National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property
   Historic name: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
   Other names/site number: ________________________________
   Name of related multiple property listing:
   ____________________________________________________
   (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location
   Street & number: Roughly bounded by Lake Street on the north, West Drive on the west, Third Street on the south, and East Drive on the east
   City or town: Excelsior State: MN County: Hennepin
   Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
   I hereby certify that this □ nomination □ request for determination of eligibility meets
   the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
   Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
   In my opinion, the property □ meets □ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I
   recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
   level(s) of significance:
   □ national □ statewide □ local □
   Applicable National Register Criteria:
   □ A □ B □ C □ D

   ________________________________  9/3/2021
   Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy SHPO, MN Dept. of Admin. Date

   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

   In my opinion, the property □ meets □ does not meet the National Register criteria.

   ________________________________  ________________________________
   Signature of commenting official: Date

   ________________________________  State or Federal agency/bureau
   Title: or Tribal Government
4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain): ___________________

Signature of the Keeper ___________________ Date of Action ___________________

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)
Private: [X]
Public – Local
Public – State
Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

Building(s)
District [X]
Site
Structure
Object
Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
- COMMERCE/TRADE/business
- COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
- COMMERCE/TRADE/department store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
- SOCIAL/meeting hall
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
- GOVERNMENT/post office

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
- COMMERCE/TRADE/business
- COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
- COMMERCE/TRADE/professional
- COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
- SOCIAL/meeting hall
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE VICTORIAN: Renaissance Revival
LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque Revival
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Georgian Revival
MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: STONE, CONCRETE
Walls: BRICK, STONE, STUCCO, CERAMIC TILE
Roof: ROOFING MEMBRANE, ASPHALT

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheet.

Narrative Description

See continuation sheet.
Excelsior Commercial Historic District                   Hennepin, Minnesota
Name of Property                                               County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
☐ B. Removed from its original location
☐ C. A birthplace or grave
☐ D. A cemetery
☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
☐ F. A commemorative property
☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years
Excelsior Commercial Historic District

Hennepin, Minnesota

Name of Property: ____________________________

County and State: ________________________

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCETYPE

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________

Period of Significance

1886-1955

___________________

___________________

___________________

Significant Dates

___________________

___________________

___________________

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

___________________

___________________

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

___________________

___________________

Architect/Builder

Miller, Charles F.

Morse, William

Elliot, H. B.

Liebenberg and Kaplan

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________
Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

See continuation sheet.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

See continuation sheet.
Excelsior Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Hennepin, Minnesota
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #___________
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_________
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #___________

Primary location of additional data:
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
X__ Other

Name of repository: _Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  4.58

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927  or  ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15  Easting: 455306.89  Northing: 4972473.52
2. Zone: 15  Easting: 455346.31  Northing: 4972400.79
3. Zone: 15  Easting: 455258.55  Northing: 4972208.27
4. Zone: 15  Easting: 455168.15  Northing: 4972297.27

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The southeast corner of the historic district is at the intersection of Third Street and East Drive. From that point, the boundary runs north along East Drive to the center of Second Street. It then run west until it is in line with the east property line of 409 Second Street. The boundary runs north to the northeast corner of 409 Second Street. From that point, the boundary turns west and follows the north property lines of 409 Second Street and 31 Water Street and continues to the center of Water Street. The boundary runs north along Water Street until it aligns with the north property line for 26 Water Street. The boundary follows that property line to the northwest corner of 26 Water Street. From there, it turns south and follows the west property lines for 26, 28, and 34-50 Water Street and continues to the center of Second Street. The boundary jogs east to align with the west property line for 206 Water Street. The boundary follows that property line to the southwest corner of 206 Water Street and then turns west to follow the north property line of 212 Water Street to West Drive. The boundary turns south and follows West Drive to the southwest corner of 274 Water Street. It follows the south property line of 274 Water Street and then turns south to follow the west property lines of 270-274 and 278 Water Street to the southwest corner of 278 Water. The boundary follows the south property line to the center of Water Street. It runs south along Water Street and turns east on Third Street to its intersection with East Drive.
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes the city lots for all contributing and non-contributing properties in the historic district. East Drive and West Drive historically defined the commercial district and are clear physical dividing lines. They serve as the east and west boundaries of the historic district. Lake Street and Lake Minnetonka are clear physical barriers at the north end of the district. The district boundary was moved south of Lake Street to exclude non-contributing resources. Third Street was historically the south end of the commercial district and is a clear dividing line between the commercial buildings to the north and industrial and residential buildings to the south. The boundary at the southwest corner was modified to exclude a non-contributing resource.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rachel Peterson, historian
organization: Hess, Roise and Company
street & number: 100 North First Street
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55401
e-mail: rachel@hessroise.com
telephone: 612-338-1987
date: March 2021

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
7. Narrative Description

Summary
The Excelsior Commercial Historic District comprises approximately two blocks of downtown Excelsior near Lake Minnetonka. The district includes thirty-seven commercial buildings, of which thirty-two are contributing resources and five are non-contributing resources. Three of the non-contributing resources were constructed after the period of significance, and two underwent significant alterations and do not retain sufficient integrity to be contributing resources.

The buildings in the historic district were constructed between 1886 and 1971. The majority of the properties date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and are one- or two-story brick structures. They form a nearly continuous building face on either side of Water Street between Second and Third Streets. Construction in downtown Excelsior paused during the Great Depression, but a handful of commercial buildings were constructed in the years shortly before and after World War II to fill undeveloped or recently cleared lots. The north block of Water Streets between Lake and Second Streets, which initially held hotels and boarding houses for the tourist industry, was largely redeveloped during this period with new entertainment, auto sales and service, and commercial buildings.

The district is roughly bounded by Lake Street on the north, East Drive on the east, Third Street on the south, and West Drive on the west. Lake Minnetonka is north of the district.

Narrative Description

Commercial Buildings
The majority of the buildings in downtown Excelsior are one- or two-story commercial blocks. These buildings most often have masonry or concrete-block walls, and the primary facades are brick. The first floors have storefront windows and entrances, many of which were renovated during the mid-twentieth century to adapt to changing needs and taste. The upper floor of two-story commercial blocks usually held offices or small apartments. Ornamentation on the commercial buildings is limited to the window openings and the cornice line. Variations on the Romanesque Revival and Renaissance Revival styles are most common on the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century buildings.

Fraternal Organization Buildings
Two of the largest and most ornate buildings in downtown Excelsior—the Excelsior Masonic Temple (249 Water Street) and the IOOF Temple (250-252 Water Street)—were constructed for fraternal organizations. The IOOF Temple is a good example of the Romanesque Revival style and the Masonic Temple is a good example of Georgian Revival architecture.

Automotive Sales and Service Buildings
Auto repair shops and dealerships were constructed in downtown Excelsior during the 1920s-1940s as automobiles became more popular. Two buildings of this type in the historic district—the Phillips Garage (420 Second Street) and the Wistrand Motor Company (421 Third Street)—are utilitarian one-story structures. The Tonka Ford building at 34-50 Water Street was designed in the Art Moderne style and has a rounded southeast corner with large storefront windows. A service wing on the west side of the building is a much simpler design.
Mid-Century Buildings
The buildings constructed during and after World War II are architecturally distinct from the earlier buildings in the historic district and reflect the popular mid-century architectural styles. Tonka Ford and the Tonka Theater draw on the Art Moderne style and its use of curves. Red Owl Foods/Bacon Drug at 205-207 Water Street used brightly colored glazed-brick cladding and large storefront windows to achieve a modern aesthetic. The Hennessey Building at 28-30 Water Street, built in 1958, took a different approach and was designed to mirror the one-story brick commercial blocks constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Street Features
Water Street and Second Street run through the historic district. Both are paved with bituminous and have one lane of traffic in each direction with street parking along the curbs. Concrete sidewalks are on both sides of the streets and have boulevard trees and double-arm streetlights. All of the buildings in the historic district directly abut the sidewalks creating a continuous building facade.

Building Descriptions
Tonka Theater, 26 Water Street, Contributing
The Tonka Theater is a two-story concrete movie theater with a flat roof. The building has an irregular footprint formed by the original 1945 theater and additions in 1972 and 1989 on the west and south walls. The 1945 theater was designed by Liebenberg and Kaplan. The additions are not visible from Water Street. On the primary east facade, facing Water Street, the first floor is clad in vertical wood boards. The main entrance is recessed in the center of the wall and holds two metal double-leaf doors. North of the main entrance is secondary pedestrian entrance and to the south is a display area for movie posters. A marquee is above the first floor and runs the width of the east facade. The building’s only ornamentation is a curved, fluted panel on the second floor.

