



Until the election, Alamo Today will dedicate space to hear from readers regarding incorporation. Letters must be 200 words or fewer and include your first and last name, address and daytime phone number. All letters are subject to verification and editing, and will be published at the editors' discretion as space allows. Email to editor@alamotoday.com. Note: All letters received this month fitting the guidelines above were able to be printed.

Dear Editor:

For Alamo to become an incorporated city has great emotional appeal, however there is no substance!

To incorporate and add another layer of costly government there needs to be tangible benefits, that's "tangible" as in measurable! When I have asked the question of the proponents of incorporation, the response is "local control." When a follow-up question of "control what", the responses become quite vague and evasive, when further pinned down they reply with statements like control "in fill" and "over building" which are meant to possibly control the construction of large homes.

Do we really want a city government that will include a mayor, city council, city manager, city attorney, clerical staff and office space to prohibit someone from building what may be their dream home? Sounds like pretty miniscule benefits for the cost!

And on the subject of costs, we need to be very careful of banking on the proponents financial projections, data mining is a very old process used to support an already determined position.

Phil Erickson, Alamo

Dear Editor:

The independently produced Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis (CFA) of Alamo incorporation is a conservative document. It reports the audited, County-certified costs, including law enforcement, that Contra Costa County presently spends on services to Alamo and adjusts those costs for inflation for ten years.

It adds the State-required ten percent surplus and conservatively adds another ten percent contingency to protect against any low cost projections.

It itemizes the revenues reported by the State and the County that would come to an incorporated Alamo, adjusting those revenues for inflation at a lower rate than the inflation rate for costs.

It shows "a healthier-than-average nest egg" (San Ramon Valley Times, 8-9-08) in all funds for the new town – general fund, roads fund, and parks fund – for ten years.

It is the only State-managed CFA ever performed on a community looking to incorporate in Contra Costa County.

Contra Costa County, Alamo's present local government, recently disclosed a \$1.7 billion unfunded liability for employee benefits. It must cut services and dramatically increase revenue-generating development in the unincorporated areas to struggle to stay fiscally afloat.

In the current economic climate, I will vote, for fiscal reasons, to incorporate Alamo.

Jeanne Tate, Alamo

Dear Editor,

In these uncertain economic times, it is imperative that we Alamo citizens distance ourselves from the County.

The County owes \$1.7 billion in underfunded obligations to retired and present employees. It continues to pay employees according to expensive agreements that have made it a debtor.

Consequently, it must cut services to the unincorporated areas. It reduced law enforcement services the past two fiscal years and is doing so again this year. It must also generate new revenues with new development in the unincorporated areas, for which it owns the General Plan, and where it can rezone as it chooses.

It is unsettling to contemplate change. But change is being forced upon us. If we don't adjust, we will pay the price in quality of community life and value of personal property.

Change is inevitable. We have the best chance to manage that change if we are an incorporated town. As such, we can set our own priorities that are best for the citizens of Alamo. We will not be bound to decisions that are best for the county.

Tim Tinnes, Alamo

Dear Editor:

We have been residents of Alamo for 34 years, and we

want to voice our support of the Alamo Incorporation movement. We are concerned about all of the changes that have taken place over that time and want the citizens of Alamo to have local control what happens in Alamo in the future.

We are told that Alamo is fully developed and no changes can occur in Alamo in the future; however, the County is in control of the General Plan that determines Alamo roads, zoning, and commercial development and, as recently as June, proposed expanding the Stone Valley/Danville Blvd. intersection and 680 off-ramps to divert more traffic through Alamo. Citizens can voice their opinions on what the County proposes, but at present, they don't have to follow their recommendations. The citizens of Alamo should determine whatever changes come to Alamo in the future.

We have read the Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis of Alamo incorporation. We feel it presents an accurate analysis of the fiscal feasibility and viability of making Alamo an incorporated town.

Patrick and Carol Atwater, Alamo

Dear Editor:

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the region

Our holiday traffic congestion was legion
The pace on 680 had slowed to a halt
Invoking a holiday humbug gestalt.

When what did my wondering eyes see below
But an alternate freeway through west Alamo!
A few hundred yards from the old freeway wall --
Get ready! Get set! Now, dash away, all!

El Cerro in Danville to Rudgear they came
But stopping in Alamo wasn't their aim
They were just passing through on the way to their home
In Concord, or Davis, or Auburn, or Nome.

'Twas sad seeing change to the old thoroughfare
From two lanes to four lanes with nary a care
Of regional planners for trees on the route
Of regional drivers on their commute.

Here was pavement as food for the feast of the eye
And turf for the calvacade inching on by
And din for the people who lived past the vines
And proliferation of for-sale signs.

I woke with a start -- it was only a dream!
The two lanes, the trees, they are still what they seem
But the vision persists though it's gone from my sight
I vowed to incorporate that very night.

