

Appendix C: Project Process and Community Design Workshop

Community Profile

Exercises

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Project Process

The Community Vision for Commercial Development project was commissioned by the City of Belle Plaine, guided by the Belle Plaine Commercial Design Committee (Commercial Design Committee) and prepared by the Center for Rural Design (CRD) at the University of Minnesota.

The project process, illustrated in the timeline in Figure C1 (located at the end of Appendix C), began with the Belle Plaine City Council approval of the project in December 2007, the re-appointment of the Commercial Design Committee and the establishment of the project Steering Committee. The project included three major phases: the organizational and inventory phase, the vision identification phase and the Design Manual documentation phase.

The organizational and inventory phase focused discussion with the Steering Committee on existing physical and cultural assets and opportunities, potential design guideline implementation measures and precedents for urban design features and policy implementation. This phase was facilitated by two Steering Committee meetings.

The goal of the vision identification phase was to gain insight into the community's values in regards to the City's current and future image. The community values helped guide the planning principles and design guidelines in the Design Manual. The vision identification phase included two Steering Committee meetings and the Community Design Workshop. The two Steering Committee meetings focused on the design of the exercises and process of the Community Design Workshop. Figure C2, illustrates the Design Workshop Flier prepared by the City of Belle Plaine.

The Design Manual documentation phase is a synthesis of the outcomes of project phases 1 and 2, Steering Committee conversation and further research into the report. The project phase included two Steering Committee Meetings and one public meeting with the Belle Plaine City Council. The intent of the first Steering Committee Meeting was to review and gain approval of the Community Design Workshop results. Between the first and second Steering Committee meetings was an electronic transfer of a draft of the Design Manual for review and edit. The second Steering Committee meeting involved gaining the comments and further approval of the Steering Committee for the Design Manual. The culmination of the process was the public meeting with Belle Plaine City Council for approval of the Design Manual.

This project could not have been made possible without the re-appointed Belle Plaine Commercial Design Committee. The Commercial Design Committee formed the basis of the Steering Committee and was a direct liaison to the City Council. Efforts were made to have as diverse of a Steering Committee as possible. Steering Committee diversity provides needed insight into multiple perspectives and opinions from people in the City and surrounding areas. As such, additional members of the community were asked to

Project Process

provide assistance to the project without official voting rights. The combined group was the Steering Committee for the remainder of the project. The Steering Committee's role was to provide insight and guidance to the Center for Rural Design for the Community Vision of Commercial Development project.

**Join us at the Belle Plaine Community
PUBLIC WORKSHOP
for the Vision of Commercial Design**



You are Invited
to a
Community Workshop!

Tuesday April 8th,
2008
6:00-8:00 P.M.
Belle Plaine
Government Center
218 North Meridian
Street

Please join us!
Your opinion matters!



Making Belle Plaine Beautiful by Design

If you live, work, or
play in Belle Plaine,
we need you here!

Help Define:

- Belle Plaine's
Community Vision
- The Relationship of
Downtown Belle
Plaine to Highway 169



We would like to hear from you!
If you can't make the
workshop, please email your
comments to Trisha Rosenfeld at
trosenfeld@ci.belleplaine.mn.us
or call 952-873-5553.

*Sponsored by the City of Belle Plaine Steering Committee with the
Center for Rural Design, University of Minnesota.
For more information check out the Belle Plaine website: www.belleplainemn.com*

Figure C2. Public Workshop Flier, City of Belle Plaine April, 2008.

Community Design Workshop: Exercises

Exercise 1

The intent of Exercise 1 was to gain a better understanding about what Belle Plaine's identity could be. As expressed in the public participation results of the Comprehensive Plan, economic development is important to the community of Belle Plaine. Research shows that in order to increase economic development, marketing the quality of life or image of a community is key. This exercise began to help the community frame the meaning of Belle Plaine to the broader region.

The Exercise 1 questionnaire (Figure 3C) was designed as an individual exercise with the goal of constructive group discussion. The table participants rated their current vision of Belle Plaine in relation to broad vision topics (e.g. arts and entertainment, industry, agriculture, etc.) individually. A rating of ten was the best or most heavily weighted. The participants then rated their future vision of Belle Plaine in relation to the same broad vision topics. The participants then picked four areas of the most importance to their future vision. The four areas were ranked comparatively from one to four, with four being the most important.

The next part of the Workshop, Exercise 1 Part 2 A and B, as shown in Figure C4, was a group dotmocracy exercise. The intent of this Exercise was to gain insight into the community's perception of the City's image. Dotmocracy is a public participation technique, in which there are a number of opportunities to submit input for one set of questions. This dotmocracy exercise entailed the participant table groups to first individually answer:

- A. If Belle Plaine were to prepare a postcard what would be illustrated on it?
- B. What type of destination should Belle Plaine be in the future?

After these questions were answered the table's answers were collected and traded with a different group. The new group then read, interpreted, discussed and recorded answers. The recorded answers were publicly posted and then the participants placed dots on the answers to the above questions that they identified with best.

Exercises 2A and B

Exercise 2A and B, as shown in Figure C5, was a set of individual questions that focused on gaining insight into the community's values in relation to the perceptions of the existing and future physical character of downtown Belle Plaine, the US Highway 169 Corridor and the City's gateways. The first set of questions focused on the character of downtown Belle Plaine. Downtown Belle Plaine is the historic heart of the City and may be the source of the principle defining character of the community. The following questions were asked of the community:

- A. What elements currently make downtown special?
- B. What elements could make downtown even better in the future?

Exercise 2C

Exercise 2C, as shown in Figure C5, focused on gaining insight into the community's sense of character of commercial development outside of the historic downtown Belle Plaine and the US Highway 169. The following question was asked:

- A. How important is it that commercial development in the other portions of Belle Plaine embody the identity of the historic portions of the City? And to what extent?

Exercises 2D and E

Exercise 2D and E, as shown in Figure C6, focused on gaining insight into the community's sense of physical character of the US Highway 169 Corridor. US Highway 169 moves through Belle Plaine on a diagonal creating a corridor that offers opportunity to introduce through-traffic to the unique character of Belle Plaine, enticing them to stop or to return in the future to explore the city. The following questions were asked of the community:

- A. Should the highway businesses facilitate the highway (face the highway) or facilitate the community (maintain the grid)?
- B. How important is it that highway businesses embody the identity of the historic portions of city? And to what extent?

Exercises 2F and G

Exercises 2F and G, as shown in Figure C7, was the third set of questions focusing on character of the Belle Plaine. The City's entry points can be an asset to the broad community, functioning as gateways to the City. They provide a crucial 'first impression' to visitors coming to Belle Plaine and can also be a source of community pride, providing a sense of 'arriving home' to residents. The following questions were asked of the community:

- A. Where are the key entry points to Belle Plaine?
- B. Should the entry points provide linkages to broader community features such as the parks, the river, internal and regional trail systems, etc., as well as the commercial districts?

Vision Related Areas	Belle Plaine's CURRENT Vision Score Individually 1-10 Rating (10 being the best)	Belle Plaine's FUTURE Vision Score Individually 1-10 Rating (10 being the best)	Pick 4 Areas of the Most Importance to the FUTURE Vision of Belle Plaine (Rank 1-4, 4 being the most important)	Comments
Arts and Entertainment				
Industry				
Agriculture				
Environmental Location				
Outdoor Recreation				
Location to the Twin Cities				
History				
Cultural Experiences				
Landmarks				
Sense of Place (Downtown Belle Plaine)				
Senior Living				
Sense of Community / Rural Heritage				
Bedroom Community				
New Belle Plaine / Old Belle Plaine				

Figure C3. Exercise One Questionnaire, CRD, April, 2008.

Project Process

Exercise 1

The results of Exercise 1 and rest of the exercises of the Community Design Workshop were tallied and illustrated by bar graphs. The bar graphs are color coded, as shown in Figure C8, to highlight the first, second, third and fourth ranked results where appropriate.