Hennessey Building, 28-30 Water Street, Contributing
The Hennessey Building is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The north and south walls are engaged with the neighboring buildings. The walls are running-bond brick painted tan. The building’s east facade, facing Water Street, has a central entrance flanked by pairs of non-historic plate-glass-and-metal storefront windows. Non-historic vinyl awnings are above each pair of windows. The single-leaf metal and glass entrance door has two sidelights and transom. A simple crenelated cornice is along the top of the parapet. Decorative brackets are at each end of the cornice, and the parapet is covered in wood beadboard.

Commercial Building, 31-33 Water Street, Contributing
The commercial building at 31-33 Water Street is two stories tall with a rectangular footprint. It has a flat roof with a brick chimney near the center. The primary west facade faces Water Street and is clad in tan brick. The south wall engages the adjacent building and east wall partially engages with 409 Second Street. The north wall is concrete block. On the primary facade, a pair of large storefront windows are in the center of the first floor. Two pedestrian doors with transom lights are on either side of the windows. A large non-historic awning spans the west facade above the first floor. Two window openings are on the first floor and hold multi-pane casement sashes. On the north wall, a pedestrian door is on the first floor and two multi-pane windows are on the second floor.

Tonka Ford, 34-50 Water Street, Contributing
The Tonka Ford building sits at the northwest corner of Water Street and Second Street. The building has two sections: a two-story dealership to the east and a one-story service center to the west.
The dealership was constructed in the Art Moderne style and has a characteristic rounded southeast corner. The south and east facades are clad in red brick largely set in a common bond, with subtle detailing in the bond pattern across the building. The main entrance is recessed into a large storefront system at the southeast corner. A course of soldier brick runs above the storefronts.

The south wall facade faces Second Street and has two pedestrian doors and a small window west of the corner storefront. Both pedestrian doors have transoms and are recessed into the wall. The east door has rounded stack-bond brick panels on either side of the entrance. The window is between the two doors and has a three-by-one pane arrangement with a transom.

The east facade faces Water Street. A pedestrian door with curved brick sidewalls and a large transom is recessed near the center of the wall. Two storefronts are at the north end of the east wall. The south storefront has a recessed door at its north end with a large storefront window to the south. The north storefront has a recessed door at its south end with a large storefront window to the north. A band of soldier-course brick is above the storefronts. At the north end of the wall is a two-story brick panel that projects slightly from the face of the wall. A pedestrian door with a transom window is recessed into the first floor. Concentric brick panels are above.

Large sets of multi-pane casement windows are on the second floor of the south and east walls. Three pairs of windows are at the southeast corner, seven pairs of windows are on the second floor of the east wall, and two sets of three windows are on the south wall. Panels of tan running-bond brick with two courses of red header bricks are between all of the window bays. Continuous courses of header bricks run across second floor, forming the windowsills and lintels. The north facade engages the adjacent building, and the west wall engages the service center.

The service center is one story tall with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary south facade faces Second Street. The south facade is clad in wood siding and the west and north walls are concrete block. A storefront is at the east end of the south wall. It comprises a large window to the east and a deeply recessed door to the west with decorative wood pilasters are on either side of the door opening. The storefront bay is clad in vertical wood siding with decorative wood pilasters on either end of the bay. Three pairs of sliding windows are on the south facade west of the entrance bay. All have wood surrounds. A decorative wood pilaster is at the west end of the south wall. The north wall has six window openings, each with a fixed window.

Nygren’s Clothing Store, 35 Water Street, Non-contributing

Nygren’s Clothing Store is a two-story commercial building at the northeast corner of Water and Second Streets. It has a rectangular footprint with a chamfered southwest corner. The first floor is clad in dark-brown running-bond brick veneer. The roof is flat with a false mansard roof clad in asphalt shingles that drops over the second floor. The main entrance is at the chamfered southwest corner. The entrance bay holds a pair of glazed metal doors with a wood surround topped by a broken pediment. A large storefront window is on the south wall and two storefront windows are on the west wall. The windows have wood surrounds and stone sills. A secondary entrance is at the north end of the west wall. It is a wood single-leaf door, with wood surrounds and broken pediment. Three pairs of casement windows are on the second floor, one on the south wall and two on the west wall.

Sampson Building, 200-206 Water Street, Contributing

The Sampson Building is a two-story brick commercial block at the southwest corner of Water and Second
Excelsior Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Hennepin, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Streets. The building has a rectangular footprint and a flat roof, which is marked by a wood cornice projecting from the east and north walls. The primary east facade faces Water Street. Four bays of storefront windows surrounded by wood paneling dominate the first floor of the east wall. Each window is separated by a wood pilaster and is topped with a multi-pane transom and an entablature. Multi-pane windows are on the second floor, grouped in one or two pairs. The windows have solid course sills and lintels. Matching storefront windows are at the east and west ends of the north wall, and pairs of multi-pane windows are on the second floor. A one-story storefront addition is at the west end of the north wall. It follows the design of the storefronts.

Red Owl Foods/Bacon Drug, 205-207 Water Street, Contributing
Red Owl Foods/Bacon Drug is at the southeast corner of the intersection of Water and Second Streets. The building is one-story tall with rectangular footprint and a flat roof with metal flashing. The south and east walls abut neighboring buildings. The building was rehabilitated in 2013, and non-historic wall cladding was removed to expose the historic red and yellow glazed brick. The recessed main entrance, which is a double-leaf metal and glass flanked by storefront windows, is near the south end of the west wall. This entrance was installed during the 2013 project. Large storefront windows span the west wall, and a smaller storefront window is on the west end of the north wall.

A new storefront was constructed at the east end of the north wall. Its facade faces Second Street and is clad in dark brown brick. A brick pilaster separates the facade into two bays, and additional pilasters are at the north and south ends of the wall. Each pilaster has three rough-faced stone accent blocks. The pilasters extend above the roofline and delicate brick tracery runs between them. The east bay is recessed and holds a door and a large picture window with a transom. The west bay holds a large picture window with a transom.

Smith and Company Store, 211-213 Water Street, Contributing
The Smith and Company Store is a two-story commercial block with running-bond brick walls and a flat roof. The building’s west facade faces Water Street and its north and south walls are largely obscured by adjacent buildings. Where exposed, the north wall is covered with parge coating. The first floor of the west facade is divided into three bays. The north bay holds a large picture window. The center bay is recessed and holds a single-leaf wood door and a large picture window. The south bay holds a picture window and a multi-panel wood door. All bays also have brick infill that was added when the storefronts were redesigned, likely in the 1980s. A non-historic wood-shingle eave is above the storefronts. The second floor has three arched window openings, each holding a non-historic single-pane fixed window. Each window bay has a set of shutters. A raised brick panel is above each window. A modest crenelated cornice is at the roofline.

Wheeler Building, 212 Water Street, Contributing
The Wheeler Building is a one-story commercial block with running-bond brick walls and a flat roof. The building’s east facade faces Water Street and its north and south walls are obscured by neighboring buildings. The main entrance is recessed into the center of the east wall. The metal and glass door is topped with a transom window. Large metal and plate glass storefront windows are on either side of the door. The window units have been replaced, but the openings appear unaltered and retain their historic stone sills. A non-historic vinyl awning is above the windows. Subtle brick detailing is along the roof including a course of angled brick, three raised-brick panels, and a corbeled cornice line. The entire facade has been painted brown-gray.

Wheeler Building, 216 Water Street, Contributing
The Wheeler Building is a one-story commercial block with running-bond brick walls and a flat roof. The
The Happy Hour, 217 Water Street, Non-contributing
The Happy Hour is a two-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The west facade faces Water Street, and the north and south walls are obscured by adjacent buildings. The building was originally constructed as a theater and had an ornately decorated facade. It was renamed the Lake Theater in 1929 and the facade was extensively renovated and a new marquee was installed at that time. The original facade and marquee were removed in 1945 when the building was converted to retail. The current facade was installed during a subsequent 2011 renovation. The west facade is clad in brick veneer and the first floor holds a large storefront system comprising three windows to the north, a pedestrian door, and one window to the south. A large awning shelters the storefront. A single square window is at the south end of the second floor. It has a soldier course lintel and brick sill. A soldier course of brick runs across the roofline.

Apgar Building, 218-226 Water Street, Contributing
The Apgar Building is a two-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The east wall faces Water Street, and the north and south walls are largely obscured by adjacent buildings. The walls are red brick and have a crenelated brick cornice. The first floor has a central entrance that leads to the second floor. The door has two transoms: a single-pane transom directly above the door and a multi-pane transom above. The doorway also has a brick segmental-arch lintel. Large storefront windows with recessed entrances are north and south of the apartment entrance. The storefronts have been modified and have brick infill below the windows. The second floor has seven segmental-arch window openings with stone sills. New sashes have been installed, but the openings appear unaltered.

