2019
Florida Population Growth

A Technical Memorandum from FDOT Forecasting and Trends Office

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 2019 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 2019 population estimates which can be downloaded from the FTO's Demographic and Commuting Analysis website.
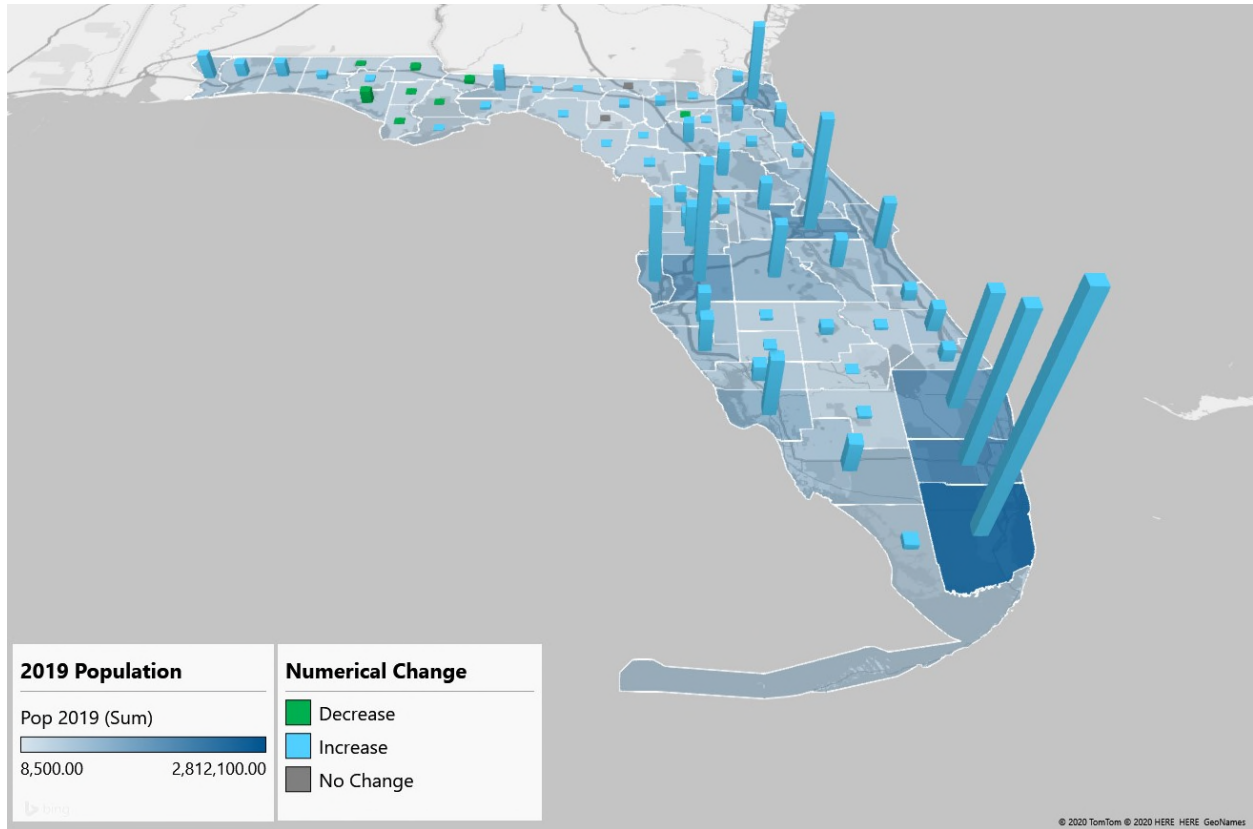
Population Change at County Level

The FDOT District by County Population Estimates sheets include the estimated county population for 2018 and 2019 developed by FTO, together with the 2010 population counts by US Census Bureau. Now the third most populous state in the nation, Florida gained 368,300 people in 2019 to reach a total population of 21,208,700, an increase of 1.8% over the past year. Since the 2010 Census, Florida's population had grown by more than 2.4 million, an increase of 12.8% over the time period.
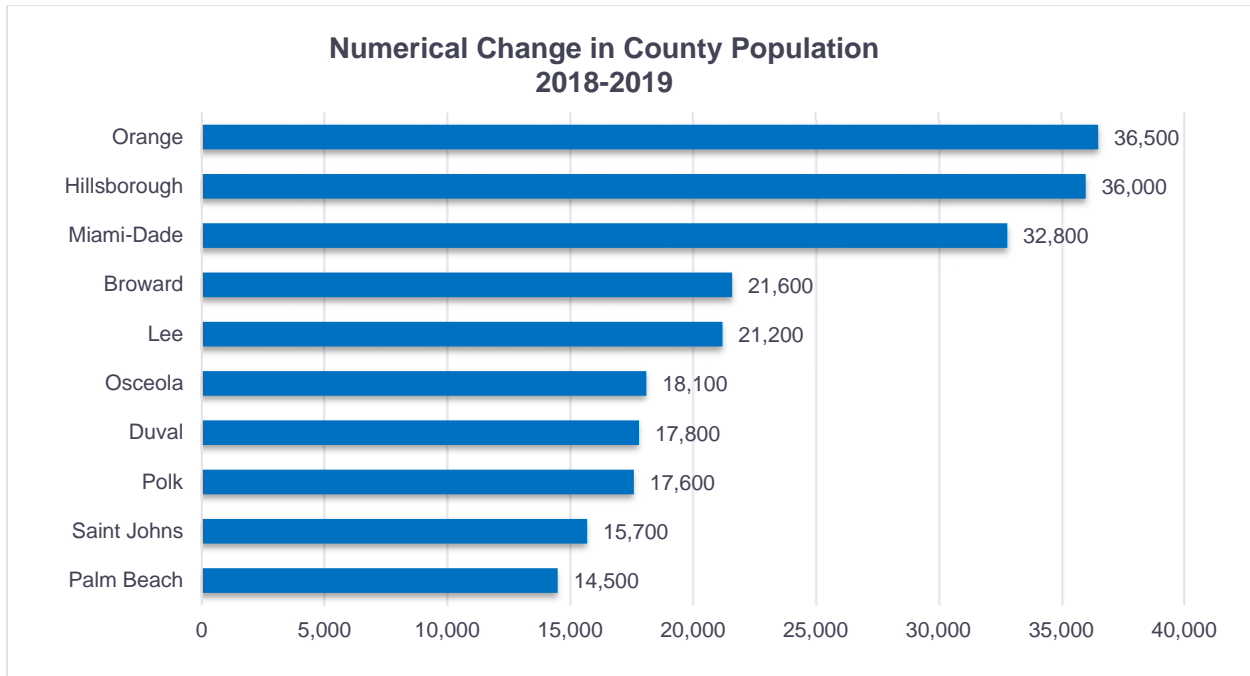
Numerical Change in County Population

