

# SECTION 3

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

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This section of the Plan provides a general overview of the City of Myrtle Beach. It consists of the following five subsections:

- 3.1 Geography and the Environment
- 3.2 Population and Demographics
- 3.3 Housing and Infrastructure
- 3.4 Employment and Industry
- 3.5 Development Trends

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### 3.1 GEOGRAPHY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Grand Strand region of South Carolina extends more than 60 miles from the North Carolina border to Pawley's Island in Georgetown County. The City of Myrtle Beach is located in Horry County at the heart of the Grand Strand area, which is visited by over 14 million tourists annually. The city has a land area of just under 17 square miles. An orientation map is provided as **Figure 3.1**.

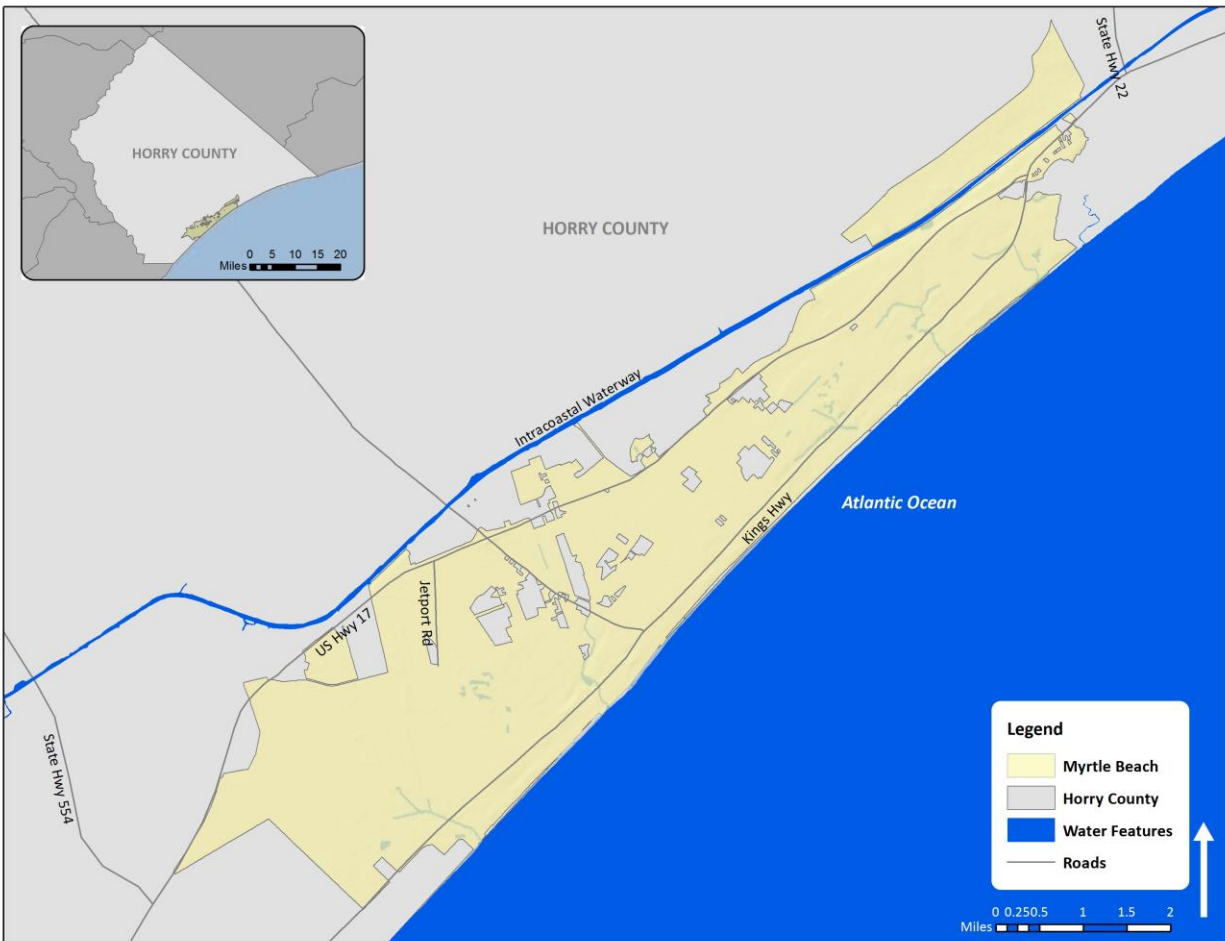
Development of the beach began around 1900. The Conway and Seashore Railroad was constructed from Conway to Myrtle Beach and connected with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in Conway. The rail line provided improved access to the beach for tourists and the resort began to grow. Myrtle Beach was incorporated as a town in 1938 and as a city in 1957. Since the 1950's, Myrtle Beach has experienced unprecedented growth and change, fueled by its increasing popularity as a vacation destination. This growth has continued and in 1989, the City of Myrtle Beach was named the sixth fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States.

