**Character:**

While the group likes the variety of the vendors at the downtown market, the traffic and difficulty parking discourages them from going. The market has grown so much they have trouble keeping track of their children in the crowd. The jump castles, pony rides, etc. distract the children from the learning opportunity of being surrounded by farmers. They do like having the option of eating breakfast or lunch there. They also do not like the emphasis on the arts and crafts. They will typically spend a couple of hours at this market.

They like that the Mt. Pleasant market is truly farmer focused, has good quality vendors, and has more breathing room. They will typically spend at least an hour there. They do not like Johns Island, which has so little variety that it is not worth the drive, or the James Island Sunday Brunch market, which feels like a food truck rodeo.

An ideal West Ashley Farmers Market would allow them to purchase groceries for the week but also entertain the family. They want to have a huge variety of vendors without being crammed together – ideally they could see at a glance what was available. In terms of size, it should be smaller than the downtown market but larger than Mt. Pleasant.

They want some form of free entertainment for both children and adults. There should be space to be active, participate in activities (playground, craft corner, etc.), or watch a performance (live music, magic shows, break-dancing, etc.). The group felt strongly that the market should highlight local talent and interactions with farmers (cooking demos/workshops/classes) should be the priority. This creates more of a communal experience that highlights key assets of our community.

**Location:**

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

* Restrooms
* Running water
* Shade – trees preferably, a structure is acceptable
* Seating - tables, benches, umbrellas, but grass is fine
* On main corridor or just off; accessibility is more important than visibility accessibility;
* Bike accessibility
* Parking
* Easy access

The group felt that the location should reflect the purpose, and it should not just be placed in a parking lot somewhere. They would also rather not have to cross a busy street. While most people feel like they would drive to any “pleasant place” if there was enough variety, they did recognize a barrier between the inside and outside 526 areas. In general, they do not think people would prefer to go out to Bees Ferry or the 29407 area.

*Specific sites: Small empty lot near church on Old Towne on frontage road; Lenevar Playground (pretty BUT may be a nuisance for the neighborhood), Community Garden on Magnolia, Old Town Creek County Park, Orange Grove Park (Mary Utsy), St. Andrews School, Charelstowne Landing PRC land, Playground road & aquatic center; WA Bike Path (lots of parking at old Limehouse Station & historic connection)*

**Product:**

Specific product suggestions include:

* Pasta
* Meat
* LOCAL craft beer – growler stations
* Local, seasonal, fresh produce
* LOCAL WA artisans
* Eggs
* Cheese
* Rotating jams & jellies
* Hot food vendors – food to eat a market, substantial food to go, & snacks (preference for food trucks over tents – seem more legit & clean)
* LOCAL seafood
* Flowers & herbs
* Local heirloom veggies
* Locally grown AND locally crafted items
* Artisanal baked goods
* Curry sauces
* Interesting, localized goods (oyster knifes, etc.)

A great variety of local products is key, especially since they want to purchase their groceries for the week there. The group would like for farmers to be given preference based on whether they are local, regional, state, etc. They want to make sure there is a full range of produce. (For example, they are fine with bringing in apples from the upstate since they don’t grow here.) Local is more of a priority than organic. They would be more likely to participate in a CSA if this were a pick-up site or purchase pre-made “goodie bags” from farmers. They also feel that there should be strict standards and guidelines for arts and craft vendors, to ensure local/non-touristy goods.

**Schedule:**

The group expressed some preference for a year-round market, though they had concerns about its ability to stay local and dealing with weather. For days of the week, there seem to be a willingness to adjust their schedules to make it work and accomplish their weekly grocery shopping. For example, parents would rather take their kids to a farmers market than a grocery store on a weeknight. Friday night was a popular option for this group. They like the idea of stopping and staying a while for a beer, shopping, and a family night out somewhere other than a restaurant. They would rather wait out traffic at the market, but it might be a struggle to get there from 3-7 PM. Another concern about Friday (or the weekend) is that people go out of town then.

Weekend mornings are already filled with children’s activities and sports. Saturday afternoons & evenings would not necessarily compete with downtown. Sunday (after church) and Monday evenings are good for grocery shopping. “Wine down Wednesday” was also mentioned.