



RV Park and Campground

# MARKETING PLAN and

# SCOAR<sup>®</sup> ANALYSIS

March 2022



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# RV Park & Campground Marketing Plan and SCOAR® Analysis

For the Township of Red Rock

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March 2022



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The Township of Red Rock would like to recognize the support of NOHFC and FedNor for this project.

The views expressed in this document are the views of the Recipient and do not necessarily reflect those of NOHFC, FedNor or the Government of Ontario.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Township of Red Rock hereby acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Robinson-Superior Treaty and that the land on which we gather is home to the Red Rock Indian Band, the Anishinabek, and the Metis people.



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**Red Rock RV Park & Campground  
Marketing Plan and SCOAR® Analysis  
Township of Red Rock**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The previous reporting through the RV Park Market Analysis made clear that many factors suggest strong current and future demand in RV and tent camping. These factors include that:

- A key age demographic in which RV ownership is popular is growing;
- There is significant growth of RV ownership in other age demographics;
- Camping is seen as a COVID-safe vacation activity;
- The positive effects of the COVID pandemic on the RV and tent camping market are not likely to dissipate soon, if ever;
- Campground revenues for both tent and RV camping are rising;
- Manufacturing and sale of RVs experienced strong growth pre-pandemic and surged further during the pandemic;
- The growing backlog in RV production orders despite increased production output is an indicator of strong future retail RV sales.

Additionally, Ontario is underserved by campsites and would require 500 more campgrounds and 10,000 more campsites to match Canada's per capita averages. Consultations with local RV park owners have made clear that there is significant demand in the Red Rock market area. Specifically, 100% of seasonal sites have been selling out annually (and waitlists amount to years of demand), and an expected occupancy rate of 80% for transient sites. This demand will be further bolstered by the return of U.S. campers (formerly 22% of campers) to the area as borders reopen.

Given these findings, it is expected that there will be no challenge in terms of sufficiency of demand for any number of campsites Red Rock can provide. In sum, the proposed Red Rock RV Park and Campground is well located, is well supported by a number of tourism assets, and has a number of positive locational and site attributes.

This marketing strategy and SCOAR analysis help outline how to leverage the fortuitous economic climate and Red Rock's natural amenities to ensure there is sufficient interest among consumers.

It will do so by:

- Identifying target audiences;
- Identifying marketing strategies to best target those target audiences;
- Briefly recapping the park's value proposition points; and
- Presenting a detailed SCOAR analysis of the campground.

## 2. IDENTIFICATION OF TARGET AUDIENCES

Key audiences are best split into two categories; RV campers and tent campers. Though there is some overlap between the two (e.g., many people undertaking the Lake Superior Circle Tour do so in RVs), for the sake of this current analysis, we have broken them down into distinct categories:

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### 2.2. RV Campers

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The two demographics most ideally pursued are casual campers and family campers. “Casual Camper” (82% over the age of 55) and “Family Camper” clusters together make up 72% of all RV owners who make use of their RV 16 and 30 days per year<sup>1</sup>. While casual campers have more flexibility, family campers are typically restricted to summer months due to scheduling constraints<sup>2</sup>.

The casual camper cluster (owning 39% of RVs) will continue to grow in size as Gen X Canadians join the Baby Boomers in this 55+ cohort. Casual campers are typically retired (55% of the demographic) and the vast majority live with no children (90%). Family Campers comprise the second-largest RV owner group (33%). The number of RV owners in this cluster will continue to grow as camping is seen as a COVID safe and relatively inexpensive vacation option for families.

Targeting these demographic clusters is recommended as they currently represent nearly three-quarters of RV ownership, and their representation is expected to continue to grow. Moreover, as noted below, the needs of both fit well with the current amenities within and near Red Rock.

#### *Campsite Size*

These two demographic clusters utilize slightly different equipment:

- Casual campers largely use conventional travel trailers (48%) and fifth-wheel trailers (14%);
- Family campers largely use conventional travel trailers (26%) and (expandable) hybrid travel trailers (11%).