August Hay Meat Market, 219 Water Street, Contributing
The August Hay Meat Market is a one-story commercial building with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The west wall faces Water Street and the north and south walls abut adjacent buildings. The building was constructed c. 1887. The west facade and the facade of the neighboring Bullens General Store were redesigned by Charles Miller in 1910 to visually combine the two buildings. The west facade is variegated brown brick, and has a metal cornice near the roofline with a brick parapet above. The north bay on the facade holds a modern storefront window with a transom. The south bay holds a pedestrian door and a large transom.

Bullens General Store, 223-227 Water Street, Contributing
The Bullens General Store is a one-story commercial building with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The west wall faces Water Street and the north and south walls abut adjacent buildings. The building was constructed in 1886 and the west facade was redesigned by Charles Miller in 1910 to visually combine it with the neighboring August Hay Meat Market. The west facade is clad in variegated brown brick. A metal cornice is near the roofline and a brick parapet extends above it. The parapet above the 233 storefront is taller than the parapet above the 227 storefront. The building is divided into two bays. The north bay holds a storefront with a recessed entrance flanked by two windows. Multi-pane transom windows are above the door and windows. The south bay holds three storefront windows and a recessed entrance. Two storefront windows are north of the entrance and one is to
the south. Multi-pane transom windows are above the door and windows.

**Apgar Real Estate Office, 228 Water Street, Contributing**
The Apgar Real Estate Office building is a small one-story commercial block. It has a narrow rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary east facade faces Water Street and is clad in tan and red running-bond brick. The north and south walls are obscured by adjacent buildings. The east facade is dominated by a storefront window with a recessed entrance at the north end. Tan brick infill is below the window. The original red brick facade is intact above the storefront and has several bands of perforated and corbelled brickwork near the roofline.

**Welter Building, 229-231 Water Street, Contributing**
The Welter Building is a two-story commercial block with tan running-bond brick walls and a flat roof. The west wall faces Water Street and the north and south walls are largely obscured by adjacent buildings. Where exposed, the north wall has been covered with a parge coat. On the first floor of the east facade, a pedestrian door leading to the second floor is at the south end of the wall. The door opening has a recessed segmental-arch lintel. A single-leaf door and a large transom fill the opening. A flat eave is between the door and transom. The remainder of the first floor has a large storefront and entrance system for the commercial space. The storefront has three large windows with a pedestrian door at the south end. A watertable and four multi-pane transom windows are above the windows and door. The second floor has four rectangular window openings with continuous stone sills and lintels. The sashes are replacement units, but the window openings are intact. Decorative brickwork with a diamond and triangle pattern is near the roofline on the parapet.

**Miller Block, 232 and 234-238 Water Street, Contributing**
The Miller Block is a two-story commercial building with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary east facade faces Water Street and the north and south walls are partially covered by adjacent buildings. Where exposed, they are tan common brick. The primary east facade is tan face brick with buff-stone accents. The first floor has two large, non-historic storefronts that angle slightly into the building. Two pedestrian doors are recessed near the center of the wall. A post between the two doors supports the overhang. A non-historic pressed-metal panel is above the storefronts in place of a transom window. A pedestrian door with a segmental-arch lintel is recessed at the south end of the east wall and leads to the second floor. A metal panel at the top of the door opening reads “Miller Block.” The second floor is divided in half by a rusticated brick pilaster. Each half has two arched windows with stone keystones. Each arched window is flanked by narrow one-over-one windows, which have stone lintels. A metal cornice projects from the roofline. Decorative brickwork is below the cornice a has a Greek meander pattern. As of this nomination, the building is undergoing a storefront renovation, and the non-historic storefront windows, pressed-metal panel, and support post have been removed.

**Fred Hawkins Building, 235-237 Water Street, Contributing**
The Fred Hawkins Building is a two-story commercial block. The primary west facade faces Water Street and the north and south walls abut adjacent buildings. Where exposed, the south wall is tan common brick with a ghost sign. The west facade has three bays and is covered dark brown face brick laid in a running-bond pattern. The first floor has been altered by a new storefront system that includes two doors on the outer bays and a modern window surrounded by infill in the center bay. The replaced wood doors have wood surrounds with fluted pilasters. The door and windows openings have vinyl awnings and a large sign band is above the storefront. The second floor has two window openings with stone sills. The openings are partially infilled with wood boards and hold non-historic sashes. A small round window is above each second-floor window. A decorative parapet with brick tracery extends above the roofline.
J. D. Jamison Grocery, 239 Water Street, Contributing
The J. D. Jamieson Grocery building is a one-story commercial block. The primary west wall faces Water Street and is covered in painted running-bond brick. The north and south walls are obscured by adjacent buildings. The west wall features a large storefront system with a recessed center entrance. The window units and door are replacement aluminum units and angle back toward the entrance. A non-historic wood awning is over the storefront. Modest brick detailing, including a course of angle brick and a stepped cornice, is above the storefront. A simple brick parapet rises above the roofline.

Commercial Building, 240 Water Street, Contributing
The building at 240 Water Street is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary east facade is painted running-bond brick and faces Water Street. The north and south walls are obscured by adjacent buildings. The primary entrance is recessed into the center of the east wall and is flanked by large multi-pane storefront windows. A sign band is above the storefront. Decorative brick corbeling is above the sign band and extends to the top of the wall.

Tony’s Barber Shop, 243 Water Street, Contributing
Tony’s Barber shop is a small, one-story commercial building. Its primary west facade faces Water Street. The north wall abuts 239 Water Street and a narrow alley dubbed Masonic Lane is on the south side. The west wall is brown running-bond brick, and the remainder of the building is concrete. There is little ornamentation on the building except for brick quoining at the west end of the south wall. A wood door is recessed into the north end of the west wall alongside a large window aluminum.

Miller’s Excelo Bakery, 244 Water Street, Contributing
Miller’s Excelo Bakery is a two-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The building’s east wall, which faces Water Street, has four bays and is covered in red running-bond brick with rough-faced sandstone details. The north and south walls are largely obscured by adjacent buildings. Where exposed, the north wall is covered with stucco. On the first floor of the primary facade, a pedestrian door leading to the second floor is at the south end of the wall. The single-leaf door is topped by a short, awning transom and a large multi-pane transom. The remainder of the first floor is dominated by a large storefront system. A doorway is recessed into the storefront’s center bay and plate glass windows are on either side. Multi-pane transoms and a sign band are above the windows and door. The second floor was rebuilt in 2009-2010, and originally had a brick facade with two rectangular window openings. Currently, there are four non-historic window openings with segmental-arch lintels and rough-faced sandstone sills. A string course of sandstone runs between the windows below the lintels. A modest cornice is on the roofline.

Excelsior Masonic Temple, 249 Water Street, Contributing
The Excelsior Masonic Lodge stands two stories tall above a raised basement, which is marked by a smoothed limestone stringcourse. The building was designed in the Georgian Revival style using Flemish-bond brown brickwork with smooth limestone details. The primary west facade, facing Water Street, has three bays. The main entrance is recessed into the center of the west facade below a tall arched opening. Inside the entryway, French doors are topped by a small arched transom window. A stained-glass light fixture with Masonic imagery hangs above the entrance. The arched entry surround has a stone keystone, above which is a large stone shield with a carved compass and square. Pairs of six-over-six, double-hung wood windows are on either side of the entrance on the first floor. Each pair of windows shares a soldier-course lintel and limestone sill. The second floor has three sets of three four-over-four, double-hung wood windows with limestone sills. A limestone arch and brick
soldier course are above each window. There is a stone cornice at the roofline, which is topped by a brick parapet. Four window openings on the basement have been filled with tan brick. The window openings on the north wall have also been filled with brick, but retain their soldier course lintels and brick sills. The south wall adjoins 251 Water Street on the first floor and has no window openings.

**IOOF Temple, 250-252 Water Street, Contributing**

The IOOF Temple is a two-story brick building and has one of the most ornate facades in downtown Excelsior. The building has a rectangular footprint, brick walls, and a flat roof. The primary east facade, facing Water Street, spans three bays and is clad in red running-bond brick. The north and south walls engage with the neighboring buildings and are tan common brick. On the first floor, a pedestrian door is at the south end of the east facade. A glass panel with chain links and “I. O. O. F.” is above the door. A large storefront encompasses the rest of the first floor. It has a recessed central entrance flanked by angled sidelights and flush storefront windows. On the second floor, the north and south bays hold pairs of one-over-one, double-hung windows, with ashlar sandstone sills and lintels. The center bay holds two recessed brick panels that mirror the windows in the outer bays. The ashlar sandstone masonry extends across the facade, giving the appearance of a string course at the second floor. Decorative brick arches are above the stone lintel at each window. Each arch has perforated brick at the center with three rows of solider course brick surrounding the arch. Rows of corbelled brick above the arches decorates the parapet, which is raised above the roofline. The taller, center parapet bay is marked with the words, “IOOF TEMPLE.” The north and south parapet bays slope slightly are marked with rows of perforated brick above the corbeled. The pilasters also extend up of the parapet, where they topped with pine-cone-shaped finals.

