

Section 3 – Geography, Demographics, and Land Use

Requirement: §201.6 (c) (2) (ii)- The plan should describe vulnerability of providing a general description of land uses and development trends within the community so that mitigation options can be considered in future land use decisions.

Geography and Demographics of Bradford County

Bradford County is a rural county in Northeast Florida located between Gainesville and Jacksonville. Originally founded in 1858 as New River County, today’s boundaries were formed in 1921 by its split into Bradford and Union counties. Bradford County covers approximately 300 square miles (294 square miles of land) and is home to around 28,000 residents. Bradford County is the third-smallest county in the State of Florida by land area. The county seat of Bradford County is the City of Starke. Bradford County is also home to the cities of Hampton and Lawtey, as well as the Town of Brooker. The county is bordered by Baker County to the north, Union County to the west, Alachua County to the south, and Clay County to the east.

Land use in Bradford County is primarily agricultural. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 490 farms in Bradford County, consisting of approximately 58,841 acres. These farms produce livestock, crops, and timber.

Bradford County is susceptible to flooding and wind damage. Prior studies have identified the median household income to be around \$33,000, with about 15% of the county living below the poverty line. Because of this, the county has a number of poorly constructed homes, as well as mobile homes, leading to the risk of wind damage. Flood mitigation is a widely discussed aspect of the county and flood plains have been identified and mapped and are maintained in the Emergency Management Division and in the Building & Zoning Office.

Topography

As stated in the previous version of the Bradford County LMS, the county is in the Gulf Coastal Lowlands physiographic area, and its topography ranges from 39.1 feet to 179.1 feet North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88).

The east and northeast sides of both Santa Fe Lake and Little Santa Fe Lake are in the Chipley-Leon, Osier Soil Association, which consists of nearly level to gently sloping,