

AC Decision Support Framework

What is the Decision Support Framework?

A structured guide to deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and foster strategic alignment in decision-making. This framework is meant to strengthen culture and decision-making capacity, not create more paperwork.

Use it to guide what matters—and make your thinking transparent. It supports the county in the development of a thinking discipline to guide and shape comprehensive discussions when decisions are needed. This is a lens, not a scorecard.

Purpose

This framework helps Arapahoe County institutionalize values-based, transparent decision-making. It is intended to assess strategies, initiatives, or decisions based on the County's Mission, Vision, and six strategic lenses (Sustainability, Data Informed, Community Engagement, Collaboration, Financial Implications, and Equity). In particular it intends to:

- Strengthen County operations and decision-making alignment with County strategic plan.
- Foster thoughtful discussion.
- Improve consistency and clarity in board-facing proposals.
- Serve as a thinking tool, not a mandatory pass/fail checklist.
- Cultivate analysis habits, not be a burdensome exercise.

When to Use the Framework

This tool is not required for every operational decision. It will be used:

- When preparing Board Summary Reports.
- Not for drop-ins or third party presentations.
- When presenting initiatives, policy shifts, capital investments, or new programs for BOCC consideration.
- As a training tool for strategic thinking across leadership.

How to Use the Framework

Review the statements in each section (6 strategic lenses + mission/vision). Hover over links for additional guidance and/or definitions.

Mark alignment*:

High – Strong alignment with criteria

Medium – Moderate alignment

Low – Weak alignment

No – Misaligned

N/A – Not applicable-provide justification in notes

Use the Notes section for short explanations (2-3 sentences maximum), if necessary. (Examples: "One-time cost from ARPA," "Limited engagement due to timeline.") Notes should be used to explain how or why it aligns, or doesn't align.

**Do not overthink alignment. Honest responses (including "low" or "no") are valuable to the discussion. Tradeoffs and imperfection are part of the process. The Notes are where the insight lives.*

Name and Title

Ceila Rethamel, Engineering Services Division Manager

Department, Office, and/or Division

PWD, Lima Office, Engineering Services Division

Issue/Initiative for Discussion

Infrastructure Design and Construction Standards 2025 Update

Short Description of Issue/Initiative

Updating the County's standards for roadway and stormwater infrastructure.

Tips:

Hover your mouse over the links for more information.

Use the Notes field to describe the “why”—even if it seems obvious.

There are 6 categories, each with multiple questions.

Note there is a "Save and Continue Later" option at the bottom right of each page.

Mission & Vision Alignment

Vision: [Initiative](#) enhances quality of life through exceptional, responsible public service.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The County's standards are the minimum standards that must be met to provide safe infrastructure.

Mission: Initiative contributes to a diverse and vibrant county where everyone can thrive.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

The County standards apply to many different scenarios of uses for roadways which are used by the public.

Sustainability

We analyze county activities through the lens of human, environmental, social, and economic sustainability, so our decisions lead the county toward meeting the needs of today while empowering current and future generations to thrive.

Holistic. Initiative promotes long-term financial (including one-time and ongoing cost considerations), human, environmental, and social sustainability.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

There is typically no cost to update the County's standards, unless standard details need to be updated. However, the IDCS does provide long term financial benefit by ensuring infrastructure accepted by the County meets standards that have been developed to ensure they are long lasting with minimal maintenance. They consider the environment to minimize impacts as much as possible and are socially sustainability by considering equity for all looking after community well-being by providing safe and resilient communities all of which promotes quality of life.

Enduring. The initiative builds lasting, resilient [systems](#) rather than offering temporary fixes.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The County's standards sets the criteria for others to build roadway and stormwater infrastructure and is the minimum standard for those assets. These standards are based on industry practices and guidance so that the County can accept these assets that have a full design life and are maintenance friendly.

Established. The systems and infrastructure are in place to support sustainability [over time](#).

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Engineering Services Division has a core function to update County standards utilized in the land development review process.

Established. The people and culture are in place to support sustainability over time.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Engineering Services Division has been responsible for make edits since the criteria was first adopted. A staff of 6 engineers complete the updates which are then reviewed by other divisions in PWD. The culture over the last few years has changed to conduct annual routine reviews so that changes are minor from year to year for the stakeholders utilizing this document.

[Data Informed](#)

We use varied data informed and [evidence-based best and promising practice](#) tools to inform how best to utilize resources to address challenges.

