

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/382445_INTERBAY08.html

Interbay closer to becoming a neighborhood

City Council panel votes to allow rezone

Thursday, October 9, 2008

Last updated 1:06 p.m. PT

By DEBERA CARLTON HARRELL
P-I REPORTER

Interbay -- or at least a part of it -- took a big step toward becoming a neighborhood Wednesday, following a Seattle City Council committee decision to allow a long-sought rezone.

The council's Planning, Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee voted to change zoning requirements in the historically industrial area to allow mixed-use buildings, including affordable housing in an area west of 15th Avenue West and near West Dravus Street.



Under the proposal, which heads to the full council for a vote expected Oct. 27, current commercial zoning with 40-foot height limits would change to allow residential and commercial uses from 65 to 85 feet high.

Developers with Freehold, the property owners who nearly four years ago sought a rezone to create a green, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood with cafes, shops and affordable housing, said they were pleased that the council at long last had taken some action.

But Freehold as well as the Interbay Neighborhood Association, which supports the neighborhood plan, expressed disappointment that they must abide by work force housing incentive zoning legislation being discussed by the council.

Some City Council members have argued that Freehold's plan, considered consistent with council policies on sustainably designed, walkable communities, predates the mayor's incentive zoning proposals and therefore should not be subject to them.

Developers also sought an upzone to 120 feet, noting that such heights were not controversial in this particular area and would allow for more cost-effective housing development in a neighborhood just a mile north of downtown.

Committee Chairwoman Sally Clark, who said making a decision on Interbay was one of her top priorities, nonetheless did not support the higher limits. She noted that the committee still is waiting for a city survey of industrial lands and uses, which is being produced by the Mayor's Office.

The survey is expected by the end of the year.

P-I reporter Debera Carlton Harrell can be reached at 206-448-8326 or deberaharrell@seattlepi.com.

© 1998-2008 Seattle Post-Intelligencer