

Comment Card - Results

Vision Statement

Do you agree with the proposed vision statement for the City: "To be the best small lakeside-town in Minnesota"? Yes - 31
No -12

Comments:

- 1) Strike "small lakeside-town"
- 2) This is so vague. How would one evaluate or assess this statement?
- 3) A very subjective goal?
- 4) How would anyone be able to verify that status?
- 5) Keep it real
- 6) I don't disagree with it, but it doesn't really say much or differentiate Excelsior
- 7) It is fine, but I don't think we need a vision statement.
- 8) Be smart about what this means. Encourage growth, discourage being insular or small minded.
- 9) However, current direction is contrary. I feel developers are bullying our community to get what they want. Not what residents want.
- 10) Emphasis on small
- 11) I think "best" can mean a lot of different things to different people.
- 12) Don't overbuild our town like Wayzata.
- 13) So please don't destroy Excelsior.
- 14) I have doubts the City staff wants this.
- 15) It is so leave alone and stop enlarging and expanding.
- 16) It's not a competition, just stay unique why fix what isn't broken?
- 17) Increase density in a well thought out way.
- 18) Small. Please don't let Excelsior turn into a Wayzata.
- 19) "Best" is too vague. No historic?
- 20) We are not in a statewide competition. Each area is different.
- 21) Who determines what "best" means?
- 22) This is so vague. How would one evaluate or asses this statement?
- 23) Kind of over-reaching and not specific enough. We are a unique "lakeside" town.
- 24) It already is.
- 25) Isn't it a city, not a town?

Residential Policies

1. Regarding new single-family homes being built in Excelsior, how concerned are you with the following items?

| | Very Concerned | Little Concerned | Not Concerned |
|---|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Height - | 34 | 9 | 4 |
| Hardcover (building & paving coverage) - | 39 | 4 | 1 |
| Overall Mass & Scale - | 35 | 4 | 1 |
| Side Yard Setbacks - | 29 | 15 | 2 |
| Front Yard Setbacks - | 20 | 17 | 3 |
| Design - | 26 | 15 | 6 |

Comments:

- 1) Low to mid density
- 2) I think there have been some great improvements over the old, run-down houses.
- 3) Mass and scale are concerned with home scale in relation to neighbors, need some subjectivity. Design into fit neighborhood.
- 4) Can't legislate good taste.
- 5) 75% of new homes fit with Excelsior. 25% seem very out-of-place.
- 6) Demand great architecture, push back against bad design. Reward good design with fast approval. Have a mindset that all housing may need to be replaced someday. This approach will be liberating to the village.
- 7) Please look at 328 W. Lake St (Zehner Builders) and home near W. Lake and Third St. (Mark Williams - Builder/Designer).
- 8) Especially concerned with mass and scale compared to neighbors.
- 9) Main concern is towering over the road or neighbors.
- 10) Landschute does a nice job with design, detail, scale, etc. A two-story house is not too large, they just look large because the homes are close to the road.
- 11) The huge house on 300 block W. Lake St should never have been approved.
- 12) Houses are way too big and intrude on the neighbors. Variances are given to any builder for any reason.
- 13) Also concerned about relative size of adjacent houses.
- 14) The large scale homes are destroying the neighborhoods, the culture/quaintness of Excelsior.
- 15) Very concerned with the homes that have been approved that are too large for lots and in comparison to adjacent homes.
- 16) I think there have been some great improvements over the old, run down houses.
- 17) Vague question regarding "concerned." If they are followed, not terribly concerned. But they are not always followed, which I do have concerns about.

2. The City has established a Task Force to study the size and design of new single-family homes and the idea of establishing a conservation district. Do you believe the City should establish a conservation district for residential areas? (please refer to the display board for information)

- Yes - 24
- Yes, but only for the village area (north of Oak Street and west of Water Street, to Lake Minnetonka)? - 9
- No - 6
- Not sure/need more information - 8

Comments:

- 1) It is essential to establish a conservation district. The character of Excelsior will be gone very soon.
- 2) Conservation district should apply to ALL of Excelsior. Hate the term "village." I live in Excelsior too.
- 3) Thank you Council for realizing the need to establish a conservation district and revisit current zoning. Please don't let Excelsior fall to overdevelopment and inappropriate mass and scale home remodels, teardowns/rebuilds. WE can find a balance.
- 4) Could be very subjective. That could have unintended consequences.
- 5) Conservation and green spaces are very important.
- 6) Just following the building regulations and stop handing out variances like Halloween candy.
- 7) The small town feel must be preserved and more nice old styles should be marked as "historical" and not torn down.
- 8) This is essential for the character, charm of Excelsior - mass and scale is the issue.
- 9) 826 Pleasant St is south of Oak St. Then need protection over there. Also 241 Academy Ave.
- 10) Would be open to a reduced zone (Village area only) if reason are compelling but not sure what they would be.

