



MEMBER-OWNER FEEDBACK: SYNTHESIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

**Prepared by the Synthesis Committee
January 24, 2018**

INTRODUCTION

In July of 2017, Member-Owners learned that two primary projects were being considered as components of a long-term plan: opening a second store or relocating to a larger site, ideally within our current neighborhood. Unfortunately, this news broke via calls from a market study firm that the Long-term Planning Committee had hired to examine the market potential of a second store or relocation, and not from the Collective or the Board. Some Member-Owners, asked to choose between these two projects, felt that the Collective had unnecessarily and inappropriately narrowed the range of possible development projects without consulting the Member-Ownership. This framing impacted the way that Member-Owners responded to the information that was shared with them, and in turn affected the comments that they've shared with us here. The Board of Directors and the Long-term Planning Committee received many emails, had in-person conversations with Member-Owners, and held a community forum in August. From September through October, the Long-term Planning Committee organized feedback sessions, community forums, and an online Member-Owner survey about the future of People's, the long-term planning process, and Member-Owner values around growth. This produced a massive volume of Member-Owner feedback.

The Synthesis Committee was formed to help process the comments the Board and the Long-term Planning Committee received. The group was tasked with digesting and synthesizing all of the Member-Owner feedback that was received, using it to produce a recommendation for how to move forward. After 3 months thumbing through Member-Owner feedback, we have accomplished that task!

The Synthesis Committee consists of ten Member-Owners:

- Four Member-Owners, one selected from Member-Owners at each feedback session: Judith Maron-Friend, Phil Quitslund, David Todd, and Chris Eykamp.
- Two members of the Board of Directors chosen by the Board: Dave Wadley and Jenna Whitaker.
- One Collective Manager: Kahadish Wa' Adabisha.
- Three Collective Managers who are also members of the Long-term Planning Committee: Finnley LoPresti, Ashley Todd, and Sofie Sherman-Burton.

While the members of the Synthesis Committee represent a variety of different backgrounds and life experiences, we recognize that the majority of committee members benefit from white privilege. Given the committee's makeup, its work may not reflect the breadth of thinking and feeling the broader community.

The Synthesis Committee met five times, from late October 2017 to mid-January 2018. Synthesis Committee meetings were facilitated by David Osborn, who also facilitated the feedback sessions. We reached agreement on all of the sections that follow, as well as our recommendation.

The Synthesis Committee wants to acknowledge all of the time, effort, and passion poured into all of the responses that we read from Member-Owners. Many Member-Owners shared thoughtful sentiments, well-considered ideas, and impassioned responses with us. Considering this wealth of information was a tremendous opportunity to get to know our

community better, and we thank every Member-Owner that made a comment, wrote an email, attended a feedback session or community forum, took the survey, or otherwise engaged in this process.

Based on all the input that Member-Owners have shared so far, the Synthesis Committee is recommending two steps forward:

1. **We recommend that the Co-op stop looking into relocation as an option for our long-term plan.** While some Member-Owners supported a possible move, the vast majority of Member-Owners hope People's will continue operating in its current location. Member-Owners shared many reasons for this, from a connection to the physical building and the history that we have here to the character of the neighborhood and apprehension about the financial implications of relocating. You can read more of the specific sentiments that Member-Owners shared on page 9.
2. **We recommend that the Co-op work towards keeping People's vital at its current location.** From researching expanding our physical building to reevaluating operations to adjusting prices and products, input from Member-Owners collectively suggests that we do everything reasonable to keep a store at 3029 SE 21st Avenue.

There is much more to learn from the comments and input that Member-Owners shared, much of which is included in the following synthesis document. We feel it is an adequate representation of the feelings and opinion of Member-Owners about the long-term plan and this process going forward.

Certainly, this is not the end of the long-term planning process, nor the end of Member-Owner engagement! More information is clearly needed before we are able to implement and of the ideas represented in this document. As we move forward, the Synthesis Committee feels that further Member-Owner participation will be critical in finding a suitable long-term plan for People's.

