

The City of Key West faces a downtown parking situation comparable to that of heavily populated urban areas. Parking needs to be maximized and demand reduced. At the same time, the historic district must be protected because its character and appearance help attract the tourists who are the backbone of the local economy. If individually striped parking spaces are eliminated and parking permit zones are introduced then the situation will improve.

DOWNTOWN IS CROWDED: REALLY, REALLY CROWDED

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Key West (“CoKW”) has an area of 7.4 square miles: 5.9 square miles of land and 1.5 square miles of water¹. The estimated 2016 population was 26,039 yielding a density of 4,413 people per square mile of land². The Old Town Historic District (“Old Town”; depicted in Exhibit A) has an area of .789 square miles and a population of 8,826 thus a density of 11,186 people per square mile³. This density exceeds the median density of Florida’s three most populous counties: Miami-Dade (8,343 people per square mile); Broward (7,167 people per square mile); and Pinellas (5,313 people per square mile)⁴. 34% of the CoKW population ($8,826 \div 26,039$) is living on 15% of the island [$.789 \div 5.4$]. This is the same 15% of the island containing most of the restaurants and tourist attractions. Old Town residents, commuters and visitors are all competing for limited parking.

WE ALL WANT TO PARK NEAR OUR HOMES

Most island residents can park easily near their homes. The density is only 3,379 people per square mile outside Old Town⁵. There is ample street parking enabling residents to park in front of their homes if they lack a private drive. One of the challenges in Old Town is these same residents expect to have readily available, free parking not only at home but at their chosen *destination*. This is fine when the destination is Home Depot or Publix. When the destination is Old Town then this expectation comes at the expense of neighborhood residents who can’t find parking within blocks of their Old Town homes. Parking should be available to *all* residents close to home. A first step toward that goal would be to stop striping individual, curbside spaces which will increase available parking.

STRIPING REDUCES AVAILABLE PARKING

Individually striped curb spaces must be sized to accommodate the longest vehicles. If curbs are unmarked then smaller vehicles can park in spaces too short for longer cars *and 10 to 15 percent more cars can typically fit into the available curb space*⁶. The CoKW already recognizes the benefits of unstriped parking: where parking meters have been replaced by “Pay-and-Display”

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Key_West,_Florida

² <https://factfinder.census.gov> (2016 most recent data found) $26,039 \div 5.9 = 4,413$ people per square mile

³ <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Old-Town-Key-West-FL.html>. City-Data’s “Old Town” is bounded roughly by White, United and Thomas Streets. City-Data material used herein is based on these boundaries.

⁴ <https://www.bebr.ufl.edu/population/website-article/measuring-population-density-counties-florida>

⁵ $26,093$ population – $8,826$ Old Town population = $17,267$ people. 5.9 square miles – $.789$ Old Town area = 5.11 square miles. $17,267 \div 5.11 = 3,379$ people per square mile.

⁶ *The High Cost of Free Parking*, Donald Shoup ©2011 by American Planning Association P.385

boxes the blocks are unstriped which maximizes the number of cars that can be accommodated. The Citizen reports approximately 1,750 residential and non-residential striped spaces in Old Town⁷. If striping ceased then 175 – 263 spaces could be gained.

The attached photos illustrate the problem (Exhibit B). They depict the east side of the 400 block of Elizabeth Street at 9:45 AM on Thursday, Jan. 18. 30' of curb space is unoccupied between vehicles 1 and 6: enough to park a 19' Dodge Ram truck and still have 2' between each car if spaces were not individually striped. Note also, the three scooter spaces striped between vehicles 5 and 6, plus the three scooter places visible in the foreground of the lower photo plus the three scooter spaces not shown south of vehicle 6 at the corner of Fleming Street. Collectively the scooter spaces consume 28' of curb space⁸. Only three scooters/motorcycles were parked in the 9 available spaces. Much of the scooter/motorcycle space throughout Old Town could be recovered for cars if automobile spaces were not individually striped.⁹

PARKING GARAGE COMPARISON

Walker Parking Consultants provided design-build criteria for two downtown parking garages in response to a CoKW request.¹⁰ It should be noted that Walker “pioneered the concept of the mega-parking structure” and their website touts 2,600 parking structures designed.¹¹ Walker was not asked to address comprehensive parking management or alternatives to garages.

