



# MEMORANDUM

Date: May 22, 2026

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner *JL*  
County Administrator

Re: **Maricopa and Pima County Primary Property Tax Comparison for Fiscal Year 2024/25**

Pima County's primary property tax rate is often compared to Maricopa County's due to the noticeable difference between the two rates. While the comparison is accurate on the surface, the counties operate under significantly different revenue structures and service delivery responsibilities, making a direct comparison less reflective of the overall fiscal picture.

The attached analysis provides additional context regarding those differences and demonstrates that Pima County's effective tax burden is closer to Maricopa County's than the published primary tax rates alone may suggest. Based on the adjustments outlined below, Pima County's primary property tax rate could be reduced to approximately \$1.8328 if the County had access to comparable revenue sources and operated under a similar service structure.

### Fiscal Year 2024/25 Property Tax Rates

County	Primary Property Tax Rate
Maricopa County	1.1591
Pima County	4.0990
Adjusted Pima County	1.8328

### Revenue and Structural Differences Between Pima and Maricopa Counties

1. Jail District Excise Tax: Pima County funds its county jail and juvenile detention facilities through the primary property tax rate. In Maricopa County, a portion of these costs are paid through a separate dedicated jail district sales tax. If Pima County sought legislative and voter approval for a quarter-cent (0.25 percent) jail district excise tax, the maximum allowed under A.R.S. 48-4022, the County's primary property tax rate could be reduced by \$0.5287.
2. Road Excise Tax: Maricopa County benefits from a dedicated 0.5 percent transportation excise tax, a portion of which supports the Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) for arterial street and intersection improvements. Pima County uses \$25.0M from its General Fund to support its Transportation Department for similar road work. In FY 2024/25, this support equated to approximately \$0.2221 of the primary property tax rate.

MAY 22 2026 11:48 PCLK OF BD

3. Special Healthcare District: For many years, Maricopa County paid for their hospital from their primary property tax rate. In 2003, Maricopa requested and received special legislation allowing the operation of Maricopa's hospital to be transferred to a newly created special taxing district, the Maricopa County Special Health Care District, funded through a secondary property tax levied by a separate governing board. The secondary tax also provides funding for several other health care facilities. Through its General Fund, Pima County provides \$15 million in annual support for the County-owned Banner-University of Arizona Medical Center South Campus and \$7.6 million in support for Health Operations. The hospital funding accounted for approximately \$0.1333 of the primary property tax rate, while the Health Operations accounted for \$0.0671.
4. Entrance Fees for Mountain Parks and Conservation Areas: Maricopa County's parks system primarily focuses on regional parks and conservation areas and generally does not provide the same level of recreational amenities such as ball fields, playgrounds, community centers, and swimming pools that are supported within Pima County's system. There are minor exceptions to this, but for the most part these more developed forms of recreation are provided by cities, towns, homeowner associations and private operators. In addition, Maricopa County charges entrance fees for access to its regional parks and conservation areas, payable daily or via an annual pass, while Pima County does not. As a result, Maricopa County provides approximately \$1.5 million in General Fund support for Parks and Recreation, compared to Pima County providing more than \$17 million in General Fund support. These differences impact our primary property tax rate by \$0.1453.
5. Taxable Net Assessed Value: Maricopa County's tax base generates substantially higher revenues per capita than Pima County's. In FY 2024/25, Maricopa County's per capita primary net assessed value was approximately 19.16 percent higher than Pima County's. As a result, Pima County must levy an estimated additional \$0.6590 per \$100 of taxable net assessed value to generate the same level of revenue per resident.
6. State-Shared Revenues: Maricopa County also receives higher per capita state-shared revenues, particularly from sales taxes and vehicle license taxes, due in part to its larger economic base, higher tourism activity, and greater retail concentration. This gives Maricopa a substantial advantage in state sales tax distributions and shared (non-transportation) vehicle license tax revenue compared to Pima County. If Pima County received comparable per capita distributions, the primary property tax rate would be reduced by \$0.2894 for the state-shared sales tax revenue and \$0.1209 for shared vehicle license tax revenue, for a total reduction of \$0.4103.

### **Impact of Unincorporated Population**

Pima County also serves a larger unincorporated population than Maricopa County. Approximately 375,200 residents live in unincorporated areas of Pima County, compared to approximately 337,000 in Maricopa County. This results in Pima County providing municipal-type services, including law enforcement, to a larger population outside incorporated cities and towns. Adjusting for this difference for the law enforcement portion of the Sheriff's budget would reduce the County's primary property tax rate by approximately \$0.1004.