Thank you again, for all of the input that you shared with us and all of your engagement in our long-term planning process. The Co-op is better for our shared work, and we look forward to seeing where this process leads us.

In cooperation,

Ashley, Chris, Dave, David, Finnley, Jenna, Judith, Kahadish, Phil, and Sofie
The Synthesis Committee

CONTEXT

Market Conditions

Central Question: What input was received from Member-Owners about the opportunities and constraints of the market conditions in which People's operates as they pertain to the long term planning process?

Synthesis of Input:

Member-Owners expressed an acknowledgment of the rapid growth in Portland, and shared complex relationships to growth. Some felt it was good and could be utilized to accomplish the Co-op's Ends.

- *"THE REALITIES: Peoples cannot sustain a good bottom line in the current space. In my opinion this is clear and a fact. Sales and surplus (profit in capitalist terms) cannot support the Ends & Mission of the co-op." (Email)*

Some challenged the sustainability of growth and felt that pressure to grow in tension with the Co-op's Ends.

- *"Regarding the need for increased growth, infinite growth is not sustainable." (Feedback Session 2)*

Member-Owners acknowledged the increasing options for purchasing natural foods nearby – New Seasons, Natural Grocers, Market of Choice, Amazon/Whole Foods (online sales), etc. Member-Owners expressed mixed views regarding this expanded market and competition within the natural foods sector. Some felt it presents competition, while others perceive the Co-op as a distinct entity in the marketplace that it is not in direct competition with these other players. Member-Owners commented on the Co-op's current form and scale fills a niche within the current market conditions and competition.

- *"Please take note: given the lack of debt and high cash reserves, a one or two percentage drop in annual sales is not cause to announce the imminent death of the co-op! On the contrary, it seems to me that there has never been a better time for People's at its current location." (Email)*
- *"I think we have opportunity to differentiate with the smaller store." (Feedback Session 3)*

The Building

Central Question: What opportunities and constraints does the building provide for the long-term planning process?

Synthesis of Input:

Retail Space & Size of Store

Some owners felt that the store is too small, while others prefer its intimate size.

- *One Member-Owner reported getting claustrophobic if there are more than 4 or 5 people in the store when she is shopping. (Feedback Session 1)*
- *"I think the size of People's is just right – you carry everything I need and still feel like a neighborhood store." (Email)*

- *“What is most important for me is that People's is SMALL. I hate going into big stores like New Seasons.” (Survey)*

The survey asked about store size in a several different ways. 30% of respondents said they often did not have room to move around the store. Wider aisles ranked 8 out of 13 of “Important Concerns”, and 7.6% said wider aisles would help make People's their primary store.

Back stock

Because the challenges working with the back stock areas are not something most owners have direct experience with, it was not frequently brought up in emails or comments. However, a few did mention the possibility for addressing the problems at the current location.

- *“Even 1500 sq ft [additional area Shawn reported could be added to the building onsite] offers some significant potential to address back stock and office crowding issues.” (Email)*

Building

The People's community has a sense of connection to the building itself. The building is also a part of the neighborhood identity.

- *This is one of the most beautiful buildings I know. All of the people who worked on this space, used this room, they're part of this space, it's really unique. (Feedback Session 4)*
- *The reason I love to shop at People's... is because the shop itself maintains a very human, farmer's market feeling. It doesn't have that “supermarket” feeling with the sterile atmosphere. I love the building itself, with its cob walls and passive energy construction. I love the little outdoor area in front, and the upstairs space. Whenever I come into People's, I feel human. Whenever I go into other markets, I feel the sterility and coldness of them. People's reflects the society I wish I lived in generally. As it is, the only time I get to experience that feeling is when I go to People's.” (Email)*

Parking

While some owners expressed a desire for more parking, many appreciated the walkable/bikeable nature of its current location. Overall, parking did not seem to be a major concern or issue.

- *“I absolutely love the current location – and it's accessibility by bike and walking.” (Survey)*

In the survey, 4.1% of respondents said that better parking would help make People's their primary store, and 52% said that parking was not at all important or slightly important. 12.8% said it was very important or extremely important.