Though slightly different, these clusters both rely on RVs of significant length. As such, the equipment of these demographics is better suited to pull-through sites being designed for the proposed RV park, whereas most campsites in the area rely on traditional back-in spaces. Moreover, the ability of the proposed RV park to provide sites with 3-way services will be seen as a significant positive for many within these two demographic clusters and their larger RVs.

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<sup>1</sup> A third potential target market demographic are the “escapists” demographic. Escapists often travel as a family for up to two months, enjoying water-based activities and areas with natural beauty. However, they represent a much smaller percentage of the market compared to these two demographics, and their needs are relatively similar. As such, we have not included them here.

<sup>2</sup> Go RVing Owner Demographic Profiles. <https://www.rvia.org/go-rving-rv-owner-demographic-profile>

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## *Amenities Needed*

Casual campers value access to hiking, sightseeing and other outdoor and water-based activities – typically these interests are satisfied in the campground or the surrounding area. Red Rock is already well served in this respect. Local hiking opportunities (including two hiking access points within the Township) and immediate access to the Red Rock Marina will serve this demographic well.

Family campers are often more interested in making use of a campground’s physical assets (i.e., a swimming pool, playground, beach)<sup>3</sup>. Significant improvements to the playground and splash pad area, as well as the improvement and re-opening of the beach are man-made amenities that will be required to be attractive to family campers. The current work to refurbish and reopen a swimming pool by 2024 will be another draw. All of these assets provide an opportunity for interaction between local residents and visitors.

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## 2.3. Tent Campers

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Though there are a large variety of campers who would make use of tents, for the purposes of this marketing strategy, tent campers will be separated into three broad categories: Lake Superior Circle Tour participants, event-goers, and local nature enthusiasts.

### *Lake Superior Circle Tour Participants*

Red Rock is well positioned along the north shore of Lake Superior to take advantage of the many cyclists and motorists who are touring the area or attempting to complete the Lake Superior Circle Tour. The Lake Superior Circle Tour is approximately 2,000 kilometres in length, self-guided, and completes a loop around the Lake. The route is a popular tour for both bicyclists and motorcyclists.

The official [bicycle](#) and [motorcycle](#) tour guides have significant trip planning and guide resources, highlighting available campgrounds and other amenities. Profiling of the RV campground on the website is a must. [Advertising](#) through the Lake Superior Circle Tour Adventure Guide is also a potential opportunity. The guide is available online and sees over 80,000 copies printed each year; advertising costs range from \$500 to \$1,000, depending on the level of information shared.

Moreover, the amenities available within Red Rock (Red Pebbles Café, variety store and grocery store, as well as showers, bathrooms, and laundry services), are likely to appeal strongly to tour participants needing a recharge. As noted in the introduction to this section, many of the tour participants are RV owners, though they typically fall within the RV owner demographic groups noted above and their specific needs are covered in the previous sub-section.

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<sup>3</sup> Go RVing Owner Demographic Profiles. <https://www.rvia.org/go-rving-rv-owner-demographic-profile>

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### *Event-goers*

Red Rock hosts numerous local events that attract tourists from outside the area. These events include the Red Rock Fish and Game Club Trout Derby (in June), the Paju Mountain Run (August) and Live from the Rock Folk Festival (August). The Folk Festival in particular is a significant attraction, with approximately 2,000 attendees annually across its four days of festivities. Though some attendees will utilize the RV section of the campground, having available space for tent campers is an important alternative for the infrequent camper.

### *Local Nature Enthusiasts*

Red Rock is also well served in amenities offered to tent campers. Campsites offering quick access to the surrounding natural beauty appeals to these campers. Being only approximately 100 KM from Thunder Bay allows access for those looking for brief weekend tenting excursions.

