

## CCSP housing panel talks ways of reaching retirees

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More study is needed to determine how to successfully achieve the goals set forth in the Clark County Strategic Plan, according to members of the housing subcommittee.

At a meeting on Tuesday, the group decided to consult Ed Bee, president of Taimeric, the research firm that helped compile the strategic plan. Bee will be asked to help the subcommittee find a research firm, or perhaps a non-profit organization, to conduct a needs study in Clark

County.

Many people responded to Internet surveys during the strategic planning process, and they revealed needs for certain types of housing. Both "high end" and "affordable"

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housing are needed in the county, according to the surveys. But significant projects have begun since those surveys were made, members of the subcommittee said. Among those are The Gardens, a gated community for retirement aged people, and Somerset, a community aimed at moderate to middle income families.

"Somerset will take care of the affordable housing," said Jim Andrews, co-chairman of the subcommittee. He suggested more projects like The Gardens. "We need to study how we can market Arkadelphia as a retirement community. We need to be bigger than The Gardens, but smaller than Hot Springs Village," he said.

Bringing retired persons to the community strengthens the economy, he said. Retired persons have more disposable income to spend on home, vehicle and retail purchases. Retired persons also mean more property tax payments, but no more students in local school districts.

Committee members also expressed their desire to concentrate on "high end" housing for possible employees of new industries and businesses. "Affordable housing doesn't bring people in," Andrews said. He said families with the level of income associated with "affordable" housing are less

likely to move from another state to Clark County unless they are affiliated with a new business or industry in the county.

"They don't help expand the tax base either," said Al Lynch, subcommittee member.

Housing for employees of potential industries is needed, subcommittee co-chairman Tom Calhoon said. "If a new industry (person) comes in here, he's going to want to know where his workers will live," he said.

The housing market in the county is also based on the job market, Lynch said. If a new industry employing several hundred workers comes into Clark County, the housing market will boom, he said.

"I've lived here for more than 30 years, and Arkadelphia's population is not 1,000 (residents) bigger than it was when I got here," Andrews said.

"The county's population is not growing either," said Dr. Wesley Kluck, one of the chairmen of the strategic planning process.

The group also discussed the number of persons who work in Clark County but live elsewhere. "We need to find out why," Calhoon said.

Kluck said surveys needed to be done and results compiled before a marketing plan can be developed. "If you want to grow, you have to do things in order," he said.