SECTION 01
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
INTRODUCTION

Imagine a place unlike any other at Western Michigan University (“Western” or “WMU”). This is a place where students live, study, work, and play. This is a place where visitors from near and far choose to socialize, experience cultural and athletic performances. This is a place where faculty and staff gather. This is a place that attracts the best and brightest to Western. This is, at its core, a place where ‘town meets gown.’

What makes this place so special? It is a place people want to be. It has amenities, features a mix of uses in a walkable environment, boasts beautiful outdoor spaces, showcases state-of-the-art buildings, and has a vibrant street life. Getting to and from this place is accommodated through improved access from Stadium Drive and within the district itself via a system of complete streets designed for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. The image of campus is greatly improved, especially along Stadium Drive.

Why does Western need a place such as this? The university is seeking to reinvest in its campus, improve its facilities, and become a draw for students, faculty, staff from across the region, nation, and globe. The university continues to be a steward of the land it currently owns by planning ways to optimize uses and spaces to serve the next generation of students. Finally, the university is in constant competition—for students, employees, and resources.

This master plan study contains the conceptual plan and technical detail to guide the university forward for the South Neighborhood Sub-Campus. This is a 20-30 year ‘road map’ not a mandate or inflexible document. The university will make decisions in the future that will be informed by this plan, but there is flexibility in this plan in terms of the exact uses, mix, and size/configuration of buildings. The future implementation will depend on political will, market-forces, access to resources/capital, and commitment of leadership. However, this plan is a strong conceptual framework. Contained within this master plan are recommendations on building use, and configuration, landscape and open space, infrastructure, urban design and aesthetics, phasing, and cost.

This master plan is a product of the following vision drivers:

- Create a destination that makes WMU a university of choice
- Blur the boundaries from edge to gateway
- Vision for the next generation of residential life facilities
- Align vision to market realities and partner

Creating the Smartest, Most Connected+ Desirable Campus District in the Country

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Why Plan?

Creating a master plan is an endeavor that attempts to guide growth and prioritize enhancements on campus. It is a visionary and strategic document that offers five important opportunities:

- Think big and explore new ideas
- Improve efficiencies and ensure that proper infrastructure is in place
- Create a ‘sense of place’ and weave connections back to the community
- Identify needs, develop cost-effective solutions, and prioritize investment
- Align with the strategic goals of the institution

Impetus for Action

This ‘living document’ is about more than creating a south neighborhood sub-campus master plan. It is about reinforcing a vision, establishing priorities and enhancing campus identity. It is about maximizing the utilization of existing resources while fostering a physical environment to support academic goals into the future. It is about stewardship and getting the most for every dollar invested within an environment of limited resources. It is about conceiving innovative approaches to campus improvement, ensuring student access and successes, and strengthening the overall reputation of Western Michigan University within the state and the country.

WMU plays an important role in its community. It provides a broad and comprehensive range of educational opportunities, it is an employment center, and it is a vibrant and cultural hub for the region. This master plan seeks to capitalize on the university’s positive community impact by providing a roadmap to guide WMU forward as it strives to be the ‘university of choice’.

ALL DECISIONS SHOULD...

CREATE A TRUE, VIBRANT HUB

for WMU’s South Neighborhood Campus. Make it a destination of choice: “quintessentially Western”

IMPROVE AMENITIES & ACCESS

around and throughout campus. Entice and engage community beyond campus edge.

SMART DEVELOPMENT

leads to assessing program and needs through the balanced lens of economics, viability and sustainability

ENHANCE USER EXPERIENCE

for students, faculty, staff and visitors. Celebrate the Bronco Spirit.

INTEGRATE INCLUSIVITY AND AGILITY OF SPACES

buildings and landscape, that can adapt in use over time.
WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

- A plan for the future - the next 5 years and beyond.
- Helps prioritize Western’s near and long term needs.
- Addresses specific goals and strategies of the institution.
- Provides recommendations for physical improvements including land/building use, open space, transportation, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and phasing.

