



Capital Region Telecommute Study

A Look Back & A Look Forward

Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency

FEBRUARY 2024

Executive Summary

The Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) Telecommute Study explores how telecommuting can impact transportation demand and reduce peak-hour traffic congestion in the four-county Capital Region.

In 2020, the COVID pandemic caused an exponential increase in telecommuting both nationally and locally. Pandemic stay-at-home orders drastically reduced daily traffic throughout the Capital region, especially during peak hours.

In the subsequent years, as communities have regained a sense of normalcy, area traffic has also rebounded to pre-COVID levels. Although working from home is no longer a public health necessity, telecommuting is now a more acceptable and implemented practice. The CRTPA is interested in using the lessons from life during the COVID-19 pandemic – namely, that implementing telecommuting programs can affect area traffic and is an effective Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy.

Building upon lessons learned about pandemic travel behavior, as well as input from regional employers, **the study demonstrates that telecommuting:**

- Creates more flexible work opportunities that attract top talent to the region.
- Reduces peak-hour congestion throughout the region.
- Supports the region's economic resilience by making employers more adaptive.

This report provides the following:

- Relevant TDM and telecommuting research.
- Findings from a review of current, pre-pandemic, and pandemic commute patterns.
- Key input received through stakeholder interviews.
- Resources for employers in the Capital Region for developing a telecommuting program.

Key outcomes presented in the report include:

- Telecommuting is an effective TDM strategy to reduce traffic congestion.
- In the post-pandemic workplace telecommuting is a more established practice.
- Telecommuting workplace programs and policies facilitate establishing and managing a telework program.
- Guidance for employers on managing remote workers is a key component to supporting partners in implementation of telecommuting programs.
- Developing evaluation framework will allow employers to monitor progress of their telecommute programs and inform future decision making.

Cover Photo Sources: Shutterstock

Thank you to the members of the Project Working Group for your participation and contributions to the Telecommute Study.



Staff from the following agencies assisted with the development of this document:

- **Apalachee Regional Planning Council RideOn**
- **City of Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality**
- **City of Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department**
- **City of Tallahassee StarMetro Transit**
- **Leon County Department of Development Services**
- **Florida State University Transportation and Parking Services**
- **Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Office of Parking & Transportation**
- **Florida Department of Transportation**



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1

How Do you Solve a Problem Like Peak-Hour Congestion?

Nobody likes sitting in traffic. To ensure roadway users can get to where they need to go efficiently, transportation authorities have turned to implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs in their jurisdictions.

An effective TDM program can:

- Alleviate traffic congestion.
- Reduce transportation-related environmental impacts.
- Stimulate economic activity and growth.

Historically, TDM program strategies have primarily focused on reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles in favor of alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit, walking, cycling, ridesharing.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, demonstrated that telecommuting is also an effective tool that advances the goals of a TDM program.

Through this study the CRTPA examined how telecommuting impacted congestion during the pandemic and investigated the feasibility of telecommuting programs as an effective strategy to address congestion and reduce demand across its four-county transportation system.



Source: Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

What Creates Traffic in CRTPA Counties?

Historically, trips to school, work, errands, or recreation generate vehicle volumes across the region (**Figure 1**).

Traveling for employment is an especially heavy contributor to peak-hour congestion. While workers can live in very rural areas of a region, jobs tend to cluster in urban city centers.

The primary job industries in the Capital Region, including government, education, and healthcare, are heavily concentrated in the City of Tallahassee and surrounding Leon County.

An analysis weighed information from the American Community Survey (ACS), travel speeds from HERE Technologies, volumes from Florida Traffic Online, and Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) data to understand the prevalence of physical commuting in the region, as well as how these commutes contribute to congested roadways.

Figure 1. Commuter Trips To, From, and Within Leon County

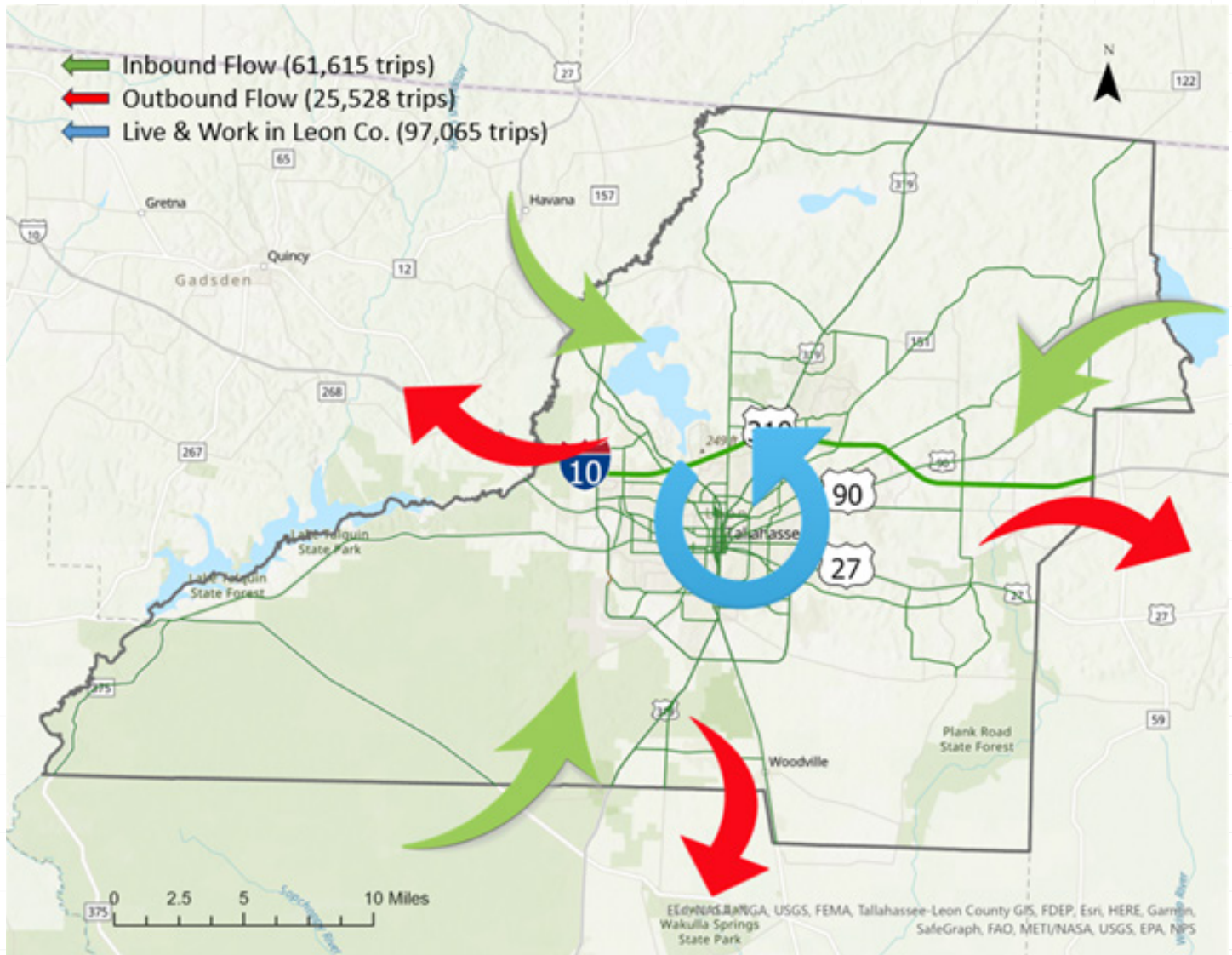
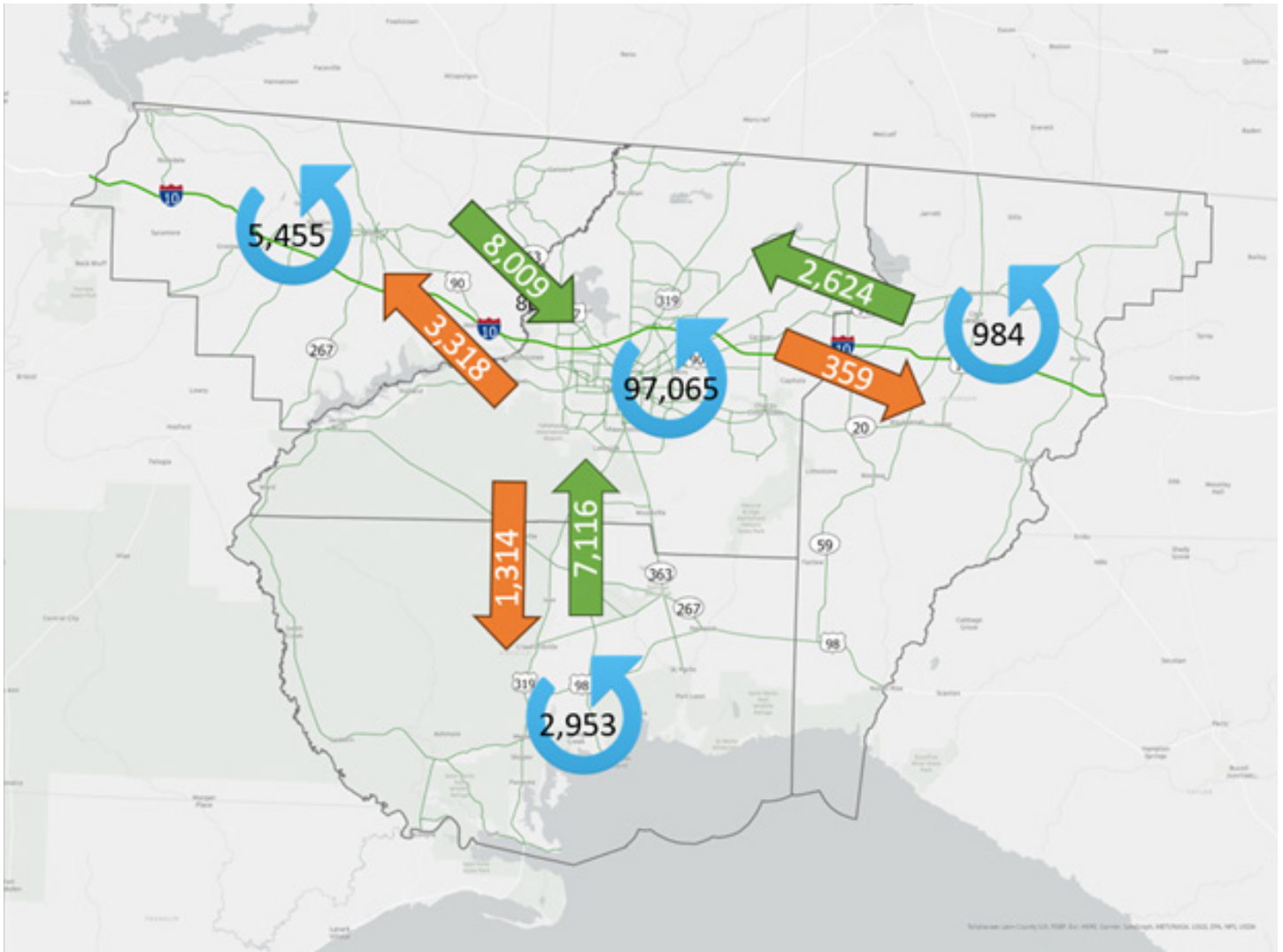


Figure 2. Commuter Flow Between All Counties in CRTPA Region



Meanwhile, for all three rural counties in the CRTPA’s planning area—Jefferson, Wakulla, and Gadsden¹—more of their residents commute to Leon County for work than commute within their counties for employment leading to longer travel distances and more congestion (**Figure 2**).²

In Leon County

53% of employees live and work within the County.

47% of employees commute to or from surrounding Counties.

¹ 2019 LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, U.S. Census Bureau.
² LEHD, 2019.



Source: Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

2

Literature Review: How Telecommuting Changes a Community

Telecommuting (also known as “remote work” or “telework”) sees employers and employees performing work tasks from a location other than a traditional office space.

Teleworkers may work a mixed or hybrid schedule (working sometimes remotely and sometimes in an office), utilize a remote work hub, or primarily work from home.

Physical trips decreased in 2020 and 2021, when COVID-19 sent nonessential workers online. The effect on congestion in the CRTPA region was most acute during the morning and evening peak hours— the prime commuting period.

Although the body of research on these questions is still developing, a review of the existing literature helps us to understand the benefits, challenges, and paradigm shifts that come with embracing telecommuting.

A “**remote work hub**” refers to a co-working space where employees from many different companies can congregate to do work.

Remote work hubs provide employees with the infrastructure and equipment of an office without requiring them to live near the office space of their company. They also provide socialization and reduce unwanted commute times.

Telecommuting Benefits Our Work Places By:

1. Improving employee retention:

Hiring and training new employees is expensive, and turnover carries a downside to team morale, client relationships, and team capacity. Strong retention maximizes the likelihood of keeping high performers and innovators, including senior staff who may have otherwise retired early.

In one survey, nearly half (46%) of respondents reported that telecommuting reduced attrition.³

2. Improving access to jobs:

Remote work may improve access to certain jobs or industries for rural workers who would otherwise have long commutes.

14% of Americans have changed jobs to shorten their commute.⁴

³ “Pros and Cons,” Global Workplace Analytics White Paper, <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/pros-cons>.

⁴ “Pros and Cons,” <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/pros-cons>.

3. Improving employee morale and work-life balance:

Telework increases flexibility and employees' quality of life. One study found that removing a commute saved workers an average of 72 minutes a day; workers invested at least part of this time back into their jobs.⁵

36% of people in one survey reported they would choose remote work over a pay raise.⁶

4. Improving employee health and reducing employee absences:

Remote workers report reduced stress and illness, and more time to exercise. Flexible hours benefit employees and employers by allowing workers to schedule appointments or run errands during the day without losing productive hours. Teleworkers return to work faster following medical absences.⁷

5. Reducing overhead:

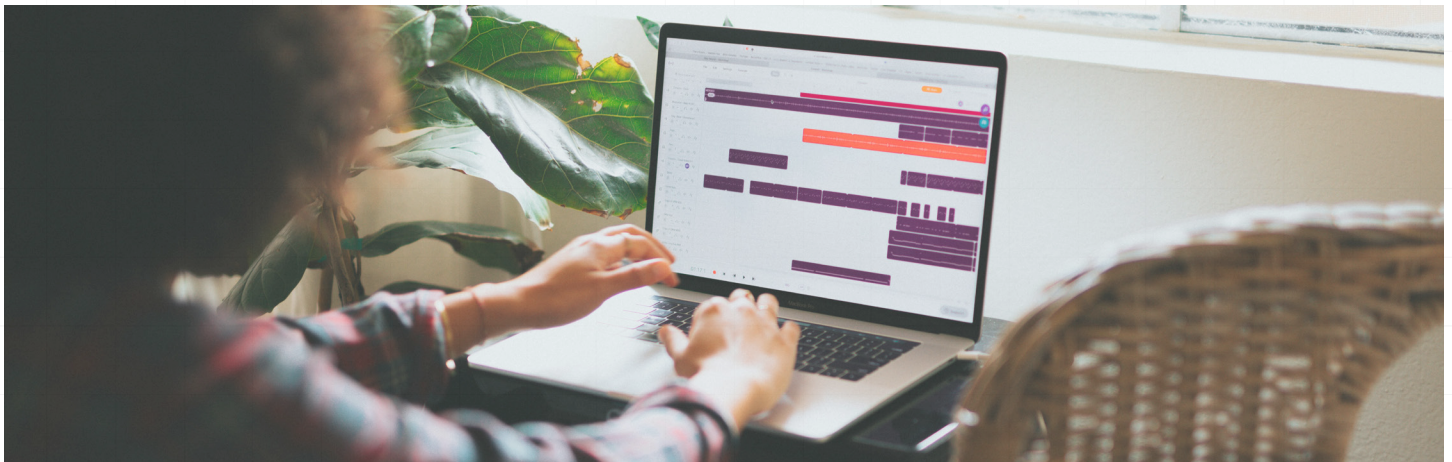
Businesses that have a larger contingent of fully remote or hybrid workers report reduced real-estate costs. Employers can estimate their cost savings using the Global Workplace Analytics Telework Workplace Savings Calculator.⁸

One source reports an average annual real estate savings of \$10,000 per full-time teleworker.⁹

6. Expanding the talent pool:

Remote work improves an employer's ability to recruit caregivers, people with mobility challenges, and other talented staff for whom going into an office regularly would be a barrier.

One study reported that 37% of employees would change jobs for the opportunity to work remotely at least one day a week.¹⁰



Source: Soundtrap on Unsplash

⁵ Cevat Giray Aksoy et al., "Time Savings When Working from Home," Becker Friedman Institute, University of Chicago, November 2023, https://bfi.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/BFI_WP_2023-03.pdf.

⁶ "Pros and Cons," <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/pros-cons>.

⁷ "Pros and Cons," <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/pros-cons>.

⁸ The U.S. Office of Personnel Management praised the GWA Calculator in a 2016 report to Congress on Federal Telework. Users must create a free account to access the "lite" version of the tool but can pay for a more comprehensive version.

⁹ "Pros and Cons," <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/pros-cons>.

¹⁰ Barrero et al., "The Evolution of Work From Home," Journal of Economic Perspectives, Vol 37, No. 4 (2023), 23-50, <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/telecommuting-statistics>.



Source: Adobe Stock

Telecommuting Benefits Our Economy By:

- 1. Improving regional resilience:**
Where feasible, telework enables employers and employees to continue working should an event interrupt onsite operations, such as a natural disaster.
- 2. Increasing productivity time:**
Collectively, physical commutes cost drivers in the Capital Region hundreds of thousands of productive hours.

The average commuter in Tallahassee loses 23 hours a year to work-related travel.¹¹

Telecommuting Benefits Our Roadways By:

- 1. Reducing congestion:**
Every one percent reduction in vehicles yields a three-fold decrease in congestion.¹²
- 2. Lowering stress on transportation infrastructure:**
Lessening demand on transportation infrastructure will improve its lifespan.

