

THE GEOGRAPHY OF WELFARE REFORM IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

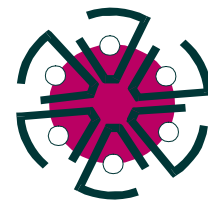
PART ONE

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23 June 1999



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Region

As each individual city and county in Southeast Florida gains population, they become more and more interdependent. Their services and governance systems become linked through formal and informal intergovernmental agreements; their citizens interact with each other and depend on the services, public and private, of the other. In many ways Southeast Florida is one already, but certainly within 20 years it is foreseeable that intra-regional leadership must look beyond their jurisdiction for regional solutions and successes.

Impact of Welfare Reform

The decision to give states block grants of social services funding and allowing them flexible regulations to design their own welfare requirements will have the greatest affect on local governments. In most situations, those citizens who do not become gainfully employed will lose their state or federal public assistance. The net effect on a city or county with substantial numbers of citizens at risk of losing benefits may be a decline in that city or county's quality of life. Unemployment statistics and economic development are now the critical indicators these local governments must monitor to in order to deal with welfare reform.

Infrastructure

There are two fundamentally important infrastructure elements necessary for the success of the welfare to work initiative: public transportation and affordable and available child care. Since it costs about \$5,000 per year to operate an automobile, many welfare recipients must rely on public transportation to get from their home to their place of employment and then home again. Yet nearly all public transportation within the region is county-based; rarely do buses traverse into adjacent counties. Thus, for those welfare clients who do not have access to an automobile, they are limited in their job search to their home county, and probably to job centers close to their neighborhood. Furthermore, because the vast majority of welfare recipients required to find employment are single mothers, the location, affordability and availability of child care represents a critical factor in their daily decisions about finding and holding a job.

Regional Planning

The purpose of this report is to explore a regional perspective on welfare reform to demonstrate opportunities that may not be evident at the county or local level. Working cooperatively on issues like transportation and child care for welfare clients, the counties in Southeast Florida could provide the necessary infrastructure to allow clients to search regionally for employment opportunities, without having to relocate to that area. Housing and education opportunities (also very important to the welfare client) are far more diverse on a regional basis than within each county.

Planning for human resources on a regional basis gives those who are impacted by welfare reform more opportunities towards achieving economic self sufficiency. County-based human resource planning does not acknowledge the reality that Southeast Florida is a single economic system. By opening up mobility between counties for those who represent the working class (including welfare clients) the entire regional economy will be stronger and our entire social structure will be more dynamic. Currently only the professional class, who have the financial ability to operate an automobile, has access to regional opportunities, which tends to weaken the region's ability to accommodate programs like welfare-to-work.

INTRODUCTION

Background

In August 1996, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, which ended the federal AFDC program and signaled the start of "block grants" to states. In turn, states initiated their own style of welfare reforms, usually incorporating "time limits" for temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) benefits, and requiring adult cash assistance recipients to participate in an employment activity.

Florida's program is called Work and Gain Economic Self-sufficiency, or WAGES. In Florida, all WAGES recipients have a 48 month lifetime limit (vs. 60 months allowed by federal law) and are assigned either a 24 month time limit within a 60 month period or 36 month time limit in a 72 month period. Families with WAGES-eligible adults face either a 24 or 36-month benefit time limit. These time limits are based on the recipient's age, length of time on cash assistance, employability, and educational skills. The WAGES Act is not only about time limits but also calls for the creation of one stop centers, improvements in child care, transportation, and counseling. The key is to ensure that clients have enough supportive services that facilitate their transition from welfare to work.

Regional Topics Explored

This report describes and illustrates using zipcode-based thematic maps some spatial characteristics of the WAGES program from a *regional* perspective. Although there are many other topics that should and could be studied, in this brief analysis we focus on regional population change, WAGES participants, child care, and regional transit services.

Data Sources

The WAGES data used in this analysis are from the Department's FLORIDA system and were extracted by the District 11 Office of Research and Community Affairs in April 1999. The population data are from the US Census Bureau and from Wessex, Inc., a private data vendor. The child care data were generated in October 1998 and are from the Department's Office of Standards and Evaluation in Tallahassee. The transit data were from county and state government sources.

REGIONAL POPULATION CHANGE

The South Florida region stretches from Lake Okeechobee in Palm Beach County to Key West in Monroe County. This area is a tremendous economic force in the state, a vital national and international tourist destination, and is home to 31% of Florida’s population. In 1998, the region possessed over 4.6 million residents. Between 1990 and 1998, the region grew by over 500,000 residents, a 10.8% increase. The annual growth rate in Florida was 15.9%, which suggests that South Florida is urbanizing while other areas of the state are still expanding. The number of urban redevelopment initiatives taking place in recent years confirms this notion.

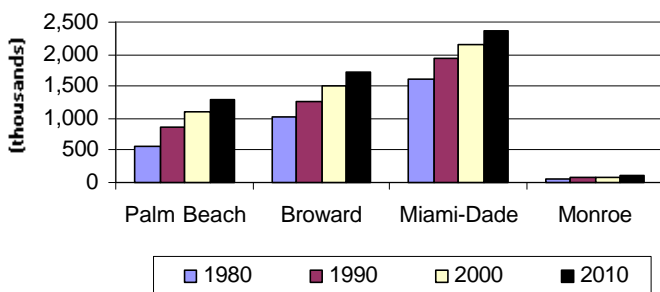
This map demonstrates the population changes between 1990 and 1997 for each zipcode in the region. This information was generated using 1990 census data and 1997 population estimates purchased from Wessex, Inc.

The zipcodes shaded orange to red depict moderate to high population growth, which show up mostly in the western areas of the region, with very significant increases in western Broward County. Conversely, the gray, green and yellow shades depict areas that grew little or actually lost population. Generally, these areas are in the traditional urban neighborhoods and areas which are either built out or where development is very restricted.

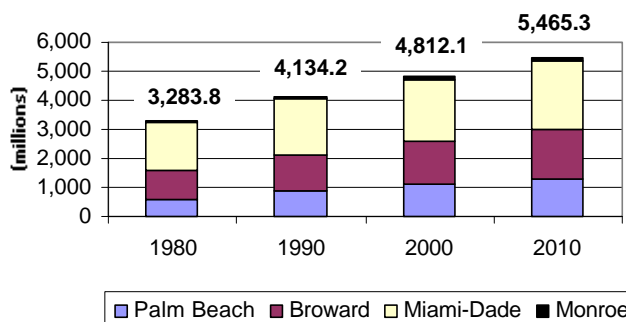
Urban planners and social scientists have suggested that “urban sprawl”, or the outward expansion of residential areas beyond city service boundaries, is correlated with the deterioration of traditional urban neighborhoods due to loss of economic opportunities and social and spatial isolation. Thus, community expansion and deterioration are said to be linked in an urban system.

Note: Some zipcodes were created between 1990 and 1997 because of large population gains in those particular areas. In some situations this affects the amount of population change shown on the map if the 1990 zipcode was split into 2 or more individual zipcodes by 1997. Also, the 1997 population estimates were acquired from a data vendor that applies standard formulas when calculating population estimates. In some cases this does not capture the true changes that occurred in some areas in the region. The estimates, like any population statistic, are used for general trends, not specific “hard” science.

