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## MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP and TAP-L Project Selection Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: May 7, 2026

Subject: CMAQ Methodology – Proposed changes to highway Transportation Impact Criteria safety scoring

Action Requested: Discussion

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### CMAP Safe Systems Program

CMAP's newly established Safe Systems Program puts into action processes that direct the region toward a future where no one gets killed or seriously injured on our roadways. Among the program's first directives is implementing the county-level Safety Action Plans (SAPs) adopted in 2025 and aligning CMAP's programming and planning work with Safe System Principles.

The Safe System Approach, adopted by FHWA in 2022, and many partners since, aims to eliminate fatal and serious injuries for all road users. Historically, traffic safety approaches have focused on the most cost-effective way of reducing existing crashes; a Safe System Approach is a holistic view of the elements that can create layers of safety, and roadway designs that plan for inevitable human error and reduce the amount of kinetic energy in the network.

To better align CMAP's project programming with a Safe System Approach, staff recommend near-term changes to CMAQ evaluation methodology that employ the completed SAP work, take a more proactive approach to addressing known crash risk factors, and assess interventions for their effect on the overall system.

## Current Methodology - Safety

Project types that are scored using the Road Projects and Safety Benefits Worksheet can earn up to 5 points for Safety. Those project types include Bottleneck Eliminations, Intersection Improvements, and Signal Interconnects.

A project's safety score relies on the location's Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Safer Roads Index (SRI) score, where a project in a "critical" tier location earns more points than a project in a "medium" tier location. The SRI methodology divides roads throughout the state into peer groups based on roadway features and then creates five tiers based on an analysis of the overrepresentation of crashes on roadways in each peer group. The proposed project's safety need score uses the highest SRI category along the project location. A project receives a score of 1 to 5 points if the project includes potential safety improvements.

SRI	Score
Critical	5
High	3
Medium	2
Low	1
Minimal	0

## Proposed Methodology – Safety

This applies to the following project types: Bottleneck Eliminations, Intersection Improvements, and Signal Interconnects.

For all project types listed above, CMAP staff propose refining how the safety element is measured. Instead of relying on IDOT SRI scores, safety will be evaluated using county-level High Injury Networks (HINs) and the systemic risk typologies identified in the SAPs. Projects may receive up to 100 safety need points based on their location within the respective county HIN (up to 25 points) and presence of systemic risk factors identified in the relevant county SAP (up to 75 points). These 100 points will be scaled as follows:

Safety Need	Score
76-100	5
51-75	3
26 -50	2
1-25	1
0	0

## Conclusion

The proposed safety scoring methodology will better align CMAP programming with a Safe System approach and operationalize the completed county-level SAP efforts in the near-term. While more substantial changes are expected in the long term, staff intends for these minor adjustments to provide a smooth transition toward a more comprehensive Safe System-based evaluation framework in the future.