Together, the combination of placement on the Lake Superior Circle Tour, the popularity of local events, and access to Thunder Bay and surrounding natural excursion opportunities suggest that the tent camping area will see significant demand if leveraged appropriately.



## 3. MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

### 3.1. Priority 1: Online Marketing

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#### A. Updated and Active Online Presence

A considerable drawback to many otherwise desirable campgrounds is a lack of online presence. As of 2017, over three out of every four North Americans have purchased some form of good online, with 2022 estimates rising as high as 90%<sup>4</sup>. As the usage of computers in commerce continues to grow, the proposed RV site must have an accessible Internet presence. Once established, the website must be maintained<sup>5</sup>. Many campgrounds reviewed for this report have web addresses that are referenced on booking sites but are unable to be connected to or have not been updated in years. These sites give the appearance of a rundown business, discouraging potential campers from staying at the campground.

Having an accessible website that presents clear, relevant information combined with a secure seamless booking process will offer a competitive advantage over other campgrounds. Given consumers' preference for simplicity and ease of access (availability and convenience are commonly cited as the most relevant issues for online consumers), hosting a well-maintained site is invaluable<sup>6</sup>.

#### Opportunities:

- 1) Produce a website/webpage specifically for the Red Rock RV Park and Campground and locate it on a sub-domain of the current Township of Red Rock website with a URL such as CampRedRock.ca (available). Provide comprehensive information on the campground. Ensure that the website always is current.
- 2) Investigate established online booking (and ideally check-in) systems for campgrounds to determine the one that works best for the Red Rock RV Park and Campground (and possibly marina) and which is most suitable and cost-effective for the Township. (i.e., <https://www.letsbonfire.com/> or <https://campgroundsolutions.goodsam.com/> or <https://join.letscamp.ca/>).

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<sup>4</sup> Maat, K & Konings, R. 2017. Accessibility or Innovation? Store Shopping Trips versus Online Shopping. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361198118794044>

<sup>5</sup> In a study of international online shopping, over 1 in 3 consumers stated their biggest frustration were "buggy and complicated websites". Brizfeel Research & Survey Data, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> McKinsey and Company. 2021. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-great-consumer-shift-ten-charts-that-show-how-us-shopping-behavior-is-changing>.

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- 3) Work closely with regional tourism organizations to ensure that the Red Rock RV Park and Campground is found/featured on the organizations' websites. Several websites cater to camping in northern Ontario including:
- Explore Northwest Ontario <http://visitnorthwestontario.com/places-to-stay/>
  - Lake Superior Circle Tour <https://lakesuperiorcircletour.info/>
  - Northern Ontario Travel <https://www.northernontario.travel/>
  - Destination Ontario <https://www.destinationontario.com/en-ca>
  - Superior Country <https://superiorcountry.ca/>
  - Ontario Camping <https://www.ontariocamping.ca/>
  - Ride Lake Superior <https://www.ridelakesuperior.com/>

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## B. Engage Through Social Media Channels

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If possible, leveraging Red Rock's natural beauty and local amenities through social media channels will help drive interest and consumer demand in the RV park. According to a 6,000-person survey conducted by Alter Agents, approximately two out of three consumers use social media when shopping<sup>7</sup>. Announcing sales, engaging with users, and sharing photographs and videos of the campgrounds through social media helps form an online community of potential campers.

If the decision is made to use social media to increase traffic to, and awareness of, the campground, it is imperative that engagement remains relatively high. Similar to the websites referenced above, often campgrounds have started a social media account but fail to actively engage with community members or upload new content. This inactivity can once again leave consumers unclear as to the state of a campground and whether the site is even open for business<sup>8</sup>. As such, if it is unlikely that the RV Park can maintain a consistent presence on social media, it would be suggested to avoid this marketing exercise.

