

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

Jennifer Ludwig, Director

Department, Office, and/or Division

Public Health

Issue/Initiative for Discussion

Tobacco-related ordinance revisions and updates

Short Description of Issue/Initiative

Arapahoe County has two smoking related ordinances in effect and a resolution. Public Health recommends repealing the two outdated ordinances and updating the resolution to bring into compliance with state law.

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

Strengthens laws that protect the public's health and reduces access of tobacco products to youth.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

Public Health policies protect population health and limit/reduce exposure to harm.

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

Repealing the current policies doesn't have a financial impact on the organization or community.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Tobacco policies are critical for protecting youth by preventing early addiction, reducing exposure to targeted marketing, and creating healthier environments that support lifelong well-being.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Tobacco policies sustain long-term health outcomes by preventing initiation, reducing exposure to harmful products, and supporting environments that promote healthier, tobacco-free lives.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

Policies remain in place once adopted and public health has been implementing tobacco prevention and education programs for decades; however, all grant funding for programs is at risk and may not be sustained.

[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

Tobacco use data is well established

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Data comes from several validated sources at the state and national level. Arapahoe County Public Health also has data scientists and experience health educators who receive, analyze and interpret data.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Public Health has always used data to inform and guide 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

Youth advisors have been part of conversations.

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

Policies that impact health or businesses, or changes in policies, are communicated with those most impacted or broadcast more broadly in an effort to educate the general population.

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 not gathered for this policy update.

[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

Public Health met with Attorney's Office, Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office and Public Works and Development understand current response to violations and determine how to best partner in the future.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria		X			

Notes

To this point we have only collaborated internally.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Arapahoe County Government should be the lead in adopting, updating or revising policies that impact the community's health.

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

Public Health currently has the staff and funds to work with partners on updating policies, and enforcing policies.

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

Public Health is currently funded through A35, through CDPHE, to conduct this work.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria					X

Notes

Funded 100% through A35 grant dollars.

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

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

Tobacco policies are evidence-based and have been implemented for decades, and established to protect the most vulnerable populations.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria	X				

Notes

Tobacco policies are evidence-based and have been implemented for decades, and established to protect the most vulnerable populations.

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

	High	Med	Low	No	N/A
Criteria			X		

Notes

There are options to be considered, but policies are not meant to be flexible.