**Commercial Building, 251 Water Street, Non-contributing**

The building at 251 Water Street is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary west facade faces Water Street, and the north and south walls abut the adjacent buildings. The west facade was entirely rebuilt in the 1980s. It is covered in stone. A single-leaf wood door with oversized metal hinges is recessed into the south end of the wall. There is a large arched, wood multi-pane window on the north end of the wall. The upper portion of the wall is covered with a faux mansard roof, which is covered in shingles.

**Commercial Building, 254-256 Water Street, Contributing**

The building at 254-256 Water Street is a two-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary east facade faces Water Street, and the north and south walls abut the adjacent buildings. The south wall is partially visible above the neighboring one-story building. It is tan common brick with a ghost sign at the east end of the wall. The building is covered in red running-bond brick with modest rough-faced sandstone detailing. A large mid-century storefront is on the first floor. A door leading to the second floor is recessed at the north end of the storefront and a second door for the commercial space is slightly south of center. The remaining space holds storefront windows. A transom window runs above the storefront. The second floor has five rectangular one-over-one windows that share a stone sill and lintel. Decorative brick arches are above each window. Each arch has perforated brick at the center with three rows of solider course brick surrounding the arch. A corbelled brick parapet caps the building.

**Commercial Building, 260 Water Street, Contributing**

The building at 260 Water Street is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary east facade faces Water Street and the north and south walls abut adjacent buildings. The wall is brown running-bond brick and holds a storefront window with a recessed entrance to the north. A simple brick cornice caps the building.
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Commercial Building, 261 Water Street
The building at 261 Water Street is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary west facade faces Water Street, and the north and south walls abut the adjacent buildings. The west facade is divided into two bays and is covered in painted running-bond brick. The bays are separated by a brick pilaster, and additional pilasters are at the north and south ends of the facade. The north bay has a large storefront window. The south bay has a recessed, single-leaf wood entrance door flanked by thick sidelights. The door and sidelights are each topped with wood transom units. Non-historic metal and vinyl awnings are above each bay. A stepped brick cornice with metal flashing caps the building.

Commercial Building, 264-266 Water Street, Contributing
The building at 264-266 Water Street is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary east facade faces Water Street, and the north and south walls abut adjacent buildings. The building is covered in red running-bond brick. The east facade is divided into three bays. Two single-leaf doors, one wood and one metal, are recessed into the center bay. Both have transom lights. The wall surrounding the doors is clad in wood beadboard. Large storefront windows are in the north and south bays. The windows are plate glass with metal sashes. Both have wood panels below and are topped with a wood cornice and transom window. Modest decorative brickwork with dentils is above the storefronts. A coped cornice is on the roofline. Rusticated brick pilasters are at north and south ends of the east wall.

Commercial Building, 270-274 Water Street, Contributing
The building at 270-274 Water Street is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary east facade, which faces Water Street, has five bays and is clad in red running-bond brick. The north and south walls abut the adjacent buildings. Two single-leaf metal doors, each flanked by narrow sidelights, are recessed into the center bay of the east facade. Pairs of storefront windows are in the north and south bays. The window units on the east facade have been replaced. Modest decorative brickwork is above the storefronts. A series of six transom lights are above the storefronts and entrances. A coped cornice is on the roofline. Rusticated brick pilasters with wood scroll capital are at north and south ends of the building.

Commercial Building, 276-278 Water Street, Contributing
The building at 278 Water Street is a two-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary east facade faces Water Street and the north and south walls are largely obscured by the adjacent buildings. The east wall, which has three bays, is covered in red running-bond brick with decorative detailing. The main entrance is recessed into the north end of the east wall. Two doors, one leading to the first-floor commercial space and one leading to the second floor are in this bay. A large metal and plate glass storefront window is to the south. Decorative brick panels are above the entrance and storefront bays. Three pairs of windows are on the second floor. Each pair shares a solider-course brick sill. The brick wall above the windows was removed in 1978, and the space was filled with concrete. A decorative cornice with dentils caps the building.

Tonka Printing, 287 Water Street, Non-contributing
The Tonka Printing building is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary west facade, which faces Water Street, is clad in brown running-bond brick and wood paneling. The remainder of the building is covered with stucco. The building is divided into three bays. The center bay extends above the roofline and holds four fixed windows and a Juliet balcony. The main entrance is in on the first floor and is recessed into the building. The north and south bays each hold three recessed storefront windows separated by brick pilasters. Non-historic awnings are above each window.
Commercial Building, 400 Second Street, Non-contributing
The building at 400 Second Street is a one-story commercial block with a rectangular footprint and flat roof. The primary north facade faces Second Street and is clad in dark brown brick. The first floor has two bays. The west bay is recessed into the wall and holds a door and fixed window. The east bay holds a storefront window. Both bays have five-pane transom windows. A parapet wall extends above the roof line and features metal lattices between three brick piers. The north and south walls abut neighboring buildings.

Stemmer Company, 402-406 Second Street, Contributing
The Stemmer Building is a one-story commercial block with a flat roof. The north facade faces Second Street and is clad in variegated red, brown, and tan brick. The east and west walls abut the neighboring buildings. The north facade is divided into three storefront bays, each with large windows, a pedestrian door, and transom lights. The door for the east bay is recessed at the east end of the north wall. The doors for the center and west bay are recessed into the facade slightly west of center. The storefront windows are modern, but historically appropriate, replacements.

Minnetonka State Bank, 409 Second Street, Contributing
The Minnetonka State Bank is a two-story brick building, that steps down to one story at the north end. It has a rectangular footprint with a chamfered southwest corner. The primary south facade faces Second Street. It has two large storefront windows. Pedestrian doors are at the east end of the wall and at the southwest corner. Thin bands of perforated brick detailing and a stone water table are above the first-floor windows and door. Six arched window openings are on the second floor of the south facade. The southwest door and storefront windows are sheltered by non-historic awnings. The east wall is clad in stucco. Three glass-block windows are at the north end of the wall along with a pedestrian door. One one-over-one window is on the second floor. The west wall abuts 35 Water Street on the first floor and has no window or door openings.

Phillips Garage, 420 Second Street, Contributing
The Phillips Garage at 420 Second Street is a one-story brick commercial block with a flat roof that steps down slightly from north to south. The building, which sits on a concrete foundation and has a concrete structure, is clad in red running-bond brick walls. The primary north facade, facing Second Street, has three bays. The window units on the north facade have been replaced, but the openings are unaltered and retain their stone sills. The east bay has a large metal and plate glass storefront window. An entryway is in the center bay. A single-leaf metal door is flanked by sidelights and has a large transom above. Two smaller storefront windows and a pedestrian door are on the west bay. The door is approached by a concrete stoop with a metal railing. A subtle brick cornice along the roofline, along with gold metal lettering that reads “Phillips Garage Auto Livery.” On the east wall, there are four pairs of arched windows. East Drive slopes down slightly from north, exposing a raised basement with rectangular windows. The west wall adjoins 402-406 Water Street.

Wisstrand Motor Company, 421 Third Street, Contributing
The Wisstrand Motor Company Building is a one-story commercial block. The south facade and south portions of the east and west walls are clad in stucco and the rest of the building is concrete block. The building has a rectangular footprint and a flat roof with cambered coping on top of the parapet wall. The primary south facade, facing Third Street, has three bays. The center bay holds a central entrance flanked by large storefront windows. The east and west bays have storefront windows. The window sashes have been replaced, but the openings appear to be unaltered. Non-historic awnings are above the windows. On the west wall, the south bay holds a storefront window with a multi-light transom. Moving north is a historic industrial-sash window, an overhead door, and
small glass-block windows. On the east wall, the south bay holds a set of non-historic patio doors sheltered by a wood trellis. Moving north are two small glass-block windows, an industrial-sash window, a pedestrian door, an overhead door and five non-historic casement windows.

