

2018

Florida Population Growth

A Technical Memorandum from FDOT Forecasting and Trends Office

September 2019

Introduction

People travel to engage in employment, school, shopping, social, and recreational activities. Understanding the number of people and their residential and activity locations is critical for planning transportation infrastructure and services to meet people's travel needs. Each year, the Forecasting and Trends Office (FTO) of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) publishes population estimates and future year projections based on the population study of the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at the University of Florida. The population estimates are developed by FDOT district, county, city, urbanized area, urban cluster, and metropolitan planning organization (MPO). The population estimates can be used for a variety of planning studies including statewide and regional transportation plan updates, subarea and corridor studies, and funding allocations for various planning agencies. This Technical Memorandum provides an overview of the population changes in Florida in 2018 at various geographic levels. The focus is on the location and magnitude of the population changes at three commonly used geographic levels: county, urbanized area, and MPO. This Technical Memorandum works in conjunction with the 2018 population estimates which can be downloaded from the FTO's [Demographic and Commuting Analysis](#) website.

Population Change at County Level

The [FDOT District by County Population Estimates](#) sheets include the estimated county population for 2017 and 2018 developed by FTO, together with the 2010 population counts by US Census Bureau. Now the third most populous state in the nation, Florida gained 356,300 people in 2018 to reach a total population of 20,840,400, an increase of 1.7% over the past year. During the eight (8) years since the 2010 Census year, Florida's population grew by more than two million, an increase of 10.8% over the time period.

Numerical Change in County Population

Figure 1 depicts the 2018 population by county and the 2017-2018 numerical change in population for each county. The population is represented by shade, with darker shade indicating higher population counties and lighter color lower population counties. The bar chart represents the growth in population. In 2018, 51 of the 67 counties in Florida saw an increase in population. Not surprisingly, the most populous counties saw the largest increase. The population in six (6) counties remained unchanged in 2018. These counties include Jackson, Lafayette, Okeechobee, Taylor, Union, and Wakulla, all of which are located in rural areas of District 1, District 2, or District 3. The remaining ten (10) counties experienced a decrease in population. They are DeSoto, Dixie, Franklin, Gadsden, Glades, Hamilton, Hardee, Holmes, Monroe, and Putnam Counties. Monroe County had the largest decrease in population by 3,000 people. **Figure 2** lists the ten (10) counties with the largest population growth during the past year. Miami-Dade County gained the most with 36,200 people, followed closely by Orange County with 35,700 people. Hillsborough County came in third with a population growth of 29,600. Other counties include Broward, Palm Beach, Duval, Lee, Osceola, Polk, and Lake, all of which contain large urban areas in the state.