The results of the first part of Exercise 1: Belle Plaine's Vision NOW, shown in Figure C9, suggests that the community members consider Belle Plaine to be a bedroom community to the Twin Cities, with a significant agricultural base. The participants identify Belle Plaine as having close proximity to the Twin Cities and a strong sense of community and rural heritage. The results also suggest that Belle Plaine is a significant place for senior living. These results imply that Belle Plaine's location to the Twin Cities and the community's perception of living on the urban and rural edge is significant and should be considered in the project.

The results of the second part of Exercise 1: "Belle Plaine's future vision", as shown in Figure C10, suggests that the community would like Belle Plaine to focus interests on enhancing and promoting industry, outdoor recreation and the sense of place of the downtown. Sense of community and rural heritage is also significant and important to the future of Belle Plaine. These results imply that the community of Belle Plaine would like to strengthen the City's economy, natural recreational assets, downtown and community heritage.

The results of the third part of Exercise 1: "four areas of the most importance to the community's future vision", as illustrated in Figure C11, shows that industry, community heritage, uniting new and old Belle Plaine, and the location to the Twin Cities is significant. These results imply that enhancing Belle Plaine's economy is most important. Preserving and strengthening the community's heritage is important. Uniting new and old Belle Plaine or north and south Belle Plaine is significant, as well as the relation to the Twin Cities being significant.

Exercises 1 Part 2 A and B

The cumulative individual results of Exercise 1 Part 2 A, illustrated in Figure C12, shows that if Belle Plaine were to prepare a postcard, the Minnesota River would be the most significant image featured. Visions of agriculture would also be an important feature on a postcard. The prairie and bluff landscape, trails and churches (steeple) are also significant features to be represented on a Belle Plaine postcard.

The dotmocracy results of Exercise 1 Part 2A, illustrated in Figure C13, shows that a potential postcard should represent a series of images, mainly the Minnesota River, farmland, churches, the golf course, the new Highway 25 bridge, commercial areas, historic buildings, the Belle Plaine Government Center mural and wide streetscapes. The Minnesota Riverfront, parks, Belle Plaine's relation to the River and the trail systems are

Community Design Workshop Results

highly favored by the community. A transitional panorama representing the Belle Plaine and its historic and modern relationship to the Minnesota River is also significant to represent in a postcard of Belle Plaine.

The cumulative individual results of Exercise 1 Part 2B, illustrated in Figure C14, shows that Belle Plaine should be a destination that features retail/shopping, working/job center, trails, food businesses and entertainment. Outdoor recreation, parks, community heritage promotion and a place to stop are also significant features in a future vision for Belle Plaine as a destination.

The dotmocracy results of Exercise 1 Part 2B, illustrated in Figure C15, shows that Belle Plaine as an industrial job center destination is highly significant. And, Belle Plaine as a destination for the arts, entertainment, industry, connectivity to the river and trails is also important.

Exercises 2A and B

The results for Exercise 2A, illustrated in Figure C16, shows that historic storefronts are the most significant feature that currently makes downtown Belle Plaine special. The wide streets and historic architecture are highly significant. The friendly community atmosphere and pedestrian friendly environment also contribute to the elements that make downtown special.

The results for Exercise 2B, illustrated in Figure C17, expresses that new planting and a variety of restaurants and shops would most significantly enhance downtown Belle Plaine in the future. The renovation of downtown's buildings and streetscape would also enhance Belle Plaine. The community had suggested that the addition of a theater would be significant in making downtown better in the future. Enhanced business signage, benches and places to go would also make the downtown better.

Exercise 2C

The results for Exercise 2C, illustrated in Figure C18, suggests that the community mostly had no response or found it very important that the commercial businesses that are not located in either the Downtown or US Highway 169 Corridor Districts have their own character.

Exercises 2D and E

The results for Exercise 2D, shown in Figure C19, expresses that new development along the US Highway 169 Corridor should face and facilitate the highway. The responses also indicate that the new commercial development should maintain the existing grid of the City and that there should be easy access to the businesses from the highway interchanges and the community.

The results for Exercise 2E, as shown in Figure C20, suggest that it is very important that the highway businesses embody the identity of the historic portions of the City.

There were also a significant amount of responses that didn't consider that the physical character of the historic downtown should be extended to the highway businesses.

Exercises 2F and G

The results for Exercise 2F, as shown in Figure C21 support areas north and south of Belle Plaine on the US Highway 169 Corridor and areas north and south of the City on Highway 25 as being the primary entry points into Belle Plaine. The County Road 3 entry point south of the City was also significant.

The results for Exercise 2G as shown in Figure 22, expresses that linkage from the key entry points to broader community features are highly significant. More and better signage was also suggested in relation to linking entry points to major City assets such as the parks, the Minnesota River, internal and regional trails systems, etc.

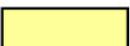
Key	
Color Code	Ranking
	1st
	2nd
	3rd
	4th

Figure C8. Graph Key for Charrette Results, CRD, May, 2008.

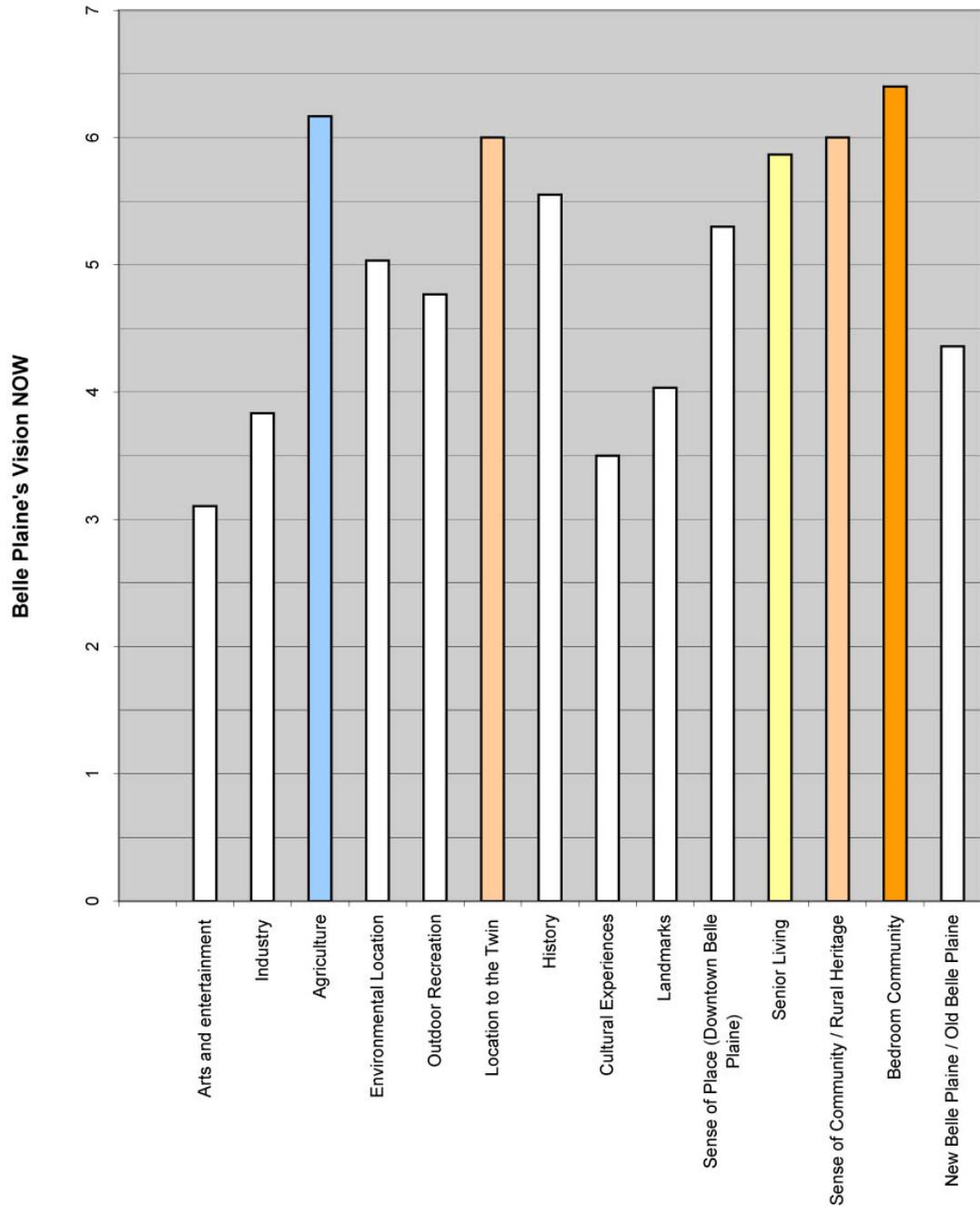


Figure C9. Exercise One Vision Now Results– Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