Quality. Initiative is supported by accurate, relevant, and timely [data](#).

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The goals is to keep the County standards current with industry practices. This specific standard recently received a significant update and is now on track to be routine reviewed and updated yearly.

Accuracy. Data is [interpreted and validated](#) by appropriately [qualified professionals](#).

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The County standards are reviewed by engineers, inspectors and Road & Bridge staff as well as those external individuals that utilize the standards and must comply with the standards.

Application. Data is used to guide decisions rather than simply [justify them](#).

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Data utilized to update the standards are based on industry references that set the regulations or standards for the nation or state.

Community Engagement

We want to understand and respond to [community values](#) in decision-making, meeting people where they are.

Inclusive. Specific communities affected by the initiative have been engaged, as appropriate, and in accessible ways.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria			X		

Notes

External stakeholders are asked for their comments; however, the standards may not be adjusted if the overall public safety would be compromised.

Open. We are transparent in sharing what we're doing and why, in a meaningful way.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria			X		

Notes

More communications have been provided and shared; however, many external comments were not received. This could mean that another way to receive comments may be needed.

Responsive. Community input and feedback has been considered and reflected, where appropriate, based on genuine understanding.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria					X

Notes

When updating the County standards, many engineering standards and concepts are not easily understood by the community. The more appropriate time to work on understanding would be during Public Works week and throughout the year.

Collaboration

We work within and across the county to implement outcomes, engaging key [internal and external partners](#) to maximize benefits and increase efficiency.

Strategic. Key partners have been identified and intentionally engaged in a [timely manner](#) to maximize benefit and increase efficiency.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Engineering Services worked with internal partners to review and edit the standards for this update. No comments were not received during this update and it feels like that is because of the close collaboration that was done to make the edits.

Participatory. Collaboration is transparent, inclusive, and responsive to both internal and external [stakeholders](#).

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

Internal stakeholders have been responsive through the last two updates; however, the external stakeholders did not have as much to share. Not sure what changed this year.

Defined. County's role is clearly defined as lead, support, or defer.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

These are the County standards which defines the County's role in the land development review process. Continued communications with applicants and the public on the County's role for land development reviews can always be done to help.

Financial Implications

We consider long-term and holistic financial implications in decision-making, prioritizing best overall value, responsible use of public funds, and sustainable financial health.

Prudent. Short- and long-term costs are understood, affordable, and balanced with current available resources (including non-monetary assets like equipment or facilities.)

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Changes to the County standards has direct implications the County's road and stormwater infrastructure. This specific update will impact developers and permittees that are working in the County. Developers will need to provide more collateral and permittees will be asked to restore the pavement that they impact in a more maintenance friendly manner.

Efficient. The initiative includes cost-saving measures, external funding, or partnerships where appropriate, and prioritizes best overall value.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria					X

Notes

The land development review process is for other entities that build within unincorporated Arapahoe County. The costs of the improvements are paid by developers or third parties.

Accountable. Public funds are used responsibly, with trade-offs and [non-monetary impacts](#) clearly considered.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

Should the County agree to make some improvements, agreements are established between the developers and the County to ensure that County's funds are spent in a manner that helps the public and not just a specific developer.

Disciplined. One-time and ongoing financial commitments are identified, justified, and planned for in alignment with long-term fiscal health.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

Any financial commitments by the County are either documented in the County's standards or in a development agreement. These are limited to a case-by-case basis and often take into account impacts to the County's infrastructure as well as on-going maintenance concerns.

Equity

We work with communities impacted by county policies, behaviors, beliefs, practices, and decisions. We seek their voice, consider historical context, and understand intersectional impacts. We anticipate potential obstacles, consider unintended consequences, and work to remove barriers for the betterment of all.

Precautionary. Benefits, challenges, and impacts are understood and addressed, with care taken to avoid unintended harm.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

The County's standards are intended to protect public safety. However, land development can be perceived as causing harm even though the criteria for the County may be met by the developing community.

Equitable. The initiative acknowledges and addresses both historical and current [inequities](#).

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

As the County's standards have a high life safety component (eg. fire access, traffic safety), there is high alignment as the intent is to keep the public safe irrespective of who will be using the infrastructure.

Adaptive. The approach is [flexible](#) and inclusive, removing barriers and meeting diverse needs.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

The County's standards are typically not flexible and require technical justification to vary from the criteria; however the overall intent is to provide safety for the public.