

Connecting Business and Community Report





UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

Michael Darger, Eric King, Aiden Opatz



Special Thanks!

Gina Grensing, Monica Haynes,
Annabelle Oberg



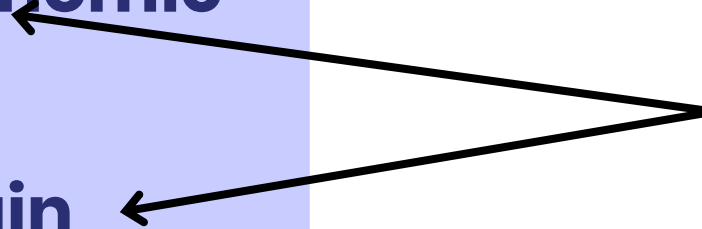
Friends of
**Downtown
Northfield**



Northfield's Objectives

1. Demonstrate support for local businesses
2. To identify growth opportunities for existing businesses
3. To help solve immediate business concerns
4. To understand concerns related to parking availability
5. To increase local businesses' ability to compete in the global economy
- 6. To implement a strategic plan for economic development**
- 7. To build community capacity to sustain growth and development**

This presentation's focus



RESEARCH Step 1

Organize the Leadership Team

Finalize the interview guide

Train visitors

Inform community about CBC

Visit businesses

Tabulate interview data

PRIORITIZE Step 2

Respond to warning flags

Analyze interview data

Write summary
report

Write research
report

Set priorities on systemic issues

Design priority
projects

IMPLEMENT Step 3



Sustain Leadership Team

Form Project Teams

Implement projects

Plan to sustain or sunset various Project Teams

Evaluate results

Distribute results

RESEARCH H Step 1

Organize the Leadership Team

Finalize the interview guide

Train visitors

Inform community about CBC

Visit businesses

Tabulate interview
data

- Produced in house video and logo
- promoted video on Facebook:
 - 45k views -> 568 clicked the link to the webpage
 - CBC webpage had 688 total views
 - \$200 total spent on facebook ads

53 Interviews Total





PRIORITIZ E Step 2

Respond to warning flags

Analyze interview data

Write summary
report
Write research
report

Set priorities on systemic issues

**Design priority
projects**

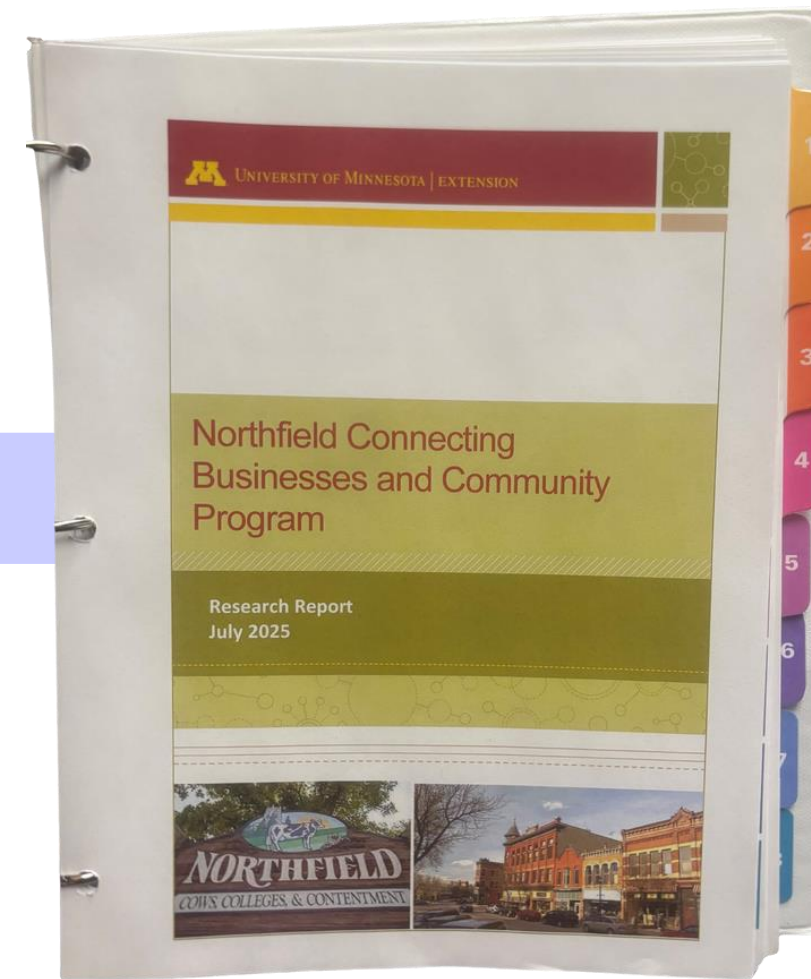
- City Staff attended priority session at the U of M Extension at St. Paul campus
- Got first hand feedback and brainstorming from research team – included professors, economists, students, and researchers

