



AURP Insights into Research Parks George Mason University

April 22-23, 2026

Manassas, VA

(As of 4.20.26)

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Guest arrival and hotel check in

Recommendation: Tempo by Hilton Manassas, 9849 Discovery Blvd, Manassas, VA 20109

Closest Airport: Washington Dulles International Airport, approximately 35-minute drive to the hotel

Or Reagan National Airport, approximately 50-minute drive to the hotel

8:30 AM – 10:30 AM

OPTIONAL EVENT

Visionary Voices: Designing the Future: Where Placemaking Sparks Innovation and Growth

Sweeney Barn [9310 Discovery Blvd, Manassas]

Explore how thoughtfully designed physical environments can spark collaboration, cultivate vibrant innovation communities, and attract both today's workforce and the talent of the future.

Participants will gain insight into real-world examples, the strategies behind their development, and the ways placemaking drives innovation and long-term economic impact.

- Stephen Coulston, Managing Principal, Perkins and Will
- Kevin Byrne, President and Chief Executive Officer, The University Financing Foundation

Welcome Remarks

- Vickie Palmer, Chief Executive Officer, AURP

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM

Check In

Tempo by Hilton Manassas [9489 Discovery Blvd, Manassas]

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Welcome to the Nova Live Campus

Nova Live is a premier destination campus and entertainment hub in the Innovation District, featuring craft beer, distilled spirits, world-inspired cuisine, live local music, and the newly opened Tempo by Hilton hotel.

- Kevin Rieger, Vice President of Operations, NOVA Live

2:15 PM

Transportation Departs

All transportation sponsored by OmniRide, a smarter and more inclusive demonstration of commuter and fixed route transit in the Virginia area.



2:30 PM – 3:15 PM

County led Commercial Wet Lab Incubator to Spur Economic Growth

Endeavor 234 [11100 Endeavor Ct, Manassas]

Visit Endeavor 234, a commercial wet-lab incubator owned and operated by the Prince William County Department of Economic Development since 2014. Learn how it was established from its earliest beginnings, how it supports companies seeking commercial wet-lab space, and how it helps start-ups scale and grow.

- Cohava Gelber, Chief Executive Officer, Serpin Pharma
- Helena Kondow, Life Science Business Manager, Prince William County Department of Economic Development and Tourism

- Liz Pyle, Life Science Business Mentor, George Mason University
- Moderator: Tom Flynn, Economic Development Advisor, Prince William County Department of Economic Development and Tourism

3:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Semiconductor Manufacturing and Partnerships to Ensure a Workforce Pipeline to Maintain U.S. Competitiveness: Tour: Micron Fabrication Facility and Panel Discussion

Micron [9600 Godwin Dr., Manassas]

Experience firsthand look inside Micron, a cutting-edge semiconductor facility and global leader in memory solutions who announced a \$2B expansion in the City of Manassas and received \$275M CHIPS Act funding last year. Hear from Micron leaders and K-12, community college, and university educators about innovative partnerships ranging from STEM Governor’s School dual-credit programs to seamless transfer pathways, boot camps, and micro-credentials to address workforce needs in advanced manufacturing.

- Delbert Parks, Vice President, Frontend Manufacturing Operations, MTV at Micron Technology
- Chad Knights, Vice President, Information and Engineering Technologies and College Computing, Northern Virginia Community College
- Ethan Ahn, Professor, George Mason University
- Jason Calhoun, Director, Governor’s School @ Innovation Park
- Jason Cottrel, Director, Advance Program, George Mason University
- Moderator: Zuzana Steen, Director of Academic and Community Relations, Micron

5:45 PM – 6:15 PM

Happy Hour in Historic Downtown

CenterFuse [9071 Center St., Manassas]

Enjoy drinks and mingle at Centerfuse, a vibrant co-working space in historic downtown.

