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TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

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A Foreword

This Master Plan was undertaken beginning in early 2019 and completed in the summer of 2020. During the course of the planning process a number of major events took place at Tarleton State University, and across the country and globe. In May of 2019, Dr. F. Dominic Dottavio announced he would step down as President of the University after eleven years, and remain at Tarleton as a faculty member of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. He was succeeded by Dr. James Hurley in August 2019.

As is often the case, with a new administration comes new priorities; knowing this, the planning process had been put on “stimmer” for several months during the transition, until the team could brief the new President and his cabinet, hear about his aspirations for Tarleton, and reflect those in the master plan in progress.

As the master plan entered the final “Refinement Phase,” in the spring of 2020 the world was struck with the global COVID-19 pandemic, causing Tarleton State, along with higher education institutions across the Texas A&M University System, and indeed the entire country, to respond and adapt, working quickly to transition from in-person to virtual learning for all students, postpone spring commencement ceremonies, and prepare for uncertainty in the year to come.

This global health crisis, paired with the accompanying economic recession and significant political unrest across the United States creates an opportunity for the University to re-imagine itself, chart a course forward, and reaffirm itself as it strives to “develop moral and ethical thinkers, scholars, and leaders who demonstrate civility and integrity, while contributing meaningfully and responsibly to a global society.”
The Scope of this Plan
The Campus Master Plan Update covers Tarleton State’s Main Campus in Stephenville only; separate master plans or small area plans have recently been completed for the Fort Worth Campus, Agricultural Center, and Rodeo Grounds. Tarleton State also offers courses in Waco and Midlothian; these locations are not addressed in this master plan.

The Master Plan Update is broken out into three phases: Near, Mid, and Long Term. Projects have been given priority according to needs expressed and agreed to by the Steering Committee and within the context of the expected future availability of different funding sources. In general, detailed building programming has not been completed for these projects and all square footages are rough assumptions for master planning purposes.
Since Tarleton State completed its most recent Campus Development Plan in 2014, the university has seen dramatic changes. The university has completed major building, landscape, and infrastructure projects across the Main Campus and Agricultural Center in Stephenville, while opening the very first building on a brand new campus in Fort Worth. Student enrollment had grown substantially during much of the period leading up to this master plan. Much of what was contained in the 2014 Campus Development Plan has been achieved, transforming the campus for the better and enhancing the student experience.

This Master Plan Update seeks to build on these successes, reconsider priorities, and chart a course for future development. Many of the principles and concepts are still very much valid, and are re-affirmed within the context of this update. Because of the successful implementation of previous planning, Tarleton is already realizing the vision it has set out for itself. This plan takes this vision to the next stage, further emphasizing the principles that have allowed the campus to grow into what it is today, and reinforce these within a new set of building, landscape, and infrastructure priorities.
Campus Transformations (2014-2019)

Looking north down Lillian Avenue, Fine Arts Building at right (2014)

Texan Trace Pedestrian Mall looking north (2019)

New Engineering Building (2020)

Looking west toward Memorial Stadium East Grandstand (2014)

New Traditions Residence Halls, Memorial Stadium East Grandstand behind (2019)

New Memorial Stadium West Grandstand (2019)
Steering Committee participating in a project prioritization exercise

Mobility and Parking Committee Workshop

Master Plan Process
The Master Plan was structured in three phases: Pre-Development, Development, and Refinement. As this was framed as a Master Plan Update, and several of the planning team members had worked on the previous master plan, the process (although for reasons mentioned in the Foreword was not shorter in duration) was able to be condensed and streamlined to a greater extent than it would have if the team had not had such extensive experience on campus.

The master plan team met with the Steering Committee during each phase, including one additional meeting to brief President Hurley and incorporate his strategic direction into the process before proceeding to finalize the plan.

In addition to the Steering Committee, the planning team met twice each with a Parking and Mobility Committee and a Facilities Committee to address each of these topics in more detail. A number of individual and small group sessions were held with representatives from Enrollment Management, Finance and Administration, Office of the Provost, Athletics, Student Affairs, Advancement, and the City of Stephenville.

In particular, the Refinement Phase featured a lively workshop with the Steering Committee, during which members were asked as a group to prioritize projects in the master plan in an interactive session, which was then taken to develop the three phases represented in the final plan in this document.

In keeping with the idea of a Master Plan Update, previous elements were revisited, and either verified, modified, or done away with. In assessing the implementation of the previous master plan, substantial progress had been made toward many of design principles identified. Yet, having not yet been fully achieved, these principles were still seen as valid aspirations for this planning effort, and have been used as a framework for determining the shape of the master plan contained herein.
2- Analysis and Observations
Tarleton at a Glance

Tarleton State History
Tarleton State University was established in 1899 as John Tarleton College, at the bequest in the will of its namesake, John Tarleton, who had walked to Texas from eastern Tennessee 34 years prior, became a successful rancher, and left $85,000 for the creation of this institution. The university became a member of the Texas A&M University System in 1917, becoming John Tarleton Agricultural College, and eventually Tarleton State University in 1973.

Academics
Tarleton State offers students nearly 100 undergraduate and graduate degree programs and two Doctorate Degrees across six colleges: Business Administration, Education, Health Sciences and Human Services, Liberal and Fine Arts, and Science and Technology.

Student Housing
The University currently operates nearly 3,500 beds on campus, with a mix of traditional dormitory style, suites, and apartments and maintains a Freshman and Sophomore on-campus housing requirement. The vast majority of the housing has been built in the last twenty years, with nearly all of the oldest residence halls either being repurposed for other uses or demolished in recent years.

