Vision Zero in Practice

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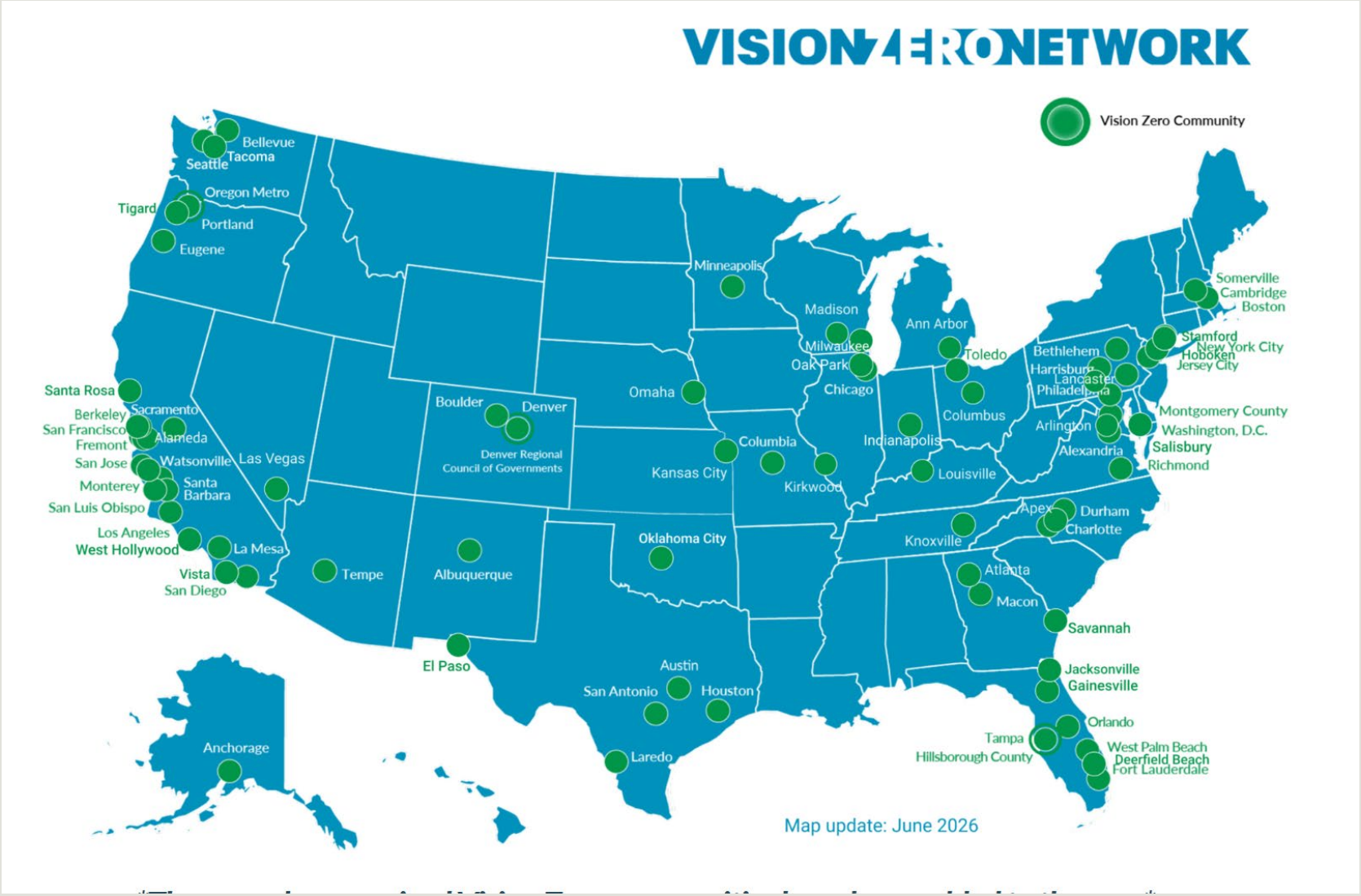
Background

- 40,000+ traffic fatalities in US/year
- Response: transportation safety programs
- Vision Zero
  - Sweden, 1997
- The question isn't "should we adopt a safety program?" but "what will it take?"

Vision Zero

TRADITIONAL APPROACH		VISION ZERO
Traffic deaths are **INEVITABLE**		Traffic deaths are **PREVENTABLE**
PERFECT human behaviour	VS	Integrate **HUMAN FAILING** in approach
Prevent **COLLISIONS**		Prevent **FATAL AND SEVERE CRASHES**
INDIVIDUAL responsibility		**SYSTEMS** approach
Saving lives is **EXPENSIVE**		Saving lives is **NOT EXPENSIVE**

Safe System Approach



Vision Zero In the United States

60 JURISDICTIONS HAVE ADOPTED VISION ZERO APPROACH

Vision Zero In the United States

300+ jurisdictions have adopted Vision Zero or a similar Safe System approach

Yet fatality reductions are uneven across contexts.

Research consistently identifies what works, while practitioners face different realities.

There exists a gap between research and implementation.

Research Questions: Practitioners vs Researchers

Do they prioritize Vision Zero strategies differently?

Do they perceive implementation barriers differently?

Do they define success differently?

