**Character:**

The group attends both the downtown and the Mt. Pleasant markets. They like the variety and event/festival atmosphere of downtown, but the parking, high prices, early closing, and overabundance of crafts are negatives. They like the parking, permanent structure/infrastructure, and utility of the Mt. Pleasant market. They also visit smaller markets like John Wesley (not visually appealing and too small), James Island (not enough produce and too much crafts), and Johns Island (which did not have any energy).

An ideal West Ashley Farmers Market would have a vibe and sense of variety similar to downtown. They would like for it to be a social gathering like a street festival that lead everyone in West Ashley to gather. For this to happen, it needs to be kid and dog friendly. Another draw for this would be for the entertainment to feature local talent in a variety of forms (not just live music – praise bands, dance troupes, etc.). They would also like to see opportunities for nonprofits, churches, civic organizations, etc. to fundraise and promote their programs. They would also like for the markets to address the small food deserts in West Ashley.

This group stressed the importance of educational interactions with farmers and other producers since this doesn’t happen in a grocery store. For example, activities for children and adults should include cooking classes, woodworking, flower arrangement, master gardener demonstrations, etc. They would also like this to be a sourcing opportunity of fresh, local produce for WA restaurants.

**Location:**

The group identified the following as key characteristics for potential location:

* PARKING
* Walkable and bikeable! – close to neighborhoods
* Sidewalks!
* Be able to utilize both tents and a permanent shelter
* Visible from main right of way – not hidden in a neighborhood
* Shade
* Fans during the summer

The group discussed the idea of multiple farmers markets in different locations because of how important it is that markets be accessible and visible. They also considered the fact that West Ashley is so big that you probably can’t find a location to make everyone happy. WA has 5 core areas that could be built up around a rotating market on a set schedule. However, that schedule might get confusing, and one larger market might be better. They suggested testing with one big one and then adding others as needed. One positive they noted about West Ashley has tons of parking if we can find a way to take advantage of abandoned shopping center. They would prefer not to locate it too close to Avondale. Instead, it should be more central - Wappoo/Dupont, etc.

*Specific sites: Sofa Super Store Site, Limehouse Station, Magnolia Community Garden, Old Food Lion, Ackerman Park, Clemson Extension, Bees Landing Rec Center, Citadel Mall, Long Savannah, PRC/Charlestowne Landing, School District Property, Midway Park (across from city golf course)*

**Product:**

Specific product suggestions include:

* **Local**—Berkley, Charleston, Dorchester (fresh & local is more important than organic)
* Fresh seafood - cook it for you; don’t get this at a grocery store
* Fresh pizza dough
* Flowers
* Herbs
* Bee farmers
* Eggs
* Cheese
* Other proteins
* Hot food vendors – healthy meals not junky fair food
* Rack of ribs to take home
* Small ratio of local, quality, nontouristy crafts
* Rotation of food trucks – not too many

The group strongly encouraged a variety of vendors that is balanced in favor of farmers. (They expressed concern about whether there are enough available farmers in the area to create the desired variety at this market).They seemed vaguely interested in a CSA dropoff, but they did like the idea of the market accepting WIC/SNAP/EBT, etc. The group was conflicted about the sale of beer and wine out of fear that it might pull focus and get out of control. They do feel that consistent variety is important - if you have boiled peanuts, make sure a boiled peanut vendor is there every time.

**Schedule:**

The two options most popular with this group were Thursday nights and Sunday afternoons. Sunday is a family day already due to church so it would be nice do something after as well. It could be a very casual market with some music. (Parks are not heavily programmed on Sundays.)Thursdays are seen as a good, after work shopping day. Some people will stop by quickly to shop, but others would stay with their family and have dinner. Some people aren’t sure they would go at all on a weeknight.

Saturday is already consumed with sports and other children’s activities, and they worry about competing for the same vendors as downtown. They would also prefer to stay away from Wednesdays (church) and Monday.