Athletics
Tarleton State has competed for the past 25 seasons in the Lone Star Conference at the NCAA Division II Athletics, but as of July 2020 will be entering the Division I Western Athletic Conference. Tarleton competes in six men’s and eight women's varsity sports. The jump to Division I is a big move for the University, and will bring increased notoriety, publicity, as well as new standards and requirements of athletics facilities. The newly completed Memorial Stadium West Grandstand greatly enhanced the stature of the program and will be a great place to host games as this transition moves forward this fall.

Student Life and Recreation
Tarleton students have many opportunities to participate in activities beyond their academic pursuits, from intramural sports and campus recreation to student organizations and community service. Just a few of the better-known activities include Founder’s Week, the Tarleton Round Up, an annual day of service, Greek Life, Diversity and Inclusion, and the Tarleton Rodeo which consistently fields national championship caliber teams.
Enrollment

For most of the past decade, Tarleton State’s Main Campus has experienced steady growth, growing from a student body of around 7,000 fall semester headcount enrollment in 2009 to a local high point of approximately 9,500 in 2016. This population has leveled off and slightly declined in the past few years, hovering just above 9,000. The addition of 2,000 plus new students to the campus came with numerous physical changes, as demonstrated in the implementation of projects from the previous master plan.

Tarleton State has set a target enrollment projection of 3% increase per year over the next decade, out to the planning horizon of 2030. This would mean an increase of approximately 3,500 headcount enrollment over the next ten years. While portions of these students are shifting to on-line or hybrid learning models, this growth target will have a profound impact on facility needs and capital investment to support this significantly larger student body.
Campus Uses

The images at right show some of the representative facilities in each category. Despite use, nearly all campus buildings employ the characteristic Tarleton red brick.

(Imageas listed from top to bottom in each category)

**Academic**
- E.J. Howell Education Building (1918)
- Lamar Johnson Science Building (2001)
- Nursing Building (2010)
- Engineering Building (2019)

**Administration & Support**
- Administration Building (1986)
- Moody and Gough Halls (1936)
- Physical Facilities (1960)
- Trogdon House (1924)

**Student Life / Athletics**
- Memorial Stadium West Grandstand (2019)
- Thompson Student Center (1994) and Dining Hall (2008)
- Sports Recreation Center (2007)
- Wisdom Gym / Kinesiology (1970)

**Housing**
- Traditions North and South (2016)
- Honors Hall (2016)
- Heritage Hall (2014)
- Hunewell Hall (1961)
Building Uses
The diagram above indicates the predominant use of each building on campus. While many buildings have overlapping uses in all or part of the building, this diagram highlights the general overall purpose of each campus facility.

Campus Use Zones
Starting from the predominant use in each building, the campus begins to be separated into "use zones" or districts where any single use is most prevalent. As can be seen in the diagram, there is a major "academic core" use zone at the heart of campus, flanked to the east by the main administration and support zone, to the north by housing, and to the east by athletics. While these zones represent the major clusters of each use, there are facilities sprinkled throughout the campus that do not fit within this framework. This organization is not necessarily either good or bad, but helps to think about desired adjacencies and locations of future uses within this framework.
Edges, Gateways, and Landmarks

The experience of a campus is strongly influenced by the perception of an individual as they approach, enter and interact with the campus. This experience is shaped by visual and experiential elements that signal to the individual the boundaries, access points, and landmarks. These elements serve multiple purposes: to direct campus users, present an image of Tarleton State and reinforce the identity of the institution.

Tarleton State has a set of historic limestone walls in portions of the campus. Where these are present, they assert a strong campus image, particularly when paired with mature trees, consistent lighting, and signage.

Conversely, there are many areas of campus where the edges are frayed or even punctured by uses and signage that disrupt the image and actual boundary of campus. Some edges lack proper paving, lighting, and landscaping, while in other areas commercial properties compete with signage and brand presence, particularly along the Washington Street frontage. The university is aware of these issues and is continuing to make progress toward pedestrianizing this edge, eliminating clutter, and planning to acquire property strategically for future development as able.

Edges

Tarleton State has a set of edges, gateways and landmarks that work together to comprise this perception and campus experience. These are well developed in some areas, while less developed in others. A good bit of progress has been made to reinforce these elements in recent years, though there is still room to improve.
Tarleton State is fortunate to have a number of historic and modern reproductions of signature stone gates at several key entrances and signature building locations around campus. Many of these gateways allow no vehicle traffic or are partially restricted, limited access areas.

Other areas around campus also serve as less official gateways, either at key intersections or entrances to campus. These areas can be reinforced through a number of ways, whether strong building, landscape or signage presence to indicate the crossing of a threshold onto campus, as it is not necessary to have a ceremonial entrance at every access point.

**Gateways**

**Landmarks**

Landmarks can serve both as external and internal signifiers and wayfinding tools for a campus. Certain buildings, because of their scale, historic value, or iconic nature, serve as landmarks external to campus. Internal to the campus, elements such as plazas, sculptures, statutory, or follies provide local meeting points or directional elements within the landscape. Pieces across campus such as the cannon, John Tarleton Statue, James Earl Rudder Statue, the smokestack, and water tower, are some of these elements. The smokestack, originally built in 1923, has served not served a functional purpose for many years, but instead is an iconic element of the campus fabric. Especially because Tarleton has employed similar building materials across campus, these wayfinding elements are important guideposts for visitors and students.
Pedestrian Experience

Existing Pedestrian Areas
Tarleton has done an admirable job of improving its internal pedestrian zones, having transformed over a mile of former vehicular rights of way into fully landscaped pedestrian malls, and adding or improving numerous plazas and interior walkways. Campus is now a much safer, more inviting place to walk.