Project Goals

- Provide the latest and greatest in campus amenities
- Refresh the visual identity of the Stadium Drive Corridor
- Sustainable Design to reduce energy use, increase water efficiency, and reuse materials
- Incorporate ‘Inclusive Design’ principles:
  - Inclusive, so everyone can use it safely, easily, and with dignity
  - Responsive, taking into account what people say they need and want
  - Flexible, so different people can use it different ways
  - Convenient, so everyone can use it without too much effort or segregation
  - Accommodating for all people, regardless of their age, gender, mobility, ethnicity or circumstances
  - Welcoming, with no disabling barriers that might exclude some people
  - Realistic, offering more than one solution to help balance everyone’s need and recognizing that one solution may not work for all

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

Project Study Area

Stadium Drive
Michigan Avenue
Howard Street
Arcadia Creek
Oliver Street
Ring Road South
Arcadia Road
Van De Giessen Road
REC CENTER
WALDO LIBRARY
Area of former Elmwood Apartments (demolished Summer 2018)
SPRAU TOWER
SANGREN HALL
The new district is nearly as much a part of the city of Kalamazoo as the university. This place is meant to be a destination for visitors and a spot where ‘town’ meets ‘gown.’
“Brick by brick, we are building a stronger foundation. Some of these building blocks are large and some are small, but they are all crucial to the structural integrity of what we’re creating—the school of choice and a campus community that is focused on all aspects of student success.”

– President Montgomery, 2018 State of the University Address
The ‘Village Concept’ is about creating a vibrant place incorporating a range of land uses, compact development, pedestrian-friendly design, and beautiful outdoor open spaces. This is a destination. A place to live/work/play/study. This concept will enliven the campus and attract multiple, lively, and prosperous businesses from beyond the university.

Successful neighborhoods promote a diversity of programs which can activate not only the buildings themselves, but the spaces between them. This strategy of mixed-use development is a strategy now common on campuses to promote outside engagement and collaboration. Integrating this into this project can help ensure the success in enlivening the campus beyond the Monday-Thursday routine (Fridays are commonly underutilized). The goal of the “Village Concept” is to get “Beyond Thursday”—a place that is vibrant 365 days a year.

Bringing mixed-use development including hospitality, retail, office and market-rate apartments will start to elevate interest in and establish this place as a new and exciting neighborhood in Kalamazoo. The proposed location on the site provides a highly visible new and active gateway into Western’s campus, thus encouraging its use by the students as well as outside visitors. The view from Stadium Drive will be greatly enhanced.

Adjacencies between student housing and shared buildings, such as the Waldo Library and future student center (the replacement facility to the existing Bernhard Center) are optimized to enhance pedestrian connection. The central “Viewshed” provides a public space in the heart of the campus which will accommodate a variety of activities – both formal and informal. The ground floor of new buildings will reinforce the public nature of the ground plane, with programs that will be shared and open to encourage their use and maximize exposure for the students using and passing by them. Maximizing transparency into these spaces will reinforce this intent as an opportunity to engage with others.

A new inner-loop street will integrate complete streets concepts providing critical multi-modal access through the neighborhood for pedestrians, cyclists, and automobiles. This new and efficient vehicular access is critical to the success of the retail area, and, by allowing it to penetrate the campus boundary, brings its vibrancy in as well.

A series of primary and secondary paths provide pedestrian access throughout the plan which efficiently links the varied spaces and the rest of the campus. Pathway locations and hierarchy also reinforce the Village concept by leading students through and along shared exterior and interior spaces. These pathways will link a series of “one-minute destinations” which will enliven the pedestrian experience in short intervals along the journey and encourage foot traffic through the campus and retail area.

These strategies ultimately will make the South Neighborhood at Western Michigan University a desirable place for students to live, as well as an enticing place to do business, and thus create the active and enlightening campus environment intended.
The South Neighborhood Sub-Campus is organized into distinct districts. The districts help to conceptualize the grouping of anchor uses in a compact way. They are physically defined by edges—both landscape edges and street/path edges. Districts help organize the overall master plan, improve wayfinding and access, and enhance the image of the overall place.
Building Use

There are a wide range of proposed building uses in the study area. Their uses are depicted below and quantified on the next page.
Executive Summary

Phase Floors

Footprint (GSF) Total Area (GSF) Uses Use Area (GSF) Notes
4 7

EXISTING*

PROPOSED

STUDENT HOUSING 1.1 million GSF (51%)

