

Great Places in SC : Entry # 1175
Official Name of Suggestion The Market Common District
Category Neighborhood
Location (City) Myrtle Beach
Boundaries of Nomination On the former Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, from Kings Highway (US 17 Business) to US 17 Bypass, and from the Myrtle Beach International Airport to the city/county line. It is made up of more than 3,936 acres.
Identify the Great Places characteristic(s) that are a part of your place's story. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Livable Built Environment• Resilient Economy• Healthy Community• Responsible Regionalism• Authentic Participation
Narrative describing your nomination's planning story and why it is worthy of a Great Places in SC designation. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The-Market-Common-District-in-the-City-of-Myrtle-Beach.pdf
Identify the funding source(s) used to make the place what it is today, if possible. <p>The Market Common is a shining example of a public-private partnership. When the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base was closed in 1993, the federal government via the USAF distributed the base parcels between the City of Myrtle Beach, Horry County, and Horry Gerogetown Technical College. The SC General Assembly passed legislation which eventually created the Base Redevelopment Authority. The City of Myrtle Beach partnered with the RDA to provide the infrastructure needed for the redevelopment of the area, including streets, sidewalks, recreational facilities, parking and parking structures, green spaces, and a stormwater master plan from which all of the subsequent development has benefited.</p>
Photos <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MarketCommonAerials.pdf
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The Market Common District is a shining star in the City of Myrtle Beach. Formerly part of the 3,936-acre Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, the district represents what the US EPA recently referred to as “exemplary work transforming the Superfund site into a successful commercial and industrial space”. In recognizing the redevelopment of the MBAFB with its 2nd annual *National Federal Facility Excellence in Site Reuse* award, EPA Region 4 Administrator Mary S. Walker said, “This project is a successful demonstration of how public-private partnerships can convert contaminated sites into community assets that will attract jobs, encourage partnerships and achieve broader economic development outcomes.”

When the federal government announced the base closure in FY 1991, the entire area went into a panic. The base was Horry County’s largest employer, and with little economic development outside of the hospitality and tourism industry, leaders worried about the future. The closure came to fruition in 1993, but prior to that the process began on how to redevelop the site. The governor had created the South Carolina Defense Base Development Commission, and out of that a local Executive Committee was appointed to oversee the preparation of a Community Redevelopment Plan for the MBAFB. The Executive Committee included local elected officials, former AFB leaders, local business executives, and city and county staff members. By this time, the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base Community Development Plan was completed and recommended the establishment of an authority or a development corporation as the organizational structure to manage activities in implementation of the reuse plans.

In 1993, the Air Base Redevelopment Commission was established to begin work. The governor replaced it in 1994 with the creation of the Air Force Base Redevelopment Authority, which continues its work today. Partnering with the City of Myrtle Beach, the Base Redevelopment Authority contracted with



Design Works, LC of Charleston, SC to create a master plan team to further define and refine the master development plan. By 1998, the Urban Village Redevelopment Master Plan (left) combined the existing recreational facilities from the base with proposed new plans for a mixed use live-work community with a mix of housing opportunities surrounding and including a commercial center.