While a good deal of improvement has been made, there are still many areas on and around campus where the pedestrian realm is in poor repair or missing entirely, many of which are along the campus edges. Some of these areas are not on Tarleton property, but it is important to address the opportunities to make these improvements and create safer sidewalks and pedestrian crossings in partnership with the City of Stephenville or TxDOT where applicable.
Pedestrian Connections - Campus Edges

Pedestrian Connections (Present and Missing)
The diagram above shows existing key pedestrian routes with blue arrows and future desired routes in red dashed areas. As the Master Plan section will show, these connections will become key in tying new development to existing and stitching the campus together at a human scale.
PARKING FACILITIES

Parking and Campus Experience

Every university must strike a balance on the amount and location of parking provided to its students, visitors, faculty and staff. Due to its small town setting and the historic availability of land, the standing approach to parking at Tarleton has been to provide ample parking wherever it can be built. As the university experienced rapid growth, it struggled to continue to provide this ample parking to students at the same levels as before, expanding into a number of remote lots on the edges of campus. Opportunistic property acquisitions were quickly turned into surface parking to accommodate growth in demand.

Meanwhile, while some core parking has been repurposed for building footprints (Engineering, for example), large central lots still exist, which, in some instances negatively affect the campus experience.

This topic is explored in great detail within the Parking and Mobility Plan, but it is worth noting here, as it impacts the way the master plan treats these areas and plans for parking in the future.
Existing Parking Lots

Existing Parking Visualized as Continuous Surface
Holes in the Campus Fabric

Building from the parking assessment as it relates to campus experience, the planning team identified a number of “holes” or gaps in the campus where the experience was lacking in one way or another. Many of these locations were parking lots, though some were related to adjacent development or out-parcels such as the Dairy Queen and “Neebo” buildings, still others were disconnected or improperly located Tarleton State buildings such as the Facilities Complex.
Opportunity Sites

Looking holistically at the gaps in the campus fabric, planned demolitions or relocations of certain uses, along with potential future property acquisition, the planning team identified a number of “opportunity sites” upon which to focus future development for the master plan. Ultimately, many options were explored for the organization and phasing of future development. While not every opportunity site is fully developed within the Long-Term Master Plan, it is important to recognize the areas where future development may be seen as appropriate, even if not immediately envisioned.
Existing Campus
Illustrative Plan

Building Legend

501 Engineering Technology Building
503 Construction Facilities Maintenance
506 Clyde H. Wells Fine Arts Complex
508 Joe W. Autry Agriculture Building
509 Mathematics Building
510 Administration Annex
511 O A Grant Building
513 E J Howell Education Building
518 Physical Plant
521 Trogdon House
529 Hunewell Hall
530 Moody Hall
532 Administration Annex II
533 Tarleton Center
534 Administration Building
536 Bender Hall
537 Stadium Pressbox
540 Ticket Booth
543 Concessions
551 P.E. Field Facility
557 West-side Concession Facility
570 Memorial Stadium Concession
603 Rock Greenhouse
646 Traditions Hall
647 Hunewell Lounge
648 Kinesiology
648 University Police & Parking
656 Library
664 Welcome Center
671 Physical Facilities Building
673 Ag Mechanics Lab
674 Maintenance Warehouse
679 Biology Research Lab
680 Biology Storage
685 Central Receiving
686 Intramural Sports Building
687 College of Business Administration
688 Hydrology/Engineering Building
689 Barry B. Thompson Student Center
689 Campus Bookstore
689 Student Health Center
690 Central Plant
691 Hydrology Annex
725 Horticulture Lab
726 Horticulture Greenhouse
727 Horticulture Greenhouse
810 Venture Apartments
919 Science Building
938 Women’s Athletic Facility
952 Texan Village
953 Texan Village
954 Texan Village
955 Texan Village Clubhouse
956 Texan Village Pavilion
957 Lone Star Apartments
959 Texan Village
960 Centennial Hall
961 Dining
962 Legends
963 Legacy
964 Heritage
965 Sports Medicine Facility
967 Recreational Sports Facility
981 Nursing Building
999 Engineering Building
3-Master Plan
Near-Term Plan

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Health Sciences Building
A major priority for Tarleton State has emerged with a push for several new programs in the Health Sciences. These new programs may include a College of Osteopathic Medicine, and may include programs for Physicians Assistants, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy and Optometry. The new Health Sciences Building would have good adjacencies to the Nursing Building, Student Health Center, and Student Recreation Center.

Event Center
This is intended as a multi-use his facility for large events, conferences, and meetings. This may include commencement, basketball, ballroom functions, and more. With Tarleton State’s shift to Division 1 Athletics underway, the University needs to upgrade its facilities to meet new seating and competition requirements in basketball in particular. This building is not intended to be “owned” by Athletics or any single use, but will serve as a multi-use Event Center for Tarleton State.

Library / Learning Commons Expansion
An expansion to the existing Dick Smith Library on the recently demolished Davis Hall site. Would expand overall library space and could accommodate a wide variety of study spaces, collaboration spaces, student success / support services, etc.

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<th>Footprint</th>
<th>Floors</th>
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<th>NSF (est.)</th>
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Key | Type | Renovation | Footprint | Floors | GSF (est.) | NSF (est.) | Notes |
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Key | Type | Demolition | Footprint | Floors | GSF (est.) | NSF (est.) | Notes |
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<td>9,300</td>
<td>Relocation south of Washington to repurposed buildings.</td>
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AC = Academic
Ath = Athletics
Hou = Housing
L = Student Life
S = Support
Near-Term Plan

NEW CONSTRUCTION (CONTINUED)

Baseball Softball Field House
The Baseball / Softball Field house was planned during the Baseball / Softball Complex Master Plan, would contain Batting Cages and other practice facilities, locker rooms, restrooms and other team facilities. The existing remaining “Ag Mechanics” which is presently occupied by baseball building would be demolished.