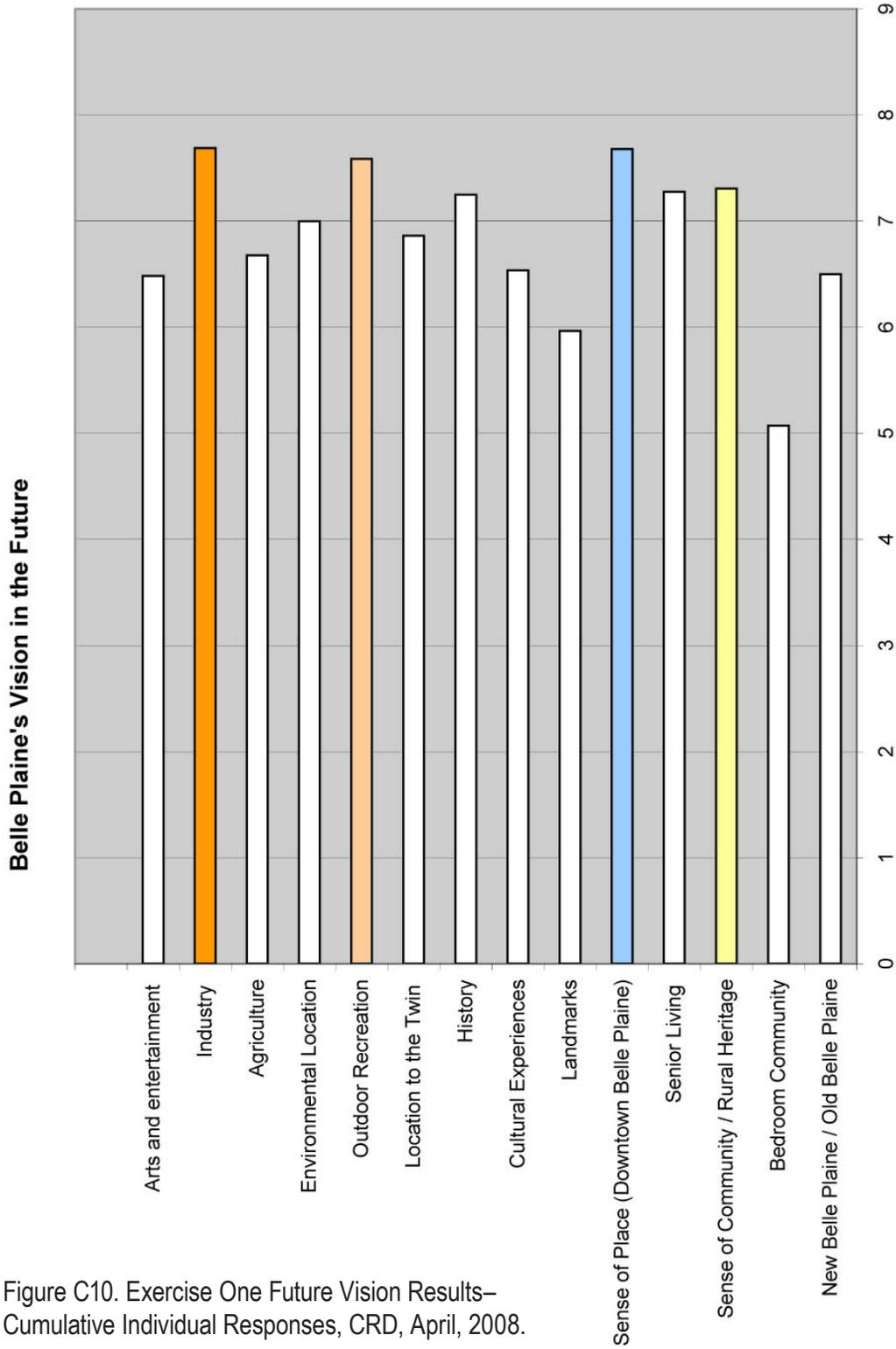


Figure C10. Exercise One Future Vision Results—Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

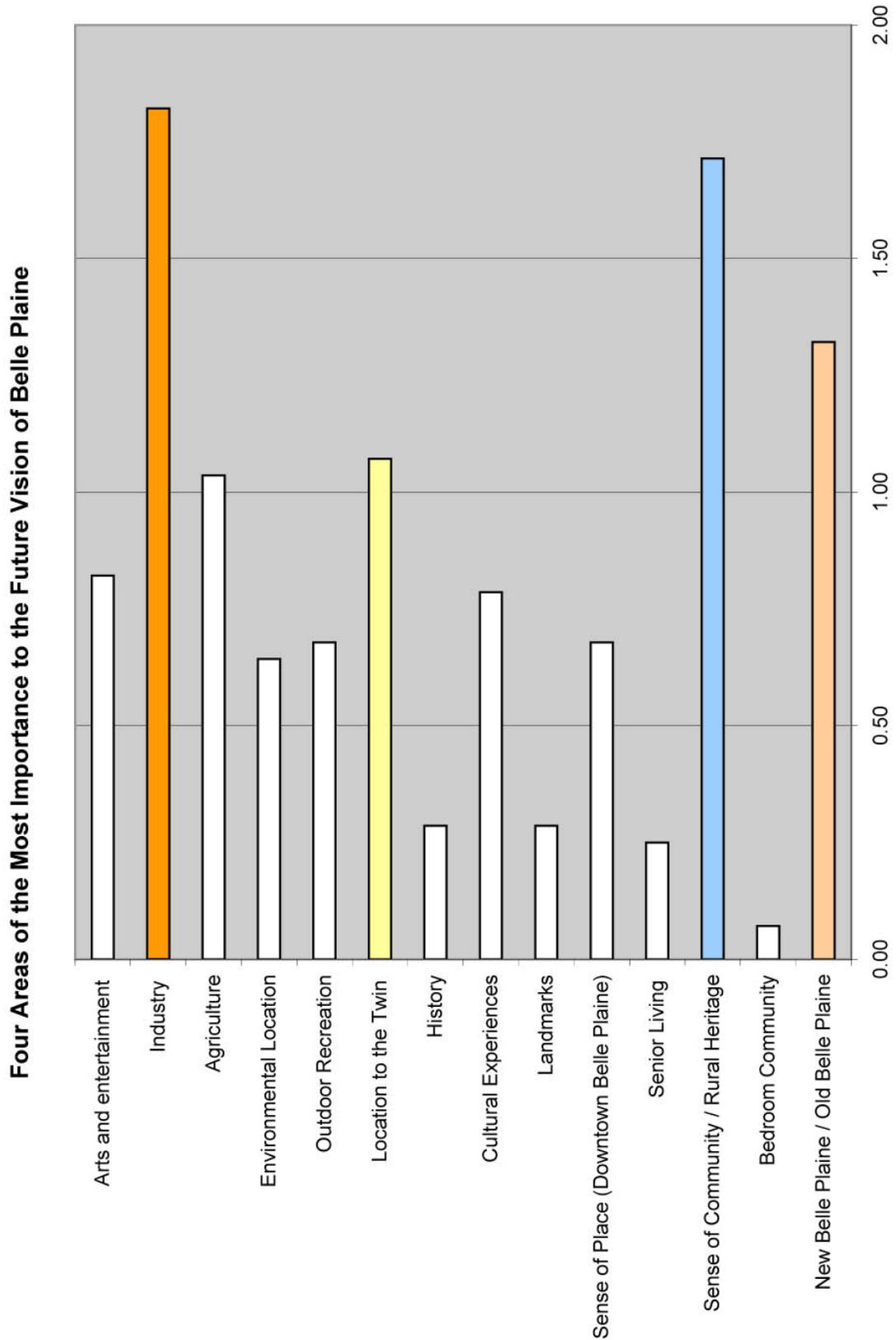


Figure C11. Exercise One: Four Most Important Results– Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

If Belle Plaine Were To Prepare a Postcard What Would Be Illustrated On It?

