



Metro Atlanta eXchange for Workforce Solutions

Q&A WITH DAVID GIGUERE, ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC)

Following MAX Minutes on May 22, 2026

Overall

MAX: One of the big themes in your presentation was that disruption isn't something coming someday — it's already happening. What signals or trends do you think community and workforce leaders should be paying the closest attention to right now?

GIGUERE: If you see layoffs, probe into whether they are attributed to AI?

MAX: When it comes to workforce disruption and AI, do you think we're underestimating how quickly things could change, or do you think some of the fears are overblown?

GIGUERE: I think we are underestimating how quickly things will change. And even if I'm off by a few years on the timeline, is it possible to be overprepared?

MAX: Looking ahead, which industries or occupations do you think are most vulnerable over the next five years? And how might that picture change over the next fifteen years?

GIGUERE: Most research points to cognitive or knowledge work being the most vulnerable in general, with entry level roles being vulnerable in the near term with mid-level roles following in the years that follow. High level roles with long tenures and decades of institutional knowledge may be the least vulnerable, but what happens when those employees retire and the pipeline of employees who would traditionally climb the ladder have all been replaced?

About White-Collar Work

MAX: You talked quite a bit about AI's growing impact on white-collar work. What kinds of cognitive or knowledge-based skills do you think will continue to be especially valuable and resilient?

GIGUERE: Jobs that are heavily regulated (attorneys, CPAs, etc), as well as jobs that straddle white-collar and blue-collar work (nursing, for instance) should be more resilient.

MAX: Are there certain white-collar jobs or career paths that people assume are "safe," but may actually be more vulnerable to automation than we realize?



GIGUERE: Concierge roles rate “high” on the December 2025 list from Microsoft Research: Working.with.AI&Measuring.the.Applicability.of.Generative.AI.to.Occupations. (<https://arxiv.org/pdf/2507.07935>).

MAX: How do you personally think about the difference between AI helping workers do their jobs better versus AI actually replacing workers altogether?

GIGUERE: This is the augmentation vs replacement question. My personal feelings are that the way I’m using AI has increased my ability to jumpstart tasks or projects that are well outside my domain or experience. It has increased my ability to conduct and synthesize research (Claude Cowork and scheduled ETR research) and improved my ability to build prototypes or proof of concept tools (Comprehensive Transportation Plan Grant Matchmaker) and expanded my ability to share concepts (custom GPTs related to Strategic Foresight).

About the Skilled Trades

MAX: Your presentation highlighted both the growing importance of skilled trades and the rapid rise of humanoid robotics. How should we think about those two trends together?

GIGUERE: For those in skilled trades, in the near term I would learn all that you can about the systems that are beginning to become available and look for their weaknesses. If you can specialize within your field, exploit these early weaknesses by extending your capabilities outside the immediate reach. If your work is specialized and low volume work taking place in an unstructured, ever changing or remote/inhospitable environment, all the better.

MAX: As AI and robotics continue to evolve, what trades or technical occupations do you think may become even more valuable in the years ahead?

GIGUERE: The single most valuable skill is your ability to reinvent yourself. If you are comfortable with being a lifelong learner and you find purpose in working, you will never be without a job.

MAX: We’ve seen examples of humanoid robots in warehouses, manufacturing, and even healthcare settings. How close do you think we really are to seeing these technologies become more common in everyday life?

GIGUERE: I watched a floor cleaning robot scoot by me at QuikTrip recently and it doesn’t not seem that long ago when human staff mopped the floor. I see delivery robots on the



sidewalk near Peachtree Center fairly regularly and it was only in 2021 that I captured a video of my first delivery bot sighting on a sidewalk in Santa Monica. I give it a few years before we see them every day.

Other

MAX: As wearable AI and smart glasses become more widespread, do you think society is truly prepared for the cultural, ethical, and privacy implications that may come with them?

GIGUERE: If convenience, coolness or social signaling outweigh the drawbacks and they are not in conflict with established norms, I think adoption will increase.

MAX: One of your closing messages was that “your humanity is your greatest asset.” In an increasingly AI-driven world, what human qualities or capabilities do you think become even more important?

GIGUERE: Your ability to reinvent yourself and have a fluid identity.

MAX: If a young person asked you for career advice today, what skills, mindsets, or capabilities would you encourage them to focus on developing?

GIGUERE: Plan on having several careers in your lifetime. Choose one that interests you today and move forward and as you develop the skills needed to become competent in that field, consider other interests and spend your nights and weekends exploring your next career. Rinse and repeat. Do not expect to hold the same job or career throughout your entire life and do not expect to return to university each time you change direction. This should feel liberating.