Walker’s proposed Greene Street garage would net 140 new parking spaces.¹² The Simonton (Fire Station) garage would net between 91 and 146 new parking spaces.¹³ Walker’s estimate to add 231 spaces was \$8.8 million (±\$38,100 per new space). The estimate to add 286 spaces was \$10.4 million (±\$36,400 per new space). As much as 92% of this additional parking (263 spaces) could be added if curb spaces were no longer individually striped in Old Town. Unstriped curbs could yield 14% more parking than the Greene Street garage and the smaller Simonton garage proposal. The City would incur costs only to remove pavement signage and implement residential parking permit zones. Unsightly and unpopular parking garages would be avoided.

⁷ Residential Parking Permits Available, Key West Citizen, October 17, 2017. 1000 residential, 750 unmarked, 60 handicapped spaces. Note there also many unstriped blocks, particularly south of Truman and west of Whitehead.

⁸ 106” between vehicles 5 and 6 + 106” foreground/east side of Elizabeth + 104” at Fleming = 336” (28”)

⁹ Which is not to say eliminate all scooter/motorcycle parking. It could be productively located at strategically identified corners to maximize visibility.

¹⁰ Request for Qualifications for Design-Build Criteria Documents for Parking Garages at Two Old Town Key West Locations issued December 14, 2014 http://www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov/egov/documents/1418736620_45393.pdf

¹¹ <http://walkerconsultants.com>

¹² Parking Garage Siting Status based on August 2015 Walker Report. Greene Street Garage + surface lot = 193 spaces. Restriping existing lot = 53 spaces. 193 – 53 = 140 additional spaces at the Greene Street location. \$4.4 million; ±\$31,400 per additional space.

¹³ Parking Garage Siting Status based on August 2015 Walker Report. Simonton Street Garage A (132 spaces) + surface lot (26 spaces) = 158 spaces. 158 – 67 current spaces = 91 additional spaces at the Simonton Street location. \$4.4 million; ±\$48,350 per additional space. Simonton Garage B (205 spaces) + surface lot (8 spaces) = 213 spaces. 213 – 67 current spaces = 146 additional spaces. \$6 million; ±\$41,100 per additional space.

RESIDENTIAL ZONES

If parking spaces are no longer striped then the “Resident Only” spaces are eliminated. Residential Parking Permit (RPP) districts could accommodate Old Town residents, reduce traffic and generate revenue.

The experience in Aspen, CO is instructive. Aspen had a population of only 5000 when it was hosting as many as 25,000 visitors per day. Aspen attempted to alleviate the resultant parking problem by constructing a 340-space parking garage. Despite a \$1.50 per day rate it filled only for special events. Traffic and congestion infested the surrounding blocks where people sought free parking. When Aspen began to charge for curbside parking and implemented RPP districts in neighborhoods adjacent the commercial area the problems were alleviated.¹⁴

Key West has attempted to protect resident parking; however, the definition of resident has been broadly applied. First, it was any car with a Monroe County license plate. Now it is any resident of the island. This is fine for the people who live in New Town but Old Town residents are competing with tourists, locals and commuters for free neighborhood parking while the Grinnell Garage remains largely empty. The streets are clogged with people circling the block cruising for an empty, free, non-resident space. Visitors leave cars for days at a time. RPP districts could work for the CoKW as they worked for Aspen.

An RPP district is a zone of a few blocks in which parking is reserved solely for neighborhood residents and their guests.¹⁵ Any combination of days and hours is possible as illustrated by the permit parking signs shown in Exhibit C. Zone A might be residents only 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Zone B might be residents only during evenings and weekends. The latter opens a neighborhood to visitors, contractors and commuters during normal business hours when residents have taken their cars to work. No zone permit is needed to go to the library, shop downtown or park a work van but the spaces are freed at the close of the business day when residents return. They can also run errands on weekends with reasonable confidence of finding a parking place upon return. The streets in front of their homes are not in constant use as parking lots.