One Member-Owner shared an experience where the lack of a parking lot made them feel unsafe shopping at the Co-op.

- *“A couple of years ago, I actually tripped and fell over the shopping cart while wheeling my groceries to the car parked a block away from People's... This has never happened to me at a store that has a parking lot, where the store is*

responsible for making sure the pavement is even and intact.” (Email)

Ownership of Building

Member-Owners value owning our own building. Some focused on the control it offers, while others focused on the financial aspects of ownership.

- *“[We own] the building and property and therefore are not susceptible to the whims of the very expensive and unpredictable rental market.” (Email)*
- *“I would argue that moving seriously jeopardizes your biggest assets – your devoted membership/shoppers, as well as your financial stability from owning your own building in a neighborhood renowned for its radical politics and emphasis on sustainability.” (Email)*
- *“Selling this building and renting something else seems crazy to me. Owning this building is the only hedge we have, it's appreciating. It's the main way we can maintain financial stability.” (Feedback Session 3)*

There were fewer comments about ownership in the first two feedback sessions because attendees were not told that relocation required selling the building (the LTPC didn't learn this until after the 2nd meeting), but this was shared with participants in the third and fourth session, and was addressed in the survey.

Real Estate

Several owners warned about the difficulties finding “the right” property.

- *“Buying or renting a new building is a long-term process. My employer (an independent school) has been searching for 20 years for a new building.” (Feedback Session 3)*

Others shared their experiences leasing business properties, and expressed concerns that buying real estate can be very expensive.

- *“Many businesses that lease space suffer greatly and are forced out of business because of the landlord... Leases always carry annual rent increases, something the co-op doesn't have to worry about today... Once the co-op signs a lease, all the power shifts to the landlord. Leases must eventually be renegotiated and are almost never on favorable terms to the lessee.... The owner knows the tenant has very high costs to move, and knows exactly what they can get from a new tenant. Remember, most landlords have only one goal: maximize rent...”*

I was astonished at how quickly [property] prices increased during the time I started looking in 2013 and when I stopped looking early this year. I stopped looking because the prices are being driven up so high by out of state investors that they no longer made sense for me... and renovation costs can be surprisingly high (It cost Green Zebra one and a half million to renovate a 5,600 square foot space.” (Email)

Zoning

Several owners commented on the opportunities that might be available with the new zoning taking effect in early 2018.

- *“With the new zoning coming in 2018, there may be considerable possibility for growing the store building physically, especially backstock and other non-customer areas.” (Email)*

Others expressed concern that the zoning wasn't investigated as part of how to make the current site more sustainable.

- *"You're just asking for zoning information now... It just doesn't sound like that everything related to staying in place has been fully explored." (Feedback Session 3)*

Courtyard

The courtyard was frequently mentioned by Member-Owners, most often in the context of finding some way to stay at the current location (generally as something that could be sacrificed if it permitted the store to remain in its location).

- *"Keep current store, if you need to expand into the courtyard a bit or a lot." (Email)*
- *"I'd rather see you expand into the courtyard area and stay in the same location if space is the issue." (Email)*

Several people expressed sadness at the idea of losing the courtyard.

- *"It would be a shame to lose the outdoor community space." (Email)*
- *"I love the courtyard, especially on farmers market day and would be sad to lose all of the space in order to enlarge the coop." (Survey)*

Urgency

Central Question: What input was received from Member-Owners about the urgency of acting on a long-term plan?

Synthesis of Input:

A number of Member-Owners have expressed confusion over a perceived rush to identify and commit to a plan moving forward, wondering if a slower pace might not allow for improved research and a process that allows for Member-Owners to have a meaningful opportunity for participation in making this major decision.

