

City of Bremerton Proposition No. 1

Annexation of West Hills Island

Official Ballot Title

The Bremerton City Council passed Ordinance No. 5002 approving annexation of an island of unincorporated territory commonly known as West Hills Island. A referendum petition has been filed requesting that the question of annexation be submitted to the voters in the annexation area. If approved, the West Hills Island would be annexed to the City as provided in Ordinance No. 5002. Shall the annexation be approved?

Explanatory Statement (Prepared by the Attorney for the City of Bremerton, as prescribed by law.)

The Bremerton City Council passed Ordinance No. 5002 approving annexation of approximately 171 acres of unincorporated territory situated in West Bremerton. This unincorporated territory, which is completely surrounded by the City of Bremerton, is commonly referred to as the “West Hills Island.” A referendum petition has been filed, submitting to the voters of West Hills Island the question of whether West Hills Island should be annexed by the City of Bremerton. If the proposition is approved by the voters, West Hills Island will become part of the City of Bremerton as provided in Ordinance No. 5002.

If annexed, the following will occur: 1) the property within West Hills Island will be entitled to the same City services as other property within the City of Bremerton and shall be subject to all the laws and ordinances of the City, except as otherwise provided by law; 2) the City of Bremerton’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning designations of Residential and Industrial will be adopted for West Hills Island; 3) West Hills Island will assume and be subject to its proportionate share of the City of Bremerton’s existing indebtedness and shall be assessed and taxed at the same rate and on the same basis that other property within the City of Bremerton is assessed; and 4) a portion of West Hills Island will be assigned to Bremerton City Council District 8 and a portion will be assigned to City Council District 9.

If the proposition is approved by the voters, the annexation of West Hills Island will become effective upon certification of the election, and on that date, West Hills Island will become a part of the City of Bremerton.

Statement For the Measure

Annexation of West Hills is in the best interest of residents and we should say yes for the following reasons.

IMPROVED PUBLIC SAFETY: Fire protection and Emergency Medical response will be much faster since a Bremerton station is located just down the hill. Without annexation, Fire and EMS response will continue to come from Silverdale. Bremerton police will provide faster response to our neighborhood. Currently the County Sheriff must drive through Bremerton to get here, and is staffed at a lower level.

NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION: Bremerton’s zoning for the area would protect single family homes. County zoning encourages redevelopment of a portion of West Hills with multi-family apartments.

MEANINGFUL REPRESENTATION: The 9 member City Council would provide direct representation by a resident near your neighborhood. The Council already listened to residents by passing a law ‘grandfathering’ lifestyle items such as livestock and non-mandatory garbage collection. Annexation to Bremerton will not change quality of life in West Hills.

NO ADDITIONAL COST: Most residents will not see a cost increase. Some costs will go down including property taxes and the price of water. Your bottom line depends on the services you use and the value of your home. In all cases, the overall change in costs is very small.

Rebuttal to the Statement Against

Bremerton is straightforward with residents about annexation. Detailed cost information was mailed to residents, and a special meeting was held on February 12. This exceeds state requirements for notice. Bremerton accommodated citizens’ wishes to retain community character by passing a special law. City property taxes are lower. City utility taxes will help fund service improvements, such as Police and EMS protection, as well as future sidewalks and streetlights that the County has not provided.

Statement and rebuttal prepared by: R. Bruce Hankins, Chairperson, and David Raymond, member of West Hills Resident For Annexation. Further questions may be addressed by email to rbruce@telebyte.com or calling (360) 377.5728.

Statement Against the Measure

The majority of residents oppose annexation by the City for the following reasons:

1) We do not want our neighborhood to lose its rural character; 2) We want things to stay the same if we do not get any benefits; 3) If we annex now, we have no bargaining power to get benefits; 4) We want the City to benefit us by paying for capital improvements like street lights, fire hydrants, sidewalks, speed bumps and sewer; 5) We doubt the City will consult us on the compatibility of new development because the Tweed Business Park on Tweed Street does not conform to our neighborhood; 6) We worry the City will use eminent domain to develop higher tax-based properties; 7) We are offended the City did not consult us before passing the resolution to annex us as County Wide Planning policies dictate; 8) We feel the City intends to profit off us because the City’s resolution states the annexation will financially benefit the City; 9) We distrust the City’s undisclosed intentions; 10) We cannot afford property tax increases; 11) We do not want to pay City utility taxes on our electric, phone and cable bills.

Rebuttal to the Statement For

We rebut “NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION.” The City had zoned 1/3 of our rural neighborhood as industrial: the south ends of Ida and Sunnyhill, the north side of Rogers, Skylark, Werner, Eden, West Francis, Twin View Place and Howe. To woo us into annexing it has temporarily zoned this area as residential. If we are annexed the City will revisit such interim zoning to fit its Comprehensive Plan that prioritizes industrial expansion and economic development. Vote “No.”

Statement and rebuttal prepared by: PamAlonia McCrary, Chairperson, Neil Allen and Danita Geyer, Citizens Against the Annexation. Further questions may be addressed by email to pamalonia@donobi.net.