



# TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN College Station, TX

City Council Update  
November 13, 2025  
Item 8.1

SELECT CLIENTS

# The Legacy of Success & The Industry's Advisor

Our team has a 25+ year track record in supporting destinations by identifying needs, stimulating growth and measuring success:

<p>100+</p> <p>Convention &amp; conference center studies</p>	<p>100+</p> <p>Tourism &amp; destination planning clients</p>	<p>50</p> <p>Organizational strategic planning efforts</p>
<p>35</p> <p>Multi-jurisdictional destination plans</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Public-private hotel development &amp; advisory projects</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Governance &amp; model restructuring efforts</p>



# Your Team



Dan Fenton  
Managing Director

**Project role:**  
Strategic Advisor



Shirin Jafari  
Vice President

**Project role:**  
Project Manager &  
Strategic Lead



Abigail Harrod  
Associate

**Project role:**  
Project Support &  
Research Lead

# PROJECT STRATEGY OVERVIEW



**Listen**



**Analyze**



**Strategize**



**Activate**



# Stakeholder Engagement

**Listen**



**Intentionality in Audience**



**Surveys**



**Project Updates**



**Focus Groups & Interviews**



**Engaging Diverse Audiences**



Solicit stakeholder input destination-wide of a wide range of audiences



Collect perceptions on assets & opportunities



Determine community expectations



Gain alignment and support for implementation



# Analysis Methods & Proprietary Products

Analyze



## Tourism Readiness Index

Comprehensive analysis to address what makes a destination ready for sustainable Travel & Tourism. Assesses current positioning and ability to manage growth



## Demand Driver Scorecard

Utilizes visitor traffic and flow data to assess current demand and uses the outcome to identify future competitive position



## Event Matrix

Conducts individual event analysis based on standard criteria to determine gaps and growth opportunities for the destination



## University Benchmarking Research

Utilizes JLL's prior research on academic departments, internal units, and meeting and event planning methods for benchmarking and best practices.

# Proposed Strategies

# Position College Station as Premier Academic Conference Destination

**Description:** Leverage Texas A&M's academic strengths in agriculture, engineering, veterinary medicine, and military sciences to attract major conferences. Address the gap in dedicated conference and meeting development staff, with a focus on higher revenue conference business to diversify from sports-dependent tourism. This will require additional resources to execute.

## Visit College Station Strategies:

- Inventory all academic departments, associations, and historical conference patterns to qualify the business. A rough estimate of the universe of potential conferences is over 10,000.
- Establish dedicated academic conference sales and support team and initiate prospecting.
- Target niche areas where A&M has national/international recognition.
- Work directly with college and department deans to identify conference development opportunities.
- Develop packages connecting conferences with hotel, dining, and attraction experiences.
- Present this process to the TAMU president, advocating for Visit CSTAT to lead business development.



# Position College Station as Premier Academic Conference Destination (continued)

## Texas A&M Support Areas:

- Facilitate regular touchpoints between Visit College Station and A&M Conference staff for case review and process improvement.
- Integrate all faculty conference requests through this channel; prompt referrals from HR/Academic Deans.
- Commit to a minimum response time (e.g., 3 business days) for conference inquiry triage.
- Program support for 2–3 major conferences within first year, measure economic and reputational impact.

**Key Partners:** Texas A&M Athletics Department, Texas A&M Special Events Office, University Administration, City Manager's Office, National Event Promoters & Conference Organizers

**Timeline:** 12-month MOU negotiation & pilot event, 24-month external event booking & scaling, ongoing revenue optimization Years 4-5



# Create TAMU+Visit College Station Event Management Partnership

**Description:** Address the critical gap identified where Texas A&M's Special Events department (6 people handling 300-400 events/year) lacks capacity for external sourcing, while Visit College Station needs access to premier university venues. Create a formal partnership that leverages the facility investments by A&M and the City.

