



# MENDOCINO PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

## Public Participation Guidelines

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#### Purpose

Public participation is an important component of successful and meaningful planning and a key component of precautionary decision-making. These guidelines are intended to insure that the public has an opportunity to participate in deliberations of significant public interest. Such participation will aid in resolving concerns early in the decision-making process, and promote goodwill between the county officials, the general public, and other identified specific stakeholders.

#### Guiding Principles

The public participation program follows several principles that help ensure planning efforts obtain sufficient public input and support.

1. The public participation program must be a genuine effort to encourage public involvement in the decision-making process.
2. Information must be disseminated to a broad range of stakeholders and interested parties. This may be achieved through public notices, newsletters, flyers, newspaper articles, the Internet, and/or other events.
3. Per the Precautionary Principle Procedure, if impacts are “moderate or high” a public hearing will be scheduled.
4. Agencies must be very careful not to decide the way the process will unfold without full public participation.

**Process**

The agency or department shall use the participatory approach to assist in the decision-making pertaining to the development of a proposal or project. The public participation process shall consist of several elements. At a minimum, the public participation program must address the following components:

1. Describe the decision to be made by the department or agency, including purpose and statement of need.

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2. Describe the planned community involvement area.

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3. List stakeholders that may be affected by the decision. While individual circumstances will vary, stakeholders include residents, property owners, homeowners associations, businesses and any others identified.

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4. How will interested parties and stakeholders be notified of the action or decision to be made? Please check:

- Newspaper
- Internet
- Website
- Email
- Radio/Television
- Posters/Flyers
- Public Hearing

5. Indicate the specific ways in which minority, low-income, and non- English speaking individuals and groups will be notified of the action or decision to be made.

- Newspaper
- Internet
- Website
- Email

Radio/TV  
Posters/Flyers  
Public Hearing

6. Public Comment Period and background Documents

Indicate how the public will provide meaningful input and information to the department of agency, including possible alternatives and options.

a. What is the official comment period including any extensions? A minimum period of 30 business days shall be provided for public comment and review of each action or decision.

Date of Commencement:

Date Public Comment Adjourns:

b. How is the public to obtain background documents related to the decision? Where will the documents be housed and what is the address, phone, number, fax number and email information so that people can request materials?

7. Submitting Comments

With the exception of comment received at a scheduled public hearing, oral comment may not be accepted. Please provide all addresses pertaining to written comment.

8. Public Hearing

a. If impacts of the proposed activity are considered “moderate or high” a public hearing will be scheduled. Additional public hearings will be held if at least 20 persons from the community request so in writing.

- Is a public hearing to be scheduled? \_\_\_\_\_
- When will the hearing take place? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the location and time of the hearing? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Notices of the public hearing should occur a week or more ahead of time and never less than 72 hours prior to the scheduled hearing. The hearing notice must be posted on the department or agency’s electronic calendar, on other appropriate places on the agency’s website and personally to those who have previously shown an interest in the matter. A full agenda must be included for any hearing with sufficient time allotted for public comment.

9. Department and agency staff, along with stakeholders and interested parties will examine the potential environmental and health impacts of each alternative.

10. Information on final decision-making will be posted on the Mendocino Precautionary Principle website ([mendoprecaution.org](http://mendoprecaution.org)) and distributed to all stakeholders and interested parties involved.