



# POLK

COUNTY

Board of County Commissioners

**2020 Polk Profile**



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
330 W. Church Street  
PO Box 9005  
Bartow, FL 33831-9005

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*photo by Ken Williams, Fire Rescue*

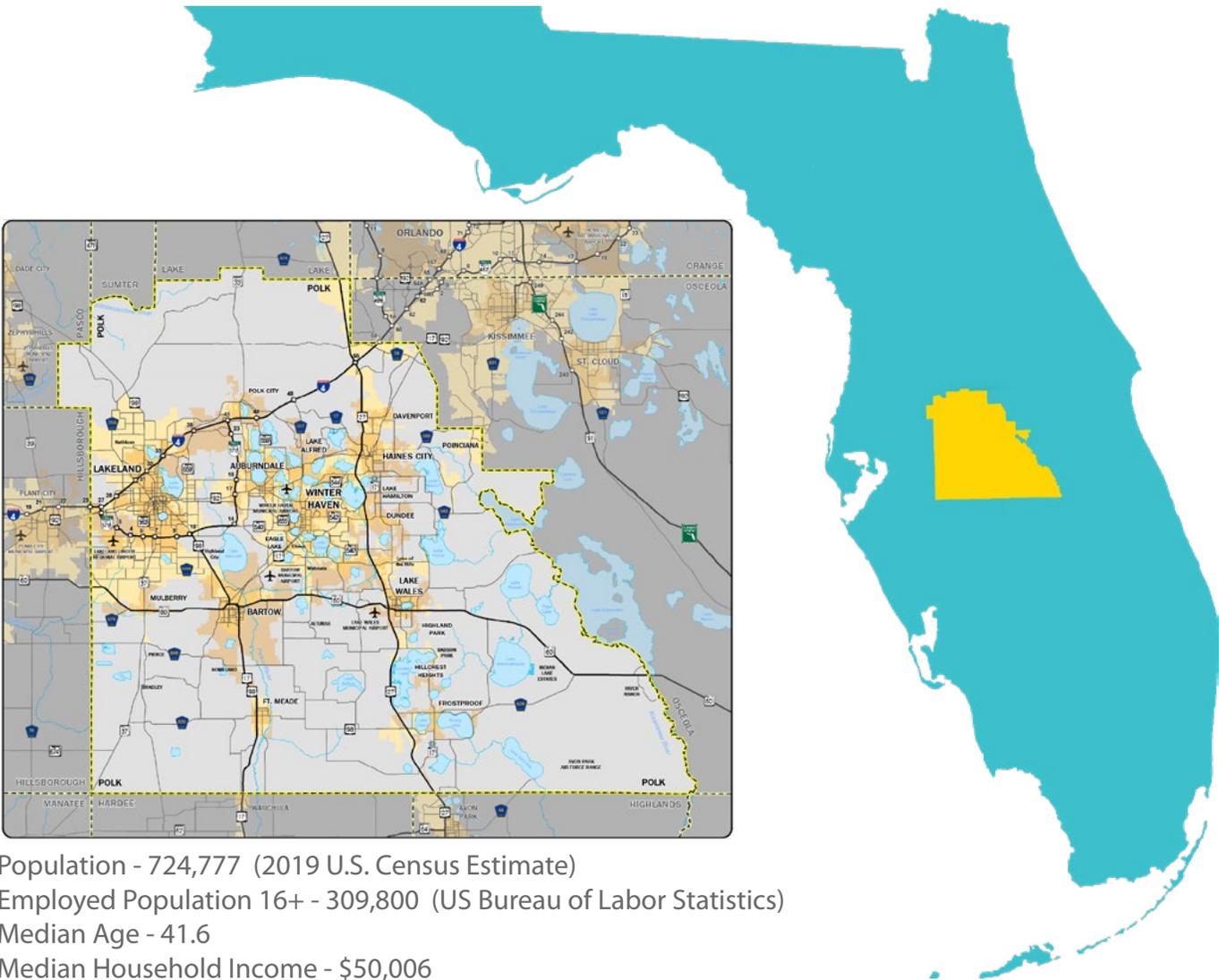


## **Mission:**

We enhance the quality of life  
for people throughout Polk County.