Telecommuting Benefits Our Environment By:

- 1. Enhancing air quality and yielding other climate benefits:**
The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District determined that pandemic related shelter-in-place restrictions led to a 28% reduction in particulate matter pollution. In response the agency committed to promoting telework—and teleconferences for public meetings where [California's] Brown Act requirements are still met—for its air quality and climate benefits.¹³

¹¹ City Ranking List, INRIX 2022 Global Traffic Scorecard, INRIX Institute, <https://inrix.com/scorecard/#city-ranking-list>.

¹² "Pros and Cons," <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/pros-cons>.

¹³ <https://www.airquality.org/Communications/Documents/AQ-Benefits-Teleworking-Packet-02-28-23.pdf>

Telecommuting Strains Our Workplaces By:

1. Limiting opportunities for socialization:

Work from home can be isolating, particularly for people who thrive on interpersonal interaction. Employee loneliness could result in reduced productivity, health, and retention.

2. Dispersing data security and IT needs:

Telework naturally invites more technological vulnerabilities into company networks, as staff need to remotely access servers. Software learning curves (for programs like Zoom WebEx, and Microsoft Teams) may result in increased demand on IT resources.

3. Limiting employer oversight:

Some managers report that oversight is more challenging when employees are remote.

4. Siloing collaborators and team members:

Work from home may hamper spontaneous or effective collaboration.

5. Increasing distractions during the workday:

Lack of an appropriate and comfortable telework office space may expose the teleworker to outside demands (such as children or chores), reducing productivity.

Telecommuting Changes:

1. What “productivity” means:

Perception of worker productivity changes depending on the survey referenced and likely by job type, industry, and the personality and homelife of the employee.¹⁴ A study by the Miami Dade Transportation Planning Agency (TPO) identified lower productivity as a top reported challenge in 2020.¹⁵ Whereas employees in a San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) study reported positive impacts to productivity in both 2021 and 2023. It is notable that the 2020 survey was at the height of COVID with many variables likely impacting productivity (such as school closures and fresh acclimation to work from home).

2. What trips occur:

Telework might alleviate peak-hour congestion, but research suggests that its ultimate relationship to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) may be more complex. Teleworkers may live further from their offices, so if they ever do commute, they travel longer distances. Remote workers have also been found to take more unlinked, discretionary trips during the day, instead of compiling all errands into their physical commute home from work.^{16, 17}

¹⁴ One study of employees at a travel agency in China who were randomly assigned the ability to work from home found that the teleworkers were 13% more productive than the control group of office workers. Nicholas Bloom et al., “Does Working from Home Work? Evidence from a Chinese Experiment,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 130, Issue 1 (2015), 165–218, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qju032>.

¹⁵ <https://www.miamidadetpo.org/library/studies/mdtpo-telecommute-study-final-report-2021-01.pdf>

¹⁶ Andrew Hook et al., “A systemic review of the energy and climate impacts of teleworking,” *2020 Environ. Res. Lett.*, <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ab8a84/pdf>.

¹⁷ Pengyu Zhu et al., “Metropolitan size and the impacts of telecommuting on personal travel,” *Transportation* 45, 385–414 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11116-017-9846-3>.

How Do Commutes Play Into “Productivity”?

Research in the Journal of Economic Perspectives suggests that commutes are the key to understanding the difference between employer and employee perceptions of productivity. Employees tend to consider their commute as time dedicated to work; an employee whose commute is half an hour in each direction and who spends eight hours in the office considers nine hours of their total day dedicated to work. However, a manager only sees that the employee has accomplished their regular workload in their standard amount of time (eight hours). An employee that works from home doesn't lose the hour of their day to a commute, meaning that their understanding of their workday (eight hours) aligns with their employer's.¹⁸

How Has Telecommuting Changed the Capital Region?

According to ACS data, the number of people teleworking in Leon County increased from 5.5% in 2019 to 19.3% in 2021. Previous year-over-year increases were minimal, from 3.5% of the population working from home in 2017 to 5.3% in 2018.

Figure 3 shows the rate of remote work by occupation in Leon County as estimated by ACS data.¹⁹ The top four occupation groupings (administrative support, management, sales, and education) all have around 25% of employees working at least one day a week from home. Management, the occupation with the second-highest number of employees in Leon County, has approximately 44% of its employees on a full or hybrid telework schedule.



Source: Adobe Stock

¹⁸ Barrero et al.

¹⁹ At the time of this analysis, the relevant 2022 ACS dataset was predicted data. This study uses 2021 finalized ACS numbers to better reflect existing conditions.

Figure 3. Leon County Remote Work by Industry (2022 Estimates)

Occupation Grouping	Number of Employees	Works From Home	Hybrid	Works On-Site
Management	16,675	33.21 %	10.89 %	55.90 %
Business and financial operations	10,998	45.8 %	14.27 %	39.93 %
Computer and mathematical	7,237	60.17 %	9.76 %	30.07 %
Architecture and engineering	1,373	32.25 %	12.93 %	54.82 %
Life, physical, and social science	2,399	26.48 %	16.23 %	57.28 %
Community and social service	2,776	25.45 %	18.82 %	55.73 %
Legal	4,713	42.33 %	15.38 %	42.29 %
Educational instruction, and library	13,086	17.23 %	6.3 %	76.47 %
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	3,445	42.39 %	8.38 %	49.22 %
Healthcare practitioners and technical	11,181	9.83 %	4.06 %	86.11 %
Healthcare support	3,462	15.91 %	N	82.93 %
Protective Service	2,985	7.36 %	N	88.66 %
Food preparation and serving related	9,237	2.84 %	N	96.91 %
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	2,580	6 %	N	92.64 %
Personal care and service	3,541	14.62 %	N	82.44 %
Sales and related	16,250	20.23 %	4.22 %	75.55 %
Office and administrative support	22,491	22.46 %	4.42 %	73.12 %
Farming, fishing, and forestry	683	N	N	88.11 %
Construction and extraction	3,327	5.13 %	N	93.46 %
Installation, maintenance, and repair	4,051	7.23 %	N	91.63 %
Production	3,244	7.23 %	N	92.03 %
Transportation	3,294	6.22 %	N	92.72 %
Material moving	4,991	3.55 %	N	96.25 %
Total	154,019			

Employees by Occupation Grouping (ACS B24060: Occupation by Class of Worker for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over); Census/Employment/Industry and Occupation.

Figure 4 shows the rate of telework by county and by year pulled from Replica.²⁰ Data for 2020 was unavailable due to the volatility of the year, however we can assume that the rate of telework was significantly higher in 2020 (likely more than double compared to 2021). This chart then shows a relative stabilization of telework rates since peak-pandemic and that even with significantly higher rates of remote work adoption than pre-pandemic congestion has returned.

Professional Services, healthcare, transportation, manufacturing, and IT industries to Tallahassee. These industries, with some exceptions, are largely feasible for telework.
 -Stakeholder Interview with OEV

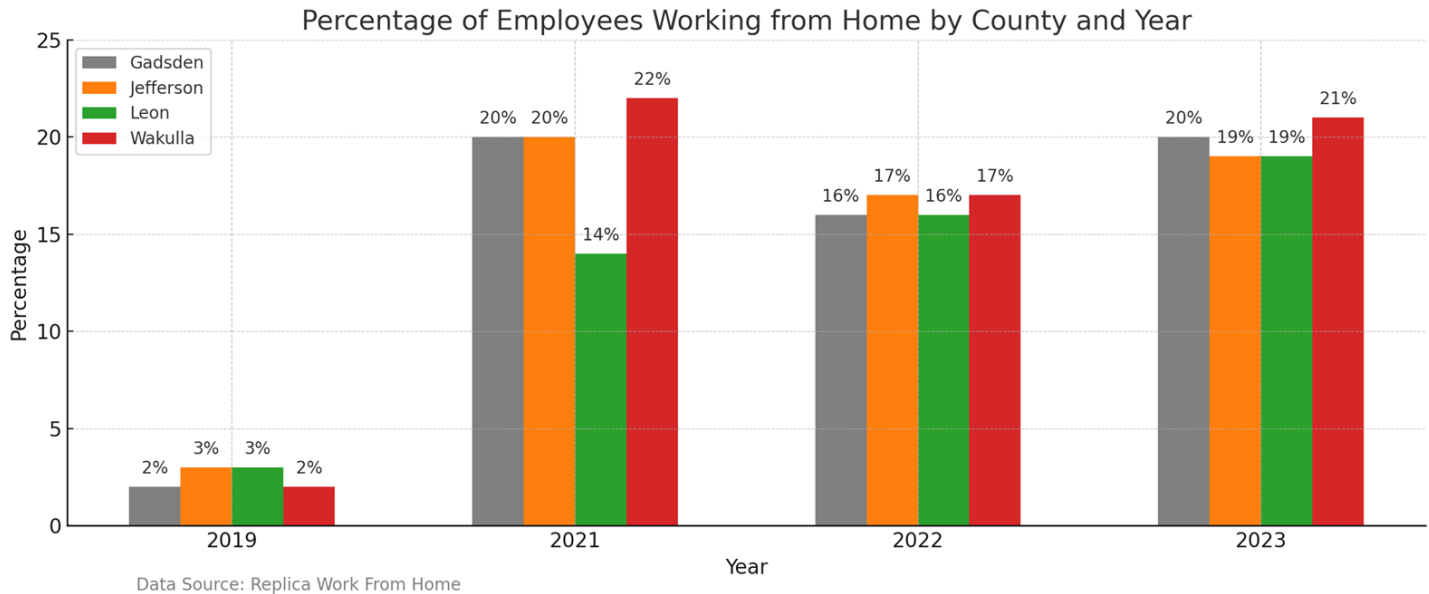
Figure 5 breaks down the 44,000 jobs in the CRTPA area that potentially allow for telecommuting either fully or in a hybrid manner.

Possible metrics that can track telework readiness, adoption, costs, and benefits include:

- Average commute times.
- Number of teleworkers in region and average value of commute-time savings.
- Number of employers by size which have a telework policy.
- Amount of office vacancies.

Building upon this report, the CRTPA could consider implementing a regularly distributed survey within the region to track sentiments and availability of remote work by employers and employees. The SANDAG study cited earlier and highlighted as a case study later in this report—is a good example of how this might be implemented.

Figure 4. Percentage of Employees Working from Home (Replica)



²⁰ Replica is a software that incorporates anonymized data from a variety of sources like the US Census Bureau, mobile location data, land use, economic activity, and others to create a simulation of an area to model how people get around, where they are going, and when they travel.

Figure 5. Available Regional Remote Jobs by Industry

Occupation Grouping	Full Remote Jobs	Hybrid Jobs
Management	5,538	1,816
Business and financial operations	5,037	1,569
Computer and mathematical	4,355	706
Architecture and engineering	443	178
Life, physical, and social science	635	389
Community and social service	706	522
Legal	1,995	725
Educational instruction, and library	2,255	824
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1,460	289
Healthcare practitioners and technical	1,099	454
Healthcare support	551	0
Protective Service	220	0
Food preparation and serving related	262	0
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	155	0
Personal care and service	518	0
Sales and related	3,287	686
Office and administrative support	5,051	994
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0	0
Construction and extraction	171	0
Installation, maintenance, and repair	293	0
Production	235	0
Transportation	205	0
Material moving	177	0
Total	34,647	9,153

Source: Employees by Occupation Grouping (ACS B24060: Occupation by Class of Worker for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over) x Percent of Employees by Occupation Working from Home (Census/Employment/ Industry and Occupation)

How Has Congestion Changed Since the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Major commuter corridors in Leon County experienced significant reduction in volumes and delay in both peak and off-peak hours in 2020, when COVID-19 telecommute practices were at their height. Although COVID-19 remains a concern, we are no longer in the acute phase of the pandemic; as such, traffic has steadily crept back to pre-COVID conditions. Today in the region, most major employers have resumed normal operations, and consequently peak-hour congestion has also returned, nearing the highest levels the region has witnessed. 2022 Volumes on I-10, Blountstown Hwy, Meridian Rd, and Apalachee Pkwy are within seven percent of 2019 counts, according to data pulled from Florida Traffic Online.

While COVID-19 is no longer a public health emergency, the lessons it taught us about work and telecommuting are likely to stay with us. Although not all peak-hour trips are commute related, we know now that strategically reducing transportation demand by commuters can have a significant impact on congestion in the four-county region.

Additionally, although remote work is not at the peak it was during the pandemic, many employers are more willing to expand telework options to employees than they were before the pandemic. A 2020 statewide survey of employees and employers found that the percentage of teleworking employees jumped from 31% to 60% at the height of the pandemic. After the pandemic, the number dropped to 47%.²¹

The CRTPA, as well as its stakeholders and local employers, can play a productive role in improving regional travel and in reducing congestion. Support for telecommuting, though diminished, has remained strong since the pandemic first made it a necessity.

As such, the opportunity to capitalize on telecommuting's remaining momentum by studying its benefits and understanding what employers in the region find effective and challenging about implementing remote work policies.

“Employees who utilize telecommuting often demand less compensation, leading to cost savings for employers.”
— Miami-Dade TPO Telecommute Study (2021)

Key Takeaways:

1. The CRTPA can encourage buy-in to a telework program by communicating the benefits of telework to employers and direct them to available resources, such as RideOn or as provided in the study.
2. There are approximately 40,000 employees working fully remote or hybrid schedules in the region.
3. Successful telecommuting programs require structure and resources, including equipment, childcare, and channels for dialogue between employer and employee.
4. Centering telework in a TDM program can incentivize employers to prioritize sustainability, active transportation, and modal choice in their projects.

To learn more about the benefits of telecommuting and existing local, state, and federal TDM policies see Appendix A: Literature Review.

²¹ “Miami-Dade TPO Telecommute Study Final Report,” Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization, January 2021, <https://www.miamidadetpo.org/library/studies/mdtpto-telecommute-study-final-report-2021-01.pdf>.



Source: Kittelson & Associates, Inc.



Source: Jared Murray on Unsplash

Case Study

San Diego Region and Telework Sentiments 2021 and 2023

The San Diego Association of Governments surveyed businesses and employees in the San Diego region in 2021²² and 2023²³ to understand the changing trends in remote work policies, practices, and sentiment. While each region's experience with telework is unique and nuanced, the SANDAG findings may provide insights into how telework could affect the CRTPA region.

²² "Remote Work Policies and Practices: Surveys of Businesses and Employees in the San Diego Region," SANDAG, April 2021, <https://www.sandag.org/-/media/SANDAG/Documents/PDF/data-and-research/applied-research-and-performance-monitoring/surveys/remote-work-policies-and-practices-survey-2021-04-16.pdf>.

²³ "Remote Work Policies and Practices: Tracking Surveys of Businesses and Employees in the San Diego Region," SANDAG, June 2023, <https://www.sandag.org/-/media/SANDAG/Documents/PDF/data-and-research/applied-research-and-performance-monitoring/surveys/remote-work-tracking-survey-2023-11-06.pdf>.

SANDAG CASE STUDY FINDINGS:

1. Telecommuting has remained beyond the worst of the pandemic.

- The percentage of employees who report being able to work remotely is higher than pre-pandemic but lower than in 2021.

2. Hybrid or mixed telework schedules are most prevalent.

- Roughly one in 10 employees say they are fully remote.
- In 2023, 37% of businesses allowed their hybrid employees the flexibility to choose their remote days.
- Meanwhile, in 2023, only 15% of businesses indicated that employees have set days they work from home.

3. When it comes to offering remote work, employer size matters.

- Businesses with one to four employees are less likely to offer remote work. When they do offer it, however, they offer it to a larger share of their employees.
- In 2023, 30% of smaller businesses reported offering telecommute opportunities to more employees.
- Some larger businesses (50 employees or more) are moving towards bringing employees into the office. Of the larger employers, 61% reported making telework available to fewer employees since 2021.

4. Businesses are acclimating to telecommuting.

- Nearly half (46%) of businesses reported feeling better about remote work now than during the pandemic.
- Roughly the same percent (47%) reported reducing their square footage or terminating leases as a result of telecommuting.
- While businesses reported a variety of perspectives on the benefits of telework, they concurred that the practice improved employee morale, business overhead, and the ability to retain good employees. This sentiment grew from 2021 to 2023. In fact, 24% of employers reported that inflexible or stringent remote work policies have negatively impacted their ability to hire and retain qualified employees.

5. Challenges remain.

- Employers continue to view remote work as negatively impacting teamwork, productivity, communication, and the ability to identify and manage poor performers.²⁴

²⁴ All case study findings come from “Remote Work in the San Diego Region. Transportation Committee Presentation,” SANDAG, December 1, 2023, Microsoft PowerPoint - Item 6 - Telework 2023.pptx (legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com); “Infobit: Remote Work in the San Diego Region Post-Pandemic,” SANDAG, November 2023, <https://www.sandag.org/-/media/SANDAG/Documents/PDF/data-and-research/applied-research-and-performance-monitoring/surveys/infobits-remote-work-2023-11-06.pdf>; and “Remote Work Policies and Practices: Tracking Surveys of Businesses and Employees in the San Diego Region,” SANDAG.

3

Local and Regional Voices on Telecommuting and TDM

Data offers crucial insights into the way telecommuting can shape communities, but it doesn't tell the whole story.

To get an on-the-ground understanding of how increased telework would affect the region, the CRTPA conducted interviews with stakeholders who have relevant experience with telecommuting. The stakeholders include partner agencies and employers.

Partner Agencies

- Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality (OEV)
- Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) RideOn
- Central Florida Commuter Services reThink Your Commute

Employers

- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU)
- Florida State University (FSU)

The perspectives from these partner agencies and local employers offer insight to the opportunities and challenges unique to implementing a telecommuting programs in the Capital Region. This section summarizes key takeaways from those stakeholder interviews.

Partner Agency Interview Key Highlights

- One of the Leon County's biggest private employers, Danfoss TurboCor, requires everyone to work in person. (OEV)
- Unemployment in Leon County hovers around three percent, putting employees and job seekers in a position of leverage and allowing them to negotiate telecommuting as part of a compensation package. (OEV)
- Commercial office space and mixed-use vacancy rates have declined post-pandemic in Leon County. (OEV)
- OEV is attempting to attract professional services, healthcare, transportation, manufacturing, and IT to Tallahassee. With a few exceptions, most of these industries allow for telecommuting. (OEV)
- There is a balance between obligating employees to report in an office and giving them volunteer opportunities to report. (ARPC)
- A significant number of Central Florida businesses have a hybrid policy, allowing employees to work from home some days of the week, but the current push is to get staff back in the office. (Central Florida Commuter Services)

- Employer engagement on TDM strategies like vanpooling and ridesharing were identified as primary approaches in lessening the number of commuters. Engagement includes discussing workplace needs to develop a telecommuting policy that meets unique employer context (Central Florida Commuter Services)
- Lake Nona was identified as a community intentionally equipped to allow people to work from home because of its significant investment in broadband. (Central Florida Commuter Services)
- Several stakeholders requested or suggested development of a toolkit that could be provided to employers to assist with managing remote workers.

