

Mobile Workforce Housing Policy Framework

*A starter kit for municipalities ready to turn a
workforce crisis into a policy opportunity.*

Includes: Drive-In 2.0 Model · Model Ordinance Language · 30-Day Quick-Start Checklist

PREPARED BY

TymMBER Outdoor · Mike Isaacs, Founder · Sierra County, New Mexico
tymMBERoutdoor.com

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Nullius in Verba

INTRODUCTION

Outdoor recreation communities across the American West share a crisis that is both visible and entirely solvable. They need hospitality and seasonal workers. The workers exist. The housing does not -- and ordinances banning overnight vehicle dwelling are criminalizing the one affordable housing option workers already own.

This document is a practical starting kit for municipalities ready to act. It requires no state legislation, no ballot measure, and no major capital investment. Everything here can be initiated by a city council resolution or a city manager administrative order. Most of it costs nothing beyond staff time to draft and post.

We have to do something. Our businesses are complaining they have their employees sleeping in the forest... and we ran out of ideas. -- Mayor Scott Jablow, Sedona AZ, FOX 10 Phoenix, March 2024

Sedona is not alone. In Moab, Utah, 88.9% of employers reported difficulty staffing due to the housing shortage. In the Teton Region, the rental vacancy rate is effectively zero. In Telluride, the ski resort has begun purchasing private homes to house workers it cannot otherwise retain. The pattern is the same across every outdoor recreation community in the American West. The solution is also the same.



This framework is offered courtesy of Tymmer Outdoor as a contribution to the communities whose outdoor economies we serve. It is not legal advice. Municipalities should have their city attorney review and adapt any language before adoption. The goal: hand you a starting point so the conversation begins this week, not next fiscal year.

THE DRIVE-IN 2.0 - A MODEL AMERICA ALREADY PROVED

Before we describe what this framework asks of municipalities, it is worth remembering what America already built -- and ran profitably for four decades -- that solved every objection cities raise about overnight vehicle parking before those objections were invented.

The Drive-In Theater. Seven dollars a car. You pulled in, hung the speaker on the window, walked to the concession building for a Coke, popcorn, and a hamburger, and watched the movie. When it ended, you drove home. Nobody filed a sanitation complaint. Nobody passed an ordinance banning vehicles from the lot after dark. Cities permitted them on suburban parcels, rural fields, edge-of-town land that wasn't good for much else. Families loved them. They ran for forty years.

Now update the model for 2026. Same lot. Same per-vehicle revenue. Same concession building -- except now it has showers and laundry alongside the popcorn. Same defined hours: in by dark, out by morning. The worker pulls in after their shift. Grabs dinner. Showers. Does laundry. Watches whatever is playing. Goes to sleep in their truck. Wakes up. Goes to work.

The Drive-In 2.0 operates as both a standalone entry point and as an activation layer within a full Prosperity Place campus. A municipality not yet ready for the complete platform can start here: a parking lot, a screen, a concession building with showers and laundry added. It generates the revenue, the community goodwill, and the proof of concept that grows into the fuller vision. The barrier to entry is a parcel, a permit, and an operator willing to run it.

PART ONE*What a Municipality Can Do Right Now -- Without a Ballot Measure*

Each action below can be taken by city council resolution or administrative order. None requires voter approval. None requires state legislative action. Each is low-cost or no-cost to initiate.

ACTION 1 · DESIGNATE OVERNIGHT PARKING ZONES

Identify 2-4 locations near employment centers, away from residential neighborhoods. Pass a council resolution designating these parcels for permitted overnight vehicle stays.

Operational parameters (suggested):

Vehicles in by 10:00 p.m., out by 7:00 a.m.

Maximum stay: 30 consecutive nights per permit cycle; renewable with active employment verification.

Prohibited: open fires, generators after posted hours, exterior structures attached to vehicles.

Required: current vehicle registration, valid ID on request, enrollment in workforce permit program.

Cost to municipality: Staff time to pass resolution and post signage. No infrastructure capital required at launch.

