

## **Testimony on Minnesota S.F. 1268**

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My name is Ian Thomas and I'm the State and Local Program Director with America Walks. I am writing to support Bill S.F. 1268: Minimum Parking Mandates Prohibited.

America Walks is a national education and advocacy organization focused on creating safe, healthy, equitable, sustainable, and walkable communities. The opinions I'm expressing here represent the official positions of America Walks.

Before moving to Minnesota, I served on the Columbia, Missouri City Council from 2013 until 2022. As a three-term, elected City policymaker, I am very familiar with the concept of "local control." However, deciding how many parking spaces are needed for a particular building is an area where cities do not need local control. In fact, parking mandates are actually harmful to cities.

It's far better to let market forces decide! The homebuilder knows how many spaces are needed for his apartment building. The local "farm-to-table" entrepreneur can make that judgment for her restaurant. Don't burden local businesses with expensive and excessive requirements – research shows that, even on the busiest shopping day of the year, there are vast areas of empty spaces.

Problems created by over-building parking to satisfy outdated parking mandates are visible everywhere – the affordable housing crisis, challenges for locally-owned small businesses, sprawling suburbs with massive areas of decaying concrete, unmanageable infrastructure costs as roads and sewer pipes have to extend many miles to service few residences, drastic loss of tax base per acre, etc.

Minnesota cities want to attract population. Two key demographic groups – who strive for car-free and car-lite living – are the Millennials and the Baby Boomers. Indeed, in a recent article titled "[\*Prioritizing Housing over Parking\*](#)," AARP's Age-Friendly Communities program championed parking reform legislation in Cutler Bay, Florida. Vice Mayor Sue Ellen Loyzelle was quoted as saying, "Many seniors have one car which they share and some use public transit, so there's no need for every apartment to have two parking spaces."

This is a perfect example of a situation in which letting the market decide will produce the best results for everyone.

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