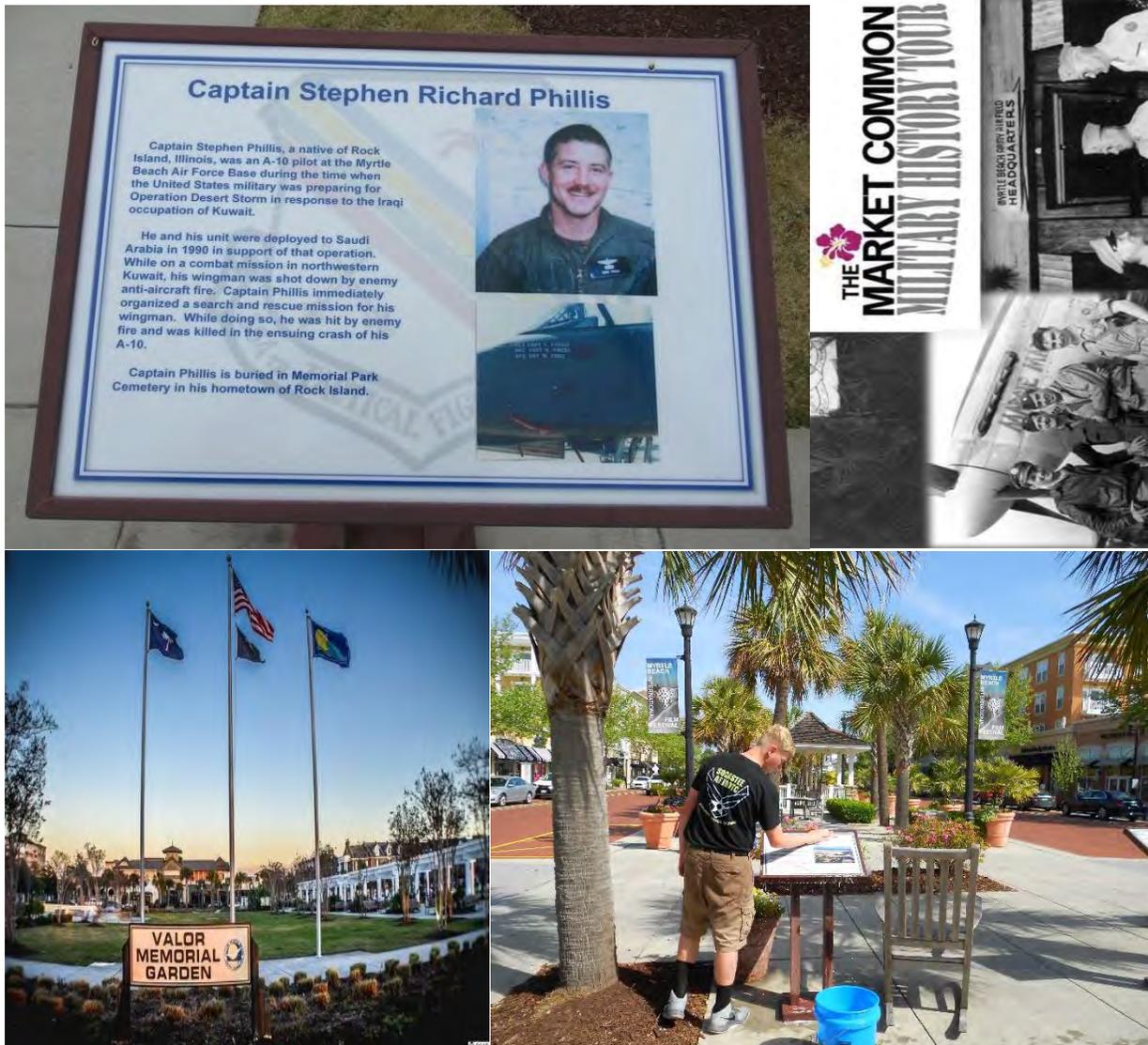
Although the original concept of the urban village has been revised and amended a bit, what exists today is quite close to the original vision. By stepping up and investing in the necessary infrastructure (including parking structures) to support new development, the City of Myrtle Beach made the site even more desirable to developers, and private firms began the redevelopment of the base. At the time, the base generated less than \$14,000 in tax revenue. Today that figure is nearly \$120 million. It includes the Master Plan for the Market Common proper, the Centre Pointe PUD, and the Clemson Tract PUD. Fortunately, the vision of an urban village resulted in infrastructure which reflected the original density designs. While that may have been more costly at the time, it's resulted in fewer growing pains today. Directly east of the district is the Myrtle Beach State Park, and Farrow Parkway, which winds through the district, terminates at Kings Highway (Business 17) where Ocean Boulevard begins.



