

Executive Summary

Pasco County is located in west central Florida and is considered the twelfth largest county by population. The county is bound by the Gulf Coast and shares its borders to the north by Hernando County, on the east by Polk and Sumter Counties, and to the south by Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties. The county in size is rather large, the total political area for Pasco County is 868 square miles, with approximately 745 square miles comprised of land area and 123 square miles comprised of water (inland, coastal, territorial, new reservoirs and other man-made lakes). The region is characterized by discontinuous highlands in the form of ridges separated by valleys. The ridges are above the static level of the water in the aquifer, and the valleys are below it. Broad shallow lakes are common on the valley floors, while smaller, deeper lakes formed on the ridges. Based on physiography, the county can be divided into five areas: the Coastal Swamps, the Gulf Coastal Lowlands, the Brooksville Ridge, the Tsala Apopka Plain, and the Western Valley. In addition to the physiography, the County is considered multi-jurisdictional. This includes six municipalities: the City of Dade City, the City of New Port Richey, the City of Port Richey, the City of San Antonio, the City of Zephyrhills, and the Town of St. Leo. The remaining areas are considered unincorporated. Figures 0.1 provides a visual on the county's location within the State of Florida and its political boundaries.

The State of Florida experienced 69 Major Disaster Declarations during the between 1953 and 2016¹, the specific declarations for Pasco County is included Appendix E. The community experiences coastal flooding and hurricanes; inland riverine overflows and tornadoes; and sinkholes and wildfires countywide. Its notable weather events included Hurricane Irma (2017), Hurricane Hermine (2016), Tropical Storm Debby (2012), Hurricane Jeanne (2004), Hurricane Francis (2004), Hurricane Charley (2004), Hurricane Georges (1998), Tropical Storm Josephine (1996), Hurricane Erin (1995), and the March 1993 Storm of the Century.

Tropical Storm Debby, Hurricane Hermine, and Hurricane Irma affected Pasco County in particular, resulting in damage to many structures for which federal grants are in process in effort to reduce future flooding potential to identified project areas countywide. A large portion of the structures protected are within Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). Aside from tropical weather events and their corresponding grant opportunities, Pasco County experienced damaging tornados in 2006, 2007, 2016, and 2018. Non-tropical cyclone related flooding occurred frequently during 1998, 2003, and 2015.

While Pasco County does not face the level of exposure to tropical storms as do Miami-Dade County or the Florida Keys, the state's overall risk level is reflected in the fact that approximately 35% of all National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policies are written in the State of Florida. Pasco County alone has nearly \$6 billion of written NFIP policies. The most recent period for which NFIP data secured for Pasco County was in July 2018. At that time, it was reported that over 24,000 flood insurance policies were in effect in the County and local municipalities representing a total of \$5,736,230,400 in coverage. The policies in force provide protection for approximately 13.1% of the total housing units in Pasco County.

¹ <http://www.fema.gov/disasters/grid/state-tribal-government/47>

Given this varied geographic layout, jurisdictional vulnerability to emergencies and disasters is nuanced. In general, all jurisdictions are vulnerable to the effects of such hazards as wind from tropical cyclones, extreme temperatures and drought, wildfires, severe storms, flooding, , drought, coastal and riverine erosion, geological, winter storms and freezes, and hazardous materials (hazmat) releases. . Coastal storm surge, flooding, high winds, and oil spill events present threats to the cities of New Port Richey and Port Richey and to the unincorporated areas of the County, from Hudson to Holiday. Freshwater flood events, high winds, and wildfires are most commonly found in the Suncoast Parkway and I-75 communities like Cypress Creek and Land O' Lakes. Hazardous materials spills present a higher vulnerability along major transportation corridors and in industrial settings. Dade City, New Port Richey, Port Richey and the western portions of unincorporated Pasco County have the highest probability of an industrial chemical incident.

The Hazard Analysis section of the Local Mitigation Strategy Plan (LMS) discusses in detail various types of hazards and their reported events and assigns each jurisdiction with a very low/low/moderate/high probability of occurrence and level of vulnerability. It identifies Pasco County as being highly vulnerable to natural hazards like tropical cyclones, wildfire, floods, and severe weather, geological, and drought and heat waves. It also analyzes the topography, historical development and land use patterns, and growth and development trends that affect the county's vulnerability.

