



Mid America Freight Coalition (MAFC) Virtual Annual Meeting

Meeting Summary – Session One: National Freight Policy The role of state freight planners and MAFC

Tuesday, July 28, 2020
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. CDT

Attendees from the ten MAASTO States participated in the first of three 2020 MAFC annual meeting sessions conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams. The session featured an overview of national freight policy development by Director of MoDOT, and Executive Director of AASHTO, Patrick McKenna. In addition to the policy overview, McKenna spoke of the importance of freight to the U.S. economy, and AASHTO's focus on supporting and moving forward with the National Freight Strategic Plan.

(<https://www.transportation.gov/freight/NFSP>).

Economic Relevance

McKenna provided a summary of the economic importance of an efficient multimodal freight system. He cited examples of regional and even national interdependence of freight corridors and facilities such as the Soo Locks in Michigan, and the I70 Rocheport Bridge in Missouri. In each case, the infrastructure is antiquated and at risk of closure. These freight choke points are geographical disparate parts of the system and yet can impact freight flows for an entire region or country. McKenna's examples reflect an understanding of the multimodal and interdependent nature of freight, and efficiencies that can be achieved in each mode.

Champions

McKenna's presentation demonstrated MAASTO State DOTs are fortunate to have their executive offices as active champions for freight. Executive level support is reflected in national leadership supporting freight transportation systems in policy and funding. The broad and critical freight knowledge accessible to McKenna and other leaders across the region depends on trusted and timely support from the agency's planning, operations, and multimodal staff.

Funding

Transportation and freight funding continue to be priority issues. McKenna pointed out the lack of tools to address inflation, the age and condition of the system, more fuel-efficient vehicles, and the continued lack of investment as critical limits to our economy and safety. McKenna considers the MAASTO region the legitimate champion for freight funding due to our centralized geographic location, transportation infrastructure, and freight activity throughout the region.

The Future

In closing, McKenna was asked where the MAFC group should focus their efforts to support the economy and their agencies. His response could be summarized as: seek innovation that can solve problems. How can CAV help us move freight, increase safety, reduce environmental



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impacts, and provide employment? How can we work together to advance the needed freight policies and funding necessary to accommodate our ever-expanding economy? How can we work together to provide a seamless, efficient, multimodal system? How can we use data to make the system safer and more efficient? He continued to explain that it is important to introduce economics, markets, social patterns, and issues such as equity to the decision-making process so that we do not miss the whole of the system we are supporting.



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Meeting Minutes Session One: National Freight Policy The role of state freight planners and MAFC

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Attendees:

IA: Sam Hiscocks, Garrett Pedersen, Justin Meade, Craig Markley,
IL: Robert Innis, Geno Koehler, Jim Durako, BJ Murray, DeAnna Smith,
IN: Kristin Brier, Donna Luley, Leslie Morgan, Joseph Avona, Venetta Keefe, Roy Nunnally,
KS: Cory Davis, John Maddox,
KY: Jeremy Edgeworth, Mikael Pelfrey,
MI: Elisha Wulff,
MN: Andrew Andrusko,
MO: Cheryl Ball, Eric Curtit, Director Patrick McKenna,
OH: Mark Locker, Scott Phinney,
WI: Dean Prestegaard, Josh Reed, Shaun Destrampe, Ethan Severson, Michael Halsted,
UW Madison: Ernie Perry, Sue Ahn, Jamie Valentine

1. Welcome and Session Overview, Sue Ahn Ph.D.
2. State Introductions and Moderator – Ernie Perry Ph.D.
3. **Speaker: President of AASHTO and Director of MoDOT – Patrick McKenna**
Transportation Reauthorization, Freight, and the role of State Planners and MAFC in advancing our system and economy.
4. Q & A: Between attendees and Mr. McKenna

Q: Where should MAFC be focusing effort, in terms of technology and policy?

A: Reauthorization to create flexibility in speed and project delivery. Cooperative and automated vehicle technology. Data and use of data in state transportation. E.g. Predictive Analytics partnership to develop a model to use environmental, crash, social event, and weather-related information to predict sources of bottlenecks and slowdowns. One goal of the data prediction is to reroute 70% of traffic in those situations. Make use of existing infrastructure and at the same time connect vehicles to each other and to infrastructure.

Q: What lessons were learned from the existing epidemic plan to putting the plan into action?

A: State DOTs respond to emergencies all the time. The pandemic has spread the methodology into other departments. McKenna thinks the pandemic approach used by DOTs will be successful in other fields. In addition, we can be more flexible with our workforce going forward including telecommuting. The flexibility will help to address future workforce issues. 20th century transportation models will not carry us into the future. Organizationally, it has been positive and pushed us together even though we are distant.



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McKenna has a positive perspective on Long term funding bill resolution and building blocks for reauthorization.

Q: Related to maximizing our existing infrastructure, what are some of your thoughts related to the importance of transportation network resiliency, and what we might expect on that front in the next reauthorization?

A: Resilience issues are often associated with the coasts from a national perspective. In the mid-west, flooding is highlighting that current infrastructure will not serve the environmental trends. Development and resiliency policy need to consider funding, needs, conditions AND consider existing infrastructure, and what is needed to retain it. Costs become exponential. Predictive Analytics can help to assess costs.

Q. Current models of gas and fuel tax funding budget are not sustainable. Where are we going with future revenue stream?

A. Stream of revenue at federal, state, and national highway trust fund, things weigh against our revenue stream:

1. Inflation. There is no tool built in to combat it.
2. Fuel economy. Aging vehicles traded in for better fuel economy vehicles. New models of revenue should be based on infrastructure. Pilot program: Transportation alternatives: registration fee conversion from horsepower of vehicle to mileage base (avg. mileage and fuel economy). Innovative ways such as this will be the way for states to address aging revenue streams and changing propulsion systems.

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