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El Sobrante Civic Survey

A Study of the Feasibility
of Incorporation or Annexation
for the Community of
El Sobrante

Compiled by
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FOREWARD

This survey was made at the request of the El Sobrante Survey Association, an organization composed of members representing different clubs interested in the community's welfare. The Survey Association bore the cost of the survey from funds collected from the interested clubs.

The survey was conducted by two interns studying with the Core Foundation of San Francisco, a non-profit, public trust conducting research and education in public affairs.

This report will not recommend any course of action for the people of El Sobrante to follow. Rather, it will try to present the facts for and against the various alternatives in such a manner as to form a basis for public discussion from which the people will be able to come to a decision.

Limited space prevents the acknowledging of the many individuals that contributed to this report. However, the writers of this report would like to express gratitude to the city officials of Richmond, San Pablo, and El Cerrito; county officials of Martinez, the Contra Costa County Taxpayers Association; the Board of Equalization, the League of California Cities, the University of California, and to the citizens of El Sobrante.

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In the past El Sobrante has been a quiet community of homes nestled in a foothill valley, apart from the commercial-industrial bay area. Because this once rural valley is today in the very midst of the growing and rapidly changing community of West Contra Costa County, the El Sobrante of tomorrow will be a thickly settled, urban community. It is important that this growth and change be directed into an orderly, planned development so that the community will remain a nice place in which to live. To do this, El Sobrante must provide the following:

1. Types and levels of services, including planning, to meet present needs and provide for future developments.
2. A political structure through which the people can make decisions as to what the program of services should be.
3. An economic unit that will give the political structure enough financial ability to provide for needed services.

This report will consider three alternatives to the present unincorporated status to meet this three point program. They are:

1. Annexation to Richmond.
2. Annexation to San Pablo.
3. Incorporation as a sixth class city.

Before presenting these alternatives it is necessary to give the general background of the area and types of services presently in existence.

EL Sobrante and Neighboring Cities

The purpose of this map is to indicate the extent of Richmond and Pinole's annexations, what cities El Sobrante can annex to, and that the incorporated city will be limited in expansion on three sides.



AREA

The natural boundaries of the El Sobrante valley are formed by the ridges of the south and the north, by the dam at the east, and the freeway at the west end of the valley (see map). However, recent annexations by Richmond, limits the area for this report to the El Sobrante Fire District, excluding these annexations. This area, which constitutes three quarters of the valley, will be referred to as El Sobrante.

POPULATION

Because population figures do not exist for an unincorporated area, estimates have been made using the following accepted methods, (for details see Note A, Appendix.)

1. Post Office Drops	7,182	
2. P.G. & E. Meter Outlets	7,350	
3. Voter Registration	9,671	Average Figure 8,926
4. Elem. School Enrollment	11,405	
5. House Count	9,024	

Because the first four population figures vary widely, it was necessary to run a special survey for El Sobrante (see house count in Appendix Note A). Because this population figure of 9,024, the voter registration figure, and the general average all compare favorably, the population of El Sobrante is assumed to be 9,000.

FUTURE GROWTH

The entire valley has a potential population of 40,000 to 60,000, of which three quarters would live in the area designated El Sobrante. If the present growth in the bay area continues as is predicted, El Sobrante can count on continued and rapid growth.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The assessed valuation of the fire district less recent annexations is \$4,000,000 (see Note B). Thus the per capita assessed valuation is \$440 as compared to an average of \$900 for most cities in the state.

The commercial development consists of sixty-two businesses concentrated largely along Dam Road and Appian Way. The small size of these businesses is indicated by the fact that they employ a total of 188 employees (see Note C.). There is no industry in El Sobrante.

The rest of the land is either still grazing land, or residential subdivisions. The average home has a \$10,000 market value and a \$2,000 assessed valuation. The house count showed an average of 4.0 persons per home, which is indicative of large families.

The small commercial development, the lack of industry, the large family size, and the modest size homes are all reflected in the low per capita assessed valuation. In addition, the residential nature of the community means that the tax burden is largely on the individual home owner (commonly referred to as a "narrow tax base").

SERVICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are many services in El Sobrante and many agencies responsible for performing them. Changes in governmental structure will bring about changes in responsibility for providing certain services. The following chart represents the changes that would take place:

