



---

## CHAPTER 2: PLANNING PRINCIPLES



### 2 Comprehensive Principles

The following overarching Principles provide the basis for the goals and policies included in the Mendocino County General Plan. These Principles embody key issues identified by the residents of Mendocino County, such as stewardship of County resources, planning for growth, and the efficient and equitable provision of public services.



---

The Principles in this chapter are statements of County policy, and have the same legal effect as the Goals, Policies, and Action Items contained in other sections of this General Plan.<sup>1</sup>

### 2-1 Overall Planning Principles

These Principles recognize the wide range of County natural systems, open spaces and recreational opportunities by protecting and enhancing resources. Consistent with this approach, development opportunity is focused on community areas that will support more compact urban development patterns, where such development can be supported by necessary infrastructure and public services.

Principle 2-1a: Conservation of Mendocino County's natural resources, farmland, forest land, and open spaces is essential to the rural quality of life desired by residents and visitors alike.

- Planned growth and compact development forms are essential to conserving environmental resources, farmland and open spaces.
- Direct new commercial and residential growth to cities and community areas where development can be supported by existing or planned infrastructure and public services, and environmental impacts can be minimized.

Principle 2-1b: Mendocino County's natural, scenic, recreational, historic, and archaeological resources are vital to the quality of life and shall be protected for the enjoyment and economic prosperity of present and future generations.

- Protection and enjoyment of the outstanding scenic, recreational and natural qualities of Mendocino County require long-term supportive economic and social systems.

Principle 2-1c: Emphasize compatibility between human activity and environmental resources and processes at all levels from regional planning to site design.

- Encourage safe, cost-effective and environmentally sound community planning and land use decisions.
- Emphasize development patterns, sustainable practices and materials that are compatible with natural environments and processes and that protect air and water quality.
- Discourage development at risk of natural or man-made hazards.
- Ensure that the existing database of County resources, including, but not limited to soil information, slope analysis, sensitive habitat, water resources, air resources, wind energy,

---

<sup>1</sup> Only those statements specifically listed as "Principle" (including the bullet points following each Principle) are statements of policy.



---

solar energy, and hydro energy, is available to guide planning decisions and is kept current as new data is developed.

Principle 2-1d: Mendocino County is committed to the health and well-being of all its residents, and shall implement land use plans, policies and programs that promote health.

- The County will strive to promote community health for all neighborhoods, with particular attention to disadvantaged communities and those that have been identified as lacking in amenities.

### 2-2 Economic Development and Jobs/Housing Principles

These Principles ensure the County focuses on the long term relative to creation of permanent jobs for local residents, consistent with each community planning area's vision for development. Creation of new employment opportunities will be balanced with protection of the environment and natural resources, with the goal of developing new businesses that utilize sustainable systems. Agricultural and timber-based operations are to be protected. Expansion of the tourism industry and County recreational activities will be encouraged. Housing development would be balanced with creation of new jobs by locating new dwelling units in proximity to employment centers.

Principle 2-2a: Emphasize long-term and sustainable economic and community needs over short-term gains.

- Promote sustainable and innovative business practices and technologies that advance work force and community health, environmental protection, and use of clean, reliable and renewable energy sources.

Principle 2-2b: Promote a vibrant, diversified and stable economy.

- Facilitate a variety of land uses and employment opportunities in community areas, consistent with General Plan and local community needs and environmental constraints.
- Promote telecommunications and information technology by supporting expanded opportunities for affordable high speed internet service to all areas of the county.
- Emphasize creation of permanent jobs for all skill levels over short-term job creation.

Principle 2-2c: Support the county's resource-based economy and take actions that protect and enhance the county's diverse natural resources.

- Support the protection and diversification of the county's agricultural and timber-based businesses.