## Visit College Station Strategies:

- Establish dedicated joint event coordinator position
- Create unified calendar system to eliminate scheduling conflicts between City and A&M
- Develop a “Venue Needs Assessment” so external planners know what’s available and when.
- Build package/event marketing for city venues as alternatives when A&M venues are unavailable.
- Target association meetings/conferences market with dedicated sales staff (previous priority in detail.)



# Create TAMU+Visit College Station Event Management Partnership (continued)

## Texas A&M Support Areas:

- Designate a university liaison as Visit College Station's counterpart in processing external event requests and coordinate with city staff.
- Run staff cross-training and pursue "non-student" part-time hires to boost event labor pool during academic breaks.
- Share annual event schedule early for external planning and city coordination.

**Key Partners:** Texas A&M Admissions, Academic Departments, Local Hotels (4,400 rooms), Restaurants, George H.W. Bush Library Center, Chamber of Commerce  
**Timeline:** 12-month foundation building, 24-month full program implementation



# Enhance Student/Family Visit Experience

**Description:** Visiting families (30% of whom stay overnight) lack coordinated experiences. They face peak hotel pricing and are unaware of non-football activities, leading to lost revenue and a limited impression of College Station. Create comprehensive recruitment support that showcases College Station as a desirable place to live and study.

## Visit College Station Strategies:

- Convene a family/student experience working group with hotel, attraction, restaurant partners.
- Develop template itineraries (e.g., "Aggie Weekender," "Family Food Crawl," "Arts & Music Tour").
- Build digital tools: landing page, QR codes in hotel lobbies, print materials for the university admissions office.
- Collect and share event and dining calendars for distribution to visiting families.



# Enhance Student/Family Visit Experience (continued)

## Texas A&M Support Areas:

- Share visit registration data (timing, volume, guest interests) to allow for tailored recommendations.
- Facilitate distribution of marketing materials to families pre-arrival and at check-in.
- Pilot inclusion of College Station event information in recruitment videos and tour materials.

**Key Partners:** Texas A&M Admissions & New Student & Family Programs, Brazos Valley Hotel & Tourism Association & Local Restaurant Association, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library & Museum, Century Square Management & Northgate District Association, Brazos Transit District

**Timeline:** 12-month foundation & pilot programs, 24-month full program implementation & scaling, ongoing optimization Years 4-5



# Enhance Faculty and Staff Recruitment Experience

**Description:** In partnership with the City's Economic Development office, address critical recruitment challenges with a lack of centralized resources and recruitment packages where faculty, especially those with families, perceive College Station as lacking activities and are unaware of the community's quality of life.

## Visit College Station Strategies:

- Form "Community Expert Network" with local alumni, business/community leaders, minority groups—offering meet-ups during faculty recruitment visits.
- Curate custom itineraries highlighting schools, neighborhoods, childcare, "life in College Station."
- Negotiate and market a local host/hospitality program; offer faculty candidates discounts and family events.
- Build comprehensive digital guide ("Move to College Station") for candidates.



# Enhance Faculty and Staff Recruitment Experience(continued)

## Texas A&M Support Areas:

- Identify faculty needs/interests so itineraries can be tailored (e.g., school tours, arts, outdoor).
- Support Visit College Station by sharing destination information and packets that the DMO provides.
- Introduce Visit College Station as the experts in destination experience planning and supporting academic conferences to be held in College Station.

**Key Partners:** Texas A&M Office of the Provost & Academic Deans, Texas A&M Human Resources, College Station Chamber of Commerce, Local School Districts & Realtor Associations, Community & Cultural Organizations

**Timeline:** 12-month program foundation & pilot with key departments, 24-month university-wide program rollout & scaling, ongoing program maturity Years 4-5



# Joint Marketing Strategy for University-Community Synergy

**Description:** Address the disconnect where fans and conference attendees are unaware of local attractions, while local businesses struggle to reach the university community. Create integrated marketing approach that cross-promotes university events with community assets and vice versa.

