from the board of zoning appeals pursuant to section 1-304. An asterisk (*) indicates additional, modified or more stringent standards are listed in article IV, Use and design standards, for those specific uses.

RESIDENTIAL USES

Manufactured home, family member residence*

Manufactured home, temporary residence*

CIVIC USES

Day care center

COMMERCIAL USE TYPES

Campground, workforce*

Office, general

Taxidermy

Veterinary hospital/clinic

INDUSTRIAL USE TYPES

Contractor's yard*

Convenience center*

Custom manufacturing*

MISCELLANEOUS USE TYPES

Communication tower*

C.

The following uses are allowed only by conditional use permit from the board of supervisors pursuant to section 1-501. An asterisk (*) indicates additional, modified or more stringent standards are listed in article IV, Use and design standards, for those specific uses.

RESIDENTIAL USES

Dwelling, multifamily conversion*

Manufactured home park*

Manufactured home subdivision*

CIVIC USE TYPES

Battery energy storage system*

Child care institution

Correctional facility

Crisis center

Educational facility

Halfway house

Nursing home

Rehabilitation service

Utility service/major*

COMMERCIAL USE TYPES

Auction establishment

Bed and breakfast*

Camp*

Campground*

Commercial outdoor recreation

Kennel, commercial

Livestock auction market*

Lumber yard

Marina

Motor vehicle repair service/minor

Motor vehicle repair service/major

INDUSTRIAL USE TYPES

Landfill*

Mining*

Power plant

Scrap and salvage service*

Transfer station

MISCELLANEOUS USE TYPES

Alternate discharge sewage system*

Aviation facility, commercial*

Aviation facility, private*

Reconstructed wetland*

Shooting range, outdoor*

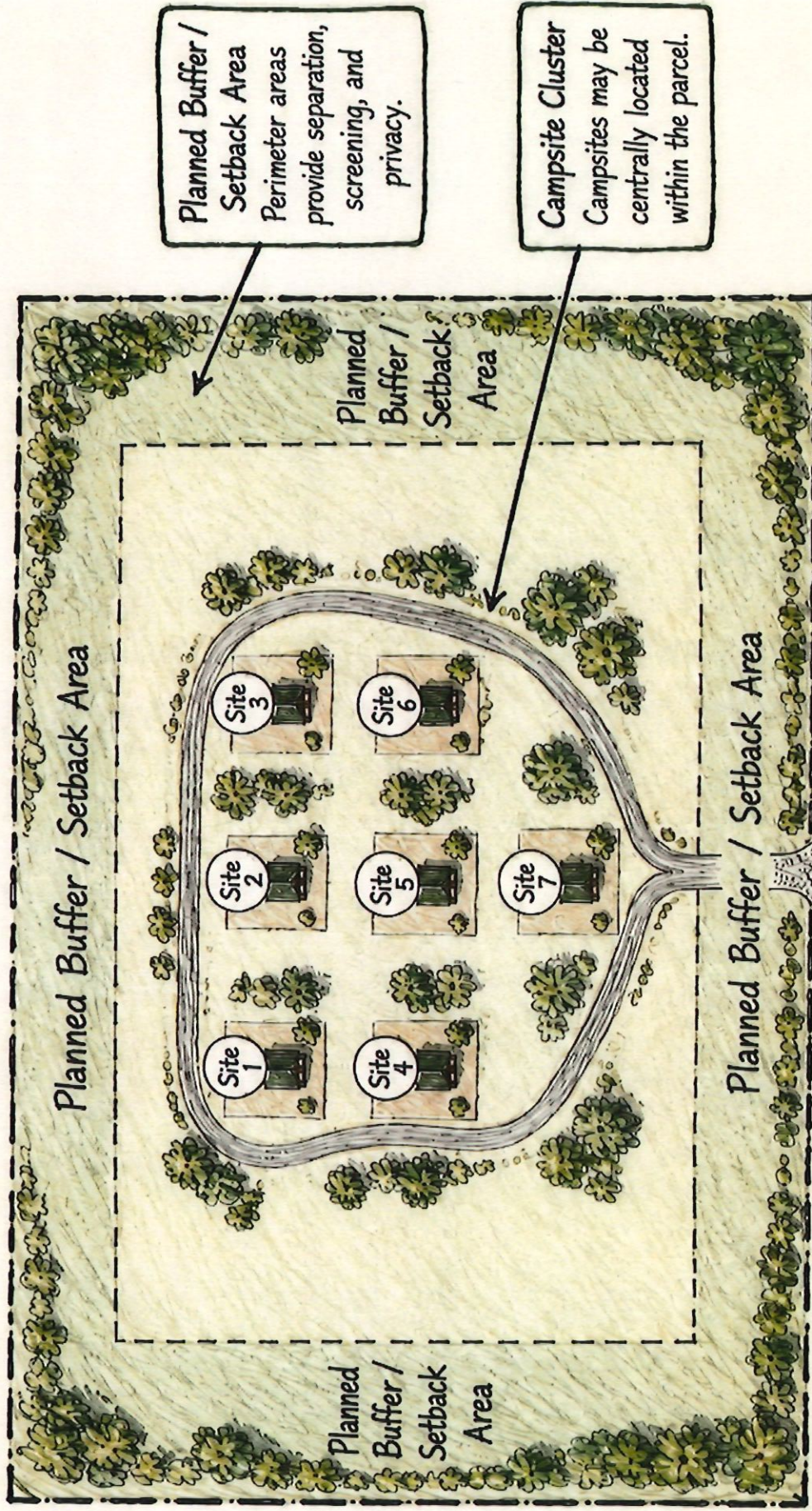
(Ord. No. 2013-01, Att., 9-5-2013; Ord. No. 2023-03, 2-2-2023; Ord. No. 2024-08, 12-5-2024; Ord. No. 2025-02, 4-3-2025)