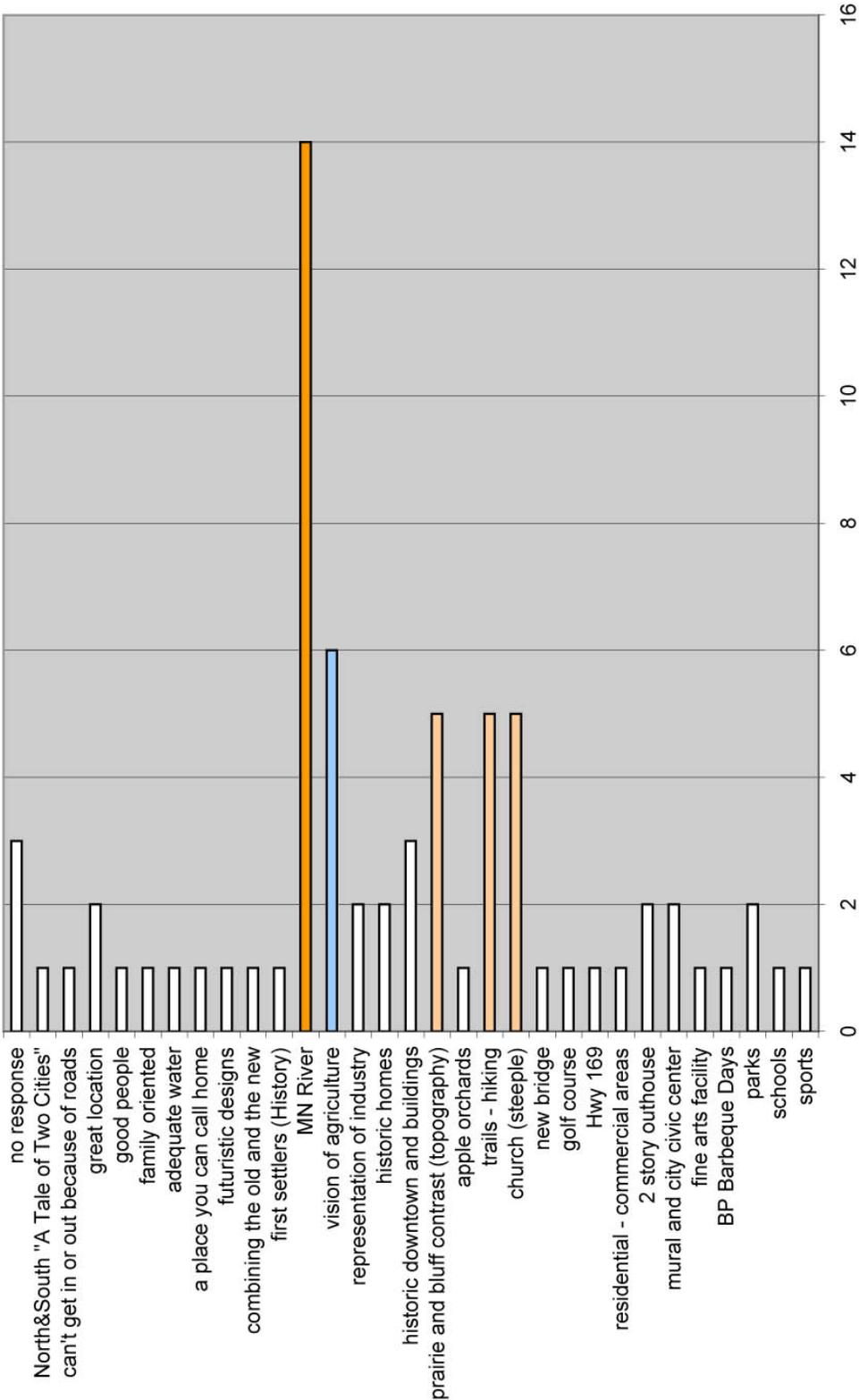


Figure C12. Exercise One Part Two A. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Dots</u>
Riverfront/Parks/Relation to the River/Trails	6
History of Settlement/Downtown Bluffs	
Historic Architecture	
Family Oriented Activities	
River, Farmland, Churches, Golf Course, New Bridge (25), Commercial areas, Historic Buildings/Mural, wide streetscapes	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mural at City Council, • Agricultural fields • River 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota River Valley • Agriculture • Historical aspects 	1
Emma's	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails • Natural Features • Vistas/views 	
Transitional panorama: The town and the river. A picture of Old town and its historical touches. The reflection in the river shows the new part of town and its newer design of the future or vice versa.	6
Bridges side by side: Old 25 bridge showing old community linked by new bridge showing new community	3

Figure C13. Exercise One Part Two A. –Dotmacracy Response, CRD, April, 2008.