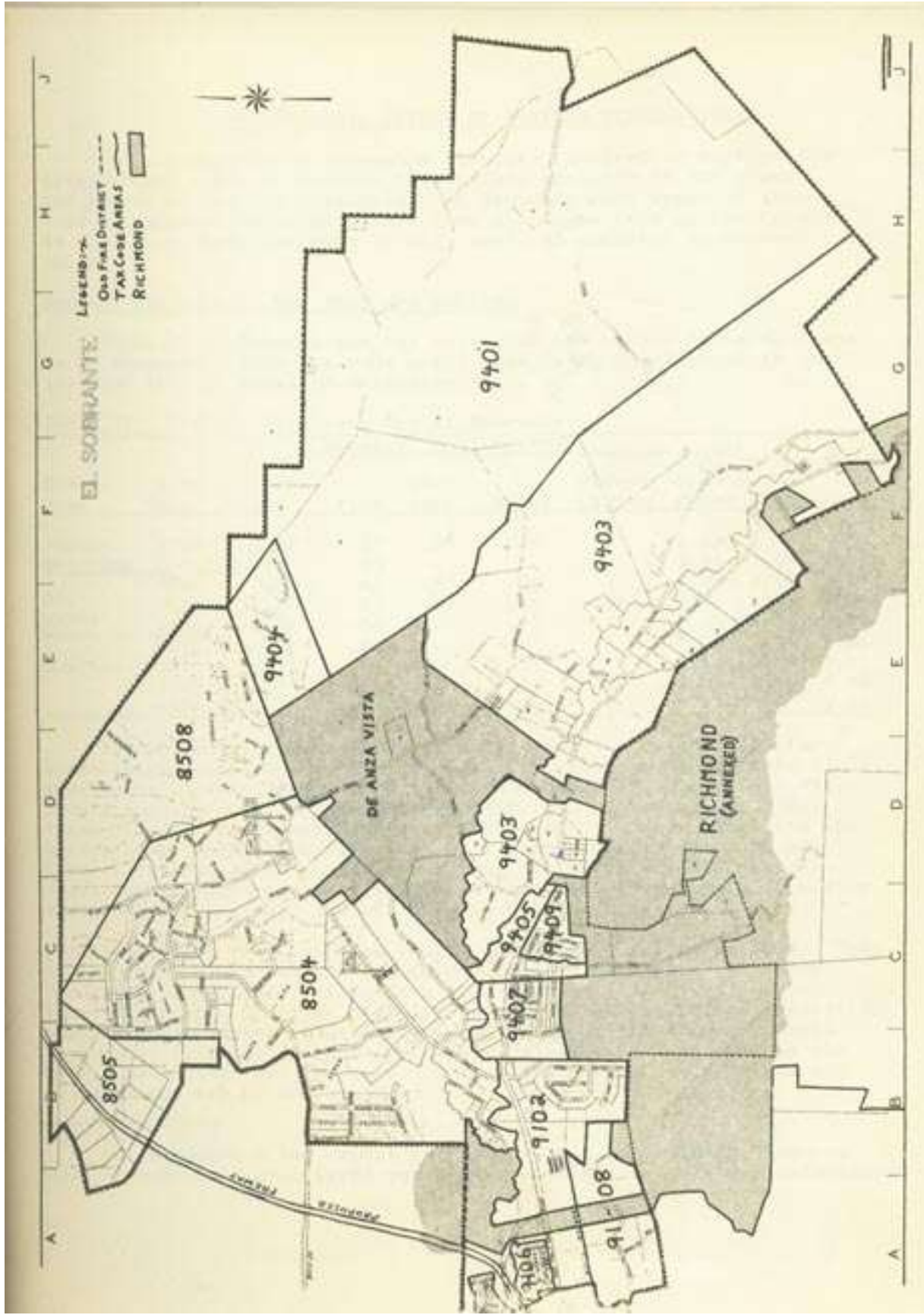
Chart I: Services and Effects of Change.

Service	Present Agency	Effects Of Change		
		Incorporate District Remains	Annex to Richmond District Does Not Remain	Annex to San Pablo District Remains
Fire	District	"	"	"
Water	"	"	"	"
Flood Control	"	"	"	"
Hospital	"	"	"	"
Sanitation	"	"	"	"
County School	"	"	"	"
Junior College	"	"	"	"
Rich. High School	"	"	"	"
Elementary School	"	"	Optional	Optional
Street Lighting	"	City Assumes	City Assumes	City Assumes
Police	County	"	"	"
Road Maintenance	"	"	"	"
Planning	"	"	"	"
Administration	"	"	"	"
Bldg. Inspection	"	"	"	"
County Library	"	County	"	County
Calif. Hwy. Patrol	State	City Assumes	"	City Assumes
Electricity	P. G. E.	Unaffected	Unaffected	Unaffected
Garbage	Priv. Co.	"	"	"

Certain service districts will remain in effect regardless of the changes under consideration. These are indicated by "District Remains" in Table I. Other services presently performed by the county or by the state will be taken over by the city government--indicated by "City Assumes". "Optional" in the case of the elementary school district means that the part of an existing school district which is within an annexed portion of land may elect to join the school district of the new city at the time of annexation.

Various services, whose costs must be provided by the city under incorporation, can be contracted out to the county or private individuals thus saving duplication of administrative costs. These could include police, road maintenance, building inspection and assessment and collection of taxes.

The changes in services presented here will be evaluated in the next two sections in terms of changes in costs and levels of service under the various alternatives as compared to present services and costs.



It is necessary to determine the costs involved in each of the alternatives outlined because they relate directly to the types and levels of service available. In deciding what types of services El Sobrante needs and where they will come from in the future, it is nice to know how much it will cost, as compared to present costs.

Present Tax Rates - How They are Derived

Table II represents the tax rates for the twelve tax code areas in El Sobrante. (See tax code map.) Tax rates are figured in dollars per \$100 of assessed valuation.¹

Table II: Present Tax Rates For El Sobrante.

School Area	Code Area	Service Districts					Area Wide Rates	County Rates	Total Tax Rate
		Elementary	Fire	Sanitary	Water	Street Lights			
Pinole	8504	1.81	.65	.85	.25	-	2.43	2.59	8.58
Hercules	8505,08	1.81	.65	-	-	-	2.43	2.59	7.48
	9102	1.84	.65	.85	.25	-	2.43	2.59	8.61
San Pablo	9106	1.84	.65	.85	.25	.59	2.43	2.59	9.20
	9108	1.84	.65	-	.25	-	2.43	2.59	7.76
	9401,04	1.93	.65	-	-	-	2.43	2.59	7.60
Sheldon	9403	1.93	.65	-	.25	-	2.43	2.59	7.85
	9405,07	1.93	.65	.85	.25	-	2.43	2.59	8.70
	9409	1.93	.65	.85	.25	.41	2.43	2.59	9.11

The columns designated "Service Districts" show the cost for specific services performed by special districts in El Sobrante (Area Wide Rates include such things as flood control .02, hospital .212, county schools .003, junior college .342, and high school 1.852). These district taxes may change as future needs change, but with the exception of street lighting they will all remain in force in one form or another under either annexation or incorporation. Street lighting districts are abolished when the area becomes part of a city and the costs are paid out of the general fund city tax.

The county rate supplies taxes for the county general fund. This tax is paid by everyone in the county even if he resides in a city. The county government exists as a legal subdivision of the state. However, it also provides city-like services such as police protection and road maintenance to unincorporated areas of the county. While the county tax rate continues, these services are taken over by the city. To offset this, certain taxes in the form of subventions are given to the city by the state.

1. Throughout the report for purposes of convenience, figures such as 1.81 will mean \$1.81 per hundred dollars of assessed valuation.

In addition to the county and district tax rates, incorporation or annexation would mean the paying of an additional city tax. In order to determine the city tax rate for incorporation the following budget has been prepared. This city tax rate is determined by the difference of expenditure over income. The city's expenditures which are not made up from subventions or other sources of income which accrue to a city, will be offset by a general city property tax.

