**Character:**

The group feels that some farmers markets in the area, such as those in Parks Circle and Daniel Island, are too small to address West Ashley’s needs. Other markets, like the Sunday Brunch market, have a good community atmosphere but not enough consistent produce vendors.

While they enjoy the family atmosphere and variety at the downtown market, they rarely go due to parking concerns and having to arrive early to avoid large, touristy crowds. They used to attend more frequently, but now it feels overwhelming and like the focus has shifted away from the farmers. A primary reason for this change is due to its prime location for attracting tourists. They do enjoy that it is dog friendly and has live performances, like the break dancers.

They prefer the Mount Pleasant market which is not so crowded but still has the best variety of produce and value added products. They enjoy the readily available parking and space afforded by the shelter, which they feel encourages consistent participation and provides visibility. They also like that there is captive audience of children, who need more exposure to agriculture, and a built in consumer base of their parents.

Ideally, they would like the West Ashley market to be a compromise between the event atmosphere of Marion Square and the shopping focus of Mt. Pleasant. While it is more important to have good access to local food and be able to do their grocery shopping, they do feel that some of the event aspects would induce people stay longer and create a feeling of community. For example, they would like to highlight local performers without losing the focus on produce vendors. They want the option of stopping by quickly for groceries or staying for a meal and socializing. They do not mind the idea of the West Ashley market being smaller, but there has to be enough variety.

**Location:**

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

* Permanent Shelter
* Picnic Tables
* Restrooms
* **PARKING!!**
* Bike Racks
* Wireless Access (Especially for vendors using Square, etc.)
* **Shade** for vendors AND patrons
* Power for vendors
* Near a church (for Sunday market) or near a school (for weeknights) to have a captive audience
* **Centrally located**
* Beautiful – like a park
* Pedestrian friendly & already has good foot traffic – especially for lower income neighborhoods
* Easily Accessible - On or just off main corridor
* Accessible via Greenway or Bikeway or CARTA
* No crossing of any bridges
* Inside 526

They discussed the possibility of rotating locations to be far to everyone, with the idea that it would be posted at the current market where the next one will be. However, they were concerned that it would be confusing and hard to keep track of and promote. They also debated the merits of repurposing some of the “ugly empty spaces” but that would contradict some of the characteristics listed above.

*Specific sites: Old Piggly Wiggly, Limehouse site, Magnolia Community Garden Site, WA High School, PRC Site, Fire Fighter Memorial Site (make it a less forgotten space – “Charleston 9 Farmers Market”), Old Food Lion, Mary Utsey Playground/Orange Grove Park*

**Product:**

The most important thing to this group is a wide variety of local produce and value added food products that they may not find elsewhere. To this group, local is anywhere within the state of South Carolina. They place much more importance on local over being certified organic. They are not truly comfortable with the concept of reselling, but they understand that it relates to the variety they desire. (However, produce grows in South Carolina year round.) They want to make sure the rules are flexible enough to encourage local farmers (example: no mandatory attendance policy). They would be more likely to participate in a CSA if the market was a drop-off site, and they would like for vendors to accept EBT & WIC.

They are comfortable highlighting some local WA makers who do not have retail space through a special series or pop up shop, but an abundance of crafts is not what they looking for on a weekly basis. They would also prefer to stay away from the touristy products.

As far as hot food vendors are concerned, they do not have a real preference in type or quality. They want both snacks and full meals.

Specific product and amenities suggestions include:

* Pasta
* Produce
* Eggs
* Meat
* Herbs
* Flowers
* Spices
* Seafood
* Plants
* Pickles
* Olive Oil
* Value added/processed goods
* Beer & wine (local only)
* ATM
* Honey
* Free water stations

**Schedule:**

They would prefer a year-round to a seasonal market, since produce grows in SC all year. However, weather might impact attendance (summer heat & winter cold). They would like for it to be held at least weekly to provide consistent grocery shopping. However, they liked the idea of following the Carrboro, NC model of a more basic farmers market on a weeknight and larger event on the weekend.

They would rather not have the market on a Saturday. It’s a busy day for them, and they would rather not compete for vendors with downtown. However, Sundays are good for meal prep shopping for the week. They also feel that they would stay at the market longer on a weekend. On the weekend, they would prefer a late morning or early afternoon market, to avoid the heat. A year-round market on a Sunday would also compete well with Johns Island, which shuts down in the winter.

On a week night, they would prefer Thursday. This would allow them to prep food for the weekend and have a “treat yourself” experience that night. Some feel that they get off work too late to go on a weeknight, but they know it is very successful at the small market Folly Beach (which has only one rotating food truck slot).