

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

Lisa Knerr, Environmental Program Manager

Department, Office, and/or Division

Public Works and Development, Engineering Services Division

Issue/Initiative for Discussion

Updates to the Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control (GESC) Manual

Short Description of Issue/Initiative

The purpose of this study session is to provide the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) with information describing the proposed updates to the Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control (GESC) Manual and to get direction from the BOCC on whether to proceed with the next steps required as part of the GESC Manual update process.

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 has an extensive stormwater drainage system that protects County residents from flooding. In addition, the County has the responsibility to protect waterways so all County residents and visitors can enjoy them. The County has a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environmental (CDPHE). One part of the permit requires the County to have a construction sites program that effectively prevents or reduces pollutants from construction sites from running off into waterways. The GESC Manual complies with the MS4 permit requirements, but the proposed updates will simplify, clarify, and strengthen the GESC permitting program.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Thriving communities include healthy waterways where the everyone can safely play in and near. The GESC program helps to protect our vital waterways and all applicable construction sites must comply with the manual.

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

The GESC Manual updates will strengthen the program and prevent sediment-laden stormwater from construction sites from clogging the County's stormwater system and flowing to waterways. Clogged storm drain inlets can cause flooding and safety hazards. Public resources must then be used to maintain the clogged stormwater system. Healthy waterways free from pollutants from construction sites are important to current and future generations. Polluted waterways are expensive to restore and it is cheaper and more equitable to taxpayers to prevent water pollution from construction sites in the first place.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Although construction sites are temporary, they present a significant potential pollutant source to waterways. By preventing stormwater pollution from construction sites through an updated GESC Manual, the County is supporting the long-term health of waterways and preventing costly stream restoration projects.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Sediment-laden stormwater from construction sites can harm waterways and can also clog the County's storm sewer system. Healthy waterways are resilient and sustainable. Updates to the GESC Manual will better prevent stormwater pollution and reduce the maintenance of a clogged stormwater system.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Healthy waterways are sustainable waterways. Sediment-laden stormwater flows from construction sites to waterways scours stream banks, which causes erosion and results in the need for stream restoration projects. Adequate sediment and erosion controls installed at construction sites result in less to no sediment being washed into the storm drain system and eventually into waterways. The GESC Manual updates will strengthen the program and prevent stormwater pollution flowing from construction sites to waterways.

[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 updates to the Standard Notes and Details are based on new guidance from the Mile High Flood District Volume III Manual and recent stormwater permit requirements from CDPHE and the new topsoil requirements are based on Mile High Flood District's Topsoil Management Guidance.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The GESC Manual updates have been reviewed by staff in the Engineering Services Division, SEMSWA, the County Attorney's office, and stakeholders.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

SEMSWA received and incorporated comments from stakeholders into their GESC Manual, which was the basis for the County's updated GESC Manual. In addition, SEMSWA has offered comments on the County's GESC manual updates.

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

Key stakeholders, including many from the construction industry, were notified of the proposed changes to the GESC Manual and the GESC Manual was posted on the County's web site on October 13, 2025. No comments from the stakeholder community were received, other than SEMSWA. The GESC Manual is compliant with the County's Digital Accessibility 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

Key stakeholders, including many from the construction industry, were notified of the proposed changes to the GESC Manual and the GESC Manual was posted on the County's web site on October 13, 2025. No comments from the stakeholder community were received, other than SEMSWA. The web site includes information on the changes proposed.

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

SEMSWA's comments were incorporated into the GESC Manual updates. No comments from other organizations were received on the proposed Manual.

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

The County worked with SEMSWA over the past year on the proposed changes and County staff attended SEMSWA's open house. The County's proposed GESC Manual is based on SEMSWA's version of the Manual adopted by their Board in July 2025. Key stakeholders, including many from the construction industry, were notified of the proposed changes to the GESC Manual and the GESC Manual was posted on the County's web site on October 13, 2025.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Key stakeholders, including many from the construction industry, were notified of the proposed changes to the GESC Manual and the GESC Manual was posted on the County's web site on October 13, 2025. Comments from the County Attorney's office and SEMSWA were incorporated into the updated GESC Manual.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The GESC Manual clearly states that the County is the primary regulatory agency for the Manual, although delegation is given to SEMSWA to implement the majority of the Manual for applicable constructions projects in the County's MS4 permit area and SEMSWA service area.

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

There are no costs anticipated from the proposed updates to the GESC Manual. It is estimated that the replacement of the GESC Report to a narrative sheet will save both the applicant and the reviewing engineer time.

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

It is estimated that the replacement of the GESC Report to a narrative sheet will save both the applicant and the reviewing engineer time.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The GESC Manual updates will strengthen the program and prevent sediment-laden stormwater from construction sites from clogging the County's stormwater system and flowing to waterways. The public generally does not want to recreate near polluted or degraded streams. Storm drain inlets clogged with sediment and debris from construction sites can cause street flooding, which is a hazard to the driving public.

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

The GESC Manual updates will not cost the County to implement. The County is responsible for complying with their state-issued MS4 permit and one requirement is an effective construction sites program. The proposed updates will result in the GESC permitting program being more effective in meeting the County's MS4 permit requirements.

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

Waterways are enjoyed by all County residents and visitors. It is important for the County to have clear expectations in the GESC Manual for construction projects to prevent stormwater pollution from degrading waterways.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The GESC Manual is equitable in that it applies to construction projects that disturb 1 acre or more, or 1 acre or less but part of a larger common plan of development or sale. It will need to be translated to Spanish once it is finalized and adopted.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The GESC Manual is equitable in that it applies to construction projects that disturb 1 acre or more, or 1 acre or less but part of a larger common plan of development or sale. It will need to be translated to Spanish once it is finalized and adopted.

Please Review Your Responses.

You're almost done!

ATTENTION! Mimecast and PDF Responses

You will be emailed a copy of your responses to attach to your BSR. Emails being sent from *noreply@alchemer.com* may get caught in the Outlook Mimecast spam filter and take up to a day to be delivered. (After you "permit" the email in Mimecast, delivery time should be quicker for future submissions.)

If you need a copy of your PDF responses *immediately*, click the Back button below and look for the Download PDF Version link at the bottom of the page.

Editing/Reviewing

The email will also contain an Edit Link if you need to edit your responses or if you need to forward to others for final review/editing.

Enter your email address below and click Submit.

Email Address

LKnerr@arapahoegov.com

Thank you for taking the time to complete the Decision Support Framework survey.

REMINDER! Mimecast and PDF Responses

You will be emailed a copy of your responses to attach to your BSR. Emails being sent from *noreply@alchemer.com* may get caught in the Outlook Mimecast spam filter and take up to a day to be delivered. (After you "permit" the email in Mimecast, delivery time should be quicker for future submissions.)