There are a number of attractions and features that make it a wonderful place to live, work, and play, in addition to its proximity to the ocean. One of the greatest is its walkability and bikeability. In master planning the area, connectivity was key, and even though many firms have had a hand in developing the communities throughout the Market Common District, access has been maintained and is still expanding. The City of Myrtle Beach was the first entity to complete its segment of the East Coast Greenway from Maine to Florida, and expanding on the multi-use path was a priority. Recreation is also a vital part of the community, and a city fitness gym, a recreation facility, fitness trails, playgrounds, ball fields, and sidewalks are available, in addition to a community amenity center and the numerous amenity centers in residential communities. Sports tourism and tournaments have become a huge draw for many visitors (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ATwFkYpVys>). There is also Savannah's Playground, South Carolina's first enabling playground (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCKKZDcvF80>). The City of Myrtle Beach was recognized by the Municipal Association of South Carolina for this trailblazing effort. To date, two of the three phases of Savannah's Playground are complete, and as a result of the tremendous response to the playground and its success, restrooms have been added for convenience.



Maintaining the integrity of the base's history was also an important factor in its redevelopment. While the new community would be fresh and different, there was a strong desire to recognize what had been and the dedication and sacrifice of many who had served on the base. To honor their service and sacrifice, all of the streets within the Market Common proper are named for people who worked on the base, or served in some capacity. There are even interpretive signs so that visitors can see the connection from the street sign to the history on the pedestal sign. Valor Memorial Gardens is a place of reflection and celebration. It is a lovely passive park, but when the time is right it is host to a number of events and festivals. Thunderbolt Park is named for the jets which were deployed from the base during the Gulf Wars, and it includes a multipurpose trail, an outdoor classroom, and a recreational facility converted from an unused Air Force structure designed for computer security. The General Robert H. Reed Recreation Center was renamed for one of the leaders who influenced the redevelopment of the base on which he served. Finally, Warbird Park has the A-10 Warthog, the A-7D Corsair, and the F-100 Super Sabre, all of which saw service on the base. The park includes a Wall of Service, listing names of the men and women, both military and civilian, who were stationed at the base before closing in 1993. The district is also an integral part of the city's military holiday services, from Memorial Day to Veteran's Day, and local ROTC programs regularly volunteer to help maintain many of the military tributes (such as washing the pedestal signs).



With a tag line of *Myrtle Beach's Uptown Downtown*, the Market Common proper has also become a destination in itself and is the site of a number of events and festivals. A Southern Time Square (New Year's Eve), Oktoberfest, Dragon Boat Races (to raise money for a local teen center) and the Highland Games have all been successful in the district. It is also a popular race route for 5 and 10k runs. The City of Myrtle Beach is often a partner in the many events held throughout the year.



Responding to community demand, the city helped organize a community garden. One of the region's more popular farmers markets is also held in the Market Common, as well as Art in the Park events.





While the Market Common is a wonderful place to live, work, and play, it is also an amazing place to learn. Horry Georgetown Technical College's Grand Strand Campus has more than 2,000 students and currently covers nearly eighty acres. The Grand Strand campus is the headquarters for the College's Continuing Education and Workforce Development division. It is also the home of the International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach.



The Fowler Beach Bistro, as well as Layers Bakery are run by students on campus, and are open to the public. Both are quite tempting. Students also work in the community and cater special events.



Also within the Market Common District is the Pittsburgh Institute of Aviation's Myrtle Beach campus. Students train to work in various fields of aviation technology and graduates are in great demand.



The Market Common was a living laboratory for Clemson University's MRED program (Master of Real Estate Development). Each spring for more than a decade, students had the opportunity to see the growth and development which had occurred since the previous year. They were also able to meet with local development and design professionals, city staff, and members of the planning commission to see what really has to occur for a development of this magnitude to take flight.

Students tour developments and meet numerous professionals during their program. Early Career students tour the South Carolina Coast for 10 days in May using Charleston, SC as a home base for coastal site tours. During this tour, you will study some of the nation's premier resort, hotel, historic, mixed-use, golf, master-planned and new urbanist communities.



<http://www.clemson.edu/caah/departments/cpred/real-estate-development/why-clemson/development-tours.html>

Another exciting development is the siting and construction of a new Veterans Affairs Clinic within the district. The Grand Strand has more than 30,000 veterans living in the area, and many have been forced to travel to Charleston and beyond for medical treatment due to the size and limitations of the existing facilities. A much larger modern clinic is under construction in Horry County's International Technology Aerospace Park at the Market Common and will benefit the district in many ways. The design teams worked with city staff to incorporate the many park and trail facilities surrounding the campus.