Employer Interview Key Highlights

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY (FAMU)

- FAMU is evaluating peer strategies to inform the development of its own approach to telecommuting.
- Many FAMU departments allow staggered work schedules.
- FAMU has no formal policy with regards to providing teleworkers with internet or equipment for an in-house office setup.

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY (FSU)

- People working for the university, outside of teaching and hands-on positions, are afforded opportunities to work from home.
- FSU allows employees to opt in to hybrid work schedules, with positions allocating three in-office work days and two telework days per week. This approach started as a pilot during the pandemic and is now evolving into policy.
- Prior to memorializing this approach to work scheduling, FSU also researched what other universities are doing elsewhere to assess effectiveness.
- In order to facilitate work-life balance, FSU also offers staggered work schedules or four-tens (working 10-hour days four days a week).
- FSU offers fully remote positions when recruiting competitive positions or for positions that struggle to retain employees. FSU provides equipment (such as a computer and monitors) and an internet allowance for people hired into fully remote positions. These resources are not provided to employees who opt in to telework, as the university provides equipment for these workers on campus.

Case Study— Developments in Florida Telecommuting

Florida Department of Transportation:

The “reThink Your Commute” program encourages businesses and employees to collaboratively explore new ways of arriving to and being at work. The program offers a range of TDM services and resources which support commuters and employers in adopting smart transportation solutions, including a telework consulting showcase.

Miami-Dade TPO Telecommute Study: In 2021, the Miami-Dade TPO Telecommute Study found that 30% of employees in Miami-Dade County already work flexible schedules, including telecommuting. The study summarizes the thoughts of employers, students, and employees who were asked about their attitudes toward telework pre-pandemic, during the pandemic and anticipated attitude post-pandemic. The survey also identifies the top benefits and challenges to remote work as perceived by community stakeholders. Benefits included better work-life balance and higher work productivity. Challenges included difficulty with supervising and socializing.

Florida Employee Handbook Policy

2023 Update: The updated 2023 Florida Employee Handbook Policy states that an employee’s choice of workplace does not undermine the employer’s control over matters such as contracts, termination, and related issues.

Florida State Employee Telework

Program: State employees can telework under Florida Statute Chapter 110, Section 171. The regulations require that every agency implementing a telework program must assess all existing positions and identify those positions that the agency considers suitable for telework. Agencies must establish criteria for assessing performance of remote workers. The policies protect the equal rights of teleworkers as compared to non-teleworking employees, such as eligibility for advancement and compensation for overtime and travel reimbursement.

Full literature review can be found in Appendix A.

Looking Ahead: Modeling Region's Future with Telecommuting

Models can help us visualize how different hypothetical real-world scenarios could impact travel conditions. Although they can yield insight into future conditions, models are neither perfect nor precise, and their findings should be considered as only one data point of many when making decisions.

MODELED SCENARIOS:

It is helpful to model different scenarios to determine a range of potential outcomes. In this case, three assumed telecommuting saturation rates were chosen to represent low, medium, and high rates of telework in the future.

- **Low (15% of total regional workforce)²⁵:**
Based on the telework rate for Leon County in 2022.
- **Medium (20% of total regional workforce):**
Assumes partial implementation of policy incentives and support structures enabling/encouraging a slight increase of telework adoption.
- **High (25% of total regional workforce):**
Assumes policy incentives and telecommuting technology advancing to support increased telework adoption.



Source: ergonomofis on Unsplash

²⁵ As reported by Replica. Differences in the final modeled telework rate and the telework rate in the Replica figure for Leon County are due to rounding.

How Do Different Telework Adoption Rates Affect Traffic Volumes Overall in 2045 By County?

The Northwest Florida Regional Planning Model developed by FDOT District 3 uses a roadway network that includes all improvements planned to be completed by 2045. When considering traffic on all types of roadway facilities in each county, Wakulla County is projected to have the greatest reduction in vehicle volumes for each scenario, and Gadsden County the least.

Different types of trips are taken on different roadway types. Minor arterials and collectors are intended to serve more localized traffic, while major arterials and divided highways have

higher speeds, serve more vehicles, and are more appropriate for longer trips. Collectors are estimated to experience the largest percent decrease of traffic volumes in Leon County, whereas divided arterials are estimated to experience the largest percent decrease in Wakulla County (Figure 6). Overall volume reductions by scenario are shown by the blue bars in Figure 7.

While fewer vehicles on the road can be equated with less congestion, one of the telling model outputs is the number of vehicle hours saved (Figure 8). Leon County, because it's the CRTPA county with the most vehicles on its roads, is projected to save the largest number of vehicle hours in the 25% adoption scenario—roughly two and a half years' worth.

Figure 6. Volume Reduction by Facility and Scenario

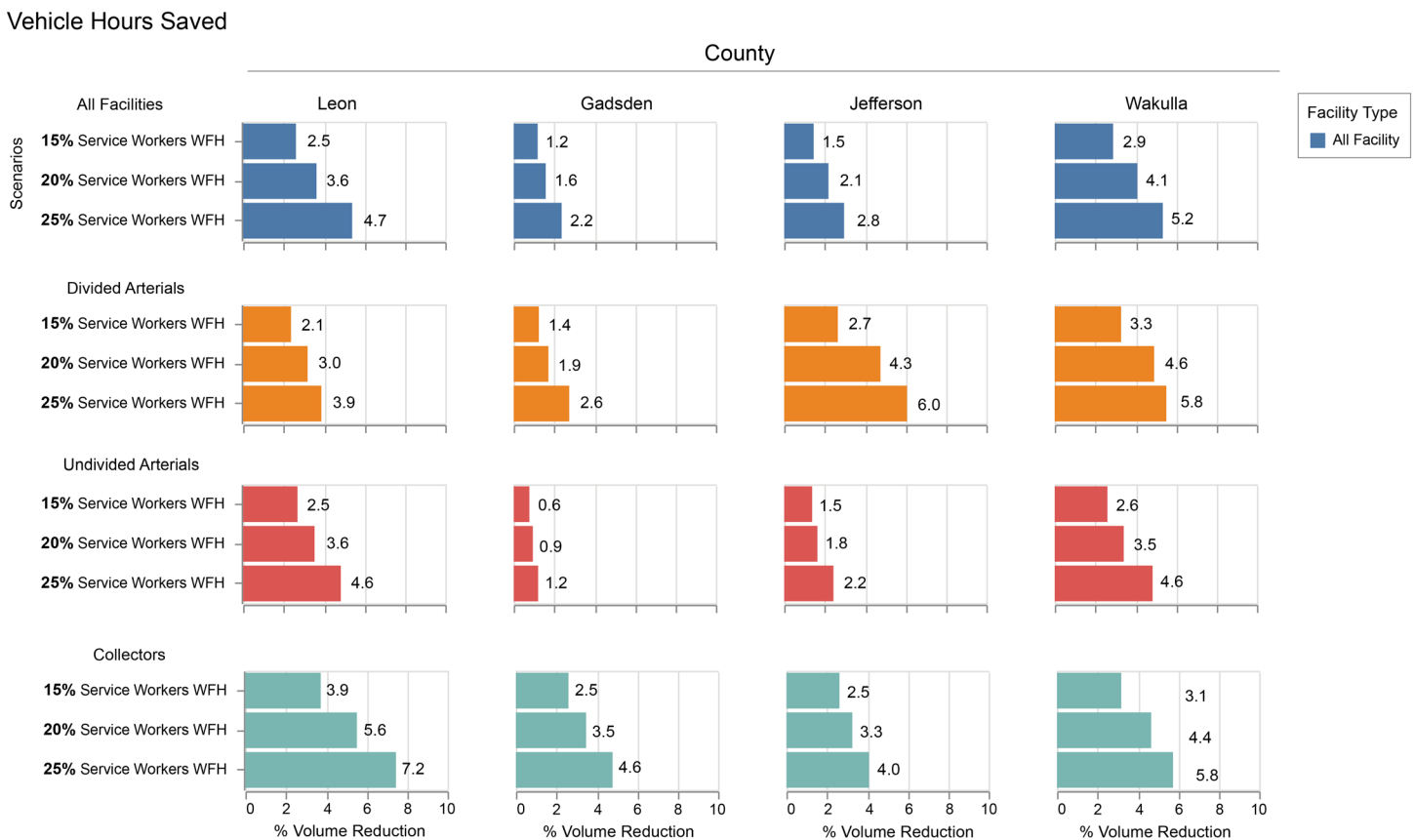


Figure 7. Traffic Volume Reduction by County and Scenario

Traffic Volume Reduction

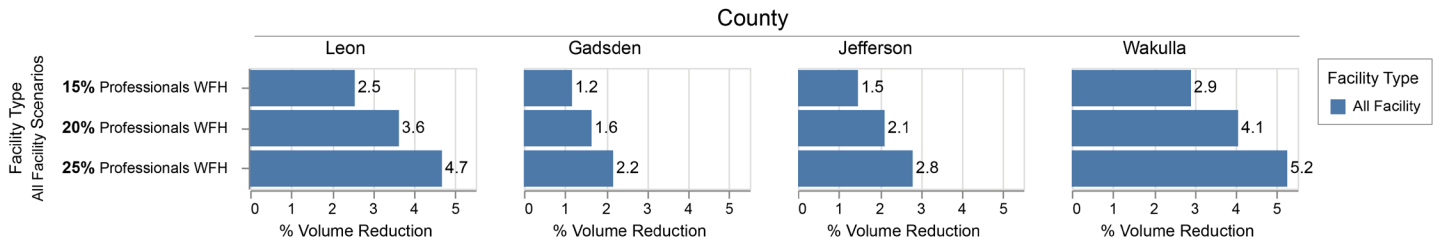
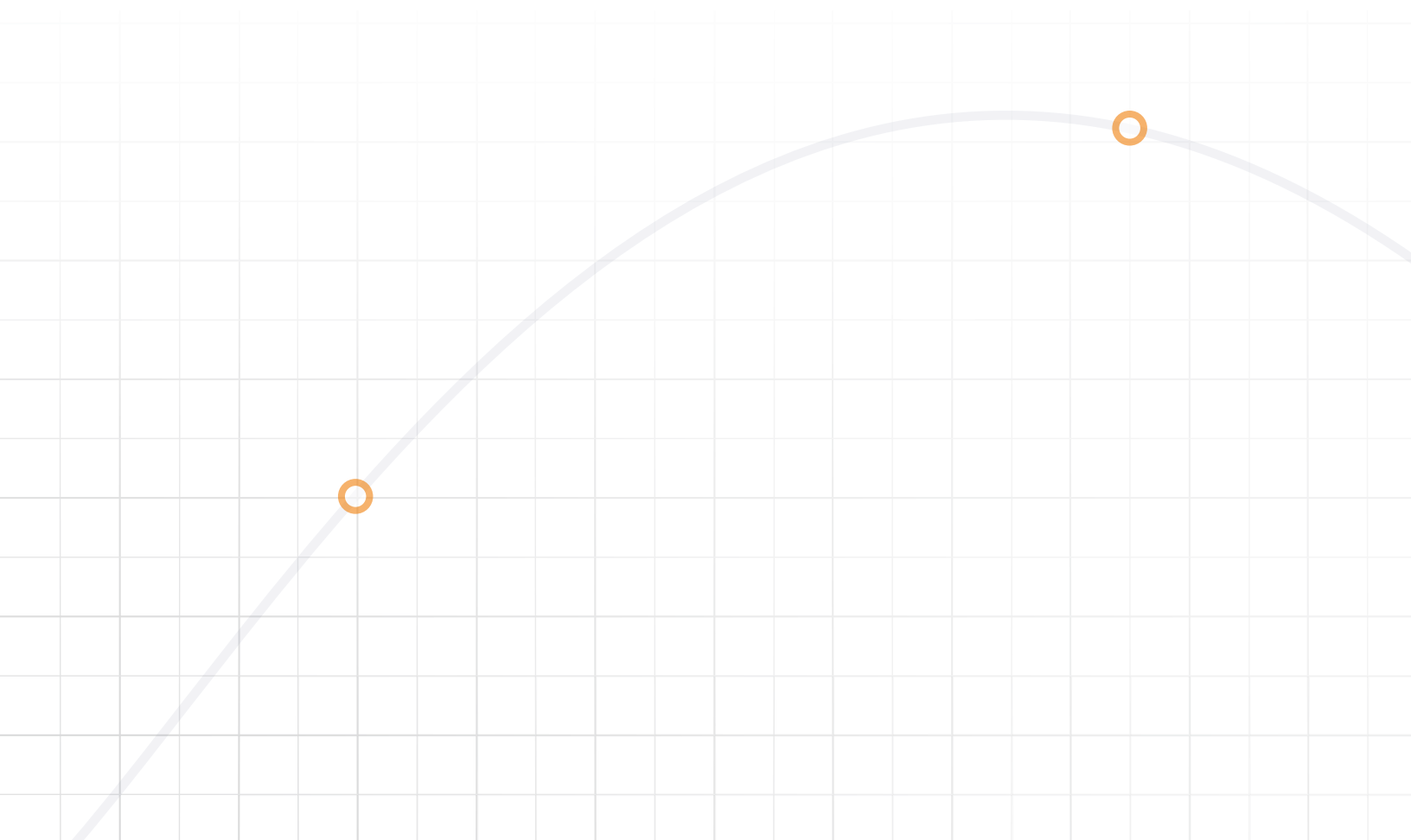
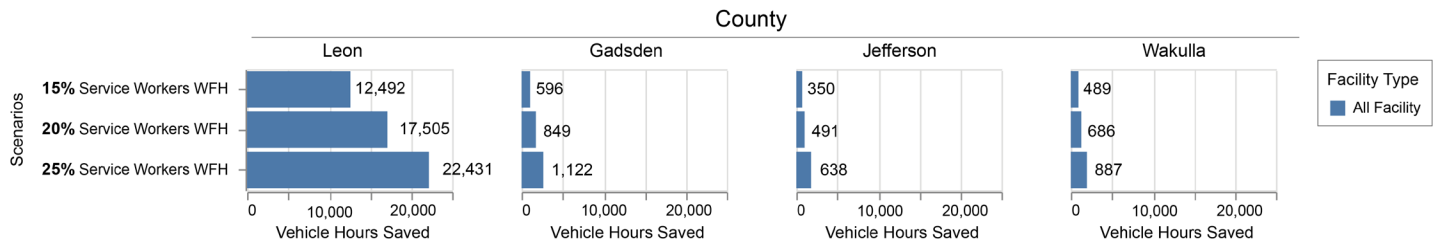


Figure 8. Vehicle Hours Saved by County and Scenario

Vehicle Hours Saved



4

Recommendations

Traffic congestion has economic costs, delays commuters, impacts air quality, and causes mental stress. Jurisdictions and employers can use TDM strategies to combat these adverse community and personal impacts, whether through encouraging alternate travel modes, different travel patterns, or reducing single-occupancy vehicle use.

The pandemic demonstrated that telecommuting is another viable, scalable TDM strategy that productively reduces commuter-related congestion in the region. Although the pandemic built a rapid telework scaffolding for employers, if an employer chooses to implement a comprehensive, cohesive telecommuting program in the long term (as opposed to as a stopgap during an emergency), the following recommendations should provide a baseline roadmap for implementation.

- 1 Set Your Goals**
- 2 Add Some Definition to Your Vision**
- 3 Craft Your Toolkit**
- 4 Set an Evaluation Framework**
- 5 Shout it From the Rooftops!**

1 First Thing's First: Set Your Goals

Successful remote work is inherently dependent upon context. The availability of broadband, the makeup of major employers in the region, and the availability of a separate workspace at home away from distractions are just a few of the many factors which influence the feasibility of at-scale telework adoption in community. Where some regions may use telework to reduce climate impacts, others may use the strategy to bring jobs to rural workers or improve economic competitiveness.

The CRTPA has documented that telework reduces peak-hour congestion. The purpose of the report is not only to assess teleworking impacts on the transportation network, but also to provide employers with relevant material on developing, guiding, and refining a telework program. Clear goals and objectives with milestones are critical to assessing the effectiveness of any effort.

2 Next: Add Some Definition to Your Vision

To develop and implement a telecommuting program successfully, **know your stakeholders.** Who are the target industries? What are their resource and communication needs? What are their limitations? Are there any underrepresented stakeholders who can contribute a valuable perspective? Consider establishing an advisory committee with clearly defined roles and responsibilities; this committee will give the program visibility and legitimacy as well as a space for stakeholders to provide key perspectives.

3 Then: Craft Your Toolkit

The literature review, case studies, and stakeholder interviews reveal the challenges facing the adoption of telework. **Preparing employers and stakeholders with “toolkit essentials” can help simplify the integration of telework into their workflows.**

4 Set an Evaluation Framework

Set performance criteria that match the program goals and objectives. Monitoring outcomes against milestones ensures that employers can track trends and provide a measuring stick for accountability.

Note that it may be valuable to consider the potential for unintended consequences and how to proactively spot them. For example, some studies have shown that telework is associated with decreased peak-hour congestion but that it increases discretionary midday trips, which creates an overall increase in vehicle miles traveled. In addition, current land uses and future planning should consider the implications of a future where nearly one in four people works from home. Developing smaller office spaces and increasing mixed land use can prevent localities from becoming the “ghost towns” that business districts have become in the age of popularized telework.

5 Finally: Shout it From the Rooftops!

It's not always enough to be a repository of resources. Proactively educating employers on the benefits of telework and making resources available that fit their needs will increase the likelihood of adoption in the region. Understand local employer needs and what additional resources may need to be developed to address their concerns or overcome their limitations.