Myrtle Beach is bordered to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by the City of North Myrtle Beach, to the west by the Intracoastal Waterway and to the south by the Town of Surfside Beach. The average elevation of the city is approximately 26 feet.

The climate in Myrtle Beach is considered sub-tropical with generally warm, humid temperatures year-round. The average high temperature is 75°F and the average low temperature is 53°F. The average annual precipitation is 48 inches, with higher rainfall amounts in the summer months.

The dominant surface water resource in Myrtle Beach is the Intracoastal Waterway, which runs north-south near the western boundary of the city. Major rivers near the city include the Pee Dee River and the Waccamaw River, both located south of the city.

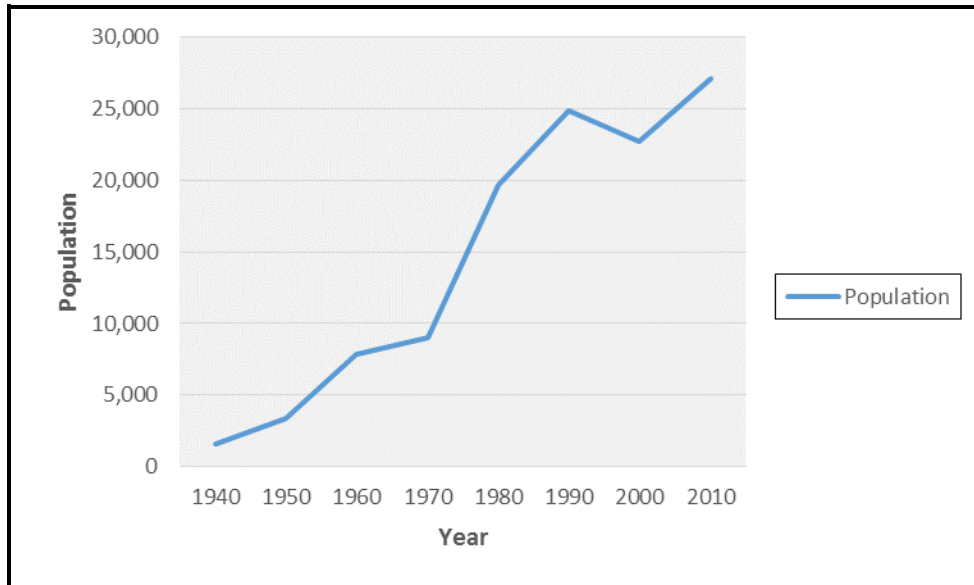
Figure 3.1: Myrtle Beach Orientation Map



### 3.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Based on data from the US Census Bureau, the resident population of Myrtle Beach increased from 22,759 in 2000 to 27,109 in 2010, resulting in an increase of 19.1 percent. According to the Myrtle Beach Comprehensive Plan, the future population in the city is likely to increase and development in the area has been strong and continues to attract new residents and visitors. While population projections are not available for the City of Myrtle Beach alone, the South Carolina Budget and Control Board has published population projections for Horry County. As of the 2010 Census, Horry County had a population of 269,291. In 2030, the county's population is projected to be 367,680, which represents projected growth of 36.5 percent.

**Figure 3.2** charts the population growth in the city from 1940 to 2008 with data provided by the US Census Bureau.

**Figure 3.2: Myrtle Beach Population Change**

According to the 2010 Census, the median age for city residents is 39.2 years. It is estimated that 15.1 percent of the city's population is made up of persons that are 65 years old and older. The population of Myrtle Beach is 72.3 percent White and 13.9 percent Black or African American. An estimated 13.7 percent of the population (of any race) is Hispanic or Latino.