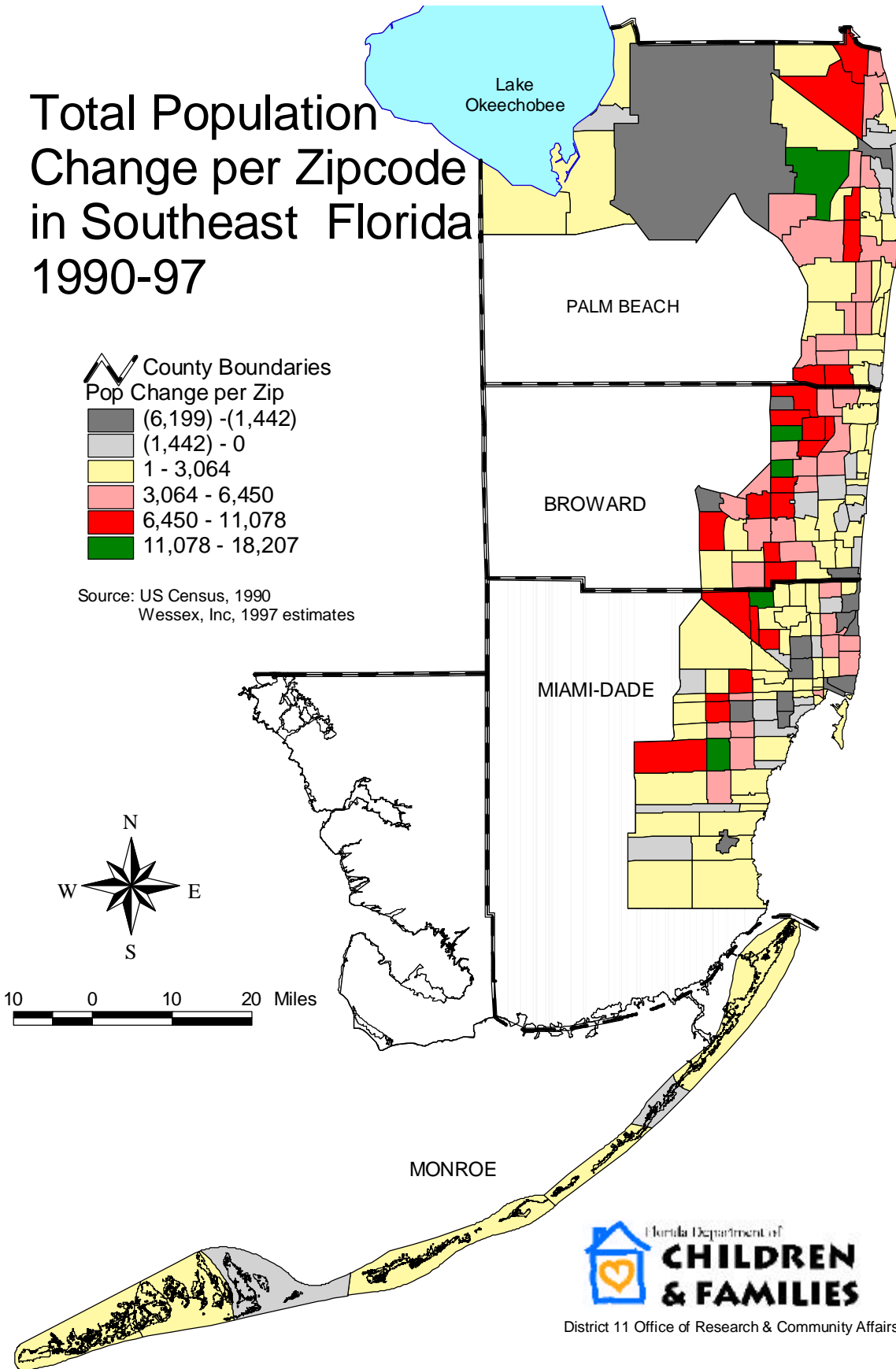
Southeast Florida Population Change
(County Comparison: 1980-2010)



Total Population 1980-2010
(Southeast Florida)



Total Population Change per Zipcode in Southeast Florida 1990-97



WAGES PARTICIPANTS

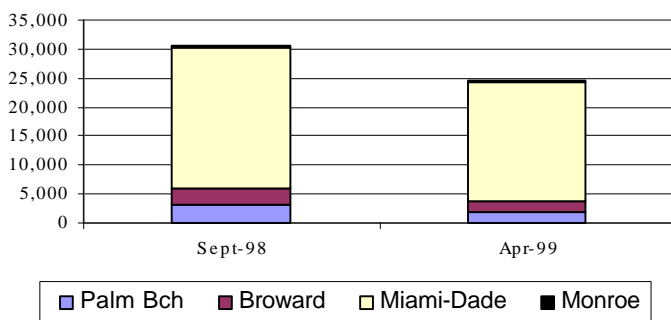
While South Florida is indeed a powerful factor in the state’s economic health, it is also where a vast majority of the state’s welfare caseload resides. About 50% of Florida’s WAGES participants live in the South Florida region, and many of those are in Miami-Dade County (42% of the statewide program). At the time of this study, Palm Beach had 2,371 participants, Broward had 2,325, Miami-Dade had 22,561, and Monroe 125.

Due to the high unemployment rates that linger in Miami-Dade County, leaders there are faced with considerable challenges moving participants from welfare to work. Miami-Dade’s unemployment rate was 7.1% in 1997, while the region’s was 6.1% and the state’s 4.8%. This disparity of unemployment among counties within the region, combined with the heavy concentration of WAGES participants in Miami-Dade County, suggests the need for programs and policies that are regional in nature rather than county-based. Intra-regional transportation systems should be first on this list.

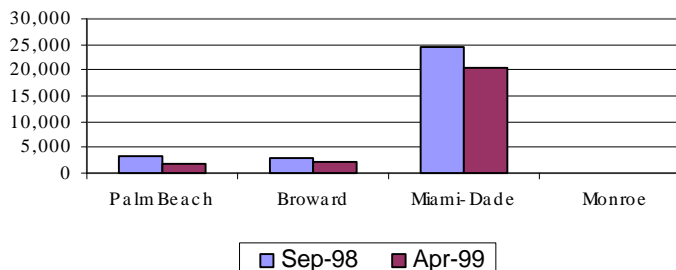
This map describes the concentration of WAGES participants by zipcode in the region. The gray to light brown shades are where the fewest participants reside, and the orange to red shades are where greater numbers of participants reside. Observe the darker shades concentrated in Miami-Dade County versus Broward and Palm Beach, and the fact that most are where population changed little or decreased between 1990 and 1997. Conversely, where population increased the most between those years, few WAGES participants are found.

This suggests the existence of a “spatial disconnect” between neighborhoods where welfare clients live and where jobs are now being created. Again transportation is an essential piece of the solution.