Baseball Softball Spectator Facility
This small facility will include concessions, restrooms, etc. to support Baseball and Softball games. The facility has been funded this fiscal year.

Central Green
This new feature space on campus is intended as a large informal open green where students can gather, throw a Frisbee, or study on the lawn, ringed by smaller more intensively landscaped spaces with shade trees and seating.

Parking Structure 1
This 670 space parking structure is anticipated along Washington with good visibility and access to the campus, intended with an active ground floor.

RENOVATION

Physical Ed Field Facility (Football Fieldhouse)
This building at the south end zone of Memorial Stadium houses locker room spaces that have long been in need of renovations and modernization.

Gough Hall
Gough Renovation for Information Technology or other uses. It is an inefficient building in its current layout, occupancy could be much higher with a renovation.

DEMOLITION

Horticulture
The Horticulture Program has moved to the recently completed Plant and Animal Sciences Building at the Agricultural Center. Once set to be renovated for Baseball and Softball coaches offices, the building has been determined not to be suitable for these purposes and will be demolished.

Facilities Complex
This existing complex along the historic campus edge will be replaced by a new Child Development Center. Facilities uses will be relocated south of Washington Street, next to the Pecan Grove.

Child Development Center
A new facility to house the Child Development Center (currently in Wisdom Gym) with associated outdoor play space. Located on the edge of campus for easy visitor access / pickup / drop-off. Proximity to Education / Psychology programs is desired.
Mid-Term Plan

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Student Center Expansion
The current Student Center is in need of unpacking and relocation of uses unrelated to Student Life more student life space, larger meeting / event rooms, expansion to existing Thompson Student Center. North side expansion has been explored by the University, and the west side is also a potential option. Need to unpack some of existing non-student focused uses, add additional event space, storage space, service elevator, etc.

Agricultural Sciences Building
This building would house the College of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences and the Texas Institute of Applied Environmental Research at the corner of Washington and Texan Trace. Along with the new engineering building, the Agricultural & Environmental Sciences Building will frame the iconic campus gateway entrance.

Student Housing 1
This residence hall would be a bookmatched pair to the existing Integrity Hall, directly across Lillian Street, with capacity of approximately 500 beds. The University should consider closing the street between these two halls and converting to a pedestrian mall at the time of construction.

Mid-Term Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>New Construction</th>
<th>Footprint</th>
<th>Floors</th>
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</table>
Mid-Term Plan

RENOVATION
Joe W. Autry Building
One of the older academic buildings on campus, the Autry Building would be renovated and refilled with a number of uses, which might include Student Success space, testing, or other uses identified at the time.

Tarleton Center
Existing “One Stop Shop” for student services, Admissions, Enrollment Management, Veterans Affairs, etc. Not a good candidate for research space.

Hydrology Engineering Building
This building is planned for renovation and backfill. Several uses have been considered for this facility, which have included Business and Kinesiology, though the use has not yet been determined by the university.

Moody Hall
Inefficient building in current layout with very large offices, and currently houses the IT HelpDesk. Occupancy could be much higher with a renovation, could be a candidate for research space or other uses.

DEMOLITION
Ferguson Hall & Bender Hall
These older residence halls are in poor condition have reached the end of their useful lives.

Looking east along completed pedestrian walkway in front of new Library and Learning Commons expansion with Engineering and future Engineering Expansion beyond the gates at the entrance to Texan Trace at Washington Street.
## Long Term Plan

### NEW CONSTRUCTION

#### Engineering Expansion

During the course of the planning and programming of the recently completed Engineering Building, a study was done showing the best future location for engineering expansion on the existing parking lot south of the new building. This would be built over the existing parking lot constructed along with the Engineering Building.

#### Academic Building 1

A future academic building footprint of moderate size. Configuration allows for retaining approximately 100 spaces directly adjacent to Wisdom Gym. Requires removal of approx. 100 Spaces.

#### Academic Building 2

A larger / expandable footprint for a future academic building. Would be the terminus of the academic spine beginning at Howell education building. Requires removal of approx 120 parking spaces.

#### Academic Building 3

Future academic building of moderate size, would help frame the Business Quad. Requires purchase of “Neebo” property.

#### Academic Building 4

Potential future college of business expansion or other academic function. Should have a strong presence along Washington to enhance campus edge. Requires purchase of Dairy Queen property.

#### Academic Building 5

Larger footprint adjacent to proposed Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Requires partial removal of P10 parking lot, retention of approx. 80 spaces.

### Long-Term Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<th>Floors</th>
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### Key Types

- **AC** = Academic
- **Hou** = Housing
- **L** = Student Life
- **S** = Support

### Demolition

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key</th>
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</table>
Long-Term Plan

Research Building / Academic Building 6
A building to house existing and future research activities currently spread across several campus buildings. Intended to have flexible, reconfigurable research environments to accommodate shifting teams and grants. Sites are being actively explored off campus for this use, in which case this site could be used for future academic buildings.

Residence Hall 2
A large residence hall north of the Dining Hall with good adjacency to existing housing and student life uses.

Parking Structure 2
A second parking structure that would provide access to the campus core. The structure is located south of Washington on existing P41 parking lot, but could be sited elsewhere if need dictates.