**Table of Properties**

The following table lists all the properties in the boundary of the historic district. The table is organized numerically by address. It lists each property’s, historic name, address, and contributing or non-contributing status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>HISTORIC NAME</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NRHP STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 Water Street</td>
<td>Tonka Theater</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-30 Water Street</td>
<td>Hennessy Building</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-33 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-50 Water Street</td>
<td>Tonka Ford</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Water Street</td>
<td>Nygren’s Clothing Store</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Non-contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-206 Water Street</td>
<td>Sampson Building</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205-207 Water Street</td>
<td>Red Owl Foods/Bacon Drug</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211-213 Water Street</td>
<td>Smith and Company Store</td>
<td>ca. 1920</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212 Water Street</td>
<td>Wheeler Building</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216 Water Street</td>
<td>Wheeler Building</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217 Water Street</td>
<td>The Happy Hour</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Non-contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218-226 Water Street</td>
<td>Apgar Building</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219 Water Street</td>
<td>August Hay Meat Market</td>
<td>ca. 1887</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223-227 Water Street</td>
<td>Bullens General Store</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228 Water Street</td>
<td>Apgar Real Estate Office</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229-231 Water Street</td>
<td>Welter Building</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232-234 Water Street</td>
<td>Miller Block</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235-237 Water Street</td>
<td>Fred Hawkins Building</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239 Water Street</td>
<td>J. D. Jamieson Grocery</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243 Water Street</td>
<td>Tony’s Barber Shop</td>
<td>ca. 1946</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244 Water Street</td>
<td>Miller’s Excelo Bakery</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249 Water Street</td>
<td>Excelsior Masonic Temple</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-252 Water Street</td>
<td>IOOF Temple/Morse Dry Goods</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Non-contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254-256 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>261 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
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<td>264-266 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270-274 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276-278 Water Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>287 Water Street</td>
<td>Tonka Printing</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Non-contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 Second Street</td>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>ca. 1965</td>
<td>Non-contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>402-406 Second Street</td>
<td>Stemmer Company</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integrity
The Excelsior Commercial Historic District displays good historic integrity as a commercial center constructed between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century. None of the resources have been moved from their historic location and the district retains good integrity of location. The district also retains its integrity of design, despite alterations to individual resources. Several buildings received new storefronts and windows in the mid- and late twentieth century. The facades retain good integrity of design, and the contributing resources have not undergone substantial alterations. There have been few additions to the buildings in the district, and all have been constructed on rear facades. Several buildings were also faced with non-historic materials in the late-twentieth century. Many of those non-historic materials were removed during renovation projects in the early 2000s, improving the district’s integrity. The district also retains good integrity of materials and workmanship, supported by the strong integrity of design. The district also has good integrity of setting. It maintains its relationship to Lake Minnetonka, which was critical to the commercial district’s development. Several eighteenth- and nineteenth-century houses are extant outside the district and contribute to its integrity of setting. There has been some demolition and new construction on side streets, but these changes do not degrade the district’s overall integrity. The buildings in the district continue to be used as shops, restaurants, and offices, giving the district strong integrity of association. The historic district’s good integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, and association contribute to its integrity of feeling. The district retains its character as a late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century commercial core. The Excelsior Commercial Historic District retains sufficient integrity of support its eligibility for the National Register.
8. Statement of Significance

Summary
The Excelsior Commercial Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Commerce. The district is locally significant and represents Excelsior’s commercial history, beginning with the town’s start as a tourist destination on Lake Minnetonka. The majority of the buildings in the historic district were built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and held a variety of shops, restaurants, and services for tourists and locals. During the mid-twentieth century, the north block of the district was redeveloped as the tourist industry declined and lakefront hotels were demolished. New entertainment venues and auto sales and service buildings were constructed during this period. The district’s period of significance begins in 1886 when the earliest buildings in the district were constructed and ends in 1955 when downtown had been fully developed.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Early Development in Excelsior
Excelsior was founded in 1852 on the south shore of Lake Minnetonka. George Bertram established the town with a group of Euro-American settlers who had moved to Minnesota from New England after the area was opened to new settlement by treaties between the United States government and Dakota leaders in 1851.1 The new residents formed the Excelsior Pioneer Association in 1853, and each member was entitled to a farm and a village lot of at least one acre. The association also set aside thirteen acres on the lake for a public common. When the Village of Excelsior was incorporated in 1877, the burgeoning town had several churches and residences, a school, and carpenter shops all concentrated on a few blocks between George Street and Lake Minnetonka.2

Excelsior’s relationship to Lake Minnetonka was critical to the town’s early growth. Streets were laid out in a grid oriented to the lake, and two flat areas—one along the lake shore and a second running north-south where Water Street was built—were ideal for new buildings. The lake also provided essential travel routes that connected Excelsior to larger cities. Steamboat pavilions with ticket offices, waiting rooms, and concession stands were built on the lakeshore at the foot of Water Street. The Red Line Pavilion opened in 1874, followed by the Blue Line Pavilion in 1880, and the Minneapolis, Lyndale and Minnetonka Railway’s Motor Line Pavilions in 1886. These pavilions formed an entertainment and service center for tourists who were the basis of the town’s early economy.3

Lake Minnetonka’s natural beauty made it an attractive destination for summer tourists. Excelsior catered to the visitors by building hotels and boardinghouses near the lake. The boardinghouses were two- to two-and-a-half story wood-frame structures designed in the popular architectural styles of the period, including Second Empire, Victorian, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival. Some were built as private residences and later adapted for renters. The hotels were much larger and often had wide porches where visitors could sit, socialize, and watch boats on the lake. Two such hotels were constructed at the north end of Water Street in the late 1800s. The White House was built on the east side of the street in 1872 and enlarged in 1886 and 1896. The Hotel La Paul opened on the

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1 Treaties signed at Traverse des Sioux and Mendota in 1851 opened large swaths of Minnesota to new settlement by Euro-Americans. The United States government agreed to pay nearly $4 million to the Dakota people for nearly all their land in southern, central, and western Minnesota, but little of that payment was received.
2 Excelsior Township, Excelsior, Lake Minnetonka (np: George B. Wright and G. J. Rice, 1873), map.
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Tourism and industry increased in the late 1800s when railroad tracks were built through Excelsior. In 1880, the Minneapolis and Saint Louis Railway line reached the southeast edge of town. Two years later, the Minneapolis, Lyndale and Minnetonka Railway constructed tracks to Excelsior’s boat docks. A new passenger and freight depot was constructed at the south end of downtown in 1883, marking a significant improvement in tourist travel. In 1886, the Saint Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba, later known as the Great Northern Railroad, ran through Excelsior parallel to the Minneapolis and Saint Louis tracks, and expanded the city’s transportation network. These railroad companies promoted Lake Minnetonka as a summer resort destination, and wealthy tourists traveled by rail from across the country to enjoy Excelsior’s fishing, boating, concerts, and social scene.5

The tourists and a growing number of permanent residents were a fruitful market for new businesses. Water Street, which ran north-south from Lake Minnetonka, became Excelsior’s primary commercial thoroughfare. The street was relatively flat, unlike the majority of the town, which made new construction easier. The north block of Water Street already held several houses and hotels, so entrepreneurs set up shop between Second and Third Streets. W. B. Jones opened one of the first stores in 1860, and later ran Excelsior’s post office out of his storefront. By 1874, the building was so dilapidated that it needed to be rebuilt. Once the new building was constructed, Jones and his business partner, Theodore Bost, provided nearly all of Excelsior’s merchandise from dry goods to hardware. Several new businesses opened on Water Street during the late 1870s including a variety store, a meat market and icehouse, a millinery, and a dressmaker.6

Fire and Reconstruction
By the late 1880s, both sides of Water Street between Second and Third Streets had been built up with one- and two-story wood commercial buildings. Grocery stores, carpenter shops, meat markets, and other commercial ventures lined the street. Many of these structures fell quickly into disrepair. Few of the buildings in downtown Excelsior were constructed of brick at this time. Those included the H. F. Bullens General Store at 223-227 Water Street (1886) and the August Hay Meat Market at 219 Water Street (ca. 1887).7 An 1885 report from the Board of Health noted that “Backyards and business properties on Water Street between Second and Third [are] in [the] poorest condition.”8

The desire for improved buildings downtown became a necessity on New Year’s Day 1895 when a fire raged through Excelsior, destroying nine commercial blocks and one private home on the west side of Water Street between Second and Third Streets. The loss constituted almost half of the city’s business district. Luckily, Excelsior had a volunteer fire department—organized in 1893—which stopped the fire from spreading outside the block, but the damage was severe. The ruined buildings represented key sections of Excelsior’s economy including hardware and grocery stores, a hotel, and a feed, flour, and lumber store. The Minnetonka News office also burned and despite the damage, the paper reported that “Excelsior is all right. Preparations are being made to rebuild.” The article also demanded that any new construction be fireproof—“Buildings must be of brick.”9

4 Meyer, Happenings Around Excelsior, 23-24, 42, 93, 118.
5 Meyer, Happenings Around Excelsior, 23.
7 Charles Miller refaced the two buildings in the 1910s to create a unified appearance.
8 Meyer, Happenings Around Excelsior, 31; Map of Hennepin County Minnesota (Minneapolis: George B. Wright, 1873), 11.
9 Meyer, Happenings Around Excelsior, 41-42; Historic Excelsior (Excelsior: Excelsior Heritage Preservation Commission and Excelsior City Council, 1982), 24; Excelsior Volunteer Fire Department, The Early History: 1893-1993 (Excelsior: Excelsior:
Over the next fifteen years, most of Water Street between Second and Third Streets was rebuilt. Two local contractors, Charles F. Miller and William Morse, designed the majority of the new commercial buildings. The properties erected in this period were all substantial and defined the city’s commercial architectural character. Miller is credited with at least nineteen buildings, all considerable brick structures that reflected the popular architectural styles of the time. He moved to Minnewashta, Minnesota, from Indiana with his parents in 1870, and then trained as a carpenter, mason, and contractor. Miller also owned several buildings along Water Street and constructed a central steam-heat plant in 1935. William Morse specialized in stone and concrete construction. He contributed two distinctive buildings to downtown Excelsior: The Happy Hour Theater and the Phillips Garage.\(^{10}\)