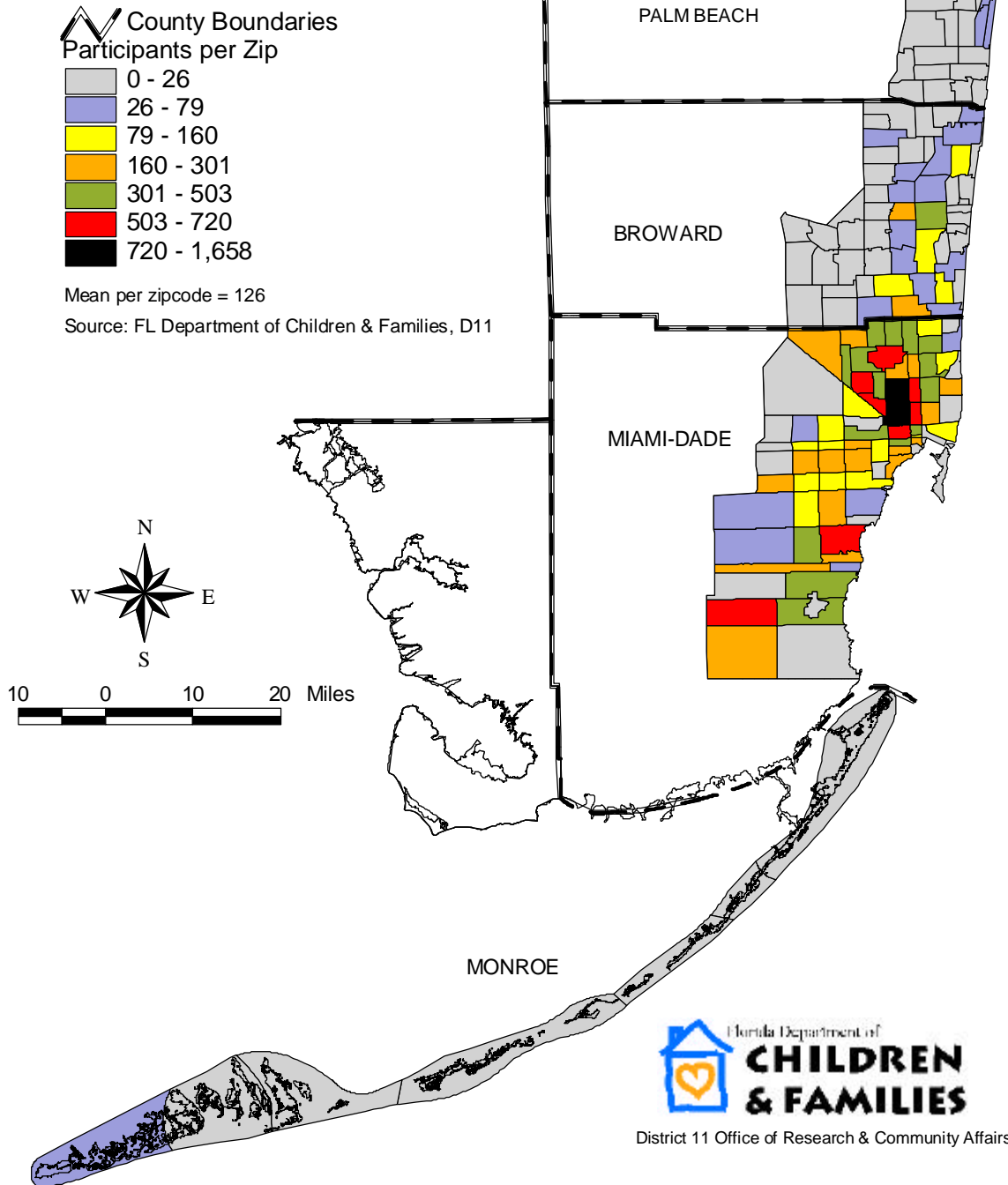
WAGES Participants in Southeast FLA



WAGES Participants in Southeast FLA (County Comparison)



WAGES Participants in Southeast Florida: April 1999



WAGES PARTICIPANTS PER 1,000 POPULATION

The previous map shows the spatial distribution of the region's WAGES population by itself. The following map shows that same distribution normalized by the total population, since moving clients from welfare to work requires a community commitment.

Where fewer people are on welfare in a particular neighborhood, the chances of that neighborhood helping the welfare recipient become independent are more likely. Conversely, where ratio thresholds of welfare recipients to population are surpassed, the neighborhood's ability to solve the problems of those recipients becomes limited, if not totally blocked.

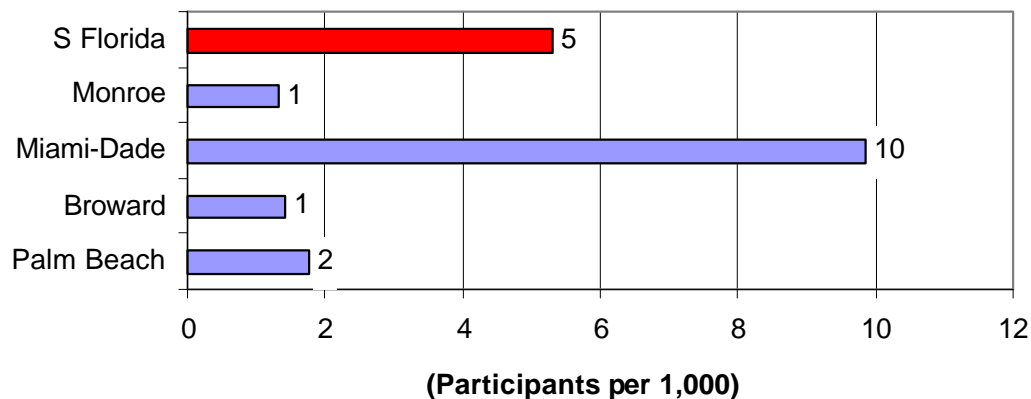
There's no bright line test for determining what that ratio threshold is, but this map highlights those neighborhoods by comparing the number of WAGES participants for every 1,000 persons in that area. The yellow to orange shades indicate fewer participants per populations, while the red shades indicate more persons per population.

Several neighborhoods in the central urban areas of Miami and smaller neighborhoods in south Miami-Dade have a disproportionate ratio of WAGES participants per total populations. Some areas in Broward and Palm Beach Counties also have similar characteristics.