RPP districts are easy to administer. One sign per block. Cruising is greatly reduced: during the day more spaces are available because a) there's more curb parking absent individually striped spaces and b) all the curb space is available to all drivers or, if the zone is 24/7 then there is no reason at all for non-residents to be cruising for parking.

WHO GETS A PERMIT ?

Residents who lack off-street parking should have first priority for RPP stickers. Residents with driveways should not receive stickers until others are accommodated. Having a driveway is equivalent to having a dedicated curb parking space. If a homeowner has a curb cut for his driveway then parks in the street he effectively takes two parking places. Not good when parking

¹⁴ *The High Cost of Free Parking*, Donald Shoup ©2011 by American Planning Association P.382 -383

¹⁵ The first RPP was created in Arlington, Virginia. Commuters who had been parking on Arlington's streets took the matter all the way to the United States Supreme Court where the authority to designate residential parking districts was upheld *County Board of Arlington County, Virginia et al v. Richards, et al.*; October 11, 1977

is as limited as it is on certain streets. Exhibit B illustrates this problem. Vehicle 2 is associated with the yellow house in the photo. The house has a large 1 ½ car drive completely unoccupied while Vehicle 2 deprives a neighbor of scarce curbside parking.

RPP stickers need to be limited per household. The average Old Town household has 1 (tenant) to 1.3 (owner) cars.¹⁶ No one should have 3, 4, 5 stickers to store their extra vehicles on the streets.

Guest stickers need to be available. These are often available for a nominal fee by mail or visiting a parking authority. A sticker is typically good for 24 hours. The guest fills in the zone/date/time and displays the guest permit on the dashboard as with a pay and display meter. In Miami Beach RPP district residents maintain on-line accounts to register guests by license plate and pay the daily fee.

PARKING REVENUE

CoKW resident stickers are presently optional and available to anyone with a Key West address. They cost only \$10, make no distinctions among vehicle types and grant an endless amount of 4-hour free parking at CoKW parking lots. A scarce resource is being under-valued and under-priced.¹⁷ Old Town residents have their neighborhoods overtaken by commuters and visitors cruising for parking because people seek a freebie no matter how convenient or inexpensive paid parking may be. Revenue opportunities include:

- 1) All vehicle owners should be required to have a \$10 CoKW sticker. Consideration should be given to charging different amounts for different vehicles (motorcycles/cars/SUVs/pick-up trucks). The base sticker should not come with parking privileges. Revenues could be earmarked for automobile related improvements or alternative transportation initiatives.

¹⁶ <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Old-Town-Key-West-FL.html>.

¹⁷ All Chicago residents driving, parking, leasing and/or owning a vehicle for which they are responsible in the City of Chicago must purchase a Chicago City Vehicle Sticker. This includes Chicago residents who maintain their registration outside of the City of Chicago but use the vehicle in the City. Revenue from the Chicago City Vehicle Sticker Sales Program funds the repair and maintenance of more than 4,000 miles of Chicago streets. Vehicle stickers cost \$45.51 a year for motorcycles, \$85.97 for cars, \$136.54 for SUVs, \$202.28 for pickup trucks and \$455.13 for large trucks. Seniors now can get one sticker for a car or large passenger vehicle for \$30.34. Sticker sales were expected to bring in about \$139.1 million in 2014. The fine for not having a sticker: \$200. Chicago City Clerk Targets Vehicle Sticker Scofflaws <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-chicago-vehicle-sticker-scofflaws-1022-20141021-story.html>

