

Collier Area Transit (CAT) recently completed its second year of operating a free beach bus from January through April. The service operates via two buses every 15 minutes Friday to Monday (8 am until 2:30 pm, then 4:30 pm until 7:10 pm) and alleviates beach parking needs by allowing people to travel between Conner Park parking, Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, Vanderbilt Beach, and Mercato. Based on ridership data provided by CAT for FY 2017, the beach bus ridership increased considerably into peak season with nearly 800 riders in February (Table 2-6).

Table 2-6: CAT Beach Trolley Ridership

Month	Ridership
Dec 2017	39
Jan 2018	144
Feb 2018	779
Mar 2018	623
April 2018	313

Source: Collier Area Transit



The ability to access the entire length of the beach also can be enhanced or constrained by the type, location, and number of amenities provided, particularly when an access point and parking cannot be easily expanded along the length of the beach. However, beach use also must be balanced with environmental needs and property/access rights of homeowners along the beach. These factors should be considered as part of a detailed beach access/parking study to identify potential solutions, including to address parking constraints at Clam Pass Beach Park as this is a high priority need for beach access. It should be noted that any discussions concerning Clam Pass Beach Park must involve the Pelican Bay Foundation, as the Foundation has legal rights providing certain restrictions to the property through a 30-year covenant recorded with the County in 2011.

Sports Tourism

Collier County Sports Tourism Division was established in 2006 to promote Collier County as a sports tourism destination. The Division works closely with the County’s Tourism Department and the Sports Council of Collier County, comprising business and hotel partners interested in promoting Collier County as a premier sports tourism destination.

The Division currently supports sports tourism by hosting events at North Collier Regional Park and Sugden Park, with partially offsetting revenues provided by the Collier County Tourism Development Council (TDC). In addition, East Naples Community Park’s pickleball facility (Figure 2-1), operated and maintained by the Division, serves the recreational needs of residents and also promotes sports tourism by providing a venue for the US Open Pickleball Championship. The first championship was held at the park in 2016 and contributed \$2.5 million in direct economic impact through hotels, restaurants, attractions, and local businesses, according to the Collier County Parks & Recreation Division. Subsequent championships were held at the park in April 2017 and 2018. The Division is currently developing a master plan to further enhance the park for additional pickleball capacity.