- *"I really just want the process to include all the impacted people. I want to *not* rush so fast down this road. Why are we trying to decide so quickly? What is the crisis that justifies this?" (Email)*
- *"And, as always, why the rush?" (Email)*
- *"Decision making responsibilities have been taken away from the members. There is a suspicious rush to make this momentous and unpopular decision. " (Email)*
- *"In general, the process continues to feel rushed. If we don't have time to answer important questions it seems like the natural thing is to give us more time." (Email)*
- *"Rushing. You need to slow down, get more information, come up with more creative and concrete options. I know this process has already taken months, but this is about: A.) A very beautifully designed, beloved, iconic, historic resource, store and community center possibly being lost. B.) Hundreds or thousands of People's customers possibly losing their favorite regular shopping and community resource due to loss of accessibility." (Email)*
- *"Q: If you get feedback from members and many say no don't leave, then how can you make a decision by January about what to do? Creativity and innovation are a long-term situation... it seems like the timeline is pretty rushed. I just found about*

this last month and I'm a 30-year member. You need more time to make a strong powerful decision." (Feedback Session 2)

PROPOSALS

Second Store

Central Questions: What input was received from Member-Owners about proposal to open a second store?

Synthesis of Input:

In response to the proposal of opening a second store in Lents, Milwaukie, or Montavilla, Member-Owners were generally open to the idea if it proved financially feasible, and could be done in a way that empowers our Ends and maintains the soul and humanness of People's.

- *"Portland is changing really fast and [I am] optimistic that People's can adapt to the changing market and community. It feels like a good idea to expand 'our' way." (Feedback Session 1)*

According to the survey, 34.2% of shoppers would make People's their primary grocery store if they lived closer to the store.

There was consistent concern from Member-Owners that opening a second store would be risky in terms of renting a large building in a difficult market, and also the question of whether opening a second store would alleviate the space and sales concerns of the current building.

- *"If a second store were to open, could the constraints here be worked around, such as crowded storage? I wonder about the viability of the space as is." (Feedback Session 2)*
- *"I'm still not clear how two stores will help with the economic situation. If a second store is leased the rent could go up. I don't feel confident based on the information provided this is the correct path." (Community Forum 1)*
- *"If we go big and it doesn't work it could suck the whole thing down the drain. We could start with a buyers' club in a new community. They would be setting their own priorities. I like the idea of expanding in this way." (Feedback Session 3)*
- *"What is unique could be lost, especially with pressure to pay new obligations related to a move or second store" (Feedback Session 1)*

There was consistent energy around the Ends that would be furthered through a second store, without the pain of losing the original building – more co-ops for more people, more accessible food for more people, more community nourishing power. There was a strong desire for any expansion to be done in a way that reflects the qualities folks love about People's – it's warmth, humanness, healing vibe, not-a-box grocery store.

- *"Separate stores expands the cooperative concept, reaches more people, and employs more workers!" (Survey)*
- *"Hopefully that second store would have the same feeling as its current physical space has. The physical space itself is part of what People's has to offer that is*

truly different...and makes it absolutely special...what [New Seasons] doesn't have is the very human, homey feeling that People's has." (Email)

People recognized the need to be relevant to any community we were to locate in, and spoke supportively of bringing food access to Lents or working with a similar existing co-op culture in Montavilla.

- *"Food is only one part of the Co-op, economic justice and food security are also important. Some other communities really need grocery stores and some don't. There will be a grocery store in Lents, wouldn't it be great if it was one that cared about gentrification impacts and would work to get lower cost food?" (Feedback Session 4)*

There was some interest around creative, smaller second store type projects, such as expanding through corner stores instead.

- *"People's has lots of expertise getting a lot of value from a small space. Let's go back to the roots of having corner stores. The hardest part could be the staffing structure; perhaps each store could be semi-autonomous but connected?" (Feedback Session 2)*

There was substantial contact from Lents, and some Montavilla and Milwaukie residents expressing interest in having a People's in their area.

