

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

Josh Garcia, Planner

Department, Office, and/or Division

Open Spaces Department

Issue/Initiative for Discussion

Bijou Basin Master Plan Adoption

Short Description of Issue/Initiative

Adoption of the Bijou Basin Master Plan to guide future development of public recreation facilities at Bijou Basin.

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 Bijou Basin Master Plan is the first step toward constructing recreation amenities at Bijou Basin Open Space. Once constructed, these amenities will provide access to nature and recreation opportunities for residents of Arapahoe County.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Bijou Basin will be open to all residents, however, it will provide recreation opportunities close to home for the central portion of the County.

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 recommendations in the master plan are aimed at providing a recreation experience that is easy to maintain by staff, protects the onsite natural resources, while allowing grazing and dryland farming operations to continue at Bijou Basin.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

The master planning process has helped establish a road map for how public and stakeholder engagement can be effective and help guide future master planning effort Open Spaces completed.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Open Spaces Department's Sales and Use Tax was made perpetual by the voters in 2021. This allows the department to ability to maintain facilities on open space properties once constructed.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Open Spaces Operation Team have been part of the master planning process and have provided input on the types of recreation and the level of recreation amenities they are able to maintain at Bijou Basin.

[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 Bijou Basin Master Planning project stated by having consultants collect natural resource, cultural and agricultural data at Bijou Basin in the spring of 2024. This data was presented to the County during workshops with the consultants. Based on discussions during the workshop and questions generated by the data, additional cultural, riparian, and grassland data was collected in early summer 2024 to help fill the data gaps.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The consultants analyzed the data and it was presented to County staff experts. It was compared to existing data the County had for Bijou Basin to ensure that the newly collected data was valid.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

The data collected in the spring and summer 2024 was used to identify opportunities and constraints at Bijou Basin. The opportunities and constraints were used to start conversations with stakeholders and the public about potential recreation amenities at Bijou Basin and the best location for recreation.

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

For the Bijou Basin Master Plan, the County undertook a 12-month community engagement effort to understand concerns and desires of the community at Bijou Basin. Specifically, Open Spaces mailed out 3447 postcards to the community near Bijou Basin to inform them about the project and upcoming opportunities to provide input. Open Spaces sent over 90 letters to adjacent landowners to inform them about the project and to provide an opportunity for them to talk to the County about their concerns. The County also created a project website to provide project updates, hosted several in person meetings in Byers to share information and provide input, and conducted 3 surveys to get input at 3 phases of the project. There were 636 surveys completed.

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

Open Spaces has quickly analyzed the results from the surveys and posted the summaries on the project website for the public to view. During public meetings, we have been honest about the constraints and opportunities at Bijou Basin and have shared our rationale for management recommendations being 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

After each public engagement survey was analyzed, Open Spaces staff meet internally to review the survey results and consider community feedback. Open Spaces staff researched some community suggestions further to see if they would be feasible at Bijou Basin. The County created a FAQ document that addressed community concerns and feedback and posted the document on the project website.

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 atimely manner to maximize benefit and increase efficiency.

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

At the start of the project, the Open Spaces assembled a list of key stakeholders for the project. These stakeholders included adjacent landowners, lessees, and other organizations in the central part of the county. Before any public engagement began, letters were sent out to adjacent landowners and lessees to provide then information about the project and to offer an opportunity to talk about their concerns and ideas for Bijou Basin.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Open Spaces included identified stakeholders in project emails sent out regarding project updates and opportunities to project input. In addition, we had onsite meetings with some stakeholders providing them tours of the property, and had other meetings to share and discuss the master plan design concepts and then recommendations to get there thoughts and answer questions or concerns.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

As the owner of the Bijou Basin property, the County is the project lead for the master plan and development at Bijou Basin.

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

Design and construction cost estimates have been prepared and Open Spaces Development and Acquisition fund has enough funding to cover the post. In addition, construct of the amenities has been included in the departments 5-year CIP project list.

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

During design, cost-saving measures will be explored. In addition, Open Spaces has been in contract with GOCO about the possibility of applying for a Community Impact grant to help fund construction.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

During the public engagement period of the master plan, there were comments submitted requesting amenities that have served few users or would have significantly increase ongoing maintenance cost for the department. These items were discussed but staff felt that these were not the best use of public funds.

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 construction cost have been identified in the departments 5-year CIP project list and the department has the funding set aside for construction.

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

Throughout the twelve months of public engagement, we heard many concerns about opening the property up to recreation. Open Spaces tried to understand and address as many as possible though the planning process.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

One of the main reasons for this project is to provide recreation opportunities for residents closer to there homes. In this part of the County, there are not many public recreation opportunities.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Open Spaces is open to future opportunities to provide additional programming at Bijou Basin through partnerships with other organizations. This would allow the County to provide programming that resident requested but at no or reduced cost to the County.