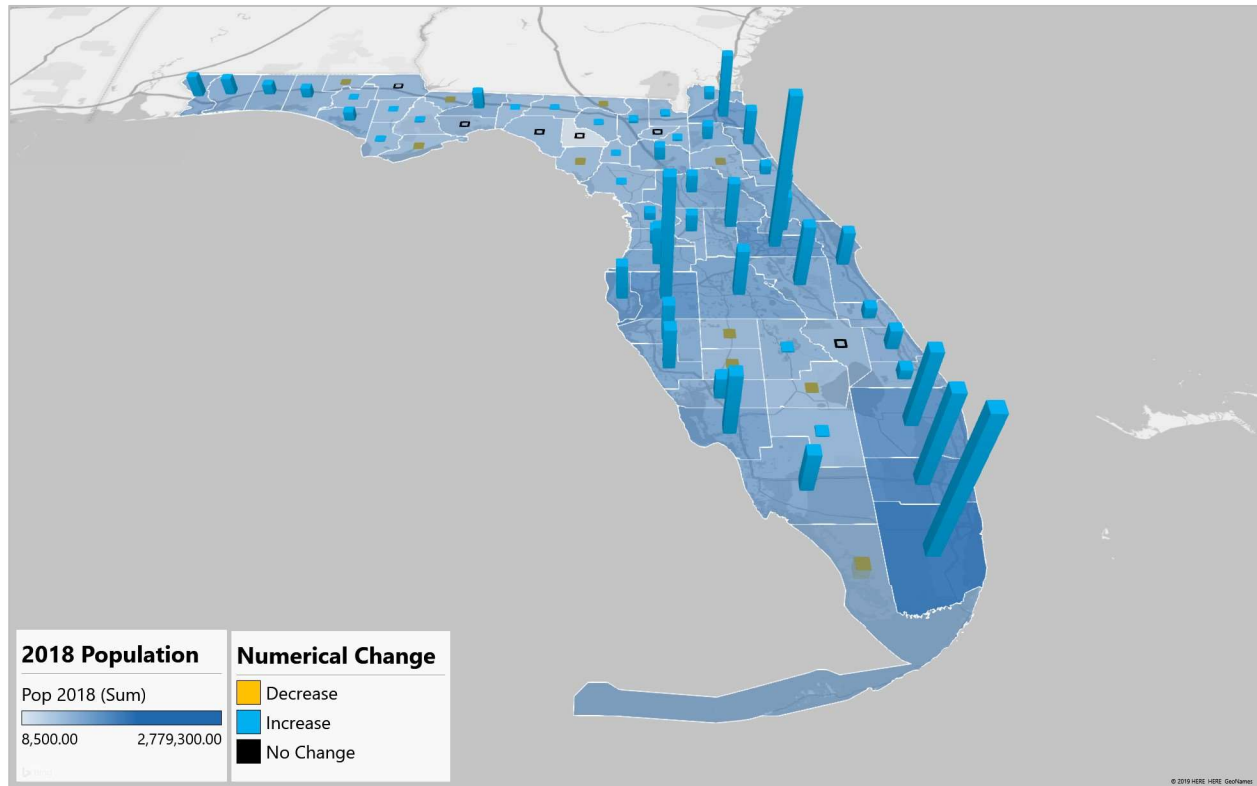


FIGURE 1 – NUMERICAL CHANGE IN COUNTY POPULATION

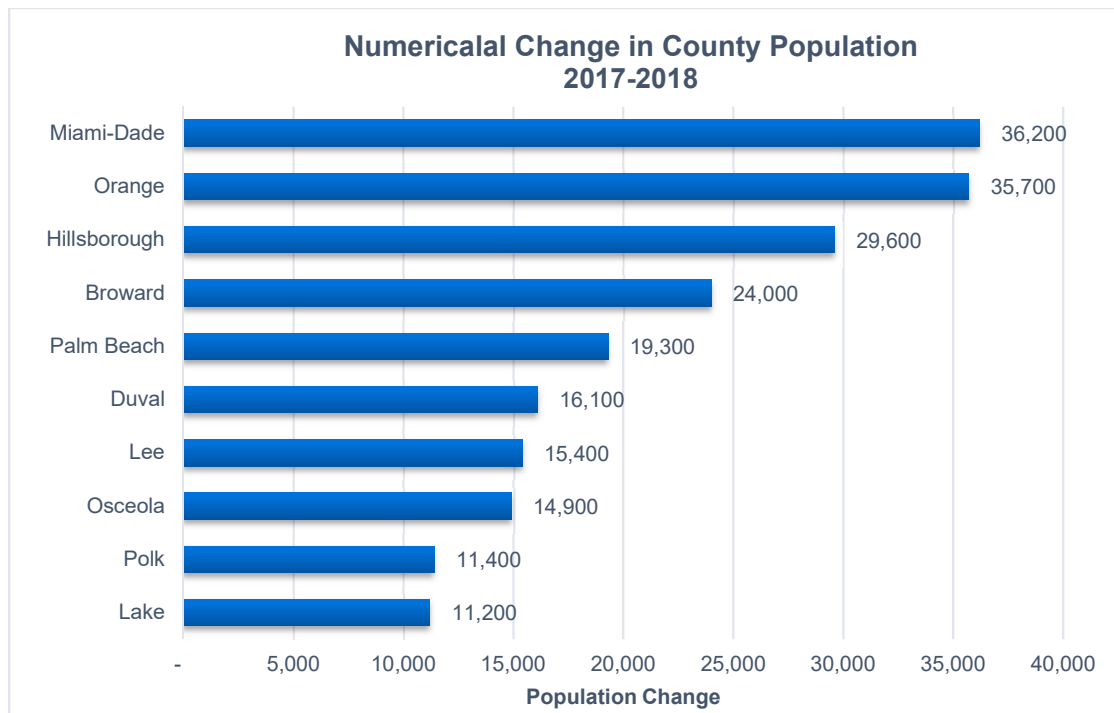


FIGURE 2 – FLORIDA COUNTIES WITH LARGEST NUMERICAL CHANGE IN POPULATION

Percent Change in County Population

The numerical change in county population reflects the magnitude of growth or decline in population, whereas the percent change indicates the rate of change in population. **Figure 3** shows the population and percent change for each county in 2018. Compared to the numerical changes, the percent changes show a different pattern. The most populous counties did not necessarily have the highest growth rates. In fact, counties with the largest percent growth are, in general, counties neighboring the more populous counties in Central, Northeast, Central West, and Northwest Florida. **Figure 4** lists the top ten (10) counties with the largest percent growth. In 2018, Osceola County led the state with 4.4% growth in population, followed closely by St. Johns County with 3.9%, and Walton County with 3.7%. Other counties with high percentage population growth include Sumter, Lake, Charlotte, Collier, Nassau, Orange, and Sarasota. It may be noted that Orange County and Osceola County experienced the largest changes in terms of both numerical change and percent change. Among the ten (10) counties that saw a population decline in 2018, Monroe County has the largest percent decrease with -3.9%. The rest ranged from -0.3% to -1.6%.

