

**Honorable City Planning Commission
Cincinnati, Ohio**

January 18, 2008

SUBJECT: A report on a request from a community coalition comprised of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council, the Pendleton Community Council, the Downtown Residents Council, the Brewery District, the Over-the-Rhine Foundation, and others, for City Planning Commission to comment on a City Council Resolution to oppose the demolition of Rothenberg School in Over-the-Rhine.

BACKGROUND:

On October 24, 2007, Cincinnati City Council approved Resolution #60-2007, which opposed the demolition of Rothenberg School in Over-the-Rhine, and asked the Cincinnati Board of Education to work with the communities of Over-the-Rhine, Pendleton, and Downtown to craft a renovation plan for Rothenberg School that is both economically viable and acceptable to the community. Please see the attached Resolution.

In the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) Facilities Master Plan, Rothenberg School was initially scheduled for renovation. In recent months, CPS has reconsidered the feasibility of renovating Rothenberg School, and has paused to review its options for this school. The Cincinnati Board of Education has not yet voted on whether Rothenberg School will be renovated or newly constructed on another site; furthermore, no decision has yet been made as to the disposition of Rothenberg School if it becomes a surplus site.

On January 1, 2008, a community coalition comprised of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council, the Pendleton Community Council, the Downtown Residents Council, the Brewery District, the Over-the-Rhine Foundation, and others, requested that the City Planning Commission and Historic Conservation Board review Resolution #60-2007 and consider lending their support.

The Historic Conservation Board (HCB) discussed the issue on January 7, 2008. The HCB did not take action, because taking a stand on this issue could be construed as prejudicial prior to an application or official hearing. Rothenberg School is in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District, and any future demolition permit would come before the Board for approval. The HCB had previously supported the retention of CPS's historic buildings as identified in a 1998 study prepared by the Cincinnati Preservation Association.

The City Planning Commission, as stated in Article VII, Section 3 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code, has the power and duty to make plans and maps that show the Commission's recommendation on the location and extent of public buildings.

The Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan, approved by both City Planning Commission and City Council in 2002, identifies Rothenberg School as a major asset to the Over-the-Rhine community. In the Plan, Quality of Life Goal #3, Strategy #4 is to: Renovate Rothenberg School as an elementary school and expand its open space.

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Planning Commission has an active opinion on Rothenberg School: that it should be renovated on site. As CPS is still considering options for the school, it may be premature for the Commission to comment.

The staff of the Department of City Planning recommends that City Planning Commission not take any action on this item, but retain its current position on the issue as stated in the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan (2002) until alternative plans are proposed.

Respectfully Submitted,

APPROVED:

Katherine Keough-Jurs, AICP
Senior City Planner

Charles C. Graves III, Director
Department of City Planning

CMZ/B *[Handwritten initials]*

RESOLUTION NO. 60 - 2007

EXPRESSING City Council's opposition to the demolition of Rothenberg School, which would be a great loss to the Cincinnati neighborhoods of Over-the-Rhine, Pendleton, and Downtown.

WHEREAS, Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS), as a part of its Facilities Master Plan, has presented demolition and renovation alternatives for Rothenberg School; and

WHEREAS, the CPS School Design Team has recommended the demolition of Rothenberg School due to the additional costs associated with the renovation alternative; and

WHEREAS, Rothenberg School is an architecturally and historically significant landmark in the community; and

WHEREAS, the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan of June 2002 calls to renovate Rothenberg School as an elementary school and expand open space; and

WHEREAS, said Comprehensive Plan was a "consensus-based plan by people of the community" and was adopted by City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Over-the-Rhine Community Council and Pendleton Neighborhood Council voted to support renovation of Rothenberg School; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That City Council asks that the Cincinnati Board of Education work with the communities of Over-the-Rhine, Pendleton and Downtown to craft a renovation plan for Rothenberg School that is both economically viable and acceptable to the community.

Section 2. That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Council and that a copy be sent to the Cincinnati Board of Education, Cincinnati Public Schools, Office of the Board Members, P.O. Box 5381, Cincinnati, Ohio 45201-5381.

Passed: October 24, 2007

Attest: *Pamela Williams*
Acting Clerk

[Handwritten Signature]
Mayor

Submitted by Councilmember Berding