- *"I have been a working member for over a decade. I love the co-op for many reasons. I just heard we may be getting a co-op in Lents and it makes me jump for joy. I live in Lents, volunteer in Lents and love my neighborhood. But the food options here are limited and I have to travel for grocery shopping & to support the Co-op. Please please come to Lents. We need good food options and desperately need a hub for community." (Email)*
- *"I shop at people's whenever I am in the area. I live in Montavilla and want to strongly encourage you to open a second store here. The grocery situation is one of my biggest frustrations living in Montavilla... I think there are a lot of folks in the neighbourhood who would be excited to have a co-op and easier natural food access." (Email)*
- *"As a car-free member (with a family of 6!) who has been faithfully making the trek from the southernmost Portland neighborhood (Sellwood, right near Milwaukie), I would LOVE to see you guys open in Milwaukie – as an alternative to New Seasons' tiny Sellwood location (that has higher prices and an ever-diminishing ruthlessly-culled inventory of only 'best-sellers')! With the new safe, flat and speedy bike path to Milwaukie recently completed, we would happily shift most of our daily shopping to a Milwaukie People's." (Email)*

Relocation

Central Questions: What input was received from Member-Owners about proposal to relocate the store?

Synthesis of Input:

There is a broad range of viewpoints regarding relocation. Many Member-Owners expressed strong disagreement with the proposal in feedback sessions and via email. Primary concerns that were voiced had to do with People's identity and how a new space

might change it; the value of current building/space as a community asset; and the financial viability of renting a larger space.

- *"Moving out of the neighborhood would be the least desirable option from my perspective. The store is a destination, as much as a place to shop. It's deeply rooted in community. And it's also plain unfair to abandon the community that nurtured People's and made it what it is today." (Email)*
- *"We would hate to see [the co-op] closed and sold and moved to a new location. Yet, this is preferable to having it slowly decline because of economic circumstances. It would not be fair to the employees who have put so much time and energy into the place providing food and space for the community." (Email)*
- *"If you end up moving into a larger space, it most likely wouldn't have the same feeling your current space does. If People's ended up feeling like the other markets in Portland, I would feel quite bereft." (Email)*
- *"I'm concerned there is not a lot of information about what could be done to make this location work better... I feel like there has not been enough discussion and details on these options." (Feedback Session 3)*

In general, the survey showed more openness to relocation "if necessary," with about 91% of respondents stating they'd continue shopping at People's if we relocated within 1 mile of our current location, which is also reflected in some emails and feedback sessions.

That said, there is an overall sense that People's should only consider relocation once all other options have been explored, and that the risks of relocation seem greater than those of opening second store.

Sustaining in Place

Central Question: What opportunities and constraints does the building provide for the long-term planning process? What is the level of support for use of the current building?

Synthesis of Input

Constraints to sustaining in place were almost all related to building size. Needs were seen in areas of retail, receiving, back-stock, office, and community space. Other constraints were mostly related to planning and other processes. People generally see losing the positive aspects of the current space as a constraint or in conflict with thriving.

- *"Mobility in the store is limited and challenging for some shoppers." (Feedback Session 2)*
- *"I worked as a [Hands on Owner] in produce for several years. It's a struggle for workers to use the back area. It can't store much. A larger space would be great for the workers." (Feedback Session 4)*

Several people expressed sadness at the idea of losing the courtyard.

- *"I love the courtyard especially on farmers market day and would be sad to lose all of the space in order to enlarge the co-op." (Survey)*
- *"Would we gain enough that the costs we'd incur would be worth it? Or would it just be a temporary fix?" (Community Forum 1)*

Member-Owners shared that one reason to stay is that our building is unique, and it offers a shopping experience distinct from any other in Portland.

- *"What is unique could be lost, especially with pressure to pay new obligations related to a move or second store." (Feedback Session 1)*
- *"I love the small space, it provides a unique experience and there are really not a lot of small grocery stores in the city. There is value in the coziness of the space and if the back room and accessibility issues can be addressed I think this building is great." (Feedback Session 4)*

Many people offered suggestions for ways to strengthen the co-op by coordinating with other co-ops in Portland: coordinating purchases, sharing bookkeeping and other support staff, or merging as an alternative to expanding on our own.

