

# Thought Leadership & VT's role in the Megaregion

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# Overview

- The Greater Washington Megaregion, thought leadership to innovation
- The challenge of Shared Prosperity and the Urban Rural Divide in Virginia

# THE MEGAREGION



- Amazon HQ2
- VT Innovation Campus
- Greater Washington Regional Ecosystem
- Acceleration of 2 trends
- Broader role for VT: Thought Leadership for innovating the GWR

# TWO DRAMATIC TRENDS--ACCELERATED

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## Growth of Megaregions\*

- By 2050, 70 to 85% of the US population will live in one of 11-13 megaregions (“Mid Atlantic,” Baltimore to Richmond)
- Multiple metro areas linked through infrastructure, topography, economies, cultures, history, and land use patterns
- More than [3 million people/week migrate to densely populated metro regions across the globe.](#)
- How do we plan for the massive transformation and build on the opportunities?

## Transformation: Physical to the Digital Life

- From transportation to criminal justice, security to housing, & healthcare to education, the gathering, management and application of big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning, the launch of 5G network, and interconnectivity of devices, appliances, and broad platforms, our future is **digital**.
- How do we transition in the region with the best technology, data science, cyber knowledge, international opportunities, and advanced infrastructure, while maintaining our focus on the **human condition**--community, privacy, equity, security and safety, health, education, and more?

# VT and Regional Thought Leadership



WTOP.com

With the Innovation Campus, Virginia Tech can build on the visibility and credibility that comes with this major undertaking by establishing a role in university thought leadership for the region.

Thought leadership should be focused on the challenges of the megaregion and the simultaneous digital drivers of change and opportunity

# Thought Leadership



Exploration and a bridge to  
innovation: Translating  
thought to practice

## Exploration

- What is the role for all universities in the region?
- How can we build broad partnerships to address regional challenges?
- What are the areas for regional solutions, and what are the areas that require place-based local solutions and engagement?
- What are the challenges of digital applications in key policy areas, and how do we proceed while grounded in the human condition?

## Translation

- Convene, engage and partner with other universities, governments, businesses, communities and international partners.
- Partnerships and research in key areas with regional implications.
- Impact through implementation.

## First Steps in Exploratory Thought Leadership

- TEDxVT focused on the region
- Round Table on Universities and Megaregions: A leadership perspective with regional and international partners
- Regional Round Tables
- The Science of Regional Collaboration
- International Consortium on Megaregions
- Regional and International networks: metro lab







## First Steps in Translation: Some early ideas for partnerships\*

- Equity and Workforce Development
- Affordable housing
- Cyber Security and a “safe” Internet
- Transportation and Autonomous vehicles
- Refugee Resettlement
- Sustainable water systems
- Food security



[CS4FN](#)



[medium.com](https://medium.com)

## Urban Rural Divide? Or systemic drivers of disparity in Virginia?

The megaregional challenges are best understood in the context of the growing urban and rural divide and the challenge of understanding the systemic drivers that result in shocking disparities in health, economic opportunity, transportation, education, housing, equity, and more.

# Shared Prosperity Index?

- Rethinking the Urban and Rural divide:
    - outcomes of broader systemic dynamics
  - Ongoing work and initiatives that can be channeled and translated into the index:
  - Vibrant VA, RVI, VA Provosts' Initiative, Potential foundation partnership, rural health, rural environment, environmental justice, smart farms
  - Exploration and development with student participation
  - Innovation Campus and broader Commonwealth impact
- The 95% /5% rule: focusing strategic impact