Mixed Methods Survey

83% Respondents in the United States

10+ Countries represented globally

Mixed Methods Survey

Survey Sample

67%
City or Municipal Government

2/3+
More Than 10 Years of Experience

Mixed Urban / Suburban
Contexts

Respondent Breakdown

80 Usable Respondents

57.5% — **46 Practitioners**

42.5% — **34 Researchers**

8 Themes Within Vision Zero

Safe speeds

Safe roads

Innovation

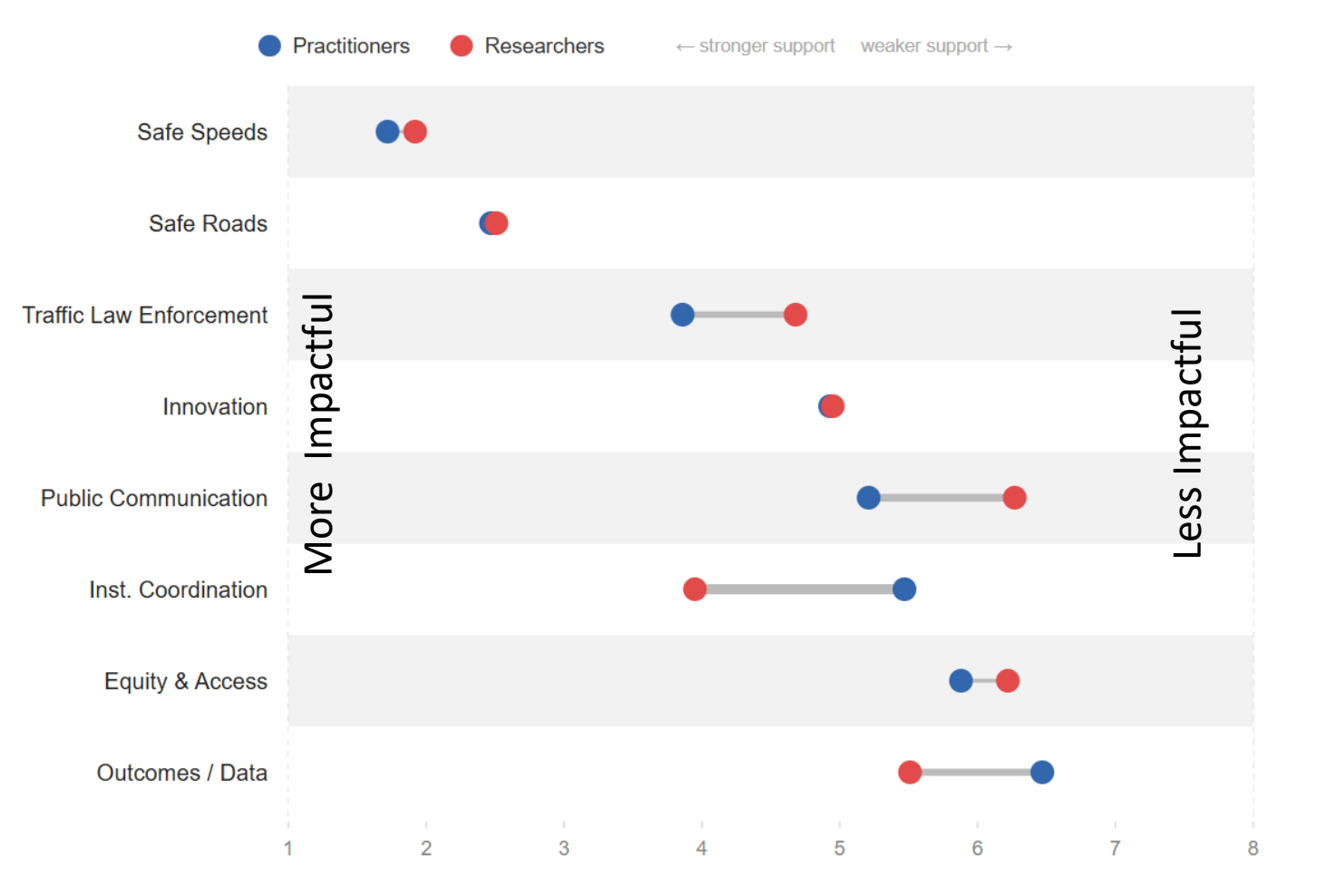
Traffic law enforcement