3. Looking forward over the next 10 years, do you feel Excelsior should:

- Strengthen residential zoning regulations to maintain the current neighborhood character - 33
- Loosen residential zoning regulations to allow variety of scale and design - 0
- Leave zoning as it is today - 8

Comments:

- 1) Maintain and keep the character of all Excelsior neighborhoods.
- 2) My concern is over the increase in taxes due to the large increase in the cost of the land.
- 3) The City has addressed the "misses" of the past.
- 4) Implement policies to control mass and scale and keep neighborhood scale.
- 5) People should be able to tear-down dilapidated homes; but mass/scale of new homes should be managed.
- 6) I see zero reason to change from today. Please be mindful that the entire Protect Excelsior movement is exclusionary. A vibrant town is also moving, changing, growing. Avoid stagnation as many desire.
- 7) Character, mass, scale, diversity needs to be protected, otherwise Excelsior will turn into an expensive McMansion community – with history and character gone.
- 8) What's done is done, but we need to stop these huge houses with very little green space.
- 9) Leave zoning as it is today and stop allowing so many variances.
- 10) Increase density in East side by building smaller single-family homes. Create the conservation district on the East side.
- 11) All zoning regulations should be strengthened to reduce huge massive homes from being built. No more teardowns – remodeling should be rewarded.
- 12) Different designs/architecture is good – adds to the charm.
- 13) Before it's too late, please.
- 14) I would say improve and clarify zoning regulations to maintain the current neighborhood character and discourage negative impacts to neighboring properties.
- 15) My concern is over the increase in taxes due to the large increase in the cost of the land.
- 16) City has responsibility to protect Lake Minnetonka. Larger homes add more pollution to lake and take away needed green space. I am, however, in favor of some differences in designs.

4. As the City grows over the next 10 years, what multifamily development is preferred?

The Met Council expects every community to add housing and jobs in order to reduce urban sprawl and to grow where infrastructure is already in place. The Met Council expects Excelsior will grow by 100 households in the next 10 years. The Comprehensive Plan designates the growth areas in the Commercial and Mixed-Use areas in Excelsior (please refer to the Comprehensive Plan map).

- New Apartments – 2
- New Townhomes/Condos - 9
- Equal amounts of Townhomes and Apartments - 12
- No additional multifamily is needed - 17
- Condos, if affordable – 1
- Revamp existing apartments - 2

Comments:

- 1) Is not ½ of Excelsior rental? We need to keep some low income properties for diversity.
- 2) No sure what, but appreciate the need for small affordable condos and rental options that are more "modern."
- 3) We have plenty already.
- 4) A thriving community allows a variety of housing to be built and it allows deteriorating housing to be replaced. Please be smart with forward thinking.
- 5) Driving through Excelsior in Summer is already so hard, I can't imagine more residents in this small space.
- 6) Equalize the taxes of private/single family dwellings and apartment buildings then I'd be in support of more apartment buildings.
- 7) Higher density can be a good thing if done right. Create more taxes, more residents to support retail and restaurants, etc. Make sure the traffic and pedestrian flow is as efficient as it can be. Keep in mind that it is quite possible that older residence who may not be here in 10 years would like to maintain the status quo.
- 8) We do not need more large buildings for housing. WE will look like Wayzata which is like "Minneapolis West." We will appear to be institutionalized.
- 9) Also concerned about accessibility (in price) of housing on north side of Hwy 7.
- 10) I think low-density affordable housing should be explored. We already have enough med/high density.
- 11) Need to pursue balance of types and cost of residences to maintain character and livability for wide range of people.
- 12) Is not ½ of Excelsior rental? WE need to keep some low income properties for diversity.
- 13) We have many existing apartments already sprinkled around the city, but need more condos/townhomes.

Priorities

1. To help fund additional public improvements (such as City Hall, water and streets), would you rather allow more development, raise taxes or a little of both?

- Allow more development – 10
- Raise taxes - 3
- A little of both - 20
- Additional public improvements are not needed – 8
- Need more information – 1
- Merge with other cities - 1

Comments:

- 1) Not taxes, but not sure of the alternative.
- 2) Need more information.
- 3) My taxes went up 44.3% in 1 year – no more.
- 4) Current revenue sources are adequate.
- 5) We need a sales tax for large improvement projects.
- 6) What about reallocating current taxes? I'm not sure that current tax dollars are allocated effectively. Our taxes are higher than surrounding communities who seem able to maintain their roads and water better than we do. Do not believe we need a new city hall at all. Certainly not for the price tag being proposed. Seems very irresponsible of local government.