Recreation Center Expansion
A recreation center expansion which would include space for strength training, additional gymnasion, exercise rooms, lounge, restrooms, offices and minor renovations.

Baseball / Softball Seating Expansion
Doubling of seating capacity for both baseball and softball fields (500 and 1000 respectively), along with new press boxes / media areas.

DEMOLITION
Engineering Technology
Building slated for long-term demolition.
Improved Edges, Gateways, and Landmarks

New building projects, streetscape and landscape improvements in the long term plan greatly enhance campus edges (along Washington street in particular), adding several new internal and external landmarks (Event Center, Academic buildings near the main gates) while reinforcing and improving existing gateways.
New Pedestrian Connections

Building on the great success of the pedestrian malls that have been built at Tarleton in recent years, a number of new pedestrian connections are achieved within the long-term master plan that improve the pedestrian experience still further. There are several smaller extensions of existing malls, including one additional block to the north along Lillian Ave extending Texan Trace all the way to Frey. Several other important east-west connections are achieved in the southern portion of campus, including improvements along Washington Street and a new Academic Spine leading from O.A. Grant, between the Engineering buildings, through the Business Quad, past the new parking garage and beyond.
Before and After
The following images show the transformation of the existing campus compared to the full master plan indicated with the near, mid, and long-term improvements.
Beyond Long-Term

The University has steadily been acquiring properties on the three blocks between St. Felix Street and Harbin Drive and between Washington and Sloan Streets over the years. Some of these parcels have been aggregated and turned into paved or temporary gravel parking lots. The emerging need for an Event Center has brought the northernmost block into focus in particular, as Tarleton owns the majority of this block already. The University continues to discuss and negotiate acquisitions in this area, however not all of these properties are in the immediate cross-hairs for various reasons.

While these blocks are not fully part of campus at this moment, as the University assembles these blocks in the future it is important to consider the appropriate form of development and potential uses for these areas. To this end, the Master Plan has created a “Beyond Long-Term” plan for these blocks to help envision potential development as this assemblage comes to fruition.

The campus-side street frontage of Washington at Harbin has long been anchored by a gas station and convenience store with small-scale commercial development leading east toward campus. As future development comes forward, this could be a great opportunity for Tarleton to create a new landmark and gateway to campus and project its image onto this important corner.

While no specific uses have been identified for these blocks beyond the Event Center to the north, there is opportunity for a number of uses which may include a hotel, mixed use buildings including retail, or additional structured parking. Given its proximity to the planned Event Center and Memorial Stadium, uses that support these facilities may also bear consideration. Conversely, many academic building footprints have been identified within the campus core as shown on previous pages, so it is not immediately intended that this area be considered for that use.

No matter the uses that ultimately land in these blocks, it is critical that appropriate sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and signage accompany all development to improve this edge in Tarleton’s image.
4-Parking & Mobility Plan

SUMMARY
In partnership with Tarleton State staff, the project team conducted a detailed assessment of the transportation and parking system. A review of existing infrastructure, parking use and management, and how people access the campus allowed for a clear understanding of current issues and future opportunities.

The assessment of the current system was informed by key activities, including:

- Data collection and analysis – parking inventory and occupancy, parking permits, student and faculty population, and traffic volumes.
- Site analysis – Field observations of transportation network, parking system, and key infrastructure.
- User feedback – Interviews and focus groups with transportation and parking staff.
Parking

Inventory and Management

There are just over 6,100 parking spaces on campus. Spaces are predominantly allocated between three groups – faculty/staff, resident students, and commuter students. A number of lots are open to “all” and a portion of spaces is designated a mix of visitors, ADA permits, and official vehicles.

Parking is the most dominant single land use on campus, occupying approximately XX% of Tarleton’s land area.

Tarleton has increased parking spaces in recent years, including a net increase of approximately 250 spaces during the 2019 and 2020 school years.

For non-visitors, a permit is required to park on campus, with the cost varying by user group. A student permit costs $100 per year, while faculty/staff permits range from $50 per year (remote lots) to $105 per year (non-reserved) / $600 per year (reserved).

Student permit costs are automatically included in each student’s tuition. An opt-out provision is available but must be requested by the student within the first 12 class days of the semester.

Figure 1. Tarleton Parking Inventory (October 2019)
Occupancy

• Parking demand in the campus core is very high, with many central lots at or near 100% occupied.

• At the typical peak period, however, about 550-650 existing spaces in the “remote” lots (P20W, P34N, P34S, and P34E) are not being used.

• The remote lots are approximately one-half mile away, or a 7-10-minute walk. The lack of safe pedestrian connections reduces their desirability, convenience, and utility.

• Some stakeholders identified parking availability as a consistent challenge, and the provision of more parking as the best solution. Others noted that the parking problems at Tarleton are nuanced, stating that “Parking isn’t a problem 95% of the time,” or that “Parking challenges are more about perception.”

Figure 2 Remote Lots – Average Occupancy (Spring 2018 + Fall 2019)
Parking Costs

- Parking is very expensive to build, operate, and maintain. The estimated annualized cost for a new parking space at Tarleton is $1,335 (surface lot) and $2,407 (garage).¹
- To break even Tarleton would need to generate an estimated $6.10 per surface space and $11.05 per garage space per day.²
- The current daily cost for a student permit is $.40 and $.20 - $2.38 for a faculty/staff permit.³

Future Parking Need

A parking demand model was utilized to estimate the need for new parking spaces on campus in the next ten years. Different scenarios for net new supply and parking demand reduction were developed to identify a preferred scenario.