Figure 1 depicts the 2019 population by county and the 2018-2019 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 2019, 57 of the 67 counties in Florida saw an increase in population. Not surprisingly, the most populous counties saw the largest increase. The population in two (2) counties, Hamilton and Lafayette, remained unchanged in 2019. The remaining eight (8) counties experienced a decrease in population: Bay, Calhoun, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, and Union. Except for Union County that is located in District 2, all other seven counties are located in District 3, which were hit by Hurricane Michael in October 2018. Hurricane Michael, the first Category 5 hurricane on record to impact the Florida Panhandle, made landfall in Bay County and caused catastrophic and widespread damage in the area. It contributed to the county's population decrease by 13,900 people, the largest decrease among all. **Figure 2** lists the ten (10) counties with the largest population growth during the past year. Orange County gained the most

with 36,500 people, followed closely by Hillsborough County with 36,000 people. Miami-Dade County came in third with an increase of 32,800. Other counties include Broward, Lee, Osceola, Duval, Polk, Saint Johns, and Palm Beach, all of which contain large urban areas in the state.
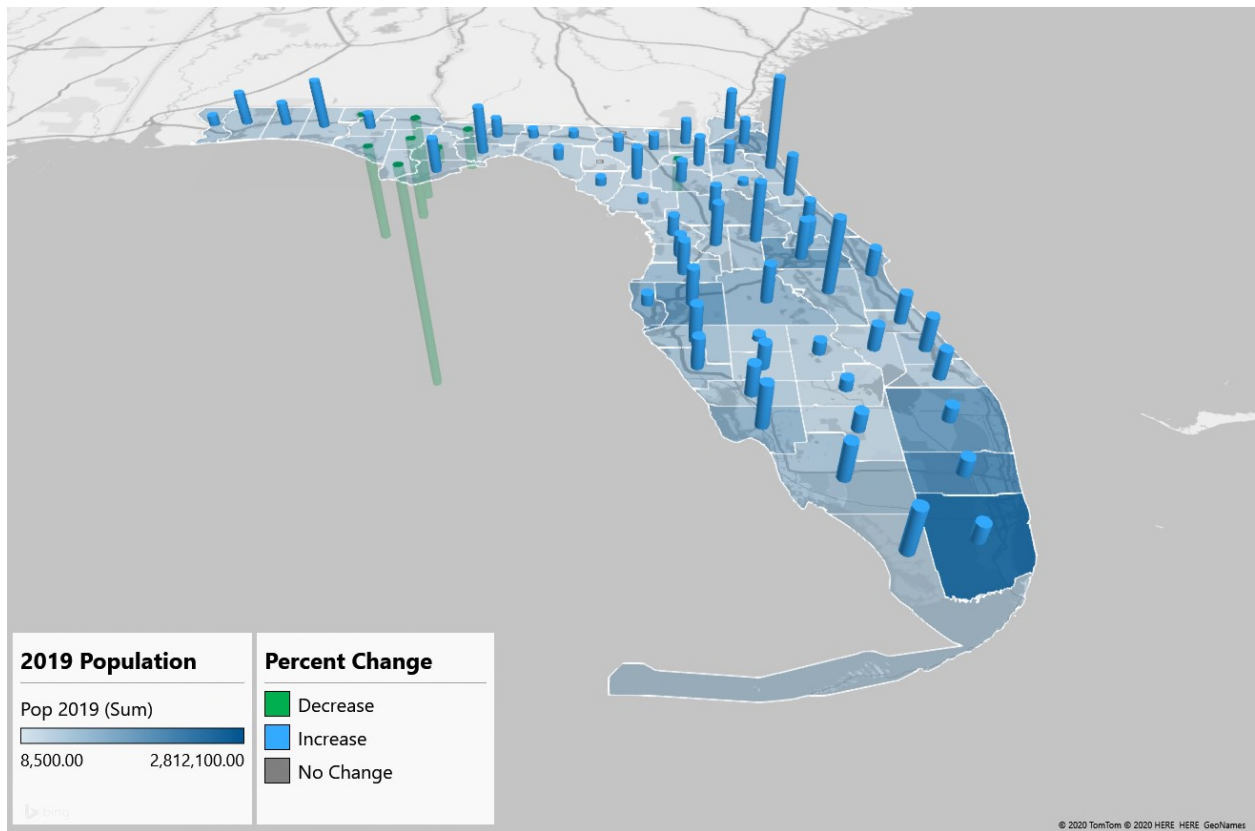

2019 Population

Pop 2019 (Sum)

