



## Pima County Board of Supervisors

To: Julie Castañeda, Clerk of the Board  
From: Dr. Matt Heinz, Supervisor, District 2  
Date: August 4, 2021  
RE: BOS Agenda 08/10/21 – PAG/RTA Weighted Voting

Please attach this memo to Item described above on the 8/10/21 Board of Supervisors meeting agenda, and please send out to my colleagues on the Board today. Thank you.

Pima Association of Governments (PAG) is the federally-mandated, federally-designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the greater Tucson region and "an association of local, state and tribal governments that **works to build consensus among its members and the public** on regional planning for transportation, water quality, air quality and economic vitality."

The PAG Agenda for the next Regional Council mtg on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 contains the following item:

### 5. Overview of Composition of PAG Regional Council Membership and Voting Entitlement.

Pursuant to PAG bylaws, Regional Council members each have one vote. This practice of one vote per member has been in place since the incorporation of PAG in 1970 and reaffirmed in 2004 for the RTA Board with an amendment to the Regional Transportation Authority statutes. ... Pursuant to ARS 48-5303, members of the Regional Council also serve on the Board of Directors of the Regional Transportation Authority.

The current one-vote-per-jurisdiction voting structure at the decision-making tables of the PAG Regional Council and the RTA Board disproportionately favors smaller jurisdictions by weighting their votes more heavily compared to population, and harms residents of larger jurisdictions accordingly by underweighting their votes. Additionally, leadership roles on the relevant PAG and RTA committees and subcommittees, where the bulk of key recommendations for transportation planning occur, is also tilted in favor of our region's smallest jurisdictions. While regional planning is the goal, the status quo of one jurisdiction-one vote, in practice, has led to planning and implementation decisions that fundamentally disempower the voters and residents of the City of Tucson – a majority of residents in the region – and to a lesser extent, those of unincorporated Pima County as well.

I believe a solution can be reached that better balances the scales and therefore leads to improved regional cooperation and successful regional planning – and it involves moderated weighted voting based on population.

CLERK'S NOTE:  
COPY TO SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

DATE 8.4.21

08/04/21 11:46:00 AM

I would strongly encourage my colleagues to **endorse the following proposed weighted voting structure**, to ensure that the residents of unincorporated Pima County, as well as those of the City of Tucson, are adequately represented at the regional decision-making tables of PAG and RTA.

**Proposed Weighted Voting Structure:**

- Jurisdictions with fewer than 250,000 residents,  
plus Arizona State Transportation Board, ASTB/ADOT: 1 vote each
- Jurisdictions with between 250,000 – 499,999 residents: 2 votes each
- Jurisdictions with 500,000 or more residents: 3 votes each

<b>Jurisdiction:</b>	<b>Estimated Population:</b>	<b>Percentage of Pima County's overall population:</b>	<b>Proposed Votes Based on Population:</b>	<b>Relative Weighted Vote (percent of total):</b>
City of Tucson	557,861	52.3%	3	25.0%
Pima County (unincorporated; non-tribal lands)	363,863	34.1%	2	16.7%
Tohono O'odham Nation	7,447	0.7%	1	8.3%
Pascua Yaqui Tribe	4,111	0.4%	1	8.3%
Marana	49,408	4.6%	1	8.3%
Oro Valley	46,553	4.4%	1	8.3%
Sahuarita	31,076	2.9%	1	8.3%
City of South Tucson	5,819	0.5%	1	8.3%
ASTB – ADOT	0	0.0%	1	8.3%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1,066,138</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This structure would ensure that no single jurisdiction has veto power, would encourage cross-jurisdictional cooperation and collaboration, would maintain a level of voting power for the smaller jurisdictions that continues to exceed their relative share of the overall population, and would stand a much greater chance than the status quo of inviting the City of Tucson to the table in a meaningful way when structuring RTA Next, which frankly, has not happened to date.

For reasons unknown, and unsupported by either PAG or RTA bylaws, not all jurisdictions have been allowed the same opportunities to hold leadership positions on the Regional Council or the RTA Board. For example, a look at the history of the chairmanships of the PAG Regional Council and RTA Board since 2013, which are supposed to rotate annually through all the jurisdictions, reveals that in fact the City of Tucson has chaired the Regional Council only once (2013) and the RTA Board only once (2015).

This inequity, along with the disempowerment of the City's voters through one-jurisdiction-one-vote, may well have contributed to the current dissatisfaction with the regional governance structure.

*It is not, therefore, unreasonable for all jurisdictions to consider a more representative voting structure based on population.* It is important to remember that PAG's role in our region is **to build consensus among its members and the public – all the public.**

As the economic driver and cultural heart of the region, as well as the largest single member jurisdiction based on population, the City of Tucson's participation in and support for the RTA and RTA Next is vital to its passage and continued success.

I support the City of Tucson's efforts to restructure voting at PAG/RTA to be more representative and proportional to jurisdictional population AND I support PAG's stated goal of building regional cooperation and shared regional leadership.

For these reasons, I offer this proposal as a means of encouraging cross-jurisdictional collaboration and consensus-building.

c: C.H. Huckelberry, Pima County Administrator  
Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator  
Carmine DeBonis, Jr, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Dr. Yves Khawam, Assistant County Administrator for Public Works  
Ana Olivares, Director, Pima County Department of Transportation