- Hosted by Jackie Krick, President and CEO, ECU Communications

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Welcome Dinner

Manassas Museum [9101 Prince William St., Manassas]

- Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger, City of Manassas
- Dr. Gregory Washington, President, George Mason University
- Chair Deshundra Jefferson, Prince William County Board of Supervisors
- Lisa Shapiro, Managing Director, GO Virginia Region 7

Thursday, April 23, 2026

7:50 AM – 7:55 AM

Meet in Hotel Lobby

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM

Networking Breakfast and Opening Remarks

Brentsville Hall, Nova Live [9915 Discovery Blvd., Manassas]

- Vickie Palmer, Chief Executive Officer, AURP

8:45 AM – 9:30 AM

Building on 30 Years of History to Create and Launch an Innovation District

Brentsville Hall, Nova Live [9915 Discovery Blvd., Manassas]

While the Innovation District officially launched in July 2025, it is built on more than 30 years of deep public-private partnerships. Hear how it began, how it evolved, and how it ultimately launched in partnership with Stiletto, which guided the team through a comprehensive planning study that

informed a successful GO Virginia state economic development grant and laid the groundwork for the districts business plan.

- Christina Winn, Executive Director, Prince William County Department of Economic Development and Tourism
- Patrick Small, Director, Economic Development, City of Manassas
- Laura O’Blenis, President and CEO, Stiletto: Make a Point
- Lovey Hammel, President, Employment Enterprises
- Amy Adams, Executive Director, Innovation District (anchored by George Mason’s SciTech)

9:45 AM – 10:30 AM

Creating a Collaborative Statewide Life Science Ecosystem to Attract, Retain, and Grow Pharma and Biotech in the Commonwealth

Brentsville Hall, Nova Live [9915 Discovery Blvd., Manassas]

Leaders across Virginia united to build a connected statewide life sciences ecosystem in 2021, led by the Virginia Biotechnology Association. Learn how creation and collaboration across five regional biohubs expanded access to commercialization resources, funding, talent programs, and shared research facilities to strengthen the Commonwealth’s ability to attract major life sciences companies and support business growth.

- Grace Festa, Director, Biopharmaceuticals, Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- Hal Irvin, Associate Vice President for Health Sciences and Technology Outreach, Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, Virginia Tech
- Kevin Leslie, Associate VP – Innovation & Commercialization, Old Dominion University
- John Newby, Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Bio
- Nicolai Shuman, Senior Director of Entrepreneurship & Ecosystem Development, Activation Capital
- Moderator: Amy Adams, Executive Director, Innovation District (anchored by George Mason’s SciTech)

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Lab to Launch, a Statewide Initiative to Standardize Fast-Track License Agreements for Commercializing University Research

Brentsville Hall, Nova Live [9915 Discovery Blvd., Manassas]

Learn how the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPCC) is accelerating the journey from research to market, and hear firsthand from a university innovator and founding CEO who used this new statewide initiative to launch a start-up in the Innovation District.

- Joe Benevento, Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation
- John Hart, President and CEO, NanoOptical Biomedical
- Remi Veneziano, Associate Professor, Department of Bioengineering, George Mason University

11:15 AM

Transportation Departs

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

TOUR: Hylton Performing Arts Center

[10960 George Mason Circle., Manassas]

Enjoy the beauty of the Hylton Performing Arts Center and learn how partnerships among George Mason University, Prince William County, the City of Manassas, and the surrounding business community brought it to life – the same collaborations that helped shape the Innovation District. It is the vibrant hub for arts and culture, featuring live performances, dynamic educational programs for K-12 students and the community, and a versatile venue for conferences and meetings.