8,500.00   2,812,100.00

Numerical Change

- Decrease
- Increase
- No Change

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FIGURE 1 – NUMERICAL CHANGE IN COUNTY POPULATION

**Numerical Change in County Population
2018-2019**

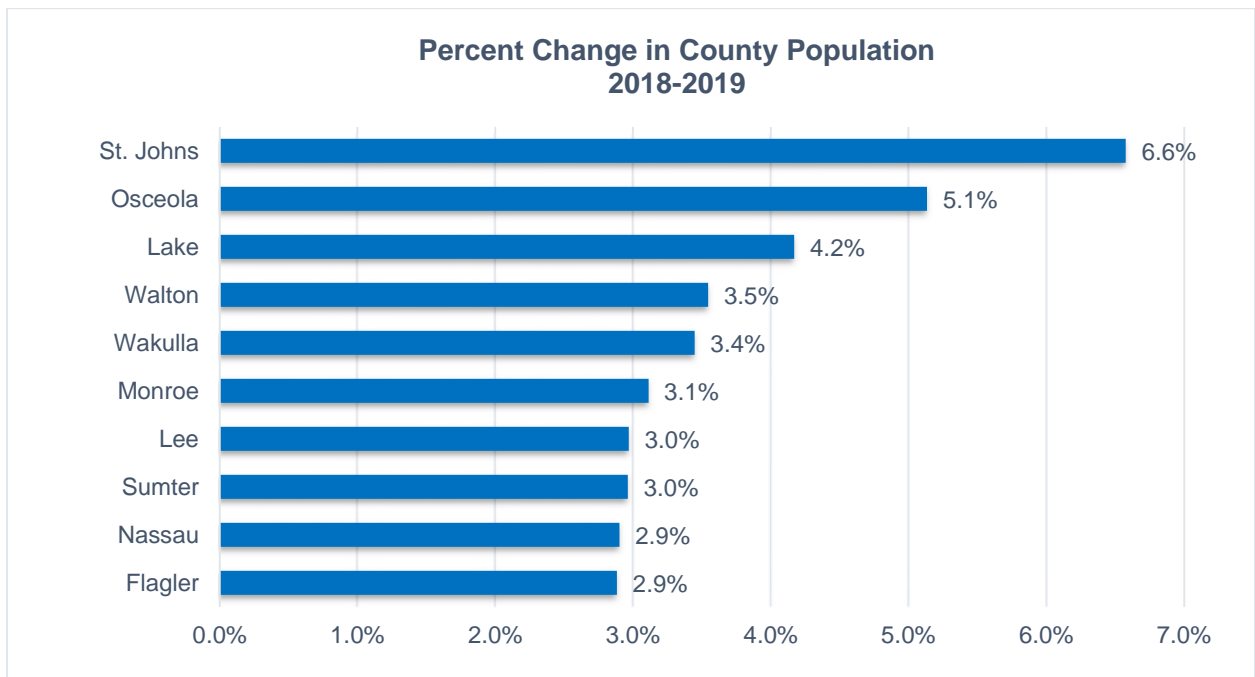| County	Value
Orange	36,500
Hillsborough	36,000
Miami-Dade	32,800
Broward	21,600
Lee	21,200
Osceola	18,100
Duval	17,800
Polk	17,600
Saint Johns	15,700
Palm Beach	14,500

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 2019. 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, St. Johns County led the state with 6.6% growth in population, followed closely by Osceola County with 5.1%, and Lake County with 4.2%. Other counties with high percentage population growth include Walton, Wakulla, Monroe, Lee, Sumter, Nassau, and Flagler. Among the eight (8) counties that saw a population decline in 2019, Gulf County had the largest percent decrease with -20.6%, followed by Bay County with -7.7%. Jackson and Calhoun Counties experienced similar percentage changes with -6.7% and -6.6%, respectively.

2019 Population	Percent Change
Pop 2019 (Sum)	■ Decrease
8,500.00 — 2,812,100.00	■ Increase
	■ No Change

FIGURE 3 – PERCENT CHANGE IN COUNTY POPULATION

**Percent Change in County Population
2018-2019**

County	Percent Change
St. Johns	6.6%
Osceola	5.1%
Lake	4.2%
Walton	3.5%
Wakulla	3.4%
Monroe	3.1%
Lee	3.0%
Sumter	3.0%
Nassau	2.9%
Flagler	2.9%

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 2019 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 2019, the Florida's population grew by 12.8% to reach 21.2 million. During the same time period, however, the population in urbanized areas grew by 13.2% to reach 18.6 million. A slightly higher percentage of the state's population (87.7%) lived in urbanized areas in 2019.