Grace Schmidt, Alamo

Dear Editor,

I have lived in Alamo for 18 years and love this beautiful town. I am writing in support of the incorporation of Alamo. I believe that incorporation can move Alamo from a collection of neighborhoods with remote, relatively anonymous government, to a vibrant community with a common vision, a plan for the future of our town and a government that is local and listens. Contra Costa County is not chartered to nor focused on enhancing Alamo.

Being retired and loving this area, Alamo's budget control at current tax levels post-incorporation is very important to me. Based on my study of the LAFCO financial analysis, I believe that Alamo will generate a significant surplus while delivering our current level of services. As important as the economics, however, is how we meld ourselves into a cohesive town and move Alamo into the future. It begins with each citizen spending the time to get his or her ideas and hopes into our Comprehensive Plan for our future. This effort will not only be our guide, but will be the glue that unites and inspires us to make our plan a reality. Together we can make a great future for our community.

Ed Chiverton, Alamo

Dear Editor,

Incorporating Alamo would be good for our town. We have a strong base of businesses in Alamo, over 300 I discovered, many in homes, that generate sales tax revenues, which would stay in incorporated Alamo. Interestingly, the State fiscal study that showed Alamo can easily support itself didn't include revenue from Yardbirds because it was closed! I've also learned the study didn't include \$1.8 million in developers' fees currently held by Contra Costa County that would go to Alamo if we incorporate.

Vehicle license fees we currently don't have access to go only to cities, not to counties. I'd also like to see Alamo keep

the property taxes we pay – why should we send them to the county to pay for new roads in east county?

If we stay unincorporated, we'll have to help get the county off the hook for their bloated unfunded employee benefit liability, now \$1.7 billion! Alamo is a cash cow for the county and I would expect to see the county authorizing lots of new development around Alamo, commercial and residential, to start paying for county liabilities. Then there will be new taxes and fees charged to us by the county. Let's take back our town!

Betsy Block, Alamo

Dear Editor:

I have lived in Alamo for 22 years and watched our community change from a lovely, rural crossroads to a busy and overburdened hub, without a real plan for its future.

As an unincorporated part of the county, we are subject to what the county deems best for the region, regardless of the general consensus of the inhabitants of Alamo. Widening Danville Boulevard through Alamo makes sense to the County. This would change the nature of Alamo as we know it. Many of us chose to live in Alamo for its rural character, and would be truly upset for an irrevocable change that would impact all our lives.

Ours is a community with large tax revenues that go to the county for their decision on appropriate use. For years we have stood silently while the County decided how to use our taxes, often delegating our tax dollars away from our community. It is time for us to accept the responsibility for Alamo's future, so that it retains its charm, or that if it changes, it is the citizens of Alamo who decide what those changes will be. The only way we will have that power is to incorporate in March.

Margery Ammon, Alamo

Dear Editor:

Why would an incorporated Town of Alamo resist widening Danville Boulevard?

The answer is, of course, that Alamo residents don't want Danville Boulevard widened. So, why has the County, Alamo's existing local government, tried for decades to widen it?

The County needs significant new revenues to pay down its \$1.7 billion unfunded liability for employee benefits. By law, local governments can only raise significant new revenues with new development and new sales taxes.

To continue to create new revenue-generating development in eastern San Ramon Valley, the County must move congested traffic in developed parts of the Valley, like Alamo – or risk losing its share of the local half cent sales tax for transportation. And there is nowhere left to move traffic in Contra Costa County except regional roads that are also residential roads – like Danville Boulevard.

Likewise, to attract more sales tax-generating regional business in unincorporated Alamo, the County must widen roads to bring more freeway traffic to downtown.

The Town of Alamo would be free of existing debt. It would not have to keep trying to widen Danville Boulevard to generate new revenues from new development and new sales taxes.

We can save Danville Boulevard by incorporating Alamo.

Carol Hyman, Alamo

Dear Editor:

In uncertain economic times, which local government condition is safer for the taxpayer?

1. No carryover debt or high carryover debt?
2. Contracted workers or worker employees?
3. Property tax revenue from older homes or from newer homes?
4. Revenue necessary to meet expenses from existing sources, or necessary revenue from sources yet to be identified?

Answers are below.

1. The Town of Alamo would have no debt, a fiscally safer condition for taxpayers than the county's \$1.7 billion unfunded liability for employee benefits.

2. The town's contracted workers would not earn benefits, chief cause of the county's fiscal crisis.

3. The Town would own property tax revenues, constrained by Proposition 13, which double, triple, and quadruple when older homes come on the market. The County now spends Alamo's property tax windfall where it chooses.

4. The Town, unlike the County, wouldn't need to develop new revenues to meet expenses for the ten years projected in the independent State Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis (CFA) of Alamo incorporation.

Alamo taxpayers need to incorporate for local government's fiscal health.

Dea Campbell, Alamo