

DOT: Midwest states prepare for the future of transportation

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From data-driven traffic management systems to automated vehicle technology, the pace of innovation in transportation is accelerating. In the second of a special three-part series of *Transportation Connects Us*, the official podcast of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), three Midwest state transportation chiefs discuss the ways the member states of the Mid America Association of Transportation Officials (MAASTO), are collaborating to plan the future of transportation.

In the second of the three podcast episodes, available January 5, 2021, Wisconsin Transportation Secretary-designee Craig Thompson, Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman and Minnesota Commissioner of Transportation Margaret Anderson Kelliher discuss how MAASTO helps its member states prepare for emerging technologies.

Planning for emerging technologies

“When we talk about connected and automated vehicle technology, people want to know when driverless cars are coming,” Thompson, who is currently MAASTO President, said. “But that’s not everything that connected and automated vehicle technology is, and it’s already here. There’s a lot of this technology that’s improving safety right now, and the auto manufacturers are implementing this technology in their vehicles. It’s coming. And so, this area is one where collaboration among states really will pay dividends,” he said.

The MAASTO mission is to foster the development, operation and maintenance of an integrated and balanced transportation system that serves the transportation needs of its member states. MAASTO member states include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa,

Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and of course, Wisconsin.

“The ability for us to virtually gather and share information and research has been important. But I think the really critical part is safety. I mean, the reason this technology is important is that this is the future of safety and transportation,” said Anderson Kelliher, who chairs MASTO’s Connected and Automated Vehicle Committee. “What we will have in the future is really multiple multimodal platforms that are going to be able communicate with each other, and there’s no place better for testing these types of technologies than in states like ours that have all four seasons,” she said.

“Technology is rapidly changing how society views transportation, making the work we do leading state departments of transportation perhaps more important than ever,” Osman said. “By partnering and working together, MAASTO states are in an ideal position to learn from each other, step into a leadership role and help chart a future for the country.”

Conversation available on *Transportation Connects Us*

Transportation Connects Us, the official WisDOT podcast, covers the many ways transportation touches our lives, and the efforts of WisDOT and its partners to provide safe and efficient mobility options for the people of Wisconsin. Stream or download the podcast at wisdot.libsyn.com.