

## **External Research Partner – Board Structure and Performance Study**

### **Scope of Work**

The Research Partner shall conduct analysis and synthesis of existing materials and prepare a written report for the County Board that addresses the following components:

#### **Historical Background Analysis**

Analyze the historical development of Arlington’s current government, including its origins, evolution, and key structural characteristics, and describe how this history informs government performance and public participation in Arlington County today.

#### **Synthesis of Community Feedback**

Review and summarize relevant community feedback received to date that is related to this effort, and identify high-level considerations for future community engagement approaches, including potential methods and areas of inquiry.

#### **Identification of Key Concepts and Questions**

Identify major concepts, themes, and questions that may warrant further consideration in future efforts related to the Arlington County Board’s structure and public participation.

#### **Deliverables and Schedule**

The Research Partner shall provide a written report encompassing the components described above.

An initial report is expected to be submitted to the County no later than October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, encompassing:

- Initial synthesis and framing
- Identification of early themes or analytical direction for consideration

The final report is expected to be submitted to the County no later than November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

~~Final deliverables are expected to be submitted to the County no later than July 30, 2026, unless otherwise agreed upon by all parties.~~

### **Limitations**

To ensure feasibility and alignment with the Board’s intent, the following limitations to the above scope shall apply:

## **Analytical Framing**

The Research Partner's work shall be limited to historical analysis, synthesis of relevant existing materials identified through independent research, and identification of key concepts and questions. This scope does not include policy-level recommendations, legal analysis, advocacy, community engagement, or development of specific proposals.

## **Data Collection**

The Research Partner shall rely on existing data, public records, archival materials, and community feedback. The scope does not include the collection of new public input or engagement, interviews, surveys, or other independent data collection efforts.

## **Research Partner Qualifications**

The Research Partner should demonstrate relevant experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Experience analyzing local government governance structures, including Board/Council forms, administrative and managerial models, and public participation or democracy-building methods
- A background in public-sector organizational review, specific to local government settings
- Familiarity with Virginia's statutory and historical context, specifically the Dillon Rule, Virginia's various government models, and Arlington's unique form of government
- Experience with production of objective, non-partisan research for government and public-sector audiences using existing materials
- Experience conducting academic or applied research related to local or regional history, civic institutions, or community development in a public-sector context.

The research partner should also demonstrate their ability to:

- Complete the defined scope of work within the specified timeframe and agreed-upon budget
- Interpret community input and present findings in a way that reflects unbiased consideration of diverse perspectives
- Conduct the scope of work with an absence of real or perceived conflicts of interest (including political, financial, or organizational ties) that could impact the neutrality of the final report.