The figures in the budget are based on two main sources:

1. Comparison with cities of similar population and assessed valuation (see note D) including the detailed breakdown of the 1954-55 Campbell budget.
2. Estimates made by various government officials and private individuals who are familiar with the local needs and problems of El Sobrante.

Table III: Proposed Budget

Proposed Expenditures

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>Administration</u>			
City Clerk-Administrator	\$6,000		City clerk appointed by council. Salary and sec'y. reflects need for high caliber administrator. Additional costs based on Campbell.
Deputy City Clerk - Sec'y.	3,000		
Office Equipment	500		
Supplies and Utilities	2,500		
Printing	1,000		
Misc.-Rent, Janitorial	2,000		
Elections	500		
Member, League of Cal. Cities	500		
		\$16,000	
<u>Finance</u>			
Auditor-Treasurer	2,000		Appointed part time position. Special audit by outside agency.
Special audit (bi-annually)	250		
Tax Collection (County)	50		
		2,300	
<u>Legal</u>			
City Attorney	3,600		Appointed, part time position.
Stenography, printing, misc.	1,000		
		4,600	
<u>Planning</u>			
Consultant	3,000		First years expenditure actually goes for Master Plan.
Misc. Surveys	1,500		
Planning Fund	2,000		
		6,500	

Table III: Proposed Budget (Continued)

Proposed Expenditures (Continued)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>Public Works</u>			
Engineering, fees & surveys	5,000		Engineer consultant retained. Road work done on contract basis with county or private firm. (See appendix note E.)
Maintenance	30,000		
Construction	15,000	50,000	
<u>Street Lighting</u>		7,500	Assumes costs for existing lights plus 100 additional.
<u>Police</u>			
Five Men (\$4,200)	21,000		Allows for one man on 24 hour patrol. Could be locally run or contracted with county.
Retirement	2,500		
Vacation Relief	700		
1 Car - equipped	3,000		
Maint.-gas, tires, etc.	2,500		
Miscellaneous	1,000		
Crossing Guards	1,300	32,000	
<u>Insurance, Soc. Sec., Pensions</u>		2,000	
<u>Unappropriated Reserve Fund</u>		10,000	Reserves based on Campbell figures.
<u>Building Fund</u>		9,000	
<u>Grand Total</u>		\$140,000	

Proposed Income:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>Subventions</u>			
Gas Tax (\$2.95 x 9,670)	\$28,527		For purposes of subventions official registrar of voter's population figures used. (Liquor-see note F.)
Motor Vehicle (4.52 x 9,670)	43,703		
Liquor License	2,634	\$74,864	
<u>Fines and Forfeitures</u>		8,000	Approx. of local court.
<u>Franchises</u>		3,000	One-half of San Pablo.
<u>Licenses & Permits</u>			
Business	1,700		\$25 per business, plus \$1 per employee. (See Note C.)
Building Inspection	2,000		
Misc.-Dog, Bicycle	300	4,000	
<u>Sales Tax</u>		10,000	80% of State Board of Equalization's figures.
<u>Grand Total</u>		\$99,864	

Property Tax Necessary:

Expenditure	\$140,000	\$40,136 (Income needed)	= 1.00
Income	99,864	\$40,000 (Assessed value in	
Difference	\$ 40,136	\$100)	
Property Tax	\$1.00	Because of the legal limit of	
Special Recreation Fund	.25	\$1.00, it was necessary to	
Total Tax Rate	\$1.25	figure recreation as a special	
		fund. It will allow \$10,000	
		for recreation.	

This means that incorporation will add a tax rate of \$1.25 above the existing rates for all code areas.

Changes in Tax Rates Under Various Alternatives.

Because each alternative involves becoming part of a city, the general effect will be to increase the tax rates above the present unincorporated levels. These changes will not be uniform for all of El Sobrante as the area is broken into 12 different taxing areas. (See Tax Code Map.) Table IV shows the type of changes taking place for code area 8504, which is used here for purposes of illustrating this change. Exact changes for all areas will be found in the appendix. (See Note G.)

Table IV: Changes in Rates For Code Area 8504.^d

Alternative	Service Districts				Area Wide Rates	County Rate	Adjust- ed City Tax	New Tax Rate
	Elemen- tary	Fire	Sani- tary	Water				
Present Unincorporated Status	1.81	.65	.85	.25	2.43	2.59	-	8.58
Annexation To Richmond	1.81	-	.85	.25	2.43	2.51 ^c	2.13 ^b	9.98
Annexation To Richmond and Schools	1.42 ^a	-	.85	.25	2.43	2.51 ^c	2.13 ^b	9.59
Annexation to San Pablo	1.81	.65	.85	.25	2.43	2.59	1.30	9.88
Incorporation	1.81	.65	.85	.25	2.43	2.59	1.25	9.83

Changes:

- a. Annexation to Richmond with the schools means a new lower tax rate for schools.
- b. The fire district taxes are eliminated under annexation to Richmond, however the cost is merely transferred to the city tax rate. This accounts for the lower city tax rates for San Pablo and Incorporation.
- c. The county rate is lowered by .08 under Richmond because of the elimination of the library tax.
- d. Lighting district taxes are eliminated. This applies only to codes 9106 and 9409.

Comparison of Total Tax Rates for All Code Areas in El Sobrante

In order to determine the financial feasibility of the various alternatives information has been gathered which will show the total of all tax rates for all the code areas in El Sobrante. Because this information is rather bulky in nature it has been placed in the appendix (see Note G). However Table V below shows the comparison in terms of total tax rates for each of the alternatives and for every possible tax code area in El Sobrante. For better illustration Table VI compares the difference in these rates for three selected areas.