Key findings included:

- Doing nothing is not an option. The assumed campus growth and loss of existing parking due to planned development will result in a parking deficit by 2030.
- Building new parking alone is not enough. A “build only” scenario will still result in a parking deficit by 2030. Even more parking could be built, but at a very high cost.
- The preferred scenario requires new parking supply, better management, and new incentives to reduce peak parking demand by 5-6% over the 10-year period.

¹ Assumes 20-year financing at 5%, O&M costs of $400 per surface space and $700 per garage space, land acquisition costs for new surface parking, no land acquisition costs for garage parking, and no annual tax on parking.
² Assumes 21 average use days per month, 90% load factor, $50 per space (surface) / $100 per space (garage) system improvement costs, and no profit.
³ Assumes 21 average use days per month.
Do Nothing Scenario

• Assumes:
  – -908 net changes to parking supply by 2030
  – No TDM / parking demand reduction

• Estimated +/-:
  – 1,620-space effective deficit by 2030

“Effective” supply is 95% of actual supply, leaving a 5% buffer in the parking system.
Build Only Scenario

- Assumes:
  - +452 net changes to parking supply by 2030
  - 1,320 spaces in parking garage(s)
  - No TDM / parking demand reduction

- Estimated +/-:
  - 328-space effective deficit by 2030

"Effective" supply is 95% of actual supply, leaving a 5% buffer in the parking system.
Preferred Scenario

- Assumes:
  - +452 net changes to parking supply by 2030
  - 1,320 spaces in parking garage(s)
  - 5-6% parking demand reduction by 2030

- Estimated +/-:
  - 59-space effective surplus by 2030
Circulation + Access

Travel Behavior

- A review of home location data for students and faculty/staff found that many Tarleton affiliates live on campus or within 1-2 miles of campus.

- Recent and planned developments within Stephenville have increased, or will increase, the number of residential units within proximity to campus.

- No mode split data to campus was available. A future travel survey and enhanced home location data would improve understanding of mode of travel to campus by affiliate group and home location.

Figure 4 Student and Faculty/Staff Home Locations
Street Network

Washington Street, Harbin Drive, and West Frey are the primary corridors serving Tarleton. These streets are auto-oriented and offer limited facilities for safe walking and biking. The lack of sidewalks, lighting, and safe crossings also result in underutilized remote parking lots.

Washington Street is the primary east-west corridor, and the “front door” to campus. However, it presents significant barriers. Key issues include:

- West of Lillian: very wide, long crossing distances, and higher vehicle speeds
- East of Lillian: pedestrian scale width and slower traffic, but sidewalks are missing, and streetscape is uninviting with large surface lots and numerous curb cuts.
- Distance between legal crossings is too far, forcing pedestrians to cross mid-block

- Narrow, missing, or disconnected sidewalks
- No pedestrian-scale lighting or bike facilities

Harbin Drive and West Frey have less traffic, but they also present challenges to pedestrians, impacting Tarleton’s connectivity to the broader area and neighborhoods. Key issues include narrow/missing sidewalks, no pedestrian-scale lighting, and no bike facilities.

Based on traffic counts from TxDOT and the City of Stephenville, average daily traffic (ADT) is relatively low on the corridors serving campus. Available traffic data appears to meet key thresholds for implementing bike and pedestrian safety enhancements, such as lane reductions, bike lanes, and sidewalks, without impacting vehicle travel.
Multimodal Access + Programs

Recent improvements to Rudder Way and Texan Trace have transformed the campus, creating a highly walkable core with significant pedestrian activity and vitality.

However, campus connectivity begins to fray as one gets outside of immediate core and near the campus edges. The presence of surface parking lots impact pedestrian comfort and campus legibility, especially for visitors.

The on-campus shuttle provides connectivity to the remote lots. The shuttle has limited stops with few passenger amenities. The shuttle frequency of 30 minutes limits its utility given that the walkshed for the campus extents is 15-20 minutes.

City and Rural Rides (CARR) is the area’s public transit service, offering demand response, curb-to-curb service. Rides must be scheduled in advance and fares are distance-based. Pre-paid passes can be bought, offering a 20% discount.

Observations indicate that there is substantial bike activity within campus, but there are no bike facilities connecting to/from campus. Given the topography and climate, Tarleton has potential to grow walking and biking to/from campus, but safety improvements are needed to capture those living within the walk and bike shed of campus.

Tarleton provides bike parking at key nodes throughout campus, but there is a mix of facility quality. Some racks are not well-maintained and do not represent best-practice design.

There are no programs or incentives to encourage carpooling, biking, walking, or transit.

- An off-campus shuttle to student housing was implemented in recent years but then discontinued due to low ridership.
- Tarleton offered a campus bike share program in 2016-17. Feedback from users about bike share was positive, but ongoing technology and maintenance issues with the vendor resulted in the program’s suspension.

Tarleton communicates parking rules and information through a website that includes detailed maps and online permit management.
Top Takeaways

• Parking in the core is in high demand and hard to find, but remote lots have available parking on the average day. Motorists would rather circle the core of campus than park and walk in the remote lots.

• Existing parking policies and rate structure are not flexible, reinforce driving, and incentivize circling for parking in the core.

• Most people drive to campus and will continue to do so. Opportunities exist, however, to provide more travel choices for some trips, especially for those that live close to campus.

• Parking is the most dominant single land use on campus, occupying approximately XX% of Tarleton’s land area.

• Access, safety, and comfort to, from, and within campus are fundamental challenges. Redevelopment of surface parking lots and improvements to Washington Street and Harbin Drive are essential to Tarleton’s long-term success.

• New parking supply is needed given Tarleton’s desire for long-term growth. An approach that only builds more parking, however, is not financially sustainable and will not solve the fundamental parking issues.

