

2.8 Concurrency Management – Public Beach and Waterway Access

A. Introduction and Background

This EAR Report evaluates whether the County has been able to maintain the adopted Level of Service Standard (LOSS) for regional parks. The support documentation that answers the objective listed above emanated from the Collier County Parks and Recreation Department's 2003 Boat and Beach Access Report. The purpose of this report is to assess Collier County's performance in providing beach access and boat launch facilities to County residents and visitors. Furthermore, the report identifies the complications involved with providing beach access and boat launch services that keep up with growth. Finally, it examines current level of service standards adopted by Collier County and the recreation industry, the inventory of current facilities and the 1999 Report with regard to and potential public beach and waterway access options and inventories. These future options will be considered for the potential expansion of services and facilities.

B. Identification of Specific Objective(s) from the Respective Element

Recreation and Open Space Element, Objective 1.3:

Continue to ensure that all public developed recreational facilities, open space and beaches and public water bodies are accessible to the general public.

C. Data Assessment

Supply And Demand

While the Gulf of Mexico is a vast but not unlimited resource for water-dependent recreation, limited access to it limits the population's ability to use it. Sandy beach, on the other hand, is a finite recreational resource even further limited by the constraints of access and available parking. Collier County's population continues to grow, but its miles of sandy beach are fixed. The challenge is to provide expanding access to beaches and waterways, including the attendant requisite parking, without exceeding the carrying capacities of the resources and thereby decreasing their desirability and worth. The decreasing availability and increasing cost of land that comes with growth exacerbate this issue. The more access is needed, the more difficult it is to find and afford.

Levels Of Service

The Collier County Growth Management Plan outlines level of service standards (LOSS) for parkland in three categories: facilities value, community park acreage, and regional park acreage. Beach, beach parking, and boating access acreage are currently included in

the regional park acreage measure for purposes of comprehensive plan concurrency. The 2001 Annual Update and Inventory Report projects satisfaction of regional park acreage LOSS through 2009 based on acreage acquisitions planned in CIP through 2004.

Satisfaction of comprehensive plan acreage standards, however, will not maintain the levels of service Collier County residents and visitors currently enjoy with regard to beach and boating access. This is because the comprehensive plan requires no distinction between regional park acreage located inland or developed to serve other functions and acreage reserved for beach and water access. To understand this issue and the expectations of the County’s residents, an examination of the levels of service they have been experiencing is necessary.

Boat Ramps

Currently 27 boat ramp lanes serve boaters countywide. The Parks and Recreation Department maintains eleven of these lanes; City or State government provide seven; and nine are privately owned but open to the public. Table 2.8-1 below outlines the locations and amenities of these facilities.

Ownership	Facility	Ramp lanes	Trailer parking spaces	Acres	Launch fee	Rest rooms	Concession	Picnic facilities	Coast Guard auxiliary	Play area	Dockmaster
County	Bayview Park	2	16	4	\$3.00	x		x		x	
	Caxambas Park	2	31	4	\$3.00	x	x	x	x		x
	Cocohatchee River Park	4	58	7	\$3.00	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Collier Boulevard Boating Park	2	19	.5	\$3.00						
	Lake Trafford Park	1	8	2	0			x			
City & State	Naples Landing	3	35		\$.75/hr	x		x		x	
	Collier-Seminole State Park	2	25		\$2.00	x					
	Delnor-Wiggins State Recreation Area	2	30		\$6.12	x	x	x			
Private	Outdoor Resorts	1	30+		\$10.00	x	x				x
	Port of the Island Marina	2	40+		\$6.00	x	x				x
	Calusa Island Marina	2	80		\$5.00	x	x				x
	Glades Haven Marina	2	Information unavailable								
	Moran’s Restaurant Marina & Motel	1	40+		\$5.30	x	x				x
	Isles of Capri Marina	1	Information unavailable								
	Shell Island Road Boat Ramp	1	15		0						

Twenty-one thousand vessels were registered in Collier County in 2002. Less than 6000 wet slips and less than 3000 commercial dry storage spaces are available to house them. As a result, at least 12,000 vessels countywide are dependent on boat ramps for water access. At an average of 20 launches per vessel per year, countywide facilities should be able to accommodate 240,000 launches per year to meet demand. Spread across the 27 boat ramp lanes available, facilities will average 8,889 launches per year, or 24 launches per day. This figure accords with the recommendation of the Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning Guide of 2000, which suggests that a single boat ramp lane can accommodate 36 launches per day (20 minutes total put-in and pull-out time over a 12-hour period). These calculations are ideal numbers, however, and do not provide for peak use times such as weekends and holidays or for any boats trailered in from outside of the county.

The Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning Guide recommends that average peak use be calculated as follows: Total user occasions are multiplied by 55 percent and divided by 111. This formula is derived from state park attendance, where 55 percent of the total annual attendance occurred over 111 days (52 weeks times two weekend days plus seven weekday holidays). Average weekend and holiday use for Collier County’s boat ramp-dependent vessels then is 1189 launches, or 44 launches per lane per day. To meet the recommended carrying capacity of 36 launches per lane per day on an average weekend or holiday Collier County needs an additional six boat ramp lanes countywide.

The growth of boating countywide is a further consideration with regard to the level of service County boaters can expect to experience. The number of registered vessels in the county has grown steadily at 1000 boats per year over the past six years. Currently few solutions exist for finding homes for these additional boats in dry storage or slips. They will most likely become ramp users, too. At 20 launches per year they will require an additional 55 launches each day or 99 launches on an average weekend day. This translates to a need for an additional two boat ramp lanes per year for as long as this growth rate is sustained in order to maintain the levels of service County boaters currently enjoy. Table 2.8-2 projects boat ramp lane deficiencies for the next ten years.

Year	Number of registered vessels	Number of wet/dry slips	Number of vessels using boat ramps	Number of ramp lanes countywide	Ramp lane deficit
2002	21,000	9000	12,000	27	6
2003	22,000	9180†	12,820	27	8
2004	23,000	9360	13,640	27	10
2005	24,000	9890‡	14,110	27	12
2006	25,000	10,070	14,930	30*	11
2007	26,000	10,250	15,750	32**	11
2008	27,000	10,370	16,630	32	13
2009	28,000	10,490	17,510	32	16
2010	29,000	10,610	18,390	32	19
2011	30,000	10,730	19,270	32	21
2012	31,000	10,850	20,150	32	23

† annual increase of 180 wet slips per year for 2002 to 2007, based on an average of the number of permits issued by Collier County over the last four years; reduced to 120 per year for 2008 to 2012, anticipating stronger environmental law and decreased availability of undeveloped waterfront property

‡ increase of 350 dry slips based on proposed development of Hamilton Harbor

* 3-lane increase based on planned development of the Pulling property by the City of Naples

** 2-lane increase based on the planned development of Goodland Boating Park by Collier County

Observation reveals, however, that where Collier County–run boat ramps are concerned 36 launches per lane per day offers a generous launch and retrieval time, and County boat ramp users can potentially significantly maximize a ramp’s capacity with efficient usage. The problem resides not in the carrying capacity of the ramp but of the parking area. Table 2.8-3 illustrates the dearth of parking available at some County facilities. Bayview Park, for example, according to the standard could accommodate 72 launches per day, but offers only 16 trailer parking spaces on weekends, Bayview ramp users parking along the roadside as far as a mile away from the park. Because the County recently adopted a policy to charge a launch fee instead of a parking fee, boaters who must walk significant distances from and to their vehicles are still required to pay \$3 to use the facility.

	Ramp lanes	Parking spaces	Parking space deficit
Bayview Park	2	16	56
Caxambas Park	2	31	41
Cocohatchee River Park	4	58	86
Collier Boulevard Boating Park	2	19	53
Lake Trafford Park	1	8	28

An additional consideration with respect to boating is access to fresh water. Currently only Lake Trafford is officially available for freshwater boating, although a considerable amount of boat traffic finds its way to the canal system. More access to fresh water may alleviate some of the burden on existing facilities and, as the County population grows, may become an increasing demand in its own right.

Beach Access

The State of Florida recommends a distance of one half (0.5) mile between sites for the spacing of beach access points at state-financed beach restoration projects. Collier County beaches offer a wide range of choices with regard to the frequency of access points along its beaches. In general, State and County beach parks have more sparsely spaced access points to maintain lesser density and a more natural beach environment and experience, please refer to Figures 1 through 7 listed below:

