

Memo



Date: 11/01/2012
To: Russ Blackburn, City Manager
Via: Teresa Scott, Director of Public Works
From: Jacob Kain, Program Coordinator
Subject: Review of parking permit program

Public Works staff was directed to conduct a review of the City's parking permit program and provide a report of findings and recommendations for consideration by the City Manager and City Commission.

A review team was established with the following City staff participating:

Chris Cooper, Code Enforcement
Jacob Kain, Public Works
Andrew Persons, Planning and Development Services
Phyllis Plummer, Budget and Finance
Joe Raulerson, Gainesville Police Department
April Shuping, Budget and Finance

The review team convened for meetings in July and September 2012. A meeting with stakeholders was held at the Thomas Center on September 12, 2012 (see Figure 1 for list of attendees). In addition, interviews were conducted with Phil Mann, Traffic Operations Manager; Deborah Leistner, Public Works Planning Manager; and Trish Everitt, Parking Operations Supervisor. Additional public input was also provided by email to the review team.

The review team's findings and recommendations were sent out to the stakeholders for comments prior to finalization. The final report is attached.

Recommendations 1 & 3 can be implemented by the Finance and Public Works Departments respectively; however recommendations 2, 4, and 5 require action by the City Commission. Recommendation 6 is on-going action required of multiple stakeholders.

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Review of Parking Permit Program

November 1, 2012

City of Gainesville
Public Works Department

Background

The City of Gainesville has regulated on-street parking in the areas immediately surrounding the University of Florida since 1981. Regulation was instituted to prevent parking by students, faculty and staff commuting to the University of Florida in what were then primarily single-family residential neighborhoods. The current parking permit zones are shown in Figure 2.

In areas that remain primarily single family, the permit program appears to remain successful in preventing parking by commuters (see Figure 3). However, in areas that have transitioned from single-family owner occupied areas into a mix of rental student housing, multi-family housing, and/or non-residential uses, supply has increasingly fell short of demand. SW 9th Road is a prime example of this transition, where within the past decade smaller single family residences (most with off-street parking) have been incrementally replaced with multi-story, multi-family buildings with minimal off-street parking (see Figure 4).

The City has taken a lead role in encouraging higher density development adjacent to campus through the adoption of the College Park (1992) and University Heights (2000) special area plans and urban mixed use zoning adopted in 2011. Together, these regulations limit the development of new parking supply off-street (see Table 1).

Table 1. Off-Street Parking Requirements in College Park and University Heights Special Area Plans and Urban Mixed Use 2 zoning district

Regulatory instrument	Parking minimum (number of spaces)	Parking maximum (number of spaces)	Surface parking as primary use allowed?
College Park Special Area Plan	0.5/bedroom for residential; no non-residential minimum	1/bedroom; no excess parking (10% or 10 spaces, whichever greater) above required by use in Article IX of code	No
University Heights Special Area Plan	0	1 space per 400 sq ft of gross floor area	No
Urban Mixed Use 2 Zoning District	0	1 space per 400 sq ft of non-residential gross floor area (surface); Unlimited for structured parking	No*

*A pending ordinance would allow for surface parking in the Innovation Square area on a temporary basis.

At the same time, infrastructure improvements funded by the Public Works Department and Community Redevelopment Agency have introduced some additional parking within these neighborhoods. Private developers have also added on-street parking, most recently adjacent to the Deco 39 development at SW 10th Street and SW 4th Avenue (see Figure 5).

Improved service by the Regional Transit System, unlimited transit access by students and staff, and pedestrian amenities have also created an environment more conducive for trips by means other than the vehicle.

While many changes have occurred and continue to occur in these neighborhoods the permit program has changed very little. Additional zones have been created over time to address commuter parking issues in additional areas and to disincentive driving and parking between destinations by residents within zones and also to distinguish areas that were primarily single family from areas that were primarily multifamily. In 2007, parking enforcement shifted from the Gainesville Police Department to Public Works. In 2008, online purchasing became available and administration of permit sales shifted from the Public Works Department to Budget and Finance.

Previous studies of City fees have found that the price of permits does not cover the permit program's administrative, sign and marking installation and maintenance, or database maintenance costs. The current permit cost is \$19.50 per year. The most recent study in 2008 recommended charging a minimum of \$45 per semester (\$135 per year) to help offset these necessary program expenses.

