

From: Cochran, Cynthia <ccochran@eastbayside.org>

Date: Wed, Mar 28, 2018 at 10:15 PM

Subject: My Comments re Franklin Reserve

To: Jill Duson <jduson@portlandmaine.gov>, Kimberly Cook <kcook@portlandmaine.gov>, Pious Ali <pali@portlandmaine.gov>, Belinda Ray <bsr@portlandmaine.gov>

Cc: Kristina Egan <kegan@gpcog.org>, Jeff Levine <JLEVINE@portlandmaine.gov>, Craig Lapine <craig@cultivatingcommunity.org>

Good evening all.

I have attached the comments I prepared prior to this evening's Housing Committee meeting. I request that they be entered into the public record for this Committee.

After this evening's meeting, I would like to make one addition to these comments. Therefore, I request that this email message also be included in the Housing Committee's public record.

I think it is important for Housing Committee members to know that the selection of the Franklin Reserve as the "Catalyst Site" for GPCOG's East Bayside Brownfields Area-Wide Planning grant was made by the GPCOG staff member who authored the grant application. I assume this parcel was selected after consultation with Jeff Levine. There was certainly no attempt to consult with East Bayside neighborhood residents, local businesses, or commercial or residential property owners. However, as I mention in my attached comments, a poll was taken of the advisory committee members on June 30, 2016, to, supposedly, make site selections. The advisory committee members did not choose this site. Please see the attached poll.

In fact, the selection of this parcel as the "Catalyst Site" for this planning grant contributed to a great deal of confusion and difficulty during the grant process, due to the fact that it is a park. Later, the advisory committee members were told that this selection could not be changed, due to "EPA guidelines."

Anyone interested in reviewing the full GPCOG East Bayside Brownfields Planning grant report, can access it here.

Thank you,

- Cindy

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<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=8987aa99e8&jsver=Z-grDj2gpow.en.&view=pt&search=inbox&th=16271c6f0d501a90&siml=16271c6f0d501a90>

To: Housing Committee Members: Councilors Jill Duson, Kim Cook, and Pious Ali  
From: Cynthia Cochran, East Bayside, Portland, ME  
Date: March 28, 2018  
Subject: Comments for today's Housing Committee Meeting

I have written these comments today, in case public comment is allowed regarding Housing Committee Meeting agenda item #5 – Review of the Franklin Reserve Massing Study including an Overview of the GPCOG Brownfields Area-Wide Plan for the East Bayside Neighborhood.

Two meetings ago, at the Feb 12, 2018 meeting, committee members requested a listing of City-owned properties. Committee members wished to consider possibilities of making one, or more, available, perhaps at discounted prices, for housing development. This information might also be useful in connection to another of the committee's priority policy proposals (i.e. to create a Portland Community Land Trust (CLT)). This listing was not provided at the next committee meeting on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>. Instead, a staff report, supposedly about City-owned properties, placed significant focus on one City-owned parcel, the Franklin Reserve. Committee members raised a number of questions about that, and a full listing of City-owned properties was again requested. This twice-requested list still has not been included in the documents provided for today's meeting. Just one, City-owned property is on today's meeting agenda for discussion, as item #5 – Review of the Franklin Reserve Massing Study and an Overview of the GPCOG Brownfields Area-Wide Plan for East Bayside Neighborhood.

I do not understand the reasons for this rapid narrowing of focus for discussion.

This answer might be stated: "Because the Franklin Reserve land parcel was identified in the Implementation Section (Section 4.3) of GPCOG's EB Area-Wide Brownfields Planning grant report, along with the following comment: 'Providing affordable housing on this site is a community-held priority, as well as preserving some open space, adding community space and helping to ensure that Cultivating Community remains in East Bayside.'" However, as a member of the grant advisory committee, I question the veracity of the first eleven (underlined) words of that statement. It is true that affordable housing is a community-held priority for East Bayside stakeholders, as is, affordable entrepreneurial space. However, no specific location for these land uses was determined through the public engagement processes undertaken by GPCOG. In fact, there are many, in East Bayside who specifically do not support housing development on this land parcel.

Does this mean that Franklin Reserve should not be considered for housing development? Not necessarily. What it means, is that, due to many circumstances, some unforeseen, GPCOG's EB brownfields planning grant process was flawed. Therefore, some of these grant report narratives, and "conclusions" remain subject to much disagreement. Please look at the Catalyst Site poll in Appendix A of GPCOG's grant report. It shows that, out of 12 potential brownfields sites, selected by the grant team for possible examination under this grant, the Franklin Reserve parcel was ranked 7<sup>th</sup>. It was ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, out of 12, by advisory committee members, who had been instructed to pick 6 sites, out of the 12 offered. The Franklin Reserve parcel wasn't selected as even one of their six choices, by 60% of advisory committee members.

I believe it would be a grave mistake for Housing Committee members to take any action to recommend development, of any kind, on the Franklin Reserve parcel, at this time. I believe that this sort of action could undermine future possibilities for the City's longer-term planning objectives in East Bayside.

I also believe, it is long past time for a comprehensive, coherent, and integrated neighborhood-wide planning process for East Bayside. A number of planning studies have occurred that include portions of East Bayside, but no overall coordination, or coherent visioning has been facilitated by any of these processes. For example, to me, it seems misleading and disingenuous to display renderings of possible uses of the Franklin Reserve parcel without seeing them in the context of plans for Franklin Street, or Portland Housing Authority's "Strategic Vision Plan."