Table V: Comparison of Total Tax Rates

Code Area	Present	Annexation			
	Tax Rates	Annexation to Richmond	to Richmond and Schools	Annexation to San Pablo	Incorporation
*8504	8.58	9.98	9.59	9.88	9.83
8505,08	7.48	8.88	8.48	8.79	9.74
*9102	8.61	10.00	9.55	9.90	9.85
9106	9.20	10.00	9.55	9.90	9.85
9108	7.76	9.15	8.70	9.06	9.01
9401,04	7.60	9.00	8.32	8.91	8.86
9403	7.85	9.25	8.57	9.16	9.11
9405,07	8.70	10.10	9.42	10.00	9.95
*9409	9.11	10.10	9.42	10.00	9.95

Table VI: Comparisons for Codes 8504, 9102, and 9409

Alternative	8504 Pinole-Hercules		9102 San Pablo		9409 Sheldon	
	Tax	Diff.	Tax	Diff.	Tax	Diff.
Present Rates	8.58	-	8.61	-	9.11	-
Annex. To Richmond	9.98	1.40	10.00	1.39	10.10	.99
Annex. To Richmond & Schools	9.59	1.01	9.55	.94	9.42	.31
Annex. To San Pablo	9.88	1.30	9.90	1.29	10.00	.89
Incorporate	9.83	1.25	9.85	1.24	9.95	.84

The median increase for all code areas would be as follows:

Annex to Richmond	1.40
Annex to Richmond and Schools	1.00
Annex to San Pablo	1.30
Incorporate	1.25

However, the increases in tax code 9409 (and 9106) are lower because they are partially compensated for by the loss of the lighting district tax.

The above two tables show that the increases in tax rates for incorporation, annexation to San Pablo and annexation to Richmond vary by only \$.15 for any code area. However annexation to Richmond including the school districts represents a substantial savings. This is borne out in the fact that Richmond elementary school districts enjoy a tax of 1.36 as compared to 1.84 average in El Sobrante.

The decision to annex the school districts is a complicated one. Annexation acceptance depends on the decision of the Richmond City council; Annexation acceptance of the school takes the additional approval of the School Board. However the people of El Sobrante can make annexation of the territory contingent on annexation of the school districts, if they so desire, by inclusion of it in the annexation petitions.

Reflection of Tax Rates in Individual Tax Bills

To better reflect costs to the individual taxpayer the following chart has been drawn up to show total yearly costs under each alternative for representative individuals. For purpose of this report we have assumed that Mr. Black, a veteran, does not have a veteran's exemption.

Table VII. Total Annual Taxes for each Alternative²

Home of Roger Clellan 1042 Allview	Market value = \$10,750 Assessed value = 2,320	Tax Code Area 8504 Less \$1,000 Veterans Exemption = \$1,320			
<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Property Tax</u>	<u>Gas Bill</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Diff.</u>	
Present Status	113	48	161	--	
Richmond with Schools	126	38	164	+3	
Richmond without Schools	132	38	170	+9	
San Pablo	130	38	168	+7	
Incorporation	130	40	170	+9	
Home of Bruce Black 4582 Canyon Road	Market value = \$9,300 Assessed value = \$1,980	Tax Code Area 9409 Without Vets. Exempt.			
Present Status	180	87	267	--	
Richmond with Schools	187	83	270	+3	
Richmond without Schools	200	83	283	+16	
San Pablo	198	83	281	+14	
Incorporation	198	85	283	+16	
The Park Theatre On Dam Road	Market value = \$110,000 Assessed value = \$17,500	Tax Code Area 9102			
<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Prop. Tax</u>	<u>Gas Bill</u>	<u>Bus. Lic.</u>	<u>Pri. Pol.</u>	<u>Tot. Dif.</u>
Present Status	1,511	300	---	180	1,991 ---
Richmond with Schools	1,671	279	34	---	1,984 -7
Richmond without Schools	1,750	279	34	---	2,063 +72
San Pablo	1,733	279	25	---	2,036 +45
Incorporation	1,724	298	34	---	2,056 +65

2. The chart does not show possible savings in electric rates or fire insurance rates, because these do not come as a direct result of incorporation or annexation. Electric rates are based on density of population, and fire insurance rates depend on improvements in the area.

SERVICES UNDER THE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES

The services presented here are based on what El Sobrante could realistically expect from the various alternatives considering certain limitations.

The cost for services under incorporation were based on the assumption that the new city could provide a moderate level of service, high enough to prevent the decline of property values.

The services that would be provided by Richmond and San Pablo must be limited by the fact that no city will expand complete services to a new area immediately, but will increase them over a period of time.

SANITATION

The San Pablo Sanitary District will continue to give service to El Sobrante, and will continue to exist as a separate taxing district, regardless of incorporation or annexation to San Pablo or Richmond. The district is in good financial condition to meet expansion without increasing the tax rate.

Richmond, whose sanitary district is in a different watershed, has to build a four million dollar treatment plant. Because El Sobrante is paying for its own service, it is important that it not pay for this coming cost thru the Richmond general tax rate.

SCHOOLS

Because El Sobrante is a growing community, and has a large family size, it will face a continued problem in financing an expanding school program. This problem could be better met by sharing Richmond's wide, industrial, tax base.

FIRE PROTECTION

El Sobrante presently receives protection from the El Sobrante Fire District. The fire insurance rating is six. Under incorporation the fire district will continue to serve as a separate taxing district. However, city ordinances and restrictions regarding fire, and the fact that the fire district is getting two additional full time men, could bring the fire rating down to five. A lower rating means that people pay less for fire insurance. Under annexation to San Pablo this same situation will hold true.

Under annexation to Richmond, the fire district could continue on a contractual basis, or it could become part of the Richmond fire department. In either case, the fire rating should come down to five, with minimum improvements.

The fire rating can be lowered to four, San Pablo's rate, by installing more hydrants and a telegraphic alarm system. An additional fire house, and a fully staffed department instead of volunteers could bring the fire rating down to three, Richmond's rate.

FIRE PROTECTION (Continued)

Under incorporation or annexation to San Pablo a future rate of four could be expected but would mean a higher fire district tax rate. Under annexation to Richmond, El Sobrante in paying the city tax, will in effect pay the same amount for fire protection as the rest of Richmond. Therefore, El Sobrante would have the right to expect a more equitable service, say one that would bring a fire rating of four soon after annexation.