Toolkit for Teleworker Success

- **Equipment:** A one-time equipment fund and/or internet stipend provides equitable access to needed supplies. Employers may consider supplying employees with equipment (such as a laptop, webcam, headset, microphone, and/or monitor) or providing a list of IT-approved remote work gear.
- **Scheduling:** Alternative scheduling comes in many forms, from staggered start times and four-tens, to hybrid telework with at least one weekday in-office, to fully remote. Employees that have the option to telework and to choose their remote days may have higher job satisfaction and/or be willing to accept reduced salary and benefits compensation. Opting in allows employees to optimize the effectiveness of telecommuting by choosing a schedule that works for their unique needs.
- **Training and support:** Telework comes with a learning curve thanks to its unique IT and task-reporting procedures, reliance on software and equipment, risk of isolation and siloing, and home distractions. Companies should make sure to proactively provide training and easy tech support to remote workers.
- **Open communication and socialization:** Communication is key! Prepare workplace infrastructure that allows for easy dialogue between employees and aim to understand what resources employees need to succeed in a telework position. Co-working spaces, which are often nearer to the employee than their physical office, can reduce isolation.

Toolkit for Employer Success

- **Adopt telework policies:** These will guide how telework will be implemented by the organization. The policy can include a rubric to screen employees for potential success as a teleworker. Telework policies can address the purpose of the operation, provide definitions, identify positions eligible for

telework, address equipment and security needs, and establish requirements and procedures for teleworker.

- **Sample employee agreements:** Especially for hybrid, fully remote, and staggered schedules. Agreements should include performance measures and regular (quarterly or annual) renewal clauses (see **Figure 9**).
- **Sample workplace arrangements:** Especially for hot desking (a hybrid workplace system where employees have the ability to use available desks at different times) and remote work hub arrangements. Include a breakdown of the benefits, costs, and limitations of each arrangement.
- **Data security:** As telework moves work online and into the cloud, companies grow more at risk to cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Data security is routinely identified as an obstacle for employers considering telework. Firms should complete an assessment of their network vulnerabilities and ability to deploy telework capability at scale. Employees should receive regular data security training and cybersecurity competency assessments.
- **Guidance for managing remote workers:** A primary apprehension of employers considering telework is their inability to monitor an employee's productivity while teleworking. Providing guidance on this question can set expectations for routine check-in meetings to review and discuss specific work assignments, due dates, and productivity. Expectations for employee responsiveness and communication protocols can also be a part of the guidance.
- **Broadband access:** Access to quality internet service is crucial to successful telework. When implementing a telecommute program it is essential to assess broadband coverage and level of service for viability of remote work. Encouraging employees to remote work in work hubs can combat coverage gaps.

Figure 9. Example Telework Feasibility Assessment for Rutgers Employees

RUTGERS
University Human Resources

**Feasibility Assessment
Telecommuting Policy**

This document is used to help the supervisor determine the feasibility of a particular position and/or employee to be engaged in a telecommuting agreement. The document will also assess the employee's and supervisor's work styles and determine if the styles would support a telecommuting arrangement.

Name of Telecommuter: _____
 Position Title: _____
 Name of Supervisor: _____
 Department/Unit: _____

Job Assignments and Duties

The position must be classified as "NL" (not subject to overtime) Managerial, Professional, Supervisory or Confidential position.

List the key duties and percentage of time allocated to each duty.

1. _____ % _____
 2. _____ % _____
 3. _____ % _____
 4. _____ % _____
 5. _____ % _____

Employee Assessment

This section will help you determine if the position's key duties lend themselves to telecommuting.

Do key duties require ongoing access to equipment, materials, and files that can only be accessed on Rutgers property? Yes No
 Do key duties require extensive face-to-face contact with supervisors, other employees, clients, or the public on Rutgers property? Yes No
 Do key duties require extensive time in meetings or performing work on Rutgers property? Yes No

Supporting Policies

Although an effective tool to address peak-hour congestion, a telework program is not the only TDM measure. A comprehensive TDM program is multifaceted and multipronged, employing complementary measures to encourage alternative modes such as carpooling, vanpooling, and transit. Educational campaigns are a great way to supplement efforts to mode shift, and proactively making alternative modes more accessible to residents can help incentivize their use.

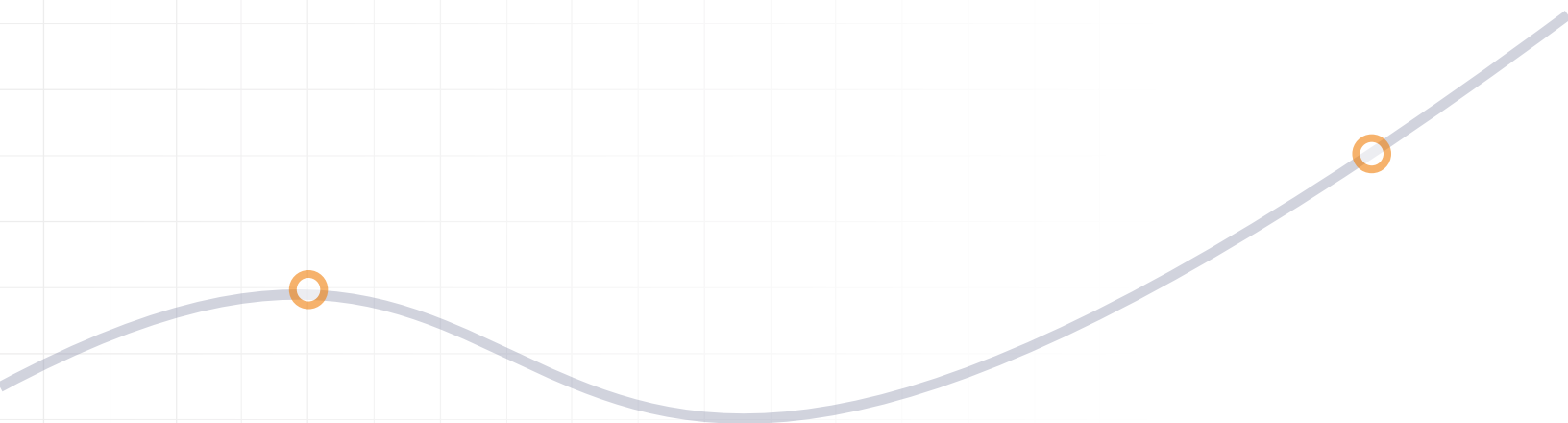
In addition to teleworking, stakeholders, employers, and employees may choose to transform regional commute behavior by:

- **Carpooling:** Coordinated employee programs which help match staff with viable carpool and vanpool partners. Creating preferred / priority parking spaces nearest the office in the parking lot for carpool and vanpools incentivizes ridesharing.
- **Riding (and subsidizing) transit:** Subsidized transit passes may make transit more accessible, and commuter express buses may make transit faster, but neither of these features alone can encourage ridership if transit is infrequent or unreliable. Transit priority infrastructure, such as bus-only lanes, queue jumps, and bus bulb-outs, are roadway treatments that help reduce transit delay and increase reliability. Transit priority measures can be folded into any project which reconfigures or repaves a roadway. Improving the viability of transit increases the efficiency of a corridor.
- **Supporting complementary development:** Incorporating clearly crafted, achievable TDM into the development process can help proactively create more livable communities in Tallahassee and the surrounding area by ensuring future development will balance active forms of transportation. If implemented, the TDM program should have monitoring and reporting requirements to track implementation and to gauge the success of the program.

A comprehensive TDM program is multifaceted and multipronged, employing complementary measures to encourage alternative modes such as carpooling, vanpooling, and transit.



Appendix A: Literature Review



February 12, 2024

Project# 267890.005

To: Suzanne Lex, Programs Manager
Capital Regional Planning Transportation Agency

From: Allison Woodworth, Tyrone Scorsone

CC: Greg Slay, Jack Kostrzewa, Greg Burke

RE: CRTPA Telecommute Study: Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

Tallahassee and the surrounding areas' vehicle volume is primarily reliant on trips being made for school, recreation, shopping, and commuting. Through 2020 and 2021 there was a decrease in these trips, as reflected in the volumes on roadways in the region. Hours most impacted by the changes in trips are the hours with the highest volume, the morning and evening peak hours. Decreases in volume led to decreases in vehicle delay and congestion levels. With most major employers resuming normal operations, the volumes returned to levels comparable to prior to 2020 and congestion is nearing the highest levels experienced in the region.

The Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) is investigating the feasibility of transportation demand management (TDM) as an effective tool to reduce peak hour traffic congestion within the four county region under its purview. As a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the CRTPA is positioned to examine TDM policy, practices, and recommendations to address congestion and reduce demand on the transportation system. The CRTPA initiated a study to assess the most viable TDM strategies to address peak hour demand with a specific interest in telecommuting. This memorandum is intended to serve as a primer on telecommuting and regional or state TDM programs, it includes an:

- Assessment of Transportation Demand Management
- Review of Telecommuting Benefits and Challenges
- Broad review of Telecommuting Policies and Programs

This literature review will contribute to the development of a resource that empowers employers and agencies in Florida to implement telecommuting programs, leading to a more sustainable and efficient transportation system.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plays a crucial role in mitigating traffic congestion, reducing environmental impacts, and improving overall mobility. TDM encompasses a range of aims that seek to address transportation challenges, increase mobility options, and promote sustainable urban development. The primary goal of TDM is to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and encourage alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit, walking, cycling, ridesharing, and telecommuting. By achieving mode shift, TDM aims to alleviate traffic congestion, reduce emissions, and enhance overall transportation efficiency. Additionally, TDM seeks to optimize land use and transportation systems through strategic planning and policy

interventions, ensuring that transportation networks are integrated with urban development plans. Other objectives of TDM include improving air quality, **enhancing accessibility for all individuals**, promoting equitable transportation options, and fostering a culture of sustainable travel behavior. When properly implemented on a mass scale, TDM assists in creating livable, resilient, and environmentally friendly cities by managing and shaping travel demand in a way that benefits both individuals and communities.

TDM encompasses various strategies aimed at optimizing transportation systems by managing travel demand through telecommuting and encouraging more sustainable modes of transportation. TDM guidance and policies encompass a diverse set of strategies to manage and shape travel demand in order to achieve sustainable and efficient transportation systems. These strategies focus on reducing private vehicle usage, promoting alternative modes of transportation, and optimizing existing infrastructure. Examples of TDM strategies include the development of robust public transit networks, the implementation of pricing mechanisms such as congestion charging and road tolls, the provision of high-quality bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, the promotion of carpooling and ridesharing programs, and the adoption of telecommuting and flexible work hour policies. TDM policies often involve land-use planning and zoning regulations that encourage mixed-use developments and promote transit-oriented development (TOD). Other policies include parking management strategies to discourage excessive car usage and the provision of incentives, such as subsidies and tax benefits, to encourage sustainable travel behaviors. These strategies and policies, when implemented in a coordinated and integrated manner, aim to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, enhance mobility options, and foster more sustainable and equitable transportation systems.

In this literature review, we will specifically focus on telecommuting as a TDM strategy and its significance in addressing travel demand challenges.

TELECOMMUTING

Telecommuting, also known as remote work or teleworking, involves utilizing information and communication technologies to perform work tasks from a location other than the traditional office space. By enabling employees to work remotely, telecommuting effectively reduces the need for daily commuting, resulting in fewer vehicles on the road during peak travel times. This reduction in single-occupancy vehicles can significantly alleviate traffic congestion, particularly in urban areas where commute times are typically longer. As a result, telecommuting contributes to more efficient use of transportation infrastructure and resources.

This practice has gained substantial attention in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic's paradigm shift of where people live and where and how people work. Stay at home orders at the onset of COVID-19 in 2020 initiated a rapid adoption of temporary telework policies in largely white-collar sectors. At the same time, the lack of a commute enabled employees to move further away from job centers.

This accelerated adoption of remote work during the pandemic has challenged traditional notions of the workplace and has the potential to prove to have permanently reset the status quo for employers and employees. It is important to note that the dust has yet to be settled on the "post-COVID" era. While trends have emerged – travel patterns altered, population growth or exodus observed – it is still too early to determine what is temporal and what is "here to stay".

Nevertheless, businesses can leverage the lessons learned from this experience, including the feasibility of remote work, the benefits it offers to both employees and employers in terms of continuity, employee well-being, retention, financial savings, and productivity.

- **Peak hour congestion:** strategically reducing transportation demand by commuters, a group who broadly traditionally travel at the same time, can alleviate peak-hour congestion. This reduction in traffic congestion also translates into decreased fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to improved air quality and environmental sustainability. Time saved by avoiding a commute can be used in other more productive ways.
- **Employer advantages:** with fewer employees physically present in the office, organizations can reduce office space requirements, leading to reduced rent, utility expenses, office equipment, and overhead costs. Allowing remote work opportunities may also contribute to **employee retention** in a job market where employees are increasingly seeking positions that offer flexibility.¹
- **Employee benefits:** Employees have provided surveys suggesting they are equally or more productive². Other employee benefits include an improved work life balance, more time afforded to them because of a lack of commute, and improved mental health.

However, telecommuting also presents certain challenges that need to be addressed for successful implementation. Technological requirements, such as reliable internet connectivity and appropriate hardware and software tools, are essential for enabling seamless remote work. Additionally, management concerns regarding monitoring employee performance, maintaining team collaboration, and ensuring data security need to be carefully managed.

Disclaimer: While research is ongoing, it will likely be several more years before more definitive conclusions can be derived regarding hotly debated subjects such as remote work's impact on employee productivity. However, there are some data streams which provide visibility into how industries are adapting to demand for remote work opportunities.

In 2022, [LinkedIn Economic Graph](#) research published a list of the top ten industries with the largest share of job postings that offer remote options. Each of the top 5 industries had at least 20% of their job listings involve remote work.

1. Technology, information, and media
2. Education
3. Administrative and support services
4. Professional services
5. Financial service
6. Consumer services
7. Government administration
8. Manufacturing
9. Arts and recreation
10. Real estate

EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

The ongoing impact of COVID-19 on travel patterns, particularly regarding commuting or lack thereof, cannot be overstated. However, TDM remains relevant to its overarching goal of

¹ Unveiling State-wide Patterns and Trends of Telecommuting in Relation to Transportation, Employment, Land Use, and Emissions in California; Tianjun Lu, Fynnwin Prager: August 2022

² What have we learned about long term structural change brought about by COVID-19 and working from home; David Henshera, Matthew.Beckb, John Nelson: December 2022

managing transportation demand regardless of trip purpose. This section discusses TDM with emphasis on telecommuting.

Legislation and Policies

Florida has supported telecommuting by improving laws to protect telecommuting workers and programed funds for telecommuting infrastructure investment. In addition, some Florida state agencies initiated teleworking programs to support their employees telecommuting. This section outlines those statutes, policies, and programs formalized by the state of Florida.

Florida Fair Labor Standards Act

The Florida Fair Labor Standards Act extends its protection to remote employees by safeguarding their payment rights and employment classification. Remote workers may be eligible for reimbursement when working from their homes. Federal regulations mandate that employers cover the expenses incurred by employees for conducting business activities at home, which can include the costs of computers and internet connectivity.

Even though employees may be working remotely, Florida's anti-discrimination laws remain in effect to shield them from discrimination. Employers are obligated to accommodate remote employees with disabilities, providing them with the same support as they would for on-site staff. Moreover, Florida employers are prohibited from discriminating against remote workers based on factors such as gender, sexual orientation, race, or religion.

It's important to note that remote workers can also be vulnerable to sexual harassment through electronic communication or video calls. Florida's anti-discrimination laws extend their protection to remote workers who may encounter sexual harassment in a virtual work environment.

Florida Employee Handbook Policy (Updated 2023)

The employee's choice of workplace does not undermine the employer's control over matters such as contracts, termination, and related issues.

Required Florida Employee Handbook Policies for remote workers suggest remote employees should:

- Obtain an employee handbook,
- Receive notifications about federal, state, and local employment laws,
- Adhere to meal and rest break requirements, and
- Make use of efficient time tracking systems.

State Employee Telework Program in Florida

The state of Florida has defined telework in its statutes. State employees can telework under Florida Statutes Title X Chapter 110, Section 171. Notably, the regulations necessitate that every agency implementing a telework program must assess all existing positions and identify those positions that the agency considers suitable for telework. The State of Florida Department of Revenue posts their telework plan on their website, providing transparency for their employees and the public.

To ensure the success of the program, the agency is mandated to set forth criteria for assessing employees' capability to effectively perform in a telework arrangement. Where permanent or long-term telework is implemented, state agencies must complete a Telework Agreement. Temporary telework does not require completion of the Telework Agreement unless extended by the program director.

Additionally, the agency must establish a monitoring system for teleworker productivity, guaranteeing that work output maintains a satisfactory level and that the duties and responsibilities of the position continue to be appropriate for a telework arrangement.

In accordance with the Florida Statutes, the Florida Department of Revenue developed policies to implement a telework program for its employees. The policies require program directors to be responsible for the annual identification and update of positions that are considered eligible for telework. In addition, the policies protect equal rights of teleworking employees as compared to non-teleworking employees, like eligibility for advancement and compensation for overtime and travel reimbursement.

Broadband Infrastructure Program

The availability and quality of internet services is important to enable successful teleworking.

In June 2020, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis enacted House Bill 969, officially creating the Florida Office of Broadband as a subdivision of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. Meanwhile, the Broadband Opportunity Program was created and is governed by section 288.9962, F.S. It is a competitive reimbursement grant program within the Florida Department of Commerce Office of Broadband (Office), created to expand broadband Internet service to unserved areas of this state, which will encourage job creation, capital investment, and the strengthening and diversification of local economies.

In July 2023, Governor Ron DeSantis allocated over \$247 million via the Broadband Infrastructure Program, linking in excess of 59,000 previously disconnected and underserved entities, encompassing businesses, residences, farms, as well as vital institutions like hospitals and libraries, to high-speed Internet. The implementation of infrastructure across 63 well-planned projects spanning 43 counties within Florida guarantees that the state's residents can enjoy dependable and effective access to workforce, educational, and healthcare monitoring opportunities for many generations ahead. Additionally, Florida was previously granted a Broadband Opportunity Grant for over \$226 million. These funds were allocated to 53 counties to extend broadband Internet accessibility to underserved regions within the state, connecting over 250,000 homes and businesses.