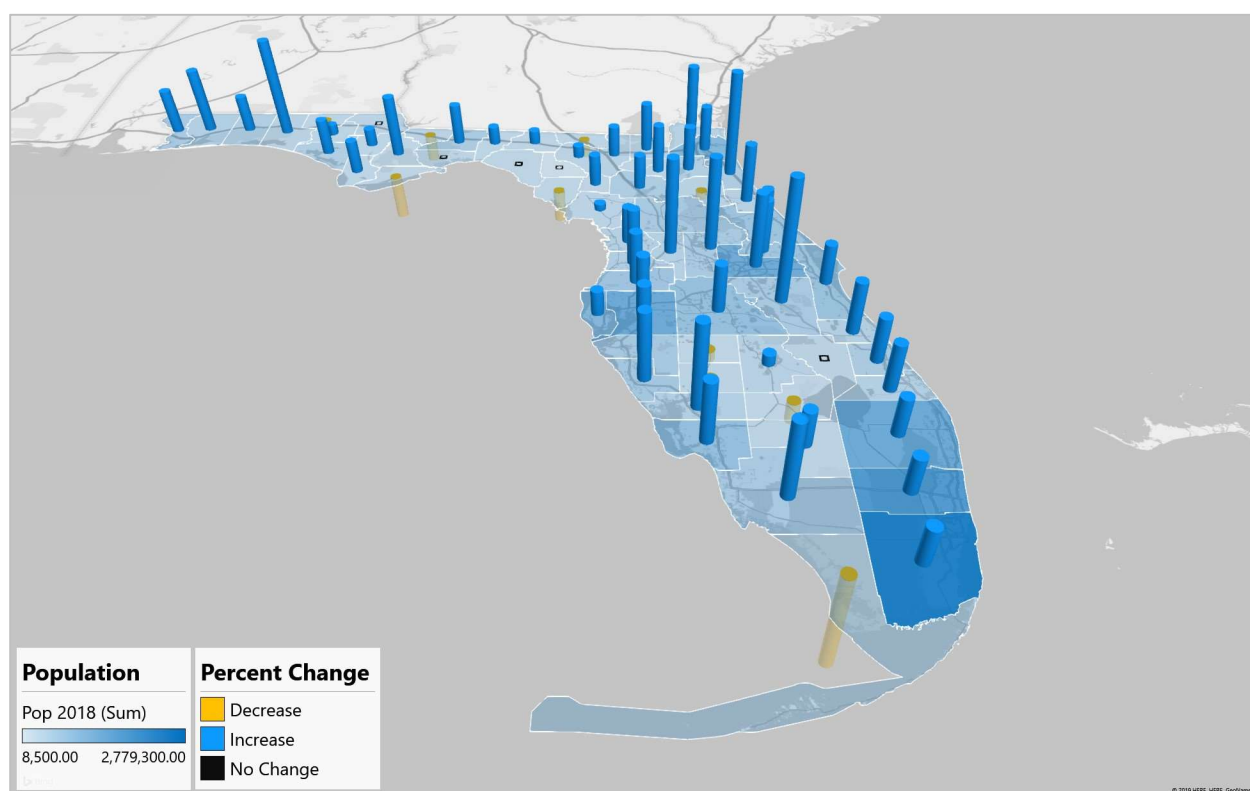


FIGURE 3 – PERCENT CHANGE IN COUNTY POPULATION

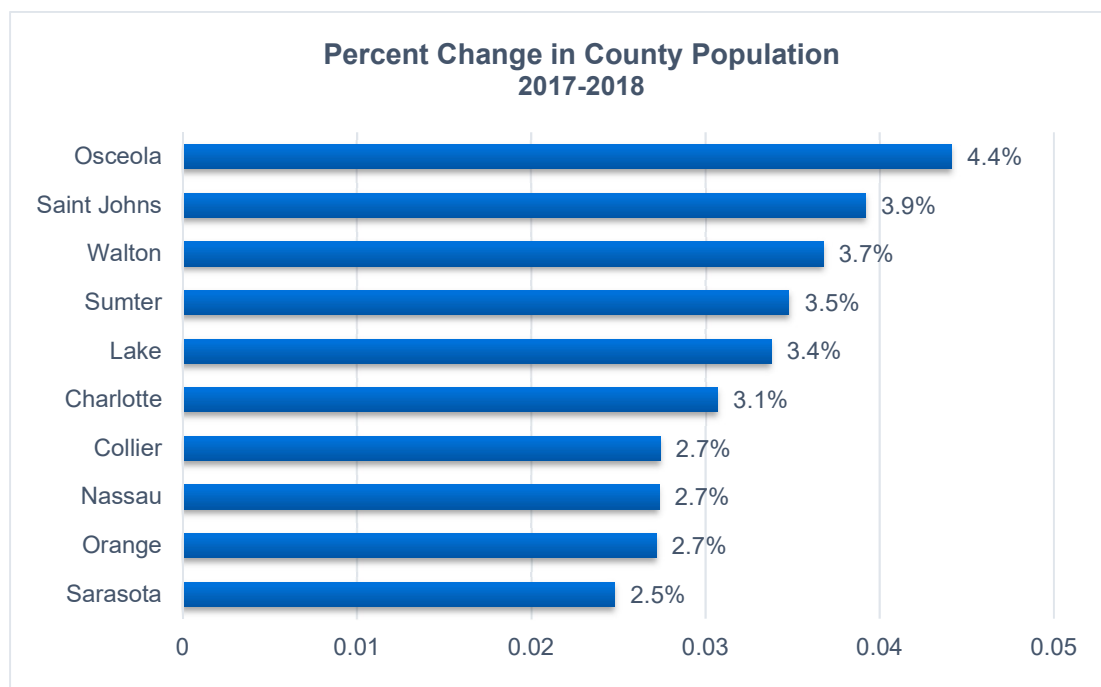


FIGURE 4 – FLORIDA COUNTIES WITH LARGEST PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION

Population Change at Urbanized Area (UA) Level

The Census Bureau delineates the nation's geographic areas into urban areas and rural areas based on population and population density. The 2010 Census defines an urban area as a densely developed territory that encompasses residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses. To qualify as an urban area, the territory must encompass at least 2,500 people, at least 1,500 of which reside outside institutional group quarters. The US Census Bureau identifies two types of urban areas:

- Urbanized Areas (UAs): an urban area with 50,000 or more people;
- Urban Clusters (UCs): an urban area with at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people.

Rural areas encompass all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area.

There are currently 30 Urbanized Areas and 74 [Urban Clusters](#) in Florida. The [Florida Urbanized Area Population Estimates](#) sheets contain the estimated population for the 30 Urbanized Areas in 2018 and the corresponding 2010 population based on 2010 US Census. In 2010, approximately 16.4 million of 18.8 million Florida's residents (87.4%) lived in urbanized areas. From 2010 to 2018, the Florida's population grew by 10.8% to reach 20.8 million. During the same time period, however, the population in urbanized areas grew by 11.2% to reach 18.3 million. A slightly higher percentage of the state's population (87.7%) lived in urbanized areas in 2018.

Numerical Change in Urbanized Area Population

Figure 5 shows the 2018 population for the urbanized areas and the numerical change in population from 2010 to 2018 for each urbanized area. During the eight-year period from 2010 to 2018, all 30 urbanized areas experienced modest to large growth in population. The largest growth occurred in the largest urbanized areas. **Figure 6** lists the ten (10) urbanized areas with the largest numerical change in population. Miami gained more than a half million (540,336) people. Tampa--St. Petersburg and Orlando each saw their population grow by approximately a quarter million, with 264,223 people and 234,404, respectively. The population in Jacksonville increased by 121,132. Sarasota--Bradenton, Kissimmee, and Cape Coral each gained more than 80,000 people. The populations in Bonita Springs, Palm Bay--Melbourne, and Lakeland increased by at least 30,000 people.