ATHLETICS + REC 457,917 GSF (21%)

STUDENT CENTER (BERNHARD) 289,500 (13%)

ACADEMIC/RESEARCH 185,950 (13%)

FUTURE STUDENT CENTER 179,832 (5%)

OFFICE-UNIVERSITY 155,900 (7%)

ACADEMIC/RESEARCH 185,950 (13%)

OFFICE-UNIVERSITY 261,000 (7%)

STRUCTURED PARKING 522,000 GSF (15%)

RETAIL 50,000 (3%)

ACADEMIC/RESEARCH 185,950 (13%)

OFFICE-NON-UNIVERSITY 48,000 (1%)

HOTEL 108,000 (3%)

STUDENT LIFE 200,359 (13%)

STUDENT HOUSING 1.0 million GSF (29%)

ATHLETICS + REC 607,900 GSF (17%)

STUDENT CENTER (BERNHARD) 289,500 (13%)

FUTURE STUDENT CENTER 179,832 (5%)

OFFICE-UNIVERSITY 261,000 (7%)

RETAIL 50,000 (3%)

OFFICE-UNIVERSITY 155,900 (7%)

ACADEMIC/RESEARCH 185,950 (13%)

HOTEL 108,000 (3%)

STUDENT LIFE 200,359 (13%)

STUDENT HOUSING 1.1 million GSF (51%)

ATHLETICS + REC 457,917 GSF (21%)

STUDENT CENTER (BERNHARD) 289,500 (13%)

ACADEMIC/RESEARCH 185,950 (13%)

FUTURE STUDENT CENTER 179,832 (5%)

OFFICE-UNIVERSITY 155,900 (7%)

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STUDENT LIFE 200,359 (13%)

These uses are non-university driven and represent 15% of overall proposed future building area in the study. These uses reflect current real estate market demand for the study area. All other uses (85%) are university-driven.

Existing area only includes buildings within the study boundary. Two notable structured parking facilities are adjacent to the study area (Parking Ramp #1 near Elsworth Hall and Parking Ramp #2 near Miller Auditorium) and are sizable garages that serve the campus currently.
The university is a leader in sustainability and this master plan sets forth a bold vision of sustainability initiatives ranging from stormwater management best management practices to renewable onsite energy to community/student gardening.

1. 2014 AASHE STARS Gold status
2. Implemented 2012 Climate Action Plan
3. Greenhouse Gas Inventory completed by 2019 in conjunction with the Office of Sustainability
4. President Montgomery’s support for LEED for WMU
5. Movement towards pedestrian connection to downtown Kalamazoo, integrating students as part of the community
6. New Provost, experience with Ball State’s geothermal system
7. Integrating WMU’s Climate Commitment as part of rebranding strategies
8. Publications offered on WMU’s support for Living Buildings and Neighborhoods & sustainability guidelines
9. Student support and initiatives for a Bicycle Resource Center on campus
10. Reinvigorate the WMU Community Garden
Planning Process

Starting in the Spring of 2018, Western Michigan University worked with the consultant team from Perkins+Will to develop the South Neighborhood Sub-campus Master Plan. The process, which spanned six months, evolved over three phases:

Phase 1: Discover
- This phase included stakeholder engagement, document collection, campus walking tours and multiple Core Committee meetings with the WMU community. Transparency, communication and constant feedback was encouraged through multiple modalities (websites, email updates, social media, public input sessions, Bronco Bash attendance, informal sessions on the Mall, etc)
- Goal-setting and initial project visioning are key to this phase, which sets the tone and direction of the project
- Engagement with the broader community was a key driver, which led to conversations with surrounding institutions, the City of Kalamazoo, Downtown Kalamazoo Inc, etc.

Phase 2: Big Ideas
- The Big Ideas phase is informed by the parameters set forth in the Discover phase
- Generation of the “big ideas” involves physical conceptualization of the vision, as well as establishing a set of guiding principles for the master plan
- Through this conceptualization, the team can explore different physical layouts for the campus that tests variables at a very high level

Phase 3: Develop
- This phase involves adding detail to the preferred physical planning big ideas concepts.
- Includes phasing, cost and technical detail
- Delivery of draft report, final meeting with Core Committee and final report issuance
Core Committee

The Western Michigan University Sub-Campus Master Planning Core Committee was formed by university leadership to represent a cross-section of stakeholders on campus (Administration, Faculty, and Staff). Members of the Core Committee were responsible for discussing with and representing their teams at large and bringing the ideas generated by their constituent groups back to the Core Committee for consideration.