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<sup>7</sup> Forbes. 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2021/08/27/how-shoppers-are-using-social-media/?sh=7e04bc7b72eb>

<sup>8</sup> Forbes. 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2021/10/05/nine-common-mistakes-new-businesses-make-on-social-media-and-how-to-fix-them/?sh=6ae6c5133f8d>

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## Opportunities:

- 1) Investigate social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) that would best drive awareness and reservations of the RV Park to the target market audience.
- 2) Create a presence on camping/related apps such as iOverlander, WikiCamp, Google Maps, Campendium, and ensure local listings/info on apps for geocaching and trails (such as AllTrails) are up to date.
- 3) Have a dedicated person in place that can coordinate and implement a social media program that is consistent and timely.

## C. Make Reviews Simple And Easy To Access

With a shift towards e-commerce, online reviews are becoming the lifeblood of many businesses – in a survey of over 30,000 worldwide consumers, 45% said they would clearly prefer purchasing from businesses with significantly more testimonials<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, approximately 95% of campers noted reading at least seven reviews before making a booking, while the average time spent reading reviews before the booking was 30 minutes per traveller.

At the same time, convoluted review processes (i.e., ones that require multiple confirmations or sign-ins) dissuade consumers from leaving positive reviews<sup>10</sup>. To raise awareness of the campgrounds naturally, ensure that reviewing the site is simple. As non-traditional vacationing continues to grow (e.g., third-party hosting sites or non-commercial (e.g., KOA) campsites), reviews are crucial because they allow consumers to feel confident in their choices.

## Opportunities:

- 1) Investigate online review platforms such as Trip Advisor, Google, RV Life Campgrounds, etc. and add the Red Rock RV Park and Campground onto the most appropriate site(s). Consistently check the reviews and ensure that the reviews continue to be positive.
- 2) Provide a clear section on the Red Rock RV Campground website where visitors can access an easy review process.
- 3) Reach out to customers through follow-up emails requesting feedback on their experience.

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<sup>9</sup> Brizfeel Research & Survey Data, 2022. <https://brizfeel.com/consumer-online-retail-shopping-behavior/#A-Summary-of-Our-Most-Interesting-Survey-Findings>

<sup>10</sup> Helverson, B. et al. 2018. Influence of consumer reviews on online purchasing decisions in older and younger adults.

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## D. Make Lasting Relationships with Existing and New Customers

It is always easier to attract customers back that have had a good vacation experience. Keep them in the loop about new things happening in and around the RV Park and Campground continue to keep Red Rock top of mind when they are planning their next camping vacation. Many Red Rock campers will be coming from Thunder Bay, and RV and camping suppliers can help point new and existing campers to Red Rock.

### Opportunities:

- 1) Follow up with clients regularly, through emails (i.e., survey monkey) and/or newsletters, to keep the Red Rock RV Campground in their future vacation plans.
- 2) Provide a promotional card to Thunder Bay RV Dealers (and possibly other camping-related suppliers) offering “stay two nights or more and the first night is on us” to help ease new campers into a positive camping experience not too far from home.

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## 3.2. Priority 2: Local Visibility and Awareness

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### A. Ensure the Campground is Visible from Highway 11/17

While the physical campground will not be visible from the TransCanada highway, consultations with local camp owners made clear that it was imperative to have some form of visibility along the highway. Visibility is important for two reasons.

First, one campground noted that they often get bookings from people who saw their campsite sign the year prior and wanted to “give it a try, because it looked interesting.” The marketing provided by a billboard or view of the campgrounds from the highway was a significant driver of interest in their campground.

Second, though the majority of overnight sales come from pre-reserved bookings, visibility along Highway 11/17 did allow for the recruitment of some people who did not have a site reserved and were just driving until they found a suitable campground. For those who cannot be seen directly from the highway, this option is not available, lowering their overall revenue opportunities.

