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

1. **Review the statements in each section (6 strategic lenses + mission/vision). Hover over links for additional guidance and/or definitions.**
2. **Mark alignment*:**
   - **High – Strong alignment with criteria**
   - **Medium – Moderate alignment**
   - **Low – Weak alignment**
   - **No – Misaligned**
   - **N/A – Not applicable-provide justification in notes**
3. **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

Ben Colussy, Retirement Plan Administrator

Department, Office, and/or Division

Human Resources, Retirement Office

Issue/Initiative for Discussion

Arapahoe County Retirement Plan Update

Short Description of Issue/Initiative

Overview of the Plan's assets and performance relative to current market conditions. In addition sharing an amendment to the By-Laws and Legacy DA Employees Plan.

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 mulitple 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

This Study Session is an update of the Retirement Plan. Retirement Benefits help retirees maintain their standard of living after they finish their careers with the County.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

If retirees reside in the County during retirement, then it aligns with this Mission.

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.

Hollistic. 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

Defined Benefit Retirement Plans promote long-term financial sustainability.

Enduring. The initiative builds lasting, resilient systems rather than offering temporary fixes.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The Defined Benefit Plan has endured for over 56 years.

Established. The systems and infrastructure are in place to support sustainability over time.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The Retirement Board utilizes the expertise of certain 3rd party vendors to ensure the Plan remains sustainable going forward.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The Retirement Board and Staff guide the plan over time.

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 Retirement Board makes decisions based on plan metrics and data provided from various resourcces.

Accuracy. Data is interpreted and validated by appropriately qualified professionals.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The Retirement Board has hired various 3rd party vendors who are reputable and have a strong track record.

Application. Data is used to guide decisions rather than simply justify them.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Data reports are provided regularly to the Board of Retirement to guide them in their decision making.

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

The Retirement Office leverages the County's various communication channels to share information about the plan.

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

This Retirement Plan update is intended to be more transparent with the BOCC.

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

Feedback from the Plan's stakeholders can help with the decision making process.

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

With this transparency comes feedback from various stakeholders. The feedback helps us improve our partnership going forward.

Participatory. Collaboration is transparent, inclusive, and responsive to both internal and external stakeholders.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The Retirement Board's decision making process is a result of the collaboration of many stakeholders and 3rd party vendors.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The Roles of the Retirement Board and County are outlined in Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), and Plan's governing documents.

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

The Plan actuaries study the liability both in the short term and long term when making recommendations to the Board of Retirement.

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

Retirement Board members are fiduciaries for the Plan and follow strict guidelines.

Accountable. Public funds are used responsibly, with trade-offs andnon-monetary impacts clearly considered.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The assets under management are invested for the sole purpose of paying benefits.

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

Decisions to invest retirement funds come from the Plan's Investment Consultant, who also follows the Plan's Investment Policy Statement, or IPS.

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 retirement benefits are administered according to the established processes and governing documents.

Equitable. The initiative acknowledges and addresses both historical and current inequities.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The County's retirement benefits are administered without prejudice and based on individual service with the County.

Adaptive. The approach is flexible and inclusive, removing barriers and meeting diverse needs.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The governing documents of the Plan need to be amended from time to time.