

Date: November 12, 2025
To: Inyo County Planning Department
From: Precision Civil Engineering, Inc.
Subject: Evaluation of Residential Parking Regulations and Flexibility Options to Support Infill Housing

1. Introduction

The purpose of this memorandum is to review Inyo County’s current residential parking regulations to determine whether existing standards may inhibit infill housing opportunities. The analysis also examines how other rural jurisdictions, specifically Mariposa County, Alpine County, Town of Mammoth Lakes, and Modoc County could address parking flexibility for single-family and multi-family development. Recommendations and ideas for Inyo County are provided based on this comparison analysis.

2. Existing Parking Regulations

The Inyo County Zoning Code establishes uniform off-street parking requirements for all residential zoning districts. Current standards require two off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit in the single-family zone districts (R-1 and R-2). In the R-2 zone district, required parking spaces must be provided on a parking lot or within a garage or carport. In the multi-family residential zone district (R-3), the standard requires two parking spaces plus one guest space for every four units.

Zone	Requirement
R-1	2 off-street spaces per unit
R-2	2 off-street spaces per unit
R-3	2 off-street spaces per unit + 1 guest space per 4 units

The County’s parking regulations are uniform, providing little flexibility to accommodate infill or small-scale residential projects. Key findings include:

- **Uniform Standards:** The two-space minimum applies equally to all zones, offering no differentiation based on site context or housing type.
- **Guest Parking Burden:** The additional guest parking requirement for R-3 developments reduces buildable area and may make smaller multi-family infill projects financially infeasible.

- Lack of Administrative Flexibility: There are no provisions for tandem, shared, or compact parking; there are also no options for minor modifications or relaxed regulations.
- No Adjustment for Unit Size or Affordability: Smaller or specific unit types (e.g., affordable, workforce or senior housing), which often generate lower parking demand, are held to the same standards as units with more bedrooms.

Collectively, these factors could potentially inhibit infill housing development by increasing land and construction costs, reducing feasible densities, and limiting design flexibility on smaller parcels.

3. Comparative Analysis

A review of other jurisdictions with rural geographic conditions shows that several jurisdictions have adopted context-based, flexible parking regulations that balance parking supply with local housing goals. These approaches retain baseline standards while introducing administrative discretion or context-specific adjustments to support housing feasibility.

Mariposa County

In Mariposa County, parking requirements vary by unit type: studio or one-bedroom residential units require 1.5 parking spaces per unit, while two-bedroom or larger apartments and single-family homes require 2 spaces per unit.

Section 17.336.030(B) of the Mariposa County Municipal Code allows reductions or modifications to these parking standards when considered through the variance process or in conjunction with a use permit or other discretionary application. This approach maintains the County's overall parking ratios but introduces administrative flexibility, allowing the Planning Commission to tailor requirements to the specific project type, location, or surrounding conditions.

Additional provisions within the Code provide targeted flexibility for specific residential contexts:

- Senior housing developments may receive up to a 25% reduction in required parking if located within 500 feet of a shopping center or transportation system.
- Tandem parking is permitted when more than one parking space is provided per residential unit, as long as at least one space per dwelling unit is individually accessible.

These measures allow Mariposa County staff and decision makers to evaluate parking requirements case-by-case, providing flexibility for projects that serve lower-mobility populations or located in areas with access to services and transit

Alpine County

Alpine County's parking requirements for residential uses are generally comparable to Inyo County's baseline standards but include additional provisions for secondary and shared housing types that introduce a degree of flexibility.

For most residential dwellings, including single-family, duplex, and multi-family units, two off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit are required. Second-family dwelling must provide one off-street

parking space year-round, while rooming houses, boardinghouses, and group dwellings require one space per two occupants.

Alpine County's ordinance also provides limited flexibility for unique site conditions and accessory units:

- When no parking is available on the building site, off-street parking may be provided on an adjacent or noncontiguous parcel, subject to approval of a use permit.
- For secondary dwelling units, parking may be provided in tandem (though not shared with the primary unit).
- Efficiency or one-bedroom secondary units require one additional parking space, while two or more-bedroom secondary units require two additional spaces.

While Alpine County's base parking ratios remain similar to Inyo County, it allows for off-site parking and tandem allowance for secondary dwelling units, adapting to the housing types. These provisions could serve as potential models for Inyo County to allow greater site flexibility and encourage infill housing on constrained lots without eliminating essential parking supply.

[Town of Mammoth Lakes](#)

The Town of Mammoth Lakes applies more context-based parking framework that provides flexibility to accommodate a range of housing types and site conditions while maintaining adequate parking supply for residents and visitors.

Under [Municipal Code Chapter 17.44 \(Parking and Loading Standards\)](#), parking requirements for residential uses are established based on unit type and location rather than a single fixed standard. In general, two spaces per dwelling unit are required for detached single-family residences, while multi-family are assigned parking ratios that vary by bedroom count and project context.