Institutional coordination

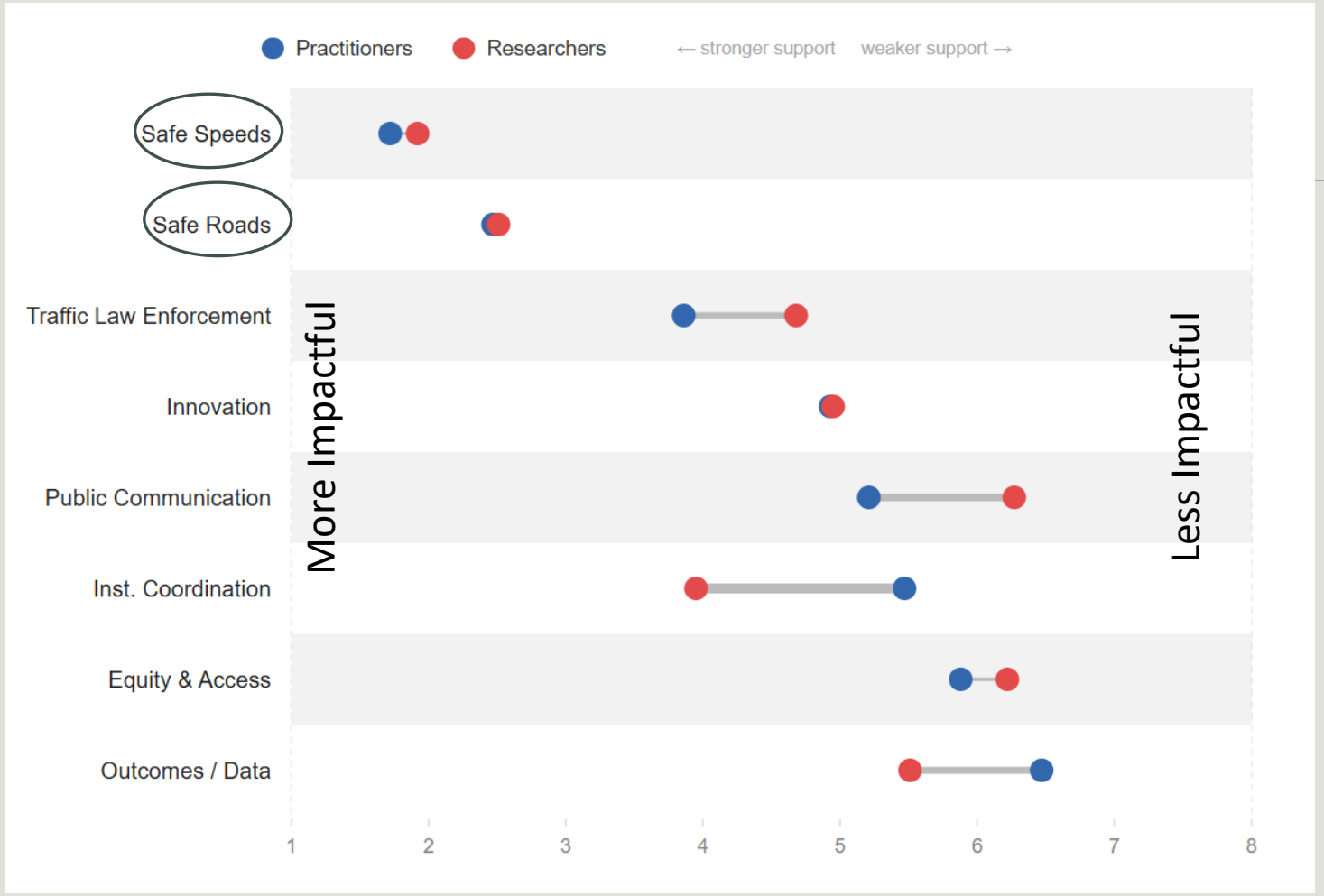
Public communication

Outcomes (data/evaluation)

Equity and access



What is most impactful?


Practitioners
Researchers
← stronger support
weaker support →
Safe Speeds
Safe Roads
Traffic Law Enforcement
Innovation
Public Communication
Inst. Coordination
Equity & Access
Outcomes / Data
More Impactful
Less Impactful
1
2
3
4
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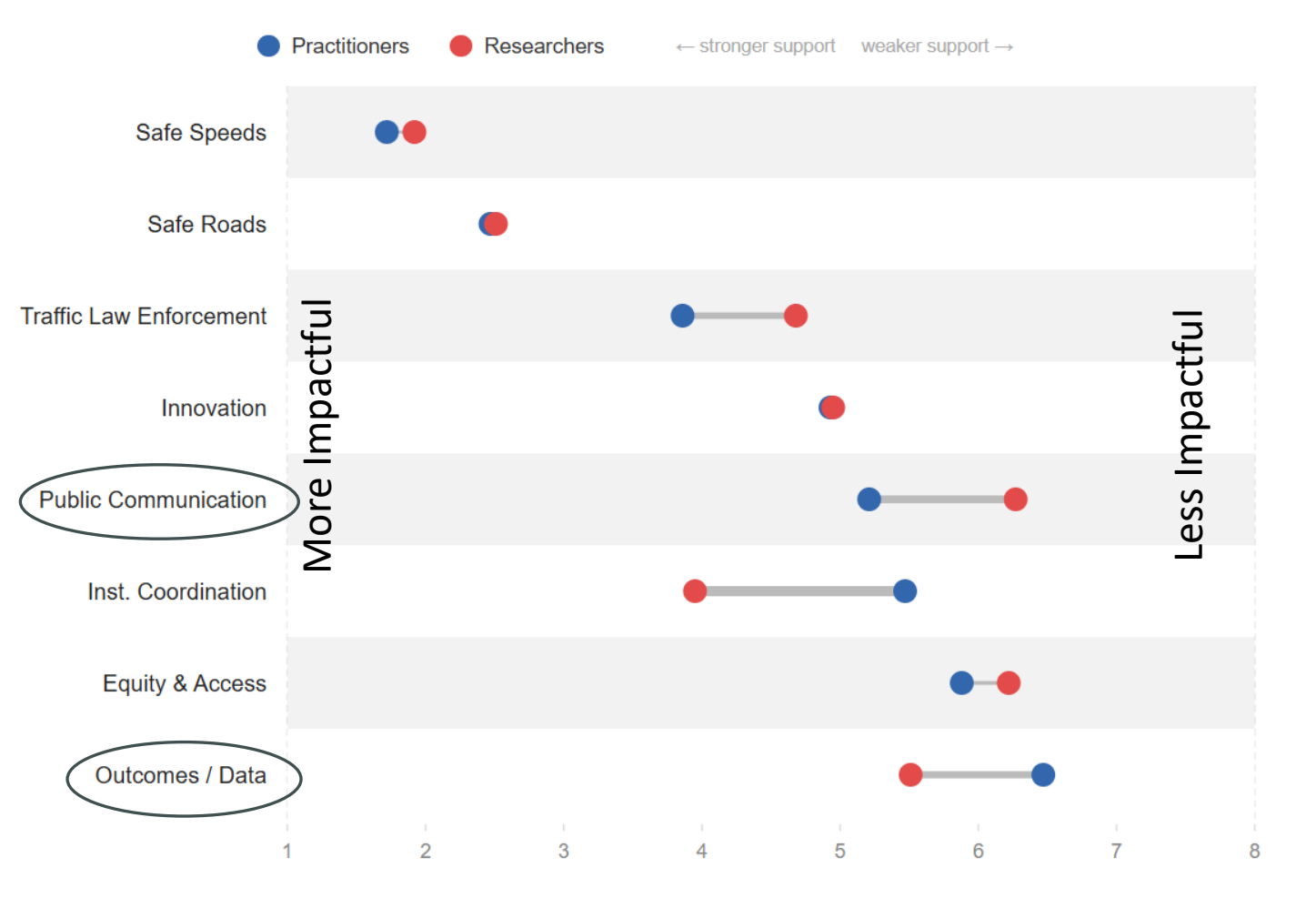
7
8

