

In the evolving landscape of residential and workforce housing, communities like Ojai, Aspen, and Big Sur face unique challenges and opportunities. These high-demand, scenic regions require housing solutions that align with local codes, environmental sensitivities, and a pressing need to attract skilled workers amid labor constraints. Repeatable modular drawing sets have emerged as a transformative approach, enabling developers, contractors, and local governments to streamline design, permitting, and construction processes. This post explores how this strategy supports projects across these diverse regions, with insights from notable firms like Irontown Modular, The Other Side Village, and My Cozy Outdoors.

## Understanding the Housing Landscape: Workforce Housing as a Recruiting Constraint

Workforce housing is a critical issue in Ojai, Aspen, and Big Sur—towns that rely heavily on tourism, hospitality, and seasonal workers. The shortage of affordable, quality housing close to job sites directly impacts recruitment and retention of employees in these markets.

- **Ojai:** Known for its artistic community and environmental stewardship, Ojai struggles with development restrictions and limited housing stock.
- **Aspen:** A high-cost resort town where luxury housing dominates market supply, pushing local workers to live farther away.
- **Big Sur:** Development here is constrained by rugged terrain and strict environmental regulations.

In all these places, repeatable modular designs provide a critical lever to deliver affordable, scalable workforce housing that can be approved and built faster, reducing the lag between housing demand and supply.

## Modular vs. Manufactured: Clarifying Definitions and Codes

Before diving into the benefits of repeatable modular drawing sets, it's essential to clarify terminology that clients, architects, and officials often confuse:

Aspect    Modular Construction    Manufactured Homes    Definition    Factory-built sections ("modules") constructed to local/state building codes, assembled onsite    Built entirely in a factory, transported as a complete unit, regulated by HUD code    Codes Must meet same local or state building codes as site-built homes    Regulated federally by HUD, not typically subject to local zoning codes    Permitting    Similar workflows as site-built homes; drawing sets subject to local plan review    Subject to less rigorous local permitting; typically easier placement but less customizable    Flexibility    High; custom and repeatable modules for varying site configurations    Limited; pre-designed models with less site-specific adaptation

Companies like **Irontown Modular** specialize in crafting high-quality repeatable modular units conforming to local building codes, balancing efficiency with design customization suitable for sensitive markets like Big Sur's. In contrast, manufactured homes often can't meet stringent neighborhood or environmental guidelines, limiting their application in places such as Aspen.

## The Role of Repeatable Modular Drawing Sets

Repeatable modular drawing sets—also known as *catalog plans*—are a collection of pre-designed, pre-engineered architectural and structural plans developed for a modular unit type. These sets have been tested and approved

[re-thinkingthefuture](#) for compliance with local codes and can be quickly adapted for site-specific needs. Here's how they help the Ojai, Aspen, and Big Sur projects:

## 1. Accelerated Permitting Workflow and Inspections

Permitting is often a bottleneck, especially in jurisdictions with complex zoning and environmental reviews typical of these regions.

- **Standardization:** Repeatable modules come with a validated set of drawings and engineering documentation, which can drastically reduce the back-and-forth in plan check.
- **Plan Review Familiarity:** As local authorities become familiar with a company's catalog plans—such as those from **The Other Side Village**—they more efficiently process permits on subsequent projects.
- **Inspection Coordination:** The factory-controlled environment simplifies inspections before shipping, allowing onsite inspections to focus on foundations, utilities, and assembly quality.

By deploying repeatable modular drawing sets, teams reduce uncertainty and administrative delays, which is especially important given the limited staffing of municipal departments in small or remote areas.

## 2. Schedule Compression through Parallel Factory and Site Work

One of modular construction's greatest advantages is the ability to compress overall project timelines by decoupling building phases:

- While the factory fabricates modules, onsite crews can simultaneously prepare foundations, utilities, and landscaping.
- This parallel workflow dramatically cuts the "critical path" of construction schedules, allowing faster worker move-in and occupancy.
- For businesses in Ojai and Aspen urgently looking to fill workforce housing, shortened timelines mitigate operational disruptions and costly vacancies.

Providers like **My Cozy Outdoors** leverage repeatable catalog plans designed specifically to integrate with site-specific configurations—topography, solar orientation, and local materials—ensuring that modular deployment complements the local environment and regulations.



### 3. Site-Specific Configuration without Reinventing the Wheel

While repeatable modules maximize efficiency, they don't compromise site sensitivity. Modular drawing sets support customization workflows allowing:

- **Orientation Adjustments:** Rotating or flipping modules to optimize views, daylight, or solar gain.
- **Facade Variation:** Swapping exterior finishes to meet design guidelines particular to Aspen's mountain aesthetic or Big Sur's coastal rustic vernacular.
- **Foundation Adaptations:** Engineering solutions for uneven sloped sites common in these locations.

This flexibility is critical for obtaining approvals in jurisdictions with strict design controls. Instead of submitting entirely new plans for each site, developers can adapt proven catalog offerings quickly, reducing engineering costs and plan review cycles.

## Spotlight: Exemplary Modular Projects in Ojai, Aspen, and Big Sur

**Irontown Modular** has implemented repeatable modular designs in Big Sur that respect the region's seismic and environmental requirements without sacrificing efficiency. Their projects highlight how catalog plans can be adapted for remote locations where onsite labor shortages pose significant constraints.

**The Other Side Village**

**My Cozy Outdoors**

## Conclusion

In the competitive and often restrictive environments of Ojai, Aspen, and Big Sur, repeatable modular drawing sets offer a strategic advantage to developers, builders, and municipalities alike. By enabling faster permitting, reducing project timelines through simultaneous factory and site work, and allowing site-specific customization without complete redesigns, modular construction helps overcome workforce housing shortages, recruitment barriers, and permitting challenges.



Key players like **Irontown Modular**, **The Other Side Village**, and **My Cozy Outdoors** are pioneering the integration of these principles, demonstrating that thoughtful design-build processes aligned with

modular innovation can support sustainable, equitable housing solutions in these treasured West Coast communities.

## Further Resources

- **Irontown Modular** – Modular design and construction expertise in California and beyond.
- **The Other Side Village** – Innovative workforce housing community development in mountain settings.
- **My Cozy Outdoors** – Catalog modular homes optimizing indoor-outdoor living for sensitive sites.