RECREATION

Recreational programs in both Richmond and San Pablo are closely linked with school facilities. These programs are geared to all age groups, and include such things as playground activity, folk dancing, arts and crafts, and ceramics. These programs are more complete than the one planned for in the incorporation budget.

LIBRARY

Under annexation to Richmond, El Sobrante will have available the new civic center library and a book-mobile service. The present county service will continue under annexation to San Pablo, or Incorporation.

POLICE PROTECTION

El Sobrante receives police protection from three sources.

1. The Highway Patrol provides occasional traffic patrol.
2. The county sheriff's department provides investigative and patrol service on a twenty-four hour basis. The one car provided however covers an area much larger than El Sobrante and can spend only a portion of its time in El Sobrante.
3. The Coast County Police Patrol, a private concern, provides protection to business establishments on a contractual basis.

The incorporation budget calls for a five man police force which will improve this situation. This will provide one man on duty on a twenty-four hour basis. This would be one policeman per 2,000 population.

Richmond's 145 man police department, and San Pablo's 24 man department both furnish police protection at the rate of 1.5 man to one thousand population. This is a high level of service when compared to the national average of one man per thousand population.

While Richmond can offer such additional services as a juvenile bureau and detective work, San Pablo would be able to get additional men into the area more quickly in cases of emergency.

STREET LIGHTING

At present street lighting in El Sobrante consists of ten lights maintained by the County, and the two small lighting districts of Serpa Tract and Canyon Park. The incorporation budget provides for maintaining these lights and the addition of approximately a hundred more.

Both Richmond and San Pablo maintain extensive street lighting systems, and both would assume responsibility for El Sobrante's lights in case of annexation. Additional lights would be provided out of the general fund as money become available and as the city council feels they are necessary.

PUBLIC WORKS

El Sobrante's 28.8 miles of roads are in fair condition. The incorporation budget allows for \$50,000 annually to maintain these roads at present standards.

Both Richmond and San Pablo under annexation would assume responsibility for these roads. One advantage of annexation to Richmond is that if the \$50,000 estimate should be low, Richmond would be better able to meet the problem because the additional expenses would be spread over a wider tax base.

Curves, gutters, and sidewalks are usually not financed by cities, but are put in by the people through a special neighborhood tax assessment.

PLANNING

Planning for El Sobrante is done by the county planning department. This department is understaffed and is spending most of its energies in planning for the central county area where the largest need is felt to exist. This means that no master plan exists for El Sobrante, and therefore that existing zoning regulations have no logical pattern. For this reason, and because there is no one to represent El Sobrante's interests before planning commission hearings, present zoning fails to protect the community, and fails to provide for future needs.

This is one field where decisions are being made now that will effect El Sobrante's future development. At present, Dam Road, which is zoned commercial, is being made into a four lane highway. No attempt is being made to prevent this strip from becoming like San Pablo Avenue - half business district and half truck route. In the case of subdivisions, playgrounds and shopping areas need not be provided for, and homes can be built on small lots that destroy the spacious, rural atmosphere of the valley.

For these reasons it is necessary that planning be done for El Sobrante, and that it be done by an agency responsive to the community. Fortunately the three alternatives provide for adequate planning at the local level.

The services planned for under the incorporation budget are in general at a lower level than in the annexation alternatives. However, assuming that the budget for any one service is not cut, and a large amount of discretion is used, these services should be adequate for the needs of the community.

These services have been planned as a balanced program. The five man police force is small for the area and population. However, the expenditure for street lights will mean that the traffic problem at night, especially as regards pedestrians, won't be as serious, and a lighted neighborhood also discourages crime. A master plan and strict zoning restrictions can encourage the establishment of business centers in place of strip commercial development. This means fewer traffic problems, and easier patrolling of business establishments.

Street maintenance is a big cost to the city. But the need for maintenance can be cut in several ways. Heavy trucks can be prohibited from traveling on residential roads. Subdividers can be required to put in wide streets that meet high construction standards.

The expense for additional street lights in future subdivisions can be cut in half by requiring the subdividers to install the lights and deed them to the city.

The recreational program will be limited primarily to school age children, and will be run in conjunction with school facilities. If the school districts participate financially, and if various clubs participate, the program could be expanded to include all ages. A recreation program again lightens the police load by keeping boys busy and out of trouble.

Planning, strict zoning enforcement and building inspection are the key to the balanced program. They will make the city more economical to run by making the most efficient use of available land and by insuring future property values. This cannot be done merely by adopting a master plan but also depends on community support of the planning commission to insure proper enforcement.

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is somewhat of a natural phenomenon for rural areas not to want city type government and to distrust neighboring cities. Growth and change however are forcing these areas to incorporate or annex.

The problem therefore is not only what services at what costs will come from the various alternatives, but also what type of governmental structure is feasible in terms of identifying with and trusting in that government. It is important to consider what the political outlook is for each of the alternatives.

Incorporation

The identity and unity of El Sobrante would be reinforced by superimposing a new political entity - that of a city - over the natural community feeling already in existence. The formation of a city would possibly form the rallying point for the people of El Sobrante to approach jointly and in force many of the problems facing them. If this should happen, an effective voice would automatically follow. However, if incorporation is seen as merely a protective device against the encroachment of other cities, then unity and participation of the people may never be realized. A city government does not necessarily bring the people closer to their problems or to the government.

Annexation to Richmond

Richmond and El Sobrante are both part of the larger community of West Contra Costa County. They are both served by the same industrial developments and should if possible benefit from them.

Annexing to Richmond would mean that El Sobrante would lose its identity as a separate community and would become a neighborhood of a larger city. It would also mean that people in El Sobrante would have less direct control over their own affairs, in return for which El Sobrante would have a voice in area wide affairs.

Annexation to San Pablo

San Pablo is geographically closer to El Sobrante than is Richmond. The two communities have a sanitary district, a judgeship, and a school district in common.

This would be a logical compromise in political self rule as El Sobrante is already half the size of San Pablo, and in the future can expect to grow larger than San Pablo. Because of San Pablo's uncertain political structure, it will be necessary for El Sobrante to take a dominant role in government, as it did in the sanitary district.