- Resulted in **Chapter 3** of the Research Report
- **16 pages** of tailored strategies for Northfield with explanations, citations, and specific suggestions

Survey Data, Findings, Analysis

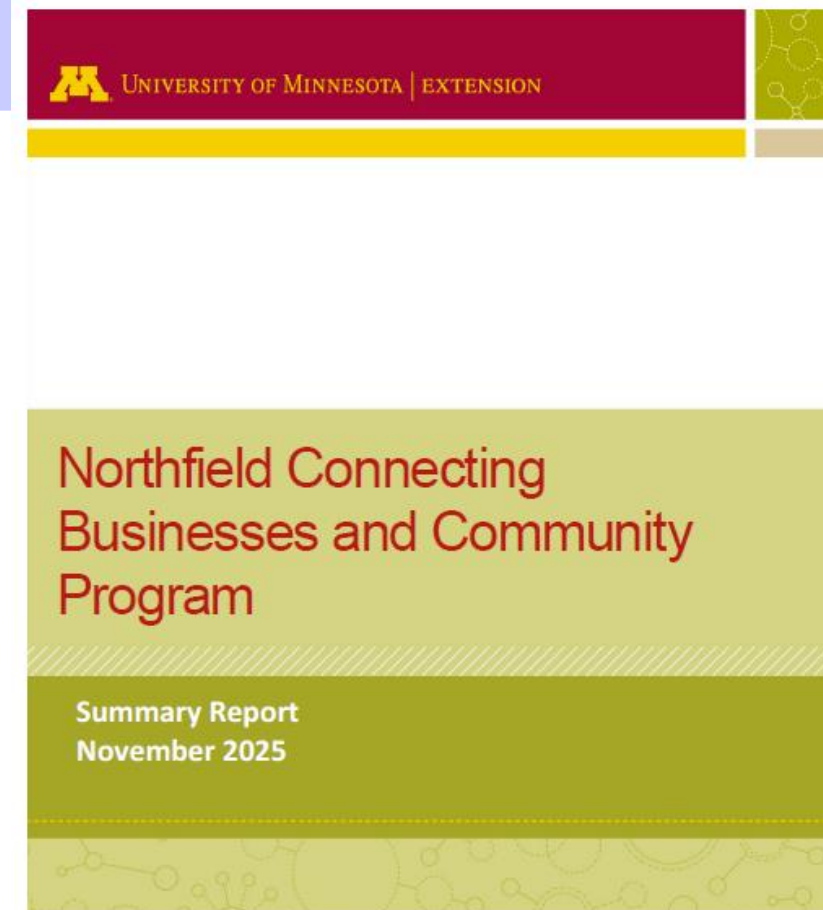
Research Report: The Binder

- **Chapter 2: Findings**
- **Chapter 3: Strategies**
- Chapter 4: Deidentified Raw Data



