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EDITORIALS

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Low-Cost Housing Gap

THE HOUSING Resources Committee heard Thursday that Mayor Ivan Allen's five-year, low-cost housing goal of 16,800 replacement units by 1971 was sure of being met.

This is encouraging.

But the goal, unfortunately, falls far below the mammoth commitment needed if city leaders are determined to wipe out the terrible slum conditions that breed violence and volatile resentment.

Noting this, the HRC voted unanimously at its second annual meeting to endorse and push for approval of the zoning "package plan" designed to pave the way for low-cost housing throughout all sections of the city simultaneously.

Is this too much to expect?

The answer apparently has been yes—judging by the silent reception the plan has received from the aldermanic Planning and Development Committee and the Zoning Committee since it was received for study last August.

Both committees were to seek information from the Planning Department. Now, more than four months later, Planning Department Director Collier Gladin has reported no substantial progress has been made to implement the package plan.

HRC Chairman Cecil Alexander put the need for the package plan in proper perspective last August. "It's like this," he told the aldermen, "either we house the poor or we have within our midst, if not in this generation, then certainly in the next, an alienated people ready to grasp by force what we would not provide when there was yet time."

The true indication of the meager success in providing adequate low-cost housing units so far in Atlanta comes from a statement released by the Atlanta Housing Authority Wednesday. For the first time in Atlanta urban renewal history, said the AHA, housing construction in 1968 exceeded the number of units demolished.

In other words, Atlanta has virtually been standing still, if not going backwards, in attacking its low-cost problem in recent years.

Therefore, it is not surprising to count the number of responsible community organizations supporting the package plan. They include the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, the Community Council of the Atlanta Area Inc., Central Atlanta Progress Inc., the Women's Chamber of Commerce, the League of

Women Voters, the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, Inc., and the Metropolitan Atlanta Conference on Housing.

It is time that the conscience of the community be heard.