Numerical Change in Urbanized Area Population

Figure 5 shows the 2019 population for the urbanized areas and the numerical change in population from 2010 to 2019 for each urbanized area. From 2010 to 2019, all but one urbanized areas experienced modest to large growth in population. The exception is the Panama City Urbanized Area which is composed of the urban areas of Bay County and Walton County. Due to the large decrease in Bay County's population, the Panama City UA's population also decreased by 1,173 people from the Year 2010 level. 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 600,577 people. Tampa--St. Petersburg and Orlando saw their population grow by approximately by 315,260 people and 278,943, respectively. The population in Jacksonville increased by 146,752. Sarasota--Bradenton, Kissimmee, and Cape Coral each gained around 100,000 people. The populations in Bonita Springs, Palm Bay--Melbourne, and Port St. Lucie also rose by 39,000 or more people.
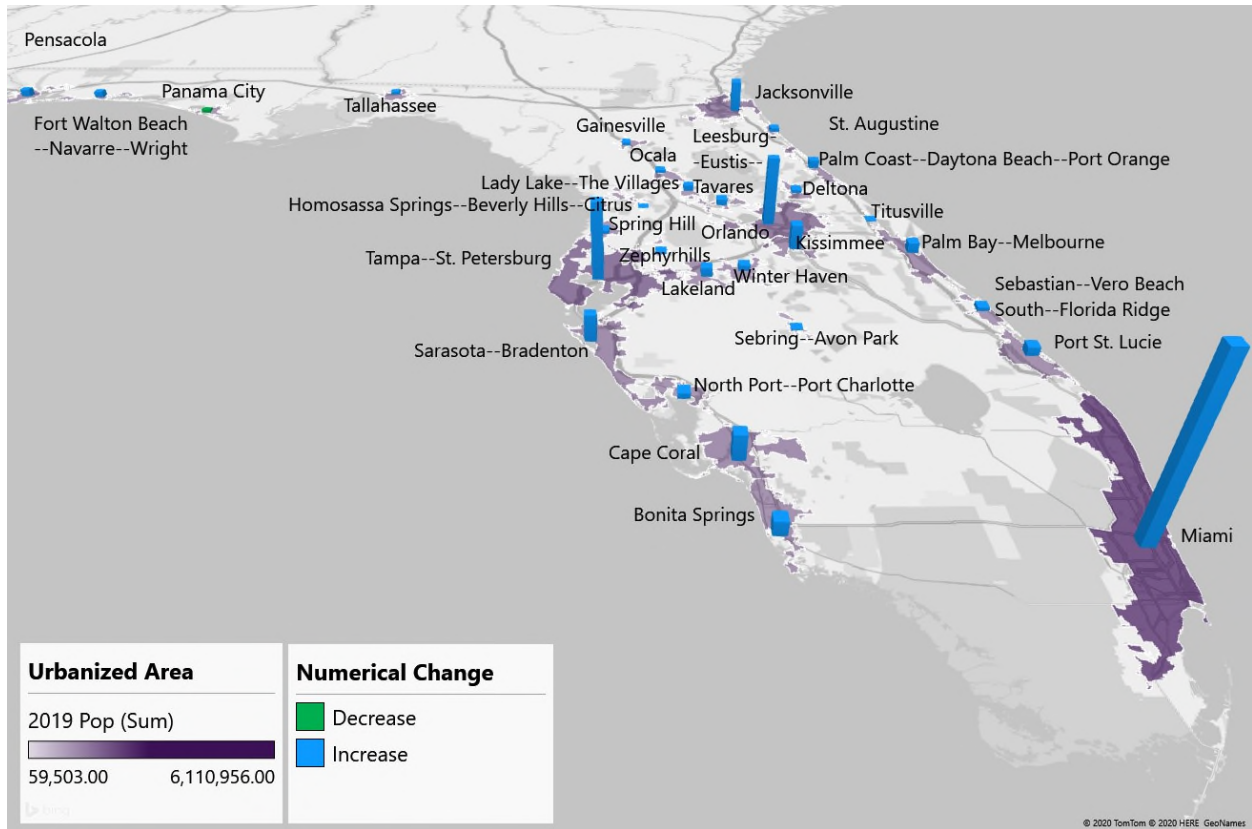
FIGURE 5 – NUMERICAL CHANGE IN URBANIZED AREA POPULATION
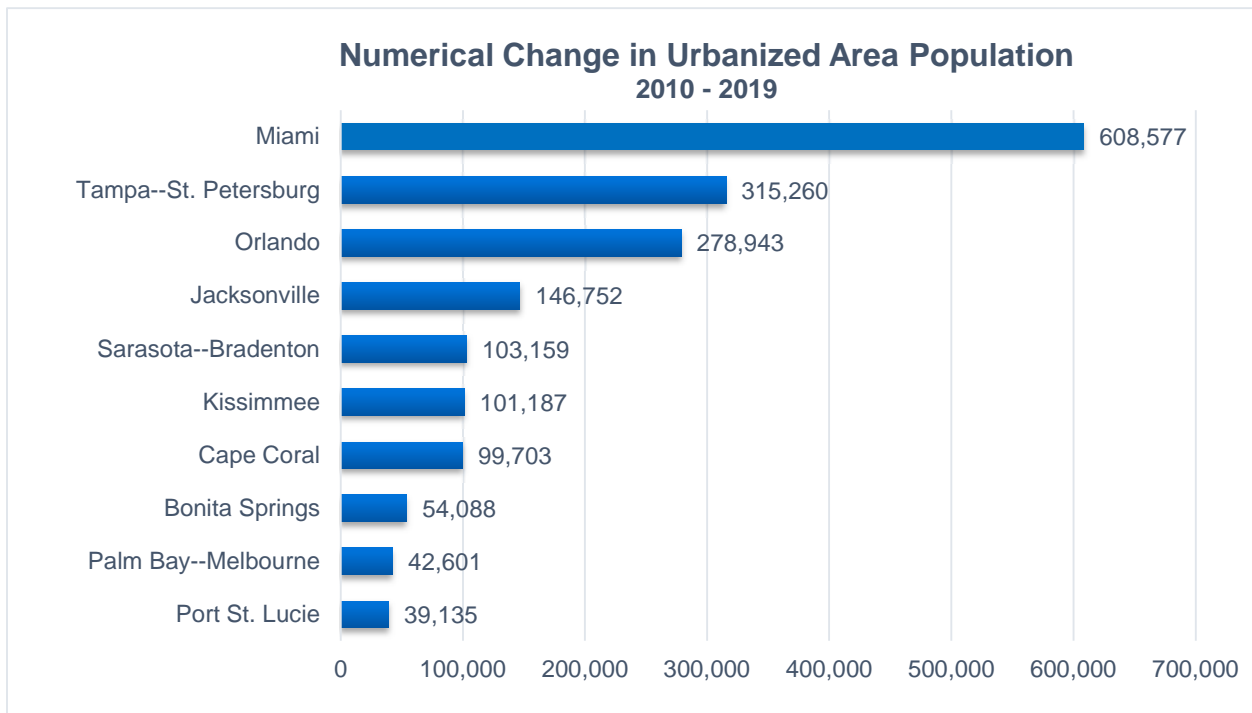
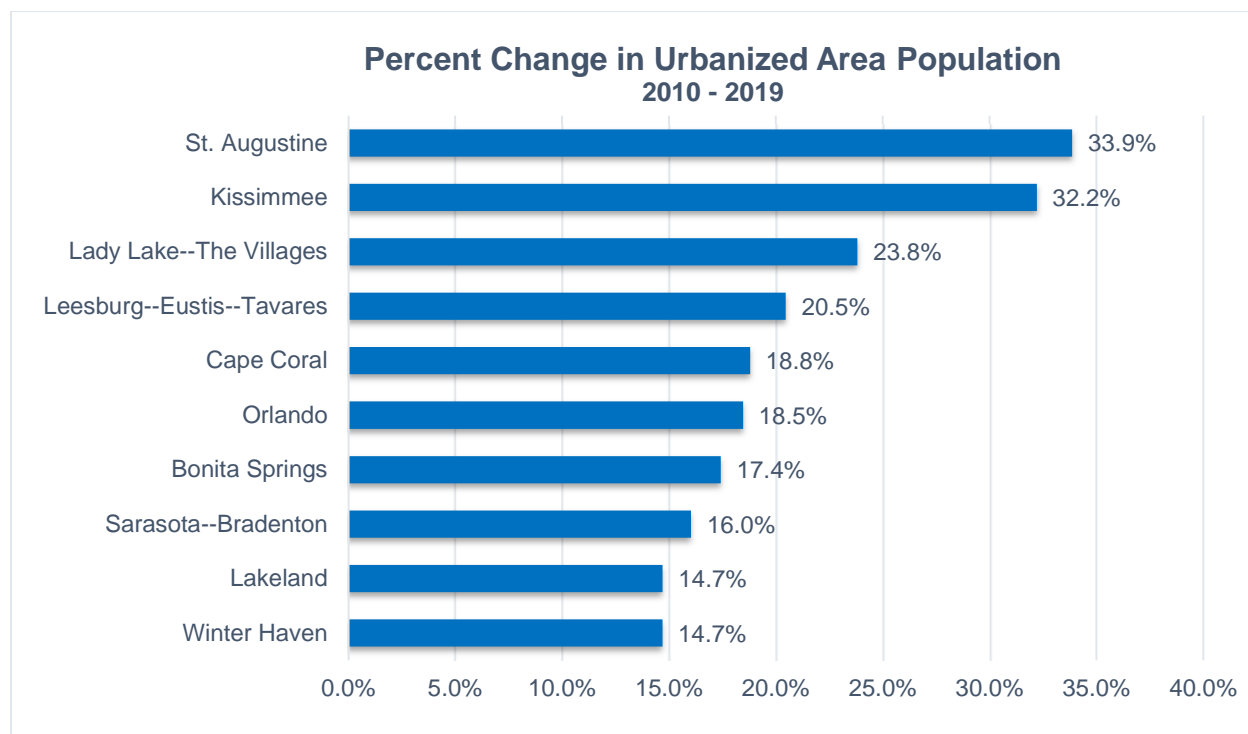**FIGURE 6 – URBANIZED AREAS WITH LARGEST NUMERICAL CHANGE IN POPULATION**