- 12:00 PM** **Lunch**
Room 2402; Life Sciences and Engineering Building [10930 George Mason Circle., Manassas]
- 12:40 PM – 1:00 PM** **Re-thinking Mobility: Understanding What Microtransit can Bring to Urbanized Science Parks**
Life Sciences and Engineering Building
Effective transportation is a persistent challenge in urbanized science and research parks. Learn how OmniRide is using cost-effective microtransit solutions to improve mobility in and around the Innovation District by addressing first- and last-mile gaps and better connecting employees, students, and visitors to jobs, housing, and amenities.
- Bob Schneider, Executive Director, OmniRide
- 1:00 PM – 1:30 PM** **Preparing for Next Level Growth: International Soft-Landing Program and Future Growth Space**
Life Sciences and Engineering Building
Discover how growing companies can successfully enter new markets and scale operations with the right support systems in place. Learn about new industrial flex space planned for the Innovation District to attract life sciences, defense technology, and semiconductor companies – while ensuring existing businesses have a clear path to expand without leaving the region. The session will also highlight a newly launched International Soft-Landing Program that leverages regional strengths to help global companies establish and grow in the Innovation District.
- Matthew Holbrook, Regional Partner, St. John Properties
 - Jaehan Park, Chief Executive Officer, Naugen, Inc.
- 1:30 PM – 2:00 PM** **Building and Growing a Nationality Ranked Biopharma Cluster**
The BioHealth Capital Region unites the life sciences communities of Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland and has evolved from a federal-centric research hub into a top-three U.S. biopharma cluster. Hear from a regional leader and industry executive about how strategic collaboration and connectivity have fueled this growth and the essential ingredients continuing to support the region’s success.
- Rich Bendis, Chief Executive Officer, Biohealth Innovation, Inc.
 - Ruth Cheng, Chief Executive Officer, ATCC
- 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM** **Strategic Collaborations Will Accelerate Innovation and Regional Prosperity**
Innovation does not happen in silos, and with U.S. competitiveness at the core of our mission, regional collaboration is essential to drive impact. Learn about the distinguishing assets and programs in neighboring parks and districts, including West Virginia Technology Parks, UT Research Park at Cherokee Farm, the University of Maryland BioPark, and the recently launched National Innovation Quarter.
- Michael Stiefvater, Director, Business Investment Group, Arlington Economic Development
 - Charlie Dusic, Chief Financial Officer / Chief Operating Officer, West Virginia Tech Parks
 - Brett Malone, Chief Executive Officer, UT Research Park at Cherokee Farm
 - Mary Morris, Director, Baltimore Fund, University of Maryland BioPark
- 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM** **An Innovation District Located in the Data Center Capital of the World: Partnerships that will Drive the Future**
The Innovation District is home to data centers that power artificial intelligence. Hear from experts across academia, the local energy provider, and the data center industry about the workforce

challenges associated with this rapidly growing sector, as well as opportunities to innovate around energy efficiency, grid resilience, and more sustainable data center operations.

- Liling Huang, Associate Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Dominion Energy Faculty Fellow, George Mason University
- Daniel Kociola, Senior Economic Development Market Specialist, Dominion Energy
- Jack Bidlack, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Information and Engineering Technologies,
Regional Center for Workforce Education and Training (WRC), Northern Virginia Community
College
- Phillip Sandino, Senior Vice President, Utility Development, Tract
- Moderator: Jacqueline Connor, Associate Director, University Priorities Science and
Technology Campus, George Mason University

4:10 PM – 5:00 PM

TOUR: Life Sciences and Engineering Building: A Next-Generation, Multidisciplinary Academic Laboratory Building

[10930 George Mason Circle., Manassas]

Explore a state-of-the-art facility designed to support cross-disciplinary collaboration, applied learning, and industry engagement. The tour will feature mechanical engineering capstone projects developed with local industry partners, advanced forensic science laboratories including labs that support research associated with the body farm, hands-on prototyping spaces, and the use of virtual reality technologies to advance mobility, accessibility, and human-centered design.

5:15 PM – 5:45 PM

TOUR: Biomedical Research Lab: One of 12 NIAID funded Regional Biocontainment Labs in the US

[10650 Pyramid Place, Manassas]

See firsthand the Regional Biocontainment Laboratory, which operates as a core facility supporting academia, government, and industry in advancing infectious disease research and developing new medical countermeasures. Learn about the staffing and operational models that enable a compliant, safe, and innovative research environment.

5:45 PM

Transportation back to Tempo Hotel

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Dinner and Fireside Chat with Marcus Silva

Brentsville Hall, Nova Live

Hear how a partnership between a visionary founder and the country brought a bold idea to life – transforming a historic barn and 21 acres into Nova Live, a destination entertainment hub within the Innovation District.

- Marcus Silva, President and CEO, Villagio Group
- Christina Winn, Executive Director, Prince William County Department of Economic Development and Tourism

Thank you to our sponsors!



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