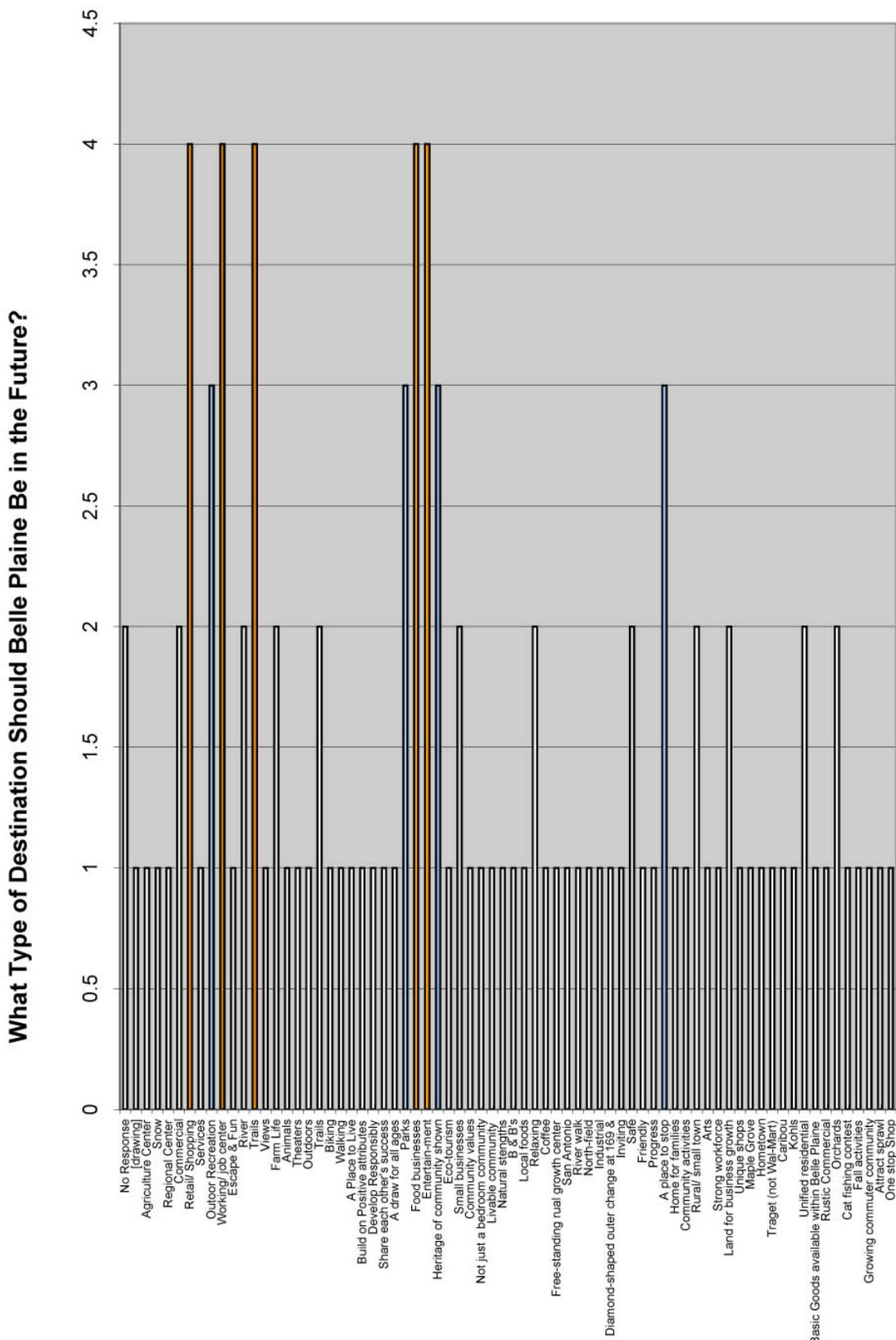


Figure C14. Exercise One Part Two B. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

Statement	Dots
Commercial business growth, Ex: Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both sides of Hwy unified, • self-sufficient town • theater • neighborhood feeling 	
Shopping, working, recreation - all in one	
One stop shop	
Agriculture center	
Regional center for variety of services	
High quality of life	1
Small businesses	
Something for everyone	
Parks to admire views/bluffs	
Arts and entertainment	
Offers little bit of everything: Arts, entertainment, industry, connectivity to the river & trails -> link to regional access/activities - bike tours.	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art gallery- places to stop during a long trip on 169. • Local shopping access to keep business dollars cycling in Belle Plain instead of being outsourced to Shakopee/Burnsville - but not as the focal point of our character. • Remove/restrict downtown parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown filled with wider sidewalks with outdoor seating for restaurants for destination restaurants for a feeling of an evening out on the town. 	
Freestanding rural growth	
Relaxation/Entertainment destination	
"Eco-Tourism" destination - birding, biking, canoeing	
Industrial job center	12
Riverwalk - River town	
Agriculture "Ag Tourism"/local food center	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial - Good Employment work base • Commercial - Shopping, relaxing • Pedestrian-oriented 	3

Figure C15. Exercise One Part Two B. –Dotmacracy Response, CRD, April, 2008.

The Character of Downtown Belle Plaine: Downtown Belle Plaine is the Historic Heart of the City and May be the Source of the Principle Defining Character of the Community.

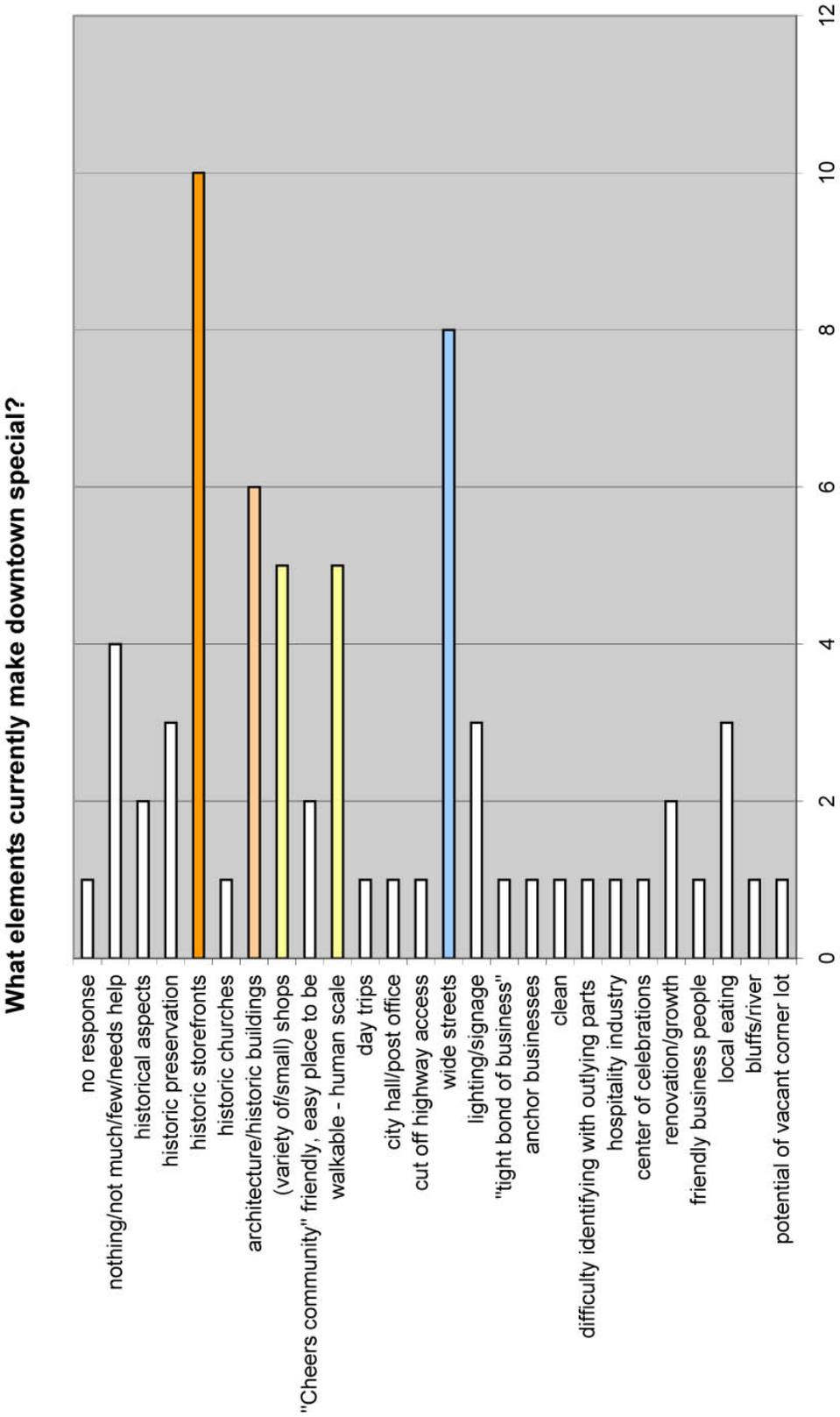


Figure C16. Exercise Two A. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

The Character of Downtown Belle Plaine: Downtown Belle Plaine is the Historic Heart of the City and May Be the Source of the Principle Defining Character of the Community.