Permit Program Administration

Under the current program structure, permit sales are administered by the Budget and Finance department. An individual residing in one of the permit areas must visit the City's website (<https://eservices1.cityofgainesville.org/OnlinePermit/index.aspx>) to apply for a permit, which is subsequently mailed to the property owner for distribution. The applicant must provide vehicle registration information at the time of application in order to purchase a permit. All Commercial permits, service permits, temporary permits, visitor permits, and fraternity/sorority meal permits are sold or issued only at the Thomas Center.

Enforcement of parking permits is handled by the Public Works Parking Operations Section. Three full-time employees monitor the permit zones between 8 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday. Per ordinance, vehicles are immobilized by boot after 3 tickets are issued and towed if not moved within 24 hours. Vehicles with 5 or more tickets are automatically towed. Hangtag permits are used in Zones 3 and 4 and for service and visitor permits. All other zones utilize adhesive windshield stickers that are vehicle-specific and voided when removed. Staff uses handheld units to verify that permits are being utilized by the vehicles registered with Budget and Finance. Parking Operations may revoke permits based on their use in a vehicle other than that registered with Budget and Finance.

Parking Operations also conducts utilization studies related to the creation of new permit zones as specified by ordinance. New permit zones are created upon request. Chapter 26 – Article III – Division 4 of the Gainesville Code of Ordinances requires a study be conducted to demonstrate need for parking permit zone (at least 50% occupancy). The city commission must approve a new zone before it is instituted. Recent studies have been conducted in the Duckpond neighborhood and around the Jefferson at 2nd development. Public Works Traffic Operations Section typically maintains signs and markings in existing permit zones and installs signs and markings in new zones (at an average cost of \$4,000 per block including labor and materials).

Findings

- 1. The current system does not successfully prevent fraud during the purchasing process**

The current purchasing system is reliant upon the honesty of individual tenants and property owners/managers to ensure that permits are only issued to legitimate users. A permit purchased online requires no validating paperwork to establish the user's legitimacy. Once mailed to the property owner/manager, the permit can be distributed to anyone and the City has no control. In addition, staff indicated that the current process to revoke a permit is lengthy, expensive, and often fails to achieve an appropriately punitive outcome. As a result, manipulation of the system is possible through minimal effort (see Figures 6 and 7).

2. Permit pricing is too low

Among stakeholders who attended the August 2012 meeting, there was consensus that parking permits were currently underpriced. There was further agreement among the stakeholders that a price of \$150 per year was more appropriate than the current \$19.50 per year.

The current underpricing of permit parking in neighborhoods adjacent to campus is especially obvious when comparing to the cost of UF permits, which are \$150 annually for students and as much as \$1,116.00 annually for staff. In most cases, student parking facilities are located on the periphery of the campus core, making spaces in city neighborhoods both closer to many destinations on campus and also significantly cheaper. This pricing is also significantly less than the \$20 monthly parking cost in the city parking garage.

3. There are few opportunities to expand on street supply within zones

The capacity of streets within the residential parking permit areas to absorb additional on-street parking is very limited. The City has over the last several years created additional on-street parking through striping or the construction of new parking bays in conjunction with road improvements. In addition, developers have created new on-street parking in conjunction with private developments. Most recently, the City partnered with Trimark Properties to convert two blocks of SW 4th Avenue from two lanes with a center turn lane to two lanes with alternating on-street parking bays (see Figure 8).

Additional opportunities to expand supply within existing infrastructure are limited. Staff reviewed the permit zones and identified two opportunities to create additional parking with the addition of only signage and striping to add a total of approximately 6 parking stalls: the 900 block of SW 5th Avenue and the 700 block of SW 9th Street (see Figure 9).

The 900 block of Depot Avenue and surrounding areas were mentioned by stakeholders as having demand beyond existing on-street and off-street supply. This has precipitated illegal parking activity in the Depot Avenue right-of-way. Parking Operations issued approximately 40 citations in this area during August and September 2012. A review of the adjacent areas, which are currently not within a residential permit zone, indicates that including these properties within the permit zone would most likely not solve this problem. There is almost no on-street parking in the non-permit areas along and adjacent to Depot Avenue. Extending the opportunity to purchase permits to additional residents in these areas could further strain the already limited supply in the permit areas.