Mammoth Lakes incorporates several flexibility provisions that support infill development:

- Tandem and uncovered parking are permitted for certain residential development, allowing more efficient use of limited lot areas.
- Parking districts and in-lieu fee program established and approved by the council, the review authority can reduce or eliminate the minimum number of required on-site parking spaces for projects.
- Reductions in required parking may be approved for project located near public transit, within mixed-use zones, or those providing affordable or workforce housing.

These provisions demonstrate Mammoth Lake's balanced approach to parking management, ensuring sufficient capacity for a car-dependent mountain community while introducing flexibility mechanisms that make infill and compact residential development more feasible.

[Modoc County](#)

Modoc County applies a more flexible and context-sensitive approach to parking standards compared to Inyo County, allowing the requirements to vary based on unit type, household characteristics, and affordability level. Under [Section 18.110.040](#), parking requirements are scaled

to reflect the size and type of dwelling rather than a single fixed standard. In general, one-bedroom units and second-dwelling units require one space per unit, while units with two or more bedrooms must provide two spaces per unit.

Modoc County incorporates several flexibility provisions that encourage a range of residential types:

- Accessory and junior accessory dwelling units (ADUs and JADUs) are subject to specific standards that can further reduce or waive parking requirements under certain conditions.
- Senior housing developments occupied exclusively by persons aged 62 or older may provide one-half space per unit or one space per four occupants in group quarters.
- Very low- and low-income housing projects may qualify for reduced parking requirements of one car and one bicycle space per dwelling unit.

These provisions demonstrate Modoc County's adaptable approach to parking management, balancing the need for adequate parking supply with the goal of supporting affordable and age-restricted housing through reduced parking requirements.

4. Recommendations

A review of Inyo County's parking regulations indicates that current standards, requiring two off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit across all residential zones are uniform but not context sensitive. While appropriate for areas with limited transit, this approach may inhibit infill housing opportunities, particularly on smaller or irregular shaped lots.

To support housing production while maintaining adequate parking supply, Inyo County may consider the following flexibility strategies adapted from peer jurisdictions.

1. Introduce Context-Based Standards

Adopt parking ratios that reflect differences in housing type, size, and possibly location.

- Smaller units (e.g., studios or one-bedrooms) could require 1.0–1.5 spaces per unit rather than two, with larger units (e.g., two or more bedrooms) could maintain current standards.
- Single-family dwellings on large rural lots may continue to require two spaces, while multi-family or mixed-use developments in compact areas, like Big Pine, Independence or Lone Pine, could qualify for reduced ratios.

This approach aligns with Mariposa County and Mammoth Lakes, which differentiate requirements based on unit size and setting.

2. Allow Administrative Reductions

Provide the Planning Director authority to approve minor parking reductions (up to 25%) when supported by findings such as:

- The site is within walking distance of community services or transit accessible areas.
- Adequate on-street or shared parking exists nearby.

- The project serves senior, low-income, or workforce households with lower vehicle ownership rates.

This mirrors Mariposa County’s discretionary reduction process and Mammoth Lakes’ location-based flexibility.

[3. Permit Tandem and Shared Parking](#)

Allow tandem parking (two cars, one behind the other) for single-family, duplex, or multi-family projects, provided at least one space per unit remains independently accessible. Encourage shared parking arrangements between adjacent properties or complementary uses through recorded agreements—similar to provisions in Alpine County and Mammoth Lakes. These measures can make small infill sites more viable without reducing overall parking supply.

[4. Support Secondary Units and Compact Infill](#)

Establish a distinct standard for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and secondary dwellings, such as:

- One space per ADU (consistent with state law), but offer reductions or waivers if located near services or along transit accessible areas.
- Allowing tandem or uncovered spaces for ADUs to maximize lot efficiency. This aligns with both state law and Alpine County’s flexible secondary-unit standards.

[5. Enable Case-by-Case Modifications](#)

Codify minor modifications that allows alternative parking solutions on constrained infill parcels—such as off-site or noncontiguous parking—consistent with Alpine County’s approach. This could also include flexible parking layouts.

[6. Codify Parking Standards](#)

Create a new section under 18.78. General Regulations that codifies parking standards, including design for residential projects.

5. Conclusion

Inyo County’s existing residential parking standards are consistent with jurisdictions of similar geographic conditions but lack the flexibility to support infill and small-scale housing development. A uniform “two spaces per dwelling unit” standard does not account for variations in lot size, housing type, or proximity to community services.

The comparable jurisdictions suggest that context-sensitive parking regulations can maintain adequate parking supply while improving housing feasibility. Introducing tiered requirements, discretionary reductions, and shared or tandem parking allowances would allow Inyo County to better respond to local housing needs without significantly impacting neighborhood function or vehicle access.

By incorporating these flexibility tools, the County can encourage infill development, diversify housing options, and support more efficient use of land within established communities, while still recognizing the region's reliance on personal vehicle travel.