TDM and Telecommuting Plans

Miami-Dade TPO Telecommute Study (2021)

The Miami-Dade TPO Telecommute Study highlights existing telecommuting policies at different levels, including Miami-Dade County, Florida statewide policies, and nationwide and international initiatives. One significant finding from the study is that **30% of employees in Miami-Dade County already work flexible schedules, including telecommuting**. This indicates a willingness and acceptance of telecommuting as a viable work option among the workforce in the region. The study also emphasizes the benefits of telecommuting for both employees and employers. **Employees who utilize telecommuting often demand less compensation, leading to cost savings for employers**. Telecommuting can improve work-life balance, increase job satisfaction, and promote individual well-being. For employers, the benefits include cost reductions, increased worker productivity, and access to a wider pool of candidates beyond the local area.

The study also identifies several challenges associated with telecommuting. These challenges include the need for the necessary network infrastructure to support telecommuting programs, providing comfortable workplaces and necessary equipment, addressing socialization and productivity concerns, managing distractions, childcare arrangements, and the potential for sitting by a computer all day.

CUTR's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program

The CUTR's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program demonstrates an effective and comprehensive approach to influencing travel behavior and promoting sustainable transportation options. Their balanced portfolio of research, technical assistance, and workforce development activities allows them to meet the diverse needs of travelers and communities. The program's collaboration with various departments and institutions, such as the USF College of Public Health and Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation, highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing transportation challenges.

One notable aspect of the program is its emphasis on research and scientific discovery. By generating and disseminating new knowledge, the program ensures that evidence-based strategies and approaches are applied in their technical assistance efforts. The management of Best Workplaces for Commuters, Florida TDM Clearinghouse, and TRANSP-TDM listserv showcases their commitment to fostering peer-to-peer exchanges, providing resources and information, and supporting employer-provided transportation services. Another notable aspect is the offering of training programs such as the **Commuter Choice Certificate** and **Social Marketing in Transportation Certificate**. These initiatives contribute to building capacity and knowledge among professionals in the field, empowering them to implement effective TDM strategies and campaigns.

Key Takeaway: CUTR's program is an excellent and renowned resource for TDM policy makers, program managers, and others seeking technical expertise in the subject such as employers in the CRTPA region seeking to launch TDM programs in their workplaces.

Re-think Your Commute – Florida Department of Transportation

The re-Think Your Commute program focuses on promoting smart transportation solutions and connecting commuters with alternatives to driving alone. The program emphasizes bringing

together businesses and employees to explore shared transportation benefits. This collaborative approach fosters engagement and participation from various stakeholders, including employers, employees, property managers, and municipalities. By involving these key players, the program addresses transportation challenges and facilitates the adoption of transportation options that suit the needs of different individuals and organizations.

The program's top 10 reasons to embrace transportation options effectively communicate the benefits of alternative commuting methods to employers and employees. By highlighting advantages such as attracting and retaining talent, reducing the carbon footprint, and earning LEED credits, the program emphasizes the positive impact of transportation options on multiple fronts, including employee satisfaction, environmental sustainability, and community engagement.

Additionally, **the re-Think Your Commute program offers a range of services and resources that support commuters and employers in adopting transportation options.** Their ride-matching service, reimbursement programs, transit trainings, assistance with last-mile connectivity, and telework consulting showcase a comprehensive and tailored approach to meeting the needs of different individuals and organizations. By providing these resources, the program not only helps address transportation challenges but also encourages behavior change and facilitates the adoption of sustainable commuting practices.

Key Takeaway: Emphasizing collaboration with employers, employees, and other stakeholders will help create a supportive environment for telecommuting adoption. Clear communication of the benefits of telecommuting, such as improved work-life balance, reduced commuting expenses, and increased productivity, can encourage participation. Providing comprehensive resources and support, such as matching telecommuters with potential partners, offering reimbursement programs, and providing telework best practices, can facilitate the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of telecommuting initiatives.

Transportation Demand Management Study – Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (2022)

The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Study was conducted by the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in 2022. The stakeholder interviews conducted as part of the study helped identify existing transportation services, assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on TDM with a focus on teleworking, gauge interest in TDM options, and identify opportunities and challenges for the future.

The Broward MPO's mission statement to optimize Broward's transportation network through collaborative strategies and their vision statement of advancing commuting solutions for an improved quality of life provide a clear and comprehensive direction for their TDM efforts. These statements emphasize the importance of collaboration and the pursuit of transportation solutions that benefit the community.

The strategies identified in the study, such as improving connectivity between low- and middle-income housing and jobs, implementing employee transportation coordinator programs, and supporting hospitality, health, and frontline worker industries, provide a framework for effective TDM initiatives. The study also highlights existing TDM efforts in Broward, such as the South Florida Commuter Services which provides technical and financial assistance to promote transportation alternatives to commuters driving alone using TDM strategies such as carpooling, mass transit, bicycling, walking, park-and-ride facilities, working from home; South Florida Vanpools Program which aims to connect workers, living in proximity to each other, to a comfortable late-model van

or SUV for transportation; bike-share micromobility program by the South Florida Regional Transit Authority; Express Bus Park-and-Ride Lot Services, and discounts programs.

The study's focus on remote work and telecommuting, as well as its recognition of the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, provides valuable insights for our telecommuting project. The importance of work-from-home policies tailored to the size and needs of the company, the productivity benefits of telecommuting, and the need for managing remote work effectively are key lessons learned from the study.

Key takeaway: Challenges identified in the study, such as the need to communicate the benefits of TDM to businesses, addressing the negative stigma associated with public transportation, gaining credibility with the private sector, securing funding, and addressing concerns related to housing affordability and low wages, are important considerations.

Interregional Transportation Demand Management Action Plan Final Report (2015)

The San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) and Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG) initiated a study to address congestion along two backbone freeway corridors running through their regions which experienced acute congestion during peak hours. The project initiated a working group with representatives from SJCOG, SACOG, the regions' transportation management associations (TMAs), and regional stakeholders; a survey of employees and employers were distributed; four employers were interviewed to determine existing TDM programs in use and what barriers employers faced to implementing TDM. The final report laid out a three year action plan for SACOG and SJCOG to improve upon existing TDM programs and most effectively target the I-5 and SR 99 corridors. The framework outlined three broad goals:

- Develop enhanced rideshare program
- Provide first and last mile connections for those travelling to transit
- Create cohesive marketing campaign to encourage alternative commute

The Interregional Transportation Demand Management Action Plan is a comprehensive assessment for leveraging TDM to alleviate congestion on two very specific freeway corridors. It provides a framework for identifying and prioritizing context sensitive TDM strategies.

City of Boston – Transportation Demand Management Point System

In 2021, the City of Boston reformed its development review process by requiring developers of large projects (over 50,000 square feet) to complete a demand management tool to increase access to sustainable transportation for their tenants. The point system allows developers to choose from a suite of strategies that are proven to have an impact on influencing mode-shift. The tool provides context for each strategy i.e. land use applicability, upfront costs, ongoing/maintenance costs, and implementation difficulty.

The [TDM Point System Fact Sheets](#) outline the program and each strategy's details. Program development and methodology is summarized in [this](#) Technical Memo.

Key Takeaway: The development review process is an effective way to proactively create more livable communities with more transportation options. Many development review processes incorporate TDM requirements but are hampered by lack of enforcement or the ability of an

applicant to meet the spirit of the requirement by making fringe improvements. Boston's point system requires applicants to implement applicable baseline strategies as well as select at least one "impact strategy" (transit subsidy, parking reduction, parking pricing) due to their impact on achieving mode shift and reducing drive alone behavior.

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) TDM Strategic Plan (2019)

SCAG recognized that there was little data collection and monitoring tied to the current abundant TDM programming in the region. The TDM Strategic Plan developed a long term, performance-based planning framework for identifying and implementing TDM strategies that increase the efficiency of the transportation system. The effort reviewed modern TDM technology and innovation and identified challenges and opportunities relevant to the SCAG region. In addition to developing final recommendations, the report revised the TDM toolbox of strategies included in the region's 2016 Regional Transportation Plan.

TDM recommendations fell into 5 categories:

- Knowledge Sharing
- Policy
- Partnerships
- Programming
- Measurement

High priority recommendations included:

- SCAG TDM website
- Deliver training to help municipalities develop and successfully orchestrate TDM policy
- Develop a formal regional TDM group
- Conduct a study aimed at better understanding the success of TDM incentives and other TDM strategies in changing travel behavior
- Developing a regional clearing-house for TDM related data

Key Takeaways: The SCAG Strategic Plan emphasizes data collection and performance-based objectives. Although it was completed prior to the pandemic, the 2019 report is set in a technological backdrop that is still relevant to 2023. While SCAG was building on a strong existing foundation of local TDM programs and knowledge, the report provides the CRTPA with resources should the agency want to survey future trends.

Appendix

Title	Journal/Source	Year Published	Study Area	Conclusion
Impact of Teleworking on Travel Behavior During COVID-19	ELSEVIER, Transportation Research Procedia 60	2021	Sicily, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smaller number of trips - Larger net amount of distance traveled per person (due to the willingness to commute further) - More utilization of trains to work during commute for longer distance - reduced traffic at peak times - Positive environmental and social impacts (less noise and air pollution, less stress, ...) -impacts to congestion on weekends, indicating that ppl WFH had propensity to increase travel for leisure on weekends more than they would if commuting (KAI NOTE: Maybe they also had more disposable income at the time?)
Using Telecommunications to Substitute for Physical Travel	Victoria Transportation Policy Institute	2019		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and frequency of WFH affected by many factors e.g type of job, employer support, telecommunications service quality (internet), employee preference • WFH reduces commute trips by 40% and may have higher VMT impact (more likely to WFH if live far away) however these gains are offset by "rebound effects" - Employees may choose to live further and increase urban sprawl - Discretionary trips may increase during day (errands) which otherwise would have been made during commute hour (less impact on peak, but more throughout day) - Veh not used for commuting can be used by other HH members - WFH may use more energy - Online shopping and telework document delivery increase delivery veh traffic

<p>Do they work? Exploring possible potentials of neighborhood Telecommuting centers in supporting sustainable travel</p>	<p>Travel Behavior and Society</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>suburb Stockholm, Sweden</p>	<p>A small group of participants who lived very close to the NTC made significant lifestyle changes and adopted more sustainable travel practices, the overall changes in the sustainability aspects of travel for most participants were minimal. The majority of the participants merely exchanged a day spent working from home for a day at the NTC, as they were only allowed to be absent from the employer's office one day per week. Further, some participants found it difficult to work remotely due to organizational roles and workplace norms.</p>
<p>Seattle Commute Trip Reduction Program (CTR)</p>	<p>https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/transportation-options-program/commute-trip-reduction-program</p>			<p>The CTR requirements apply to employer sites meeting the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ 100 or more full-time employees whose workdays start between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. on weekdays • Located in a county with more than 150,000 residents <p>In 2017, three out of every four commute trips to the Center City were by a mode other than driving alone.</p>
<p>SCAG TDM Plan</p>		<p>2019</p>	<p>Southern CA Association of Govts</p>	
<p>Interregional TDM Action Plan Final Report</p>		<p>2015</p>	<p>San Joaquin Council of Governments & Sacramento Council of Governments</p>	<p>Report produced to address congestion along I-5 and SR99 with recommendations to build on existing TDM programs within a 3 year timeline. In list of TDM Strategy prioritization for those expected to impact travel behavior in the largest scale or magnitude, telecommuting is low priority (pdf page 45)</p>

Statewide TDM Strategic Plan	North Carolina Dept of Transportation	2018	North Carolina	Lit review of the different TDM programs of major cities in NC
Miami Dade TPO Telecommute Final Report		2021	Miami Dade	
Guide to Work in Telework and Remote Work in Federal Government	Federal Government (USA)	2021	Federal Government	
Incorporation of TDM into Development Process		2010	DC	<p>Aside from policy -- Lit Review of 6 locations with TDM programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cambridge, MA; Montgomery County , MD; Arlington, VA; Alexandria, VA; Contra Costa, CA; Seattle, WA - The more successful TDM programs rely on continuing, enforceable ordinances. - Ordinances take on many forms and may tie into zoning, the building/site approval process or parking requirements - most successful TDM programs set low thresholds where TDM requirements are mandatory but broad range of thresholds exist and may apply to diff types of targets (large employers/developments) <p>The existence of an agency with enforcement authority appeared to be a necessary element for TDM to have a significant impact.</p>
Bloomington, IN TDM Plan		2020	Bloomington, IN	Includes Market Research (SWOT analysis for most relevant TDM strategies in area). ID most prevalent TDM strategies and most relevant to goal for Bloomington to reduce SOV commutes.
Tips for Implementing Successful Telecommute Program	South Carolina Dept of Administration	2019	South Carolina State Government	

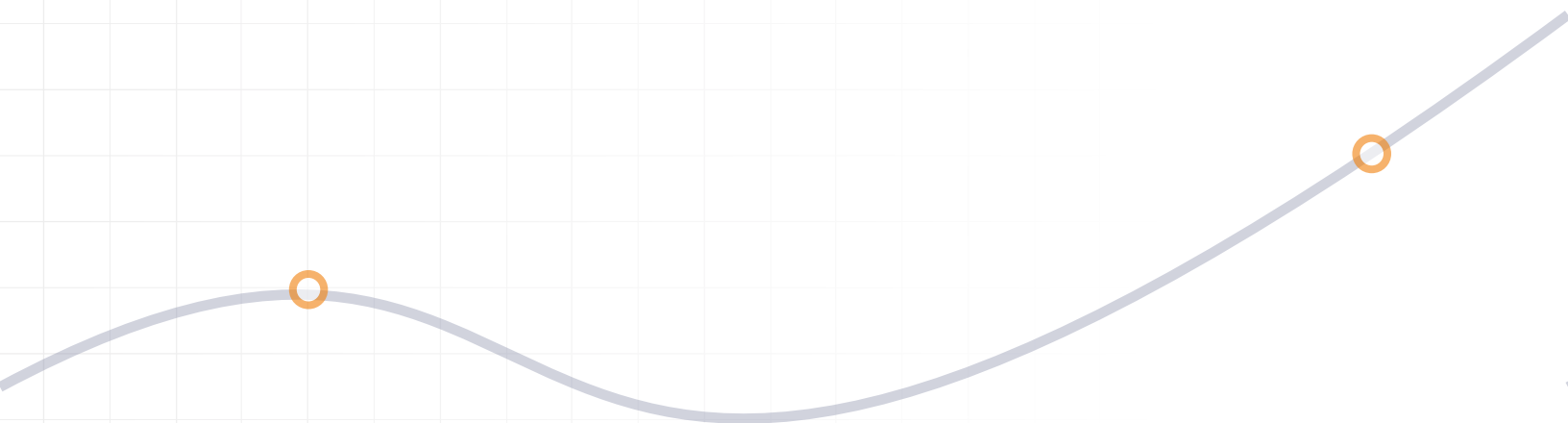
Toward a Comprehensive Telecommuting Analysis Framework	TRB Volume 2496	2015	Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle miles traveled, congestion reduction • Forms of telecommuting activities (e.g., full time, part time) • Choice and frequency of telecommuting • Interactions between telecommuting engagement and other daily activities
Spatial-temporal variations of traffic congestion under work from home (WFH) arrangements: Lessons learned from COVID-19	Cities	2022	Hongkong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall, statistically significant but moderate reductions of CI were observed. 2 The WFH arrangement has a bigger impact on peak hours than evening counterpart. 3. Without the WFH policy interventions, the morning peak in the CBD has reoccurred and rebounded to the pre-COVID level (i.e. no change in CI), 4. Integrating with other measures such as implementing congestion charging, further promoting transit-oriented development, and advocating jobs-housing balance as a policy package to tackle the urban traffic congestion is necessary
The Costs and Benefits of Telecommuting	ITS UC DAVIS	2000		Primary finding was that few pilot evals contained CBA results.
Toward a method for assessing the energy impacts of telecommuting based on time-use data	Travel Behavior and Society	2022	Netherlands	Substituting car commuting with many common 'leisure' and 'phf care' activities, 'sleep' or 'eating and drinking' is likely to reduce direct energy requirements. While car commuters can realize high energy savings through TC, for people who usually bike or walk to work, direct energy savings through reduced commuting are zero.

Examining the potential environmental and travel time saved benefits of remote working hubs	Transport Policy (Caulfield, Charly)	2022	Dublin, Ireland	Analysis of survey data (514 surveys from users of the RWH co-working space NoCo) to determine emissions and travel time savings of using a remote work hub (RWH). Found users of RWH drive avg of 60km less per day and able to depart for work later. 34% would have driven to normal place of work, 12% drove RHW. Only 9% of respondents worked from home prior to COVID. 39% of respondents travel to RWH using non motorized (where only 8% prior). Majority RWH workers highly educated. Avg distance travelled to work went from 36km to 4.6km. Finding that large number used to commute into Dublin but now use RWH in outer counties, indicating support of regeneration of those areas.
Telecommuting as a Component of Commute Trip Reduction Program	Transportation Research Record 2135		Washington State	Applies model to estimate effects of commuter trip reduction (CTR) activities in Washington State. - Employees more likely to transition to WFH at least 1 day every 2 weeks if employer consistently promote CTR strategies to enhances awareness. Employees commuting longer distances more likely to transition to WFH at least 1 day. Job characteristics and employer business impact on likeliness to work from home - Combination of CTR promotions should be used to be most effective newsletter, email communication, conducting CTR events
Long Term effects of Covid on travel behavior: study on WFH, mode choice, online shopping and air travel	transportation research part F: psychology and behavior	2022	USA	- WFH**, Travel behavior (mode choice), online shopping, Air travel '- 30% increase in willingness to WFH compared to the pre-pandemic period - 9% and 31% less auto and transit commuters in post-pandemic period - Rise in WFH, online shopping, and decrease in business flights
Broward County TDM Study 2022		2022	Broward County (MPO)	It was also noted that the implementation of formal remote work policies in Broward is still in a dynamic phase as formal programs are evolving. The Team found that a few agencies had official remote work policies including FDOT, Broward Health and Broward County and no private sector participants interviewed for this study had set formal policies.