Sec. 4-705. - Campground, workforce.

- A. *Intent.* The workforce campground, in contrast to a recreational campground, is to provide small scaled facilities in discrete rural areas of the county to accommodate the workforce associated with the Surry Nuclear Power Plant and similar facilities during outages, which require skilled and semi-skilled labor to seek temporary short term housing in the community.
- B. *General standards.*
1. Density permitted is one campsite per 0.5 acres.
 2. The maximum number of campsites shall be ten sites.
 3. No campsite shall be located within 200 feet of single-family residence located on an adjoining property, other than the residence of the owner/operator of the campground.
 4. Health department approval shall be obtained for the campground and sewage disposal system. Any form of sewage disposal may be approved by the health department, unless otherwise specifically addressed by this ordinance, provided there is no assumption of liability on Surry County without the express approval of the board of supervisors.
 5. Access to campsites shall be provided by a ten-foot all weather road suitable for volume and characteristics of the vehicles typical of a campground.
 6. The property on which the workforce campground is located shall have direct access to a public road, or if a private road is used for access, all of the property owners have access rights to the private road shall provide a written authorization for the use of the private road for a workforce campground.
 7. The maximum length of continuous occupancy in the same campground shall be no more than 120 days. This maximum occupancy shall not be circumvented by removal of units for brief periods of time, as is determined by the administrator.
 8. The location of the campgrounds, the condition of the site and the nature of surrounding land uses shall be such that loss of farmland and adverse impact on surrounding property will be minimal. In general, a wooded site or partially wooded site is to be preferred to an open site in order to preserve farmland, reduce visual impact on development and provide an attractive environment within the campground.
 9. The overall design shall evidence a reasonable effort to preserve the natural amenities of the site, including wooded areas, steep slopes, bluffs, wetlands, beaches, and bodies of water. Special emphasis shall be given to preservation of mature trees and landscaping of areas which must be cleared.
 10. The special exception permit, if approved, shall initially be issued for a period not to exceed five years. Renewal of the permit shall be obtained prior to the expiration of the initial five years, after which a permit may be issued for period of not more than ten years.

Campsite Acreage, Clustering and Buffer Example

Concept: X Acres Required Per Campsite



Per-campsite acreage sets the minimum total parcel size

Campsites may be centrally located within the parcel; each campsite does not need its own separate X-acre area.