Richmond-San Pablo Annexations

Richmond and San Pablo annexations are being contested in court. At present, El Sobrante cannot annex to San Pablo, and incorporation cannot include De Anza Vista or Serpa Tract (see map). However, if the court decision goes against Richmond, then these alternatives are possible.

Richmond-San Pablo Annexations (Continued)

If the De Anza Tract and the south ridge remain a part of Richmond, annexation to Richmond should be considered carefully from the standpoint of community unity. Incorporation will mean that a third of the valley's population will be using El Sobrante's roads, profit by El Sobrante's planning, and receive El Sobrante police protection, but will not be participating in government or paying taxes.

Need For An Organized Community

A political voice is dependent as much on the ability of the community to organize as on the government it belongs to. A community can organize and present its ideas more effectively to a small city government, but an organized community can also be effective in large cities, or even in the county structure of government. A good example of this is Moraga's organized efforts to obtain an immediate master plan from the county planning commission.

SUMMARY

The decision that El Sobrante must make will have to be considered in terms of the three requirements set forth in the introduction:

1. A program of services.
2. A political structure through which people can gain needed services.
3. An economic unit that will give the political structure ability to furnish the needed services.

It is obvious that no one alternative ideally meets all three requirements. The decision is not clear cut, and the people of El Sobrante will have to compromise one requirements for another.

Incorporation

Incorporation as a feasible plan is based on certain assumptions. First, that the budget must be adopted in its entirety to allow for a balanced program. Secondly, that while minimum but adequate services will be supplied to meet present needs, there is very little possibility of any large scale park, recreation or redevelopment program if future needs should demand them. Thirdly, there must be adequate leadership available to run an economical government. This leadership must be available for the city council, the city planning commission and mostly as interested citizens willing to support the city's programs.

Incorporation will provide a political structure more responsive to the people's wishes than the other alternatives. The sacrifice involved will be in a danger of long range economic instability because the new city would have to depend on a narrow tax base for its property tax.

Annexation to Richmond

El Sobrante would gain the services of an established and experienced city administration. This would mean that certain services would be immediately forthcoming. The extent of services that can be offered El Sobrante would be limited by the fact that Richmond is expanding in many areas, all of which need some services. The public housing redevelopment and industrial expansion program are occupying the immediate attention of Richmond officials. However, it can be argued that El Sobrante should share in these costs, for the ultimate benefits of these projects would come to the whole area.

As Richmond solves these present problems more varied services would be available in El Sobrante, probably at a higher level than the incorporated city could economically afford. This is due to the fact that Richmond's present and potential industrial development represents a healthier economic situation than either incorporation or annexing to San Pablo could provide.

However, there seems to exist a distrust on the part of many people in El Sobrante for the Richmond city government. Therefore, those services which seem immediately vital to El Sobrante should be discussed with Richmond before annexation. One area that certainly should be given serious consideration is the inclusion of the school districts in the annexation proceedings.

San Pablo Annexation

Annexation to San Pablo represents a compromise in the areas of political representation, because of the closeness of population size of the two areas. Service wise San Pablo can offer the same services as incorporation, with the additional advantage of an established government to perform them. However, the uncertain political situation in San Pablo and the ability of El Sobrante to change it after annexation is a problem to be considered in this alternative.

Other Alternatives

1. Pinole

Annexation to Pinole is not considered by this report because it provides no advantages in cost or services over incorporation. Pinole does not consider annexation favorably because El Sobrante, with a larger population, would control the city council.

2. Extended Service Districts

It is possible to get additional services in an unincorporated area for an additional cost. El Sobrante could get adequate planning from the county and other extra services under the County Service Act. But control of these services would remain with the board of supervisors. Or El Sobrante could get local control of services under the Community Services Act, with the exception of planning. Under both methods El Sobrante would have to increase its taxes to the incorporation level, and still would not receive state subvention money. More important, El Sobrante would not be protected from piece meal annexation. Therefore, these alternatives would not protect the unity of the community.

Status Quo

Decisions will continue to be made for El Sobrante, if not by El Sobrante.

While incorporation of unincorporated land can not continue indefinitely, people will want services, and piece meal annexation will continue as neighborhoods vote themselves into cities. In this respect, status quo means eventual annexation to one city or another, usually after a lack of planning has spoiled the general appearance of the community. Therefore, the decision to annex or incorporate should be made now while the community is intact. El Sobrante must decide now, while there is still freedom of decision and time to plan for a bright future.

APPENDIX

Note A: Population Estimates -- Method of Calculation

1. Post Office Stops. The San Pablo Post Office counts 2,053 in El Sobrante. The factor of 3.5 is used by postal officials although it is felt to be low considering the trend toward large families in this area.

$$2,052 \times 3.5 = 7,182$$

2. Pacific Gas and Electric Outlets. The P.G. & E. office at Rodeo is responsible for the motor count. Again, the factor of 3.5 is considered low.

$$2,100 \times 3.5 = 7,350$$

3. Voter Registration. This particular estimate is significant because it is used by the State in determining subventions from the gas tax and motor vehicle in lieu funds. The estimate is based on a factor of 3 times the average of the voters registered prior to November 2, 1954 and those registered on February 25, 1955. All figures are from the Registrar of Voters, Contra Costa County.

Registered voters prior to Nov. 2, 1954	=	3,587
Registered voters as of Feb. 25, 1955	=	<u>2,862</u>
Average		$6,447 \div 2 = 3,223.5$

$$\text{Pop.} = 3,223.5 \times 3.0 = 9,671$$

4. Elementary School Enrollment. Mr. Carl M. Frisen, research technician for Population Studies of the State Department of Finance, submits a factor of 7.3 (assuming 13.7% of the population is enrolled in the 1st to 8th grades) times the school enrollment, grades 1 to 8 inclusive. The figures below are for those students actually living in the fire district. This figure is felt to be high.