<p>Future of Telecommuting post COVID</p>	<p>ELSEVIER, Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives 16</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>British Columbia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peak hour travel reduced, but speculate to increased off peak trips due to WFH in suburban area away from restaurants, shopping, etc. If trips could have been done via foot, bike, or transit in an urban core, means increased VMT. -Females less likely to WFH, but increase in likelihood if residing further from urban core and already working part time - A higher frequency of work-from-home for those residing farther from urban centers, part-time female, mid-age workers, full-time workers with children, full-time workers with longer commutes - dwellings with lower residential density and high bedroom (ie more space to WFH) associated with higher incidence of WFH -less likely to WFH if live in area with alternative transportation infrastructure
<p>Spatial Implications of Telecommuting in US</p>	<p>National Center for Sustainable Transportation</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>4502 US Locations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - permanent increase in attractiveness of WFH = rich non-monotonic pattern of reallocations within and across cities - reduced inequality across residential locations because increased access to jobs (access to WFH = increased well being) - changes in residents and housing prices - no "end to big cities." as commuters trend away from densest locations and toward smaller cities
<p>Hillsborough County TDM Plan Study for Bay Area Commuter Services</p>			<p>Florida</p>	<p>Purpose of study was to estimate impact of TDM on reducing traffic and emissions in area. Identified key measures, reviewed the Hillsborough TDM plan and plans from similar communities, identified strategies for analysis at county level, activity center level, and employer level.</p> <p>FINDINGS - Preferred TDM Program Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employer Outreach - Transit services - Compressed workweek & WFH outreach program - Vanpool management and promotions - Matching program for employer provided discounts for transit, vanpool, other commute benefits - Preferential parking for carpool/vanpool

Loo & Huang, 2022		2022		- Significant drop in Morning peak congestion in CBD, city cores, and new town areas
South Florida Commuter Services (FDOT PROGRAM)	https://1800234ride.com/working-from-home/		South Florida	Has example Telework Agreement template and Flexible and Remote Quick Start Guide
SANDAG TDM	https://www.icommutesd.com/planners/TDM-overview		San Diego, CA	https://www.icommutesd.com/telework/telework-default

Appendix B: Current Conditions



11/29/2023

Project# 267890.005

To: Suzanne Lex, Programs Manager
Capital Regional Planning Transportation Agency

From: Tyrone Scorsone, Jia Fang

CC: Greg Slay, Greg Burke

RE: CRTPA Telecommute Study: Current Conditions Report

INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of the current commute conditions in Leon County. It consists of three sections. The first section provides data that informs the current commute pattern like figures illustrating where workers live and work, tables identifying job occupations, and maps showing the direction of commute flow. The second section describes the factors enabling telecommuting. The third section is a trend analysis of the traffic conditions along major commuter corridors. Analyses provided within this report evaluate the impact of pandemic caused work from home (WFH) arrangements on commuter travel. Both those persons who entirely work from home as well as those with hybrid schedules allowing them to work from home for 2 days or more a week are the subject. The results reveal a picture of how WFH policies could reduce travel demand and commuter related congestion in Leon County.

Vehicle trips serve many purposes one of which is commuting to and from work. Commuter traffic is responsible for the majority of volume in the peak hours. The need to physically be at a work location increases travel demand on roadways in Leon, Jefferson, Gadsden, and Wakulla Counties. Understanding commuter travel demand trends and their underlying influencing factors could lead to a better understanding of future infrastructure needs.

In addition to an assessment of current conditions, future WFH scenarios will be modeled. These scenarios will reflect differing thresholds of homebased commuter trips. In travel demand forecast models, homebase work trips reflect the commuters going from home to a workplace. The 2022 Northwest Florida Regional Planning Model 3.1.4 has been calibrated to reflect 2045 commute patterns. That validated model will serve as the basis for modeling future work from home scenarios with decreased trip generation and attraction rates. This analysis and respective documentation will be provided separate from this report.

COMMUTE PATTERNS

In this section, commuting-related data from two sources: American Community Census (ACS) and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) were used. The LEHD data is a combination of ACS data, unemployment data, Job-to-Job Flows, and the Quarterly Census of Employment Wages.

Commute Patterns

Figure 1 demonstrates the inbound and outbound flows of all jobs in Leon County. While 97,065 workers (52.7%) both live and work within the county, 87,143 workers (47.3%) travel across the county boundary for work. This includes workers going to counties immediately bordering Leon, counties in other parts of the panhandle and big bend, as well as workers coming and going to other states. Among them, 61,615 workers live outside of the county and work in the county, while only 25,528 workers live in the county and work outside the county. Hence, Leon County provides a significant amount of job opportunities for workers living outside of the county.

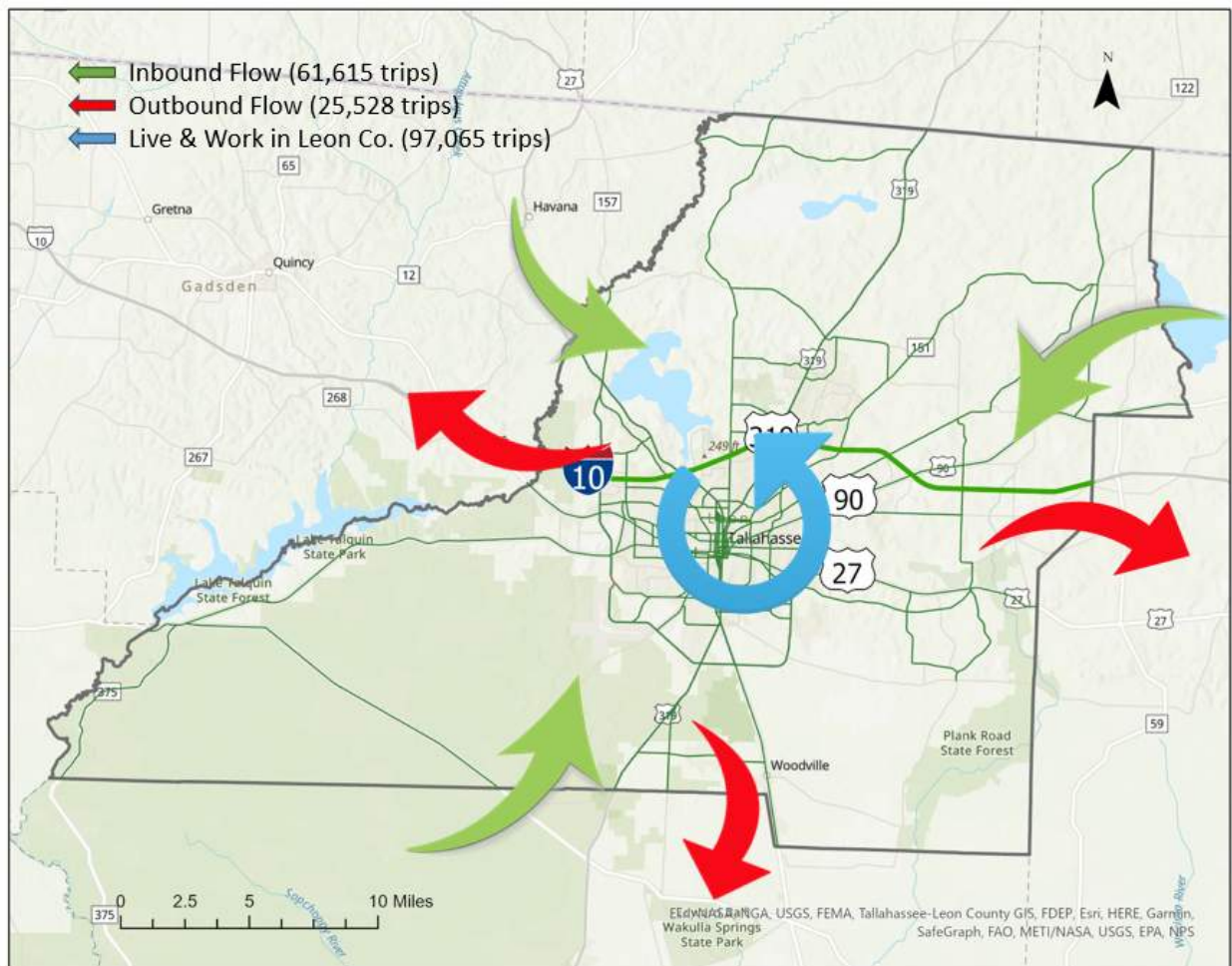


Figure 1 Inflow, Outflow, and Within flow of All Jobs in Leon County

Table 1 and Figure 2 show the workflows within the CRTPA boundaries. There is an greater number of commuters coming from counties, other than the 3 surrounding Leon County, to work in Leon County. Gadsden County to Leon Couty is the largest commute flow between the CRTPA counties. Jefferson, Wakulla, and Gadsden counties all have more commuters coming to Leon County than commuters going to jobs within their own respective counties.

Home	Workplace	Work Trips
Gadsden	Gadsden	5,455
Jefferson	Gadsden	72
Leon	Gadsden	3,318
Wakulla	Gadsden	262
Gadsden	Jefferson	61
Jefferson	Jefferson	984
Leon	Jefferson	359
Wakulla	Jefferson	44
Gadsden	Leon	8,009
Jefferson	Leon	2,624
Leon	Leon	97,065
Wakulla	Leon	7,116
Gadsden	Wakulla	194
Jefferson	Wakulla	62
Leon	Wakulla	1,314
Wakulla	Wakulla	2,953

Table 1 Workflows between and within the four counties in the CRTPA



Figure 2 Job Flow between and within Leon County and the other three counties

Home and Work Location Analysis for Leon County

Figure 16 ([click here](#)) and Figure 17 ([click here](#)) show where workers live in Leon County and Tallahassee, respectively, in 2019. A predominance of worker's home locations are located outside the downtown area closer to Capital Circle and radiate outward from there. Figure 18 ([click here](#)) and Figure 19 ([click here](#)) show where workers work in Leon County and Tallahassee, respectively. While worker's home locations are distributed more sparsely throughout the country, the locations of jobs are concentrated in multiple clusters and distributed closer to the city center. The major job clusters are listed below:

- Downtown area (Government)
- Florida State University (Education)
- Tallahassee Community College (Education)
- Capital Circle NE (Healthcare)
- Apalachee Parkway within Capital Circle (Miscellaneous, business service, food service)
- N Monroe St (Miscellaneous, i.e., business service, food service)
- Capital Circle NW & I-10 (Business service)

Within the major job cluster locations, the primary job industries are government, education, and healthcare.

Table 2 shows that the percentage of employees working from home in Leon County from 2017 through 2021 (ACS 2020 1-year estimate is not available). As expected, there was a significant increase in people working from home from 2019 to 2021. It is very likely that more than 50% of workers adapted to a work WFH model during 2020, the height of the pandemic.

	2017 1-year estimate	2018 1-year estimate	2019 1-year estimate	2021 1-year estimate
Total workers	144,672	145,031	145,853	151,750
Workers working from home	5,154	7,827	8,090	29,291
Percentage of working from home	3.5%	5.3%	5.5%	19.3%

Table 2 Percentage of People Working from Home (Source: American Community Survey)

Figure 20 ([click here](#)) displays the percentage of commuters working from home by their home Census Group. It shows that most areas with a high rate of WFH commuters are within Capital Circle. It is expected that the block group with the highest rate is in the university because students live and study in the same region. Persons living in these areas are more likely employed in an industry that provides flexibility to WFH.

Figure 21 ([click here](#)) shows clusters of commuters departing for their jobs in the morning peak hours from their residential locations. The residential locations of workers departing in the A.M. peak are clustered near Capital Circle. Outside of Capital Circle, the densest areas are the southeast, northeast, and northwest portions of the county, and commuters from those areas are

more likely to use N Monroe St, Thomasville Rd, Mahan Dr, and Apalachee Pkwy to travel to and from the downtown area.

FACTORS ENABLING WORK FROM HOME

There are three main barriers to an extensive adoption of telecommuting: job type, employer telecommuting policies, and residential broadband access.

Job Type

Table 3 is a summary of top employers in Tallahassee. It is worth noting that the top 9 employers in Tallahassee fall into these three industries: education, government, and healthcare. This is consistent with findings presented in the previous section identifying clusters of job industries. Telecommuting strategies are feasible for people employed in education and government but limited for those in healthcare and industries such as agriculture, food service, retail, or construction jobs.

<u>SIZE</u>	<u>EMPLOYER</u>	<u>INDUSTRY</u>
<u>5,000+</u>	Florida State University	Education
	State of Florida	Government
	Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare, Inc.	Healthcare
<u>2,000 - 4,999</u>	City of Tallahassee	Government
	Florida A&M University	Education
	Leon County Schools	Education
<u>1,000 to 1,999</u>	Capital Regional Medical Center	Healthcare
	Leon County	Government
	Tallahassee Community College	Education
	Trulieve	Agriculture
<u>300 to 999</u>	Apalachee Center, Inc.	Healthcare
	Capital City Bank Group	Finance & Insurance
	Capital Health Plan	Healthcare
	Citizens Property Insurance Corporation	Business Services
	Coastal Forest Resources Company	Manufacturing
	Georgia Pacific	Manufacturing
	Goodwill Industries - Big Bend	Social Services
	Mainline Information Systems	Technology
	Sodexo	Food Services
	St. Marks Powder	Manufacturing
	The Florida Bar	Associations & Organizations
VA Outpatient Clinic	Healthcare	
<u>200-299</u>	Cone Distributing	Transportation
	Danfoss Turbocor	Manufacturing
	Envision Credit Union	Finance & Insurance
	General Dynamics Land Systems	Manufacturing
	McKenzie Tank Lines	Transportation
	Preferred Managing Agency	Finance & Insurance
	Radiology Associates	Healthcare
	Residential Elevators	Manufacturing
	Seven Hills Health & Rehabilitation Center	Healthcare
	Tallahassee Orthopedic Clinic	Healthcare
	Tallahassee Primary Care Associates	Healthcare
	Tri-Eagle Sales	Transportation
	Westminster Oaks	Healthcare

Table 3 Major Employers in the Region

Employer Telecommuting Policies

During the pandemic, many employers and educators had to quickly adopt broad teleworking policies. Some have kept those policies in place. Others are requiring their workers or students to come back into the workplace full-time or under an in-person/remote hybrid schedule. The Florida Department of Transportation uses a hybrid schedule for many of their offices, workers must come in-person 3 days a week and are permitted to work from home the other 2 days. Florida State University (FSU) has a similar hybrid approach to telecommuting. Like FDOT, workers are required to come in 3 days a week and permitted to work from home the other 2 days. With both agencies the work schedules are not formally memorialized, however FSU plans to formally adopt this hybrid work schedule for applicable employees in 2024.

Broadband Access

The primary logistical hurdle to telecommuting revolves around residential access to broadband internet, which forms the infrastructure critical for successful telecommuting. Legislators and industry experts recommend broadband speeds of at least 100/10 megabits per second (Mbps) download/upload speeds to support teleworking or remote learning. Figure 22 ([Click here](#)) depicts where workers live, who have jobs conducive to telecommuting, and the availability of broadband internet access (at least 100/10 Mbps).

Broadband data was acquired from the FCC. The data shows where providers say broadband is a capability and is not entirely representative of where broadband exists. Even though broadband coverage and levels of service are not comprehensive in the region, broadband coverage is primarily available in the areas where most workers live with jobs conducive to telecommuting.

A note about FCC data: twice a year service providers report to the FCC via Form 477 a list of census blocks in which they can or do offer service in at least one address. A limitation of this method is that it is possible that certain areas within that census block do not currently have access to broadband but are shown on a map as having service capability.

MOBILITY PERFORMANCE FROM PRE-COVID TO POST-COVID

Traffic Volume Trend

Traffic volume data was collected for selected corridors in Leon County used by commuters. The volume data comes from FDOT's permanent traffic monitoring sites and portable sites. The permanent sites offer consistent traffic volume data every day throughout the year, whereas portable sites provide data for only one or two days per year. Volumes expectedly dipped in 2020. The year 2020 is identified as the peak Covid-19 pandemic period when working from home (WFH) was mandatory for many employees. Figure 3 displays the location of the sites.

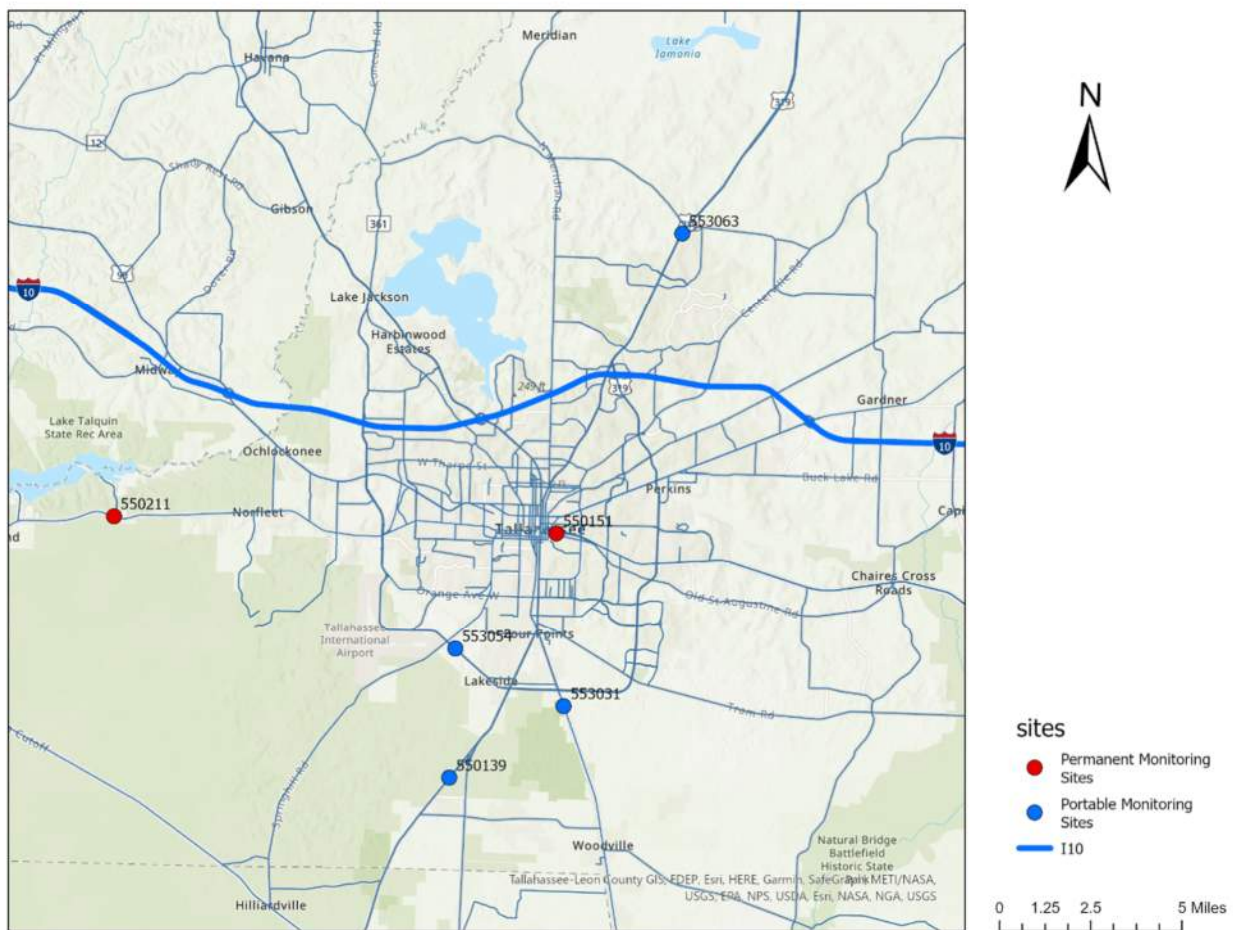


Figure 3 Traffic Monitoring Sites

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Results

Figure 4 shows the AADT trend from 2018 to 2022. For all six study corridors, there is a decrease in daily volumes during the pandemic. The 2022 vehicle volumes have bounced back to the pre-pandemic levels.