Sustaining in place is not mutually exclusive to all other options, except relocation, and some steps towards realizing this option will likely be needed if we remain in the building.

Buying Guidelines

Central Question: What input was received from Member-Owners about the Co-op's buying guidelines in relation to a long-term plan?

Synthesis of Input:

Regarding both relocation and opening a second store, Member-Owners provided mixed feedback; some people wanted the guidelines to stay the same while others could see them change as long as the store(s) remained vegetarian.

- *"Please continue to honor the product guidelines, it is important to be able to trust all of the products available." (Survey)*
- *"The buying guidelines are really important to me; they help with decision-making." (Feedback Session 2)*
- *"It is vitally important that the co-op stay vegetarian above-all." (Survey)*
- *"Thank you for at least considering adjusting some guidelines" (Survey)*

In the survey, 51% of Members said that "If People's opens a second store, it's important that the product guidelines remain the same." versus 44.6% who said "If People's opens a second store, it's important to consider affordability and relevance to the local community, even if this means that the product guidelines are adjusted (while remaining vegetarian)."

Many folks spoke of their desire for People's to remain vegetarian, others prefer we shift to a completely plant-based store, and some folks said that they would be excited for meat to be sold.

- *"People's feels like safe space for me since meat is not sold here." (Feedback Session 2)*
- *"I can't honestly choose either A or B for either of these two [buying guideline] questions, below, because I (and MANY other members) want at least one of your stores to serve ethically grown meat." (Email)*
- *"I shop at People's because it's vegetarian, though I'd very much prefer it be vegan... also very important are the product guidelines." (Survey)*

More engagement would be needed to know how people feel about changing buying guidelines in expansion.

Ideas to Research Further

Central Question: What ideas did Member-Owners share about how the Co-op could move toward our Ends and greater economic sustainability?

Synthesis of Input:

Member-Owners also shared creative ideas about alternatives ways to grow and improve the financial outlook of the Co-op.

- Warehouse
 - *"In terms of accessing warehouse space, has a federation of all food co-ops to be joint owners been considered?" (Feedback Session 3)*
- Creative investments
 - *"Given the financial position of the co-op, there's a fair amount of resources. I'm wondering if you've ever considered using the capital you have in a way that meets your Ends not necessarily as a grocer. For example, using that money to help other organizations similarly aligned, like farmer loans for example. As a way to generate other income outside of selling products. " (Community Forum 2)*
- Online ordering & delivery
 - *"Some stores are looking at online sales, with store pickup or delivery. You could start with a warehouse in one of the other locations where you hope to open a store where folks could pick things up, perhaps. Has that been considered?" (Feedback Session 1)*
- Mobile version
 - *"Have you given any thought to a mobile version of the Co-op?" (Feedback Session 1)*
- Starting buying clubs in other neighborhoods
- Merging with other co-op(s)
 - *"Have you considered economies of scale to get all three co-ops sharing some accounting and other services?" (Feedback Session 3)*
- Model where there is required labor as part of membership
- Deli & prepared foods
 - *"Prepared foods would be a great sales line for the Co-op, such as a deli." (Feedback Session 4)*

In addition to sharing comments about the project proposals from the Long-term Planning Committee, Member-Owners shared a variety of other ideas of how the Co-op could grow toward our Ends.

- Transitioning to a minimum waste store
 - *"Maybe it could be a package-free store, a CSA or bulk buying club drop point?" (Feedback Session 2)*
- Housing
 - *"Another idea for investments: some grocery co-ops will invest in co-operative housing for workers and low-income community members. That directly addresses pressures on financials here, keeping wages up, etc. This was done in Weaver Street Co-op in North Carolina – they bought two apartment complexes. " (Community Forum 2)*
- Partnering with other groups dealing with food access

Clearly, some of these projects both work towards the Co-op's Ends and could provide an economic engine to improve the Co-op's economic sustainability.

PROCESS

Process Thus Far

Central Questions: What input was received from Member-Owners about their experiences with the long term planning process thus far?

