

## Midcity group finds hope on growth woes

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*Author: Joe Hughes*

A coalition of four Midcity neighborhoods formed to protest high density development and a lack of public services in the area received praise -- and hope -- from elected officials during an emotionally-charged meeting last night.

Mayor Hedgecock, Councilwoman Gloria McColl, Supervisor Leon Williams, and representatives of community planning groups and business leaders all voiced concern over the lack of an adopted community plan for City Heights, Normal Heights, University Heights and North Park.

More than 250 people attended the meeting at John Adams Elementary School in Normal Heights.

Speakers, aided by a slide presentation, said the Midcity has runaway growth, crowded schools and streets, overburdened sewers and a lack of public parks, parking and playgrounds.

The community plan has been stalled in City Hall for the past three years.

"We are not going to let our inner city decay," Mayor Hedgecock said during the three-hour meeting. "This has happened in too many cities where the focus has been on the suburbs, not the entire city."

Hedgecock pledged support from the city after hearing that the predominantly single-family residential neighborhood is being inundated with high-density apartments and condominiums, with little regard for public services.

Hedgecock said he has written a memo to city planners in an attempt to get the stalled plan back on track.

Councilwoman McColl said the community plan would be made available to the communities next week for comment, and the document could reach the city Planning Commission by April and the City Council for possible adoption in June.

"The concerns are not new," she said. "What is new is that you are all getting together, working together."

Supervisor Williams also praised the coalition, saying "this community has been studied enough; it's time to get on with developing a plan to stop the rotting of our inner city."

Steve Temko, representing the Save Our Neighborhoods coalition, called for the city to

put a moratorium on new public and private residential development in the Midcity until the community plan is adopted.

"Parks are deficient, schools are overcrowded, growth continues unabated," Temko said.

"Single-family homes are being trucked out of the neighborhood on a daily basis and replaced by apartments and condos without any regard for the impact to the area."

Lee Shouse, representing City Heights , said, "We are experiencing daily problems from makeshift development."

Eric Duvall, representing University Heights, said, "Overdevelopment has run amok. Single-family homes are being replaced by 12-pack boxes."

He said during a three-year period, from January 1980 to January 1983, 189 single-family homes have been either torn down or removed from the Midcity, and replaced by high density units.

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