ACTION 2 · CREATE A WORKFORCE VEHICLE PERMIT

Establish a simple permit available to any person who (a) works within city or county limits a minimum of 20 hours per week and (b) registers their vehicle. The permit creates the administrative relationship municipalities need -- without requiring a lease the worker cannot afford.

Suggested permit structure:

Standard permit: \$25-\$40/week, self-renewing with proof of local employment.

Workforce program rate: \$10-\$15/week for participants enrolled in a qualifying workforce development program or employed by a designated Business Partner.

Data collected: vehicle make/model/plate, permit holder name, employer, emergency contact.

Revenue potential: 40 permitted vehicles at \$30/week average = \$62,400 annually -- enough to fund a part-time program coordinator.

ACTION 3 - SUSPEND ENFORCEMENT FOR PERMIT HOLDERS

Direct enforcement staff to treat a current Workforce Vehicle Permit as a complete defense against vehicle dwelling citations within Designated Zones. This requires no ordinance repeal -- only an enforcement directive from the city manager or police chief. Existing ordinances remain fully in effect everywhere else.

PART TWO

Infrastructure: The Three Things That Make It Work

The legitimate objection to vehicle dwelling -- sanitation, hygiene, quality of life -- disappears when basic infrastructure exists nearby. A permitted vehicle dweller with access to shower, laundry, and workspace is functionally indistinguishable from any other community resident. The city does not need to build this. It needs to permit and support private operators who will.

<p>01 SHOWERS & HYGIENE</p>	<p>Shower and restroom access within reasonable distance of designated parking zones. Options: (a) partner with existing fitness facilities for discounted permit-holder access; (b) extend access to existing public shower facilities at parks or recreation centers -- many municipalities already have them; (c) fast-track permits for any private operator proposing workforce hygiene infrastructure within half a mile of a designated zone.</p>
<p>02 LAUNDRY ACCESS</p>	<p>Partner with an existing coin laundry operator to extend discounted access to permit holders, or require inclusion of laundry in any private infrastructure facility permitted near the overnight parking zone. This is a private-sector solution requiring only a partnership agreement -- no public capital required.</p>
<p>03 WORKSPACE & WIFI</p>	<p>Extend library card privileges to permit holders, granting access to public library workspace and wifi -- most municipalities already offer this to any resident. Alternatively, identify a local co-work space willing to offer permit-holder rates as a community partner. Either option costs the city nothing.</p>

ABOUT PROSPERITY PLACE AND THE DRIVE-IN 2.0

Tymmer Outdoor's Prosperity Place concept is a privately operated campus facility providing the full infrastructure stack: shower, laundry, workspace, overnight parking, and economic incubator programming. The Drive-In 2.0 is both an activation layer within Prosperity Place -- its community-facing revenue engine -- and a standalone entry-point model for municipalities not yet ready for the full campus. A parking lot, a screen, a concession building with showers and laundry: that is how the Drive-In 2.0 begins. Prosperity Place is where it grows. We are seeking municipal partners in New Mexico and across the Mountain West.

PART THREE*Model Ordinance Language -- For City Attorney Review and Adaptation*

Draft language intended as a starting point for municipal legal staff. Not final legal text. Bracketed items [] require local completion. Adapt to your existing code structure, definitions, and local conditions.

SECTION 1 · PURPOSE AND FINDINGS

The [City/County] of [Name] finds that:

- (a) A shortage of affordable housing has created documented difficulty for local employers in recruiting and retaining workforce employees;
- (b) Persons employed within the municipality who cannot afford conventional housing have chosen to reside in personal vehicles as a lawful and dignified response to market conditions;
- (c) Prohibiting such residence without a managed alternative removes workers from the local labor market, harms local businesses, and reduces tax revenues without solving the underlying shortage;
- (d) A Workforce Vehicle Permit program advances the municipality's interest in a stable, employed workforce while maintaining public order and sanitation standards.

SECTION 2 · WORKFORCE VEHICLE PERMIT

2.1 Eligibility. Any person who (i) is employed within the municipality for a minimum of 20 hours/week and (ii) resides in a personal vehicle as their primary dwelling may apply for a Workforce Vehicle Permit.

