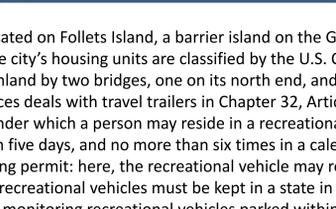
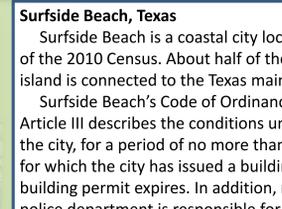




A Study of Travel Trailer Ordinances for Ocracoke, North Carolina

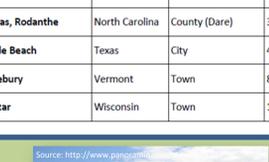
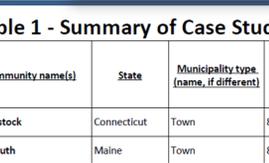
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Preface

Ocracoke is a formerly isolated small island community in North Carolina, which, in recent years, has experienced an unprecedented influx of tourism. As a result of the associated rapid economic growth, many residents have chosen to live in travel trailers when faced with the rising costs of traditional homeownership. While there is an existing Development Ordinance, the Ocracoke Advisory Planning Board is interested in alternative measures adopted by other communities, and most importantly how these measures are enforced. Their primary concerns are about health, safety, water & sanitation, and property setbacks of these travel trailers.

To address these concerns, we have researched communities of similar size and composition to Ocracoke. Communities with comparable historical, economic, and geographical features, particularly a strong tourism industry, have been selected for case studies. Using municipal code databases, such as Municode, we examine the ordinances implemented by these communities and identify popularly employed measures that could work well for Ocracoke. While not all communities presented in this report allow for people to take up residence in travel trailers, we included reference to these communities, which specifically mention travel trailers in their codes, so that the Advisory Planning Board can further examine these communities' methods of enforcement and penalties.



Surfside Beach, Texas
Surfside Beach is a coastal city located on Follets Island, a barrier island on the Gulf Coast of Texas. The city had a year-round population of 482 as of the 2010 Census. About half of the city's housing units are classified by the U.S. Census as "for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use." The island is connected to the Texas mainland by two bridges, one on its north end, and the other on its south end.
Surfside Beach's Code of Ordinances deals with travel trailers in Chapter 32, Article III, "Recreational Vehicles Outside of Parks." Sec 32-71 of Article III describes the conditions under which a person may reside in a recreational vehicle outside of a designated park: With a permit issued by the city, for a period of no more than five days, and no more than six times in a calendar year. An exception to this is granted for construction sites for which the city has issued a building permit: here, the recreational vehicle may remain for as long as construction is in progress or until the building permit expires. In addition, recreational vehicles must be kept in a state in which they can be legally towed on public highways. The city's police department is responsible for monitoring recreational vehicles parked within the city limits and for enforcing this ordinance.

Middlebury, Vermont
The Town of Middlebury was settled shortly after the American Revolution and it is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It had a population of 8,496 as of the 2010 Census. Middlebury has also been home to Middlebury College, a liberal arts school, since the college was founded in 1800 (Middlebury, 2012).
Section 759 of Middlebury's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, adopted in December of 2008, deals with travel trailers and mobile homes. It permits residents to park a travel trailer on their property in residential areas. Although the town does not allow RV parks, travel trailers may be used as a dwelling when they are permitted as such.

Table 1 - Summary of Case Studies

Community name(s)	State	Municipality type (name, if different)	Municipality Population (2010)	Coastal?	Allows use of travel trailer as a temporary residence?	Allows use of travel trailer as a permanent residence?	Septic or sewage facilities required for travel trailers by municipal code?	Maximum of one travel trailer per lot?	Permit or inspection of travel trailer required by municipal code?	Occupant of travel trailer must be lot owner or relative of lot owner?	Wind or flood restrictions for travel trailers in municipal code?	Notes
Woodstock	Connecticut	Town	8,580	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Period of occupation limited to two years.
Yarmouth	Maine	Town	8,349	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	TT must be travel-ready at all times unless elevated above ground with permanent foundation
Nahant	Massachusetts	Town	3,632	Yes	Emergencies only	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Cape May	New Jersey	City	3,607	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TTs not allowed outside of approved parks
North Wildwood	New Jersey	City	4,041	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TTs permitted only at active construction sites
Henderson Harbor	New York	Town (Henderson)	1,360	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	TT can be occupied up to 150 days in a calendar year
Lake Placid	New York	Village	2,638	No	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Sackets Harbor	New York	Village	1,450	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Hatteras, Rodanthe	North Carolina	County (Dare)	33,920	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TTs not allowed outside of approved parks
Surfside Beach	Texas	City	482	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Middlebury	Vermont	Town	8,496	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Gibraltar	Wisconsin	Town	1,063	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	

Gibraltar, Wisconsin
Gibraltar is a town situated on Green Bay, an arm of Lake Michigan, near the tip of the Door Peninsula. The town had a year-round population of 1,063 as of the 2010 Census. Nearly two-thirds of housing units in the town are classified by the U.S. Census as "for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use," indicating significant seasonal population change.
The town adopted a travel trailer ordinance in 1979. Ordinance 1979-05 prohibits the use of travel trailers to conduct business without a permit, and specifies that permits are only to be granted when a permanent structure is under construction. Ordinance 1979-06 prohibits the parking of travel trailers in any public place for a period of greater than an hour without a town-issued permit. Both ordinances prescribe that violators are to be punished with a fine of no more than \$50 for each violation. The ordinances also empower both the Town Constable and county sheriffs to remove travel trailers that are in violation of either ordinance while holding the owner or operator of the vehicle responsible for any costs involved in this removal.



