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| **Name** | **Contact** | **Title** | **Status** |
| Garrett G. D. Nelson | garrett.g.d.nelson@dartmouth.edu | Postdoctoral Fellow, Society of Fellows | Geography professor  http://geography.dartmouth.edu/people/garrett-g-d-nelson |
| ~~Dr. Alasdair Rae~~ | ~~a.j.rae@sheffield.ac.uk~~ | ~~Department of Urban Studies and Planning, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom~~ | ~~Urban and regional analyst  https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp/staff/alasdair\_rae~~ |
| Chris Jones | chris@rpa.org | VP | http://www.rpa.org/about/contact-us |
| Andrew Owen | aowen@umn.edu | Director of the Accessibility Observatory, Research Fellow, Center for Transportation Studies |  |
| David M. Levinson | dmlevinson@gmail.com | Adjunct faculty, Department of Civil, Environmental, and Geo- Engineering, University of Minnesota | davidlevinson.org |
| Tom Fisher | tfisher@umn.edu | Director, Metropolitan Design Center, and Professor Emeritus, College of Design |  |

**dmlevinson@gmail.com**

Hi Professor Levinson,

I’m a reporter at the Star Tribune looking to write about the concept of megaregions and the impact it has on the Twin Cities now and its development in the future? Michael McCarthy with CTS referred you to me.

I heard your transitioning to a new position at the University of Sydney? All the same, I’m wondering if you had any insights you might like to share for my story? Is there a time in the coming days or next week when we could talk for a bit? Email also works, if you prefer.

Your time is very greatly appreciated. Thanks!

Best,

-Jeff

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| **Name** | **Title** | **Type** | **Date** | **Notes** |
| David M. Levinson | Adjunct faculty, Department of Civil, Environmental, and Geo- Engineering, University of Minnesota | Email | 4/5/2017 |  |

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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| 1. What, if any, benefits are there to viewing metro areas and their surrounding areas as megaregions? | Just as there is more economic activity and commuting within cities than between cities, and within metropolitan areas than between metropolitan areas, there is more activity within megaregions than between them. So there is some advantage to thinking about megaregions as a territory over which some economic and transport decisions should be made. It should not be the dominant framework (as local travel and economic activity within a metropolitan area is much greater than the trade between such areas).  But for intercity travel, it might make sense to think of nearby metropolitan areas as interacting. And as transport gets faster over time, the area of daily interaction steadily increases. In the city of the 1800s, when people traveled at walking speeds, cities were much smaller than they became first with the streetcar, and then with the automobile. Even now, in the Northeast corridor, there are a reasonable number of people who regularly commute between nearby cities (Philadelphia to New York, Baltimore to Washington), and a smaller number who commute longer distances (Washington to New York), usually on a less-than-daily basis, but often enough. |
| 2. What are some ways municipalities could work more closely together when it comes to central planning and infrastructural development? What are some of the greatest challenges? | The key problem I think is that land use decisions are made very locally (at the township or municipality level), while important transport decisions are made at the regional or state level. Yet land use decisions generate demand for streets and highways outside of the local jurisdiction that permitted them, while transport decisions affect local governments. Clearly local governments are not keen to let metropolitan areas make land use decisions, or even have veto powers, and similarly cannot be responsible for regional transport decisions.  If we properly priced things like pollution and congestion and access to public facilities, this would be less of a problem, but we give away the right to travel on the roads at any time of day regardless of how many people you congest, we give away the right to pollute the air (with some regulation, but hardly enough), and we subsidize public works like water treatment, sewer, local streets, schools, and parks for new development. |
| 3. Researchers at Dartmouth College and Sheffield University released a megaregions study (http://bit.ly/2nFjFoD) and map (http://bit.ly/2kOj8n4) in November. Their use of Census commuter data seems to reveal some interesting relationships between cities and surrounding municipalities. What are your thoughts on the value of this kind of analysis? | See [https://transportist.org/2016/12/09/on-supercommuters/](https://owa.startribune.com/owa/redir.aspx?C=MdOFnpKK9WxFDrGzRSZ4X2qbBoLewOCvFH_lpuj1djCHqhVzbnzUCA..&URL=https%3a%2f%2ftransportist.org%2f2016%2f12%2f09%2fon-supercommuters%2f" \t "_blank) . I have some issues with the methods. |
| 4. What infrastructural advances will need to be implemented to forge the megaregions of the future? | Historically transport has gotten faster over time, though recently it seems to have stagnated. Some people view high-speed rail  (very fast trains) as the next logical step. I think the Internet is the next step, which leads to a more global community with worldwide interactions, rather than HSR. It depends very much on the context, but in most of the US, HSR doesn't pencil out in a market where it competes with other modes at anywhere near their current costs.  Autonomous Vehicles will emerge as well, and inevitably lead to people who own such vehicles being willing to travel longer distances, as it will lower the costs of travel (since people will not need to engage in the driving task and can do other things with their time in motion). |
| 5. The Metropolitan Council here in the Twin Cities has often been cited as a pioneer of urban regional planning. What role might such organizations have in the emergence and development of megaregions? What should their future be? | The Metropolitan Council is an unusual Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as it has some operational responsibilities in transit and water and wastewater, as well as in distribution of grants. Existing planning organizations have enough difficulties executing their existing mandate, it is hard to imagine them growing. They may become members of Megaregional Organizations. It is not clear what role a Megaregion Organization would have beyond advocacy. Would it have any responsibilities for actual infrastructure? MPOs that cross state lines are notoriously difficult. |
| 6. The Regional Plan Association famously released their America 2050 map and associated population growth projections a few years ago (http://bit.ly/15ifhmu). How do you see the Twin Cities metro area growing and evolving in terms of its urban footprint and transportation infrastructure over the next few decades? | It is also not clear if the Twin Cities is truly part of a Megaregion with any other large metropolitan areas (Duluth, St. Cloud, and Rochester don't count), it is pretty far from Chicago (compared with say Milwaukee or Indianapolis). Clearly the region will continue to expand into the exurbs, particularly as the habit of "going to work" changes from something done daily to something done weekly for many people as the ability to work at home for some tasks continues to grow. Traveling an hour once or twice a week is less onerous than traveling a half-an-hour daily. |
| 7. Anything else to add? | That's enough for now. Let me know if you have other questions. |