PARK
SPEED
LIMIT
15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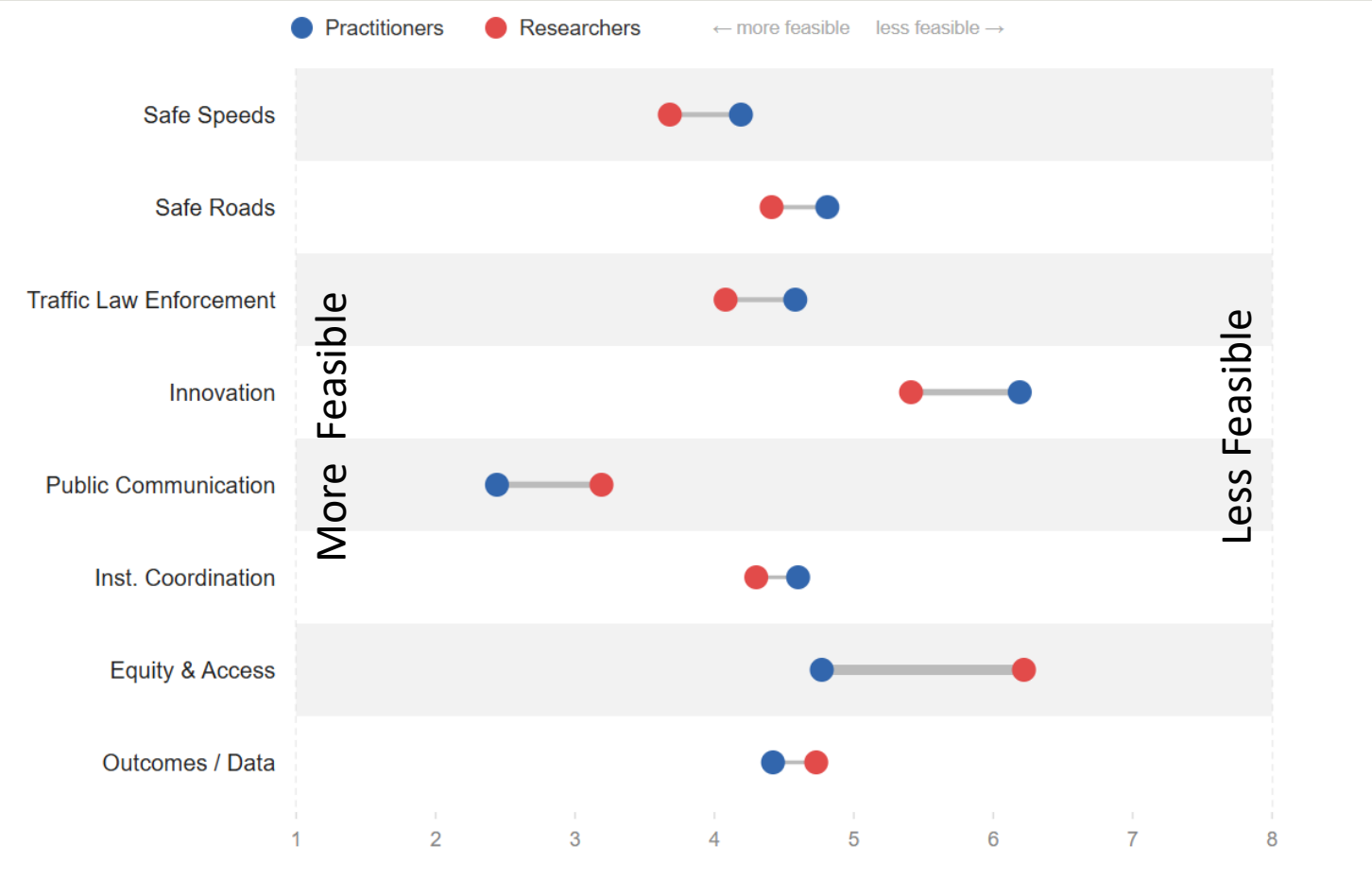