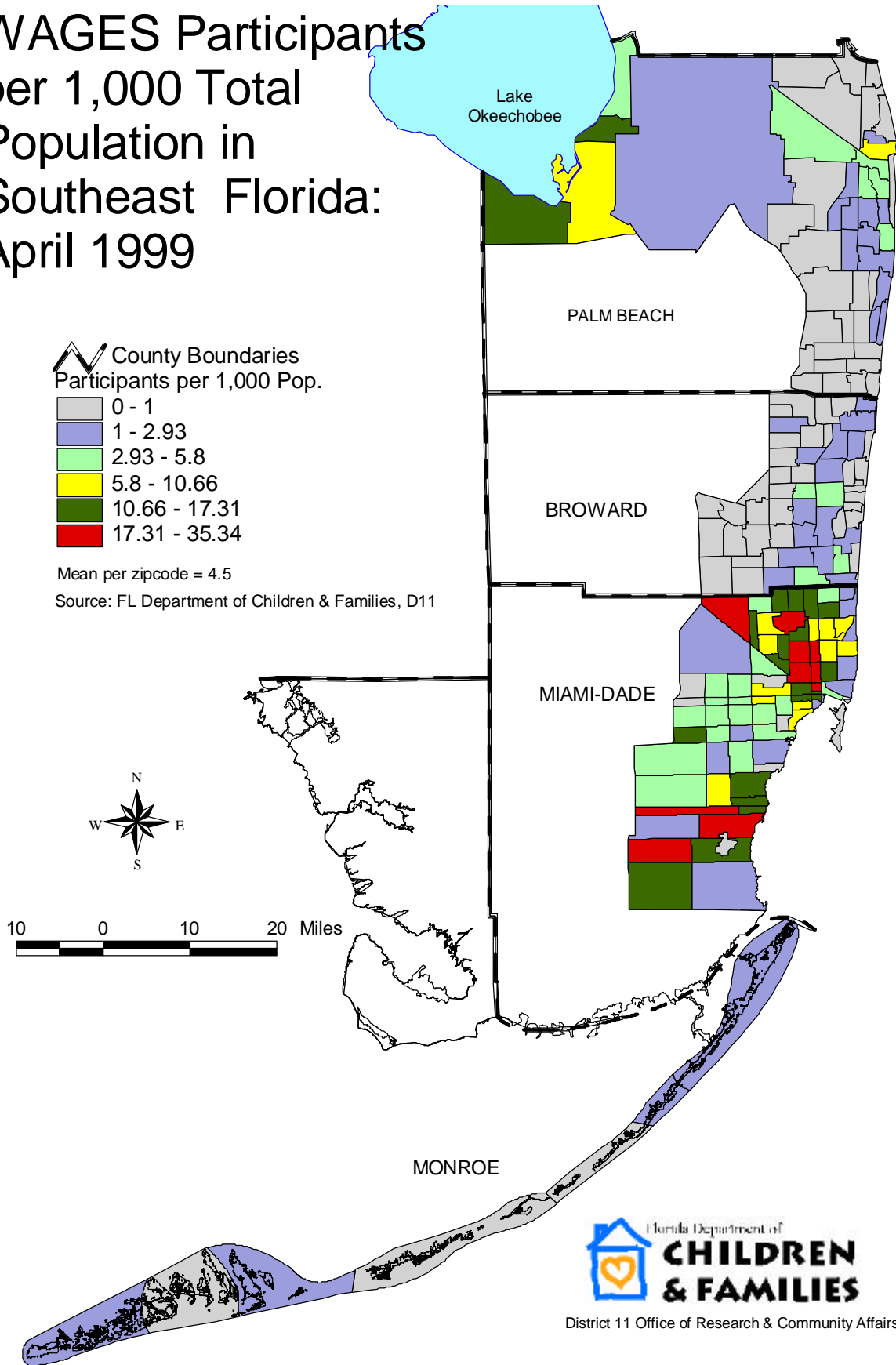
Again, low numbers per population suggests that an "internal" community solution may be feasible, but where the numbers are high per population an "external" solution may be necessary.

This means, absent redevelopment or economic development initiatives in those communities, WAGES participants may need to go beyond their neighborhood to seek employment because the ratio threshold has been breached. To do this, adequate transportation and child care infrastructure must be available.

**WAGES Participants per 1,000 Total Population
(County and Regional Comparison)**



WAGES Participants per 1,000 Total Population in Southeast Florida: April 1999



REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

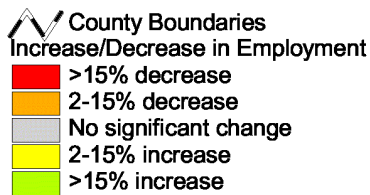
Identification of areas within the region where employment is concentrated and where it is growing and contracting enables us to see where employment opportunities are in the region in comparison to the residential location of WAGES participants. ZIP Code Business Patterns for 1994 and 1995 on CD-ROM from the U.S. Bureau of the Census provide economic data by industry for ZIP Codes. Most of the region's economic activity is covered in this series, although data are excluded for self-employed persons, domestic service workers, railroad employees, agricultural production workers, and most government employees.

ZIP Code Business Patterns basic data items are extracted from the Standard Statistical Establishment List, a file of all known single and multi-establishment companies maintained and updated by the Bureau of the Census. The annual Company Organization Survey provides individual establishment data for multi-establishment companies. Data for single establishment companies are obtained from various Census Bureau programs, such as the Annual Survey of Manufacturers and Current Business Surveys, as well as from administrative records of the Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration.

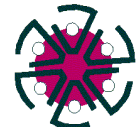
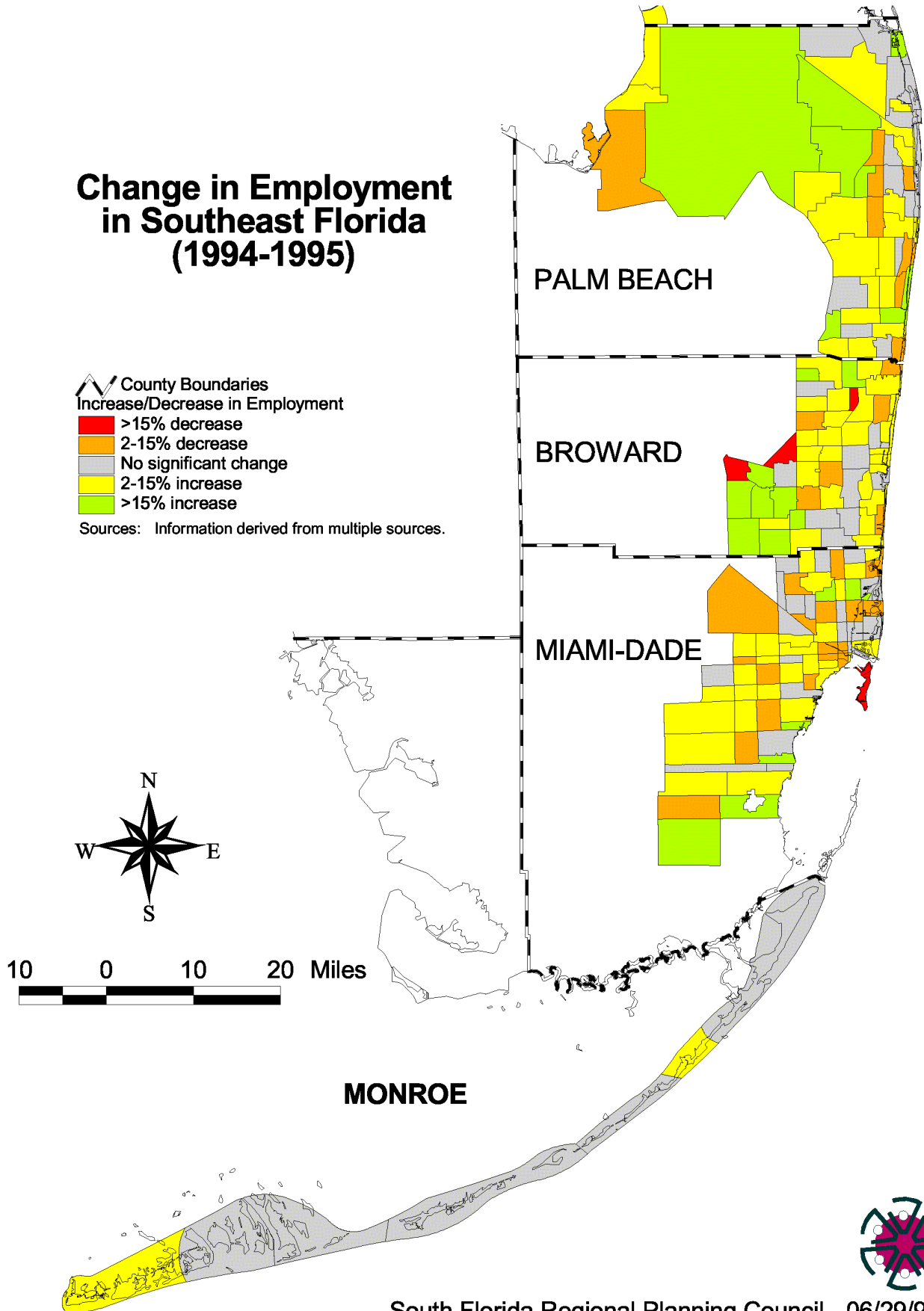
The data for 1995 are the most recent available. The change in total number of jobs between 1994 and 1995 was calculated for each ZIP Code in the four-county area. Results indicate that absolute growth in employment in the reference period was fairly evenly distributed around the region. There are high-growth ZIP Codes (green and yellow) in each county and areas of employment loss (orange and red) as well. New job growth in 1995 was largest in the City of Key West for Monroe County, in the area around the airport in Miami-Dade County, in the area close to the City of Pompano Beach and much of the western portion of Broward County, and in the area between West Palm Beach and Lake Okeechobee in Palm Beach County.