Woodstock, Connecticut
Woodstock, Connecticut is a town containing six separate villages. As of the 2010 Census, Woodstock had a population of 8,580. It is an historically agricultural community, and Woodstock's citizens have made several efforts to preserve the town's beauty and character. Inspired by a desire to preserve Woodstock's agricultural heritage, the town has created a set of ordinances designed to encourage farming. Woodstock also has an active historical society (Woodstock Historical Society, 2009).

The Town of Woodstock's Ordinance Pertaining to Trailers applies to both travel trailers and mobile homes (Town of Woodstock, 2010, p. 12-13). The ordinance prohibits travel trailers not connected to a sewage disposal system from being parked and occupied for more than 96 hours without a town-issued permit. Permits are valid for a period of two weeks and can be renewed only once (p. 15). Trailers with facilities for the disposal of sewage and running water may be used as a semi-permanent dwelling following the submission of an application to the town and a site inspection. If permission is granted by the town, the maximum period of occupancy is two years, unless the trailer's occupant can prove that he or she is constructing a permanent dwelling on the same site. In either case, a trailer may only be parked on land belonging to either the trailer's occupant or a relative of the trailer's occupant.

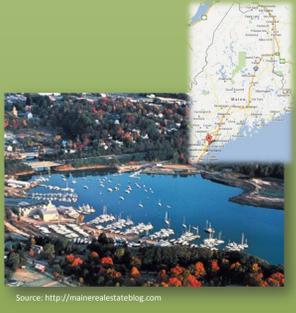
Woodstock's trailer ordinance also specifies criteria that must be met at any site where a trailer is used as a semi-permanent dwelling. In addition to containing proper water supply and sewage disposal arrangements, the site must be at least one acre in size with at least 150 feet of street frontage, and the trailer must have a setback of at least 50 feet from the road, at least 20 feet from any property line, and at least 400 yards from places of public assembly.



Yarmouth, Maine
The town of Yarmouth, Maine, first settled in 1636, is a coastal community of quaint homes and small shops with a backdrop of natural scenery. It is situated on the Atlantic Coast, about 10 miles northeast of Portland. As of the 2010 Census, it had a population of 8,349. The residents of Yarmouth take pride in their community, and actively work to preserve its beauty and charm (Yarmouth, 2012)

In Yarmouth's Flood Plain Management Ordinance (2008), travel trailers and similar vehicles are collectively classified as manufactured homes. Yarmouth's manufactured home laws are the result of flood planning. As such, Article VI of the Flood Plain Management Ordinance describes the differing requirements applying to manufactured homes, dependent on the specific zone in which the manufactured home is located. Most notable of these is that the manufactured home must be on a permanent foundation and elevated above the ground. This ordinance also distinguishes between manufactured homes and recreational vehicles. Recreational vehicles are required either to meet the same criteria as manufactured homes, be highway ready at all times, or be on site for fewer than 180 days.

The Town of Yarmouth also has a Trailer and Trailer Camps Ordinance, which more directly addresses the use of trailers as living quarters (1998). This ordinance defines any trailer which is intended for living purposes as "house-car trailers." Such dwellings are restricted to trailer camps unless they meet certain criteria. Such criteria include, but are not limited to (1) the trailer belonging to the guest of a resident who allows the trailer to be parked on their property for up to fifteen days, and (2) the trailer being neither inhabited, a nuisance, or a fire hazard. If the wheels are removed from a house-car trailer, it may then be considered a permanent structure, though only one such structure is allowed per lot.



Henderson Harbor, New York
Henderson Harbor is a small community known for its sailing and fishing, and is situated on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario in Upstate New York. The municipality containing Henderson Harbor is the Town of Henderson, which has a year-round population of 1,360 as of the 2010 Census. Two-thirds of housing units in the town are classified by the U.S. Census as "for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use," and each summer the town's population swells with the arrival of seasonal residents.

The Town of Henderson has adopted regulations relevant to travel trailers in Article VI, Section 150-34 of its zoning code, adopted in 1991. This code prohibits storing multiple recreational vehicles on a lot, and requires that recreational vehicles used as temporary living quarters be issued a permit by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. For this permit to be granted, the recreational vehicle must be licensed, have access to potable and sanitary water, and be equipped with adequate septic or sewage facilities. The municipal code does not provide for the use of travel trailers as permanent or semi-permanent housing; even with a permit, stays are limited to 150 days in any calendar year. In addition, only the lot owner or relatives of the lot owner are permitted to stay in a travel trailer used as a temporary residence.



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Acknowledgements:
We would like to thank Dr. Jennifer Rogalsky, Associate Professor and Urban Studies Director, State University of New York, College at Geneseo.

This poster was prepared for GEOG 201: Introduction to Urban and Regional Planning, Spring 2012, and was presented at GREAT (Geneseo Recognizing Excellence, Achievement & Talent) Day.