# About POLK



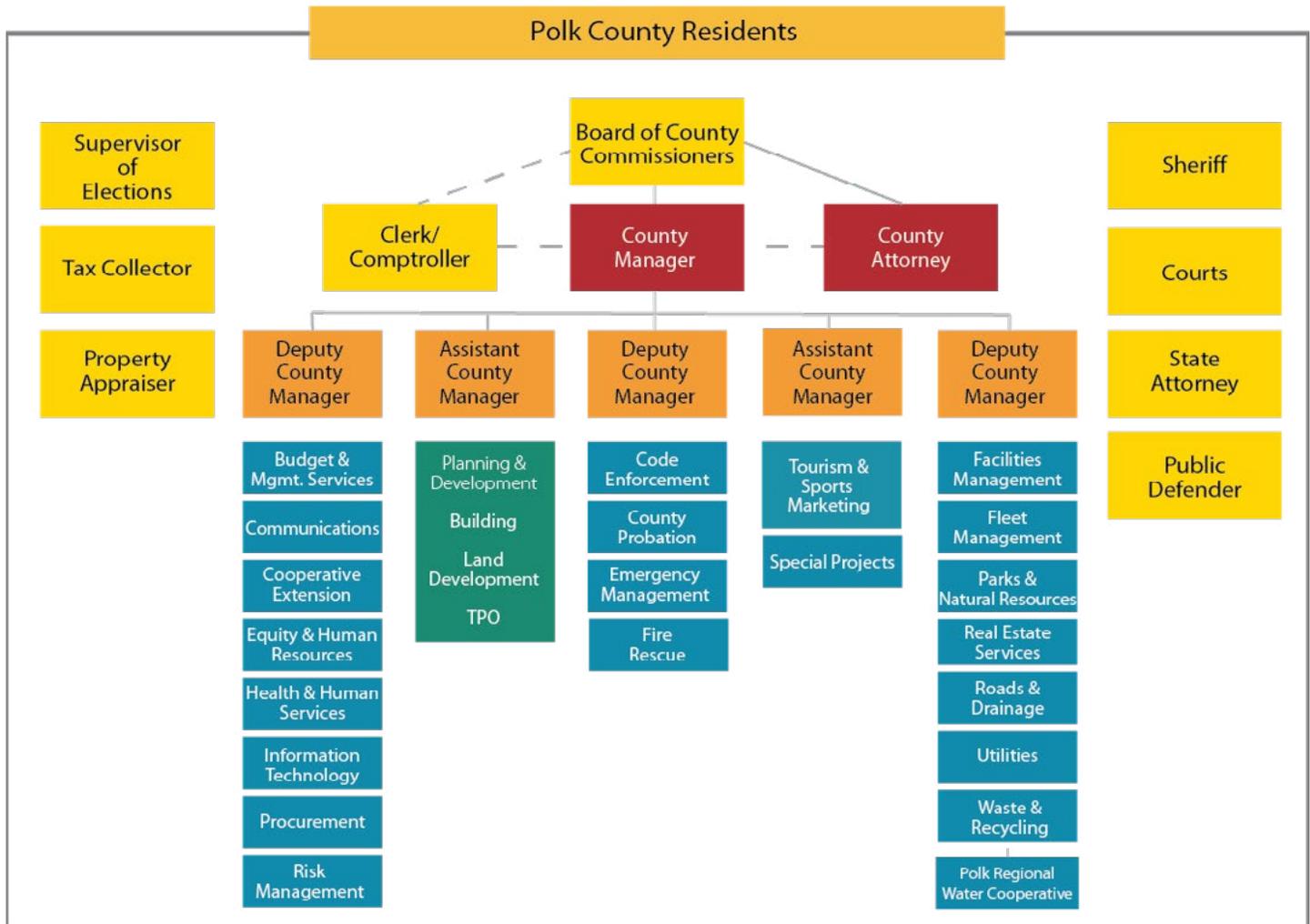
Population - 724,777 (2019 U.S. Census Estimate)  
Employed Population 16+ - 309,800 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics)  
Median Age - 41.6  
Median Household Income - \$50,006

- Polk County represents 3.4 percent of the total population of Florida
- Nine million people and a workforce of 3.5 million are within a 100-mile radius of Polk County
- Polk County has six traditional colleges/universities, including the newest state university, Florida Polytechnic University. Combined, these institutions enroll more than 19,000 students

Total Square Miles - 2,012  
Square Land Miles - 1,875  
Square Water Area - 135

- Polk County is Florida's fourth largest county and is larger than the State of Rhode Island
- The county has 17 municipalities, the largest being Lakeland and the second being Winter Haven. Other municipalities include Auburndale, Bartow, Davenport, Dundee, Eagle Lake, Fort Meade, Frostproof, Haines City, Highland Park, Hillcrest Heights, Lake Alfred, Lake Hamilton, Lake Wales, Mulberry and Polk City