When the rate of growth of employment (the percent change from 1994 to 1995) is considered, there is a clear trend for higher rates in the western portions of each county. Southwest Broward County shows the most concentrated area with annual increases in employment of more than 15% (7 ZIP Codes, in green). Northwest Palm Beach County also shows a fast pace of employment growth for this period.

Change in Employment in Southeast Florida (1994-1995)



Sources: Information derived from multiple sources.



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REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT CENTERS & TRANSIT ROUTES

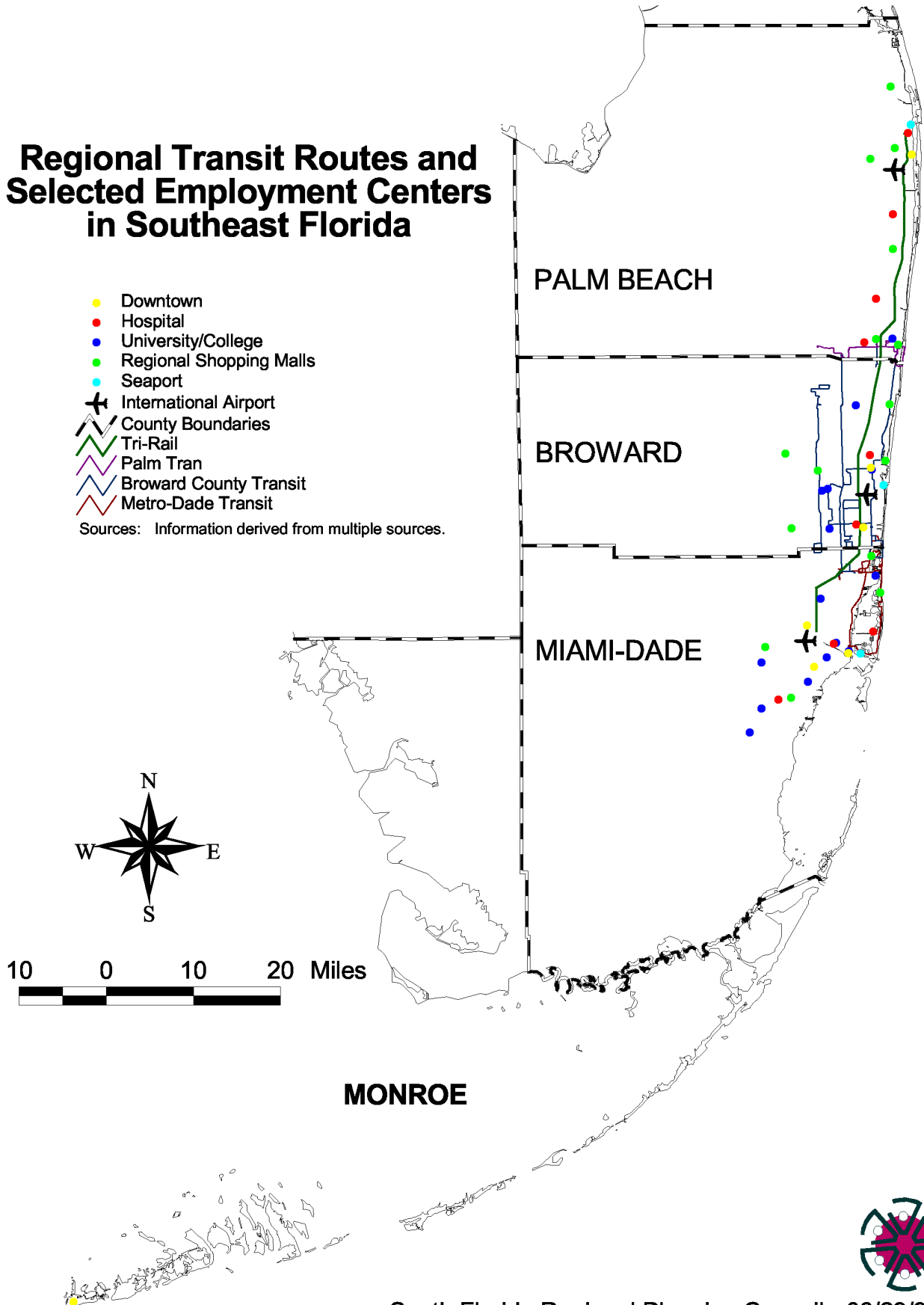
Some commercial employment activities are large enough that they may be considered regional employment centers. There is no current, all inclusive list of these sites; however some examples includes airports and seaports, large regional shopping malls, large regional hospitals, universities and colleges, and large downtown centers. These sites potentially offer the type of low-skill, entry level employment needed by the WAGES participants, and thus would benefit from regional transit connectivity. Regional transit connecting these centers would also benefit the commuters and general public, who routinely load the Interstates and Turnpike with automobile traffic for both accessing employment and utilization of the center.

In looking at regional employment centers and regional transit systems together, especially from the perspective of whether they support the WAGES population, it become more clear that indeed many centers are not connected by any regional transit system.

Regional Transit Routes and Selected Employment Centers in Southeast Florida

- Downtown
- Hospital
- University/College
- Regional Shopping Malls
- Seaport
- ✈ International Airport
- ▬ County Boundaries
- ▬ Tri-Rail
- ▬ Palm Tran
- ▬ Broward County Transit
- ▬ Metro-Dade Transit

Sources: Information derived from multiple sources.