Please see page 2 for a full list of Core Committee Members.

This Committee met on a number of occasions to review observations and analysis by the Design Team, provide feedback on concept and potential future needs for the campus, and to review progress. Each individual also served as a champion, to help socialize and promote this transformational opportunity for WMU.
Design Team Coordination

As part of a truly innovative and collaborative process, WMU encouraged the collaboration of design teams from two capital projects occurring on campus at the same time as the master plan, to establish a true synergy with building siting, views, green space, pedestrian paths, access, equity of space and connection to the student journey on campus. Members from both the Student Center and Dining Facility project (Cannon Design) and the South Neighborhood Housing project (Stantec) attended all core committee meetings, workshops and charrettes to fully understand the visionary goals targeted with this south neighborhood master plan.

Western Michigan University engaged the services of Johnson Consulting and Scion Group to conduct a market feasibility analysis and business analysis report, to help inform the South Neighborhood Sub-Campus Master Plan. The recommendations are to help create a vibrant area of campus which be activated seven days a week, 365 days a year, “which presents a unique opportunity to create a highly attractive “village” that is walkable in scale and reimagines the gateway to WMU, improving connectivity with downtown Kalamazoo, and appealing to a wide range of prospective residents, tenants and visitors. The project can be anchored by a hotel with quality meeting space, retail and restaurant uses that are different from those in the immediate area, in terms of theme, tenancies and overall design. The “village” will be supported by a small amount of office space and residential units for 55+ retirees. Consideration could also be given to reinventing the Recreation Center Fieldhouse and positioning it to become an amenity for the broader community.”

Next Steps

This document serves as the starting point for the development of a true “WMU Village.” It sets the general design parameters for a series of future building and infrastructure projects. Ideas and quantitative information herein should be used in conjunction with established qualitative drivers. The findings and vision represented in this master plan will serve as a starting point for building programming and design processes to follow.
Workshops

TOWN HALL 1

MULTI-TEAM CHARRETTE

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

BRONCO BASH

VR SESSION + TOWN HALL 2
Feedback
1 CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

3 MILES OF CAMPUS EXPLORED ON WALKING TOUR OF SITE

7 WORKSHOPS WITH

14 CORE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Beverly Vandiver, Professor
- David Dakin, Director of Facilities Planning, Space Management + Capital Projects
- Janice Quakenbush, Director of Finance and Infrastructure
- Judy Gipper, Director of Dining Services
- Katie Jacobs, Architectural Project Manager
- Malia Roberts, Associate Director of Graduate Enrollment Services
- Michele Cole, Business Service Director
- Monty Porter, Senior Associate Athletic Director
- Paul Terzino, Director, Bernhard Center
- Peter Strazdas, Associate Vice President of Facilities Management
- Steven Palmer, Director of Housing and Residence Life
- Terrence Curran, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management
- Tom Wolf, Chief Information Officer
- Vernon Payne, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

9 HOURS OF PUBLIC INPUT SESSIONS

5 COMMUNITY AND CIVIC GROUPS CONTRIBUTED

- REPRESENTATIVES FROM USER GROUPS ACROSS CAMPUS PARTICIPATED
- PEOPLE FROM 8 DIFFERENT FIRMS COLLABORATED AT CHICAGO CHARETTE
- STUDENTS ENGAGED AT BRONCO BASH
- REACHED VIA #WMUBUILD SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS
“To be sure, achieving our ambitious goals will require years long efforts and strategic initiatives. But we’ve set the foundation and, together, we’re building. We haven’t made it to the mountain top. But there has been progress, and we are gaining momentum, thanks to the individual and collective efforts of our people, our units, our departments, and colleges. Brick by brick, we are building a stronger foundation. Some of these building blocks are large and some are small, but they are all crucial to the structural integrity of what we’re creating—the school of choice and a campus community that is focused on all aspects of student success.”

– President Montgomery, 2018 State of the University Address