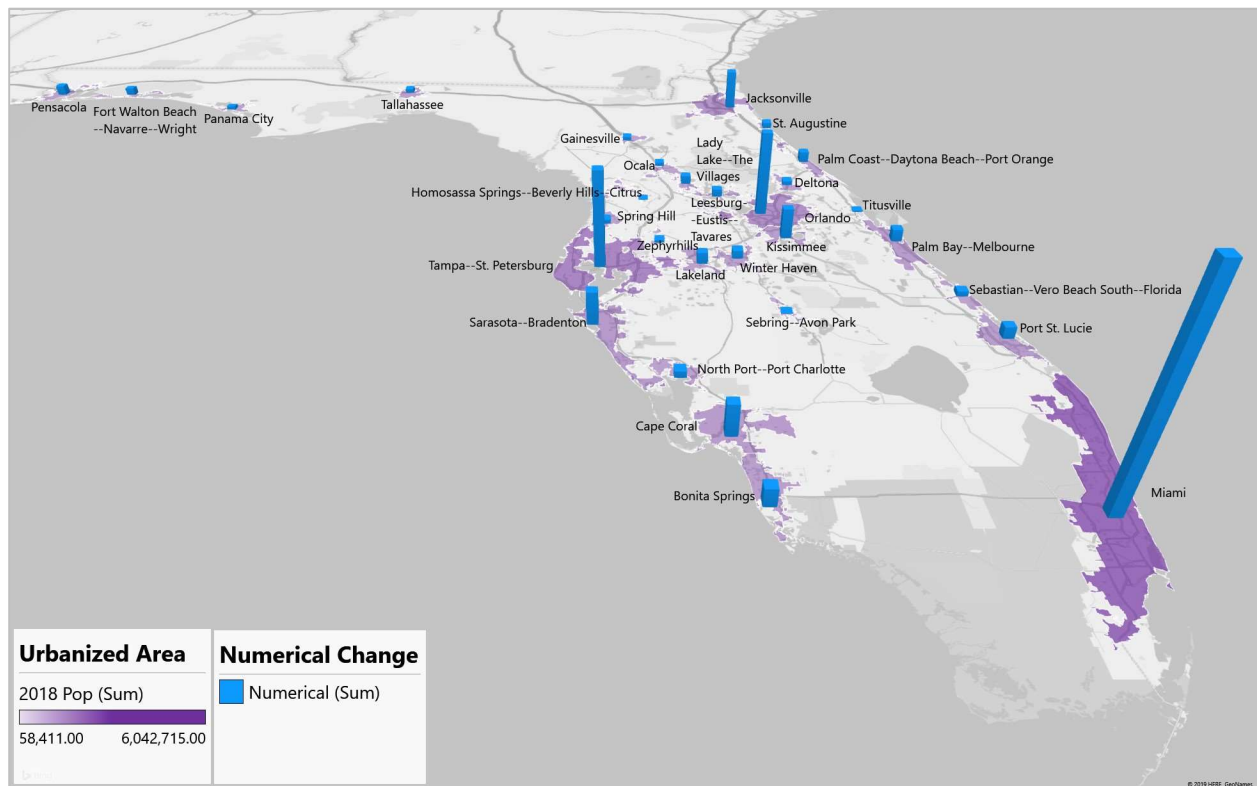


FIGURE 5 – NUMERICAL CHANGE IN URBANIZED AREA POPULATION

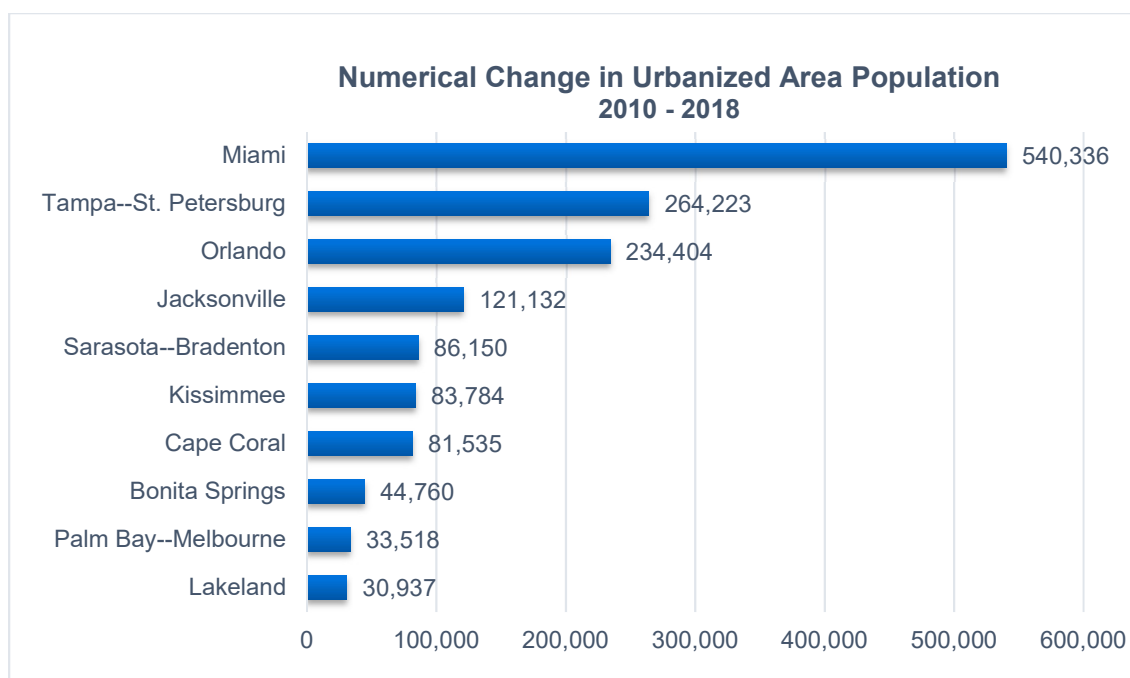


FIGURE 6 – URBANIZED AREAS WITH LARGEST NUMERICAL CHANGE IN POPULATION

Percent Change in Urbanized Area Population

Figure 7 shows the 2018 population and percent change for each urbanized area from 2010 to 2018. **Figure 8** lists the top ten (10) urbanized areas with the largest percent change in population. It may be noted that these are the same urbanized areas that had the largest numerical change in population, even though the order of changes is different. From 2010 to 2018, Kissimmee experienced the fastest growth in population at 26.7%, almost doubling the next two fastest growing urbanized areas, Orlando (15.5%) and Cape Corral (15.4%). The two urbanized areas along the west coast, Bonita Springs and Sarasota – Bradenton, also experienced high population growth at 14.4% and 13.4%, respectively. Lakeland, Jacksonville, and Tampa--St. Petersburg had similar percent growth at approximately 11% to 12%. Even the most populous urbanized area, Miami, saw its population grow by almost 10%. The population in Palm Bay -- Melbourne urbanized area increased by 7.4%.