# Our STRUCTURE



## Polk County Government...

- Provides fire protection and ALL ambulance services
- Coordinates emergency evacuations
- Enforces housing codes and regulations
- Determines land use and zoning
- Facilitates garbage and recycling collection
- Issues building permits
- Operates county landfill
- Administers affordable housing programs
- Provides health and welfare programs
- Preserves natural eco systems
- Builds, resurfaces and maintains roads
- Assists in developing small businesses
- Supplies drinking water
- Minimizes mosquito population
- Produces Government television (PGTV)
- Builds and maintains parks
- Preserves wildlife
- Provides wastewater collection/treatment
- Stimulates economic development
- Reviews development construction plans
- Offers agricultural education programs
- Initiates countywide clean-up projects
- Recruits sporting events and promotes tourism
- Provides public transportation
- Plans transportation to accommodate growth
- Maintains more than 12,500 street signs each year
- Monitors criminals who are on probation
- And much more!

# Charter Government



**County Commissioners: (Front) Rick Wilson, District 2; Martha Santiago, District 4; George Lindsey III, District 1. (Back) John Hall, District 5; Bill Braswell, District 3 (chair).**

Polk County has a charter government authorized by the Florida Constitution. It may only be adopted by a vote of the local registered voters. It is a means by which local control, home rule and citizen input are enhanced. A county charter is a written document defining the powers, structure and functions of the county. The charter acts as a “mini-constitution” for the people of Polk County.

County government is granted all home rule powers of self-government as approved by the local voters that are consistent with state law.

Some of the key provisions of the Charter:

- Requires that candidates for County Commission reside in the district in which they are running at

the time that they qualify for office, in addition to maintaining residency after being elected

- Ordinances and charter amendments can be proposed by petition of the voters
- Members of the County Commission and the Constitutional Officers may be recalled from office in accordance with state law and the Governor retains the right to suspend or remove any county official from office
- Supervisor of Elections will become non-partisan.

The Charter does not affect city governments. It is not a form of annexation or consolidation. It does not affect the powers or duties of the Constitutional Officers or the School Board.

The State Legislature is the only governing body with the power to create, abolish or consolidate counties. A county cannot change its form of government, such as combining city and county governments, without a referendum.

**Board of County Commissioners**

The Board of County Commissioners is the governing body of Polk County. Each commissioner is elected by a countywide vote to a four-year term. In the November 2018 election, the Polk County Charter was amended to limit the number of terms to three consecutive four-year terms.

Each of Polk County’s five commissioners represents a county district and must reside in his/her district. Commissioners from districts one, three and five are elected in Presidential election years; districts two and four are elected in the intervening years.

In November, a chairman and vice chairman are elected by the members of the County Commission. The board selects committee chair/liasons who, in turn, work with the county manager and staff to establish Board policies in specific focus areas, such as tourism, community outreach and legislative issues.

They also select citizens to serve on a variety of commissions, boards and councils.

**Duties**

The Florida Constitution and Chapter 125 of the Florida Statutes authorize the Board of County Commissioners to exercise all powers not prohibited by law. This includes levying taxes, distributing tax monies through budgeting and appropriations, constructing and maintaining roads and bridges, providing health and welfare services, managing all county-owned property, and providing supervision of all county functions and services. County taxes support many of the activities and services of county government, including the justice system, the sheriff, circuit and county court.

The Board meets the first and third Tuesday of the month in the Boardroom of the Administration Building in Bartow. Florida’s “Government in the Sunshine” law requires that all county government business takes place in public meetings and the public be given adequate notice of such meetings. The Board’s agenda is posted before each meeting and is available on the county’s website at [www.polk-county.net](http://www.polk-county.net). Meetings are also televised by PGTV and can also be viewed on the internet at the county’s website.

**County Manager**

The Board of County Commissioners hires the county manager who is responsible for all the divisions within the county commission, except for the County Attorney’s Office, which answers directly to the Board. The county manager serves as the budget officer and selects, employs and supervises county personnel. In FY 20/21, the county will employ about 2,140 people.

**Advisory Groups**

Advisory groups play a critical role in Polk County government. State law created some groups, the BoCC created others as advisors in specific areas. County residents are encouraged to participate by expressing a desire to be appointed to these groups or make recommendations for appointments.