Rebuilding efforts focused on rebuilding the destroyed properties as well as replacing derelict wood buildings on Water Street. Also in 1895, a new building was constructed at 218-226 Water Street for Adrian E. Apgar’s meat market. Apgar also worked as a realtor and built an office building at 228 Water Street in 1896, which connected to his meat market.\(^{11}\)

The Independent Order of the Odd Fellows (IOOF) lodge at 250-252 Water Street was one of the most impressive new buildings from this period. It was constructed in 1897 for the South Shore Odd Fellows, Minnetonka Lodge 102, which occupied the second floor. The IOOF leased the first floor to A. T. Morse for his dry-goods store. Charles Miller designed the lodge and constructed it using Chaska brick.\(^{12}\)

New construction accelerated in the last two years of the century. In 1898, the Wheeler Building was constructed at 212-216 Water Street. Another commercial block was built at 254-256 Water Street and held the *Minnetonka Record* offices. In 1899, new commercial blocks were constructed at 251 Water Street and 261 Water Street. New buildings also were constructed on Second and Third Streets as downtown continued to grow. Charles Miller designed the new Minnetonka State Bank, which was built at 409 Second Street in 1899. The building also housed Excelsior’s post office. A second floor was added to the bank in 1904.\(^{13}\)

**New Construction in the New Century**

Improvement in downtown Excelsior continued into the first decade of the twentieth century. Several of the new buildings constructed in the early 1900s housed entertainment venues. The Welter Block (229-231 Water Street) opened in 1902 as a pool hall and the Fred Hawkins Building (235-237 Water Street) held a saloon when it opened in 1904. Stores and shops occupied many of the other new properties constructed during this decade. The Miller Block at 232-238 Water Street opened in 1900 and was occupied by DeGroodt Hardware. A new building

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at 240 Water Street was constructed in 1901 for H. B. Elliot’s meat market, and the J. D. Jamison Grocery Building (239 Water Street) was built in 1904. The Wood Block was constructed in 1905 at the southwest corner of Water Street and Second Street (200-206 Water Street). The new building housed R. M. Chapman Company Groceries, and was hailed as the “largest and finest building in the village.”

The new buildings were all constructed of brick, but varied in size and amount of ornamentation. The J. D. Jamieson Grocery Building at 239 Water Street and the building at 240 Water Street were both one-story, single-storefront commercial blocks with modest brick detailing along the roofline. By contrast, the Miller Block at 232-238 Water Street was two stories tall with two commercial spaces on the first floor. The building also incorporated stone detailing and intricate brick work on the second floor, making it one of the most ornate in downtown Excelsior.

Despite all of the new masonry buildings, fire continued to plague Excelsior’s commercial district. In the early morning hours of April 29, 1902, a fire started in the Sampson Brothers store on the east side of Water Street and spread quickly between the wood-frame commercial buildings. The H. F. Bullens building at 223-227 Water Street—which was constructed in 1887—acted as a firebreak and prevented the flames from engulfing more buildings. The Minneapolis Journal reported that “Had the Bullens Block gone, nothing would have saved the rest of the town on the east side of the street to the lake, and it would have taken at least a dozen fine residences, three hotels, livery stable, drug store, bank, and post office.”

Later fires in Excelsior were smaller and smaller events as more fireproof brick buildings populated the downtown streets. On July 31, 1905, Miller’s Excelo Bakery at 244 Water Street was destroyed by flames. Unlike the 1895 and 1902 fires, all of the surrounding buildings were saved. The bakery immediately began rebuilding and the new store opened in 1909.

Several years later, yet another fire in 1916 destroyed the Wood Block at 200 Water Street. The fire supposedly started with “spontaneous combustion in 80 tons of coal stored in the basement.” High winds fanned the flames and spread the fire to nearby buildings, destroying both of Excelsior’s telephone exchanges. Like the bakery, rebuilding began right away and the new commercial block, called the Sampson Building, opened in 1917.

The cycles of fire and rebuilding transformed downtown Excelsior into a modern commercial center. A profile of the town in the 1906 Picturesque Lake Minnetonka noted that:

Excelsior has had some serious losses among her business houses from fire, but like Chicago, her progressiveness over-topped the loss and after each catastrophe, handsome new buildings seem to rise Phoenix-like from the ashes, until today Water Street presents a metropolitan appearance.

Excelsior has one bank, four hotels, and numerous boarding houses, three grocery stores, three meat

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14 “Isaac Wood Passes Away,” Minnetonka Record Centennial, April 5, 1907.
17 “Fire,” Minneapolis Tribune, July 31, 1905.
markets, two drug stores, two blacksmith shops, three dry goods stores, two barber shops, two hardware stores, three shoe stores, one feed store, two lumber and fuel yards, one livery barn, two harness shops, two complete telephone systems, a gas lighting plant, a partial water system, the Western Union Telegraph Company, the United States Express Company, two newspapers, and two real estate offices.19

By the early 1910s, Excelsior had largely recovered from the 1895 fire and its bustling commercial center had cemented the town as “the metropolis of the Lake Minnetonka region.”20

Moving Transportation Forward

After the Panic of 1893, Excelsior’s tourism industry began to change. The economic depression that followed the Panic prevented people—especially wealthy southerners who had visited Lake Minnetonka in droves—from taking expensive cross-country vacations. The local tourism industry sought out potential tourists closer to home, especially day-trippers from Minneapolis. Thomas Lowry, owner of the Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company (TCRTC), believed that a new streetcar line between Minneapolis and Excelsior could reignite the area’s tourist industry with a great potential for profit.21

Lowry’s streetcar line opened in 1906, and was operated by the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Suburban Railway Company, a subsidiary of the TCRTC. The streetcar ran between Lake Harriet in Minneapolis and Lake Minnetonka in Excelsior. The tracks generally followed the Minneapolis, Lyndale and Minnetonka Railway right-of-way, but with modifications to reduce curves and provide a smoother ride at high speeds. Thousands of lake residents, city residents, vacationers, and day-trippers took the forty-six-minute trip between Minneapolis and Excelsior when the line opened.22

In 1907, the streetcar line was expanded to a double track and the route was lit by overhead arc lights, earning it the moniker “The Great White Way.” The completed streetcar line approached Excelsior from the east along the lakeshore, ran down Water Street, and then continued west to Tonka Bay. The TCRTC expanded its public transit offerings with three steamboat routes on Lake Minnetonka that served commuting residents, traveling tourists, and visitors seeking a leisurely boat cruise. A fleet of six “streetcar boats” expanded the streetcar network to twenty-seven docks across Lake Minnetonka.23

The new streetcar attracted residents to Excelsior and boosted the city’s tourism numbers. An article in the Minneapolis Journal noted that “[Excelsior’s] growth is remarkable, and since the census of 1900, the records have shown an increase of several hundred in its population.” The downtown commercial center was a significant draw for visitors and locals alike. Excelsior Bay on Lake Minnetonka was “the liveliest and most frequented of all bays during the summer season, for Excelsior is the shopping center.”24

19 Picturesque Lake Minnetonka: Official Souvenir, Story and Guide to the Queen of All Inland Lakes (Minneapolis: S. E. Ellis, 1906), 12.
22 Meyer, Happenings Around Excelsior, 58, 63, 73, 76; “Picturing Lake Minnetonka,” 296-304.
23 Meyer, Happenings Around Excelsior, 58, 63, 73, 76; “Picturing Lake Minnetonka,” 296-304; John W. Diers and Aaron Isaacs, Twin Cities by Trolley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 76-81.
Entertaining and Expanding Excelsior

The 1910s and 1920s brought modern changes to Excelsior through new entertainment venues, new buildings, and new modes of transportation. Several lakefront amenities and large resorts from the nineteenth century were demolished, and in response, several new theaters were constructed in hopes of attracting more local and regional visitors. The Excelsior Theater (223 Water Street) opened in 1912 and was the town’s first movie theater and local singers would perform while the film reels were changed. The Excelsior Casino, which was on Lake Minnetonka just west of Water Street, opened a vaudeville theater in 1913 to join its bowling alley, billiard parlor, and ballroom. The Happy Hour Theater (217 Water Street) opened in 1914 and showed silent films. The theater could seat 300 guests and promoted its comfortable “opera chairs.” It was renamed the Lake Theater in 1929 and began showing “talkies” later that year. As part of the theater’s rebranding, the original ornate facade was removed and replaced with a simple storefront.25

