

Likes, dislikes offered up at Temple Terrace town hall meeting

By [Joyce McKenzie](#) | The Tampa Tribune

Thursday evening's town hall meeting gave residents a chance to voice what they like and dislike about the city and what they want incorporated into the new downtown center.

The meeting, which had an audience of more than 200 at the Omar K. Lightfoot Center, also gave the principles of Vlass Temple Terrace LLC, the center's master developer, a chance to share details of their own.

The audience's consensus of opinion about the city's assets is its family-friendly sense of community, its ethnic diversity and its proximity to and the beauty of the Hillsborough River.

What they don't like is being called a bedroom community of Tampa and the unsightliness of 56th Street south of Bullard Parkway, just west of the 29-acre redevelopment site that is now home to two antiquated shopping centers.

Michael Vlass of the Atlanta-based Vlass Group said the multimillion-dollar, mixed-use redevelopment project approved earlier this month by city council will take into account the pros and cons.

"We'll incorporate your preferences on the Mediterranean-style architectural details and intricacies," Vlass said following a slide show of various architectural designs.

Michael Lant of MJ Lant Developments, a partner in the redevelopment plan, assured attendees the concerns about 56th Street will be addressed prior to the start of construction, set to begin at Chicago Avenue and work north toward Bullard.

"The city will start its 56th [Street] beautification project next week and we'll clean up the frontage near 56th Street," Lant said.