



May 1, 2024

Beth Johnston, Committee Administrator for Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Committee
(email only to beth.johnston@senate.mn)

RE: SF 3572: Minnesota People Over Parking Act
Stillwater, MN Response

Beth:

Thank you for forwarding this comment as part of the May 2 Agenda for the State and Local Government and Veterans Committee.

While Stillwater supports innovation in parking that improves the supply of housing and eliminates unnecessary parking supply, we do have concern with the current 'one-size fits all' approach. As drafted, the City of Stillwater does not support the current bill language. While complete elimination of parking minimums is a viable and successful strategy in urban cores with many shared and vertical parking arrangements, this approach is not as effective in suburban and rural contexts. More importantly, each community and region within the State, especially a historic town with unique tourism parking needs, is best suited to determine actual parking demand.

By way of compromise, Stillwater would suggest requiring a nexus to actual parking demand as a requirement for local communities. This parking demand modeling is available through a number of uniform traffic manuals and traffic engineering standards. I think you would find that most communities are striving to avoid overparking developments and housing areas, but need better tools to define actual parking demand. This would likely result in reducing unnecessary parking minimums, and perhaps eliminating minimums where site specific conditions support. We would suggest a different incentive and scientific-based approach. Furthermore, Stillwater has a Downtown Parking Commission dedicated to tailoring parking experience based on actual demand.

This 'nexus' approach is well established in other municipal powers such as park dedication and water supply planning. In these examples, a City cannot establish a fee without first defining the nexus (plan to support) said fee. While we support parking reform, we cannot support the current approach in SF 3572.

Sincerely,

CITY OF STILLWATER
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Gladhill".

Tim Gladhill
Community Development Director

CC: Stillwater Mayor and City Council
Joe Kohlmann, City Administrator
Senator Karin Housley
Representative Josiah Hill