• Parking has significant costs and trade-offs. Tarleton heavily subsidizes parking and the current permit rates would only cover a small portion of the break-even daily fee for a space in a new garage.

• Tarleton must address its projected parking deficit through a combination of new supply AND improved management. Demand for parking is not fixed – Tarleton has robust, yet underutilized, policy levers, programs, and tools that can reduce parking demand.
Recommendations

Transportation and parking are not the ends, but the means to help Tarleton achieve its long-term vision for growth. An effective and cost-efficient parking system, combined with a safe and convenient transportation system, will support Tarleton’s place as an institution of higher learning and source of community pride.

Business-as-usual will not work. Tarleton can no longer simply build more and more parking. A new, comprehensive approach is required. Parking will remain central to Tarleton, but investments in walking, biking, carpooling, and transit are also needed in the next decade.

The transportation and parking recommendations reflect this new framework and are guided by the following principles.

- Comprehensive – Implement a coordinated package of strategies as there is no silver bullet.
- Cost-efficient – Existing and new parking facilities should be managed to maximize their utility, while efforts to reduce vehicle trips can be more cost-effective than building new parking.
- Safe – Provide comfortable facilities for pedestrian and bicyclists, leveraging Tarleton’s world-class campus core.

PARKING

Near-term Strategies

1. Prioritize, initiate, and implement new parking policies to improve management.

Parking occupancy data indicates that Tarleton does not maximize its parking assets, as the remote lots have available parking on the average day. Tarleton should formalize a focused approach on improving management and systems in the short-term in anticipation of new development and campus growth. Addressing key policies will fix fundamental challenges with the parking system. Key actions include:
   - Prioritize a “test and learn” management and pricing/incentive approach with student permits and remote lots.
   - De-prioritize any more parking build in the immediate term.

2. Further incentivize use of remote lots.

Tarleton should incentivize use of its remote lots (P20W, P25, P34N, PW34S, P34E), which are typically below 50% full, by modifying prices and implementing a low-cost program that rewards students and/or faculty and staff who park there. Key actions include:
   - Offer a reduced cost permit for students. Further reduce faculty/staff permit cost.
   - Offer an incentive program that includes gift cards, account credit, and/or another small cash value giveaway. Incentives could be distributed 1-2 days a week, based upon a random selection of vehicles within designated lots.

3. Modify student permit payment policy to “opt-in” instead of “opt-out.”

The current policy automatically includes a parking permit as part of student tuition, even if a student does not own or have access to a vehicle. Students can opt out, but it requires action on their part, and many may not be aware of the cost or policy.

Tarleton should decouple permit purchases from tuition payment, offering students more financial flexibility, ensuring those without a vehicle are not charged, and incentivizing less parking demand.

4. Designate additional loading spaces within residential lots.

Students have substantial need for short-term loading at their residences related to move in/out or daily activities. The lack of proximate loading spaces results in illegal parking and circulation issues in the lots. Key actions include:
   - Designate a limited number of loading spaces within parking lots that are most proximate to residences (P16, P22E, P24, P29 P31, P33, P36).
   - Spaces could be reserved for loading all day or only during designated peak loading times.
   - Monitor use and adjust regulations as needed.

5. Invest in advanced parking management and enforcement systems.

Ongoing investments in technology systems can support efficient parking management and enforcement. Key actions include:
   - Pair online permitting with deployment of License Plate Recognition (LPR) enforcement, establishing a truly “virtual” permit system. This improvement likely requires new/upgraded permitting software and purchase of an LPR vehicle. While upfront costs are high, LPR would significantly reduce labor costs, improve compliance with regulations, and allow for continuous, automated occupancy data collection.
   - Expand access control systems at certain lots to improve compliance with regulations.
   - Implement real-time parking availability data and integration with a smartphone/web application.

6. Invest in a comprehensive parking wayfinding system.

Existing parking wayfinding on campus provides basic information on location and regulation, but can be out of date, confusing, or in poor condition. An updated and comprehensive parking wayfinding program can significantly improve the legibility of the parking system and dispel perceived shortages of parking by directing motorists to available parking.

Tarleton should adopt a formal parking brand and style guide for signage, wayfinding, and parking collateral. A wayfinding program should include a suite of static, directional, pay station, informational per lot, arrival/exit, and dynamic variable message signs (VMS). VMS would allow for continually updated real-time information, be integrated across facilities, and facilitate distribution to websites and mobile apps.
7. Prioritize improved connectivity to remote lots.
Several remote lots are underutilized in part because Tarleton affiliates do not feel comfortable walking to or from them. Connecting these facilities with new pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is crucial to an efficient parking system and is far cheaper than building more parking in the campus core. As described below, improvements to the Washington Street corridor should be the highest priority.

Medium- to Long-term Strategies

8. Invest in new and consolidated parking supply to accommodate Tarleton’s growth.
Based on Tarleton’s growth plans and current parking demand, new parking supply is needed. Given the high cost to build, maintain, and operate parking, however, new parking supply should be carefully considered and strategically phased.

Based on the parking modeling analysis, it is estimated that Tarleton will need approximately 400-500 net new spaces by 2030. New supply is assumed to be programmed as such in the Master Plan:
- 40-space lot in 2025, located in the current P37 lot
- 770-space garage in 2025, located in the current P18/P40 lots
- 550-space garage in 2030, location TBD

It is important to emphasize that this analysis assumes Tarleton’s average annual growth is achieved, all existing parking facilities are effectively utilized, and Tarleton achieves a 5-6% reduction in parking demand over time. Tarleton should carefully monitor its population growth and efficacy of the short-term strategies as part of its planning efforts for new garages.