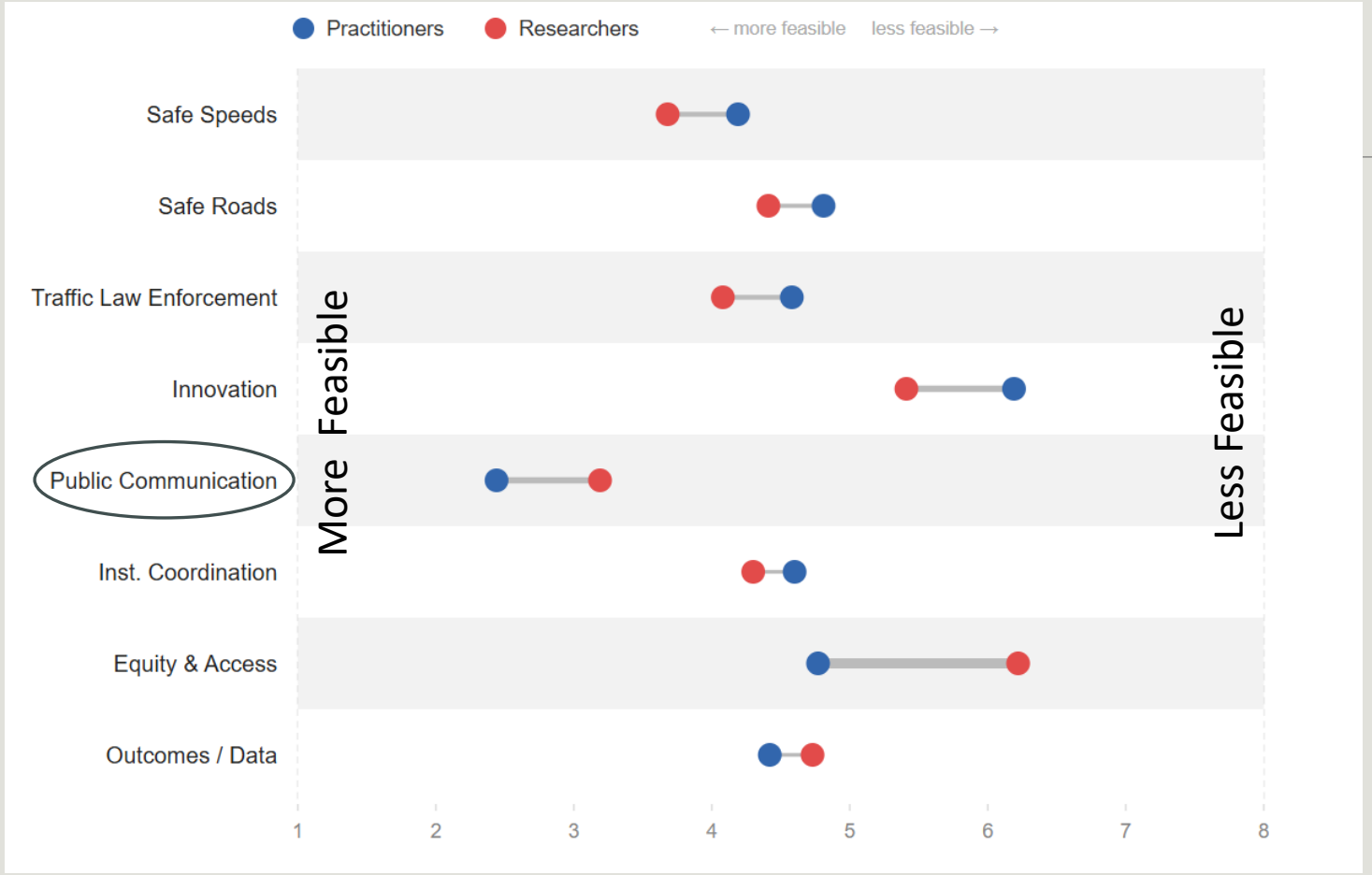
KILL WITH
KINDNESS,
NOT WITH
COLLISIONS.
We share these streets, San Francisco.
We can make them safer.