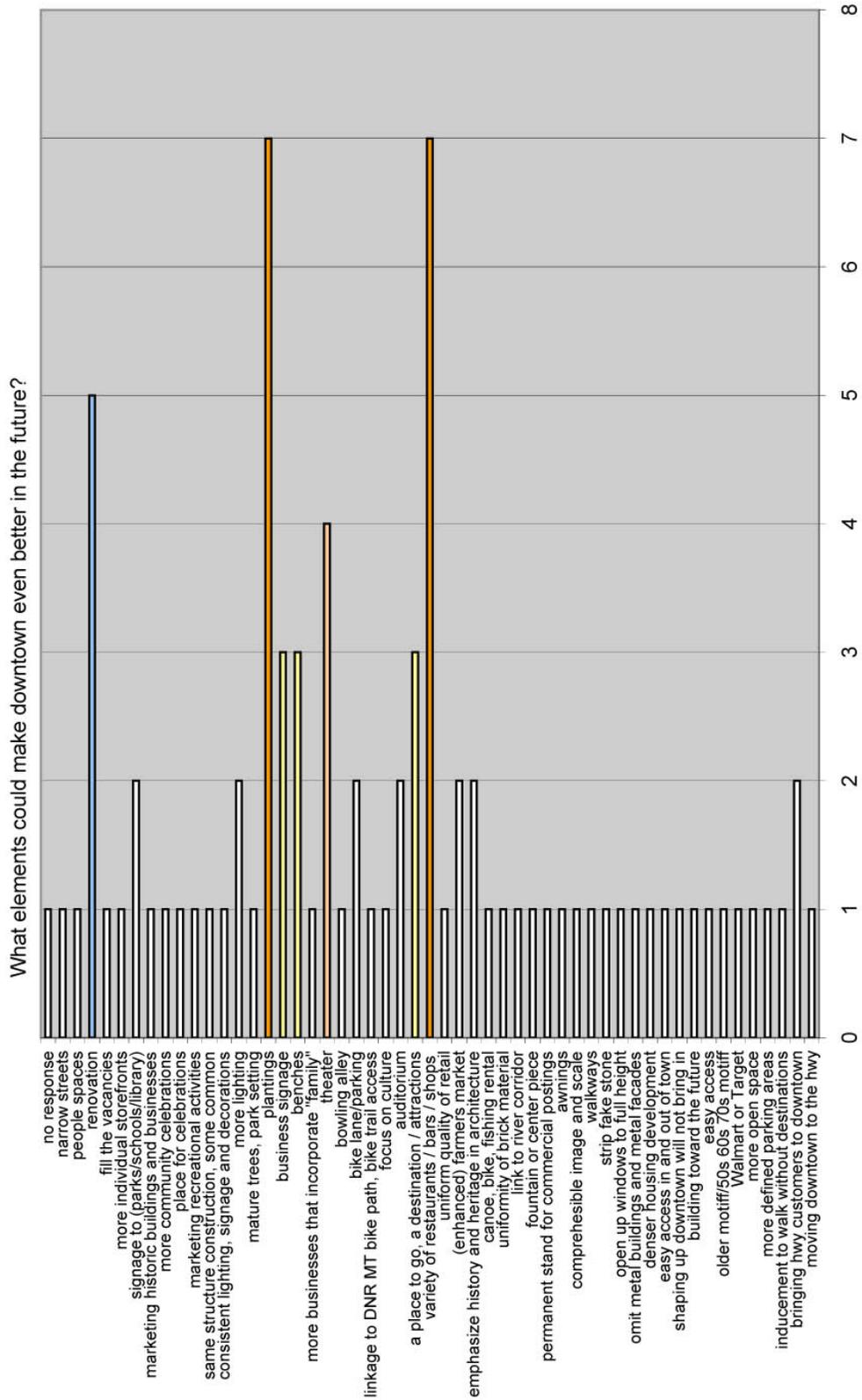


Figure C17. Exercise Two B. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

The Character of Commercial Developments in Belle Plaine: Commercial Development outside of Historic Belle Plaine and the US 169 Corridor Can Have its Own Character.

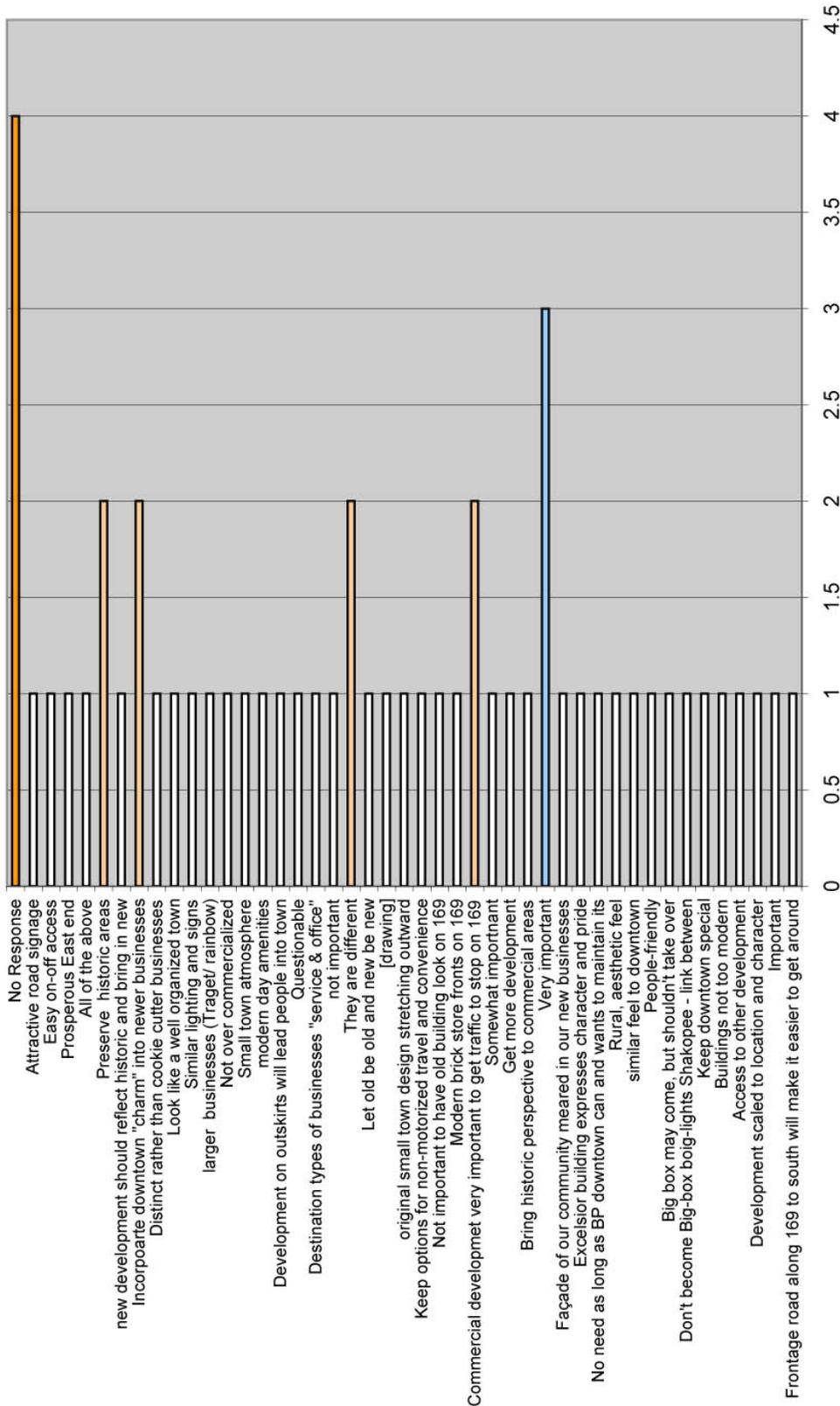


Figure C18. Exercise Two C. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

The Character of the US 169 Corridor: US 169 Moves Through Belle Plaine on a Diagonal Creating a Corridor That Offers Opportunity to Introduce Through-Traffic to the Uniques Character of Belle Plaine, Enticing Them to Stop or to Return in the Future.