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REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Work requires efficient and affordable transportation to jobs, childcare, and other support services. Southeast Florida as a region is covered by county bus transit systems in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties. Also, the three counties are linked by a regional commuter rail system. In addition, Miami-Dade County has a Metrorail system linking South Miami and Hialeah with the downtown Miami area, and a Metromover system that provides downtown circulation and access to the Omni and Brickell areas. These public transportation resources are shown on the attached map.

When compared to the maps of WAGES participants and New Jobs it appears transportation linkages are available for overcoming mobility as a barrier to entering the workforce. However, this is a simplistic view of a more complex local or area issue. In addition to linking jobs to participants, these transportation services must also be connected and available at the appropriate time, at a reasonable cost, convenient and reliable. Generally, at the zip code level, the highest concentrations of WAGES participants are within the services areas of fixed-route bus services. Therefore, more localized analysis is warranted in this area. Transit access is focused toward the eastern urban corridor, thereby not linking the growing suburb to suburb trip needs. In order, to accommodate these trip needs a passenger must travel into the eastern corridor and transfer back out on another route, increasing travel length and time.

In addition, we looked at the truly regional connectivity of these systems. The Regional Employment Centers and Transit Routes map shows Tri-Rail and the bus routes that have inter-county services. The regional fixed-route bus connections (see map) are illustrative of the lack of regional mobility between these counties.





Most concentrations of WAGES participants in Palm Beach and Broward counties are within the Tri-rail corridor (i.e., commuter rail service). However, Tri-Rail's service corridor ends at the Miami International Airport, therefore, the WAGES participants in southern Miami-Dade County do not have access to this service. Areas served by Tri-Rail do not necessarily have direct access to childcare and jobs. In addition, commuter rail service is more expensive than fixed-route bus service, which may make it cost prohibitive as a job mobility option. While it does allow for longer direct travel distances, this works against employment since studies have shown that as commute times increase the probability of employment decreases. (Annalynn Lacombe, *Welfare Reform And Access to Jobs in Boston*, 1998)

From the regional level, childcare appears to be linked by the fixed-route bus services. However, we know from anecdotal information that the fixed-route bus services are not flexible enough to accommodate multipurpose trips (i.e., trip chaining).

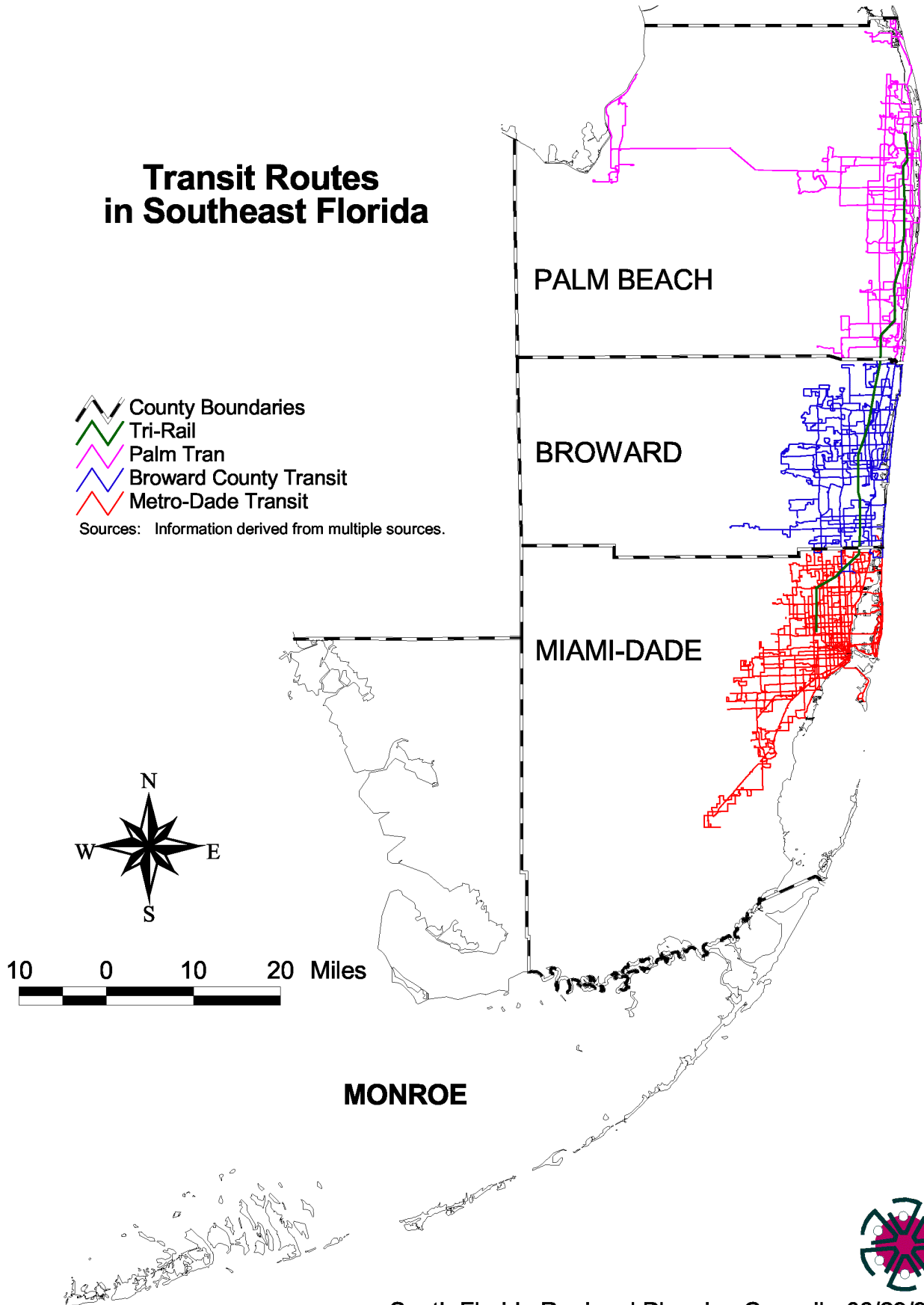
New jobs created are more dispersed in the region. This makes transportation linkages more complex (e.g., requiring multiple transfers or access to multiple transit service providers). This is a detriment to job mobility. Previous studies have indicated that as trip complexity increases it creates personal resistance to mobility, therefore, reducing job access.

Transit access alone is no guarantee of mobility. Mobility is determined by trip length, number of transfers, schedules (jobs, childcare, and transit), transportation costs, hours of services, and safety.

Transit Routes in Southeast Florida

-  County Boundaries
-  Tri-Rail
-  Palm Tran
-  Broward County Transit
-  Metro-Dade Transit

Sources: Information derived from multiple sources.



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NUMBER OF CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Because many WAGES participants have young children, the availability of convenient and affordable child care is of the utmost importance for the successful implementation of welfare reform in South Florida.