Much recent planning that has, or will, impact East Bayside, has been conducted in a "piecemeal" manner:

- Portland Housing Authority's "Strategic Vision Plan" in 2015, deals strictly with their properties in East Bayside. PHA's visioning, to date, did not include any community involvement.
- Planning for Washington Avenue, has, and continues to occur, with little, to no public involvement, or even any knowledge, until recently. Its focus is isolated.
- Last year's Division 30 text amendments to incentivize affordable housing development, impacted many areas of East Bayside, due to the zones selected by City staff for this incentive. The process did not consider the policy's impact on the East Bayside neighborhood, as a whole.
- Today, the Housing Committee has been presented with massing studies for the Franklin Reserve parcel, for consideration of housing development on this parcel.

I anticipate a next step, in this piecemeal approach to East Bayside planning, will be to propose more comprehensive changes to zoning in the neighborhood. Once again, there will be a reference made to GPCOG's EB Area-Wide Brownfields grant report. In section 3.5 - Possible Future Land Use Scenarios, there are four possible scenarios provided for the II-b and B5 zones, in East Bayside. Please note, however, that none of these zoning scenarios was discussed with members of the grant advisory committee during the grant process. No public engagement process occurred about these zoning change proposals. This is quite unlike a typical EPA brownfields planning grant, where zoning is often a large part of public discussion and engagement. Needless to say, when this omission became clear, almost all of the business members of the advisory committee stopped attending meetings. Most were not seen again after the third meeting on Sept 22, 2016.

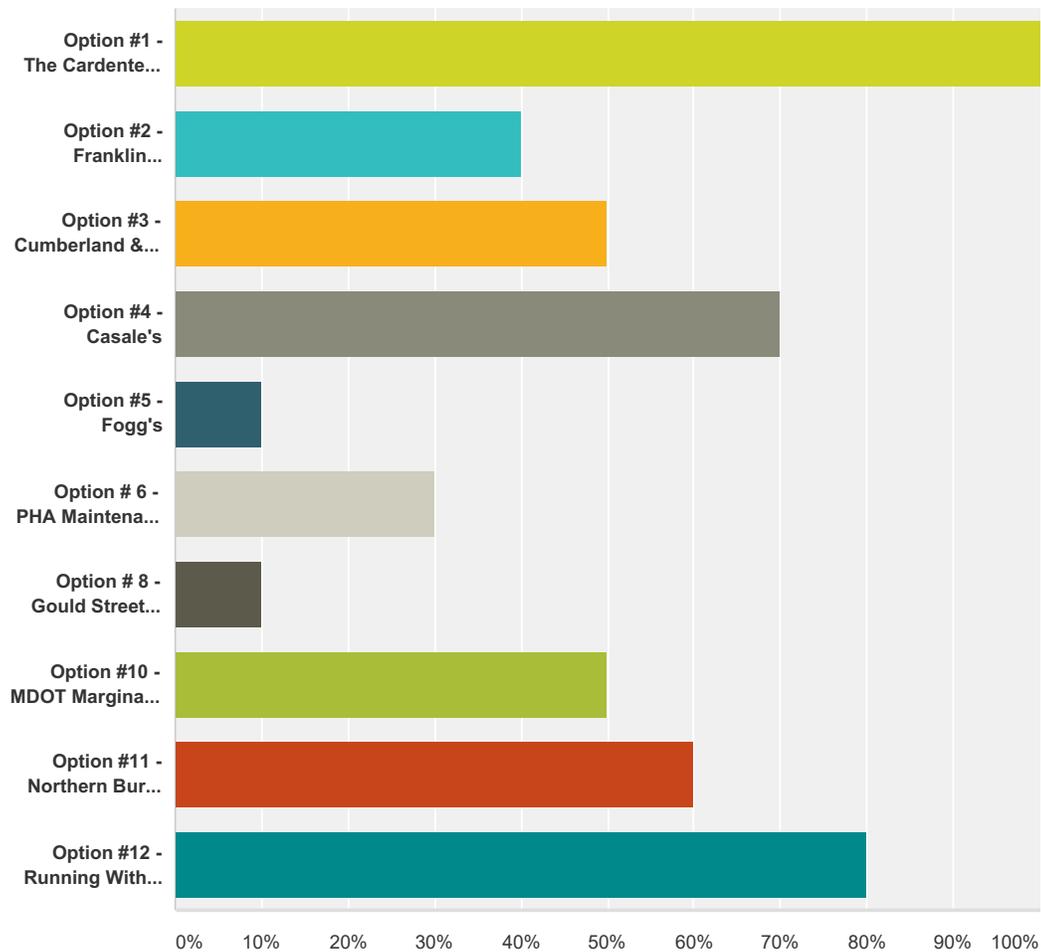
In contrast to these piecemeal approaches to planning for East Bayside, I commend the public outreach and engagement, and the comprehensive, integrated planning, undertaken by City staff, and the technical, and communications consultants involved in the Bayside Transportation Master Plan.

In conclusion, I'd like to point out this response to the GPCOG grant team question "what ideas do you have that were not presented" (in reference to land uses on Franklin Reserve): "[A] monument to people who lost their home to eminent domain." Please see page 3-13 of the GPCOG grant report.

So much work has already been done. Could we please undertake a public planning process that treats the East Bayside area of Portland as a whole neighborhood community? A process that encourages and fosters integration, rather than fractionalization of the many diverse demographics in the neighborhood? An approach that nurtures relationships that could lead to better outcomes and a safer, more resilient neighborhood? I believe that all East Bayside stakeholders would appreciate this effort.

**Q1 Please select your top 6 brownfield sites by checking the box for each one of your six choices! (Please select ONLY 6 sites - thank you!) Your top choices are an important part of the decision-making process. The selection of sites to study under the Area-Wide Planning Grant will be determined by evaluating several factors including: your votes; which sites will most benefit from use of these specific funds; and the potential of sites to meet important City and regional goals. Sites that score well in this voting will also get preference for access to other brownfields funding administered by the City or GPCOG.**

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
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