2.2 Application. Submitted to [City Clerk or designee]; shall include proof of local employment, valid vehicle registration, government-issued ID, and signed acknowledgment of program rules.

2.3 Permit Fee. Standard: \$[25-40]/week. Workforce program rate \$[10-15]/week for participants in a qualifying workforce development program or employed by a designated Business Partner.

2.4 Duration. Valid 30 days, renewable upon continued verification of employment. The municipality may establish an annual renewal process at its discretion.

SECTION 3 - DESIGNATED OVERNIGHT PARKING ZONES

3.1 Designation. The [City Manager / Council] may designate Overnight Parking Zones on municipal property, posted with hours, permit requirements, and program contact information.

3.2 Hours. Available to permit holders from [10:00 p.m.] to [7:00 a.m.], seven days per week, unless otherwise posted.

3.3 Conduct. Permit holders shall: (a) maintain vehicle and area in a clean, sanitary condition; (b) refrain from open fires, generators after posted hours, and exterior structures; (c) comply with all posted rules.

3.4 Enforcement Suspension. A current Workforce Vehicle Permit constitutes a complete defense to any citation under [cite existing ordinance section] when the holder is parked in a Designated Zone during posted hours.

SECTION 4 - PRIVATE INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIPS

4.1 The municipality may enter agreements with private operators to provide hygiene, laundry, and workspace services to permit holders at designated or reduced rates.

4.2 Permit applications for workforce support facilities -- including Drive-In 2.0 operations -- within [1/2 mile] of a Designated Zone shall receive expedited review not to exceed [30] days.

4.3 The municipality may negotiate reduced-rate access agreements with existing facilities -- including fitness centers, libraries, and laundry operations -- at no cost to the general fund.

PART FOUR*Quick-Start Checklist -- The First 30 Days*

The following sequence can move a municipality from zero to an operating pilot program in 30 days or less, with no capital expenditure.

Week 1	Direct staff to identify 2-4 candidate locations for Designated Overnight Parking Zones using existing municipal property. Parking lots near employment centers are the first target. A drive-in theater site or fairground lot is ideal.
Week 1	City attorney receives this framework and is directed to prepare an adapting resolution or ordinance amendment for the next regular council meeting.
Wk 1-2	City manager issues an administrative directive to code enforcement: suspend vehicle dwelling citations for any person presenting proof of local employment and willingness to register. This buys time for the formal program without further enforcement harm to the workforce.
Week 2	Staff drafts the Workforce Vehicle Permit application -- one page, available in print and online. No new software required.
Wk 2-3	Staff contacts the three nearest gyms, the public library, and one coin laundry operator to discuss discounted access for permit holders. Phone calls, not contracts. Start the conversation.
Week 3	Council adopts the Designated Overnight Parking Zone resolution and the Workforce Vehicle Permit fee schedule at regular meeting. No ballot required.
Week 4	Post signage at designated zones. Launch permit registration. Notify local employers -- restaurants, hotels, outfitters, lodges -- that their employees now have a legal, managed place to park.
Day 30+	Review enrollment weekly for the first quarter. Adjust zone hours, locations, and fees based on utilization. Report outcomes to council at 90 days. Begin conversations with private operators about Drive-In 2.0 or Prosperity Place infrastructure.

The most sustainable workforce housing solution is the one that already exists. The worker already owns the vehicle. The city already owns the parking lot. The only thing missing is a permit, a policy decision -- and someone willing to hang a speaker on the window.

ABOUT TYMMBER OUTDOOR

Tymber Outdoor is a Sierra County, New Mexico-based outdoor hardware and lifestyle company building the tools, content, and community infrastructure for a self-reliant outdoor life. We believe the outdoor communities that enable mobile workforce housing will have functioning restaurants, staffed lodges, and open businesses. The ones that do not will still be writing parking bans while their storefronts empty.

CONTACT

tymberoutdoor.com · Sovereign Circle: [members.html](#) · Sierra County, NM