Child care facilities can be classified into three types:

1. Licensed child care centers,
2. Licensed family day care homes, and
3. Registered day care homes.

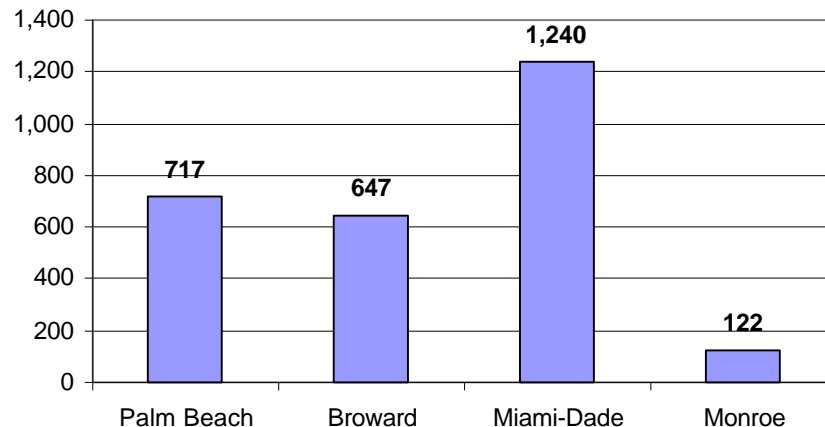
These facilities are located throughout the region. Region-wide, at the time of this study, there were 1,756 centers, 847 family day care homes, and 73 registered day care homes.

The type of designation is significant because it reflects the size or total capacity. Generally, centers are licensed to care for more children than day care homes. Centers are usually located in commercially zoned areas or as special exceptions in residential areas, while day care homes are usually in a single family detached home.

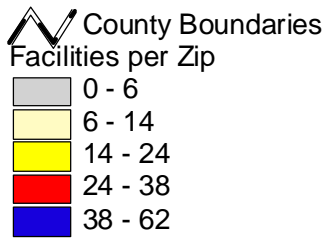
This map describes the total number of those facilities per zipcode. The lighter shades indicate fewer facilities while the darker shades indicate a greater number of facilities.

For a WAGES participant, however, the issue may not be whether a child care facility is close by (at work or near home); but whether it is affordable and available. Because many child care facilities are purely profit seeking ventures and can have very lengthy waiting lists, WAGES participants cannot always afford the child care expense for a particular facility in their neighborhood, unless it is subsidized. Thus subsidized child care should be carefully planned, regionally and locally, in concert with the needs of the WAGES participants in order to maximize its benefit under the welfare-to-work initiative.

Child Care Facilities in Southeast FLA
(County Comparison)

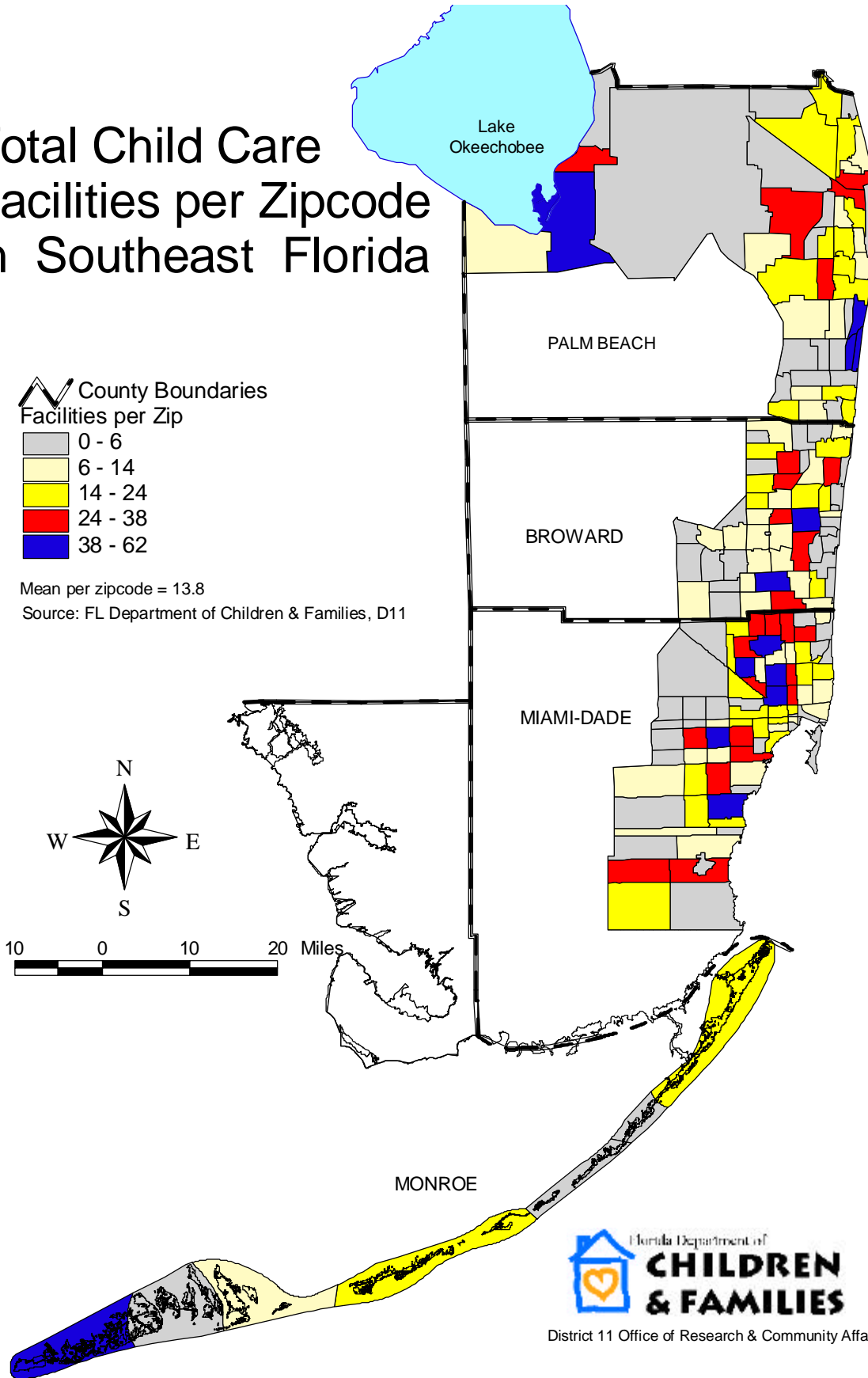


Total Child Care Facilities per Zipcode in Southeast Florida



Mean per zipcode = 13.8

Source: FL Department of Children & Families, D11



District 11 Office of Research & Community Affairs

NEIGHBORHOOD CHILD CARE AVAILABILITY

To better understand the location element of the child care question, this analysis compares the total combined capacity of all child care facilities against the total child population between the ages of 0 and 4 years within each zipcode. Most children enter kindergarten at the age of 5 years. This is a method for quickly approximating child care availability under supply (child care capacity) and demand (0-4 population).

