



Charleston County Media Contact

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COMMITTEE SEEKS INPUT ON SENIOR CENTER

If you live West of the Ashley, your input is needed to guide the planning envisioned for a new senior center to be created in West Ashley. The West Ashley Senior Services Coordinating Committee is in the early stages of determining the vision, program and site for this proposed gathering place for residents over age 50. The first step is finalizing the vision and the programming and from this, determining the best site and funding needs. No permanent decisions have been made including the location.

West Ashley Senior Center Forum

The West Ashley Senior Service Coordinating Committee is holding two forums to hear what seniors and emerging seniors want in the way of programs, services and facilities West of the Ashley.

- The first forum will be on Monday, May 10, 2010 from 4 pm to 7 pm at Bees Landing, 1580 Ashley Gardens Boulevard. (843) 402-4571
- The next forum will be on Monday, May 17, 2010 from 4 pm to 7 pm at the Jewish Community Center, Ashley River Road and Ashley Hall Road at 1645 Wallenberg Boulevard. (843) 571-6565

Charleston County Councilmember Colleen Condon and Charleston City Councilmember Aubry Alexander will speak at 4:30 pm, 5:30 pm, and 6:30 pm to share the work of this committee. Attendees will have a chance to learn more about Charleston's existing senior centers, fill out a survey as to their preferences for the proposed West Ashley senior center and learn about the vision of the committee.

The West Ashley Senior Services Coordinating Committee was created by citizens meeting since the summer of 2009 at "Coffee with Colleen and Aubry", a weekly coffee get-together at Sojourn Coffee with County Councilmember Colleen Condon and City Councilmember Aubry Alexander. In addition to the citizens on the committee and County Councilmember

Vic Rawl, there are representatives from the Jewish Community Center, St. Andrews Parks and Playground, Roper St. Francis Healthcare, and City and County staff. The anticipation for the center is as a gathering place where activities are offered such as bridge, book clubs, lectures, fitness, and other programs.

Citizen input will identify which services, programs and facilities are most vital and what specific opportunities are most popular. To share your views, go to the survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/seniorcenter> or come to the forums.

You may also stop by the following locations to fill out a printed brief survey:

Lowcountry Senior Center on James Island	Charleston Tennis Center
West Ashley Library	Jewish Community Center
St. Andrews Library	St. Andrews Family Fitness Center
Bee's Landing	

Future meetings are being planned for late summer or early fall to share the results of the surveys and next steps toward the creation of the center.

The committee has identified a wealth of senior resources already in the area, but under ten or more roofs. They include AARP, the Center for Creative Retirement, St. Andrews Parks and Playground and the City of Charleston's recreation facilities. Seven housing facilities which focus on senior residences are already located in West Ashley. As of the 2000 census, there were 17,000 residents who were age 50 and up. Those 17,000 residents represented 28% of the West Ashley population area in 2000.

City Councilmember Alexander says, "We provide incredible opportunities for our children in the West Ashley area. Once the funding and the vision is in place, it is time to promote our existing senior opportunities and expand on them through a dedicated senior center."

County Councilmember Colleen Condon says, "Similar centers in Mount Pleasant and James Island have been extremely successful, and we should do the same in West Ashley. I believe a partnership between Charleston County, the City of Charleston, St. Andrews Parks and Playgrounds, and other agencies can serve this need extremely well. "