El Sobrante No. 1 (1-3 grades)	353
El Sobrante No. 2 (1-4 grades)	216
Pinole (5-8 grades)	348
Sheldon (1-6 grades)	282
Rancho (1-6 grades)	196
Walter Helm (7-8 grades)	<u>167</u>
Total	$1,562 \times 7.3 = 11,403$

5. House Count - Family Size. This method is based on counting all dwellings in the area, determining the average size family by taking an actual sampling, and then taking the product of these two figures.

The house count, taken by the Volunteer Fire Department, excludes the De Anza sub division.

Pinole-Hercules School District	1,316	plus	9	under	construc-
Sheldon	"	"	574	"	13
San Pablo	"	"	344	"	0
Total	=	<u>2,234</u>	+	<u>22</u>	= 2,256

Appendix (Continued)Note A, Part 5 (Continued)

Family factor was derived as follows:

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>No of Houses Sampled</u>	<u>Total No. of People</u>
Serpa Tract	10	35
La Colina	10	37
Canyon Park	10	38
Upper Dam Road & Vicinity	10	32
Garden Lane & Vicinity	10	35
Appian Way & Santa Rita Rd.	10	48
Around El Sobrante No. 1	20	91
South of Hill Top Road	10	50
Upper El Sobrante Road	10	42
	<u>100</u>	<u>408</u>

$408 \div 100 = 4.08$. Thus 4.0 will be used as the house factor.

$$4.0 \times 2,256 = 9,024$$

Note B: Assessed Valuation of Fire District Less Recent Annexation.

ASSESSED VALUATION OF EL SOBRANTE

<u>Code</u>	<u>Land</u>	<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Personal Property</u>	<u>Exemption</u>	<u>Assessed Value</u>
8504	316250	1779760	132830	414985	1813855
8505	19010	11190	800	2000	290000
8506	3710	19960	2570	3000	23240
8508	58360	191160	13510	32405	230625
8511	2770	17450	940	5000	16160
9102	113580	469000	95085	112610	565055
9106 (Doubt- ful)	11720	112500	3900	48170	79950
9108 (Part- ially out)	17180	20080	1860	3000	36120
9111 (Out)	6050	67600	2440	22850	53240
9401	50160	10600	37650	-----	98410
9403	190080	442610	76870	41830	667730
9404	9920	7330	1730	3230	16250
9405 (Partly out)	61010	133310	20620	22050	192890
9407	34020	203420	11610	59000	190050
9408 (Out)	14640	-----	2160	-----	16800
9409	20060	202710	4650	68785	158635
	928520	3689180	409225	838915	4188010
Total assessed value of Fire District					4,188,010
Less Recent Annexations					<u>188,010</u>
					4,000,000

Note C: Number of Businesses and Employees in El Sobrante by Types of Establishments.

<u>Type</u>	<u>No. of Businesses</u>	<u>No. of Employees</u>
Service Station	7	22
Garage	3	6
Bar, Restaurant, & Fountain	13	38
Cleaner and Laundry	3	19
Drug	2	18
Retail Food	8	32
Hardware, Paint, Lumber	4	7
Variety	3	7
Shoe Repair & Retail	2	3
Barber and Beauty	4	7
Real Estate	2	3
Feed	2	4
Others	<u>2</u>	<u>22</u>
Totals	62	188

Note D: Comparison City Statistics (Taken from State Controllers
Financial Transactions of Cities, 1952-1953).

NOTE D
COMPARISON CITIES 1952-53 FIGURES

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	<u>Delano</u>	<u>Benicia</u>	<u>Barstow</u>	<u>La Habra</u>	<u>(1954) Campbell</u>
<u>I CHARACTERISTICS</u>					
Population	10,000	8,000	7,707	9,500	7,600
Assessed Valuation (Mill)	7.064	5.703	4.758	5.963	5.778
Per Capita Valuation	706	715	615	612	760
Adj. City Tax Rate	1.37	2.76	1.25	1.40	---
<u>II INCOME</u>					
Subventions	91,357-	66,491-	76,762-	55,169-	47,907-
Fines & Forfeitures	23,600-	16,612-	19,481-	14,392-	10,190-
Franchises	3,818-	1,990-	4,298-	3,905-	3,153-
Licenses & Permits					
Business	39,065-	13,341-	29,328-	10,660-	7,224-
Others	2,231-	2,689-	1,354-	7,752-	2,588-
Sales Tax	56,427-	13,792-	53,171-	15,039-	
Property Tax	75,958-	72,869-	58,630-	84,937-	27,803-
Total	292,456-	187,784-	243,024-	191,854-	98,865-
All Income Total	479,215.78	234,844.41	271,069.52	342,530.54	131,293-
<u>III EXPENDITURES</u>					
Administration	25,387-	12,064-	11,018-	18,655-	13,245-
Finance	9,722-	6,111-	4,212-	655-	1,116-
Legal	2,537-	4,445-	2,400-	1,631-	4,326-
Planning	1,412-	32-	4,406-	7,788-	2,595-
Public Works	52,847-	45,661-	60,478-	30,461-	31,944-
Street Lighting	8,336-	7,709-	7,759-	11,439-	-----
Police	62,637-	49,202-	71,111-	35,110-	23,735-
Insurance-Soc.Sec.	6,373-	8,140-	2,531-	4,293-	-----
Reserve Funds	22,258-	-----	26,089-	5,316-	27,000-
Outlays					
Recreation	8,870-	14,791-	-----	9,017-	-----
Total	200,379-	148,155-	190,004-	124,365-	103,961-
All Expenditures					
Total	392,567.66	220,743.88	277,720.83	228,829.57	-----

The figures for the following chart were obtained from the County Road Commission. They are based on cost of work done in the last two years on roads, or portions of roads in El Sobrante. The chart does NOT include the costs of roads in De Anza.