Percent Change in Urbanized Area Population

Figure 7 shows the 2019 population and percent change for each urbanized area from 2010 to 2019. **Figure 8** lists the top ten (10) urbanized areas with the largest percent change in population. From 2010 to 2019, St. Augustine experienced the fastest growth in population at 33.9%, followed closely by Kissimmee with 32.2%. The two urbanized areas, Lady Lake--The Villages and Leesburg--Eustis--Tavares, located in Lake County, Sumter County, and Marion County of Central Florida, also grew at a faster pace with 23.8% and 20.5%, respectively. The Orlando Urbanized Area nearby saw a slightly lower growth with 18.5%. The three urbanized areas along Florida's west coast, Cape Coral, Bonita Springs, and Sarasota -- Bradenton, experienced high growth at 18.8%, 17.4%, and 16.0%, respectively. Lakeland and Winter Haven had similar percent growth at 14.7%. On the other hand, due to the impact of Hurricane Michael and other contributing factors, the population in Panama City Urbanized Area fell by 0.8%.

FIGURE 7 − PERCENT CHANGE IN URBANIZED AREA POPULATION

Percent Change in Urbanized Area Population
2010 - 2019

Urbanized Area	Percent Change
St. Augustine	33.9%
Kissimmee	32.2%
Lady Lake--The Villages	23.8%
Leesburg--Eustis--Tavares	20.5%
Cape Coral	18.8%
Orlando	18.5%
Bonita Springs	17.4%
Sarasota--Bradenton	16.0%
Lakeland	14.7%
Winter Haven	14.7%

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 2019 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 2019, Florida's population grew by 12.8% to reach 21.2 million. During the same time period, however, the population covered by the MPOs increased by 13.2% to reach 20.5 million. By 2019, a slightly higher percentage of the state's population (96.5%) resided in one of the MPOs.
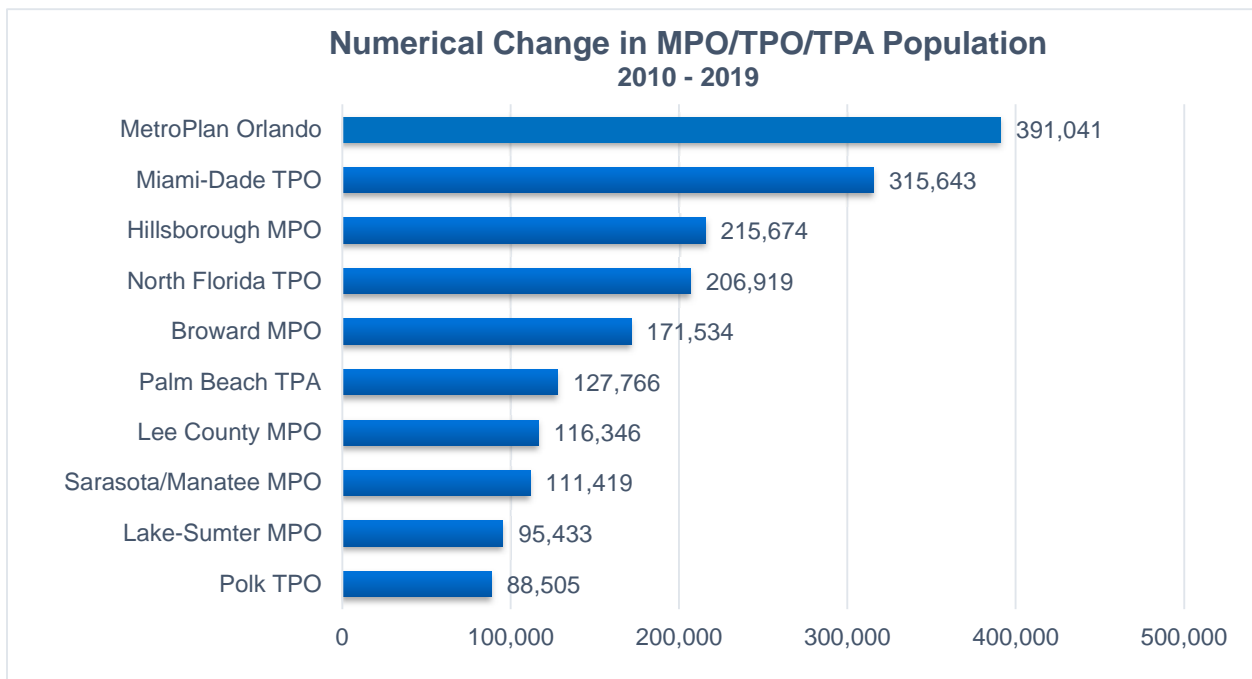
Numerical Change in MPO Population