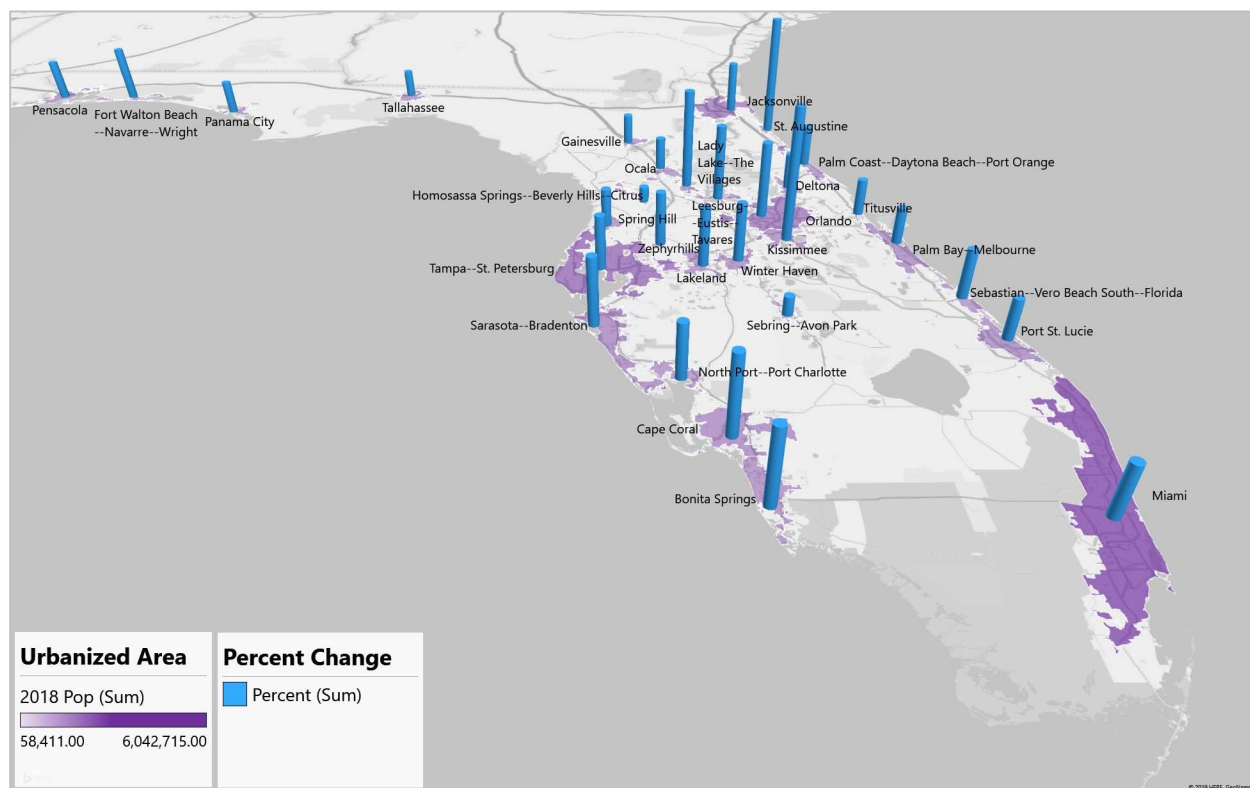


FIGURE 7 – PERCENT CHANGE IN URBANIZED AREA POPULATION

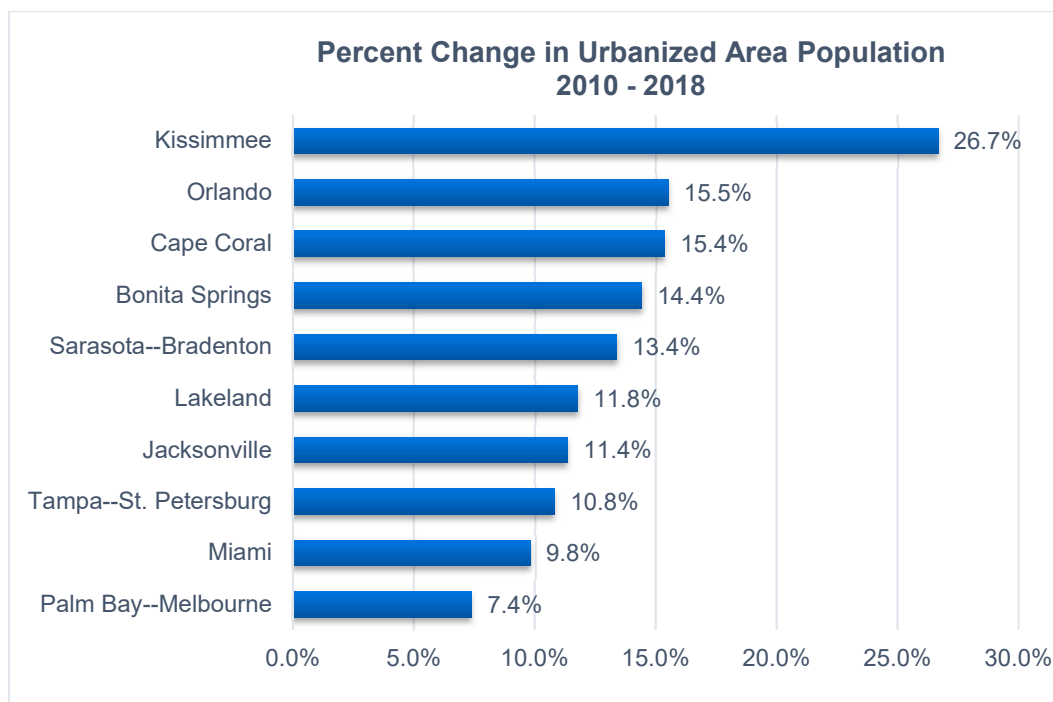


FIGURE 8 – URBANIZED AREAS WITH LARGEST PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION

Population Change at Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Level

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an agency created by federal law to provide local elected officials input into the planning and implementation of federal transportation funds to metropolitan areas with populations over 50,000. Federal law (23 USC 134(b) and 49 USC 5303(c)) requires that every urbanized area must be represented by an MPO. MPOs are also known as Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs), Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organizations (MTPOs), or Transportation Planning Agencies (TPAs). In this Technical Memorandum, MPO will be used as a generic term to represent MPOs, TPOs, MTPOs, and TPAs. There are currently 27 MPOs in Florida. Designated in 2014 based on 2010 US Census, the Heartland Regional TPO is the most recent addition in the state. Most of the MPOs encompass one or more counties that contain either partial or an entire urbanized area.

The [MPO Population Estimates](#) sheet contains the estimated population for the 27 MPOs in 2018 and the corresponding 2010 population based on 2010 US Census. In 2010, approximately 18.1 million of 18.8 million Florida's residents (96.1%) lived in an area covered by an MPO. From 2010 to 2018, Florida's population grew by 10.8% to reach 20.8 million. During the same time period, however, the population covered by the MPOs increased by 11.2% to reach 20.1 million. A slightly higher percentage of the state's population (96.4%) resided in one of the MPOs.