What is most feasible?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KILL WITH KINDNESS, NOT WITH COLLISIONS.
We share these streets, San Francisco.
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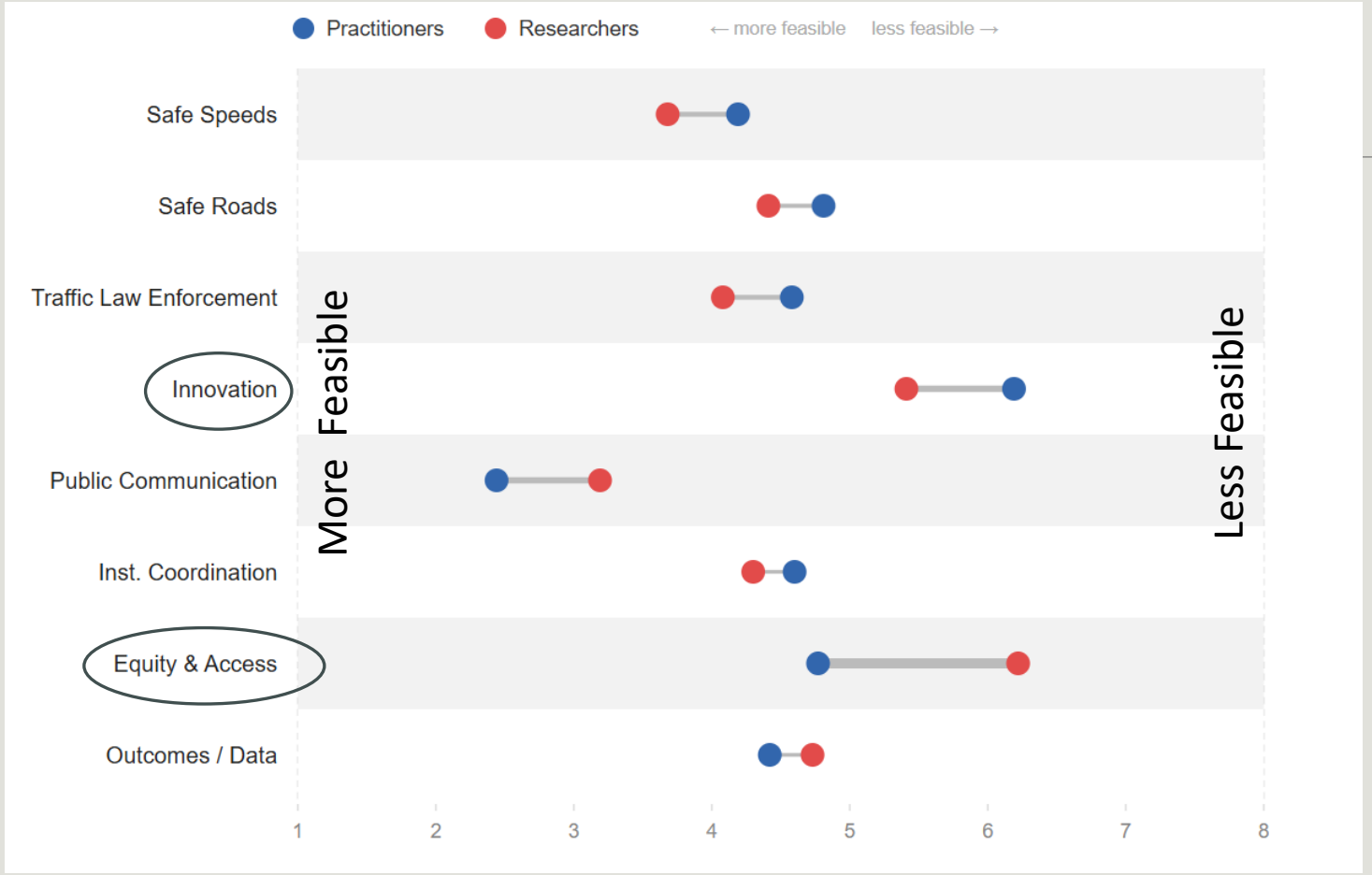