Figure 1. Beach Access

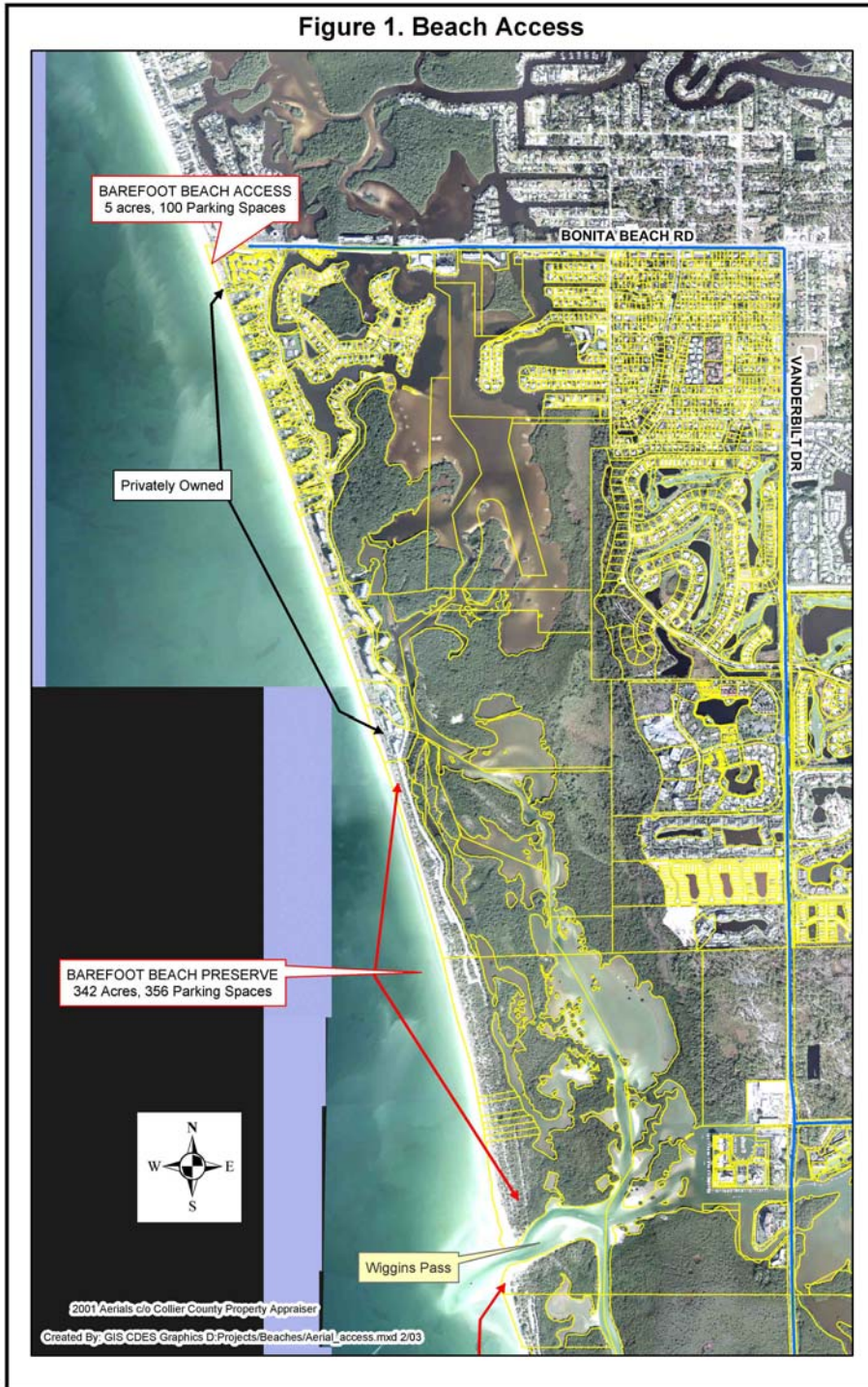


Figure 2. Beach Access

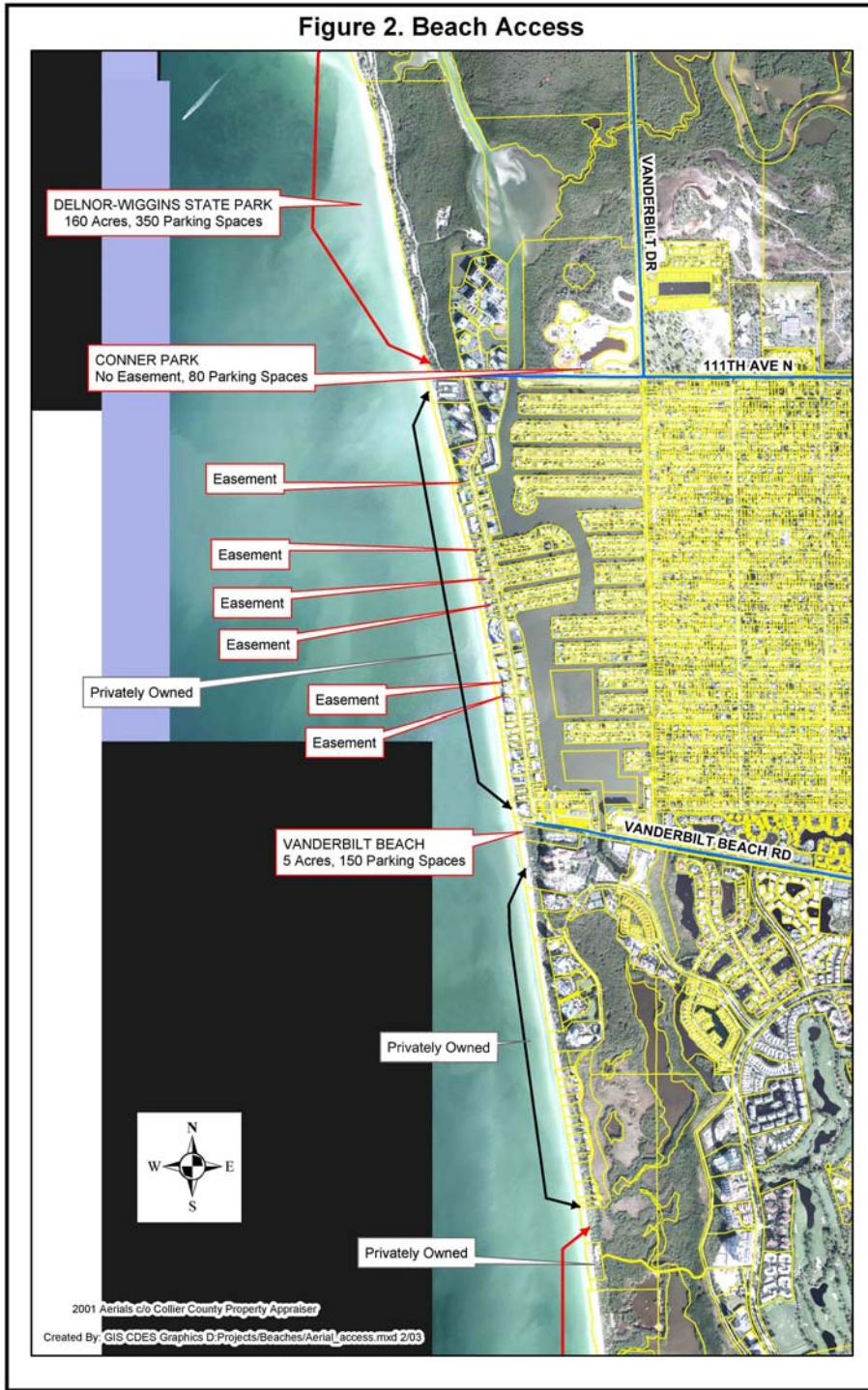


Figure 3. Beach Access

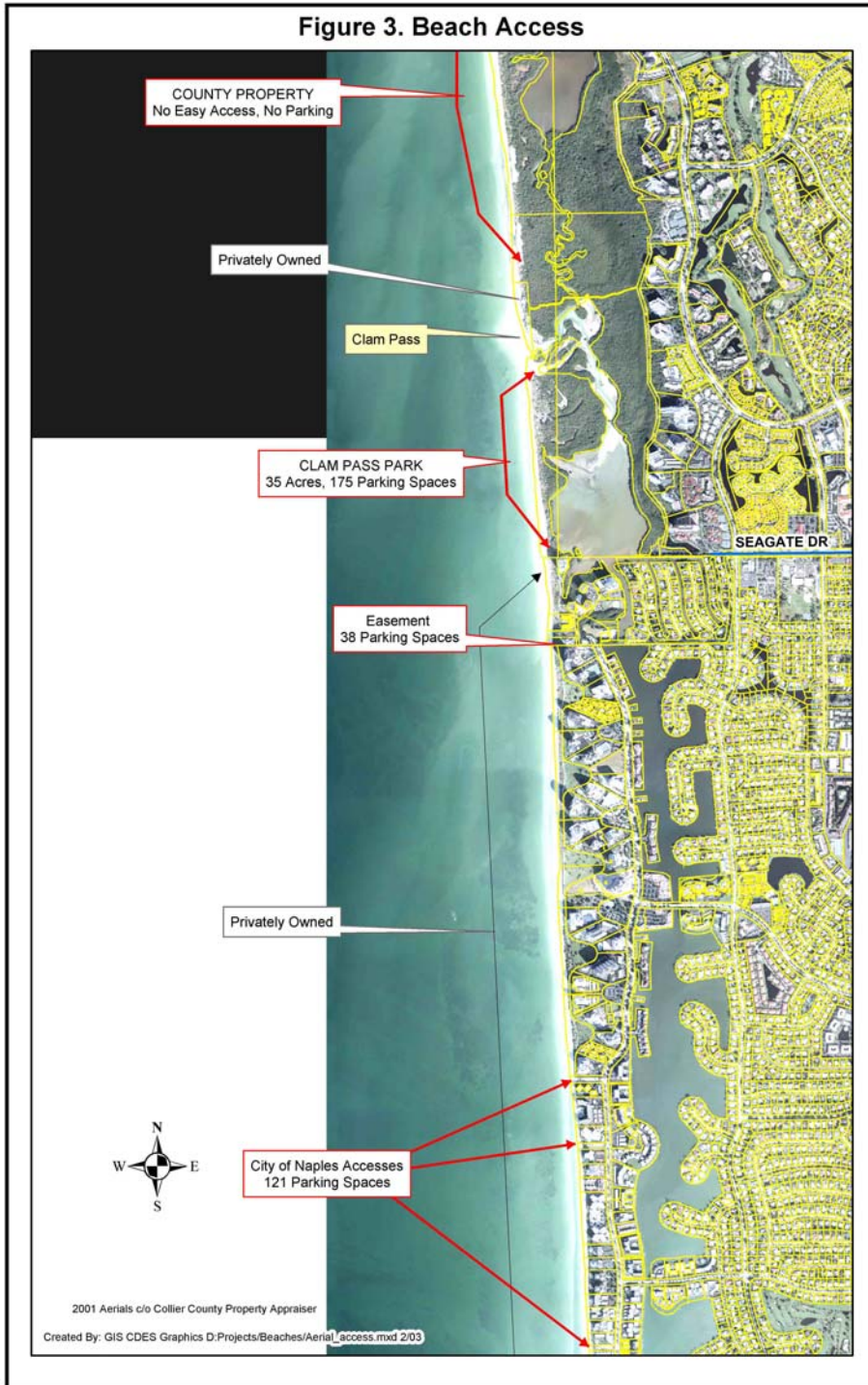


Figure 4. Beach Access