Numerical Change in MPO Population

Figure 9 shows the 2018 population for the MPOs and the numerical change in population from 2010 to 2018 for each MPO. During the eight-year period from 2010 to 2018, population grew in all MPO areas. The largest growth occurred in the largest MPOs. **Figure 10** lists the ten (10) MPOs with the largest numerical change in population. MetroPlan Orlando led the MPOs in population growth with an increase of 328,341, followed by Miami-Dade TPO with a population increase of 282,843. Hillsborough MPO had the third highest increase in population with 179,164. North Florida gained 167,919 people over the eight-year period. The other two large MPOs in South Florida, Broward MPO and Palm Beach TPA, saw their population grow by 149,934 and 113,266, respectively. The two MPOs along the west coast, Lee County MPO and Sarasota/Manatee MPO gained more than 93,000 people. The two MPOs in Central Florida, Lake-Sumter MPO and Polk TPO, saw their population increase by more than 70,000.

Percent Change in MPO Population

Figure 11 shows the 2018 population and percent change for each MPO from 2010 to 2018. **Figure 12** lists the top ten (10) MPOs with the largest percent change in population. As was the case for urbanized areas, the same MPOs that had the largest numerical change also had the largest percent change, even though the order of change is different. From 2010 to 2018, Lake-Sumter experienced the fastest growth in population with 19.8%, followed closely by MetroPlan Orlando with 17.9%. Lee County MPO came in third with a population growth of 15.4%. The population in Hillsborough County MPO grew by 14.6%, and Sarasota/Manatee MPO witnessed an expansion of 13.2%. The percent change for the next five fastest growing MPOs ranged from 8.6% to 12.7%.