Further east down the lakeshore, the Excelsior Amusement Park opened in 1925 and drew thousands of visitors to town. The park was designed and owned by Fred W. Pearce, who wanted to bring an amusement park to Excelsior after seeing how successful they were on the East Coast. The Excelsior Amusement Park had a roller coaster, a carousel, aerial swings, a Ferris wheel, bumper cars, a miniature railroad, and several other attractions designed to draw families with children. Special free events, performances from acrobats, and other spectacles through the 1930s also enticed people to visit. The park had a broad impact on the town’s economy as visitors shopped at downtown businesses, used local transit, and stayed in area hotels.26

New construction for everyday shops also continued during this period. A new two-story commercial block opened at 278 Water Street in 1912. The first floor was occupied by blacksmith Charles B. Ice after his previous shop burned. A one-story commercial building at 260 Water Street opened the same year. The west side of Water Street was dramatically changed in 1915 when two new one-story buildings were constructed at 264-266, and 270-274 Water Street. Charles Miller designed the properties to visually blend by using the same materials and architectural details. The storefronts initially held the offices of the Minnetonka Record and a lending library. A new building at 402-406 Second Street was erected in 1920, and the Smith and Company Store at 211-213 Water Street opened that same year. A new lodge for the Free Masons was constructed in 1926 at 249 Water Street. The Masons established a lodge in Excelsior in 1875, but previously leased meeting space in commercial buildings and boarding houses throughout town. The new lodge provided space for the Masons and their women’s auxiliary organization, the Order of the Eastern Star, and gave the organization a permanent home downtown near the businesses they worked with. C. E. Carlson designed the building using a concrete structure and brick facades. It stood two stories tall above a raised basement and towered over the one-story buildings to the north and south. The building’s size and Georgian Revival details, including a large stone shield above the entrance, made it an architectural anchor on Water Street.27

The rising popularity of automobiles in the early twentieth century required new sales and service business,

25 Walking the Trails, 28-31, 41-42; Knowlton, Movies Come to Excelsior, 2-17.
26 Walking the Trails, 37; Bob Bolles, Port of Excelsior Blue Line Ticket Booth Historic Designation Application, 2017, at the City of Excelsior.
several of which opened downtown in the 1910s and 1920s. Private auto ownership nationwide had grown from approximately 8,000 autos in 1900, to 458,000 vehicles in 1910, and over 8 million in 1920. The Phillips Garage opened at 420 Second Street in 1915 to serve auto owners. The building was an engineering marvel of its time. It was the first reinforced concrete structure in town and also had Excelsior’s first hydraulic lift and electric door opener. New auto dealerships, gas stations, and a licensed taxi service also opened during the 1920s. Among these was the new dealership and service station for the Wistrand Motor Company, which was built at 421 Third Street in 1922.28

The dominance of automobiles spelled the end for Excelsior’s streetcar line. The downtown ticket office closed in 1928, and streetcar service ended on August 11, 1932. The Twin City Motor Bus Company took over Excelsior’s public transit. The demand for auto-friendly roads led to highway construction and improvement throughout the state during the 1930s, which made car travel much faster and smoother. In 1934, Trunk Highway 12 (now TH 7) opened south of downtown. Papers praised the new road for cutting the travel time between Minneapolis and Excelsior to twenty minutes. The village council transferred title for the abandoned streetcar tracks to the Metal Reserve Corporation. The rails were removed in June 1942 by the Works Progress Administration before the street was repaved and the steel was contributed to the war effort.29

A Modern Era

The Great Depression and World War II were difficult for Excelsior, and downtown businesses felt the pressure of a struggling economy. The Hotel La Paul/Excelsior Bay Hotel, one of the few remaining tourist hotels, was demolished in 1929. The hotel’s site sat empty until 1940, when the new Tonka Theater opened at 26 Water Street. The Happy Hour Theater closed that year and a clothing shop moved into the building in 1945. The shop renovated the façade and installed a modern storefront. In January 1945, the Tonka Theater suffered a major fire. Rebuilding was delayed because of wartime restrictions, but the theater reopened later that year after the war production board approved the project. The new theater was designed by noted Minneapolis architects Liebenberg and Kaplan. Their design drew on Art Moderne style with a curved, fluted facade above the marquee.30

After World War II ended, Excelsior and the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area underwent a major building boom. Years of material shortages and building restrictions increased demand for new construction, and new federal programs for housing, highways, and urban development were started to meet these needs. Excelsior experienced increased suburbanization during this period as part of a larger trend toward urban sprawl. Many new buildings were constructed on the edge of the city, but downtown also saw new construction on the blocks of Water Street between Lake and Second Streets. In addition to the redevelopment of the Hotel La Paul/Excelsior Bay Hotel site, the White House was razed in 1946. The former hotel had sat on a small hill at the southeast corner of Lake and Water Streets. After it was demolished, the hill was flattened and the north half of the block was regraded, paving the way for new commercial construction. Three new properties were constructed on the site, including a two-story commercial building at 31-33 Water Street in 1950. The Minnetonka State Bank and an early general store remained at the northeast corner of Water and Second Streets.31

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Arguably the most prominent addition to the north block of Water Street was the new Tonka Ford, an auto sales and service building, which opened in 1945. Like the Tonka Theater, Tonka Ford was designed in the Art Moderne style. The building’s curved corner and large modern storefronts cemented the architectural change from the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings between Second and Third Streets to the modern construction to the north. L. R. Laramie purchased the building from Tonka Motors in 1949, and constructed a service area at the corner of Lake and Water Streets in 1949. The car dealership also moved up the block to 10 Water Street when a new building was constructed in 1957 (razed). The 1945 Tonka Ford building was converted to retail at that time.32

Fires continued to plague downtown buildings into the 1940s. The Beers Block at 205 Water Street, which housed Red Owl Foods, burned on February 7, 1941, and was subsequently rebuilt. The new building also leaned into modern aesthetics with a large band of modern storefront windows and brightly colored, glazed-brick cladding. Red Owl Foods moved out of the building in 1955, and Victor “Bac” Bacon opened Bacon Drugs, a pharmacy and soda fountain later that year.33

Several new, small commercial buildings were erected on the edges of downtown, primarily for professional offices. This wave of small-scale commercial construction also extended along Second and Lake Streets, east of Water Street. The buildings were primarily one-story brick office or commercial blocks. On Water Street, the only new building was a barber shop at 243 Water Street. The building was designed by H. B. Elliot for Tony Zembryicki, who strategically located his new barber shop next to the Masonic Lodge.34

Urban Renewal
Changing retail and transportation patterns in the early 1950s, drew customers out of downtown and threatened the viability of the commercial core. Limited parking was often cited as the reason shoppers did not want to visit downtown. Many downtown visitors were disenchanted by the “obsolete and deteriorating buildings, too narrow streets, and nonconforming zoning uses.” Downtown stores also had new competition. A new shopping center with ample parking was constructed less than two miles from Excelsior, and the novel attraction drew consumers in droves.35

In an attempt at revitalization, Excelsior celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1952 by dedicating a new train depot and installing a new streetlighting system downtown. Many residents and the village council felt that more intensive modernization efforts were needed, leading Excelsior to enact a series of redevelopment projects. The village council was authorized in 1955 to acquire property and sell bonds, and it used that power to purchase land


downtown to create surface parking lots. When the new parking areas opened in 1956, Excelsior celebrated by throwing a Progress Party. The new lots, which were behind the commercial buildings on Water Street, could accommodate 1,500 cars and became a focal point in advertisements for downtown businesses. Anticipating that most visitors would park in these lots, the city encouraged businesses to renovate the back sides of their buildings and move primary public entrances to historically rear facades.36

The types of shops downtown changed during this period. As daily-use businesses such as grocery stores and hardware stores moved to shopping centers, specialty stores that faced less competition from the malls moved downtown. New restaurants, antique stores, clothing boutiques, gift shops, art galleries, and offices moved into the historic storefronts. The change in use required little alterations to the buildings, but many shops elected to replace storefront windows with new, modern units. Several of the houses on the edges of downtown were renovated to commercial or office buildings. A new office building was also constructed on Water Street north of Tonka Ford. Unlike the other mid-century buildings on this block, the Hennessy Building at 28-30 Water Street drew its architectural inspiration from the early-twentieth-century commercial blocks between Second and Third Streets. When the building opened in 1958, it was home to a travel agency and a medical office. In the mid-1960s another new building at 400 Second Street followed suit and designed a new building in an older style.37