Additional residents, many which are retirees, require more medical facilities. In addition to the new VA clinic, Tidelands Health has expanded services into a new Market Common campus. They also initiated the *Walk with a Doc* program, where medical professionals lead walks on the many paths within the district.



1998



2001



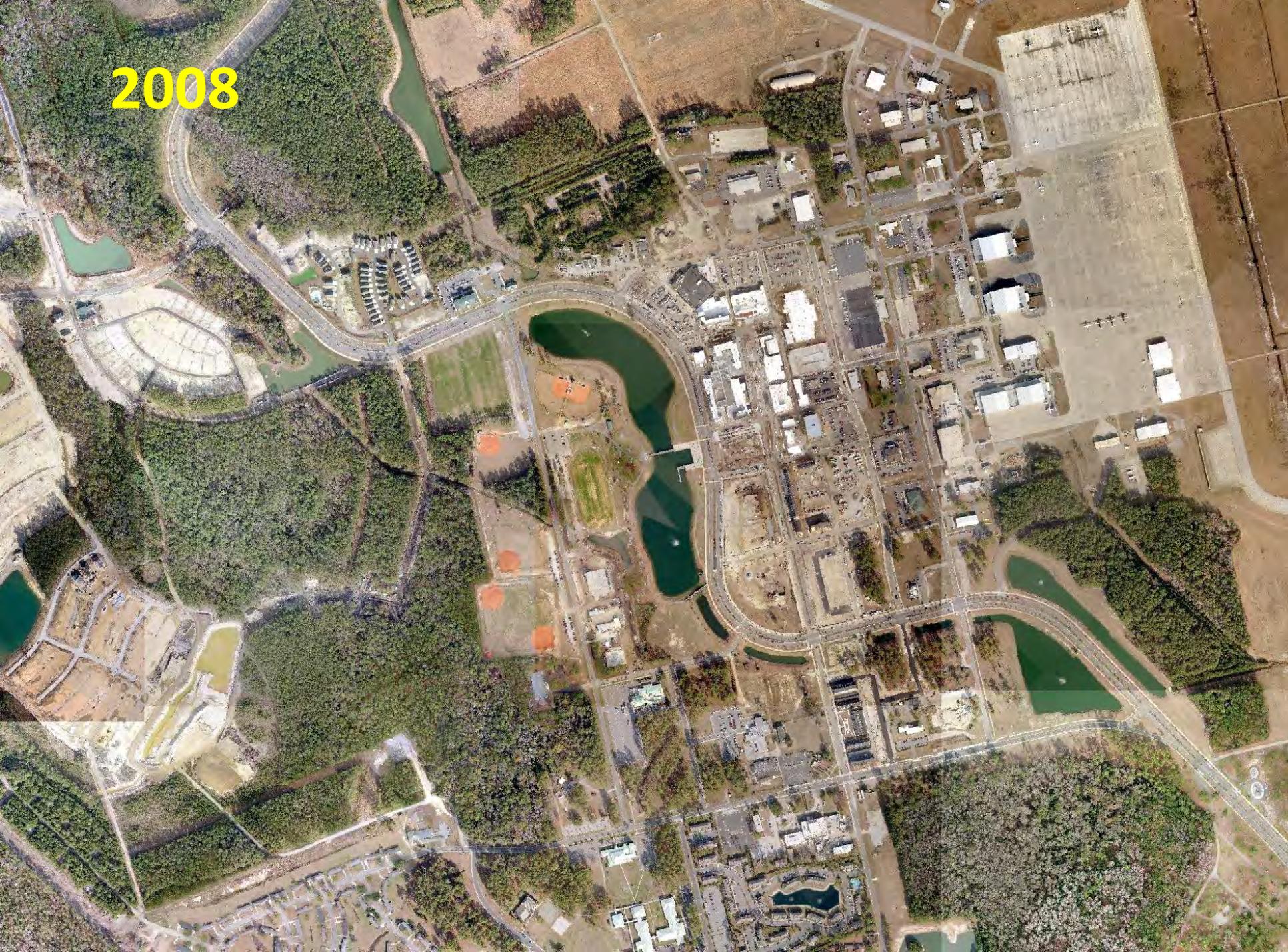
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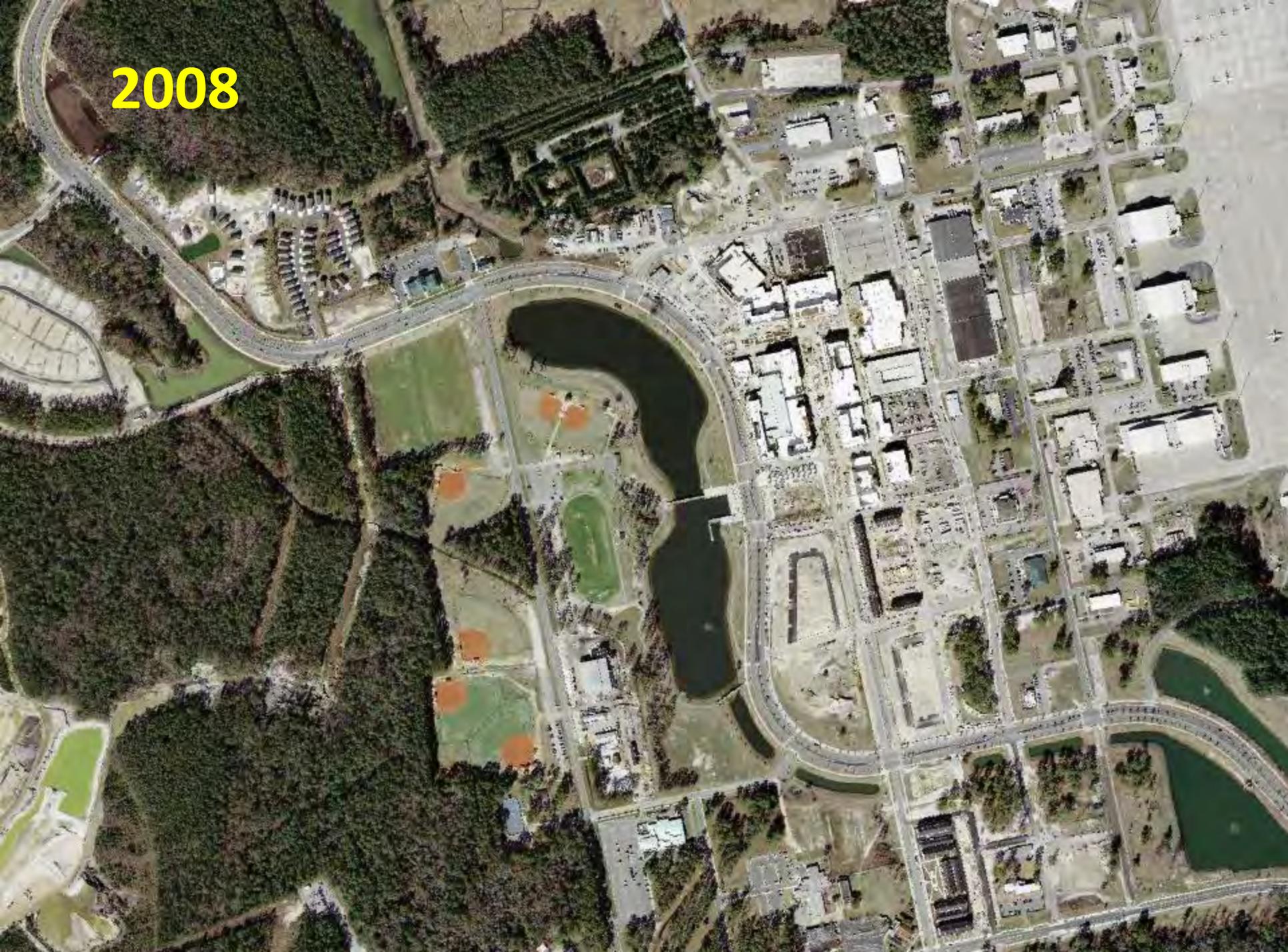
2008



