

Part 4: Public Access

Part 4.A: Introduction

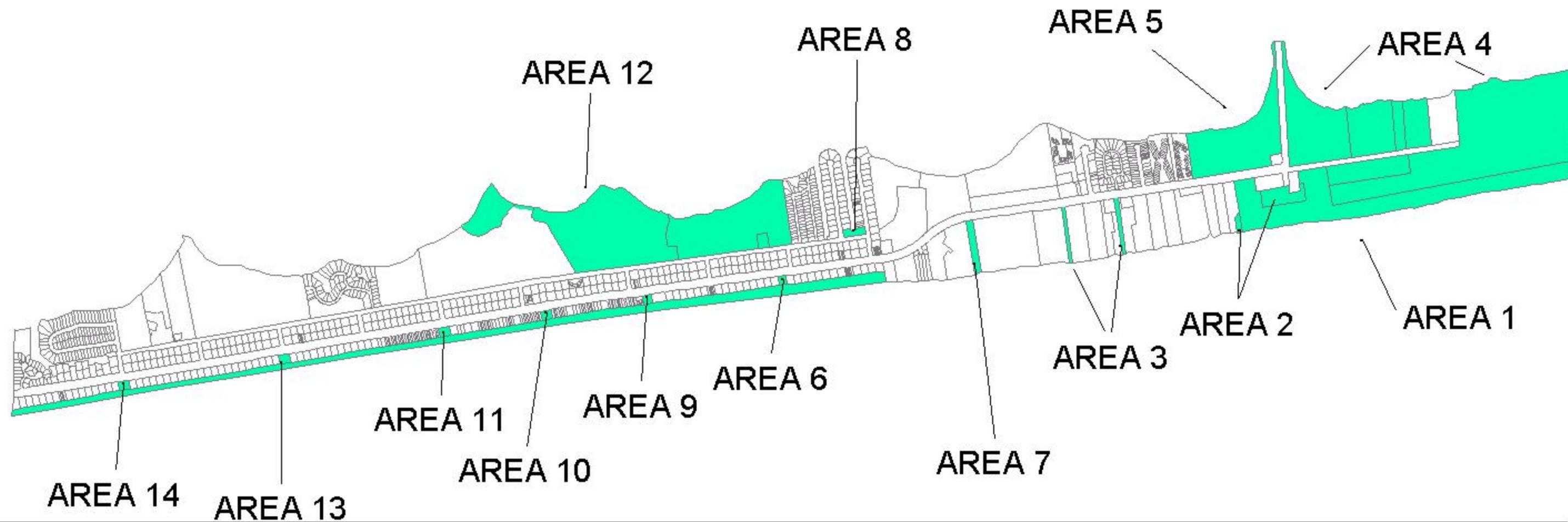
The purpose of this Chapter is to inventory and analyze the public accesses to the beaches and to dune areas at Navarre Beach. The proposed Master Plan includes about 266 acres of Conservation and Recreation lands, all of which constitute public accesses to the Gulf of Mexico, Santa Rosa Sound and the beaches and dunes of Navarre Beach.

Part 4.B: Inventory of Existing Public Access

The adopted Comprehensive Plan allocates approximately 77 acres to the Conservation and Recreation category. The proposed Master Plan will increase such acreage and access areas by at least 189 acres; a 346% increase in the available acreage.

The inventory of current and proposed public accesses is shown in Table 4-1 and depicted on Map 4-A. As indicated in the Table, there are fourteen (14) distinct areas for general public access at Navarre Beach, not including the beach itself. In addition, it is noted that there are about 18 miles of public beach open for access in the Gulf Islands National Seashore, adjacent to and west of Navarre Beach.

Map 4-A Navarre Beach Public Access Inventory Map



Legend

-  Parcel Lines
-  Public Access Parcels



0.2 0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 Miles



Community Planning, Zoning
and
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Table 4-1: Public Access Map Inventory

Access Area Map Number	Description	Facilities
Area 1	4,000 linear feet of Gulf beach front south of Gulf Boulevard from the pier east to Eglin Boundary. Also includes all of the state park area.	Paved public parking; picnic pavilion; restrooms; litter receptacles; 3 dune walk-overs.
Area 2	Navarre Beach Pier	1,200 fishing pier; improved parking (paved & shelled); snack bar; bait shop; restrooms.
Area 3	Gulf beach access	Dune walkover; litter receptacles
Area 4	Soundside beach	5 picnic areas; paved parking litter receptacles
Area 5	Soundside park	Boat ramp & pier; picnic areas; restaurant & grill; active recreation (volleyball, sail boats, etc); improved parking.
Area 6	Beach access	Improved parking; litter receptacle; dune walkover.
Area 7	Beach access	Unimproved.
Area 8	Canal access	Unimproved.
Area 9	Beach access	Improved parking; litter receptacle.
Area 10	Beach access	Litter receptacle
Area 11	Beach access	Improved parking; litter receptacle; dune walkover.
Area 12	Proposed 51 ± acre Soundside park and conservation area w/wetlands.	Currently unimproved.
Area 13	Beach access	Improved parking; litter receptacle; dune walkover.
Area 14	Beach access	Improved parking; litter receptacle; dune walkover

Source: 1995 Navarre Beach Master Plan

Subsection 4.B.1: Public Access Improvement

The proposed 51+ acre Soundside Park should be improved with parking, litter receptacles, picnic areas, wetland walkover and possibly a boat ramp. This park will provide an ideal area for families to use because:

1. The waters are relatively calm and shallow near the shore.
2. There is ample upland space to accommodate vehicles without creating any unusual pedestrian/vehicle conflict points.
3. There is ample unobstructed open space to allow parents to observe children at distances.
4. Natural area functions and dynamics can be observed "up close".
5. The area is near residential uses, not commercial uses with noise, glare, traffic₁ distractions, etc.

Area 2 and Area 5 on the Public Access Inventory Map (Map 4-1) have facilities operated as private businesses but under "Management Agreements" with the County. These areas are among the most popular spots for residents and visitors alike. The Management Agreements provide rules and regulations for the concessionaires, enterprise fund income for expenses associated with the maintenance of Navarre Beach, and facilities for use and enjoyment by the general public. Such agreements have proven successful in other Northwest Florida Communities, too. This collective experience provides the necessary methods to insure the goals of public access, public safety and protection of important resources are achieved. The Agreements have proven useful, functional, efficient and in the public interests.

Any additional Management Agreement entered by the County should include provisions for improvements to public facilities and/or the initial construction of such

facilities, including boardwalks and dune walkovers. Individual Agreements should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the area under the Agreement.

Subsection 4.B.2: Summary

- Public access to the beaches of Santa Rosa Island and Navarre Beach is almost unrestricted. There are 18 miles of National seashore adjacent to Navarre Beach and there are 14 distinct public access points along Navarre Beach (3.5 accesses per mile).
- Use of Management Agreements is an effective and proven method for providing important public facilities and services at no cost to the public, but with significant public benefit. Use of the agreement technique should continue.
- The proposed Master Plan includes almost twice as much land designated for conservation and recreation use as the current Plan. The additional acreage is on both the Sound and Gulf sides of Navarre Beach.
- Some of the added Conservation and Recreation acreage should be available for family recreation. Toward this end, the proposed Master Plan contains provisions for the conversion of about 51 acres from a developable land use category to the Conservation and Recreation category which will then be used for a family facility with picnic areas, swimming areas, restrooms, parking, etc. This park may also include a boat launching facility.
- The proposed Master Plan will provide for the recreation and public access needs of the Navarre Beach community and its visitors for generations to come.