Property owners and managers also indicated that accommodating resident scooters on private sites is increasingly difficult. Staff found many examples of successful scooter parking implementation in cities such as Philadelphia, Boston, Seattle, and San Francisco. In addition, motorcycle parking is already present in downtown Gainesville and some residents have created de-facto scooter parking adjacent to the Jefferson at 2nd development (see

Figure 10). Many streets that do not have sufficient width to accommodate additional vehicle parking may be able to accommodate scooter parking.

A 2009 study commissioned by the Community Redevelopment Agency and conducted by Rich and Associates recommended that the city explore options to create additional off-street parking supply. The same study, however, also found that there were limited locations in College Park or University Heights suitable for garage construction except for the Innovation Square area. The report also found that the average monthly cost per space in a prototypical structure would be between \$190 and \$250 to meet the debt service.

4. The Innovation Square area will likely require regulated parking in the near future

Stakeholders and staff agreed that the on-street parking surrounding Innovation Square will require regulation now or in the near future to help control supply and demand. All agreed that such regulations would be more easily implemented now in advance of major development rather than after development and increase demand are already present.

5. The current grace period is not optimal

The City currently offers a grace period from August 1st through September 15th of each year to afford new residents an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the City's parking requirements and purchase permits. During this period, no citations are issued for lack of permit. Stakeholders in attendance at the September 12th meeting indicated that this grace period creates havoc for legitimate users, who must compete with other non-resident users aware of the well-known grace period. The grace period also begins too late to coincide with the move-in dates at many locations, which are in mid-to-late July.

6. Demand management is also needed

Ultimately, as properties in residential permit zones redevelop at higher densities with (in many cases) less off-street parking supply than the preceding development, the supply of on-street parking will not be able to keep pace. At the same time, many strategies exist that could help to reduce demand for permit parking in these areas. The City's partnership with the University of Florida to provide access to RTS for students, faculty, and staff is one example of an existing, highly-successful demand management strategy. Pricing is another strategy that is currently underutilized.

The City should also consider how to implement or encourage implementation of other strategies to reduce demand for on street parking in the residential permit areas. For example, car sharing (provided by companies such as Zipcar) could help to encourage residents who opt to own a vehicle for certain errands but otherwise travel on foot, by bike, or by transit to not use a car. Continual development of improved transit, bicycle, and pedestrian amenities can also help to support a transition away from widespread vehicle ownership in these areas.

Recommendations

1. The City should resume full control over distribution of parking permits

The purchasing process should be restructured to better prevent fraud. Online purchasing is a benefit to both customers and staff since it is available anytime. However, it is clear that mailing permits to property owners or managers relinquishes City control over the distribution of permits. Mailing permits also creates a strange process in which the purchased good (the

permit) is provided to a third party (the property owner or manager) to be distributed to the purchasing party (the tenant) at the third party's discretion.

Property owners and managers should instead provide tenant lists to the City. Permit applicants could then come in person to pick up their permits with the appropriate, validating paperwork to confirm their eligibility to purchase a permit (including, at a minimum, a signed lease, vehicle registration, and one other proof of address, such as a utility bill). The City should also consider having staff affix decals to the vehicle which is registered to ensure proper placement and use. Parking Operations staff indicate that permits are frequently displayed on dashboards, using tape, or other methods of avoiding permanently affixing to the windshield.

Stakeholders and staff agreed that in-person pick up would create little additional work for staff in the sales transaction and would provide an important firewall against fraudulent permit acquisition. It would also provide staff an opportunity to distribute information and answer questions about the permit program with its users.

2. Permit pricing should be increased to better reflect its value and program costs

Permit pricing should at a minimum cover the program's administrative and operational expense and reflect the cost of providing parking. Stakeholders and staff agreed that underpricing permits encouraged program abuse and undermined the intent of the permit program.

Previous fee studies have recommended a permit price of around \$50 per semester (\$150 per year) which stakeholders and staff felt remained a reasonable cost. Stakeholders also suggested providing a lower price on permits for homestead properties in the permit zones in order to garner support for the changes.

The City should also consider charging for visitor permits, which are currently free and better monitoring the issuance of service and commercial permits to ensure they are for a legitimate business purpose.

3. The City should pursue installation of additional on-street parking in the areas identified in this report

As stated earlier, there are limited opportunities within present constraints to create additional on-street parking supply. As shown in Figure 9, two locations in University Heights may be able to accommodate up to 6 total new parking stalls. In addition, the City should identify one or more locations, particularly in Zones 1 or 2, to implement on-street scooter parking where full vehicle stalls are not feasible.