### Opportunities:

- 1) Develop a branded signage program that starts at Highway 11/17 and directs campers to the Red Rock RV and campground site including highway directional signage; gateway signage at the entrance to the park; locational signage inside of the park; and signage on the individual campsites. At minimum signage is required at the Highway 11/17/628

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junction, but both eastbound and westbound approach (multiple) signage is strongly advised. Eastbound signage before the Highway 17/102 split could indicate that Red Rock is one hour east of Thunder Bay. Westbound North Shore signage could indicate Red Rock is one hour before Thunder Bay. All signage should include iconic indicators of all available amenities such as camping, marina, swimming pool, beach, trails, etc. Signage should also have a highly visible, simple URL such as CampRedRock.ca to allow passengers to complete online bookings immediately.

- 2) Look into the possibility of applying for Tourism-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS). The TODS program is responsible for operating, managing, maintaining and financing the province-wide system<sup>11</sup>. Annual fees range from \$90 (for a tourist route marker) to \$4,800 (for “freeway major rural mainline & ramp” placement).

## B. Produce and Distribute Brochures Highlighting the Campsite and Local “To-Dos”

As much as online marketing has become the norm, there is still an additional need for hard copy brochures. Often brochures can be produced at a reasonable expense while providing travellers with sufficient details regarding both the campground and nearby amenities. Given the prevalence of information centres (as noted in the opportunities below) along the Highway 11/17 corridor, the development of brochures to be distributed among these centres is highly recommended.

### Opportunities:

- 1) Produce a Red Rock RV Park and Campground brochure showing the campground layout, local amenities, etc. and distribute it to various locations where tourists would visit. Investigate the possibility of adding the brochure to the [Sault Ste. Marie](#) and other Ontario Travel [Information Centres](#), as well as the Terry Fox Visitor Information Centre.

## C. Utilize Local Events

Red Rock hosts local events that attract tourists from outside the area. These events include the Red Rock Fish and Game Club Trout Derby (in June), the Paju Mountain Run (August) and Live from the Rock Folk Festival (August). The Folk Festival in particular is a significant attraction, with approximately 2,000 attendees annually across its four days of festivities.

### Opportunities:

- 1) Partner with organizers of local events in Red Rock and the surrounding area to leverage their advertising to encourage attendees to stay at the Red Rock RV Park and Campground.

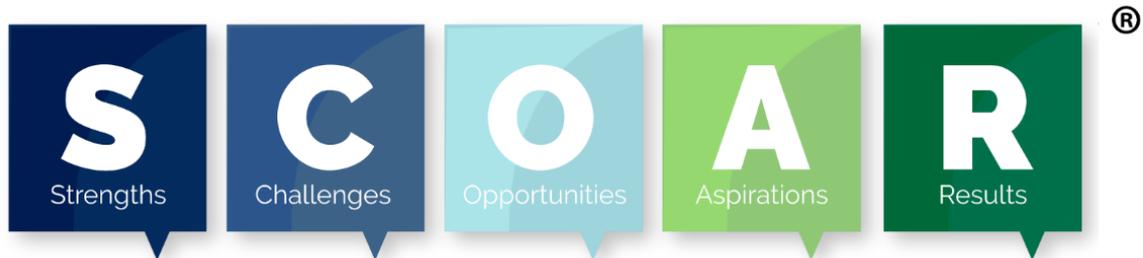
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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Transportation. [http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/tourism/TODS\\_overview.pdf](http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/tourism/TODS_overview.pdf)

## 4. VALUE PROPOSITION POINTS

- Ability to tailor the new RV park and campground to meet recent demands for larger RV sites and full services.
- Though the site is not visible from the TransCanada Highway, it is still quite close, being within 10 minutes of the highway. Ample approach and highway exit signage can compensate.
- The campground's waterfront location makes it highly desirable for both tent and RV camping. Waterfront sites are both desirable and rare in campgrounds.
- Local assets located in Red Rock, including
  - A café;
  - A recreation centre offering an ice rink, four-lane bowling alley, 24-hour fitness centre, and a gymnasium available for rent;
  - A variety store and grocery store (which is also an authorized LCBO agency store) available in town;
  - Marina Interpretive Centre is located directly across from the campground, offering showers, bathrooms, and laundry service to visitors as well as a multipurpose room available for rent.
- Location
  - Well located for campers to access local and nearby assets of interest to visitors, including a significant number of hikes within 30 minutes of Red Rock;
  - Red Rock is positioned along the Lake Superior Circle Tour, a well-publicized tour route for car, RV, motorcycle, boat, and bicycle; and
  - Proximity to Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay area residents could easily fully occupy the campground on a seasonal basis or provide a large percentage occupancy as transient campers.