**tfisher@umn.edu**

Hi Professor Fisher,

I’m a reporter at the Star Tribune looking to write about the concept of megaregions and the impact it has on the Twin Cities now and its development in the future? Michael McCarthy with CTS referred you to me. I’m wondering if you had any insights you might like to share? Is there a time in the coming days or next week when we could talk for a bit?

Your time is very greatly appreciated. Thanks!

Best,

-Jeff

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| **Name** | **Title** | **Type** | **Date** | **Notes** |
| Tom Fisher | Director, Metropolitan Design Center, and Professor Emeritus, College of Design | 612-237-4185 | 4/6/2017 @ 11:00AM |  |

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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| What, if any, benefits are there to viewing metro areas and their surrounding areas as megaregions? | This has been a very old idea, in terms of megalopolis. Richard Flora has talked about how this is actually happening. CityLab has an interesting  “There really are these kinds of natural regions. I think this is the way in which the economy is working. It’s also part of the conversation about how the global economy rests on cities.”  “It’s less about nation states and even less about states, but about regions that lapse over several states. “  “Wisconsin has taken a very different track from the state of Minnesota. We have two very different sets of public policies.”  “A region needs to stick together, including its urban and rural areas. It actually holds back these regions from being as competitive as they could be globally. “  “There are these tensions where global politics seem to be going and where state and national politics seem to be going. We need to come to some resolution to that.”  That’s a problem for everybody, urban, surburan and rural.  We have a certain kind of strength in that we have the Met Council. Our actual region extends beyond the met council region, it extends into Eau Claire.  The idea of regional governance is the right idea. |
| What are some ways municipalities could work more closely together when it comes to central planning and infrastructural development? What are some of the greatest challenges? | “The 20th century version has Minneapolis competing against St. Paul. But in the 21st century the competition has to be with other regions. Otherwise we’ll be less successful globally.”  It does raise questions. We have a construct of national policies and states rights? Is that still appropriate in this time?  “There’s a kind of hostility towards cities right now coming from Washington, It’s hostility against the engine of the economy.”  “How do we get past this polarization?”  “We need to find a way to change the conversation.” |
| The Metropolitan Council here in the Twin Cities has often been cited as a pioneer of urban regional planning. What role might such organizations have in the emergence and development of megaregions? What should their future be? | When we get mayors from urban, suburban and rural together, they realize they have the same needs.  Maybe dissolve the Met Council and allow for a more voluntary collaboration. |
| 7. Anything else to add? | Nope, I’m glad you’re writing about this. It’s the most critical subject of our time. |