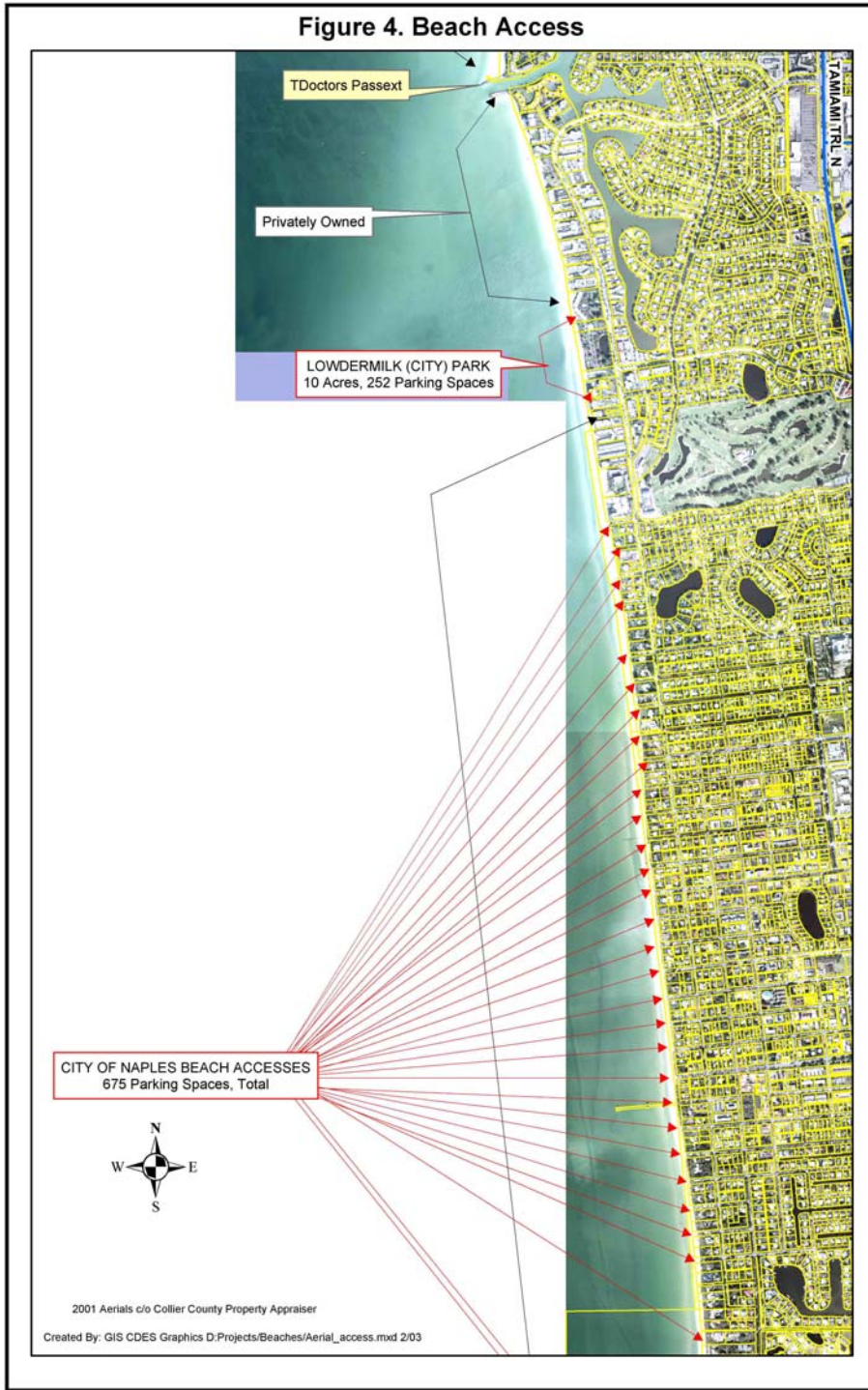


Figure 5. Beach Access

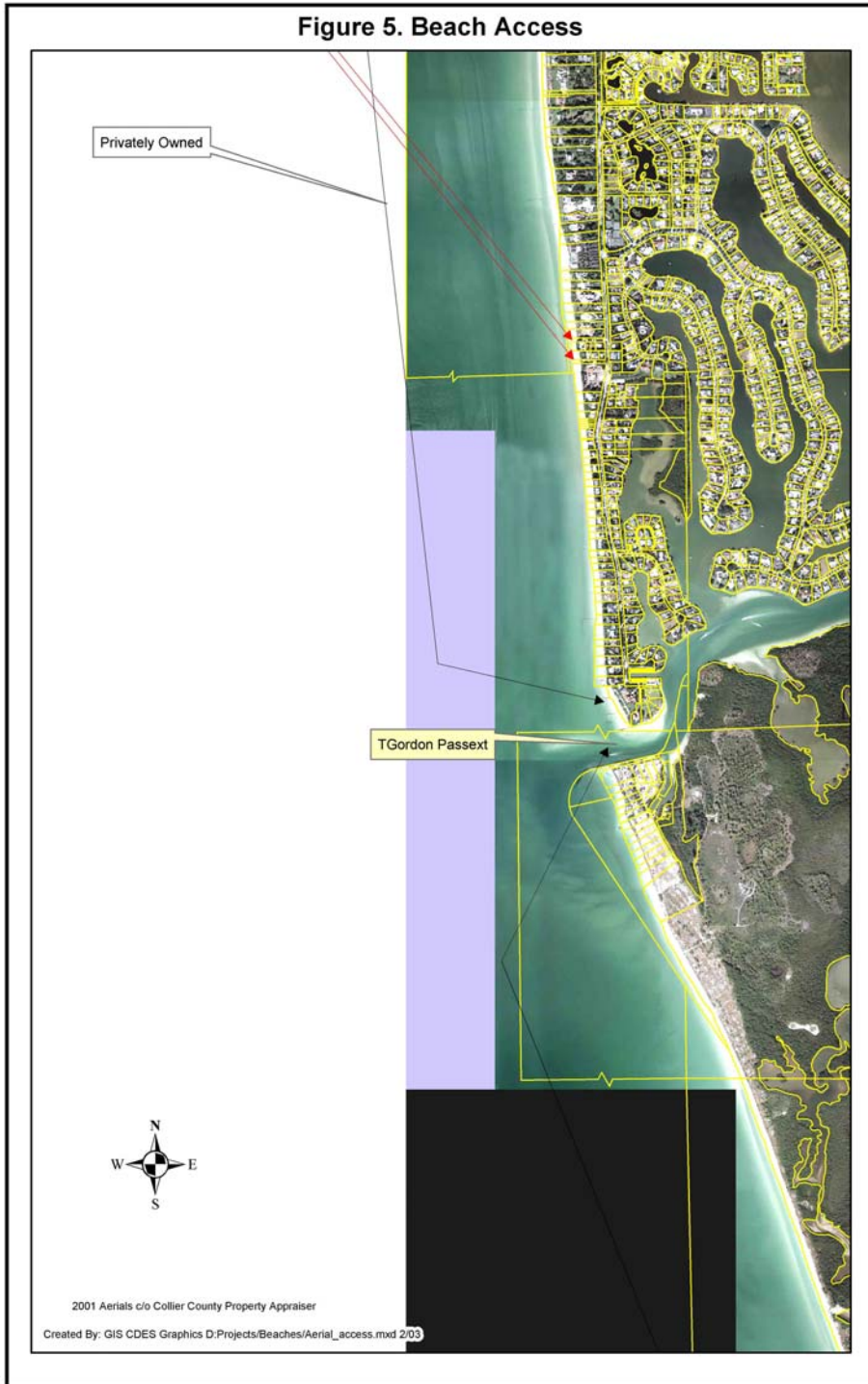


Figure 6. Beach Access



Figure 7. Beach Access



The City of Naples, on the other hand, maintains 34 of its 37 access points within a five-mile stretch of beach, allowing for a more urban beach experience. County residents and visitors are well served by this variety, but to keep up with growth the County should continuously seek ways to improve access, amenity, and parking at its beaches. Table 2.8-4 is a summary of the public access available along the county's shoreline, from north to south (facilities operated by Collier County Parks and Recreation are highlighted):