- 2) Offer an “enhanced” CoKW sticker with parking privileges. Most of the CoKW lots are \$3/hour. Two, four-hour sessions would be \$24, a very low price for a year’s worth of otherwise free downtown parking.
- 3) Miami Beach charges \$25 annually for an RPP district permit. Similarly, Chicago charges \$25 to add a zone to the city sticker required of all car owners. A zone resident would not be required to have a zone sticker unless they want to park on the street.
- 4) Guest passes. Chicago Residential Parking Daily Permits cost \$8 for 1 sheet of 15 permits, \$16 for 2 sheets of 15 permits (30) with a limit of three permit sheets at \$24.00 – or 45 permits – per household per 30-day period. Miami Beach charges \$1.00 per day for visitor permits which must be purchased by residents on-line with a maximum two-week period in any calendar year absent special application.
- 5) Grinnell Street Garage. When drivers know curb parking is unavailable then they will go where parking is available: the existing, under-utilized garage. A Duval Loop stop is on the Caroline Street side of the garage making it even easier to park then enjoy Old Town.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this memorandum is to highlight the advantages of an RPP district system without individually striped parking places that would: a) increase the number of parking places in an area very much in need; b) give Old Town residents the ability to park near their homes; c) encourage commuters and visitors to use underutilized parking facilities; and d) generate revenue for automobile and alternative transportation initiatives. It is not intended to address every detail of implementation but to encourage the CoKW to further explore the proposed initiatives.

EXHIBIT A

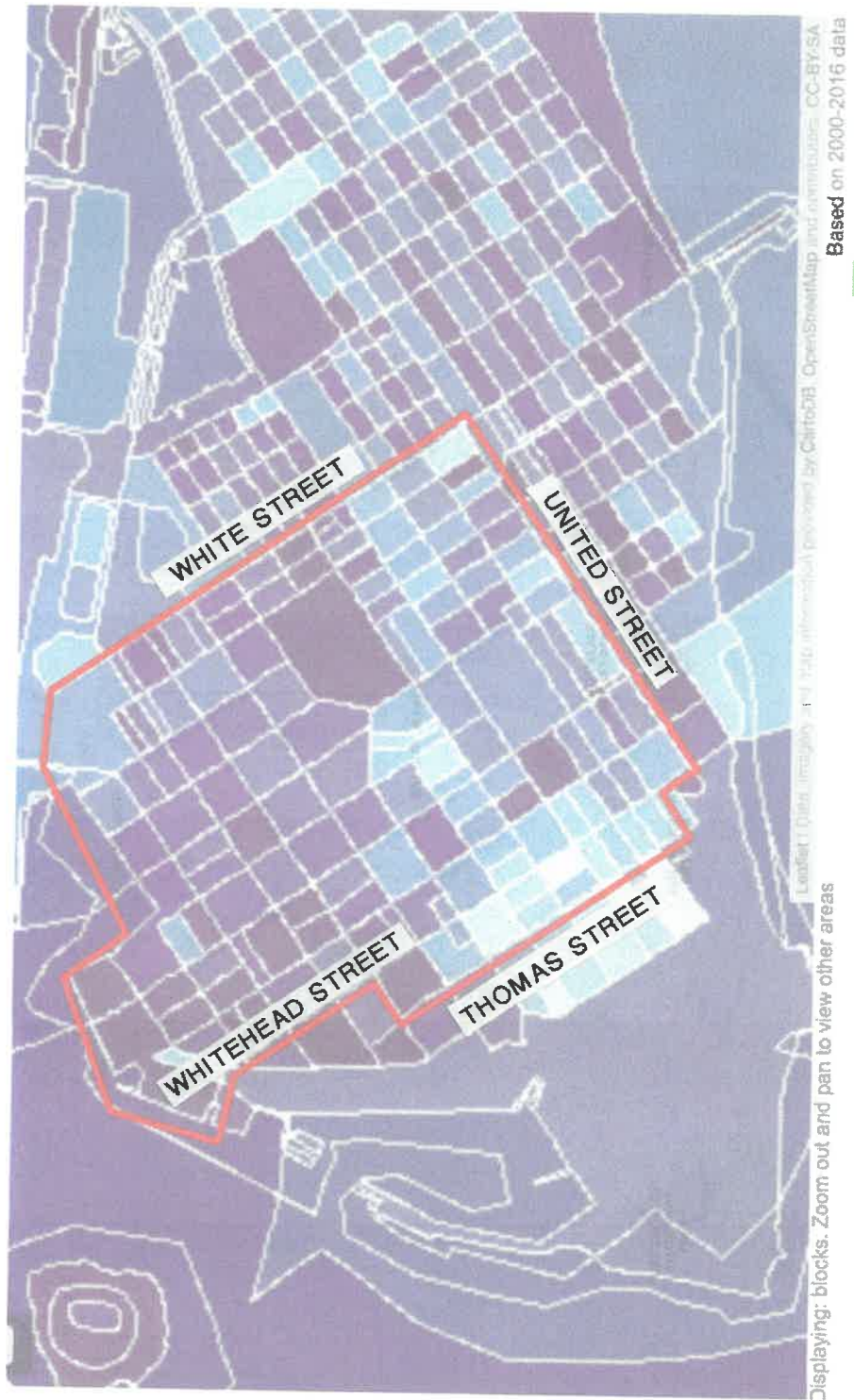
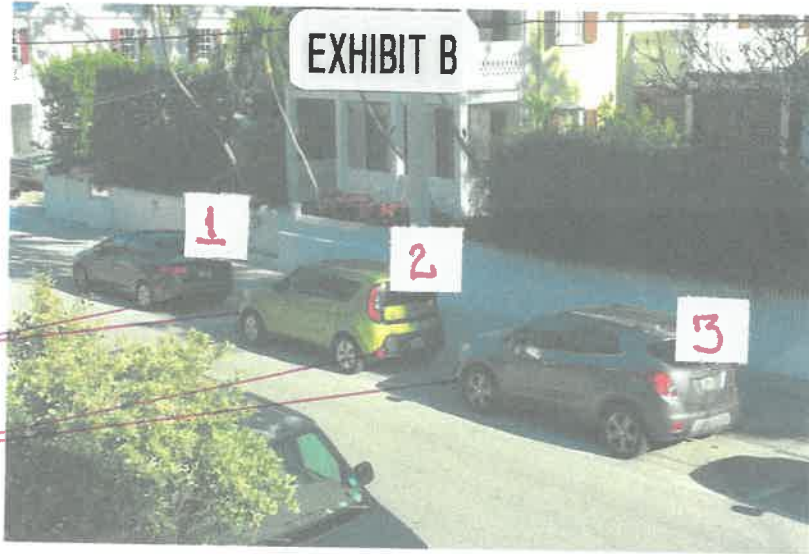