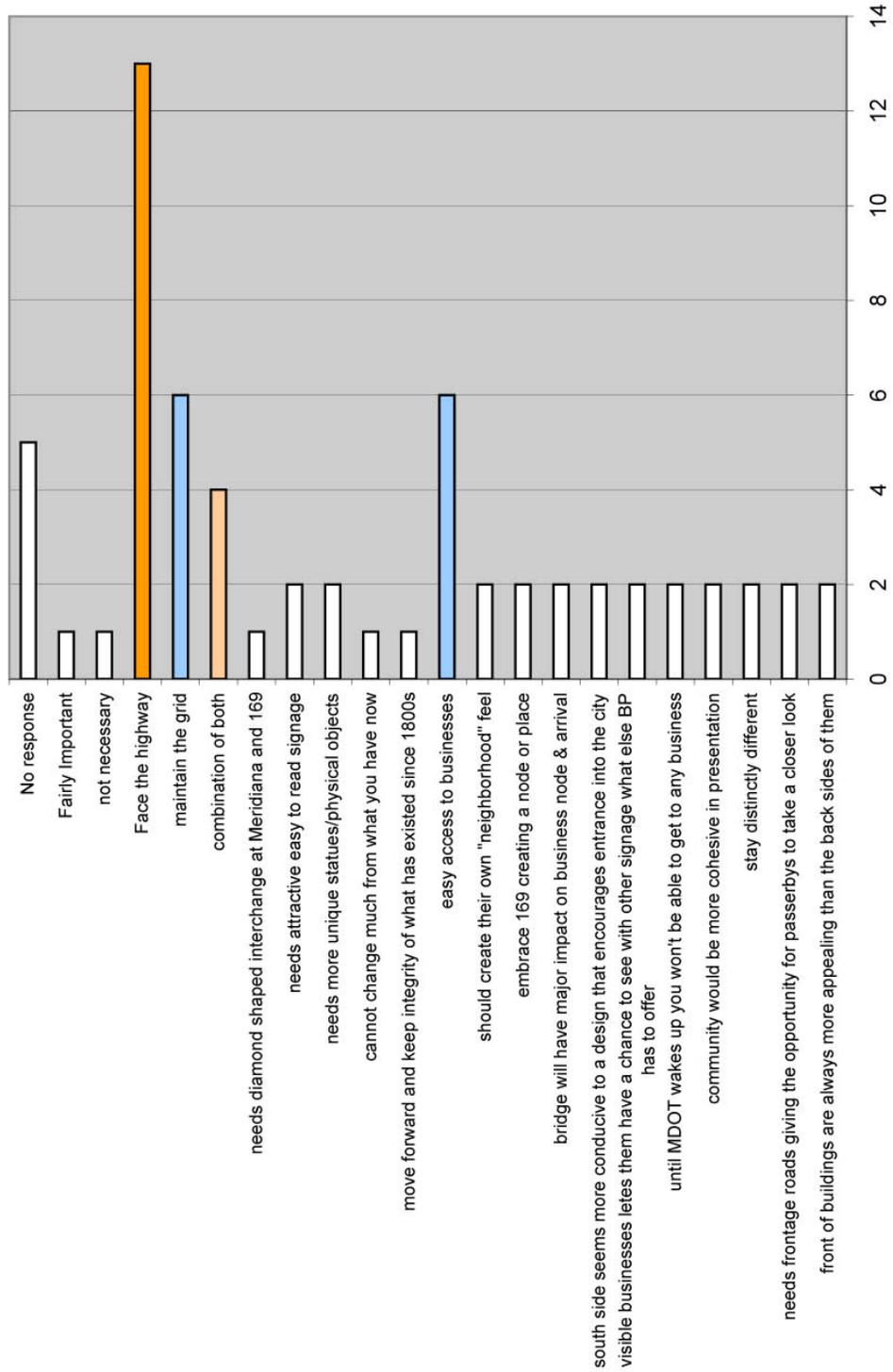


Figure C19. Exercise Two D. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

How Important is it That Highway Businesses Embody the Identity of the Historic Portions of City? And to What Extent?