Table 2.8-4 Public Access Along Collier County Shoreline				
	Linear feet	Description	Parking	Amenities
Barefoot Beach Access	650	5-acre beach access adjacent to Bonita Beach Park, which offers amenities	100	picnic shelters
Lely Barefoot Beach Development	7,100	private residences, 63% inaccessible to the general public*	0	none
Barefoot Beach Preserve	7,500	342 acres of undeveloped coastal barrier island, intended for low density public enjoyment	356	nature trail, interpretive programs, showers, picnic area, concession, rest rooms
Delnor-Wiggins State Recreation Area	5,900	160 acres of preserved area, amenities	350	interpretive programs, picnic areas, concession, showers, rest rooms
Vanderbilt Beach Accesses	6,850	6 walkway easements allow for public access between residences and condominiums, but parking is 3/4-mile away at Conner Park	80	none
Vanderbilt Beach	375	5 acres preserve some natural vegetation within a built-up area; parking is extremely limited in relation to the popularity of this beach	150	showers, rest rooms
Pelican Bay Development	12,000	Collier County owns some the shoreline property, the rest is private; 89% inaccessible to the general public*	0	none
Clam Pass Park	3,200	35 acres of preserved area, amenities	175	boardwalk with tram service, concession, picnic area, foot showers, rest rooms
North Gulf Shore Access	1,350	parking is located at the end of Seagate Drive, pedestrian access from North Gulf Shore Boulevard	38	none
Park Shore Accesses (City)	13,000	3 City of Naples accesses are available amid North Gulf Shore	see below	none

	Linear feet	Description	Parking	Amenities
		condominiums		
City of Naples Accesses	30,000	34 accesses stretch from north of The Beach Club to 32nd Avenue South; Lowdermilk Park and accesses near Naples Pier offer full amenities; select others have showers and foot showers	1,122 total	variable
Keywadin Island	40,000	water access only	0	none
Hideaway Beach Development	5,280	private residences and condominiums, 75% inaccessible to the general public*	0	none
Tigertail Beach	3,900	31 acres of preserved area, amenities	210	concession, picnic area, playground, rest rooms
Marco Island	13,000	condominiums, hotels, 80% inaccessible to the general public*	0	none
South Marco Beach Access	1,200	1-acre walkway easement between condominiums	70	rest rooms

* Accessibility calculated by subtracting ¼ (0.25) mile from the total linear footage for each contiguous publicly accessible beach.

Even more than for boaters, a beachgoer’s enjoyment is only as attainable as the nearest available parking space. In the last three years Collier County has added 93 beach parking spaces to its inventory: 80 at Conner Park (which allow for access to Delnor-Wiggins State Recreation Area or Vanderbilt Beach) and 13 at North Gulf Shore Access. Total spaces at County beaches with the completion of the North Gulf Shore project will be 1,179. Spaces at City of Naples and State of Florida beaches have remained static at 1,122 and 350, respectively.

Table 2.8-5 outlines the number of beach parking spaces per capita in season over the past three years and projected for the next ten. Even with the recent additions, available parking is not keeping pace with growth. This year Collier County’s population will exceed the 1:150 space-to-resident ratio recommended by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in 1999.

Year	Population	Number of Parking Spaces	Ratio	Parking Space Deficit
1995				Data Not Available
1996				Data Not Available
1997				Data Not Available
1998				Data Not Available
1999				Data Not Available
2000	350,744	2558	1:137	0

Year	Population	Number of Parking Spaces	Ratio	Parking Space Deficit
2001	367,605	2638	1:139	0
2002	384,276	2651	1:145	0
2003	401,536	2651	1:151	26
2004	419,603	2651	1:158	146
2005	437,138	2651	1:165	263
2006	451,949	2651	1:170	362
2007	465,180	2651	1:175	450
2008	478,812	2651	1:181	541
2009	492,856	2651	1:186	635
2010	506,495	2651	1:191	726
2011	519,695	2651	1:196	814
2012	533,250	2651	1:201	904