Drivers:
Protect Our Pedestrians and Cyclists
Slow Down
Cyclists: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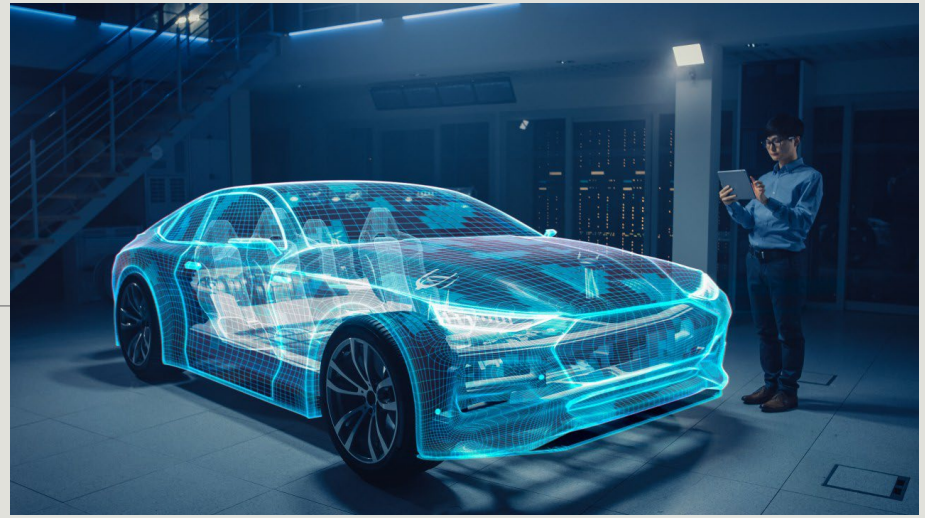
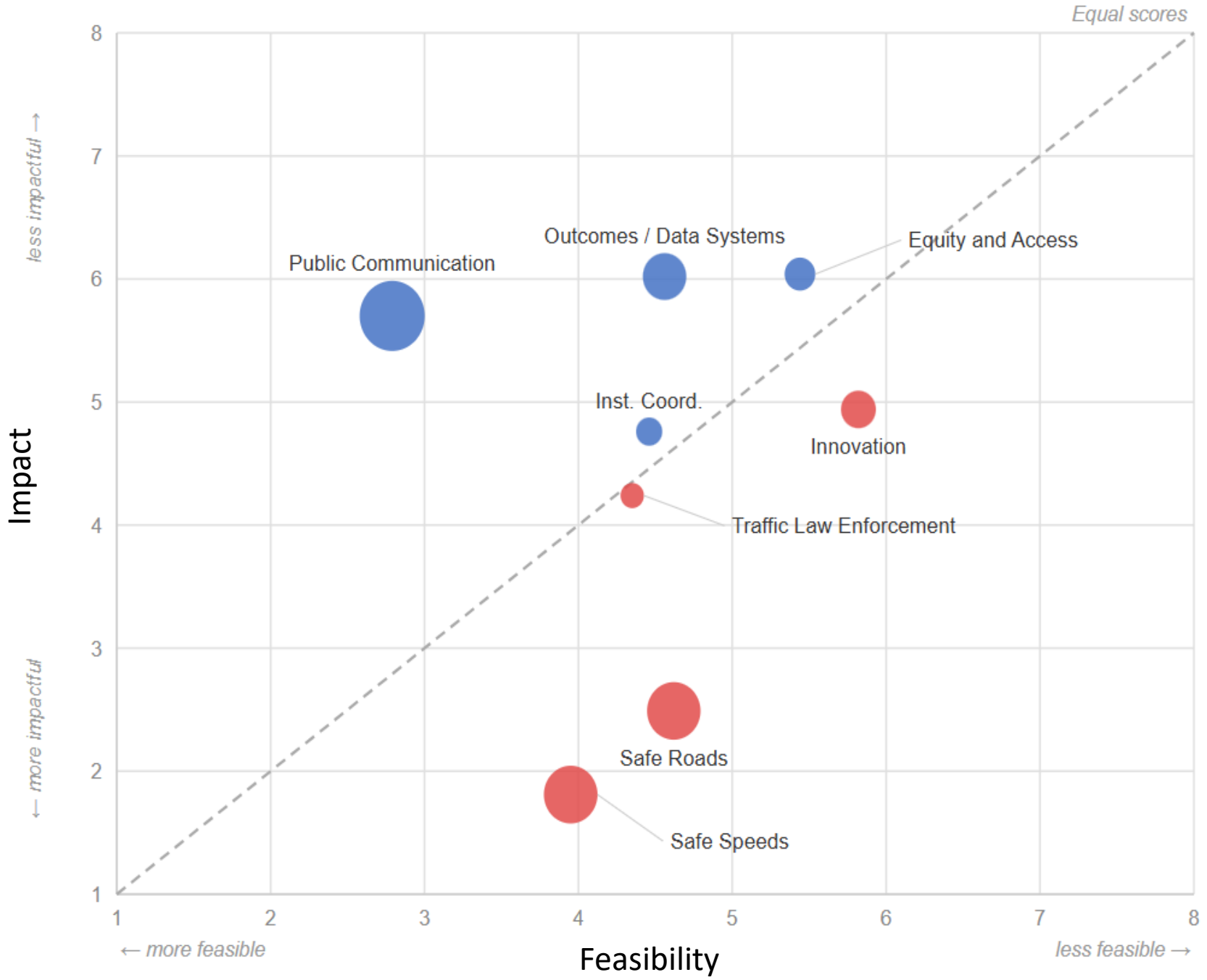
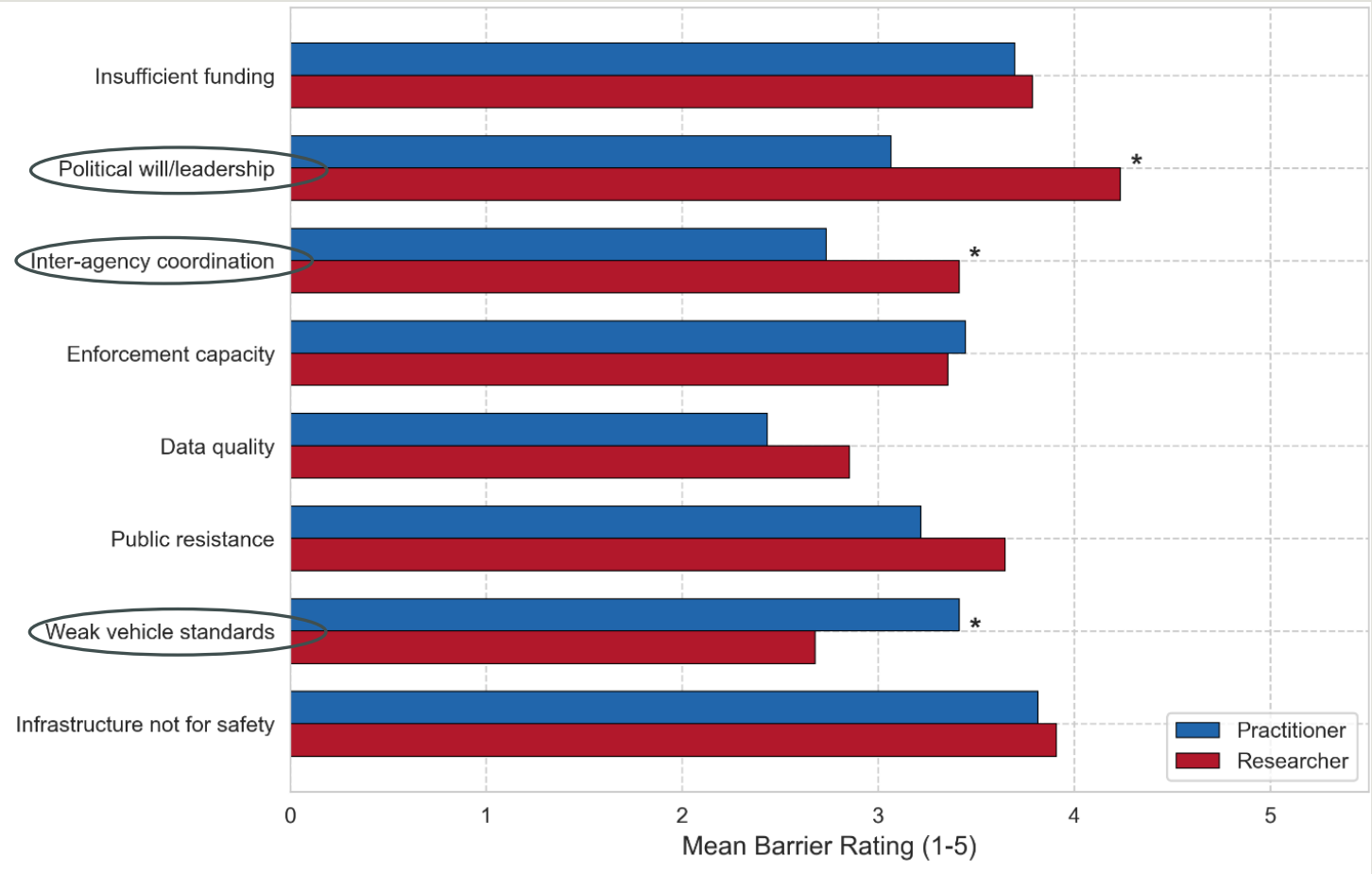