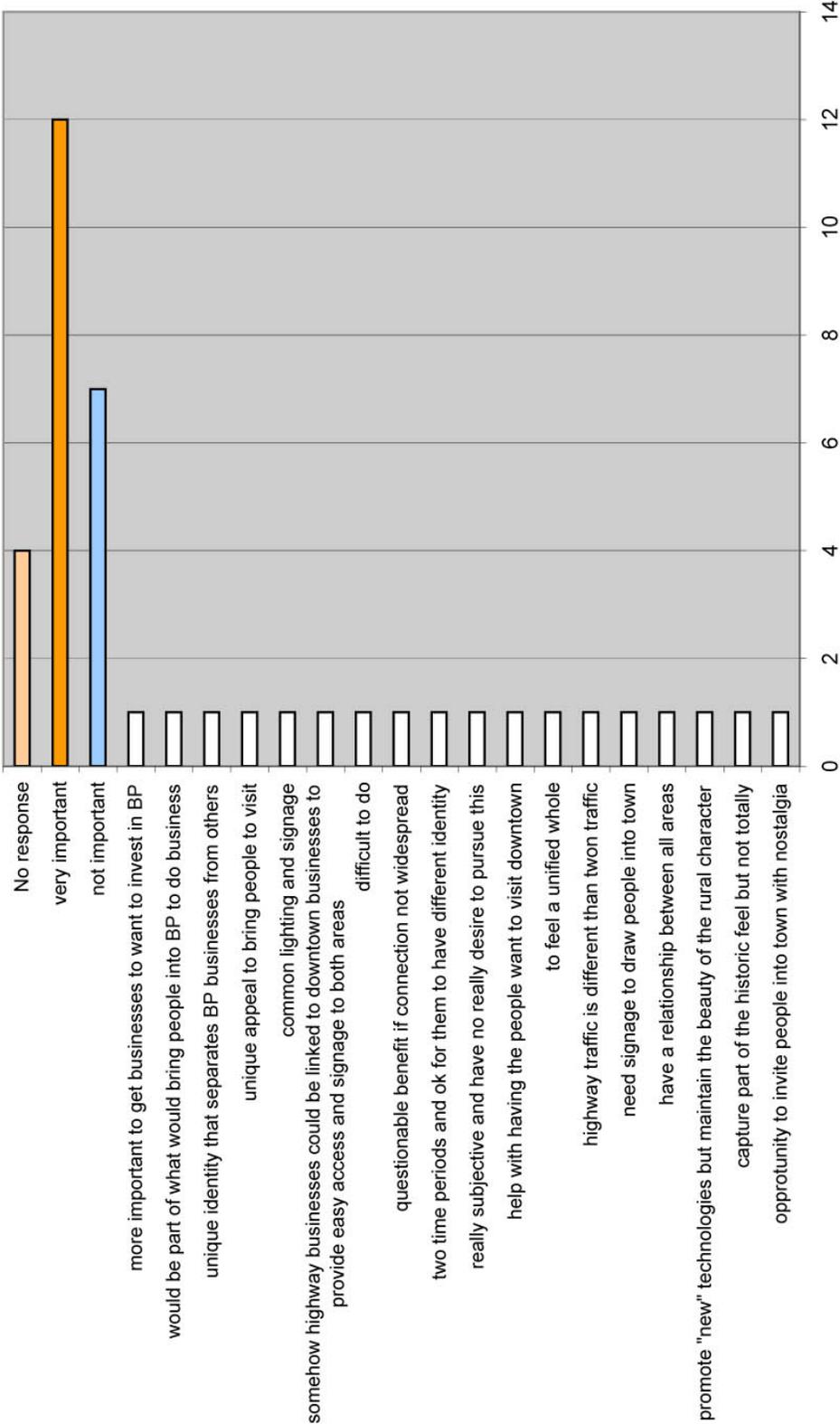


Figure C20. Exercise Two E. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

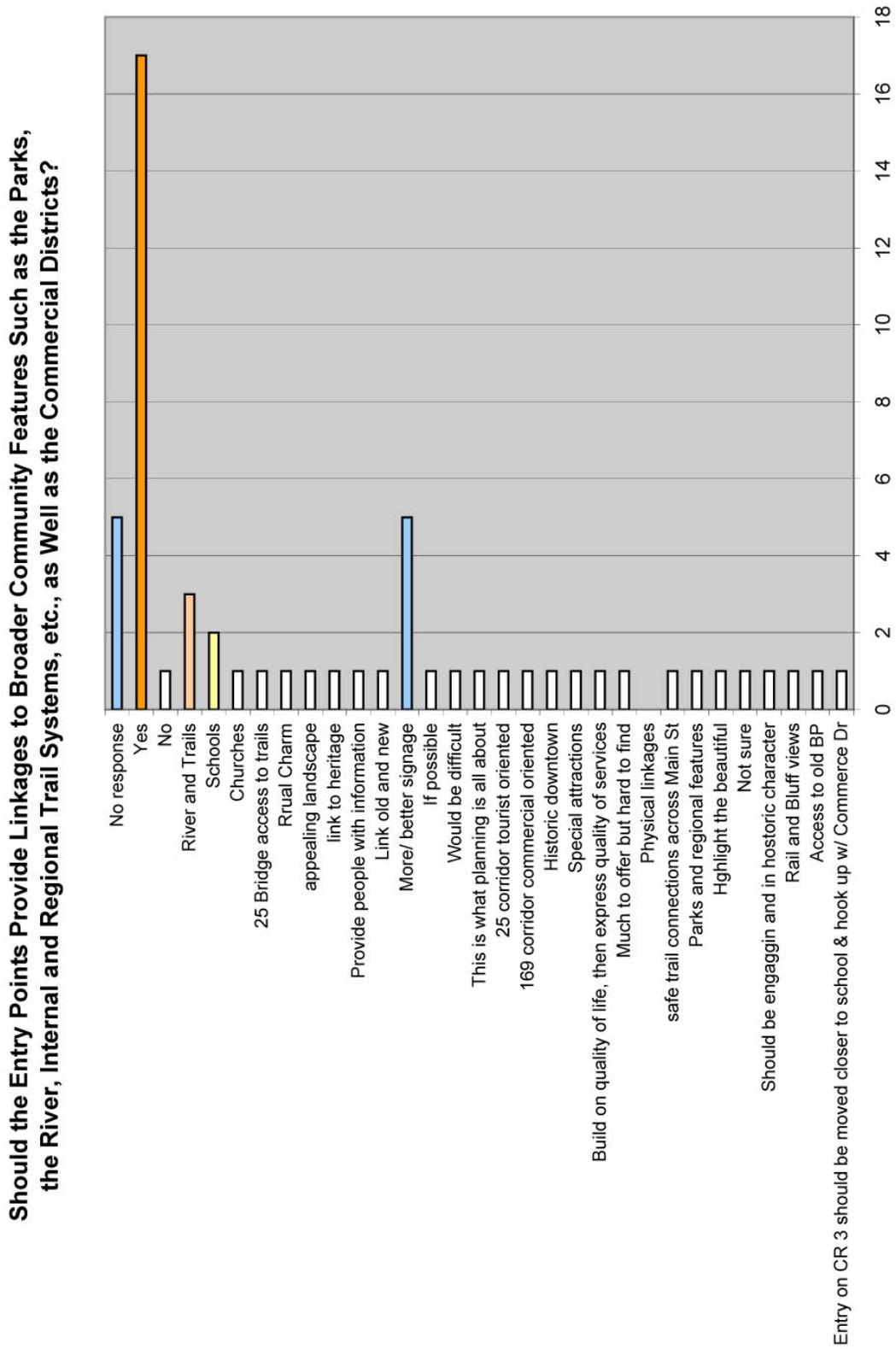


Figure C21. Exercise Two F. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

Should the Entry Points Provide Linkages to Broader Community Features Such as the Parks, the River, Internal and Regional Trail Systems, etc., as Well as the Commercial Districts?

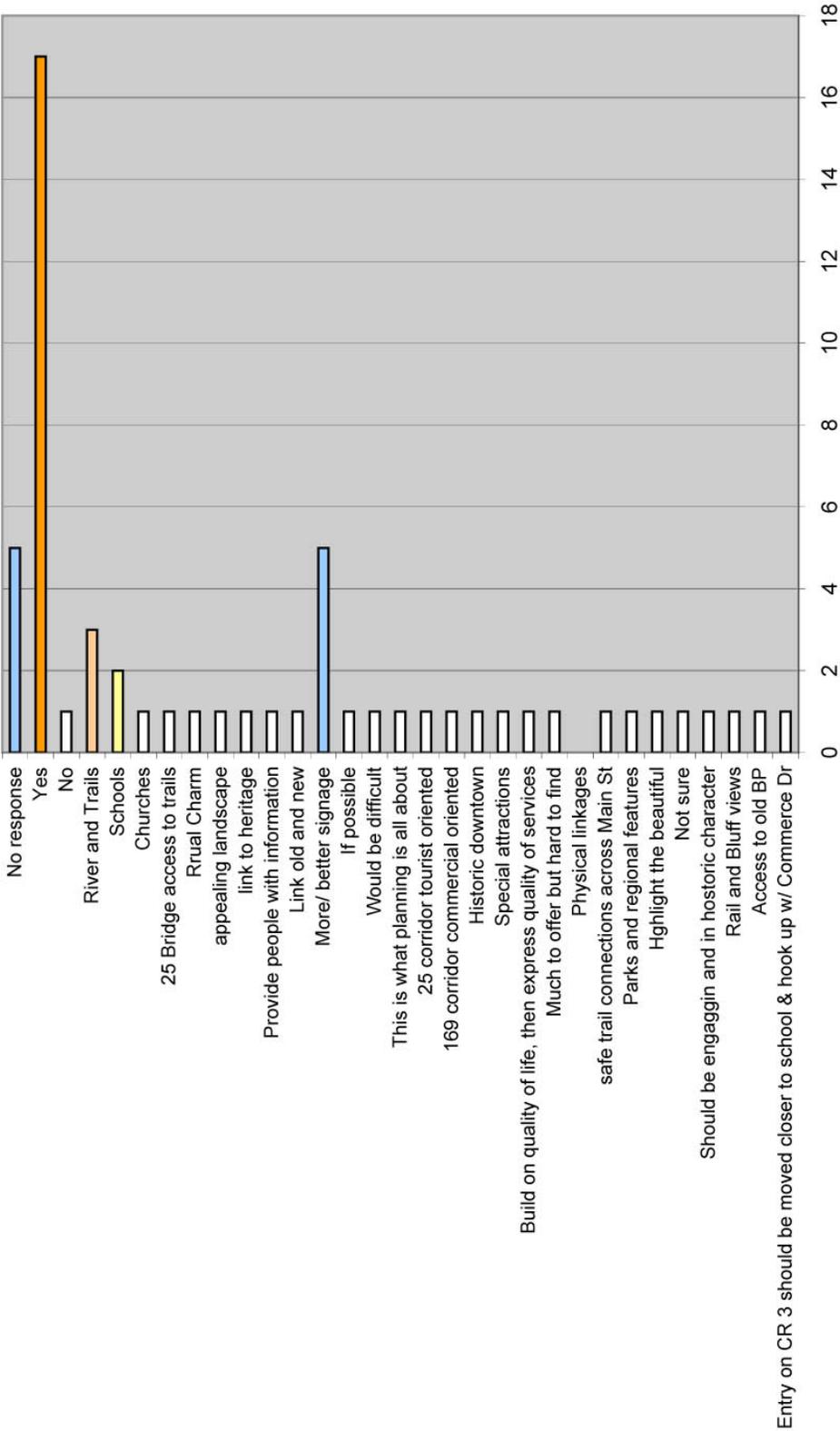


Figure C22. Exercise Two G. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

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