**Constitutional Officers**

**Tax Collector**  
Joe Tedder



**Supervisor of Elections**  
Lori Edwards



**Sheriff**  
Grady Judd



**Property Appraiser**  
Marsha Faux



**Clerk of the Courts**  
Stacy Butterfield





### Fire Rescue Services (FY 2019/20)

Stations	46
Employees (Full-time)	603
Assist to Outside Agencies	59
Citizen Assist/Service Calls	1,556
Fire Alarm	2,145
Fire Calls	3,266
Hazardous Conditions	644
Medical Calls	87,012
Other	451
Rescue Call/Special Detail	306
Technical Rescue	87
Traffic/Transportation Incidents	7,776
<b>Total</b>	<b>103,302</b>

Source: Polk County Fire Rescue Division



### Police Protection-Sheriff (FY 2019/20)

Employees (total)	2,002
Sworn	699
Certified	347
Civilian	712
Total Crimes in Polk County	6,255
Marine/Agriculture Calls for Service	1,992
911 Calls for Service	309,448
Traffic Crashed Investigated	9,763
Calls for Animal Control	35,427
Daily Average Jail Population	2,556
Jail Bookings	27,672

Source: Polk County Sheriff's FY 2020/21 Strategic Plan and Budget



### Water and Wastewater Utilities

#### Water (September 2020)

Plants	31
Connections	70,413
Average Daily Flow Pumped (mgd)	16.276
Average Daily Flow Permitted (mgd)	31.646

#### Wastewater

Wastewater Facilities	7
Pumping Stations	345
Connections	52,776
Average Daily Treatment (mgd)	7.1
Averaged Permitted Daily Capacity (mgd)	13.094

#### Public Access Reclaimed Water

Facilities	3
Connections	12,026
Average Daily Reuse Flow (mgd)	5.969
Average Daily Resue Flow Permitted (mgd)	10.132

Source: Polk County Utilities Division

# Annual Review FY 2019/20

## County Parks

Regional Parks	6
Specialty Parks	53
Neighborhood Parks	28
Community Parks	16
Park Acres	4,231
Lighted Ballfields	83
Lighted Multi-purpose Fields	43
Boat Ramps	51
Boat Ramp Lanes	59
Docks	23

Source: Polk County Parks and Natural Resources Division



## Environmental Lands

Acres Acquired	26,257
Land Acquisition Cost	\$110,749,695
Acquisition Partners	\$79,413,108
18 of 32 properties	
County's Land Acquisition Cost	\$31,326,195
Savings % to county from partners	72%
Cost of Land Sold to State	\$1,788,965

Source: Polk County Parks and Natural Resources Division



## Public Works (FY 2019/2020)

Tons of Solid Waste disposed at Landfill Annual	575,998
Collections per Household* Households	52
Serviced*	144,686
Annual Curbside Waste Pickups*	7,523,672
Cost per Pick-Up*	\$0.95
Street Miles-Center Lane**	2,711
Traffic Signs**	89,291
Sidewalk Miles**	451

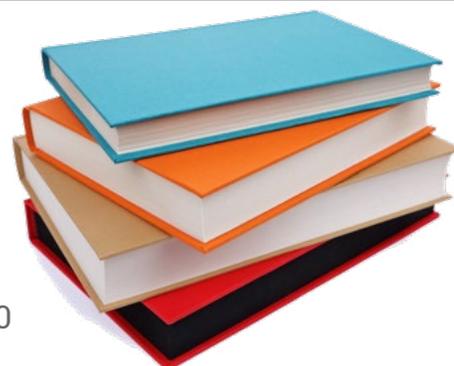
Sources: Polk County Waste & Recycling Division  
Polk County Roads & Drainage Division



## Libraries

Number of Libraries	17
Library Materials	716,143
Annual Circulation	2,357,725
Registered Borrowers	469,601

Source: Polk County Library Cooperative



# Polk County Trends & Issues

Polk County's economic outlook dramatically changed in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid economic downturn experienced in April and May was not the result of a recession or a changing political climate, but a forced shutdown of our economy intended to protect public health. Closing businesses and schools, asking residents to stay home and employees to work from home greatly affected our economy.

We are likely to be managing the effects of this public health crisis and economic downturn for some time to come. Polk County is prepared for the future

and funds priority and important areas of concern; however, should a prolonged economic downturn occur, the Board will need to address critical decisions regarding the levels of services we provide and the potential deferral of needed infrastructure improvements.