4. The City should explore implementation of a permit zone and metered parking surrounding Innovation Square

As the Innovation Square project begins to grow, the city should establish parking regulations in this area. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the currently unregulated parking surrounding the Innovation Hub, particularly along SW 2nd Avenue, is in heavy demand during the work day. The installation of meters in areas of heavy demand would help to ensure that those visiting the Innovation Hub and other businesses would have access to convenient short term on-street parking. Creating a new permit zone now would also help to avoid the perception by users that a parking "right" is being eliminated in the future when, inevitably, regulated parking is expanded to this area.

5. The parking permit grace period dates should be changed

The grace period during which parking permits are not enforced should be changed to July 15th through August 31st. This would better align with resident turnover in the neighborhoods and also prevent the establishment of “bad habits” by commuters which create parking problems for legitimate users during the existing grace period.

6. The City, in conjunction with the University of Florida and individual property owners and managers, should pursue demand-side strategies to address parking demand in the permit areas

As density and intensity of uses in many parts of the residential permit program area increase, supply strategies will not be sufficient to avoid future issues with the program. Demand management strategies should be included in the City's long range vision for these areas. Continuing to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit service in these areas is one vital element. Pursuit of other strategies such as car sharing will also be important in reducing the perception that car ownership is necessary in these areas.

Figure 1. Stakeholder meeting sign-in sheet

Sign-In Sheet
 University Heights / College Park
 Decal Parking Program Stakeholder Meeting
 9/12/2012 1:30 pm Thomas Center B

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Phyllis Plummer	City of G'ville	plummerpd@cityofgainesville.org	334-5024
JOHN FLEMING	Trimark Properties	fleming@trimarkproperties.com	
PHIL WAGNER	TRIMARK PROPERTIES	pwagner@trimarkproperties.com	
Diana Brockington	Collier Companies	diana.brockington@colliercompanies.com	
Brian Funderburg	Gainesville Police	funderbubr@cityofgainesville.org	
Steve Joplin	City of Gainesville	joplinsh@cityofgainesville.org	
PAULINE HEFLIN	HEFLIN P.A.	phflin@cox.net	
Clay Kallman	Circa Properties	clay@lookingglassapartments.com	
Andrew Persons	C.G	personsaw@cityofgainesville.org	
Trish Everitt	City of Gnv Parking	everittpw@cityofgainesville.org	
Lindsay Rizzo	CRA	rizzolm@cityofgainesville.org	
Bruce Delaney	UFF	bdelaney@uff.uff.edu	
Tom Douglas	City of G'ville	douglas te@cityofgainesville.org	
Kim Brown	The Courtyards	kim.brown@cmcapt.com	
BARTON THRASHER	Property Owner	352-335-9935	
STEVE SCANLAN	FDOT	STEVEN.SCANLAN@DOT.STATE.FL.US	351-4316