EXHIBIT B

83"
+ 53"



+ 74"
+ 44"



+ 108"
562"
÷ 12
± 50 feet

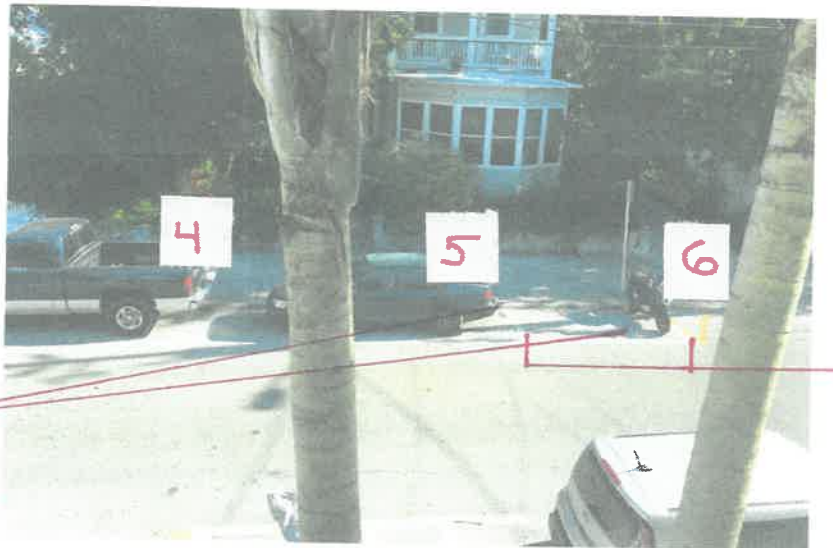


EXHIBIT C

↓ MIAMI BEACH ↓



↓ CHICAGO ↓



↓ CHICAGO ↓



↓ CHICAGO ↓