### 3.3 HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LAND USE

#### 3.3.1 Housing

According to the Census Bureau's 2009-2013 American Community Survey, there are 22,579 housing units in Myrtle Beach. Of these structures, 29.8 percent are single-unit, 65.1 percent are multi-unit, and 5.1 percent are mobile homes. The median value of a home is \$167,100 (the median home value for South Carolina is \$137,400).

The age distribution of the county's housing stock as reported in the 2009-2013 American Community Survey is as follows:

■ Pre-1939	1.3 percent
■ 1940 to 1949	1.6 percent
■ 1950 to 1959	7.3 percent
■ 1960 to 1969	7.9 percent
■ 1970 to 1979	18.3 percent
■ 1980 to 1989	26.8 percent
■ 1990 to 1999	16.0 percent
■ 2000 to 2009	20.0 percent
■ 2010 or later	0.7 percent

### 3.3.2 Infrastructure

#### Transportation

There are several major highways that provide access to Myrtle Beach. The US 17 Bypass runs north-south along the western edge of the city. Carolina Bays Parkway is another major north-south route that runs west of the city. US 501 is the major east-west highway through the city and connects to Main Street in the heart of Myrtle Beach. The Conway Bypass connects the US 17 Bypass on the north side of Myrtle Beach to US 501 on the west side of Conway, over twenty miles west of Myrtle Beach.

The Coastal Rapid Public Transit Authority provides bus service in the Myrtle Beach area. Shuttle bus services are also offered in the hotel areas during the summer.

Myrtle Beach International Airport is located on the south side of the city and is operated by the Horry County Department of Airports. The airport has a single runway and a terminal complex for both commercial flights and general aviation.

#### Utilities

Electric power in Myrtle Beach is provided by Santee Cooper and Horry Electric. The natural gas supplier is South Carolina Electric and Gas. Water, sewer, and solid waste services are provided by the Myrtle Beach Public Works Department. The City gets its potable water from the Intracoastal Waterway where the Waccamaw River provides seven-miles of freshwater. The City also maintains several deep wells in the Black Creek aquifer for emergency use. The City's surface water treatment plant and wastewater plant are located on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue North on the eastern bank of the Intracoastal Waterway.

#### Community Facilities

There are a number of public buildings and community facilities located throughout Myrtle Beach. There are six fire stations located in the City limits. The Myrtle Beach Police Department is located in the Law Enforcement Center on Oak Street, near 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The Chapin Memorial Library is the only city library in the state of South Carolina and is located on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue North on the east side of US 17 Business.

The City's Parks and Recreation system consists of 32 parks, most of which are small mini-parks or neighborhood parks, and 143 beach access points. Myrtle Beach State Park is located just south of the city limits.

Myrtle Beach is in the Horry County School District, which operates 21 schools within the jurisdiction. Horry-Georgetown Technical College and Webster University are also located in Myrtle Beach. Coastal Carolina University also has an Education Center located in Myrtle Beach.

### 3.4 EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRY

Myrtle Beach thrives on its reputation as a tourist destination. Based on the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services industry employed 28.4 percent of Myrtle Beach's labor force. Educational services, and health care and social services employed the second highest percentage of the labor force at 14.8 percent with retail trade close behind at 14.1 percent.

According to the Census Bureau's 2009-2013 American Community Survey, the estimated median family income for Myrtle Beach was \$50,343, compared to the US average of \$64,719 per family and the South Carolina average of \$55,058 per family.

### 3.5 DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Development in Myrtle Beach has historically been concentrated along the oceanfront. Commercial uses have grown up along major thoroughfares and expansion of the roadway system has resulted in additional locations for new commercial development. In recent years, properties along the oceanfront are being redeveloped at greater intensities to accommodate the growing tourist market. The Downtown Redevelopment Corporation has developed a Pavilion Area Master Plan, which outlines a redevelopment strategy for the core area of Myrtle Beach, consisting of over 300 acres of land and one-half mile of oceanfront. In addition, western areas of the city are experiencing new commercial and residential development, including redevelopment of the former Air Force Base as a large mixed-use planned development.