2. Is limiting Formula Business (i.e. chain stores) in Excelsior worth the cost of \$20,000 to hire a land use attorney to guide the City in drafting an appropriate ordinance to accomplish this goal?

- Yes – 25
- No – 20
- Unsure - 1

- 1) Why would you spend one second or one dollar on this? It is a waste of time. Encourage growth and redevelopment.
- 2) \$20,000 sounds like too much. Ask for community assistance.
- 3) Back off - don't dream that how Excelsior is was because of any ordinance.
- 4) Our town look and community feel is worth more than money.
- 5) It's not something to worry about. Would this mean the removal of Bentely's Pet Stuff and Starbucks?
- 6) Don't agree with the premise – we should limit formula businesses using available models for ordinances.
- 7) Use the sales tax money to pay for the lawyer. We don't want to be a strip mall.
- 8) More important to maintain character of buildings. What is a chain? 2, 5, 10 stores?

Public Improvements

- 1. Would you support raising water and sewer rates to expedite infrastructure improvements (roads, water pipes, sewers, etc.)?**
- Yes, considerably - 4
 - Yes, modestly - 26
 - No - 15
 - Unsure - 1

Comments:

- 1) We are already being taxed out of our homes.

- 2. Would you support raising property taxes to expedite improvements to The Commons?**
- Yes, considerably - 1
 - Yes, modestly - 12
 - No - 32

Comments:

- 1) I have believed that dock and boat fees should 100% all go directly to park improvements.
- 2) Absolutely not. The Commons is great, only slight updating necessary.
- 3) The Commons is already amazing public space.
- 4) Nothing wrong with Commons.
- 5) No, not at this time.
- 6) Sales taxes and parking fees can pay a lot of it.
- 7) Raise taxes on goods/services used by visitors to town like food/beverage tax.

- 3. Should the City add sidewalks and biking connections to neighboring communities such as along Mill St. to Shorewood and Chanhassen, to encourage walking and biking access to Excelsior?**
- Yes - 23
 - No - 15
 - No opinion - 3

Comments:

- 1) It would help with traffic and the need for parking.
- 2) Where possible.
- 3) Seems lots of visitors find their way here on bicycles currently. Chanhassen is quite a ways for little ones to pedal. We have great paths now.
- 4) But costs should be shared. Main users will be from other cities, not Excelsior.
- 5) Include west Excelsior (west of CR 19) with a tunnel (safety reasons).
- 6) It can be done without negative impact to property owners.
- 7) We can do the sidewalks to the edge of Excelsior and not further.
- 8) Just to the City line, not further.
- 9) Yes, just for safety alone.
- 10) It would help with traffic and the need for parking.
- 11) For existing residents and kids to get to the elementary school.
- 12) Can cost be shared with other cities?

Commercial Policies

1. In theory, do you support a hotel at the corner of Water and Lake Streets?

- Yes, at four stories (which would be contrary to the City's Preservation Design Manual and exceed the City's height limit over 35 feet) - 10
- Yes, only if it was limited to three stories and met the City's height requirement - 19
- No - 15

Comments:

- 1) The space works really well as a free form field/flea market/events.
- 2) I do not believe a hotel can be supported. Would eventually become condos.
- 3) It is needed and would be perfect for the City.
- 4) I would much prefer high end condos.
- 5) Concessions or something else to make it fun at lake/port.
- 6) Congestion and too big of a move for the area. That's a crazy corner already. Is there another location more suitable?
- 7) Hotel would be fine, but let's not be fixated on a hotel. Any number of uses would be fine as long as the structure is attractive and in scale.
- 8) Get this corner developed. A vibrant corner, with viable hotel is the fuel Excelsior needs to be economically viable, height is a fact. Let it happen, be a robust thinking. Make it happened fast.
- 9) Needs to fit town character – historic "small lake-side town".
- 10) We have 5 or 6 months of ice and snow and ugly – 7 months of use are not enough. There is far better use for that lot.
- 11) Our parking and public infrastructure is not ready for a hotel. Until improvements are made, we would just be showing off how unprepared we are. First impressions last forever.
- 12) Yes, hotel or condos.
- 13) We thought that this was already studied and determined to be not economically feasible.
- 14) Get it done.
- 15) Unless you want to change the height limit.
- 16) No tall buildings. We are not Lake Calhoun.
- 17) Only to 3 stories.
- 18) Can you imagine the mess for a year while the hotel is being built? Construction traffic. Parking is already overflowing in this area.
- 19) Need to make sure it's visible though.
- 20) Wish we could keep the flea market.
- 21) Sooner the better.