The Summary Report

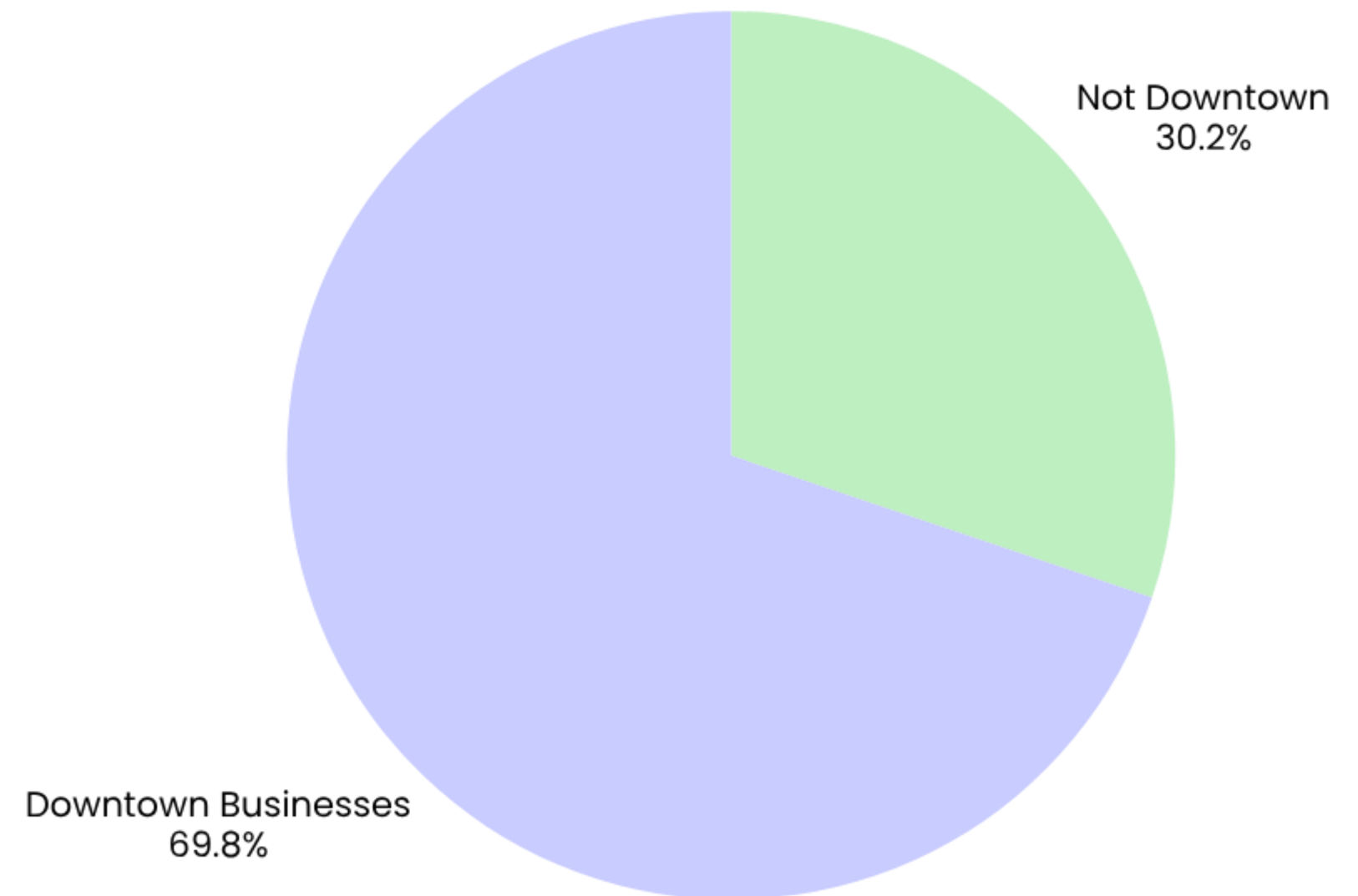
- Synthesizes research methodology
- Summarizes process
- **Highlights key themes, strategies, and Priority Projects**