## 5. SCOAR® ANALYSIS



- Proximity to Trans-Canada Highway 11/17 - 10 minutes from the highway, serving Canadians crossing Canada, visiting Northern Ontario, and visiting from the U.S.;
- Waterfront location - waterfront campgrounds and sites are both desirable and rare in campgrounds;
- Co-located with the marina, boat access, rentals and charters options;
- Interpretive Centre co-located with the campground;
- Good location for campers to access local natural assets, including waterfront location and a significant number of hikes within 30 minutes of Red Rock;
- Red Rock is positioned along the Lake Superior Circle Tour, a well-publicized tour route for car, RV, motorcycle, boat, and bicycle;
- Proximity to Thunder Bay, in an area of limited campsite availability. Thunder Bay and area residents could easily occupy the campground on either a transient or a seasonal basis;
- Strong mix of local assets within or nearby Red Rock: Lake Superior; Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area, trails, Café, recreation centre, a grocery store with authorized LCBO and variety store;
- residents support new opportunities for the Township;
- Red Rock Beautification committee, helping to make the Township a pleasant vacation destination;
- Ability to design campground to address current market demands by campers and RV campers in comparison to competing campgrounds;
- Municipal services and electric power are available on location.



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- Not directly located on or visible from Highway 11/17;
- Significant initial investment needed to prepare campground;
- Success of the campground could be jeopardized by under-investment;
- Ineffective marketing could threaten economic viability;
- Some residents are opposed to change;
- Relatively low profits compared to broader travel sector;
- Necessity of moving the physical location of boat storage;
- Flooding of pathways in spring.



- Blank slate for development – as RVer needs have changed through the years, many existing campgrounds have found their current sites inadequate. As Red Rock’s RV park will be built new, sites can be built to serve current needs and forecasted market trends;
- Campground revenues/site for both tent and RV camping are rising;
- The pandemic has driven up interest in RV and tent camping. Recent RV sales have been extremely strong. The backlog in RV production orders despite increased production output is an indicator of strong future retail RV sales. These factors support strong current and future demand for campsites;
- Seasonal permit campgrounds within the market area have sizeable waitlists, suggesting significant pent-up demand for seasonal sites;
- High (and growing significantly since 2019) occupancy rates in private and public campgrounds with transient sites; heavy booking demands for transient sites in Ontario Parks across Ontario, including in the market area. Campsite demand will exceed supply even after Red Rock completes this project;
- Changing demographics and the growth of RV purchases and use by multiple demographic groupings support continued strong campsite demand;
- The effects of the COVID pandemic on the growth of the RV and tent camping market are not likely to dissipate soon, if ever.

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### A Aspirations

- Establish a desirable campground with a well-known brand among campers in Northern Ontario that integrates with the current existing marina, Interpretation Centre and community infrastructures and natural beauty;
- Increase the visitation and visitor nights in Red Rock;
- Increase the number of young adults, families and seniors travelling to and interacting with the Township of Red Rock;
- Help to drive positive economic impact on Red Rock businesses;
- Continued revitalization of Red Rock Waterfront.

### R Results

- The creation of a waterfront RV Park and Campground will:
  - Increase the number of visitors to Red Rock;
  - Increase the number of visitor nights in Red Rock;
  - Increase Interpretive Centre use;
  - Increase marina use and related activities (canoe & boat rentals, guided activities, etc.);
  - Have a positive economic impact on current Red Rock business, support further business development, growth and services.