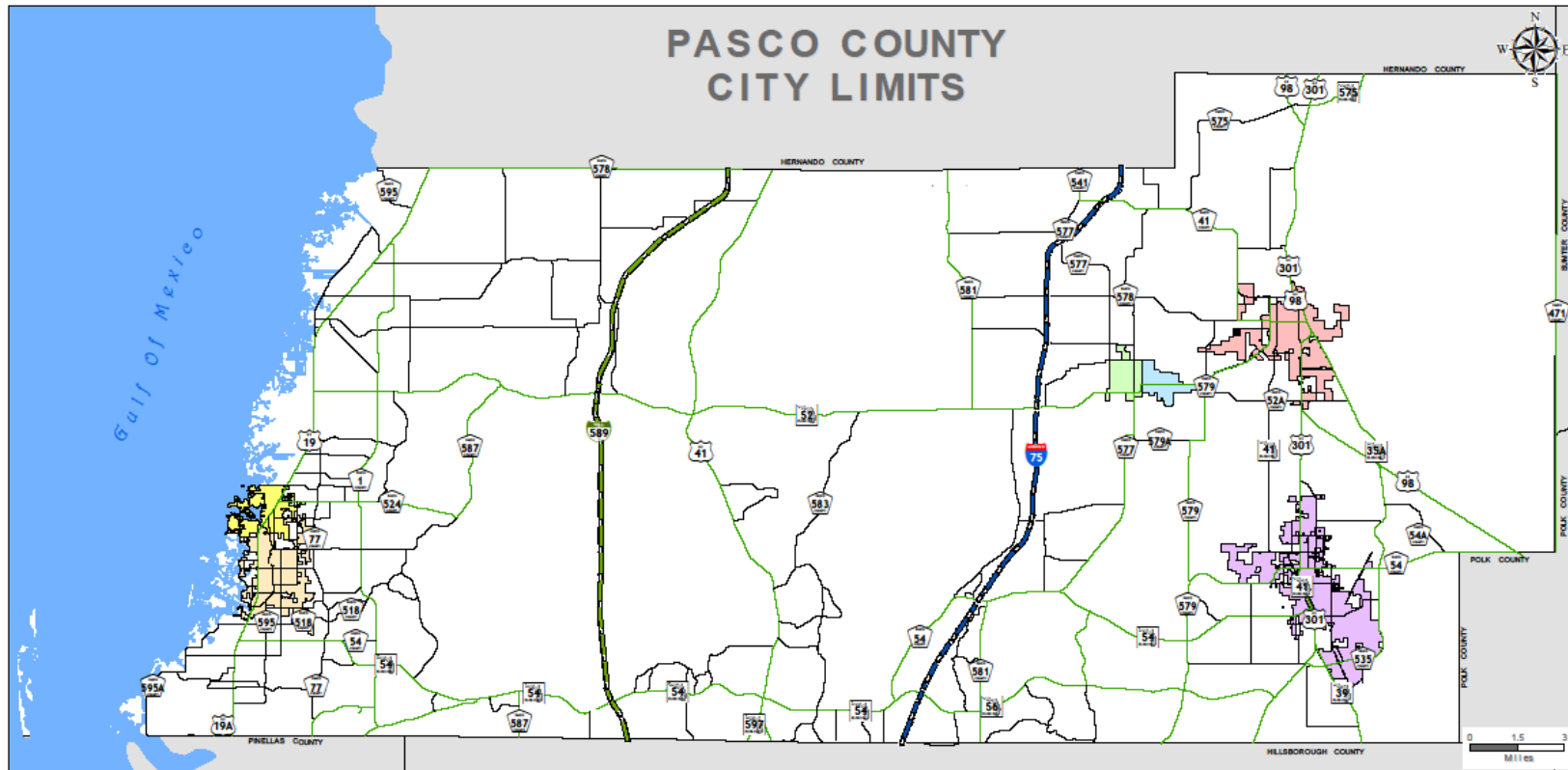
Hazard mitigation is the practice of reducing risks to people, property, and critical infrastructure from disasters. When developing new areas of a community, it is relatively straightforward to avoid hazardous areas if the locations are known, in advance. Since few communities are created from scratch, it is also necessary to make existing communities safer and able to more quickly recover following a disaster. The ability to recover quickly is called hazard resilience. Despite many obstacles that arise during efforts to implement hazard mitigation, the end result of such projects brings benefits that become apparent after a disaster. The cost of reconstruction is lower and the time it takes to recover is shorter; businesses are closed for a shorter period of time; public facilities require fewer repairs; and the community is restored to normalcy more quickly. In the long term, the community will be more resilient to future disasters.

The identification, reduction and management of disaster risks are becoming increasingly important. If effective action is not taken to mitigate against loss of life and property damage, the human and economic costs of disasters escalate precipitously and communities may possibly never fully recover. The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) continues finding reasonable approaches to making communities more resistant to disasters and ensuring that redevelopment in their aftermath will lessen future vulnerability. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is by having every local government develop and adopt both a Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) and a Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP).

Local government, citizens businesses, industry, educational institutions, and community organizations must strive together to meet mitigation objectives. This LMS is a compilation of stakeholder efforts to identify mitigation goals and objectives. This step then allows participants to develop mitigation initiatives based on the county's hazard and vulnerability analysis. Implementation of mitigation objectives is accomplished through personal awareness and

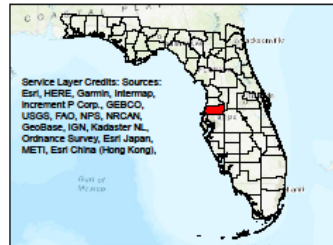
responsibility; government regulation and enforcement; and public awareness and support. In short, this LMS will make Pasco County a safer, more disaster-resistant community.

**Figure 0.1
Pasco County's County Location and Political Boundaries**



This map is for informational purposes only. The data contained herein is not collected under the supervision of, or approved by, a licensed surveyor. It is not intended for any legal use. The data does not meet the minimum technical standards under the Florida Administrative Code 61D17-5. The Pasco County Board of County Commissioners does not accept any responsibility for errors or omissions of any kind contained in the data herein. All products and derivatives from the data contained herein must retain this disclaimer.

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- Legend**
- Dade City City Limits
 - New Port Richey City Limits
 - Port Richey City Limits
 - San Antonio City Limits
 - St Leo City Limits
 - Zephyrhills City Limits
 - Arterial Road
 - Collector Road
 - Interstate Road
 - Toll Road



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to Create a Better Future**