## Key Strategies (joint with A&M):

- Develop joint marketing campaigns highlighting university-community connections.
- Create visitor packages combining athletic events with local attractions and dining.
- Establish cross-promotional opportunities for university events and local businesses.
- Build "Aggie gameday" experiences that extend economic impact beyond sports venues.



# Joint Marketing Strategy for University-Community Synergy (continued)

**Key Partners:** Texas A&M Athletics, Texas A&M Marketing & Communications, College Station Chamber of Commerce, Local Media Outlets, Century Square & Northgate Business Associations, Key Attractions (Bush Library, Museum of the American G.I.)

**Timeline:** 12-month brand framework & pilot campaign, 24-month full package implementation & multi-sport expansion, ongoing data-driven optimization Years 4-5





## Leisure Events Strategy

**Vision:** To transform College Station's event landscape from a collection of local gatherings into a strategic portfolio of regional and national demand-driving events, focusing on filling need periods and maximizing overnight visitation.

### **Pillar 1: Data-Driven Evaluation & Prioritization**

- **Action:** Formally adopt the Event Matrix as the standard tool for evaluating all current and future events seeking city/DMO support. This ensures funding decisions are objective and ROI-focused.
- **Action:** Create a Target Event Calendar to visually identify programming gaps, with a strategic focus on filling "need periods" when student-driven demand is low.
- **Action:** Prioritize marketing and grant support for events that have the potential to drive national and regional visitation to College Station.



# Leisure Events Strategy

## Pillar 2: Signature Event & Product Development

- **Action:** Establish a Signature Event Task Force, comprised of community, university, and private sector leaders, charged with developing a business plan to create or acquire one new, large-scale signature event (e.g., a major music or culinary festival) within three years.
- **Action:** Develop "Event-in-a-Box" packages that bundle event tickets with hotel stays, dining experiences at local restaurants, and tickets to attractions like the Bush Library to drive multi-day visits.



## Leisure Events Strategy

### Pillar 3: Streamlined Organizer Support & Funding

- **Action:** In providing funding and resources to leisure events, prioritize those with potential for overnight stays, and its willingness to schedule in a need period.
- **Action:** Require all major grant recipients to use the Destinations International Event Impact Calculator (EIC) to provide standardized post-event reporting on room nights and economic impact, ensuring accountability for public funds.



## Summary of Key Pillars and Next Steps

1. Position College Station as Premier Academic Conference Destination
2. Create TAMU+Visit College Station Event Management Partnership
3. Enhance Student/Family Visit Experience
4. Enhance Faculty and Staff Recruitment Experience
5. Joint Marketing Strategy for University-Community Synergy
6. Leisure Events Strategy
  - Data-Driven Evaluation & Prioritization
  - Signature Event & Product Development
  - Streamlined Organizer Support & Funding

# Visit College Station Project Process

## Phase 1

### Listen + Meet

Stakeholder interviews and focus groups informed by the Tourism Readiness Index

Tourism Readiness Index

January 2025

### Council Kick- Off Meeting

May 2025

### Deliverable Phase Activate + Recommend

Late 2025- Early 2026

November 2024

### Kick Off + Alignment Meetings

March 2025

### Phase 2 Analyze + Assess

Demand Driver Scorecard

Event Matrix

November 2025

### Phase 3 Vision + Strategy

Priority development & identification

Organizational positioning

Draft plan



# Thank you

## **Dan Fenton**

*Managing Director,  
Global Tourism &  
Destination Advisory*

[dan.fenton@jll.com](mailto:dan.fenton@jll.com)

## **Shirin Jafari**

*Vice President,  
Global Tourism &  
Destination Advisory*

[shirin.jafari@jll.com](mailto:shirin.jafari@jll.com)

## **Abigail Harrod**

*Associate,  
Global Tourism &  
Destination Advisory*

[abigail.harrod@jll.com](mailto:abigail.harrod@jll.com)