2. The City has been approached by multiple developers inquiring about the feasibility of redeveloping both of the two municipal parking lots. Do you believe that the City should encourage the development of more housing or retail shops in the two municipal parking lots in order to build a parking ramp?

- No, keep the two municipal parking lots for parking only. Parking ramps are not needed - 32
- Yes, but only if the amount of parking exceeds the amount of parking required by the new development so the net amount of parking downtown is increased - 14

Comments:

- 1) Improve the existing muni lots. Encourage churches and businesses to open their lots at peak times (July 4th, etc.)
- 2) Hesitantly, a yes.
- 3) Only one of the parking lots.
- 4) I support, but the structures should be attractive and not big. Please, no big, ugly concrete parking ramps.
- 5) Economic vitality is essential to Excelsior to be the best small lakeside town in America. Stagnation will kill the village. Push forward, embrace creativity, develop a platform where money will flow. Then, Excelsior will prosper.
- 6) I don't like creepy, dirty parking ramps. Do not want ramps in Excelsior.
- 7) Do you remember how they were conceived? By condemning all houses. You are flouting common sense. Parking ramps cost a mint. All your harping on money – really.
- 8) Please keep the two municipal parking lots intact.
- 9) Sales tax for parking ramp.
- 10) Parking ramps in Excelsior do not make sense. We have height restrictions which will limit their additional parking spaces, and they will add significant construction, utility, security and maintenance costs. If you want to develop those areas, push parking to the east side of town and provide transportation (trolley) to downtown.
- 11) Love to see multi-use parking structures.
- 12) I am more concerned that it "fit in" with the small-town charm than what height it is. A 3 level hotel could be a "fit" disaster, while a charmingly appointed 4 story hotel could fit in just fine.

Additional Comments:

- 1) Overall, the City is well run and addresses issues as they arise. The City does tend to overthink issues that have yet to appear.
 - 2) I wish there was a month-electronic newsletter.
 - 3) Love living here and the character of the town. Do not overdevelop the area both commercially or residentially.
 - 4) Do not allow any more restaurants at all.
 - 5) I prefer the City try to tax more commercial/visitors (sales tax or something) than put the burden entirely on residents.
 - 6) Excelsior is on a slippery slide of losing our character as well as becoming uncomfortable to long time residents.
 - 7) Consolidation of City administration/services with other south lake municipalities should be considered.
 - 8) Not too big too fast. Keep it real. No riff-raff.
 - 9) I am concerned with the development plans for Maynards, Bayside, St. Albans' Boathouse area. I do not want more condos blocking the residents of Excelsior's access to enjoying the lake via restaurants/bars.
 - 10) Please advocate for residents experiencing overinflated "land values" which could adversely impact existing residents from making improvements and repairs on structures. Protect or incentivize improving properties that contribute to his "character preservation" for people already living her. These teardowns are by people way out of the norm.
 - 11) I wish there was a monthly electronic newsletter.
 - 12) I think the City should approach Hennepin County about how they assess property value in town. People are paying above market for properties which is driving our taxes up high-relative to other county residences, especially in consideration of land value.
 - 13) Thank you for asking the questions - we love this community.
 - 14) Situation surrounding possible sales tax add-on in Excelsior.
 - 15) We need to start monitoring the amount of salt water that goes into the lake and find other means to replace the road salt, and if the moratorium does not allow enough time for redoing the zoning, then it should be extended.
 - 16) Get rid of the parking meters. They are stupid and don't help residents.
 - 17) A little confusing for the average person to comprehend - maybe should explain better - good survey though. Thank you!
 - 18) Buy the Congregational Church and replace it with a ground level parking with additional parking underneath. Plant trees around it. No one will see it. The church does not pay taxes anyway. No loss in revenue.
 - 19) My taxes have gone up 44.3% in 1 year. As you can imagine I am not happy about this. Why am I paying so much when the apartment building taxes are so low and there are so many of them in the City. When will something be done about this. There should be cap to how much taxes can be raised. If my taxes keep going up you will run me out of this city and I have lived her 26 years.
 - 20) This City Council is ruing Excelsior. Very sad.
 - 21) Thank you Council!
 - 22) Teardowns will happen, and that is ok. We just need to be sure the new builds are tasteful.
 - 23) Historical homes might be nice to have if they are maintained. Since not all historical homes are upgraded, be careful how you limit renewal. Otherwise, the village very well could end up with a bunch of crappy house, not maintained, needing huge dollars and the city is stuck.
 - 24) Regarding residential teardowns, the current building codes do not protect the existing neighborhoods from McMansions being overbuilt (i.e. 328 W. Lake St). I would like homes like 328 W. Lake St that needed no variance to have that discussion so that it maybe possible to move new buildings farther away from existing homes.
-