**Michael McCarthy**

**mpmccarthy@umn.edu**

**Editor/Media Relations**

**UMN Center for Transportation Studies**

Hi Michael,

I'm a reporter for the Star Tribune writing about the concept of megaregions and where the Twin Cities fits in. I'm wondering if there's anyone at CTS willing to talk to me about megaregions and associated transportation and infrastructural issues?

Any info is greatly appreciated. Thanks!

-Jeff

**garrett.g.d.nelson@dartmouth.edu; a.j.rae@sheffield.ac.uk;**

Hi,

I’m a reporter at the Star Tribune newspaper in Minneapolis and am really interested with your study on U.S. megaregions.

I’ve been looking through your research article and your very cool map and am looking to do a write up about the concept of megaregions with a special focus on the various ones the Twin Cities has been assigned to over time. I’ve seen a few different takes on carving the country up to cultural and economic groupings, but yours is by far the most comprehensive and interesting I’ve run across.

Would either or both of you be willing to talk with me a bit sometime in the coming days? I don’t have a hard deadline at this time, but your insights would be invaluable to my reporting.

Your time and any information are very greatly appreciated. Thanks!

-Jeff Hargarten

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| **Name** | **Title** | **Type** | **Date** | **Notes** |
| Garrett G. D. Nelson |  | 603-646-3865 | Thursday 03.23.2017 @ 1pm CST |  |

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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| How would you define a megaregion for our readers? | “The idea of megaregions is sort of an old one”  “As cities have overspilled their boundaries and spilled into each other, the idea that we have these distinct cities has faded away.”  BosWas is a concept.  “What we really mean is clusters of big and small cities and towns and even rural areas that form some sort of cohesive whole.” |
| How does your research differ from other attempts at slicing the U.S. into megaregions? | “What a lot of people have done when they draw these megaregions they rely on common sense. They look at nighttime satellite imageries, look at map and lump connected areas together.”  “What we did was twofold. We started with this really interesting dataset that comes from the census, which tracks commuters.”  Community detection: if you have a set of points and how strong each is connected to each other, you can do some math to see where the connections area.  Took that technique (used by Facebook) and applied it to the commute data. If a suburb of Minneapolis has many commutes into Downtown Minneapolis that’s a strong connection than from Los Angeles to Minneapolis.”  It doesn’t know that St. Paul that is next to Minneapolis. It only knows how strongly they are connected, not their spacial locations.  “The goal is to put lines in places where the fewest number of people are crossing those lines to make a commute.”  These are not watersheds. People are commuting across all of these boundaries. The borders are where they crossover the least. |
| So from what I can see, this map, as opposed to the America 2015 map from the RPA, is more tethered to the now than future projections on how regions will develop. Is that a fair assessment? | “I wouldn’t say there’s anything wrong with the RPA’s version.”  “What differs in this map is we’re actually able to distinguish where breaks or borders occur that aren’t necessarily visible to the naked eye.” |
| A difference I notice between this and other various megaregion maps I’ve seen – notably the RPA map – is that the Twin Cities is the center of its own region. Could you talk a bit about your findings there? | The computer lumps LaCross and Eau Claire into that region. The computer is evaluating it via statistics rather than our common sense  “We’ve been really surprised.”  “We’ve talked to people who are like these findings make sense according tot heir own experiences  “The computer doesn’t know anything about culutural patterns or interpretive types of geography.”  The computer is blind to how these regions are culturally lumped together but reveals them anyway. |
| What’s your hope as to how this research should be used? | We have an economy and culture that’s deeply interlinked.  “There was a time when these cities were distinct from one another, but now they have become deeply interlaced.”  We really have to think about these places as an interactive whole.  “In the same way neighborhoods are linked together to form a city, we know that cities are linked together to form regions.”  “Our biggest hope it encourages people to experiment with borders and not just go with bordesr that have been around since the 17th century.”  Borders were drawn for reasons that don’t exist anymore. Borders control how you vote, where you pay taxes and where infrastructure goes. It may not match how we’re living in the 21st century. They may not make much sense when talking about an economy that’s deeply interlinked.  That thinking about borders can’t just be something that bureaucrats deal with. People have to think about how they’re connected to each other. |
| Where did the names on the map come from? What’s the source of Laurentide? The ice sheet? | He made up most of those.  Tried to spread them across different categories.  One thing we did try to do was not just name them after their big cities. It’s these newly emerging systems that connect a lot of different types of geography.  Laurentide = the ice sheet |
| Anything else to add? | Nope, you seem to have a firm grasp on the situation. |
| Another question has cropped up amid my research, and maybe you have an answer for it, if you don't mind?  I've been going through the Census commuter flow data (county to county, nothing too fancy) and I wonder what the best way is to explain the division between super-commuters -- those traveling 90 minutes or more to work -- and to those commuting less than 90 minutes? So, for example, those traveling from Eau Claire to Minneapolis certainly make that long drive, but they don't necessarily do it every day, unlike someone traveling from St. Paul. Does that difference have an impact on how we might look at megaregions in general or no?  This doesn't necessarily directly relate to your work, but maybe you have some insights? | I’d say there’s two answers to your question. First of all, there are a surprising number of people who actually do commute over 90 minutes to work regularly, especially in urban areas with extremely high central-city housing prices like San Francisco and NYC (see Rapino and Fields). Secondly, though, even where commuters are not physically performing a long distance commute every workday, they nonetheless represent an important economic link between their place of employment and their home location, through the wage and labor exchange which is a part of even a ‘virtual’ commute. We might say, then, that commutes which are actually physically performed on a daily basis help us think about megaregion linkages in terms of infrastructure and the built environment, whereas including long-distance commuters allows us to generalize more broadly about economic integration over wide areas.  Hope that’s a useful answer—happy to clarify if you need anything more, and do let us know when the story is finished! |