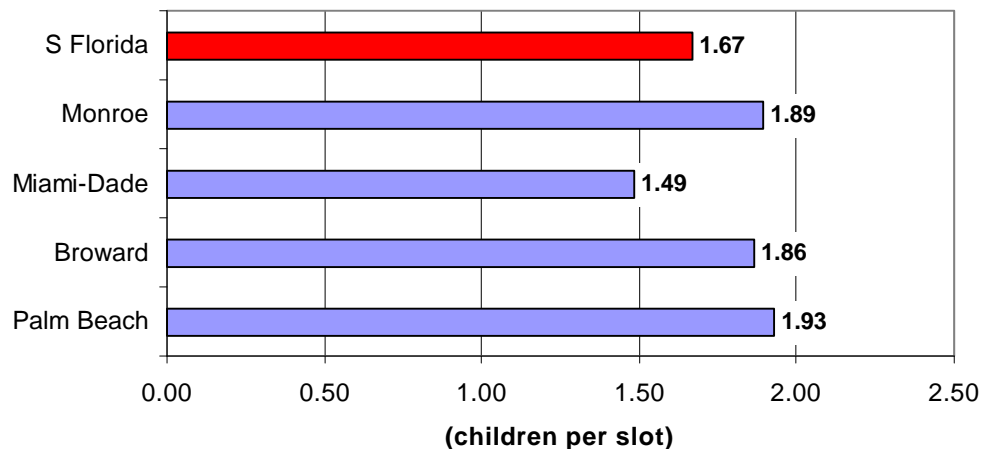
This analysis assumes that parents will desire neighborhood-based child care, or child care near where they live rather than near where they work, and that all parents need child care.

Thus, if we analyze the 0 - 4 population of a zipcode to ascertain the potential market competition for localized child care against how many child care slots are available at a given time, we can picture, generally, where there is under-service and over-service.

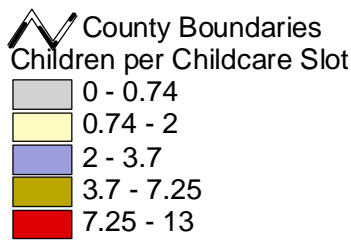
This map shows the availability of child care in each zipcode by assessing how many children are in the 0-4 population group compared to the number of child care slots. The lighter colors indicate areas where there are fewer children per child care slot. The darker shades are where there are more children per child care slot.

Keep in mind that this analysis assumes what would happen if all parents suddenly needed child care and sought only neighborhood-based child care. In reality some parents don't need child care and some look for child care near their work.

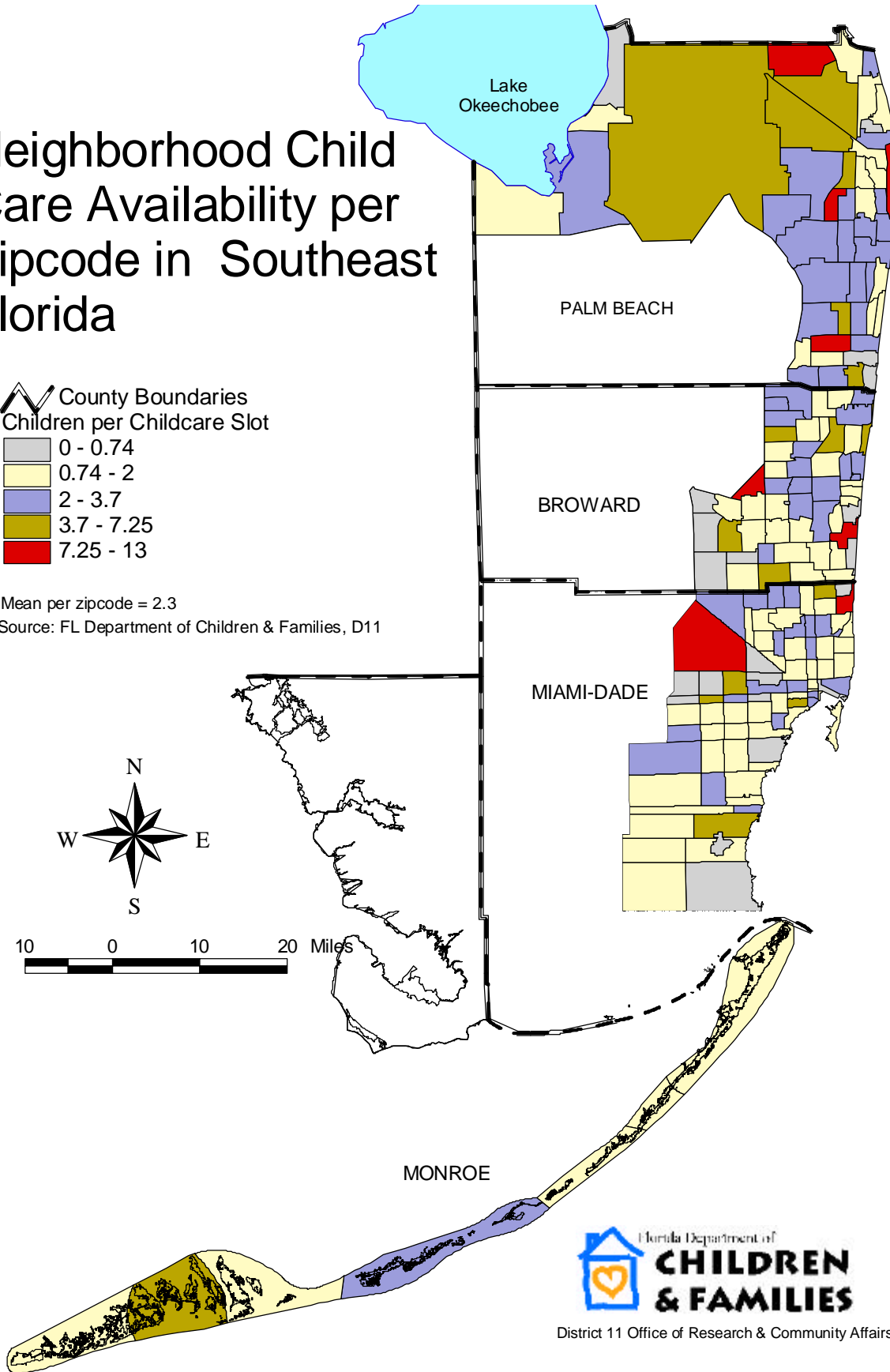
Child Care Availability in Southeast FLA
(County and Regional Comparison)



Neighborhood Child Care Availability per Zipcode in Southeast Florida



Mean per zipcode = 2.3
Source: FL Department of Children & Families, D11



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CONCLUSIONS

Low-income job access needs will be adequately addressed when it becomes part of general transportation planning. Low-income people do not have the same level of mobility as middle-income people. For example, a transit dependent individual does not have the same access to job opportunities as an individual with an automobile. Therefore, mobility or transportation equity must be an objective of transportation policies and planning.

One clear observation is that there is a lack of regional public transit linkages (see regional transit routes map). Therefore, additional research is needed to determine the effect and impact on low-income access to growing job markets. This report demonstrates that at the regional level, county transit services appear to provide adequate access to WAGES Participants. However, with a disproportionate share of WAGES Participants in Miami-Dade County, inter-county solutions must be further analyzed.

The majority of WAGES Participants are single mothers. Because of this, the two key infrastructure needs are child care and transportation. Traditional transit is unlikely to meet all travel needs for the flexible and intermediate trips required for work, child care and other support services. Therefore, innovative and flexible services are being explored and developed within each county. However, this report shows that disparity between counties (e.g., WAGES Participants, unemployment rates) dictates that these efforts be considered in a regional context (across county borders).

County-based planning is limiting opportunities to solve welfare reform issues. These planning efforts should recognize Southeast Florida as an interconnected, viable regional system. By improving mobility linkages between counties WAGES transportation issues will be addressed, while also improving the entire social structure and economy of the region as a whole.

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