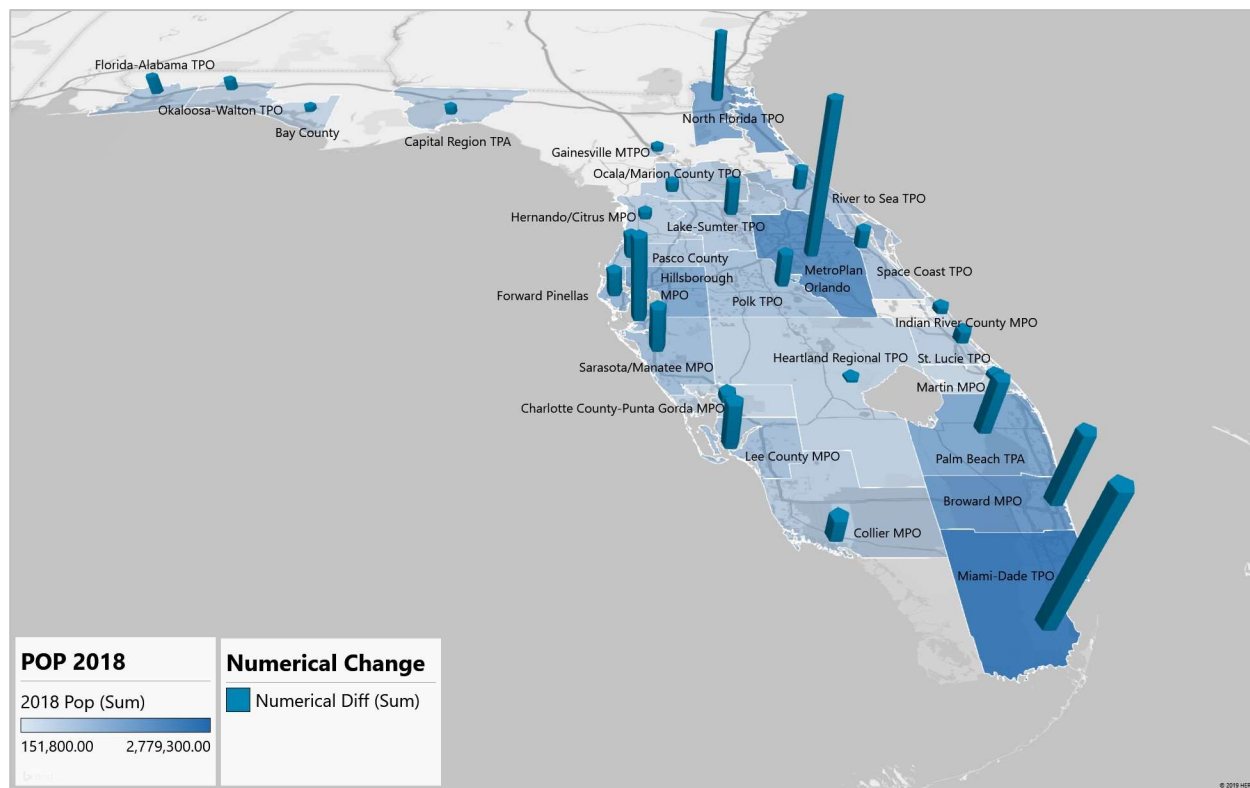


FIGURE 9 – NUMERICAL CHANGE IN MPO POPULATION

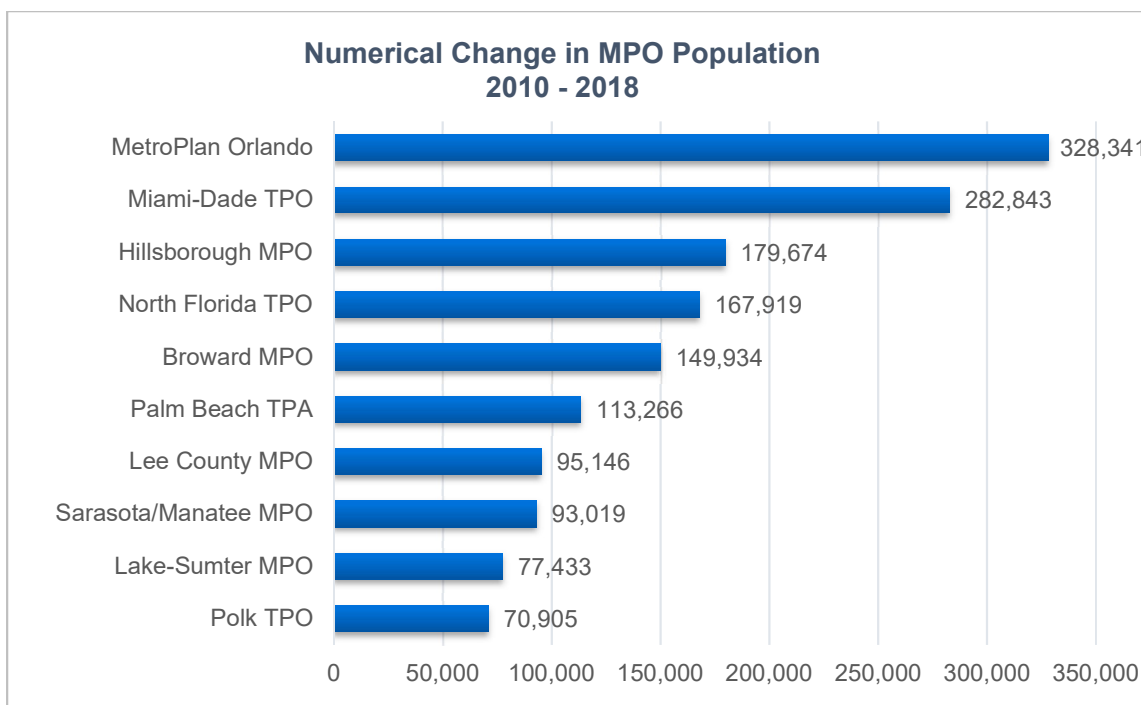


FIGURE 10 – MPOS WITH LARGEST NUMERICAL CHANGE IN POPULATION

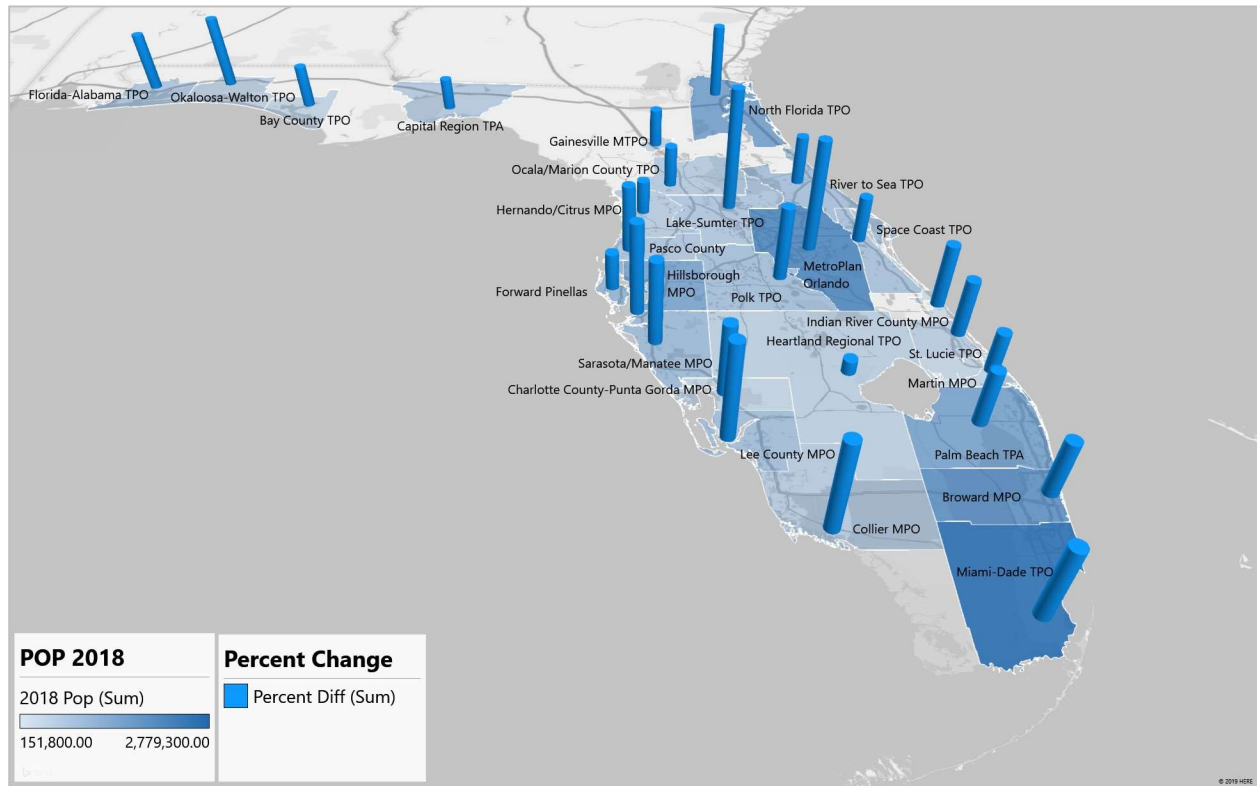


FIGURE 11 – PERCENT CHANGE IN MPO POPULATION

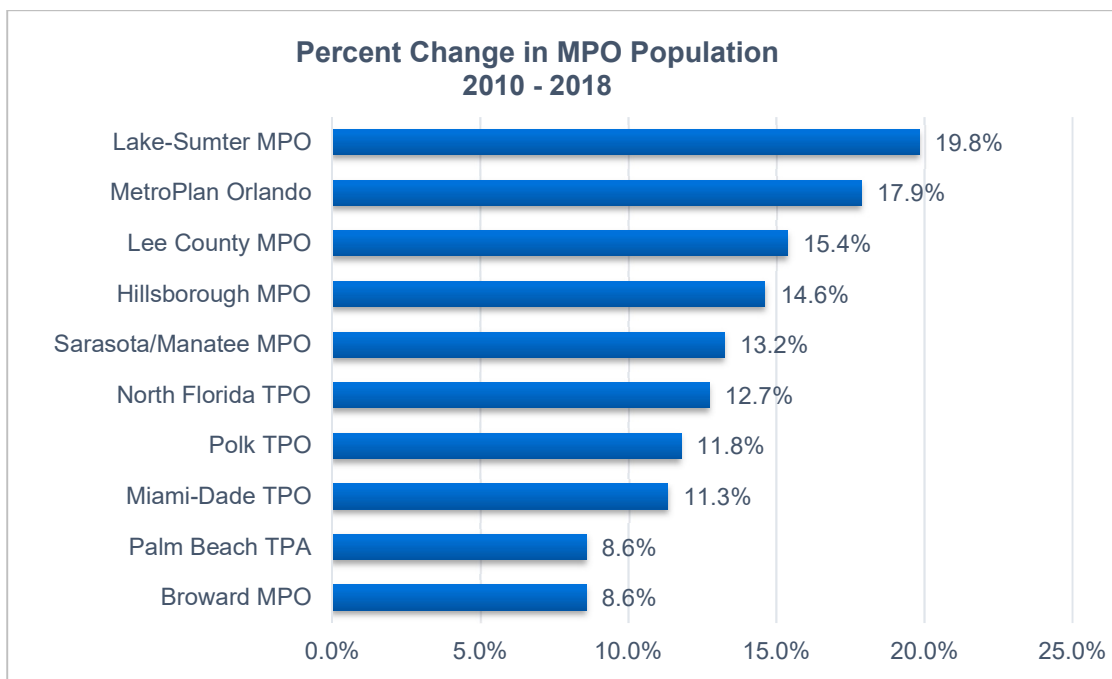


FIGURE 12 – MPOs WITH LARGEST PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION

Factors Influencing Population Growth

Two main factors affect population growth: natural growth and net migration (both domestically and internationally). Natural growth is determined by the difference between births and deaths. Births fluctuate more subtly in response to economic conditions. Deaths, on the other hand, change more slowly in response to the age profile of population. Net migration is the combined result of people coming and leaving the state. The migration patterns are heavily influenced by economic conditions but could also be affected by quality-of-life factors, immigration policies, and even political environment. Florida has grown steadily over the past few decades, even though the rate of growth has varied depending on the economic conditions and other factors. It is critical to continuously monitor the conditions that influence the population growth and provide accurate population estimates and projections that will ultimately affect transportation investment strategies and decisions.

More detailed population data can be found at FTO's Demographic and Commuting Analysis webpage (<https://www.fdot.gov/planning/demographic>).