

Mr. S. S. S. S.

Constitution Aug 12

Put 'Package Plan' to Test

Interest of private developers in building low-rent housing in Atlanta has been waning recently, not because of the lack of funds, but because of scarcity of suitable land zoned for such housing and the problems of getting suitable land rezoned for such use.

There is capital available right now, and there will be much more available under the \$1.3 billion housing bill just passed by Congress.

The major problem remaining is zoning, and the city's Housing Resources Committee has come up with a proposal that might overcome that problem. HRC has submitted to the Board of Aldermen a "package plan" whereby land in all sections of the city now zoned industrial and single-family would be considered for rezoning for apartments at one time.

It is hoped that under such a program complaints that some sections are getting more than their "fair share" of apartments—especially low-rent apartments—would be overcome.

Mayor Ivan Allen, although the city's leading advocate of low-rent housing, opposes the "package plan." He claims that the present

method of attempting to rezone individual tracts as developers express interest in those tracts arises, is the preferable approach. He expressed fear that by attempting wholesale rezoning at one time, opposition to low-rent housing would be able to concentrate its forces.

However, past experience shows us that there is usually enough opposition to individual rezoning proposals to thwart the mayor's housing problem anyway. It also is obvious that forces in this city which support an effective housing program for the poor—and these forces are likely to be underestimated—are not likely to be drawn in substantial numbers to individual rezoning hearings. But they are likely to be drawn to a hearing on the "package plan."

Already, substantial groups, from the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce to the League of Women Voters and the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, Inc., have endorsed the "package plan."

Here is an opportunity to test the will of the people of this city to provide decent housing for all its citizens. It is a test that should be made.