### **Conclusion**

When these structural and revenue differences are considered collectively, Pima County's adjusted primary property tax rate would be approximately \$1.8328, compared to Maricopa County's rate of \$1.1591.

JKL/dym

Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator  
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator  
Chad Kasmar, Deputy County Administrator  
Art Cuaron, Director, Finance and Risk Management  
Andy Welch, Deputy Director, Finance and Risk Management  
Xavier Rendon, Budget Division Manager, Finance and Risk Management

**Primary Property Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2024/25  
Maricopa County vs Pima County**

	Rate	Levy
<b><u>Maricopa County</u></b>		
Primary Property Tax (a)	\$1.1591	\$676,087,804
Jail Excise Tax (Sales Tax) (b)		\$283,373,309
Road Excise Tax (Sales Tax) (c)		\$768,082,294
Maricopa County Special Health Care District (Secondary Property Tax) (d)		\$153,380,069
	\$1.1591	
<b><u>Pima County</u></b>		
Primary Property Tax (e)	\$4.0990	\$461,322,412
Primary Property Tax Rate Includes the following:		
1. Adjust for Adult and Juvenile Detention (f)	\$0.5287	\$59,500,000
	\$3.5703	
2. Adjust for Transfer Out to Transportation (g)	\$0.2221	\$25,000,000
	\$3.3482	
3. Adjust for Banner-UA Medical Center South Campus Subsidy (h)	\$0.1333	\$15,000,000
	\$3.2149	
3. Adjust for Transfer Out to Health Operations (i)	\$0.0671	\$7,550,000
	\$3.1478	
4. Adjust for Parks & Recreation (j)	\$0.1453	\$16,356,286
	\$3.0025	
5. Adjust for Per Capita Difference in Net Assessed Value (k)	\$0.6590	\$74,161,602
	\$2.3435	
6. Adjust for lower Per Capita State Shared Sales Tax Revenue (l)	\$0.2894	\$32,576,067
	\$2.0541	
7. Adjust for lower Per Capita Vehicle License Tax Revenue (l)	\$0.1209	\$13,606,272
	\$1.9332	
8. Adjust for higher unincorporated population served by Sheriff (m)	\$0.1004	\$11,294,202
	\$1.8328	
Pima County's Adjusted Tax Rate	\$1.8328	
<b><u>Face Value of Difference in Primary Tax Rate</u></b>		
Pima County's Adopted Primary Property Tax Rate =	\$4.0990	
Maricopa County's Adopted Primary Property Tax Rate =	\$1.1591	
Face Value Comparison (Pima Rate/Maricopa Rate) =	3.54	
<b><u>Adjusted Primary Tax Rate (Difference)</u></b>		
Pima County's Adjusted Adopted Primary Property Tax Rate =	\$1.8328	
Maricopa County's Adopted Primary Property Tax Rate =	\$1.1591	
Consistent Value Comparison (Pima Adjusted Rate/Maricopa Rate) =	1.58	

By using an adjusted rate for Pima County that takes into account the different revenue streams and makes for a more consistent comparison between the two rates, one can conclude that Pima County's rate, while higher, is not all that much greater than Maricopa County's rate. A deeper analysis may push this difference even lower.

## **Notes**

(a) Maricopa County Primary Tax Levy FY2024-25, Table 37 of ADOR Annual Report  
[https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS\\_ANNUAL\\_2025\\_ASSETS\\_fy25\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS_ANNUAL_2025_ASSETS_fy25_annual_report.pdf)

(b) Maricopa County Jail Tax FY2024-25, Table 5 of ADOR Annual Report  
[https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS\\_ANNUAL\\_2025\\_ASSETS\\_fy25\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS_ANNUAL_2025_ASSETS_fy25_annual_report.pdf)

(c) Maricopa County Jail Tax FY2024-25, Table 5 of ADOR Annual Report  
[https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS\\_ANNUAL\\_2025\\_ASSETS\\_fy25\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS_ANNUAL_2025_ASSETS_fy25_annual_report.pdf)

(d) Maricopa County - Adopted Property Tax Levies and Rates, Page 21 of 55,  
<https://www.maricopa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/109284/Tax-Levy-2025-PDF>

(e) Pima County Adopted FY2024-25 Adopted Budget, Schedule B, p. 7-4.

