

# 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

Caitlyn Mars, Zoning and Weed Control Manager

## Department, Office, and/or Division

Public Works and Development, Planning Division, Zoning Section

## Issue/Initiative for Discussion

Short-Term Rental Ordinance and Licensing Program

### Short Description of Issue/Initiative

Short-Term Rentals (STRs) have increased in number, resulting in community concern related to noise, parking, safety, and neighborhood impacts, prompting the need for a clear regulatory framework. The proposed ordinance establishes licensing, safety standards, occupancy limits, and enforcement tools to ensure STRs operate responsibly while preserving neighborhood character and protecting public health and welfare.

#### 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

This initiative enhances quality of life by ensuring short-term rentals operate safely, responsibly, and with accountability to surrounding neighborhoods. It supports exceptional public service by establishing clear standards that protect residents while allowing responsible STR activity.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

#### Notes

This initiative ensures short-term rentals operate safely and responsibly, protecting housing stability and neighborhood livability. By establishing clear, fair regulations, the ordinance helps create communities where residents, visitors, and property owners can all thrive.

## 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 initiative promotes holistic sustainability by using licensing fees to create a self-sustaining program supported by both third-party enforcement and existing staff capacity. The ordinance also maintains flexibility for owners to earn income by renting their homes under clear, responsible standards.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

## Notes

This initiative establishes durable, long-term regulatory and enforcement structures that create a stable framework for responsible STR operation. Rather than applying temporary fixes, it builds resilient systems designed to support sustained neighborhood quality and consistent compliance.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

## Notes

The initiative is establishing the systems and infrastructure needed to support long-term program sustainability, ensuring the framework will remain effective as it develops.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

## Notes

The initiative is actively fostering the people and organizational culture needed to support long-term sustainability, ensuring teams are prepared to uphold the program implementation and growth..

## [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 initiative is grounded in accurate, relevant, and timely data, ensuring that the regulations are responsive to real community conditions and enforcement needs.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

## Notes

Data used in the initiative is interpreted and validated by trained, qualified professionals as well as leadership across the department, supporting accurate, evidence-based decision-making.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

## Notes

Feedback gathered from the community, in addition to review of other jurisdictional regulations, is applied to inform and shape decisions.

## 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

Three rounds of public outreach were conducted over the course of the project to gather input from residents and property owners in unincorporated Arapahoe County.

**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

Staff have been transparent in explaining the goals, reasoning, and development of the STR initiative, sharing information in meaningful and accessible ways. This included three separate outreach efforts to openly communicate with and gather input from residents and property owners in unincorporated Arapahoe County.

**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

Community input was received and considered throughout the STR ordinance drafting process, and the regulations were adjusted where appropriate based on that feedback. This included late-2025 updates that incorporated community concerns and added a provision to accommodate legacy STRs.

## [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**

Key partners were identified early and engaged intentionally to maximize efficiency and ensure broad, informed input. On two occasions, we proactively sent referral requests to fire departments, public health, ACSO, and other agencies and work groups to gather their feedback.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

**Notes**

Collaboration throughout the STR ordinance process has been transparent, inclusive, and responsive to both internal and external stakeholders.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

**Notes**

The County is the lead on this project; the ordinance will only be enforced throughout the unincorporated Arapahoe County areas of the County.

## 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**

Short- and long-term costs have been evaluated to ensure the program remains affordable, is self-sustainable, and aligned with available resources.

**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 program is funded by application and licensing fees. Further, the work to process license applications is absorbed within existing staffing levels.

**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 initiative prioritized self-sustaining funding through licensing and application fees.

**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

One-time and ongoing financial commitments have been clearly identified, justified, and planned to support fiscal health of the program. A STR monitoring vendor has already been selected, and the associated budget needs have been anticipated to ensure disciplined and sustainable program implementation.

## 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

Benefits, challenges, and potential impacts of the STR program have been carefully evaluated, and measures have been put in place to address them proactively. This precautionary approach ensures risks are minimized and unintended harm is avoided as the program moves forward.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

### Notes

The drafted ordinance aims to provide equitable opportunity to property owners, while also considering the concerns of those invested in living within their communities.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

### Notes

The approach and outreach was conducted inclusively, aiming to obtain feedback from various communities.

