Bellingham City Council — At-Large

Bob Burr
(360) 671-7813
bobburr@comcast.net

Yes. There are some provisions related to paid signature gatherers that I wish were not there, but this will be the first Tim Eyman initiative I have ever supported. I am an unabashed supporter of the initiative process because it rests power in the people where it belongs. The City going to Court to block a vote on the Citizens Bill Of Rights signed by 10,000 of us was the precipitating cause of my candidacy. The City should have made its case to the voters, rather than denying us a vote. I-517 will put an end to such voter disrespect.

Roxanne Murphy
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electroxanne@
gmail.com

No. The $8 million pricetag is too steep and the probability of negative environmental impact is too high. Mitigation is inadequate. The existing trail offers beautiful views, which would be obstructed by the walkway. The question is moot in any event. By treaty, traverse of the waters would have to be approved by the Lummi Nation. Unlike those of us who came later, the Lummi are stewards of the land and water. They are not going to approve the walkway. This is one more thing for which to thank the Lummi.

Bellingham City Council — Ward 2

Gene Knutson
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gene_knutson@
msn.com

Mr. Knutson has taken a two-month leave of absence from the City Council for back surgery so he is not available to answer the questions.
City of Bellingham Candidates

**Bellingham City Council — Ward 4**

**Clayton Petree**  
(360) 733-1303  
clayton@claytonpetree.com

Yes I support Initiative 517. Our State Constitution says, “The first power reserved by the people is the initiative.” Washington citizens have had their first power threatened in recent years and I-517 protects this citizen process. Additional time given for signature gathering will reduce mistakes or fraud. It is disturbing we have to define what interfering is with words such as, “shoving,” “spitting,” “screamin,” “From section one of our State Constitution, “All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights.”

Are you in favor of building the overwater walkway?

**Bellingham City Council — Ward 6**

**Pinky Vargas**  
(360) 510-1388  
pinky@votepinkvargas.com

“No, I don’t support I-517. While the initiative process itself is a fantastic opportunity for citizens to engage in the governing process, I don’t see a real benefit here for voters or property owners. It would prevent property owners from having control over signature gathering on their property. It puts signature gatherers in an unusual elevated protected status only shared by funeral mourners. It enacts brutal penalties on business owners who just want the signature gatherers to stop bothering their customers. We managed to pass Death with Dignity, Gay Marriage and Legalize Marijuana without it.”

Are you in favor of the waterfront plan as currently proposed by the Port? What, if any, issues do you think need to be addressed further before the waterfront plan is finalized?

**Michael Lilliquist**  
(360) 920-2684  
mlilliquist@comcast.net

“Yes, the walkway would provide continuous waterfront access from downtown to Fairhaven with amazing shoreline views of our spectacular bay. The people of Bellingham crave access to our waterfront. Look how busy Boulevard Park and Taylor Dock are. This is an incredible opportunity and we’ve done a lot of the hard work already, including funding. This project has gone through extensive feasibility plans and I believe it makes sense for our city. I truly hope we are able to work with the Lummi Tribe to determine a resolution that will permit all our people to enjoy the waterfront.”

Like the walkway from Taylor Ave dock, an overwater walkway from Boulevard Park to the future Cornwall Beach park on the waterfront would be a great public benefit. This project has been publicly vetted for several years. Designed well to minimize impacts on shallow-water eelgrass, it would help to achieve the Waterfront Futures vision of reconnecting Bellingham with the Bay, yet keep people off vulnerable tidal lands. I support this. The Lummi Nation has legitimate concerns about impacts on fishing access near the shoreline, and these concerns must be addressed first. A proposal to restore fishing access is in progress.

The case law on voter initiatives is a legal tangle, however, is written so broadly that it raises concerns about what they mean in practice. As things stand, the court requires some objections to be dealt with prior to the ballot, while others can be taken up only after the vote. Initiative 517 would simplify matters by consolidating all objections after the vote. It’s impossible to say all that should be said on this topic within the 100-word limit. The current proposal is close to striking the right balance among many goals, but there are a number of shortcomings I would like to address prior to approval. I see problems in shoreline management, transportation, and financial planning. I also see shortcomings in infrastructure planning, and the working-wage jobs program under the auspices of the Port and state agencies. In addition to the plan itself, city council must also consider four additional agreements and regulatory documents, which need equal scrutiny.

Background: Washington State Initiative Measure No. 517 titled Protect the Initiative Act will appear on the general election ballot. The initiative establishes protections for citizens who participate in the initiative and referendum process. The final sentence in Section 4 of the initiative reads: “This section may not be construed in any way to impede the right to legal review of the sufficiency of valid voter signatures or post-election legal review; however, under no circumstances may an initiative be prohibited from submission to the people for a vote if sufficient valid voter signatures are submitted.” If Initiative 517 is passed it will prohibit the city of Bellingham from challenging initiatives and preventing them from appearing on the ballot.

Background: The city proposes to build an $8 million overwater walkway to connect Boulevard Park and the Cornwall Landfill area. The project has been held for two years because it will impact Lummi Nation treaty rights.

Background: The public has voiced strong and fairly consistent objections to the proposed waterfront plan, regarding public process, habitat protection, working-wage jobs, clean-up standards, parks, use of the ASB structure (former G-P treatment lagoon), and privatization of publicly-owned land.

Contact the candidates for more information and to learn how you can get involved in Bellingham’s political process.