Figure 2. Parking permit zones

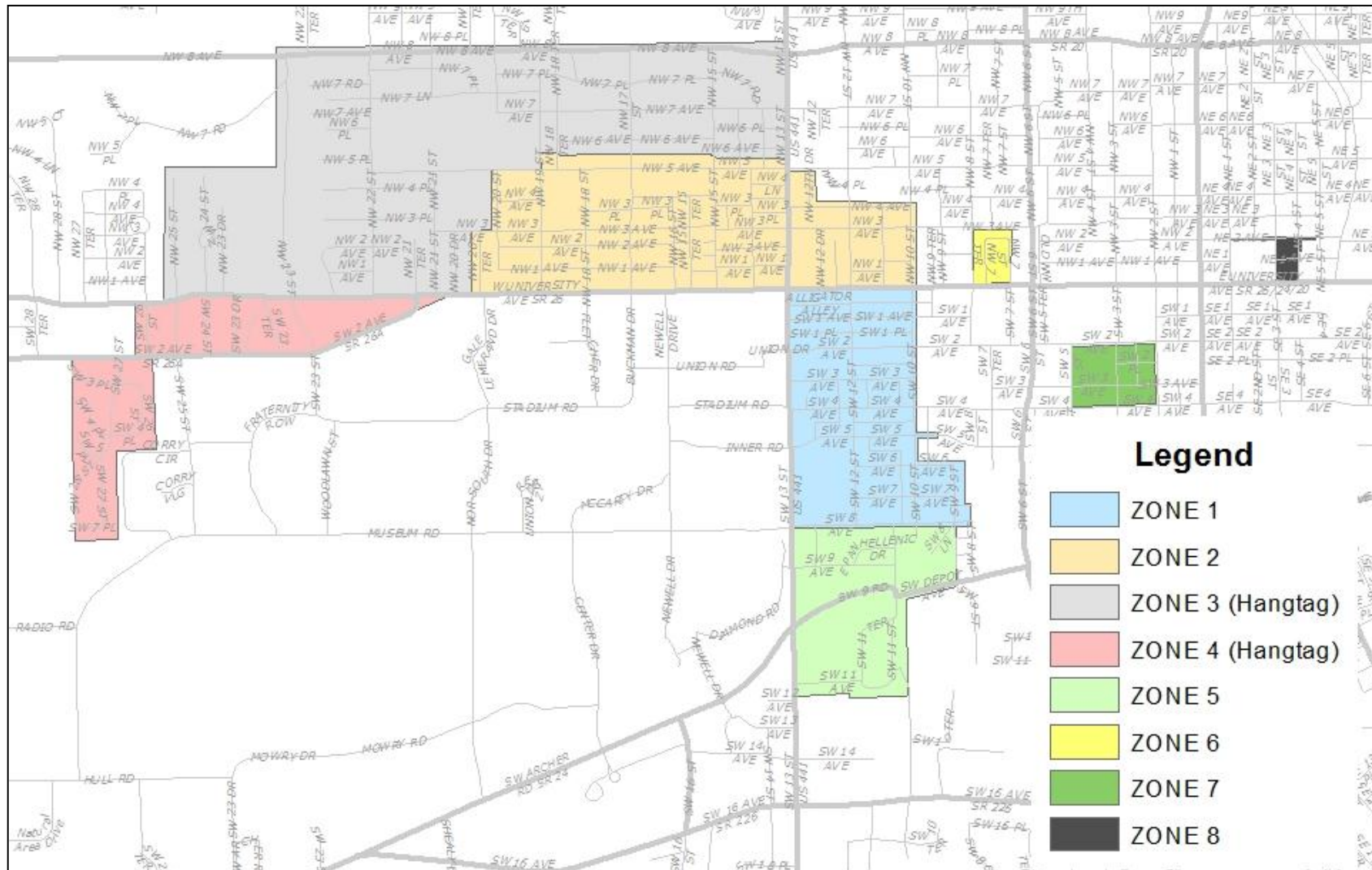


Figure 3. Limited use of on-street parking during the work day along the 1700 block of NW 6th Avenue in College Park. The permit program has continued to be successful in preventing commuter parking in areas like this that have remained largely single-family.



Figure 4. Multi-family development has largely replaced single family homes along the 1100 block of SW 9th Road in University Heights.



Figure 5. New on-street parking created in conjunction with the Deco 39 development on SW 10th Street in University Heights.



Figure 6. Request to fraudulently obtain a residential permit on Facebook (August 2012)**Ashlee Henriquez**

Hey girls! Is anyone leaving either at ivy house or anywhere along city parking zone 1 next year and does not have a car? I am searching for a decal I wi give you the money it cost plus an extra \$40 for the inconvenience of signing me up. Let me know thank you!!!

 Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 14 hours ago near Carol City, FL

 Autumn Thomas likes this.



Ashlee Henriquez Living*****

14 hours ago via mobile · Like



Aubrey Morey Hey Ashlee! Just wanted to let you know that the decals are license-plate specific, and the license plate must be registered to the lease signor or the cosignor. The ticket enforcers will check the license plate of the registered car against the decal and ticket the car and void the decal if it doesn't match. It's expensive!

about an hour ago · Like



Ashlee Henriquez Hey Aubrey I lived there last year. And there is a paper you can sign because my car was registered to my grandfather and he was neither the signer or co signer. I would just have the person log in as if my car is there's and present my registration with the waiver and it should be good to go. I have done this before and never gotten a ticket or anything lol.