2008



2008



2009



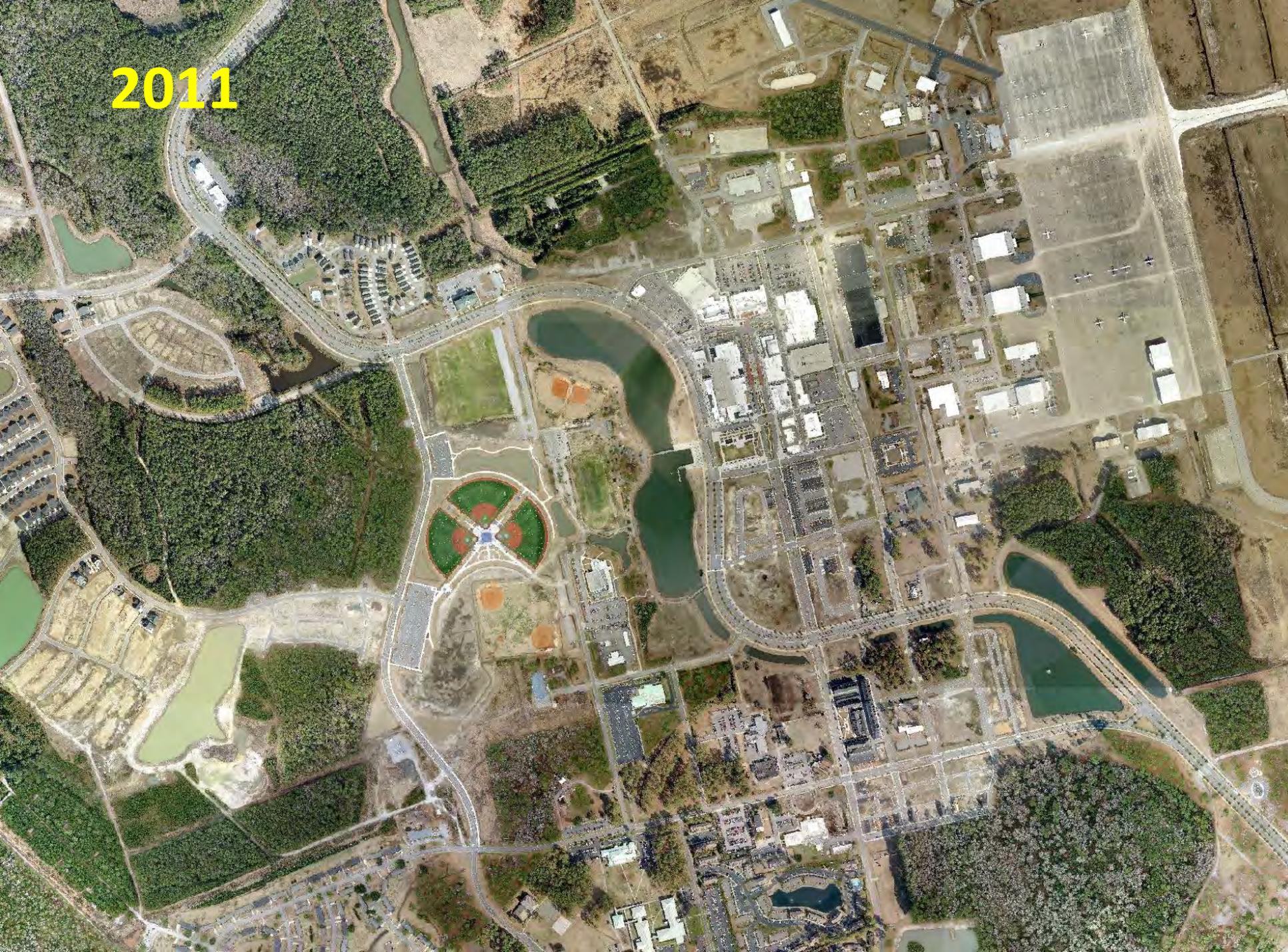


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2010



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2011



2012



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2013



2014





2014



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2016

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2017