(f) Maricopa County has a separate revenue stream for Adult and Juvenile Detention in the form of a Jail Excise Tax. Pima County does not have this capability and must include these costs when calculating the primary property tax rate. For FY2024-25, Pima County budgeted over \$100 million for these purposes. If Pima County wanted to levy a jail excise tax the assumption is the County would pursue legislation for a 0.25% jail excise tax, the maximum allowed for counties with a population between 500,000 and 1.5 million. This would cover part of the cost of detention, and reduce the primary property tax rate by \$0.5287. FY2024-25 Pima County Adopted Budget Sheriff Corrections Expenditures and Juvenile Court Detention Services Expenditures, plus proportion of Admin Expenditures, minus revenues. For Juvenile Court and Sheriff's Expenditures, see p. 13-4 and p. 13-5. Behavioral Health Health Mandates p.12-9. Local sales tax p. 6-3.

(g) Maricopa County has a 0.5% Road Tax part of which goes to the Maricopa County Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) for major arterial street and intersection improvements. Pima County transfers \$25.0M from its General Fund to the county Transportation department for similar road work. In FY 2024/25, that amounted to a \$0.2221 increase in the primary tax rate. See Pima County FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget , p. 7-23.

(h) Maricopa County's hospital costs are funded through a Special Health Services District secondary property tax. Pima County pays for \$15 million in annual support for its hospital through the county's primary property tax. This item increases Pima County's primary tax rate by \$0.1333. See Pima County FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget, p. 10-106.

(i) Maricopa County's Special Health Services District property tax also covers many community health needs. Pima County does not have such a tax and partially funds its health department with a \$7.55M Transfer Out from the General Fund. Pima County levied a primary property tax of \$0.0671 to fund the transfer in FY 2024-25. Transfers Out come from the FY 2024-25 Pima County Adopted Budget Book Schedule D, p. 7-15.

(j) Pima County's Parks and Recreation Department provides ball fields, playgrounds, community centers and pools to mainly unincorporated residents. Maricopa County does not provide these functions. In addition, Maricopa County largely relies on entrance fees and concession fees to fund its Parks and Recreation Department, with only \$1,506,905 in General Fund support for FY 2024-25. Pima County does not charge entrance fees to mountain parks and conservation areas, and largely funds this function from the General Fund. If Pima County were to provide a similar level of General Fund Support, the primary property tax rate would decrease by \$0.1453. (<https://www.maricopa.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/5877>, p.103, Parks and Recreation General Fund 100). (Pima County Adopted Budget FY 2024-25, p. 14-70).

(k) Maricopa County's per capita primary net assessed value is 19.16% higher than Pima County's. Pima County has to levy an additional \$0.6590 to collect the same amount of tax revenue per capita.  
Population estimates July 1, 2024 Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity- <https://oeo.az.gov/population/estimates>  
Net Assessed Values for Tax Year 2024 (FY2024-25) from Arizona Department of Revenue Annual Report Table 37  
[https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS\\_ANNUAL\\_2025\\_ASSETS\\_fy25\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS_ANNUAL_2025_ASSETS_fy25_annual_report.pdf)

(l) Maricopa County receives more State Shared Sales Tax revenue and Vehicle License Tax revenue on a per capita basis than Pima County does so Pima County charges a higher property tax to make up the difference. The smaller amount of State Shared Sales Tax impacts Pima County's primary tax rate by \$0.2894 while the reduced Vehicle License Tax revenue impacts the tax rate by \$0.1209.

State Shared Sales Tax comes FY 2025 ADOR Annual Report Table 25.

[https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS\\_ANNUAL\\_2025\\_ASSETS\\_fy25\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://azdor.gov/sites/default/files/document/REPORTS_ANNUAL_2025_ASSETS_fy25_annual_report.pdf)

Vehicle License Tax comes from FY 2025 'VLT Distribution to Recipients' report under Vehicle License Tax (VLT) Information on ADOT webpage.

<https://azdot.gov/about/financial-management-services/transportation-funding/archived-audits-and-reports>

Population estimates as of July 1, 2024 come from the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity.

<https://oeo.az.gov/population/estimates>

(m) Pima County's unincorporated population is 11% greater than Maricopa County's unincorporated population. Pima County's primary tax rate includes the cost of providing urban-like services to more unincorporated residents than in Maricopa County. Two of the largest unincorporated costs from Pima County's General Fund are for Law Enforcement and Parks and Recreation. This item accounts for the added Sheriff expenses, excluding Corrections, driven by a higher unincorporated population. This item impacts Pima County's rate by \$0.1004.