

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Announces Long Savannah Planning Charrette And Proposed Adjustment Of The City's Urban Growth Boundary

Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. announced today that a week-long public planning workshop, or charrette, will be held November 30 to December 6 to plan the future of the West Ashley property known as Long Savannah. The charrette will be led by the world-renowned town planning and urban design firm of Dover, Kohl and Partners of Coral Gables, Florida. One of the nation's leading planning practices, Dover, Kohl's work in this area includes Mount Pleasant's l'On neighborhood, a master plan for redevelopment of a four-mile stretch of Johnnie Dodds Boulevard, the new neighborhood of Limehouse in Summerville, the Village of Port Royal in Beaufort County, and the new master plan for Old Town Bluffton.

The plans for the future of the 3,053-acre Long Savannah property already include the proposed creation of a 1,568-acre Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) regional park and a 232-acre City of Charleston park. These two proposed parks will be acquired using funds from the Charleston County Greenbelt funds provided by the half-cent sales tax. The remainder of the property is being considered for an innovative development that will be designed to combat urban sprawl.

Mayor Riley said of the planning charrette, "The City is extremely fortunate to have such a world class planning and design firm working on the Long Savannah project. Dover Kohl will help us implement traditional neighborhood design principles, principles that will help us combat urban sprawl and yield more sustainable development patterns in Charleston's sub-urban area. Working with the surrounding neighborhoods and the developer, this project will undoubtedly become a model of innovative planning, and when combined with our West Ashley Circle, will serve to reduce suburban sprawl pressure in the West Ashley area for years to come."

Mayor Riley also announced today that the owners of the property, the Cuthbert Family, and Long Savannah LLC, the proposed developers of the mixed-use project, have applied to the city for a movement of the city's urban growth boundary (UGB) and for annexation of the portions of the property that are proposed for the mixed-use development and for the city park. The City will give preliminary consideration of their applications, along with a proposed development agreement, at the City Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 27.

The proposed movement of the urban growth boundary and annexation will enable a long list of traffic and transportation improvements in the West Ashley area, including the extension of the Glenn McConnell Parkway to Village Green, as well as the purchase and development of the two large parks that will be accessible to all of West Ashley. It will also enable the creation of a permanent greenbelt around the suburban area of West Ashley, protecting the delicate Ashley River corridor, and the protection of the Red Top community from future development pressures. Further, the proposed move of the UGB in conjunction with the large parkland purchases will set precedent and a high standard for future proposed moves of the boundary, and will create an edge for the city.

The full list of regional infrastructure improvements to be provided by the developer totals approximately \$15 million, including:

- **Glenn McConnell Extension**-Estimated at \$8,000,000. This extension will be completed prior to the first home being sold in the development, and will provide immediate traffic relief to adjacent neighborhoods as well;
- **West Ashley Circle**- \$1,000,000 contribution. The proposed contribution complements the vision of the West Ashley Circle—the City’s plan for a village center that will also be funded by the Half-Cent Sales Tax;
- **Magwood Road Intersection improvements**- \$1,000,000 contribution;
- **Preservation of Bear Swamp Road Character via Traffic Calming Improvements**—Estimated at \$3,000,000.
- **Charleston County Schools**—approx. \$1,360,000 to be paid at final plat or closing of lots/units to be used toward the funding of a neighborhood school site within the planned development; and
- **Civic Site Contribution**—Donation of land/site for Police/Fire/EMS facility.

The proposed development will consist of a diverse housing mix (affordable and market rate housing), mix of uses (neighborhood commercial to support the proposed residents), inclusion of a regional park, and a neighborhood school.

In August 2006, the Long Savannah development team had proposed to the Charleston County Planning Commission a rezoning of the property, but that rezoning was deferred. Since that time, the development team has cooperated with the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, Charleston County PRC, Charleston County Planning Department, the Red Top Community, and the City of Charleston to create a revised concept plan for the property. The current plan is substantially different in concept and in nature of land uses than the original proposal. The current concept plan includes the two parks and avoids the widening of Bear Swamp Road. The proposed density is substantially less than the earlier proposal (based upon the function of the design of the community). When implemented, the concept will solidify a permanent “Greenbelt” for the Charleston County Region in the West Ashley area.

The next steps for the proposed project are: Following the movement of the city’s UGB, the applicant plans to complete the annexation of the portion of the property to be developed, and move forward with the development agreement, and the zoning recommended by the charrette. That plan will dictate the settlement pattern for the property. The PRC and city parks purchases will occur after the completion of the planning process and annexation. Both parks will remain outside the city’s UGB.

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. stated, “We look forward to working with our citizens during the charrette to make sure that this proposed project will be the finest example of sub-urban development in the Charleston region.”

The Long Savannah Charrette will be conducted during the dates of November 30, 2007– December 6, 2007 at 1821 Sam Rittenberg Blvd (previously the Kincaid furniture store retail space). The following meetings are open to the general public:

- November 30th–Kickoff Presentation @ 6pm
- December 1st–Hands-on Design Studio 9am-2pm
- December 2nd–Open Design Studio 9am-6pm
- December 3rd–Open Design Studio 9am-5pm
- December 4th–Open Design Studio 9am-6pm
- December 5th–Open Design Studio 9am-6pm
- December 6th–Work-in-Progress Presentation @ 6pm

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