Overview

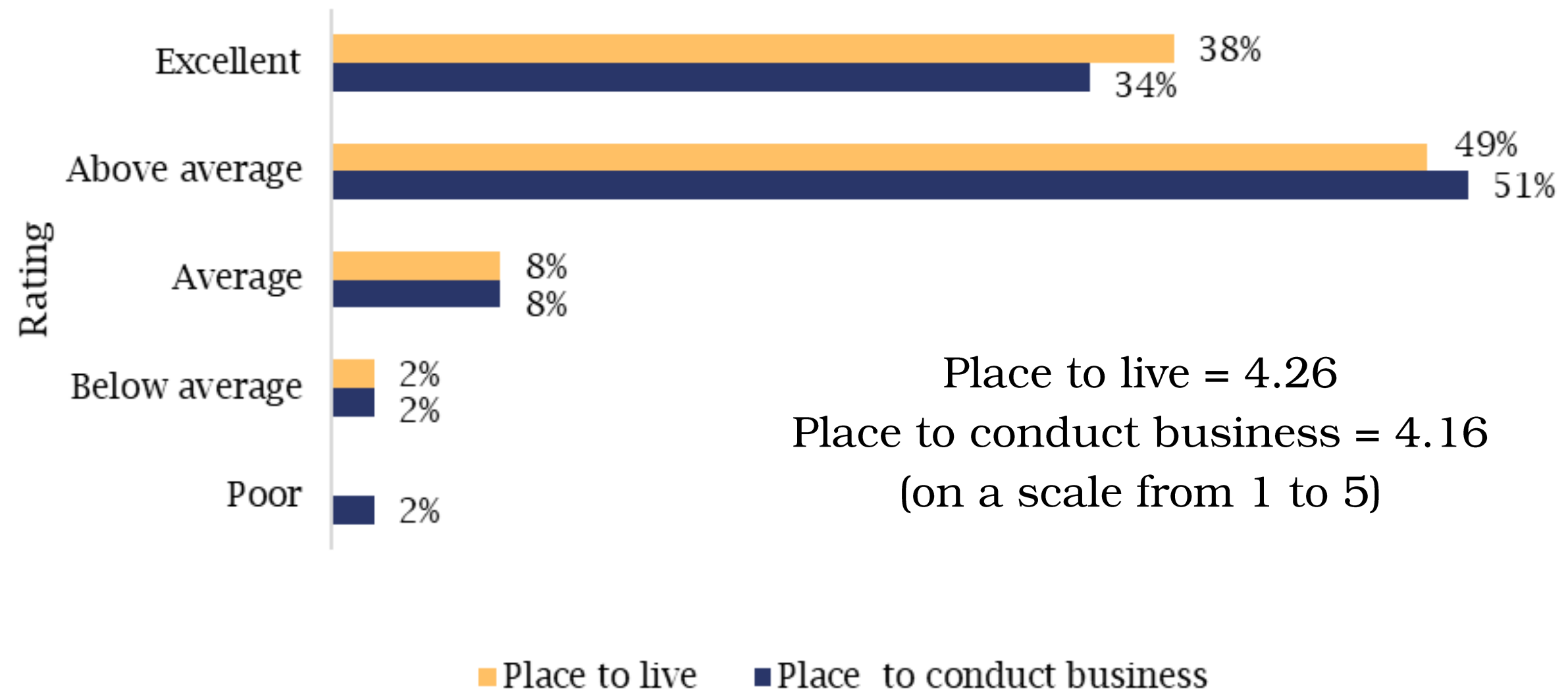


- 4/5 of the largest employers in Northfield were interviewed
- “Convenience sample” of businesses, meaning it is not scientifically representative of all of Northfield businesses
- 53 total businesses interviewed
- Questions were wide-ranging, including:
 - employee commute time
 - recruiting challenges
 - opinions of local retail and local community
 - expansion challenges



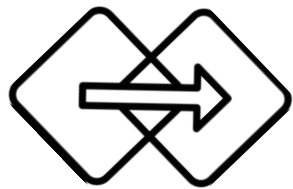


“Nearly **90% of respondents** rated Northfield as an above average or excellent place to live. Furthermore, **85% of respondents** rated Northfield as an above average or excellent place to do business.”
(Research Report: Findings 10)

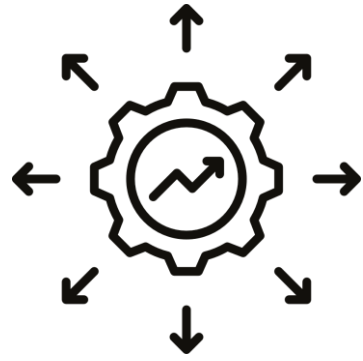




Summary Report Highlighted Concerns



- While 66% of surveyed businesses had a business plan, **only 21%** reported having a transition plan. (Summary Report 6)



- “Of the respondents, **55%** do not currently own or rent sufficient property space to allow for the expansion of their business.” (Summary Report 7)



- On a scale of 1 to 4, respondents rated **housing supply** a 2.16 and **housing cost** a 1.94 (Summary Report 8)