**wpollack@rpa.org**

Hi Wendy,

I’m a reporter at the Star Tribune in Minneapolis looking to write about the concept of megaregions, with a special focus on the ones the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota have been attributed to in recent years.

I’m looking at a few different megaregion maps and studies. The America 2050 map is one I had encountered some time ago and I would love to talk to someone about that and the emergence of megaregions in general as a concept and what the future might hold.

Is there anyone at RPA who would be willing to lend their insights to my reporting?

Any information is very greatly appreciated. Thanks!

-Jeff Hargarten

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| **Name** | **Title** | **Type** | **Date** | **Notes** |
| Chris Jones | RPA Senior VP | (212) 253-5763 | Friday 03.24.2017 @ 3PM CST |  |

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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| How would you define a megaregion for our readers? | The whole concept of a megaregion dates back to the 1960’s. The term was coined in the Northeast Megalopolis emerging at the time. We revived that notion along with the Billington Institute when we looked at the way that metropolitan areas were really converging.  There’s no readily accepted definition of a megaregion. You have a central city that’s within a labor market where people can commute in and out.  They are geographic that have common economic or planning challenges. Common landscapes (Rock Mountains). They have linked trading systems and labor markets. Companies trade with each other on a frequent basis. Common transportation infrastructure. |
| What methods were used to create the original America 2050 megaregions map? | When we defined megaregions by these different criteria. We defined 10 regions. The Great Lakes was the broadest defined. That was basically this idea of a common economic base with similar challenges. That was the basic concept we were promoting. |
| Where do you think we stand when it comes to forging the kind of necessary infrastructure to for these megaregions to functionally emerge? | There are certain types of policy implications that these lend themselves to. High speed rail was a common one. Most of these regions are places where highspeed rail systems make sense.  Linking different types of transportation infrastructure.  The infrastructure challenges are the largest. It faces the biggest funding challenges.  The political challenges as well. It’s difficult enough to get metropolitan regions to collaborate. The Twin Cities pioneered that with the Met Council.  Getting multistate regions to collaborate is a major institutional undertaking to try to get done. |
| What about the Dartmouth map? | The more important idea is the concept than the actual definition of some of these megaregions. It was a good step forward. |
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| Anything else to add? |  |
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