Revitalization projects continued through the 1960s and into the 1970s, and many shop owners renovated their storefronts in the hopes of attracting new customers with a modern look. In 1972, the new owners of the Tonka Theater rebranded it with a nautical theme and added a second screen, which opened for showings in 1975. A third screen was added in 1989. In 1975, Driskill’s Super Valu moved out of the Sampson Building (200-206 Water Street) to the Shorewood Village Shopping Center. The new tenant, Hance Hardware, completed a significant remodeling project in 1979 that installed new wood cladding over the north and east facades.38

During the 2000s, several renovation projects downtown removed most of the non-historic fabric added during the 1970s. In 2005, the Sampson Building underwent a substantial rehabilitation project to expose the historic brick facades and restore the building to its historic appearance. In 2013, Red Owl Foods/Bacon Drug at 205-207 Water Street building was rehabilitated as a restaurant and non-historic siding installed in 1993 was stripped away. These rehabilitation projects improved the integrity of the 200 block of Water Street and it clearly communicates its development as a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century commercial core. The north block of Water Street saw fewer changes during the 1970s-2000s, and conveys the city’s mid-century commercial revitalization.39

Analysis of Significance
The Excelsior Commercial Historic District exemplifies the city’s vibrant commercial development, beginning with its origins as a tourist town for Lake Minnetonka vacationers and continuing through its redevelopment as a suburb of Minneapolis in the mid-twentieth century. The majority of the buildings in the historic district were constructed between 1886 and 1920 during Excelsior’s tenure as the premier commercial center on Lake Minnetonka. Tourism was the center of the town’s economy, and the buildings in the historic district were constructed for businesses that served tourists and residents. After the tourism industry declined, new auto-service and entertainment businesses replaced earlier hotels at the north end of downtown. The age range in the buildings highlights the long history of downtown as the commercial core of Excelsior. The district is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Commerce. Its period of significance begins in 1886 with the construction of the earliest extant building in the district and ends in 1955 when the downtown had been fully developed.
9. Major Bibliographic References

**Published**


- *Map of Hennepin County Minnesota.* Minneapolis: George B. Wright, 1873.


**Unpublished**


- Clipping Files and Historic Photographs. Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, Excelsior.

- Heritage Preservation Commission Case Files, City of Excelsior.

Planning Commission Files, City of Excelsior.

Newspapers


“Excelsior; Metropolis of Minnetonka.” *Minneapolis Journal*, May 27, 1906.


“Isaac Wood Passes Away.” *Minnetonka Record Centennial*, April 5, 1907.


“The Loss is $30,000.” *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 1, 1895.


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City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0001  
North block of Water Street, looking south.

**Photo 2 of 43**
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0002  
Tonka Theater (contributing), 26 Water Street, looking southwest.

**Photo 3 of 43**
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0003  
Hennessy Building (contributing), 28-30 Water Street, looking west.

**Photo 4 of 43**
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0004  
Tonka Ford (contributing), 34 Water Street, looking northwest.
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0005
Commercial Building (contributing), 31-33 Water Street, looking northeast.

Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0006
Nygren’s Clothing Store (non-contributing), 35 Water Street, looking northeast.

Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0007
Second Street, looking east.

Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0008
Tonka Ford (contributing), 34-50 Water Street, looking northeast.
Excelsior Commercial Historic District

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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0009
Second Street, looking west.

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- **Name of Property:** Excelsior Commercial Historic District
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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0010
Phillips Garage (contributing), 420 Second Street, looking south.

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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0011
Stemmer Company (contributing), 402-404 Second Street, looking south.

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- **City or Vicinity:** Excelsior
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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0012
Commercial Building (contributing), 400 Second Street, looking west.
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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0013
Minnetonka State Bank (contributing), 409 Second Street, looking northwest.

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Water Street, looking south.

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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0015
Sampson Building (contributing), 200-206 Water Street, looking southwest.

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Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0016
Wheeler Building (contributing), 212 Water Street, looking west.
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Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0017
Wheeler Building (contributing), 216 Water Street, looking west.

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City or Vicinity: Excelsior
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Date of Photograph: July 2020

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Apgar Building (contributing), 218-226 Water Street, looking west.

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Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
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State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

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Apgar Real Estate Office (contributing), 228 Water Street, looking west.

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City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
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Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0020
Miller Block (contributing), 232-234 Water Street, looking west.
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Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0021
Commercial Building (contributing), 240 Water Street, looking northeast.

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Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_v0022
Miller’s Excelo Bakery (contributing), 244 Water Street, looking southeast.

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Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0023
IOOF Temple/Morse Dry Goods (contributing), 250-252 Water Street, looking southwest.

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Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
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Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0024
Commercial Building (contributing), 254-256 Water Street, looking southeast.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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State:  Minnesota
Name of Photographer:  Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph:  July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0025
Commercial Building (contributing), 260 Water Street, looking west.

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Name of Photographer:  Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph:  July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0026
Commercial Building (contributing), 264 Water Street, looking northeast.

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**Photo 27 of 43**
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Name of Photographer:  Rachel Peterson
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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0027
Commercial Building (contributing), 270-274 Water Street, looking northeast.

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Name of Photographer:  Rachel Peterson
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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0028
Commercial Building (contributing), 276-278 Water Street, looking southeast.
**Excelsior Commercial Historic District**

**Name of Property:** Excelsior Commercial Historic District

**City or Vicinity:** Excelsior

**County:** Hennepin County

**State:** Minnesota

**Name of Photographer:** Rachel Peterson

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MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0029

Water Street, looking north.

**Photo 30 of 43**

**Name of Property:** Excelsior Commercial Historic District

**City or Vicinity:** Excelsior

**County:** Hennepin County

**State:** Minnesota

**Name of Photographer:** Rachel Peterson

**Date of Photograph:** July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0030

Tonka Printing (non-contributing), 287 Water Street, looking northeast.

**Photo 31 of 43**

**Name of Property:** Excelsior Commercial Historic District

**City or Vicinity:** Excelsior

**County:** Hennepin County

**State:** Minnesota

**Name of Photographer:** Rachel Peterson

**Date of Photograph:** July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0031

Commercial Building (contributing), 261 Water Street, looking east.

**Photo 32 of 43**

**Name of Property:** Excelsior Commercial Historic District

**City or Vicinity:** Excelsior

**County:** Hennepin County

**State:** Minnesota

**Name of Photographer:** Rachel Peterson

**Date of Photograph:** July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0032

Commercial Building (non-contributing), 251 Water Street, looking east.
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

Excelsior Masonic Temple (contributing), 249 Water Street, looking southeast.

Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

Tony’s Barber Shop (contributing), 243 Water Street, looking east.

Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

J. D. Jamieson Grocery (contributing), 239 Water Street, looking east.

Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Excelsior
County: Hennepin County
State: Minnesota
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson
Date of Photograph: July 2020

Fred Hawkins Building (contributing), 235-237 Water Street, looking east.
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service 

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**Photo 37 of 43**
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0037
Welter Building (contributing), 229-231 Water Street, looking east.

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**Photo 38 of 43**
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0038
August Hay Meat Market (contributing, left), 219 Water Street, and Bullens General Store (contributing, right), 223-227 Water Street, looking east.

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**Photo 39 of 43**
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0039
The Happy Hour (non-contributing), 217 Water Street, looking east.

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**Photo 40 of 43**
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0040
Smith and Company Store (contributing), 211-213 Water Street, looking east.
### Photo 41 of 43
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0041
Red Owl Foods/Bacon Drug (contributing), 205-207 Water Street, looking southeast.

### Photo 42 of 43
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0042
Third Street, looking west.

### Photo 43 of 43
Name of Property: Excelsior Commercial Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Excelsior  
County: Hennepin County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Rachel Peterson  
Date of Photograph: July 2020

MN_Hennepin County_Excelsior Commercial Historic District_0043
Wistrand Motor Company (contributing), 421 Third Street, looking northeast.
District Location Map

UTM Coordinates

1. Zone: 15  
   Easting: 455306.89  Northing: 4972473.52
2. Zone: 15  
   Easting: 455346.31  Northing: 4972400.79
3. Zone: 15  
   Easting: 455258.55  Northing: 4972208.27
4. Zone: 15  
   Easting: 455168.15  Northing: 4972297.27
Excelsior Commercial Historic District

Name of Property

Hennepin County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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District Location Map

UTM Coordinates

1. Zone: 15  Easting: 455306.89  Northing: 4972473.52
2. Zone: 15  Easting: 455346.31  Northing: 4972400.79
3. Zone: 15  Easting: 455258.55  Northing: 4972208.27
4. Zone: 15  Easting: 455168.15  Northing: 4972297.27
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Excelsior Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Historic District Boundary
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photo Keys Page 2

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Excelsior Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Photo Key 1
Excelsior Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Excelsior Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Photo Key 3
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 6: Water Street, 1967, Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society
Excelsior Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 1.

Figure 2.
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Figure 3.

Figure 4.
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Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 5.

Figure 6.