The Board continues to determine policy direction to address Polk's rapidly growing population and urbanizing environment. Board priorities are to assure our residents a safe community, improved transportation mobility, higher wage jobs in a vibrant economy and an even better quality of life.

## Seven Key Trends

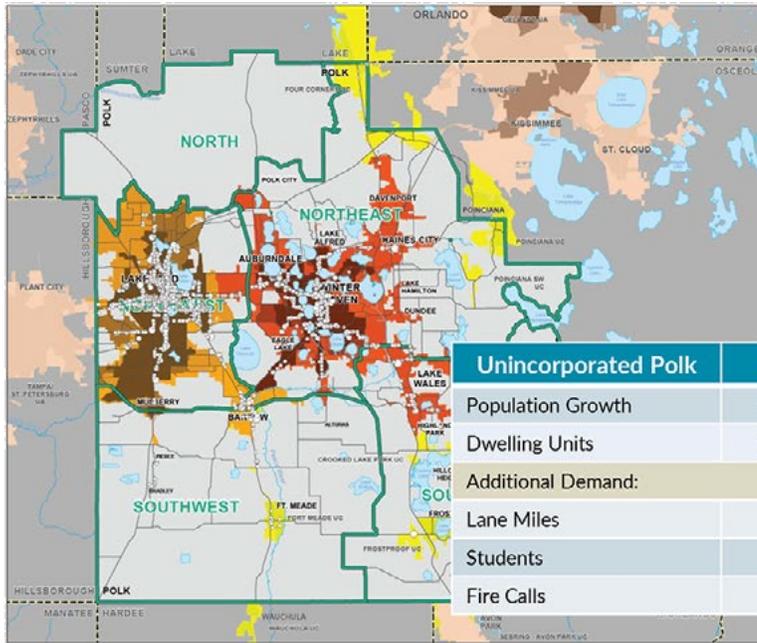
Seven key trends exist which represent challenges and opportunities for Polk County Government. These trends drive more specific challenges. Understanding these trends is critical for developing effective strategies. Trends include: *Urbanization and Population Growth, Revenue Growth, Limitations on Revenue Options, the Cost of Operating Government, Rising Costs to the Public, Competition for a Skilled Workforce and Leadership Transitions.*

## Challenges Addressed in the FY 2020/21 Budget

- ◆ Financial
- ◆ Infrastructure
- ◆ Human Resources (Skill)
- ◆ Service demands and public expectations
- ◆ Facilities
- ◆ Technology, tools and equipment