The 1:150 space-to-resident ratio was established as a goal by comparing the number of public parking spaces to the seasonal population of the county. To retain the validity of the standard the same formula has been used in the table above. However, a number of considerations improve the outlook where the County’s ability to provide sufficient parking for beach access is concerned. For example, the areas listed in Table 2.8-4 as partially inaccessible to the general public nonetheless do serve a portion of the population. Those people who live in the appropriate areas and/or purchase the required memberships are served by accesses and parking at such semiprivate beaches. The organizations that manage these beaches are able to provide a higher level of service to their constituents than the general public enjoys. Pelican Bay, for example, provides 174 parking spaces for 8600 units. That’s a 1:123 space-to-resident ratio assuming 2.5 residents per unit. Marco’s Residents Beaches offer a total of 390 spaces for 6,654 dwelling units, or 1 space for every 42 residents. Nonetheless the managers of both areas attest that their facilities are inadequate during peak use times, and both have taken steps to improve their service. Pelican Bay is expanding its parking facilities, while Residents Beach restricts guest parking on weekends during season. Additionally, thousands of residences in Collier County are west of Lely Barefoot Boulevard, Gulf Shore Drive, Gulf Shore Boulevard, Gordon Drive, and Collier Boulevard. The people who live in those residences do not need parking accommodation because they live within walking distance of the beach.

The recent introduction of the Collier Area Transit System may be relieving some of the burden on beach parking for inland dwellers. Current routes take riders as far west as 6th Street in downtown Naples, which would give a beachgoer a six-block walk to his destination. The County should pursue expanding CAT service to local beaches, as will be discussed in greater detail in the Recommendations section of this report.

Other Recreation

A final topic in assessing the County’s levels of service with regard to beaches and boating is the introduction of alternative recreational activities. Sugden Regional Park is home to the 60-acre Lake Avalon, which supports a swimming beach and opportunities to

participate in non-motorized boating such as sailing, canoeing, kayaking, and paddle boating. Clam Pass Park and Barefoot Beach Preserve offer canoe launches. Future plans also call for a non-motorized vessel launch at the bridge at State Road 92. Upon completion of North Naples Regional Park, residents and visitors can enjoy a first-class water park with slides, a lazy river, and children's activity pools—a perfect alternative to the beach for cooling down on a hot day. The existing Golden Gate Aquatic Center and small water park at Vineyards Community Park provide more choices, as well. The County should continue to diversify the recreational activities it offers. Variety builds the participant base and alleviates the burden on traditional resources such as beaches.

Planned Capital Improvements

Many of Collier County's Parks and Recreation facilities are relatively new, and few to date have required extensive renovations. As these facilities age and the burden of use - or overuse if new facilities are not constructed - accumulate, renovations to existing facilities will become an increasing demand on capital expenditures. Meanwhile the county's population will continue to grow and demand for new facilities will remain. Balancing the need to sustain or improve existing facilities and add new ones will be a mounting challenge in the future. The mix of renovation and construction as a destination for capital dollars is reflected already in the following boat ramp and beach access projects, all of which are incorporated in the five-year Capital Improvement Plan:

Bayview Park Renovation and Dredging

Renovations will include an additional dock and renovations of the existing dock and fish-cleaning tables. Funding through a Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program grant is secured for up to \$120,000. A fifty percent match is required; \$75,000 is approved for FY 03. The balance of the match will be made up from reserves or through in-kind services. Dredging will constitute a separate project, for which \$100,000 is approved for FY 03.

Gulf Shore Drive Beach Accesses Improvements

The six accesses along Gulf Shore Drive at Vanderbilt Beach will be refurbished over several years. Improvements at Bayview Drive are approved for \$125,000 of TDC funding for FY 03.

Collier Boulevard Boating Park Expansion and Overflow Parking

Expansion to the north will add an additional 47 trailer parking spaces. A second phase of expansion to the south may add an additional 28 trailer parking spaces. Lease of and improvements to a parcel of land across CR 951 may supply additional overflow parking spaces. This will be a multiyear project for which \$600,000 is approved for FY 03 and \$600,000 is planned for FY 04.

Lake Trafford Park Improvements

Improvements will be the installation of riprap around the water bank and repairs to the pier. Planned funding is \$75,000 in FY 04.

Land Purchase for Shuttle Parking

The Department will pursue purchasing land along the US 41 corridor to develop for parking in conjunction with a CAT beach shuttle service. Proposed funding is \$2,000,000 in FY 04.

Cocohatchee River Park Seawall and Dock Repair

Seawall and dock repair is proposed for FY 04 at a cost of \$100,000.

Caxambas Park Seawall Repair and Landscaping

Seawall repair and landscaping projects are proposed for FY 05 at \$60,000 each.

Goodland Boating Park Development

Park development will include two boat ramp lanes and 50 to 75 trailer parking spaces as well as a neighborhood park. This multiyear project is scheduled for master planning at \$100,000 in FY 06 and Phase I development at \$1,000,000 in FY 07.

D. Objective Achievement Analysis

Supply And Demand

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E. Conclusion

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F. Specific Policy Relevance

The County finds that there are no enabling policies for Objective 1.3 that specifically deal with issues related to both beach access points or waterway access.

G. Recommendations

Collier County will modify or add policies related to beach access, boat ramps and beach parking in the EAR -based amendments.