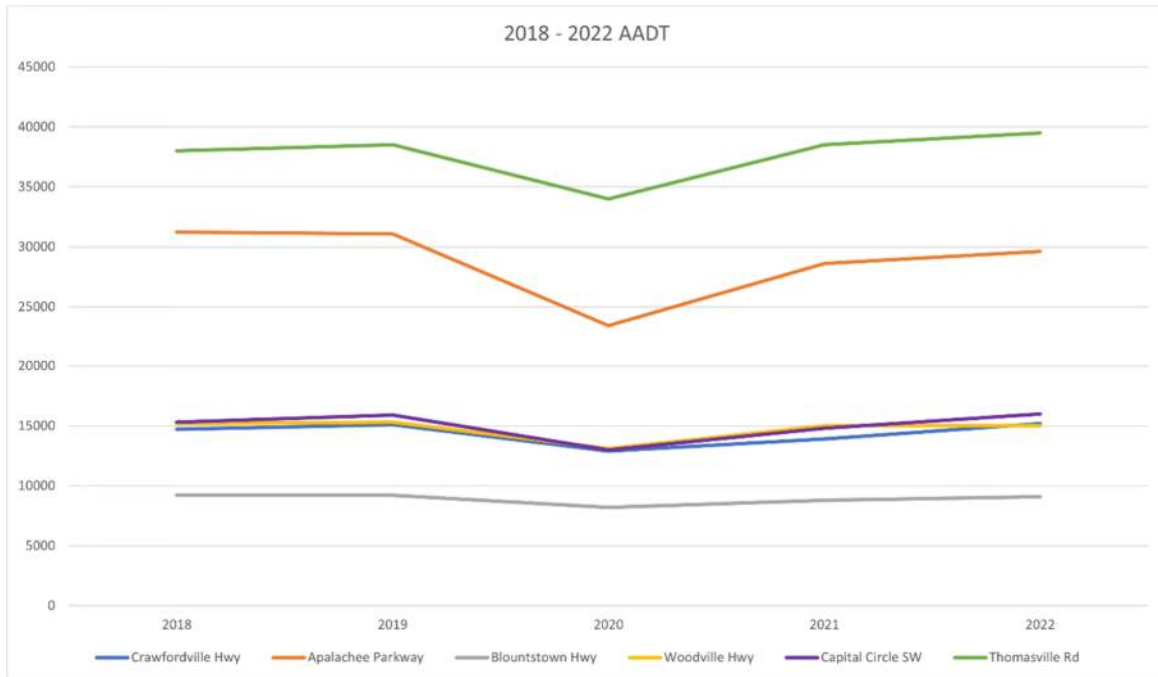


Figure 4 2018-2022 AADT for the Major Commute Corridors

Hourly Volume Results from Permanent Traffic Monitoring Sites

Figure 5 and Figure 7 show the annual average hourly traffic volume from 2018 – 2022 for Apalachee Pkwy and Blountstown Hwy, respectively. It is observed that 2020 peak traffic volume during the pandemic was lower than in the pre- and post-Covid periods, especially during the morning peak hours. Additionally, post-pandemic peak traffic volumes in 2021 and 2022 did not rebound to the pre-pandemic levels in 2018 and 2019 in both the AM and PM peaks. Figure 6 and Figure 8 show the AM peak (7AM - 9AM) total traffic volume by day of week from 2018 – 2022 for Apalachee Pkwy and Blountstown Hwy, respectively. A similar pattern can be observed across different days of week that 2020 experienced the lowest AM peak volume. Besides, Tuesday to Thursday experienced more volume than Monday and Friday, consistent across different years. It might be because people tend to work from home on days closer to the weekend. Overall, the four figures convey the consistent travel patterns from pre-pandemic to post-pandemic.

This practice has gained substantial attention in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic's paradigm shift of where people live and where and how people work. Stay at home orders at the onset of COVID-19 in 2020 initiated a rapid adoption of temporary telework policies in largely white-collar sectors. At the same time, the lack of a commute enabled employees to move further away from job centers.

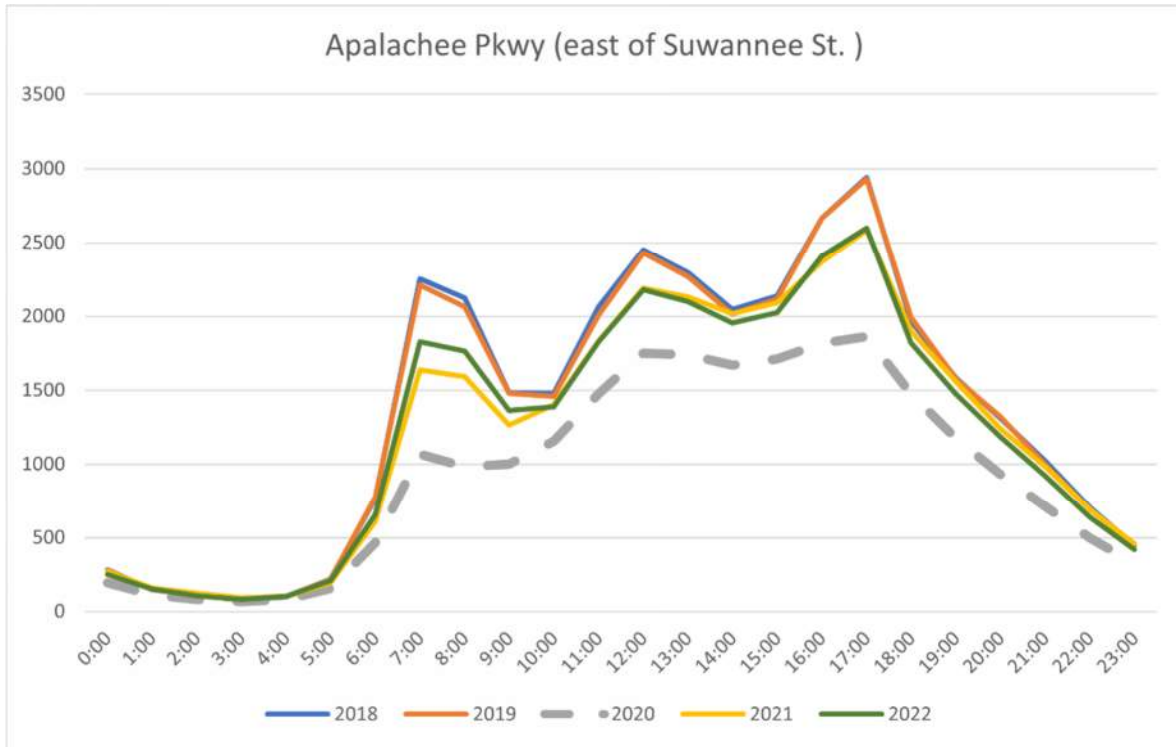


Figure 5 Annual Average Hourly Traffic Volume on Apalachee Parkway from 2018 to 2022

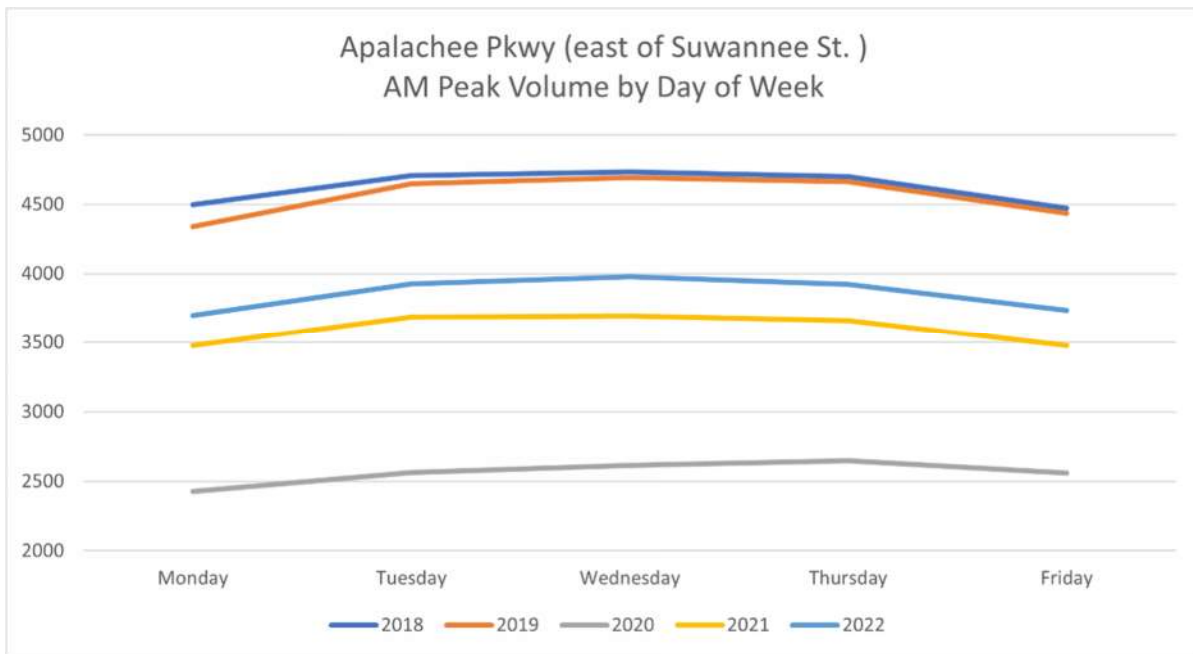


Figure 6 AM Peak Volume on Apalachee Parkway by Day of Week from 2018 to 2022

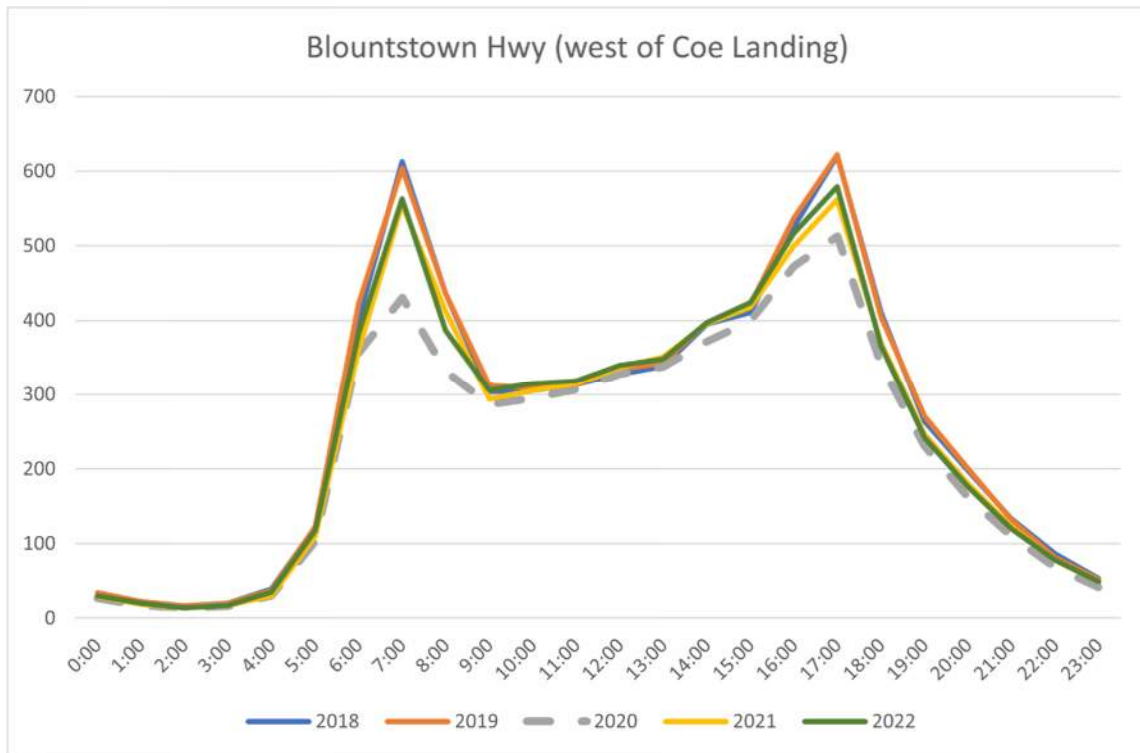


Figure 7 Annual Average Hourly Traffic Volume on Blountstown Hwy from 2018 to 2022

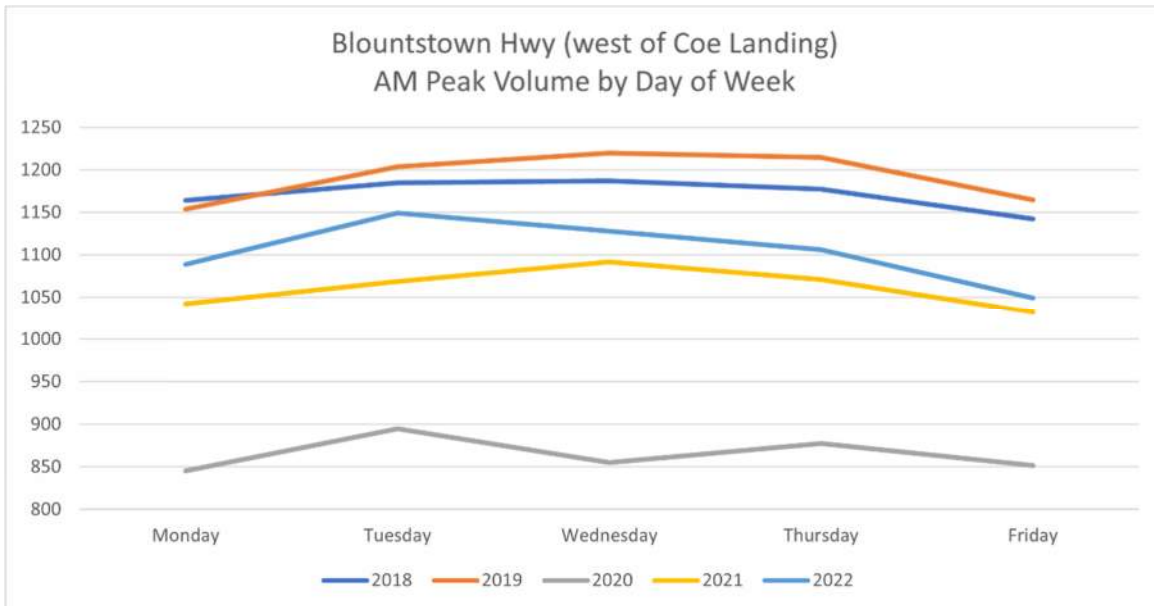


Figure 8 AM Peak Volume on Blountstown Hwy by Day of Week from 2018 to 2022

Hourly Volume Results from Portable Traffic Monitoring Sites

As previously explained, portable monitoring sites provide data for one or two days out of the year. Figure 9 - Figure 12 show the hourly volumes from 2018 to 2022 for some Tallahassee's commuter corridors. If 2020 volume data is collected prior to March 2020, the representative dates for WFH conditions are from 2021. Therefore, in Figure 11 and Figure 12, the dashed yellow 2021 line represents the traffic volume impacted by the WFH arrangements in comparison to the rest of dates.

For Crawfordville Hwy (Figure 9), the peak hour traffic volume during the 2020 pandemic period is similar to early 2021. However, the volume in 2020-2021 period was slightly lower than in other periods.

For Capital Circle SW (Figure 10), the peak hour traffic volume collected during the pandemic period (November 2020) was lower than in March 2021, especially during the morning peak hours. Meanwhile, the volumes in 2020-2021 period were significantly lower than in other periods. Additionally, the March 2021 peak periods show a distinct shift to earlier hours compared to the other years. This phenomenon may be reflective of conditions specific to the day the data was captured (i.e., March 1, 2021).