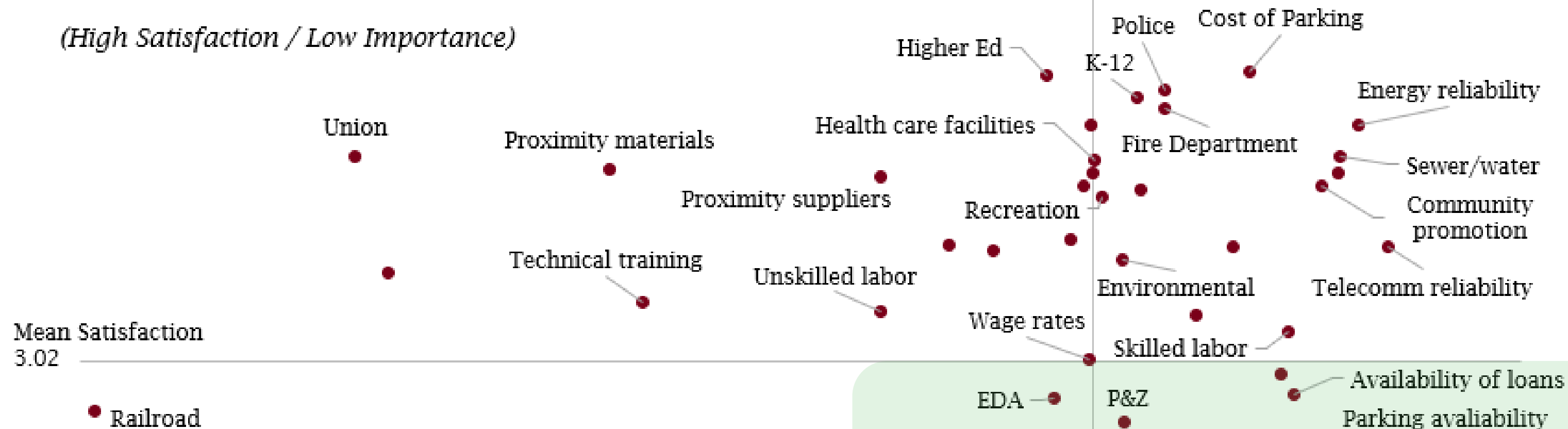
- On a scale of 1 to 4, respondents rated public bathroom availability an average of 1.64 (Summary Report 9)

Celebrate

(High Satisfaction / High Importance)

Leave Alone

(High Satisfaction / Low Importance)



Take Action

(Low Satisfaction / High Importance)

Monitor

(Low Satisfaction / Low Importance)

Strengths



Survey Result	Question #
Community is a good place to live and do business	42, 43
Strong feelings of safety	371
Satisfaction with special events, recreation, cultural opportunities	37a, 35
Quality of K-12 schools and higher education	35
Local business support	35
Fire, police, and sewer/water services	35
66% of businesses have written business plans	24
53% of businesses are planning to expand	27a
75% rated shopping atmosphere highly	38

Weaknesses



Lack of public restrooms	37a
Availability and cost of buildings	35
Housing supply and cost	35
Diversity of businesses and food options	37a
Parking situation	37a, 39
58% of businesses rent or lease	32a

Opportunties



Collaborate to improve parking	37a
Assist with business succession planning	24
Connect property owners and businesses looking to move or expand	29
Expand training methods	18
Taxes/public finance discussion	35
Online sales	20
Coordinate evening store hours	37a

Threats



question phrased as
moving OR expanding –
not closing in Northfield
and opening elsewhere



River flooding	29
2 out of 3 businesses have no succession plan	24
21% of businesses are considering moving, 16% considering moving out of the city	28, 30
Labor shortages	Review meeting
42% of respondents have no planned technological innovations.	23
External threats (e.g., economy, recession, trade, federal funding).	Review meeting

IMPLEMENT Step 3

Sustain Leadership Team

Form Project Teams

Implement projects

Plan to sustain or sunset
various Project Teams

Evaluate results

Distribute results



Priority Projects

- Industrial Park Development
- “All of the above” housing strategy
- Strategic approach to Northfield transportation

Timeline



Discussion and Questions