Figure 9 shows the 2019 population for the MPOs and the numerical change in population from 2010 to 2019 for each MPO. During the period from 2010 to 2019, population grew in all MPO areas except for Bay County TPO where the County population decreased by 1,552. The largest growth occurred in the largest MPOs. **Figure 10** lists the top ten (10) MPOs with the largest numerical change in population. Metroplan Orlando led the MPOs in population growth with an increase of 391,041, followed by Miami-Dade TPO with a population increase of 315,643. Hillsborough MPO had the third highest increase in population with 215,674. North Florida gained 206,919 people. The other two large MPOs in South Florida, Broward MPO and Palm Beach TPA, saw their population grow by 171,534 and 127,766, respectively. The two MPOs along the west coast, Lee County MPO and Sarasota/Manatee MPO, gained more than 110,000 people each. The two MPOs in Central Florida, Lake-Sumter MPO and Polk TPO, saw their population increase by more than 88,000.
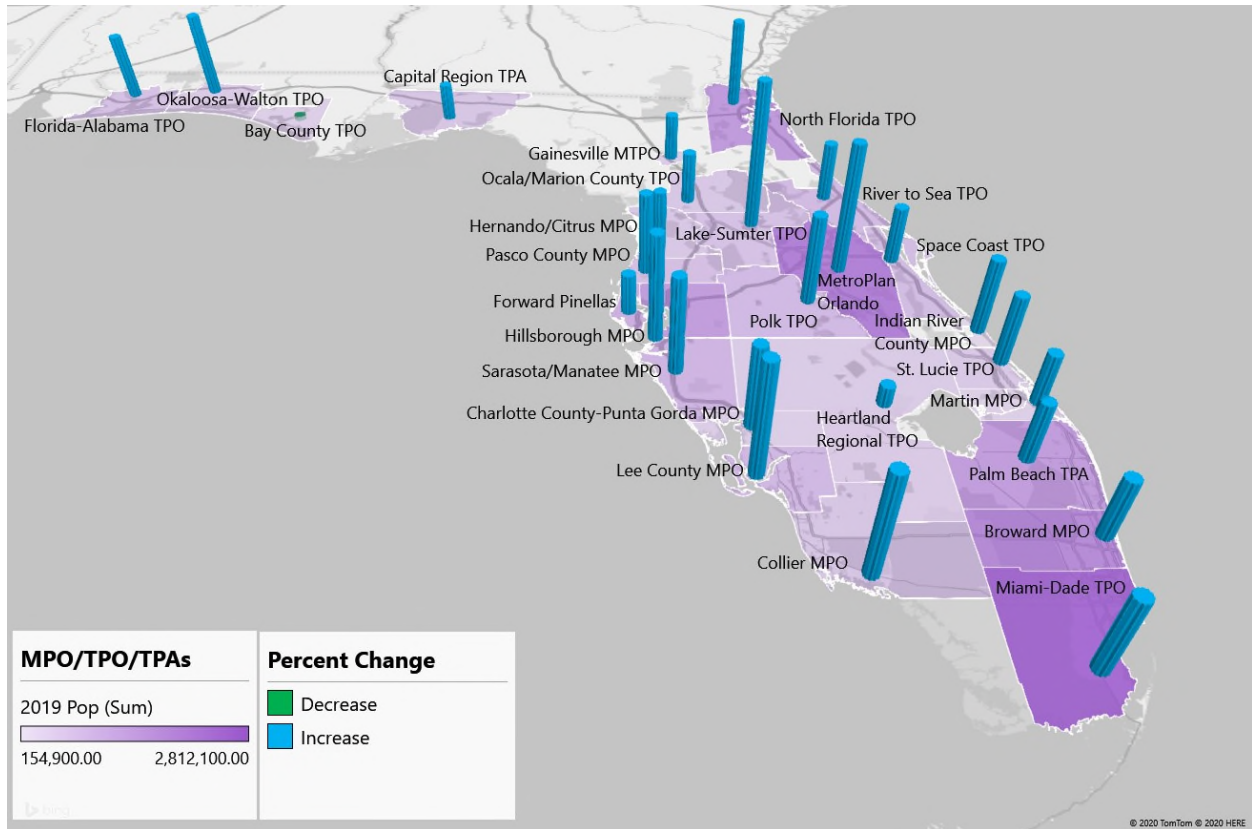
Percent Change in MPO Population

