

# TFOGS OVERVIEW

---

TFOGS Resident Members Eileen Harrington, John  
Rothschild, and Justice Castañeda

# Background

---

- TFOGS was created by Common Council with charge to investigate:
  - Whether Madison's government structure ensures that municipal decision-makers are representative of and accountable to all residents or only those with time, resources and knowledge of process
- Met ninety times over nearly two years
- Six resident members and five CC members
- Conducted outreach thru open houses, surveys, and work of 7 community liaisons focused on Districts 1, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20



# Key Findings - General

---

- “[t]he City’s current government structure is an impediment to full participation and representation and . . . The City’s structure is fundamentally unfair to a large portion of the City’s population, including, most notably, the City’s residents of color and low income.” – p.4
- City processes and procedures are a significant obstacle to resident engagement – e.g. nighttime meetings downtown, Roberts Rules, lack of robust technology to support new avenues for resident engagement including, but not limited to: remote participation, opportunity for pre-submitted and/or pre-recorded comment/ testimony, notification/alerts of matters coming before Council, one accessible web page/site to display all current and upcoming vacancies on BCCs

# Key Findings - General

---

- The City of Madison is an outlier among comparable cities (population, state capitol, home to Big Ten Universities
  - Double the number of BCCs (sometimes more)
  - Alders represent fewer residents; Council has significantly more members
  - Madison lags behind in technology to support resident engagement

# Key Findings – Common Council

---

- Common Council
  - “[s]ome alders already work full-time on City business, either because they are retired, do not need additional income, or have a second job with flexibility... These ‘full-time’ alders tend to spend more time working with their constituents and serving on the City’s BCCs. Not all alders can afford to do this.”
  - “[i]n its current structure, the City’s aldermanic districts have disparate levels of representation based, at least in part, on how much time their alder is able to devote to City work.



# Key Findings - BCCs

---

- BCC structure “lacks diversity, clarity of purpose, and accountability.”
- 38% of 700+ members come from Districts 4, 6, 11, 13 and 19; only 12.5% come from Districts 1, 7, 8, 9, 16.
- Alder membership on BCCs very uneven – ranges from 2 to 14.
- No organizational chart; no way to find exact number and identity of BCCs; overlapping/redundant jurisdictions; members/chairs do not know how to conduct meetings.

# Key Findings – BCCs

---

- “BCCs vary widely with regard to the impact of their recommendations in City decision making...”
- “City’s current BCC structure better represents some districts than others, unfairly favors people with the time, resources, and knowledge to influence government decisions, and facilitates a system where some BCCs act with considerably more power and resources than others.”

# Key Findings – Mayor's Office

---

- Current span of administrative control may be too wide to ensure adequate supervision of day-to-day operations
  - Too many direct reports
  - Absence of performance reviews
  - Absence of organizational transparency



# Key Findings – Resident Engagement

---

- Lack of robust technology options for resident participation, requirements that meetings be held downtown and often at night, rigid adherence to Roberts Rules pose barriers for resident engagement.
- Other local governments are ahead of Madison in using technology tools to facilitate resident engagement and holding meetings in a variety of locations.
- COVID-19 has demonstrated that virtual meetings and remote participation are possible, although these are only some of the improvements TFOGS recommended.

# TFOGS BCC Subcommittee Chair Justice Castañeda

---

- Significant synergy between recommendations from BCC and Common Council Subcommittees, and the analysis of challenges with these two components of the structure of Madison's government
  - Many recommendations from one subcommittee were based on findings from the other, or are iterative steps toward mitigating challenges with the other
- The work of assessing BCCs and reorganizing them into a more manageable, representative and effective structure will demand a significant amount of time from elected officials—especially alders
  - Not possible under current, part-time model (which is why it doesn't happen, even when there have been attempts at it)



# BCC's (continued)

---

- BCC structure needs increased accountability, scaffolded throughout multiple/all levels
  - To include expected deliverables, stated periodic progress reports, clearly defined progress metrics
  - Many of the committees could (should) sunset after a particular order of business or completion of work
    - If sunsetted body had to be reconstituted, that would allow for new(er) members and different representation
  - Fewer BCCs with lead Committee overseeing work of related committees

# TFOGS Common Council Subcommittee Chair, and TFOGS Vice-chair, John Rothschild

---

- Key CC Subcommittee recommendation
  - Transition to a full-time Council
- Key CC Subcommittee recommendations requiring referendum approval
  - Reduce the number of districts to 10
  - Increase length of Alder terms to 4 years
- Number of districts was last changed in 1987, from 22 to 20, and mayor's term extended from 2 years to 4
- TFOGS recommends 4-year terms for Alders even if other changes not made



# Why We Need a Full-Time Council

---

- To provide equal representation to the city's residents, rather than representation based on the amount of time an Alder has available to do the job.
- To encourage and permit residents who are not time or money rich to run for and serve on the Council.
- To recognize that serving as Alder is a full-time job and should be compensated as such.
- To provide Alders with the time needed to oversee major policy initiatives and the needed restructuring and oversight of certain city functions (e.g., BCCs).
- To allow Alders sufficient time to be essential contributors to engaging residents more fully in the City's decision-making processes.

# Conclusion

---

- TFOGS report makes 42 recommendations
- Only two – changing the term of Alders from 2 to 4 years, and reducing the number of Districts from 20 to 10 – require approval of the voters
- A reduction in the number of districts would most efficiently occur in connection with post-census redistricting
- There are no similar timing considerations on other recommendations