Construction Estimate

Code No.	Name Of Road	Total Miles	Miles In Fire Dist.	% Of Work Done In Dist.	Total	Fire	Total	Fire
					Cost '52-'53	Dist. Share	Cost '53-'54	Dist. Share
<u>Primary Roads</u>								
0871	Road 20	1.15	.25	.208	2,922	608		
0961	Dam Road	16.65	3.73	.230			216	50
1271	Appian Way	2.95	1.97	.205	32,978	6,760		
1461	Castro Rd.	2.99	2.87	.957				
0873	Hill Top Drive	3.05	1.31	.430			176	76
<u>Secondary Roads</u>								
1373	May Rd.	.77	.28	.364	2,730	994	20,494	7,452
1374	Valley View	1.74	.89	.511			2,257	1,153
1473	La Honda	.38	.38	1.000				
<u>Road Networks</u>								
1075	Serpa Tract	5.03	.45	.089			570	51
1265	Rds. So. of Dam Rd.	3.12	3.12	1.000	18,594	18,594	660	660
1375	About Hill Top	10.37	10.37	1.000	815	815		
1561	Sherwood Forest							
0965	Ramsay Ct.	2.27	.35					
Totals			28.18			27,771		9,442

Combined Total = \$37,213 ÷ 2 years = \$18,607 average yearly construction cost.

Maintenance Estimate

In the fiscal year 1953-1954 it cost the County \$1168 per mile to maintain roads.

\$1168/mile X 28.18 (total miles in district) = \$32,904 to maintain roads in El Sobrante.

Total yearly costs to County \$32,904 + \$18,607 = \$51,511.

NOTE F: Subventions From Liquor Licenses
 (Based on Total of Licenses Issued in Area.)

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<u>Type of License</u>	<u>License Fee</u>	<u>No. Of Licenses</u>	<u>Total</u>
On Sale General	\$332.50 per year	4	\$1,330.00
Off Sale General (Average)*	\$275.00 " "	3	825.00
On Sale Beer	\$ 27.50 " "	3	82.50
On Sale Beer & Wine	\$ 82.50 " "	4	330.00
Off Sale Beer & Wine	\$ 11.00 " "	6	66.00
*Based on sales.			\$2,633.50

Total Subventions = \$2,633.50

NOTE G: Changes in Tax Rates Under The Various Alternatives
 For All Code Areas.

Annexation To Richmond

Below is a detached chart showing tax rates for all code areas in El Sobrante as they would exist if annexed to Richmond. (Based on 1953-1954 figures.)

Code	Elementary	¹ Fire	Sanitary	Water	² Street Lights	Area Wide Rates	³ County Rate	Ad-justed City Tax	⁴ New Tax Rate
8504	1,814	----	.846	.25	-----	2.429	2.509	2.128	9.976
8505 & 08	1,814	----	----	---	-----	"	"	"	8.880
9102	1,835	----	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.997
9106	1,835	----	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.997
9108	1,835	----	----	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.151
9401 & 04	1,933	----	----	---	-----	"	"	"	8.999
9403	1,933	----	----	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.249
9405 & 07	1,933	----	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	10.095
9409	1,933	----	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	10.095

1. The Fire District may continue to serve, but district taxes are assumed by Richmond.
2. The lighting districts will be abolished and Richmond will assume the cost. This effects 9106 and 9409.
3. The county rate is .08 lower because Richmond finances its own library.
4. The city tax rate of 2.128 is added.

The following table shows the savings in each school districts tax rate, if the school districts should be included in the annexation. Each school district in El Sobrante would continue to pay its own outstanding bonded indebted tax rate, but would get the Richmond Elementary tax rate less its outstanding bonds. The savings would be approximate as indicated in the last column (based on 1953-54 figures.).

School District	Tax	Bonds	Total	New Rich. Tax & Bonds	Diff.
Richmond Elemen.	1.062	.294	1.356	---	---
Pinole-Hercules	1.461	.353	1.814	1.415	-.399
San Pablo	1.513	.322	1.835	1.384	-.451
Sheldon	1.737	.196	1.933	1.258	-.675

The net saving in total tax rate if El Sobrante should annex to Richmond with its schools is shown for each tax code area in the following table.

Tax Code Area	Diff. In School Tax	Annex. Tax Incl. Schls.
Pinole-Hercules		
8504	-.399	9.577
8505 & 8508	-.399	8.481
San Pablo		
9102	-.451	9.546
9106	-.451	9.546
9108	-.451	8.700
Sheldon		
9401 & 9404	-.675	8.324
9403	-.675	8.574
9405 & 9407	-.675	9.420
9409	-.675	9.420

Annexation To San Pablo

The following table indicates the tax rates for all tax code areas in El Sobrante in case of annexation to San Pablo (based on 1953-1954 figures).

Code	Elementary	Fire	Sanitary	Water	Street Lights	Area Wide Rates	County Rate	Adjusted City Tax	New Tax Rate
8504	1.814	.654	.846	.25	-----	2.429	2.589	1.30	9.882
8505&08	1.814	.654	----	----	-----	"	"	"	8.786
9102	1.835	.654	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.903
9106	1.835	.654	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.903
9108	1.835	.654	----	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.057
9401&04	1.933	.654	----	----	-----	"	"	"	8.905
9403	1.933	.654	----	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.155
9505&07	1.933	.654	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	10.001
9409	1.933	.654	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	10.001

- The Fire Dist. will remain the same as San Pablo does not have their own fire department, but is also served by a district.
- As with Richmond, all street lighting districts will be abolished and the costs assumed by the city. (Effects 9106 and 9409.)
- The new city tax rate is 1.30.

Incorporation

Below is the chart for the tax rate under incorporation.
(Figures based on 1953-54 data.)

<u>Code</u>	<u>Ele- men- tary</u>	<u>Fire</u>	<u>Sani- tary</u>	<u>Water</u>	<u>Street Lights</u>	<u>Area Wide Rates</u>	<u>County Rate</u>	<u>City Rate</u>	<u>New Tax Rate</u>
8504	1.814	.654	.846	.25	-----	2.429	2.589	1.25	9.832
8505 & 08	1.814	.654	----	---	-----	"	"	"	8.736
9102	1.835	.654	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.853
9106	1.835	.654	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.853
9108	1.835	.654	----	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.007
9401 & 04	1.933	.654	----	---	-----	"	"	"	9.855
9403	1.933	.654	----	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.105
9405 & 07	1.933	.654	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.951
9409	1.933	.654	.846	.25	-----	"	"	"	9.951