Synthesis of Input:

According to the survey, overall, about 85% of Member-Owners said that they were satisfied with the amount of input and engagement available to Member-Owners regarding the long-term plan.

- *"I appreciate all of these efforts to include the membership in this long-term planning process!" (Survey)*
- *"I was very impressed with the most recent Grassroots addressing some of our questions. It felt really good to me to have that come out in a really articulate way... I feel like you're really competent and willing to listen. You've gone to a lot of trouble to do these meetings in a well-facilitated meeting. I think you guys work really hard, but when you have these responsibilities, even in sessions where people are disagreeing with CM, I've seen some people just be really gracious. " (Community Forum 2)*
- *"Thank you for treating this long-term planning and these decisions with such care and concern and for making an intentional process. Go team!" (Survey)*

While the majority of Member-Owners who took the survey were satisfied with the process, about 10% were not satisfied (almost 5% of survey results analyzed were missing an answer to the question about satisfaction with the process).

Some concerns that Member-Owners raised include:

- That the process seems rushed.
 - *"I think that we should make sure that we explore every option before we do such a thing. I really just want to process to include all of the impacted people. I want to not rush so fast down this road. Why are we trying to decide so quickly? What is the crisis that justifies this?" (Email)*
- That the way that people found out about relocation was really unfortunate and had a negative impact on the way that Member-Owners engaged with the long-term planning process (and in particular the prospect of relocation).
 - *"While I am generally satisfied with the long-term planning process, I was disappointed that whoever was in charge of the telephone survey that was done did not read the questions carefully and realize that the survey would spread rumors and (mis)information about the process before much information had been provided to member-owners." (Survey)*
 - *"I'm pretty disappointed in how the information regarding the expansion/long term vision planning has been delivered to the People's community. I found out about expansion efforts through a survey call, the*

same way many of my neighbors and your long time members found out. I was really surprised and saddened to learn about the possibility of People's relocating in this way." (Email)

- That Member-Owners don't understand how or why the Board delegated responsibility to the Collective Management.
 - *"I'm satisfied with the level of input and engagement in the past month or two, but I am concerned that I didn't realize the weight and significance of the earlier opportunities in 2016. I also don't understand the BOD's stance and approach to this process." (Survey)*
 - *"Why did the Board delegate so much responsibility to the CM for such a big decision?" (Feedback Session 1)*
 - *"It's an enduring mystery to me why the Board would choose to delegate one of the most momentous decisions of our history." (Email)*
- That the conversation around creating a long-term plan to stabilize the Co-op's finances was framed in the language of "expansion", which many people reacted to. Some felt the conversation was structured with intent to steer people towards a predetermined outcome:
 - *"I would like to request that the LTPC consider what options may be available for on-site expansion given the challenges and significant risks associated with both opening a second store and relocation." (Email)*
 - *"This lack of knowledge and lack of curiosity of working with the existing site proves they have not considered all options available. It's a major red flag. It appears to me, as an active member involved in this process as much as I am allowed, that the decision has been made beforehand and this 'process' is just a formality." (Email)*
 - *"It feels to me the decision process has been captured by the relocation process. Are the options for staying here going to get an honest review, too?" (Feedback Session 3)*
 - *"The options presented reflect a very narrow and biased framing of the issues, and questions seem designed to further an agenda rather than capturing data on what values and tradeoffs members would be willing to make." (Survey)*
 - *"I would like to ask that these and other statements of opinion be removed from the information packets, and that they be replaced with actual financial data, pro-formas, and objective statements of fact. Let the member-owners draw their own conclusions from the numbers." (Email)*
 - *"The fact that you are framing feedback around a binary choice when Member Owners have been unequivocal that we think there are other alternatives that were prematurely winnowed out feels reckless and unfair." (Email)*

Member-Owners also offered a breadth of comments about the survey format and questions, in particular.

