



COVENTRY **P.E.A.C.E.** CAMPUS
coventrypeacecampus.org

Moving from “**Problem**” to “**Opportunity**”.

Introduction

The strong turnout at the Library's public meeting and participation in the survey show that this is an issue that resonates deeply across Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

Some general take-aways from both include:

The Library and Coventry P.E.A.C.E. have widespread community support.

Residents from all over Cleveland Heights & University Heights have voiced their love for our Library system and equally value the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Building as a vital Arts, Culture, and Education Center.

Our broader Cleveland Heights – University Heights community was well represented.

Neighborhoods across our cities were well represented, underscoring that this is a concern shared by our entire community.

The survey received a high response rate.

The survey received approximately 1,471 responses—surpassing both the Library's Baldwin Wallace Community Survey and the Playground Survey combined.

There was a broad range of ages represented.

Participants spanned a wide range of age groups, highlighting that this issue affects all generations.

There was overwhelming opposition to demolition.

Residents overwhelmingly reject the idea of demolishing the building.

Residents see this as an opportunity.

And.. rather than seeing a problem, our community views this as an opportunity.

Community Perspective

Cole Ware: Cole is a community organizer and public policy professional. He is a program manager at Results for America, where he helps government leaders use data to promote economic mobility. He has led placemaking and revitalization efforts in Cleveland Heights and is the co-founder of the Coventry Neighborhood Group. Cole serves on the Cleveland Heights Transportation and Mobility Committee, The Coventry Village Vacancy Task Force, GCRTA's Community Advisory Committee and is a board member of City Fresh.

As a resident and community advocate who has been deeply involved with community projects focused on revitalizing the Coventry commercial district, Cole has unique insight into:

Neighborhood Progress & Milestones

- » Focus has been on leveraging our existing assets – small businesses, the library, park, and PEACE Building.
- » Securing \$300k in ARPA funds for Coventry S.I.D.
- » Completion of community-led gathering space in Pekar Park.
- » New investment in properties from current owners.
- » P.E.A.C.E. Park renovation led by Cleveland Heights - University Heights Library.

Neighborhood Identity & Assets

- » Coventry has a unique identity of being a progressive, creative, slightly weird place.
- » The PEACE Building and the organizations in it not only represent that identity but strengthen it.

Neighborhood Momentum

- » The decision made about the future of the PEACE Building can help or it can hinder the momentum of the neighborhood.
- » The Library has always been a partner in the work done so far.
- » Hope to find a way to keep the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. nonprofit organizations here - regardless of the exact solution.
- » A collaborative solution that realizes this goal is what is best for Coventry and for the broader community.

Steps to Take to Meet the Community's Expectations

Listen and Understand.

We must actively listen to the community to understand what residents and local businesses want. This will help us identify what they consider a “win.”

Identify Stakeholder Concerns.

By pinpointing the concerns and goals of all stakeholders, we can forge a path forward that addresses key factors for the Library and other involved parties.

Collaborative Planning.

Stakeholders must come together to find a viable future for preserving the building as an Arts, Culture, and Education Center.

Propose Collaborative Solutions.

Let's brainstorm solutions that allow the Library to thrive while preserving the P.E.A.C.E. Building and the nonprofits it houses.

What Residents Want

Preservation Over Demolition.

The community has made it clear they do not support the demolition of the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Building. They see it as a valuable community asset that must be preserved and enhanced.

Collaborative Solutions.

The community seeks transparent and collaborative solutions to ensure the building continues to serve its important role in supporting local arts, culture, and education.

Vision of the Business District

According to Matt Moore, the Executive Director of the Coventry S.I.D., they support:

Strengthening the District as an Arts Hub.

Preservation, not demolition, is key to strengthening the commercial district and its role as an arts hub.

Collaboration with the S.I.D.

The S.I.D. is ready to partner, offering marketing support and potential management solutions to preserve the building.

The Issues

Community Stance.

The community is against demolition and supports collaboration to preserve the building.

Library's Goals.

The Library aims to divest from property management, creating a need for new ownership or management.

City Involvement.

The City has not yet been formally invited to the discussion, but their participation is crucial.

Stability for Nonprofits.

Action is needed to address expiring leases and secure long-term solutions.

Addressing the Issues

Collaborate.

We propose forming a collaborative working group between the Library, the City, Coventry P.E.A.C.E., and the Coventry S.I.D. to workshop solutions and finalize a plan that aligns with residents' wishes and resolves the Library's concerns.

Explore Ownership Solutions.

For example, consider the Library conveying the building to the City, similar to how the School Board conveyed the property to the Library.

Financial Sustainability.

Working together, we can identify cost savings and increase occupancy, making the building more financially sustainable. However, site control is key for accessing grants and loans and pursuing a formal capital campaign.

Aaron Marcovy: Aaron is a local Coventry resident and the Community Investment & Economic Development Director for NOPEC. Aaron recently met with Library Nancy Levin and discussed NOPEC's PACE and STEP loan programs. These are just two examples of funding streams that can be pursued for the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Building. Like other potential programs, site control is a key component of any funding stream.

Site Control is Crucial.

The issue isn't financing—it's site control. Programs like NOPEC's require the entity with site control to lead the funding process.

Layered Funding Streams.

Programs like NOPEC's can be combined with other funding streams, but site control is essential to unlock these opportunities.

Turning the Page to the Next Chapter

We find ourselves at the end of one chapter and turning the page to the next chapter. One filled with many new possibilities.

- » The survey and meeting revealed that saving the building is crucial to more people and businesses than we initially knew.
- » Several viable funding opportunities have emerged, including some new ones that weren't available just a few years ago.
- » **The question now is:** How do we proceed in a way that allows the Library to focus on its core mission while giving Coventry P.E.A.C.E. the site control it needs to secure funding for critical repairs?

Key First Steps

Commit to Collaboration.

We suggest forming a Work Group that includes members of Keep The PEACE, and Heights Library Staff and Board, with a goal to outline a clear plan by the end of 2024.

Initial actions by the Work Group should include:

- » Formally inviting the City to join the effort.
- » Scheduling an initial meeting to review the "Keep The P.E.A.C.E." plan and determine next steps.

Engage Our Community.

Cleveland Heights and University Heights residents are engaged and knowledgeable.

- » In addition to the professionals already working pro-bono on this project, we should invite community members to serve as special advisors in our process.
- » Additionally, key institutions and funders have expressed a willingness to collaborate if a clear path forward is established. We should turn to them for guidance.

The residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights love their libraries. We all want our libraries to succeed and our cities to continue being known for their support of the arts, education, and local nonprofits. Let's work together to envision a new chapter that benefits everyone.