**Parking Availability in the UMiami App** (Red Lot Pilot)
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is Parking Availability in the UM App?**
Parking Availability is a feature in the UMiami App that shows estimated parking availability by location across campus to help you make a more informed decision before you arrive.

**How do I use Parking Availability?**
Open the UMiami App, select Parking and Transit, Parking Availability, and view estimated availability for parking areas before choosing where to go.

**How is parking availability estimated?**
Availability is a real time estimate based on parking activity combined anonymously. The App displays availability using simple status levels:

- High – better chance of finding a space
- Medium – moderate chance
- Low – limited availability
- Unknown – not enough recent data

**Does Parking Availability guarantee I'll find a space?**
No. Parking Availability is a guide, not a guarantee. Parking conditions can change quickly, and all parking rules still apply.

**What does "Last updated X hours ago" mean?**
It shows the last time the parking data refreshed, not when conditions last changed. If the time looks old, there may not be enough new activity to update the estimate.

**Do I need to update the UMiami App?**
Yes. Make sure you're using the latest version of the UMiami App to access Parking Availability.

**Why do I need to select my role or permit?**
Your role (student, faculty, staff) and permit type help the App show parking locations that apply to you. If these aren't selected, some parking options may not appear.

**Do I need to opt in for Parking Availability to work?**
No. You can still see parking availability even if you don't opt in to every permission. Opting in simply means your phone is allowed to send anonymous signals—like when you park or leave—that help the system estimate how full a lot is. These signals don't identify you, and they aren't tied to your account.

**Is my location tracked or shared?**
No personal location data is tracked or shared. Parking Availability uses anonymous, aggregated data only.

**Will Parking Availability drain my battery or use a lot of data?**
The feature is designed to be lightweight. Like any location-based service, it may use a small amount of battery or data.

**When will more parking lots be added?**
Parking Availability is launching as a pilot, starting with Red Lot. Additional lots may be added as participation grows and data becomes more robust.

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**What should I try if availability isn't updating?**

- Confirm the App is up to date
- Make sure Location Services are enabled
- Check that your role and permit are selected
- Close and reopen the App, or try again later

**What permissions should I enable for the best experience?**
Enable Location Services for the UMiami App to help Parking Availability update more reliably.

- On iPhone (iOS), Location Services help the App recognize parking activity and improve estimates.
- On Android, Location Services and Bluetooth help the App more accurately detect when users arrive at and leave parking areas.

You can still view Parking Availability without enabling all permissions, but availability may update less often or appear as "Unknown."

**Why does the App request Location (Always) and Motion & Fitness permissions?**
These permissions help the App detect parking activity, such as arriving and leaving, which improves the accuracy of availability estimates. Without them, availability may update less often or appear as "Unknown."

**When will more parking lots be added?**
Parking Availability is launching as a pilot, starting with Red Lot. Additional lots may be added as participation grows and data becomes more reliable.

**How can I report an issue or share feedback?**
If something doesn't look right, share feedback through the App or contact the Office of Parking & Transportation. Including your device type, App version, and location helps speed up support.

**Additional FAQ's for Android Users**

**Why does Parking Availability work differently on Android and iPhone?**
iPhone and Android devices handle background activity differently. To ensure reliable and battery efficient performance across many Android devices, Parking Availability uses a slightly different approach on Android than on iPhone.

**Why does Parking Availability use Bluetooth on Android?**
On Android devices, Bluetooth helps the App better understand when a driving trip starts and ends. This improves the accuracy of parking availability estimates while keeping battery usage low.

**Do I need Bluetooth enabled to use Parking Availability?**
You can view Parking Availability without Bluetooth enabled. However, on Android devices, keeping Bluetooth enabled — especially when connected to your vehicle — helps improve how accurately parking activity is detected.

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**Why does this improve battery life on Android?**
Instead of running continuous background location tracking, the App relies on brief signals to understand parking activity. This design reduces battery usage and avoids long running background processes.

**Is the App tracking me all the time?**
No. The App does not continuously track your location. It uses short, anonymous signals related to parking activity to estimate availability at the lot level.

**What happens if I don't enable Location or Bluetooth permissions?**
Parking Availability will still display, but availability updates may be less frequent or appear as "Unknown," especially on Android devices.

**Does this work on all Android phones?**
The approach is designed to work reliably across many Android devices, manufacturers, and operating system versions, which is why Bluetooth is used as a supporting signal.

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