- *"I cannot take this survey because giving answers in too many instances requires choosing between too narrow a set of options. How can a thoughtful and well-intentioned person meaningfully answer questions, which tend to go along the lines of: What is more important? a) That People's survive into the future or b) that People's store site not move? Too many of the questions are framed in such a way that there is no reasonable 'other' option. Without pointing fingers or making*

anyone feel accused I just want to ask that the survey designers consider the questions from the point of view that moving may not be the only really viable option for the Co-op." (Email)

- *"This survey feels pretty loaded. It feels like it wants me to choose the financial viability over staying put. I would really like to see way more creative options exploring keeping the building while increasing People's' financial health. I think it would be wise to have an outside neutral person write this survey, as it feels that it is written to elicit specific answers from the members. I'm surprised and frustrated by this."* (Survey)
- *"I appreciate the survey: how it's worded, its intent. It reflects you."* (Survey)

Process Going Forward

Central Questions: What input was received from Member-Owners about their views on what is needed for the long-term planning process going forward?

Synthesis of Input:

In addition to comments about process so far, we heard comments from Member-Owners about what they would like to see from the process moving forward. Those included:

- More clarity of vision.
 - *"I want to emphasize careful planning and holding onto your values during this process. I was part of a co-op expansion project in another state where the amazing, community-based co-op that I loved turned into an overpriced store with a huge profit and no soul."* (Survey)
 - *"It feels like there is lack of clarity of vision. This conversation needs to come out of a holistic vision and some clarity of focus from the CM and Board."* (Feedback Session 2)
- More transparency, access to data, and context to understand data being used.
 - Some Member-Owners desired more specific information, rather than summaries of data.
 - *"I feel like there has not been enough discussion and details on these options. I encourage you to be more detail-oriented and creative and let members know exactly what these options would entail."* (Feedback Session 3)
 - *"I appreciate all of the work put into this, but it still feels really shallow. Gathering of and communicating detailed information needs to be more robust."* (Feedback Session 3)
 - *"I feel like we haven't been given enough information. When can we get more information? What was the NCG recommendation based on?"* (Feedback Session 2)
 - *"I would like to ask that... statements of opinion be removed from the information packets, and that they be replaced with actual financial data, pro-formas, and objective statements of fact. Let the member-owners draw their own conclusions from the numbers."* (Email)
- Folks have shared a variety of ways that they would like to see Member-Owners have more involvement in the long-term planning process.
 - *"I feel the process should have included Member-Owners from the get go. Folks in my group were really pissed – their feelings were that the CM*

- were not in touch with the Member-Owners. I think the Board of Directors needs to adjust policies to allow Member-Owner participation in decisions that are fundamental to the sustainability of the co-op." (Email)*
- *"As a Member-Owner I would like to help but don't know what else I can do to help. This seems like a missed opportunity. People care. If there is some way for us to be more specifically involved and helpful let us know." (Feedback Session 3)*
 - Other commenters offered creative ways members can be more productively engaged by creating a more participatory process.
 - *"Member-Owners deserve a direct voice. Since the Board does not seem to want input, perhaps we can jointly figure out an acceptable process, and then present it to them to make sure they are comfortable with it." (Email)*
 - *"To not actively and vividly include members seriously jeopardizes your chance of success as well as your retention of members should you move or build a new store. I strongly encourage you folks to form committees to help you get more info and come up with creative solutions. This is how KBOO has survived for 50 years! With volunteer committee help! Again, your greatest assets are your members and other shoppers! Reach out to us! Truly involve us! We can help tremendously! We have a huge amount of knowledge and resources to offer!" (Email)*
 - According to survey responses, about 25% of Member-Owners would like more information about how the Board of Directors governs the Co-op and represents Member-Owners. Some Member-Owners expressed dissatisfaction with the role that the Board has taken to date.
 - *"Little about this process feels truly cooperative to me and I remain unpersuaded that ample steps are being taken to correct an abdication of responsibility on the part of the Board to a Committee charged with pursuing the best interests of the Co-Op and its Member Owners that fundamentally failed to be driven by Member Owner input when it mattered the most." (Email)*
 - *"What seems to be missing is the Board as a filter for the ownership." (Feedback Session 1)*