9. Expand tiered pricing and evaluate a transition to daily pricing.
Tarleton currently offers a discount rate to faculty/staff to incentivize use of the remote lots and distribute demand. Tarleton could expand this tiered framework to more of its parking facilities and all Tarleton affiliates. Tiered pricing could also be applied not only by geography, but by level of demand during different semesters, days of week, and/or times of day.

Tarleton should also offer reduced or free parking for carpools to incentivize shared rides and lower parking demand. Finally, Tarleton should evaluate a daily parking system, which would eliminate annual permits and charge affiliates only on the days that they drive to campus. Daily pricing has proven effective at incentivizing less driving and would also offer financial flexibility to affiliates that are predominantly “online” or only visit the Tarleton campus on occasion. Such a system could be implemented with a combination of a virtual permit system, access control at lots, and/or pay stations.
MULTIMODAL ACCESS + PROGRAMS
Near-term Strategies

1. Support efforts to improve the safety and connectivity of major corridors serving the Tarleton campus.

Washington Street and Harbin Drive are the front door to Tarleton, while also connecting the campus to Stephenville and key local destinations. Their current designs, however, do not support safe travel and impact the Tarleton affiliates to access key parking facilities. The width of the streets and their relatively low vehicle volumes likely meet thresholds that allow for pedestrian and bicycle improvements without impacting vehicle flow.

- Tarleton should support City of Stephenville and TXDOT efforts to improve these corridors. Key elements to prioritize include:
  - Removal of a travel lane on Washington Street west of Lillian with the addition of a center turn lane
  - Narrow travel lane widths
  - Addition of bicycle lanes
  - Installation of complete sidewalk network with at least 5-6’ widths, lighting, and street trees
  - Gutter and stormwater management systems
  - Addition of pedestrian crossings, including Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)
  - Intersection improvements, including high-visibility crossings, bulb outs, and leading pedestrian intervals
  - Reduction of speed limits

2. Increase shuttle frequency and improve stop amenities.

To support better utilization of the remote lots, Tarleton should evaluate an increase in the service frequency of the shuttles, especially during the fall/winter. The current frequency of 30 minutes minimizes its effectiveness given the relatively small of the campus – if someone misses the shuttle it is often faster to just walk. Furthermore, the current frequency will likely not meet remote Parker needs given increased demand.

Tarleton should also improve shuttle stops to increase attractiveness of the system. Improvements could include:
- Shelters and benches
- Lighting
- Emergency call information
- Trash receptacles
- Shuttle map and information

3. Standardize and expand bike parking.

Tarleton can increase the number of people biking to, from, and within campus with further investments in bicycle infrastructure. The current bike parking on campus offers a mix of quality of short-term racks. Tarleton should standardize its bike parking, offering both short-term racks (inverted U, post & ring, or wheel well) and long-term, secure options (bike cages, lockers, or indoor bike rooms). Tarleton should also explore development of an on-campus bike shop and/or service center.

Finally, Tarleton should also update its bike parking standards for new development, ensuring that new residential, academic, and athletic buildings offer adequate short- and long-term bike parking. The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals offers guidelines and best practices for bike parking.
4. Improve communication and promotion of transportation services.

Additional information and improved communication will support Tarleton’s effort to improve efficiency of the parking system and support travel choices to, from, and within campus. Potential improvements include:

- New messaging and collateral to inform campus population on parking options, policy, and other mobility services
- New student and faculty/staff orientation materials
- Smartphone app, including real-time parking
- Social media channels
- Marketing and promotions (i.e. Bike/Walk to Class week)
- Integration with internal campus communication platforms, student groups, and faculty/staff advisory committees

5. Enhance data collection and reporting.

The Tarleton Police Department currently collects parking inventory and occupancy data. However, modifications to the data collection efforts could improve Tarleton’s management of the parking system, help inform changes to permit prices based on demand, and inform rollout and adjustments to new programs.

Key actions include:

- Conduct parking counts at least once per semester for all parking lots.
- Parking counts should capture a “typical” day and be structured to allow for longitudinal comparisons of data – counts at the same days of week and times of day.
- Partner with the City and TxDot to expand data collection to other key areas, such as bike parking inventory and occupancy, traffic counts on key corridors and at key intersections, and collisions by mode.
- Create a simple database for data collection/reporting. Issue a brief report summarizing data and issues identified during each semester.
- Medium- to Long-term Strategies

6. Evaluate implementation of new incentives, programs, and shared mobility services to improve travel choice and reduce parking demand.

Tarleton is a car-oriented campus, and most people will continue to drive to campus. Over the next ten years, a small reduction in the number of vehicle trips to, from, and on campus, especially for those that live close to campus, is needed to achieve Tarleton’s growth in a cost-effective way.

Many colleges offer programs offer and incentivize other ways to get around, while providing popular amenities to students and faculty/staff. Options include:

- Carpool program, including both internal carpool matching database/platform and provision of priority/discount parking for carpools.
- Campus car share or a shared vehicle fleet.
- Incentive program that rewards those who do not drive or who do not purchase a permit. These programs can be low-cost, utilizing point-based systems that can be redeemed for entries into a monthly prize lottery or gift cards. Emerging web-based platforms support program administration.
- A reconstituted off-campus shuttle program that connects Tarleton to nearby affiliate housing and other local destinations. A separate shuttle study is needed to evaluate the feasibility of such a service. Key issues would include routing, span and frequency, vehicle size and availability, and operating structure (in-house or contracting).
- A reconstituted campus bike share program.