

LONG TERM PLANNING F.A.Q.



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As People's moves towards the more public phases of our long term planning and visioning process, our Collective Management (CM) and Board members have begun to receive questions from Member-Owners. The Long Term Planning Committee thought that other Member-Owners might share these questions and concerns, so we compiled the following Frequently Asked Questions.

I THINK OUR VALUES ARE IMPORTANT, BUT I'M ALSO AWARE THAT WE NEED MONEY TO SURVIVE. HOW ARE YOU MAKING SURE THAT WE'RE GOING TO MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO SURVIVE AS A STORE?

Over the past fifteen years People's CM has been improving its financial skills. Our budgets are well thought out, monitored closely and adjusted according to the needs of the co-op. Also, we've been successful operationally—more volume of product per square foot passes through our backstock, retail floor, and into our shoppers' hands than almost any other co-op in the country.

We've been keeping our eyes on the natural foods market, the demographics

of Portland and the trends that we hear about from other co-ops, our Member-Owners and shoppers.

We also are working with experts. We hired a consultant who has experience working with other food co-ops on financial sustainability, growth readiness, business practices and is no stranger to the competitive marketplace. If our long-term plan involves growth we will be practicing due caution, utilizing research, employing feasibility studies and doing whatever we need in order to poised ourselves for the continued success of People's.

I DON'T WANT OUR CO-OP TO WATER DOWN ITS VALUES IN FAVOR OF MAKING MORE MONEY. HOW ARE YOU MAKING SURE THAT THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN?

Our long-term plan needs to be both financially sustainable and fulfill our Values and Ends Statement. The long-term planning process has been crafted to ensure that we really listen to what our community needs so that we can ultimately serve and strengthen the community. While financial sustainability of the co-op is important, our values are what make your co-op important and worth caring for. Our consultants are helping us follow our values through the

planning process, and the CM is really excited about what the future will look like!

**ARE OUR PRODUCT GUIDELINES GOING TO CHANGE?
WILL OUR CO-OP BE CARRYING MEAT?**

We're in the midst of understanding if the co-op's product guidelines will change as part of our long-term plan. If they do this will come from examining the balance of our values such as food accessibility, quality, sustainable practices and fair labor practices. Any change will also come from listening to the community's needs. The decision to be a vegetarian store was made by People's Member-Owners over two decades ago. Many current Member-Owners would like to see our co-op apply our values-based guidelines to purchasing meat, while other Member-Owners say how much they appreciate and value that the vegetarian focus of the store. Any change will not "water down" our values and will be carefully considered and informed by our values.

WHY DO WE HAVE TO GROW?

For better or worse, your co-op is subject to the same market pressures as any other business. Costs to keep

our doors open continue to rise. We can't make the same amount of money year after year because inflation causes our money to be worth 2-3% less each year. . We either need to keep up with inflation or cut back on expenses. Cutting back expenses would mean no building updates, a less supported floor and wage and benefits cuts for our staff.

Although we know that the co-op needs to grow, it is difficult with our limited space. For many of us, it's also about how we want to grow. We want to provide more access to our food, the co-op and collective structure, our human-scale workplace, and opportunities to participate in a democratic business, and we want to use the passion and heart of our communities to get us there.

**HOW WILL YOU MAKE SURE
THAT THE PROCESS WON'T DRAG
OUT, COSTING OUR CO-OP MORE
MONEY THAN IS NECESSARY?**

In order to understand our long term planning process, it's good to understand our structure. People's has a Collective Management which, along with its Board of Directors, makes decisions using consensus. We're also very interested in deep democracy and working to counter the systemic effects of social and economic injustice. These kinds of values are what founded the store you see today.

Our structure and values make us who we are, but like any structure, there are drawbacks. Our need for careful consideration and consensus decision-making may lead us to take a little more time than other businesses might.

That said, the Collective Management and Board will be holding the process accountable to an explicit timeline, which will be checked in on by multiple groups on the Collective Management and the Board once per month.

If you have any more questions, feel free to send an email to planning@peoples.coop or contact your Board Chair Jacob at jacobengstrom@peoples.coop. Additionally, we'll get in touch soon about times when you can meet up with the Long Term Planning Committee to ask questions about the process and where People's is headed.



TAKE OUR 2016 MEMBER-OWNER AND CUSTOMER SURVEY

TAKE THE SURVEY ONLINE:

<http://www.peoples.coop/2015-survey>

TAKE THE SURVEY IN-STORE:

A computer is available in our sun room with the survey ready to go.

Meeting the needs of our growing and changing community is at the core of our cooperative philosophy. Help us by sharing your experiences & priorities. Your input will enable the Collective Management to effectively plan for store updates.

As a thank you for completing our survey, you'll be able to pick up a free Equal Exchange chocolate bar the next time you come into the store. Also you will be entered into a raffle for one of ten, \$50 gift cards.