Figure 11 shows the 2019 population and percent change for each MPO from 2010 to 2019. **Figure 12** lists the top ten (10) MPOs with the largest percent change in population. From 2010 to 2019, Lake-Sumter experienced the fastest growth in population with 24.4%, followed closely by MetroPlan Orlando with 21.3%. Lee County MPO came in third with a population growth of 18.8%. The population in Hillsborough County MPO grew by 17.5%, and Collier MPO witnessed an expansion of 17.2%. The percent change for the next five fastest growing MPOs ranged from 13.6% to 15.9%. Bay County TPO was the only MPO that saw its population decline. The percent change was -0.9%.
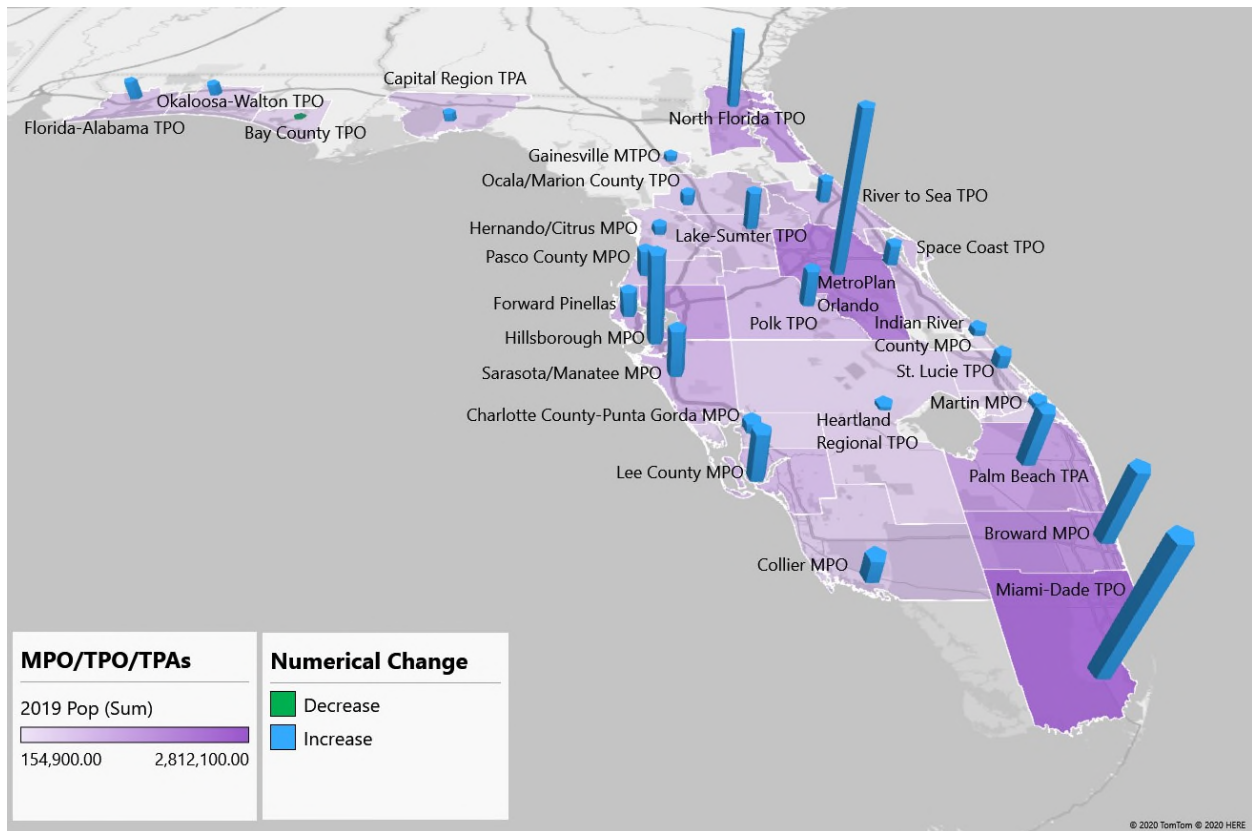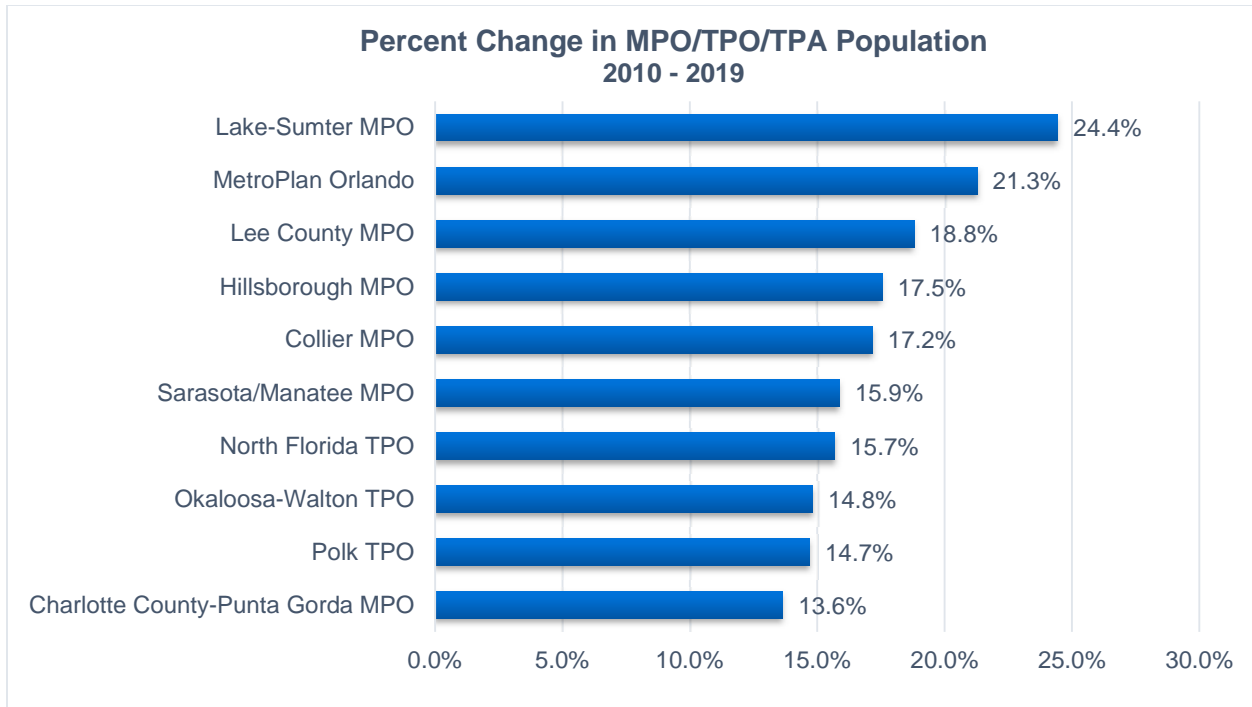
FIGURE 9 – NUMERICAL CHANGE IN MPO POPULATION

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**

Population Density

The spatial distribution and concentration of people is an important factor impacting urban structure and transportation requirements. Population density influences both travel patterns and land use configurations. Increasing development density tends to bring certain benefits such as reducing driving, lowering Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT), and providing more opportunities for public transit. On the other hand, lowering development density could result in longer average work trip travel times and greater traffic congestion. In addition to population estimates, the FTO also conducts analysis of population densities for counties, urbanized areas, and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). Population density maps and tables are provided on FTO's Demographic and Commuting Analysis website.