22 minutes ago via mobile · Like



Aubrey Morey Hey Ashlee! The paper that you are referring to is a legal affadavit wherein you say that you purchased the car. If you didn't purchase the car (or have a grandparent etc purchase it for you), that won't work. Just making sure! I don't want anyone to lose parking privileges or get ticketed or towed.

2 seconds ago · Like

Figure 7. Request to fraudulently obtain a residential permit on Craigslist (September 2012)

[gainesville craigslist](#) > [for sale / wanted](#) > [items wanted](#) [email this posting to a friend](#)

Avoid scams and fraud by dealing locally! Beware any deal involving Western Union, Moneygram, wire transfer, cashier check, money order, shipping, escrow, or any promise of transaction protection/certification/guarantee. [More info](#)

please flag with care: [?]

[miscategorized](#)

[prohibited](#)

[spam/overpost](#)

[best of craigslist](#)

IF YOU LIVE NEAR UF, HELP me get a decal w/ your address - \$15 (North of University Ave, West of 13th St)

Date: 2012-09-11, 12:03PM EDT

[Reply to this post](#) ksqw4-3258421223@sale.craigslist.org [Errors when replying to ads?]

I need permission from someone in an apartment complex or house north of campus between 13th street and 19 st, University ave and 5th or 6th ave. to purchase a decal under your address
 EXAMPLE college park, gatormest, arbor lofts, etc

Anyone whose complex or address is within the Zone 2 neighborhood decal parking The City of Gvill allows one decal per apartment or house in this area, so if you don't need one, I will pay you to get one w your address!!!!!!

Apparently you have to live within this range to purchase one, even though there are literally hundreds of spots open all day every day (probably because if you already live this close to campus, you most likely didn't bother purchasing a decal unless necessary.)

Need someone to allow me to use their address to purchase the decal.
 Decals are 19.50, will pay you an additional \$15 just for your permission to use your address!!!!!!

Thanks!!! If you have a friend living in this area, ask them!!! An easy 15 bucks for literally no trouble at all. And you would greatly be helping me out this semester.
 Can't afford a 150 dollar decal to park equally far away from UF.

- Location: North of University Ave, West of 13th St
- it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

PostingID: 3258421223

Figure 8. New parking created through the elimination of a turn-lane on SW 4th Avenue in University Heights



Figure 9. Potential areas for new on-street parking created with signage and striping (in red)

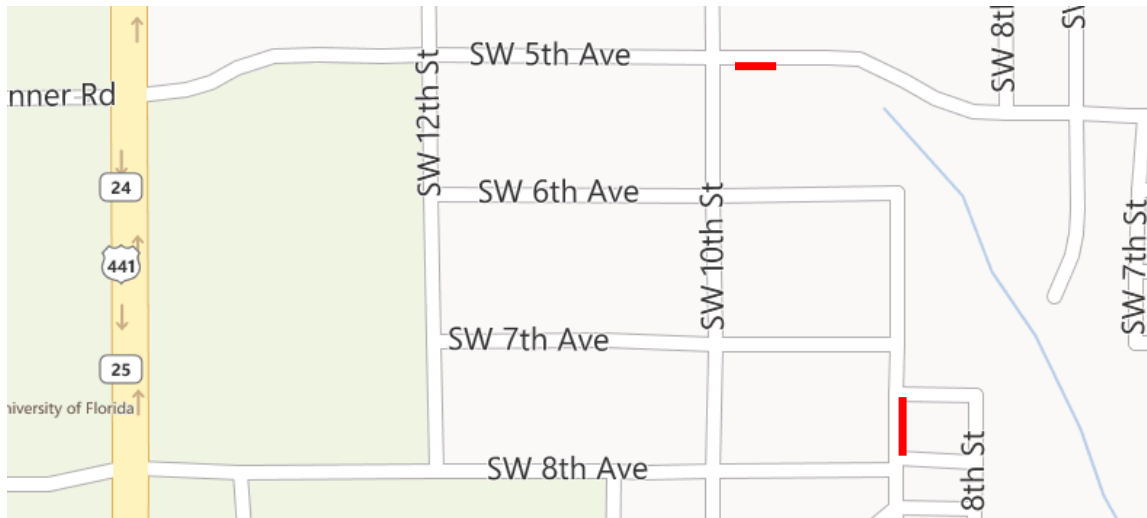


Figure 10. De facto on-street scooter parking on SW 3rd Avenue adjacent to Jefferson at 2nd.