Impact Vs. Feasibility

- Feasibility > Impact
  (easy to implement but low impact)
- Impact > Feasibility
  (high impact but harder to implement)
- --- No Gap
  (equal scores)





Barriers

Hypothesis not supported:

- Researchers (not practitioners) saw political barriers as bigger obstacle

Barrier:
Road Space Reallocation

"Reallocating road space from motorists to anyone or anything else. There is also a misconception that taking away car lanes will cause congestion, even where the same people say motorists drive too fast."

"All of it — elected officials or appointees are so afraid of upsetting 'the public' that they prioritize perception over saving lives.“

"Road diets tend to be most politically sensitive - reallocating road space from motorists to anyone or anything else."

29 practitioners cited this

7 researchers cited this

43% of all question respondents

Biggest political issue

Themes – Barrier to Implementation

Practitioners

- Road space reallocation
- Anti-car sentiment
- Contributing factors data
- Political will

Researchers

- International best practices
- System design
- Political will
- Exposure data

Themes – Barrier to Implementation

Practitioners

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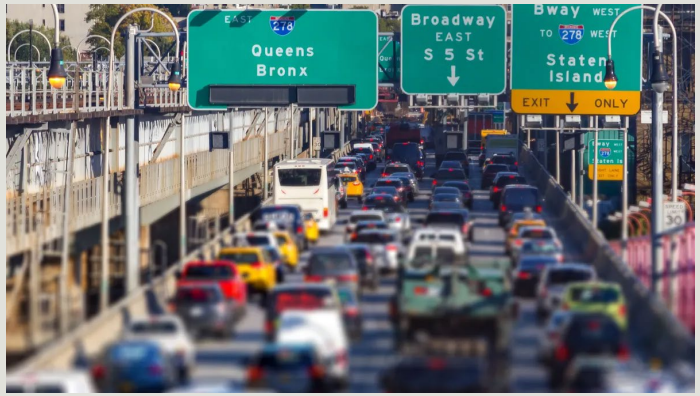

Themes – Barrier to Implementation

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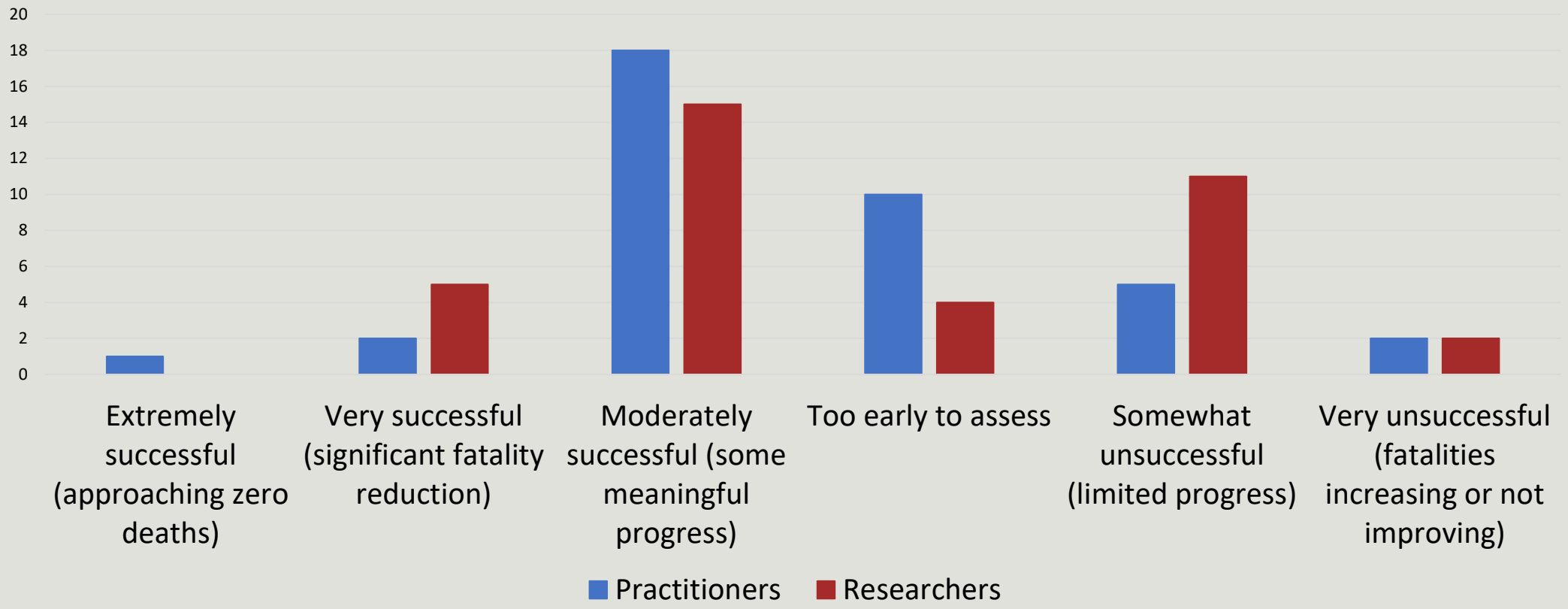
Success of VZ Programs



Takeaways

Practitioners and researchers share a broad commitment to Vision Zero's goals - but they diverge systematically on what is politically achievable.

Not a disagreement about what works

But a disagreement about what is possible

We know what works- we just have to do it.

Thank you!

QUESTIONS??

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