Figure 13 shows the population density by county based on the 2019 population estimates. The State of Florida has a surface area of 65,757.7 square miles (170,311.6 square kilometers), of which 53,624.8 square miles (138,887.5 square kilometers) are land areas. Based on the 2019 population estimates, this equates to 396 persons per square mile (154 persons per square kilometer) of land area, which makes Florida one of the most densely populated states in the US.

The largest county by population is Miami-Dade County with well over 2.8 million individuals residing within the county lines in 2019. The largest county by land area is Collier County with 1,998.3 square miles (5,175.6 square Kilometers). However, the County with the highest density is Pinellas County with 3,572 persons per square mile (1,379 persons per square Kilometer). Other counties with the highest densities are those that contain the largest urban centers in the state, such as Broward County (1,587 persons per square mile or 613 persons per square Kilometer), Orange County (1,534 persons per square mile or 592 persons per square Kilometer), and Miami-Dade County (1,482 persons per square mile or 572 persons per square Kilometer).

On the other end of the spectrum, Liberty County is the most sparsely populated county with a population density of only 11 persons per square mile or 4 persons per square Kilometer. Lafayette County and Glades County had similar densities with 16 persons per square mile or 6 persons per square Kilometer. Taylor County had slightly higher density with 22 persons per square mile or 8 persons per square Kilometer.
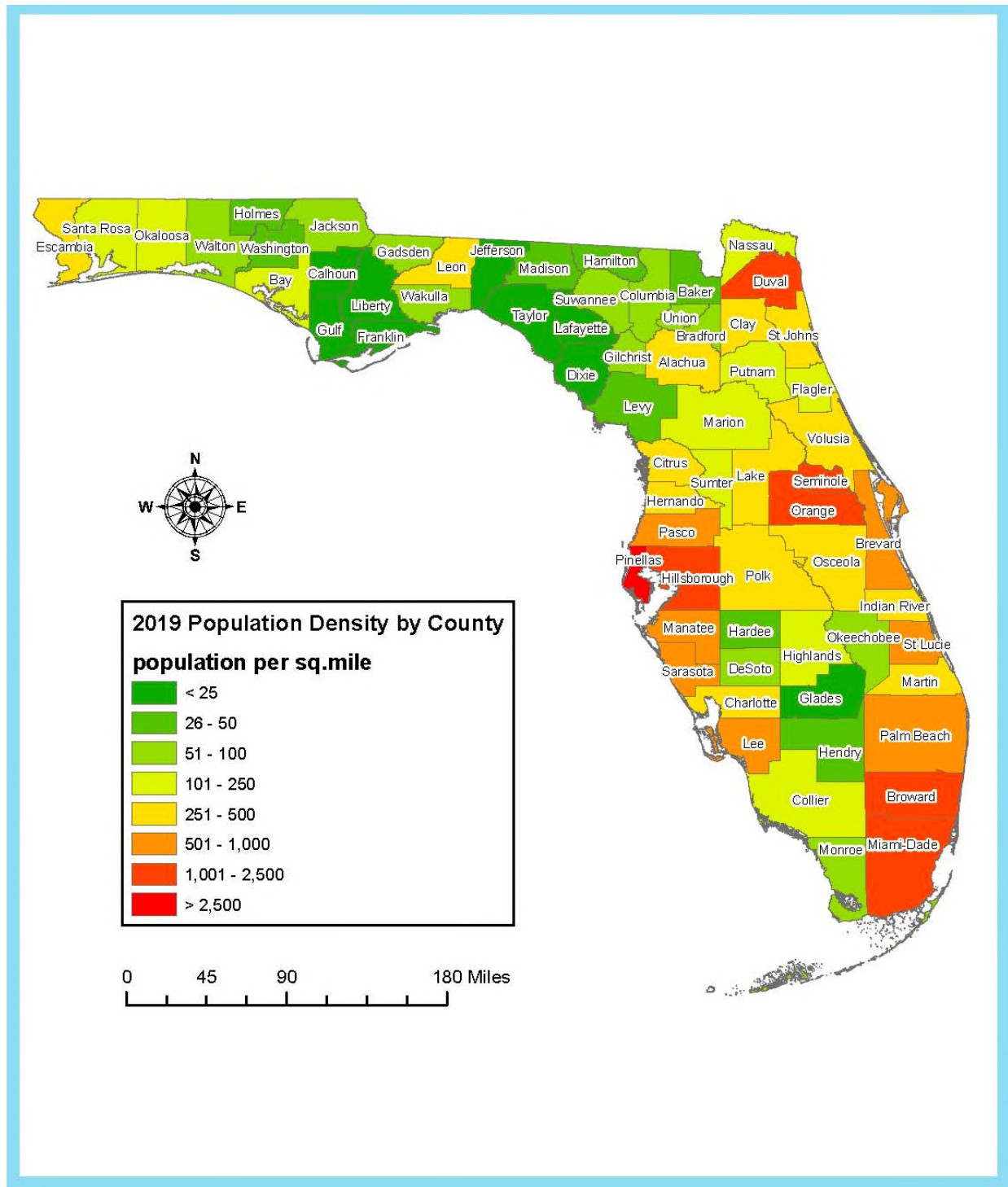
FIGURE 13 – 2019 POPULATION DENSITY BY COUNTY

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. As evidenced by Hurricane Michael in Florida's Panhandle, a natural disaster would also have an impact on population changes. 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).