



November 9, 2021 TiGER Civic Federation Update

Arlington County Civic Federation

What is TiGER?

- ❑ **Task Force in Governance and Election Reform (TiGER)** is a ACCF-chartered effort to re-examine our county's governing bodies and electoral system given that It has been over 90 years since Arlington established its current form of government. As a result, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve Arlington County's electoral and governance systems to help ensure that the County Board and School Board best represents our diverse community and promotes effective citizen engagement with our county government.
- ❑ **Outreach** - We've kept both the County and School Boards up to date on our activities and they have cited our work in their discussions regarding the adoption of ranked choice voting.
- ❑ **Areas of Inquiry**
 - ❑ The size of the County Board and the School Board
 - ❑ Alternatives to at-large elections and first-past-the-post voting systems, including district representation (utilizing either single or multi-member districts) and proportional representation (via multi-member, synchronous elections)
 - ❑ Remuneration of County Board and School Board members
 - ❑ Length of Board terms (including the term of Board Chair) and frequency of elections
 - ❑ The role of primaries and caucuses
 - ❑ The role and design of community engagement mechanisms

TiGER's Membership



- Nancy Tate
- John Vihstadt
- Michael Beer
- Dave Schutz
- Chanda Choun
- Sangita Sigdya
- Sharon Valencia
- Beth Grossman
- Kris Brown
- Kevin Appel
- Whytni Kernodle
- Tannia Talento
- Duke Banks
- Chris Wimbush, Chair
- Allan Gajadhar, Civic Federation President

Workplan Overview

Phase	Phase Description	Desired Outcomes	Timing
Phase 1: Task Force Establishment	The Task Force will assemble, determine its internal organizational structure, and adopt a workplan, including a communications plan.	A clear work plan that provides TIGER members and the public a clear understanding of how the Task Force will complete its work.	January – March 2021
Phase 2: Survey Research and Expert Forums	The Task Force will hold a series of forums to receive further information from experts in each area under consideration. These sessions will be public and include government, community stakeholders, academics with expertise in local government and electoral system, and viewpoints from beyond Arlington County. The Task Force will also conduct survey research to support its work.	Provide the Task Force and the public with the information to determine what changes are necessary (if any) and the potential forms of those changes.	April – August 2021
Phase 3: Adoption of Preliminary Recommendations Guidelines	The Task Force will adopt a Preliminary Recommendations Guidelines, which will detail the Task Force’s Preliminary Recommendations on the matters within its purview. The Preliminary Recommendations Guidelines will guide the subject matter subcommittee’s implementation proposals, which will be drafted in Phase 4.	A clear, high-level understanding of the set of recommendations (if any) the Task Force plans to advocate for in its final report.	September 2021
Phase 4: Subcommittees Draft Implementation Proposals	Additional Task Force Subcommittees will be formed and will draft implementation proposals for consideration by the Task Force	Detailed proposals to implement the Task Force’s recommendations (if any) as defined in Phase 3.	October – November 2021
Phase 5: Review and Adopt Subcommittees’ Proposals	The Task Force will review and adopt subcommittee proposals for incorporation into the Task Force’s final report.	A detailed and clear understanding of the Task Force’s recommendations and how to implement them.	December 2021
Phase 6: Final Public Report Drafting	The Task Force will designate specific individuals or a subcommittee to draft a final report based on approved proposals.	A final report that reflects the majority of the Task Force and its members.	January 2022 – March 2022
Phase 7: Adoption of Final Report	The Task Force will consider, revise, and adopt a final report.	A final report that is supported by the Civic Federation Membership.	April 2022
Phase 8: Advocacy and Outreach	Task Force will advocate for its final recommendations before the County Board, School Board, and the Virginia General Assembly	The adoption of the Task Force’s recommendations by the relevant government body.	May 2022 through End of 2023 Regular Virginia General Assembly Session

TIGER Workplan - Adopted Unanimously in February 2021

TiGER's Public Forums



- ❑ **TiGER has held seven virtual public forums during the Summer of 2021, adding up to approximately 14 hours of expert and community learning and questioning**
 - ❑ Lessons from Other Local Government, Electoral, and Governance Reforms Processes: Fort Worth, Texas
 - ❑ Lessons from Other Local Government, Electoral, and Governance Reforms Processes: Portland, Oregon
 - ❑ Perspectives on Arlington's Government Roundtable
 - ❑ Current State of Arlington County's Electoral System and Models of Reform: Overview of Voting Systems and RCV
 - ❑ Current State of Arlington County's Electoral System and Models of Reform: Experiences with Voting System
 - ❑ Current State of Arlington County's Mechanisms of Public Input and Models of Reform: Current Forms
 - ❑ Current State of Arlington County's Mechanisms of Public Input: Models for Reform

Our Preliminary Findings



- ❑ We believe Arlington County's Government is a good system that can be improved upon to achieve better citizen representation and improved government accountability. TiGER's work is intended to promote better citizen representation and through voting, election, governance, and citizen engagement reform.
- ❑ We've identified six challenges with our current system of government that we plan to provide recommended solutions to address.

Our Preliminary Findings

- ❑ Our elected boards remain the same size as they were in 1930 despite a growing and more dense population, resulting in overworked elected officials, inadequate representation, and insufficient community engagement.
- ❑ Arlington County is not having a big enough influence in the region. Because so many of our problems such as transportation, housing, for example, are strongly determined by our regional neighbors, the fact that we have a county board chair who changes every year makes it tough to develop peer-to-peer relationships with non-Arlington leaders such as the mayor of DC, or board chair of Fairfax.
- ❑ Arlington's elected bodies do not adequately reflect the county's diversity, including but not limited to racial and ethnic diversity, socioeconomic diversity, and viewpoint diversity. As a result, many Arlington residents, particularly those outside the dominant or majority groups, may not feel represented, and the County Board and School Board may not benefit from the full and robust range of perspectives and experiences of Arlington residents.
- ❑ Our electoral system does not ensure proportional representation in Arlington, encourage the most qualified best, and most diverse candidates to run and get elected to office, or provide strong competitive races in general elections.
- ❑ The current Arlington election system's reliance on primaries and caucuses discourages candidate participation and voter turnout and presents significant barriers, including the discriminatory candidate impacts as a result of the application of the Hatch Act on federal employees
- ❑ The current system (both structures and processes) for obtaining and utilizing community input is inadequate in informing decision-makers and making many residents feel that they have been heard. The government is not transparent, leading to a lack of accountability. Participants feel that engagement is not authentic and does not make a difference in outcomes. High-time requirements for participation limit the number of people able to participate.

Next Steps



- ❑ TiGER has formed working groups to develop recommendations in response to each preliminary finding.
- ❑ We plan to have a draft report completed in February 2022.
- ❑ We will submit our final report and supporting resolution to the Civic Federation Membership for adoption.
- ❑ If approved by the Civic Federation Membership, we will begin an public advocacy phase for our recommendations.