# Growth and Urbanization

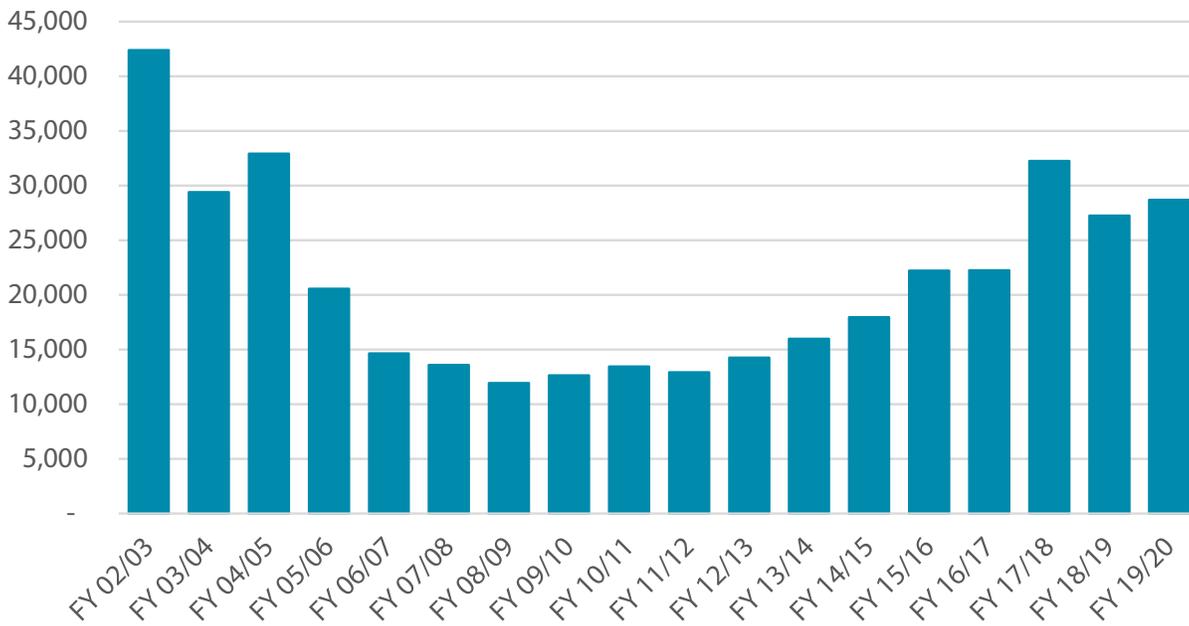


## Additional Demand for Services

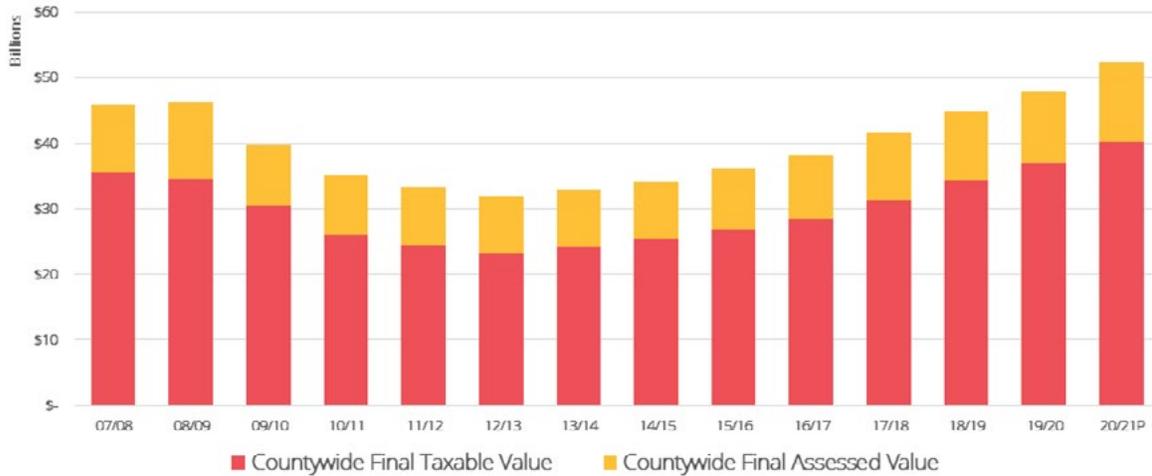
Population 2020 = 727,777 (est.)  
 Population 2040 = 1,000,000 (proj.)

Unincorporated Polk	N	NE	NW	SE	SW	Growth
Population Growth	3,603	118,109	60,711	19,582	4,622	206,627
Dwelling Units	1,716	56,242	28,910	9,325	2,201	98,394
Additional Demand:						
Lane Miles	0	226	62	36	0	324
Students	669	21,940	11,278	3,638	859	38,384
Fire Calls	756	24,769	12,732	4,107	969	43,333

# Building Permits Issued



## Countywide Assessed & Taxable Values



	Population*	Square Miles**	2020 Tax Rolls Taxable Values***	% of Change
Auburndale	16,650	22.6	\$1,358,074,995	4.90
Bartow	20,147	52.4	\$796,006,311	8.41
Davenport	6,005	3.9	\$431,741,482	32.16
Dundee	5,044	11.6	\$220,170,309	7.26
Eagle Lake	2,708	4.2	\$111,731,591	18.68
Fort Meade	6,257	8.5	\$136,793,192	20.77
Frostproof	3,273	19.1	\$144,410,331	7.31
Haines City	26,009	21.1	\$1,438,609,929	9.85
Highland Park	264	1.1	\$13,189,282	4.85
Hillcrest Heights	294	8.7	\$15,954,138	7.74
Lake Alfred	6,257	13.0	\$236,214,073	12.82
Lake Hamilton	1,485	4.1	\$92,717,200	8.19
Lake Wales	16,759	20.2	\$825,370,927	6.53
Lakeland	112,136	75.0	\$7,446,166,274	8.24
Mulberry	4,192	7.1	\$239,449,303	11.40
Polk City	2,422	5.1	\$182,545,608	12.14
Winter Haven	44,955	40.8	\$2,821,075,562	8.98
Unincorporated Polk	449,920	1,692.5	\$23,517,993,662	8.93

\* Population Source: 2019 US Census estimate

\*\* Polk County Information Technology Division

\*\*\* 2020 Polk Property Appraiser Tax Rolls