## Chapter 2: Planning Principles



- 
- Promote and enhance the county's tourism and recreational sectors, including tourism tied to historic resources.
  - Tourism and recreation-based activities must be located in areas with adequate access and services, and minimal impacts to surrounding areas and resources.
  - The use of County funds to attract companies to Mendocino County should be focused on those firms that can produce or utilize renewable energy.
  - Promote small-scale or niche manufacturing using local resources for local or general use.

Principle 2-2d: Employment and housing opportunities should be balanced within each region to maintain reasonable commute times, worker productivity and a sense of community.

- Create communities with a balanced distribution of economic, housing and transportation opportunities.
- Integrate jobs and housing through compact development patterns, mixed land uses, infill, redevelopment and reuse of existing sites and facilities, and supporting infrastructure.
- Encourage farmers to provide farmworker housing on their properties for their workers and the workers' families, reducing the transportation costs, greenhouse gas emissions, and other impacts caused by commuting to farm jobs.

### 2-3 Coordination, Partnerships and Funding Principles

This General Plan emphasizes the role of the community – local residents, organizations and others – in shaping the future of Mendocino County through participation in the planning process. As such, the General Plan encourages open and inclusive planning efforts as a means of improving the development process. New development will be required to provide or contribute fair-share payments for infrastructure and public services, while state, federal and tribal governments will be encouraged to fund management activities of their lands and facilities.

Principle 2-3a: Encourage and empower local communities and organizations to engage in local planning and community improvement consistent with this General Plan's goals and policies.

Principle 2-3b: Improve the effectiveness of the planning and development process in achieving General Plan and community objectives.

- Promote open, inclusive public planning and development processes.



- 
- Provide consistency and minimize conflicting mandates by integrating inter-agency planning and regulatory processes.
  - Strive to make regulation and development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective.
  - Continue to improve the coordination of County departments and local agencies and their functions to better facilitate the development process.
  - Continue to explore opportunities to streamline the development process.

Principle 2-3c: Allocate the costs of development equitably between existing and future beneficiaries.

- New development shall be required to pay its legal fair share of required infrastructure, such as water, sewer, drainage, fire protection, law enforcement, parks, general government, utilities, and transportation costs.
- New development shall demonstrate its ability to provide supporting infrastructure and related improvements or services, including payment of required impact fees, posting of necessary security with the County, or other payment mechanisms acceptable to the County.
- Development will be required to evaluate and, where necessary, mitigate short- and long-term social, economic, public and environmental impacts and costs.

Principle 2-3d: Use a wide range of resources to implement General Plan programs and policies.

- Coordinate County and public agency capital improvement programs and funding with the General Plan as required by law.
- Encourage state, federal and tribal governments to fully fund the management of their lands and related infrastructure and facilities in Mendocino County.
- Seek public and private funding and volunteerism to protect and enhance natural, cultural and recreational resources.
- For regionally significant issues, investigate the delegation of regional planning to an existing agency best suited to handle that responsibility or research and justify the formation of a new entity.

Principle 2-3e: Work with special districts, cities, regional and state agencies to allocate revenues and resources in a manner that is equitable and does not result in development or negative impacts for the sake of capturing revenues.

- Develop equitable revenue/cost sharing strategies to facilitate annexation, service delivery, economic development, and resource protection.

## Chapter 2: Planning Principles



- 
- Consider incorporating the results of Regional “Blueprint” planning efforts by the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) into future updates to this General Plan and other County planning documents.

Principle 2-3f: Collaborate with local communities, agencies and organizations to promote all aspects of wellness in the county’s populations.

- Align county infrastructure and capacity to support and develop programs that promote wellness and chronic disease prevention in county populations.
- Strive to reduce health disparities in low-income communities.
- Strive to reduce disparities in access to County services.
- Enhance partnerships with other government agencies, community based organizations and businesses to provide coordinated services that are client-driven, strength-based and culturally competent.
- Provide county residents with opportunities to actively participate in the planning decisions that affect their lives.
- Recruit, grow and train a culturally and linguistically competent, diverse workforce.