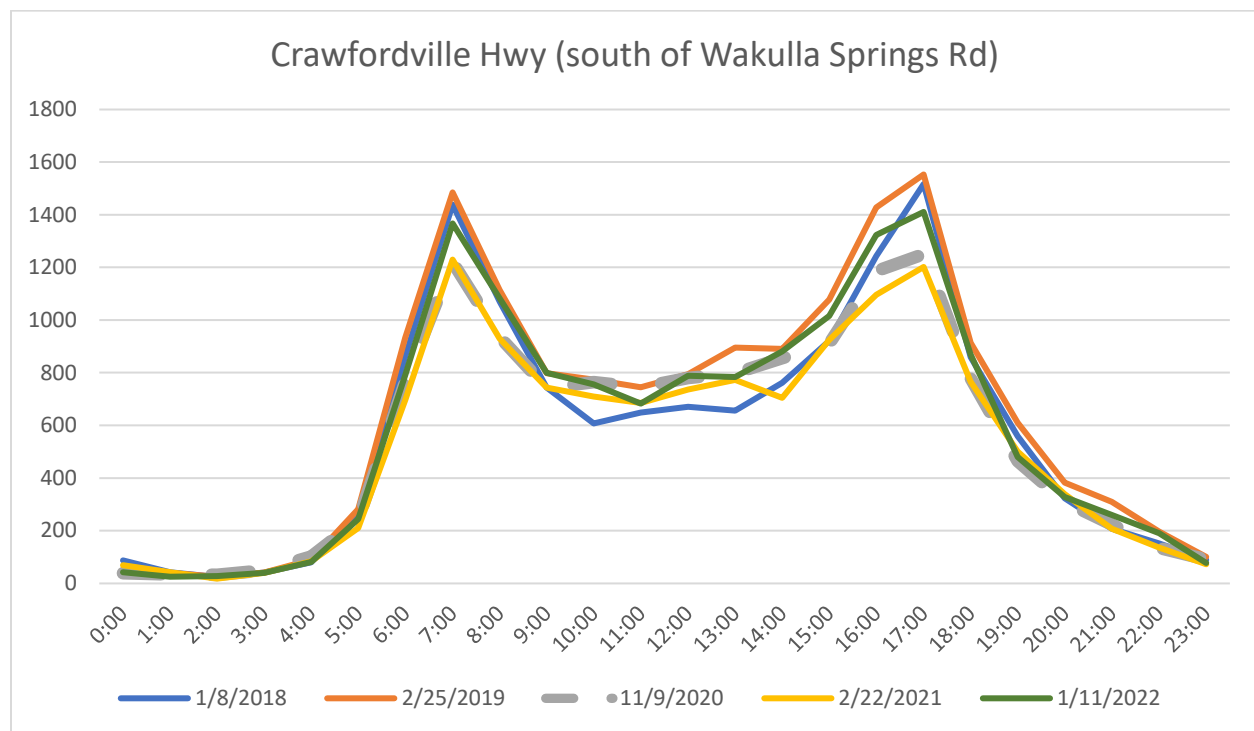


Figure 9 Hourly Volume on Crawfordville Hwy from 2018 to 2022

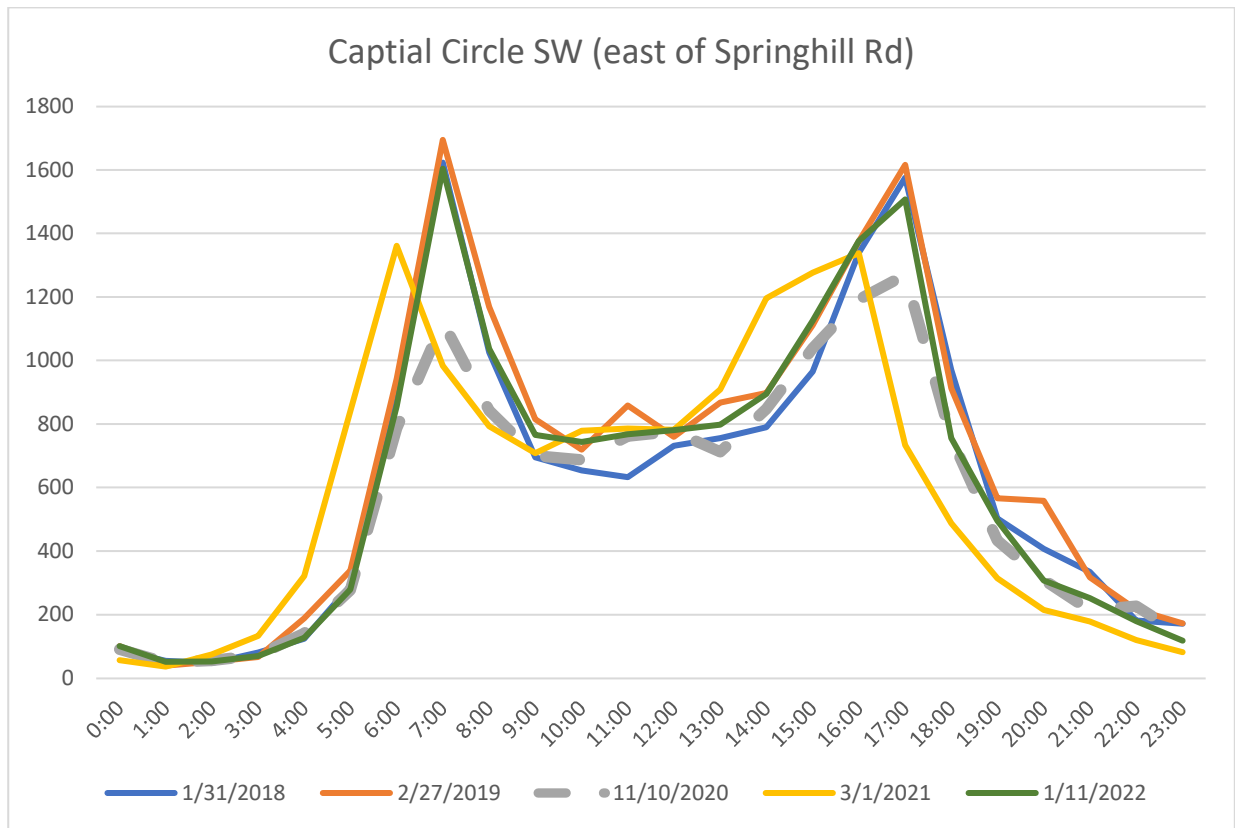


Figure 10 Hourly Volume on Capital Circle SW from 2018 to 2022

Along Thomasville Rd (Figure 11), the morning peak volume during the pandemic (early 2021) is roughly 1,000 vehicles less than pre-pandemic volumes. A similar pattern is not observed for the evening peak hours. This is because the PM peak hour volume is a confluence of varying trip purposes and does not have similar proportions of commuters as the AM peak.

For Woodville Hwy (Figure 12), only a slight difference was observed for the peak traffic volumes in the pre-pandemic, pandemic, or post-pandemic periods.

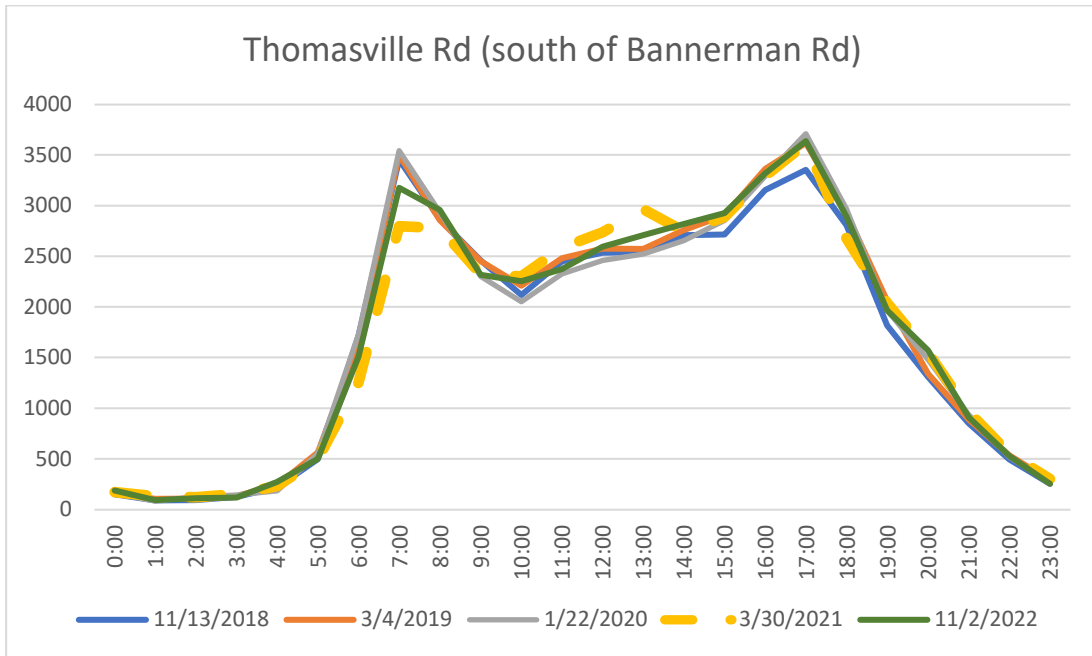


Figure 11 Hourly Volume on Thomasville Rd from 2018 to 2022

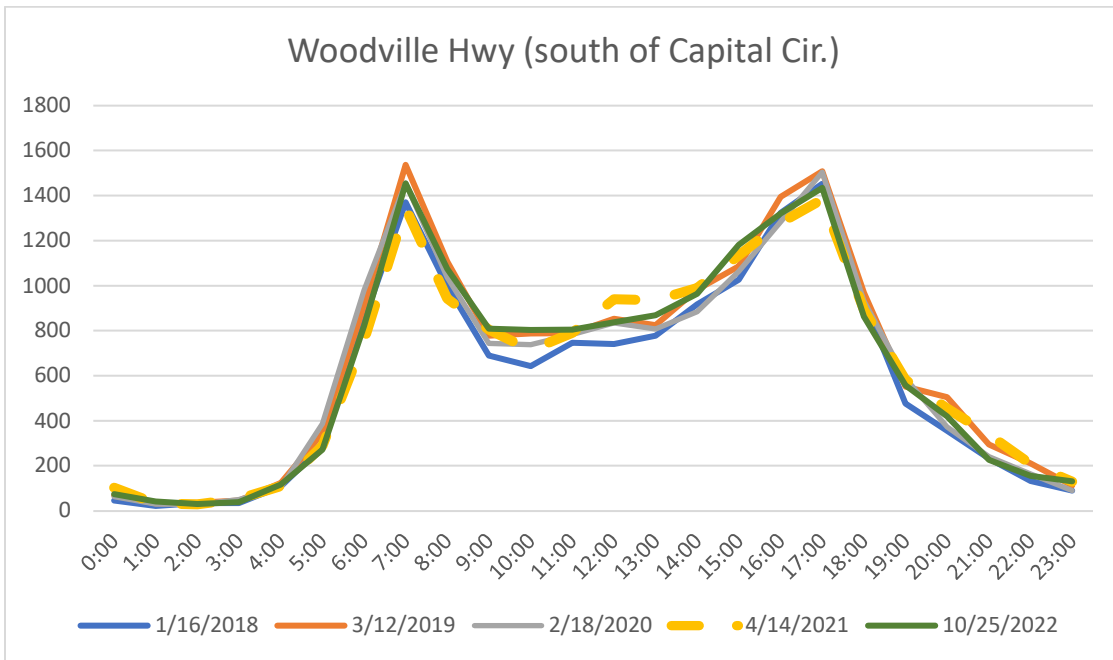


Figure 12 Hourly Volume on Woodville Hwy from 2018 to 2022

Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay

Delay data are collected from the segment-level results of FDOT's Source Book. Speed and volume data were collected for six major commuter corridors in Leon County. Figure 13 displays the location of these segments.

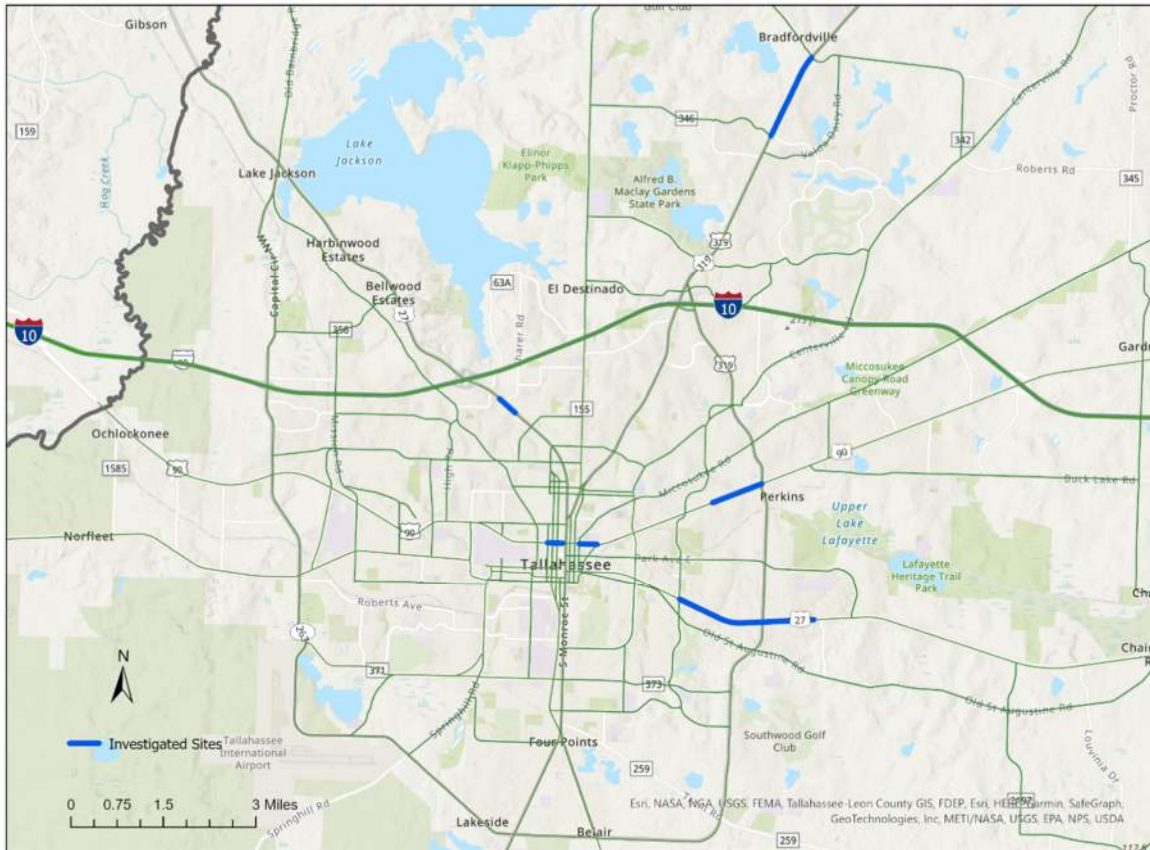


Figure 13 Locations of the Sites with Delay Calculation

Figure 14 and Figure 15 show the daily and peak-hour vehicle hours of delay, respectively. It is reasonable to see that travelers experienced less delay during the pandemic periods for most corridors. However, Mahan Dr was less heavily congested post-pandemic than pre-pandemic for the daily results while the peak hour delay increased since the pandemic. Apalachee Parkway, near Capital Circle, has witnessed decreased vehicle delays on an annual basis from 2018 through 202, likely from updates to signal timing at major intersections along the corridor.

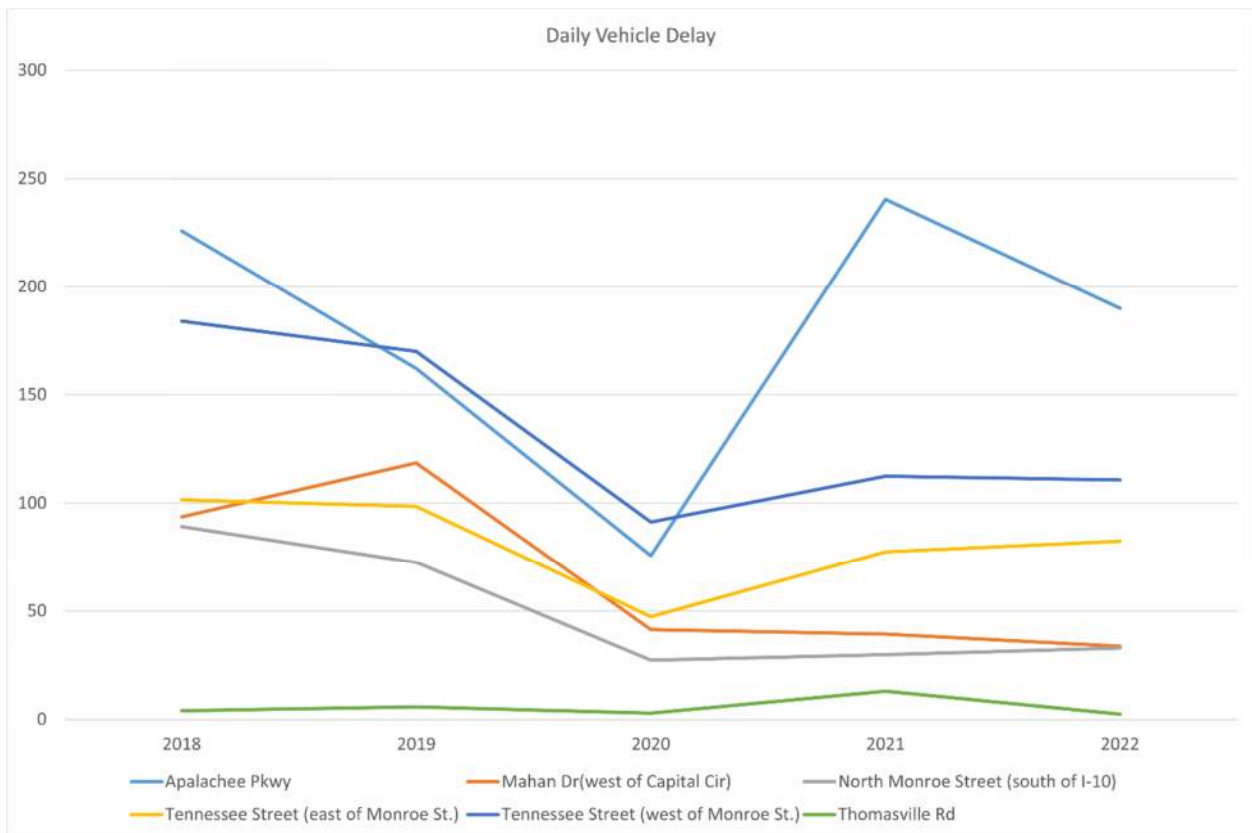


Figure 14 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay on the Major Commute Corridors

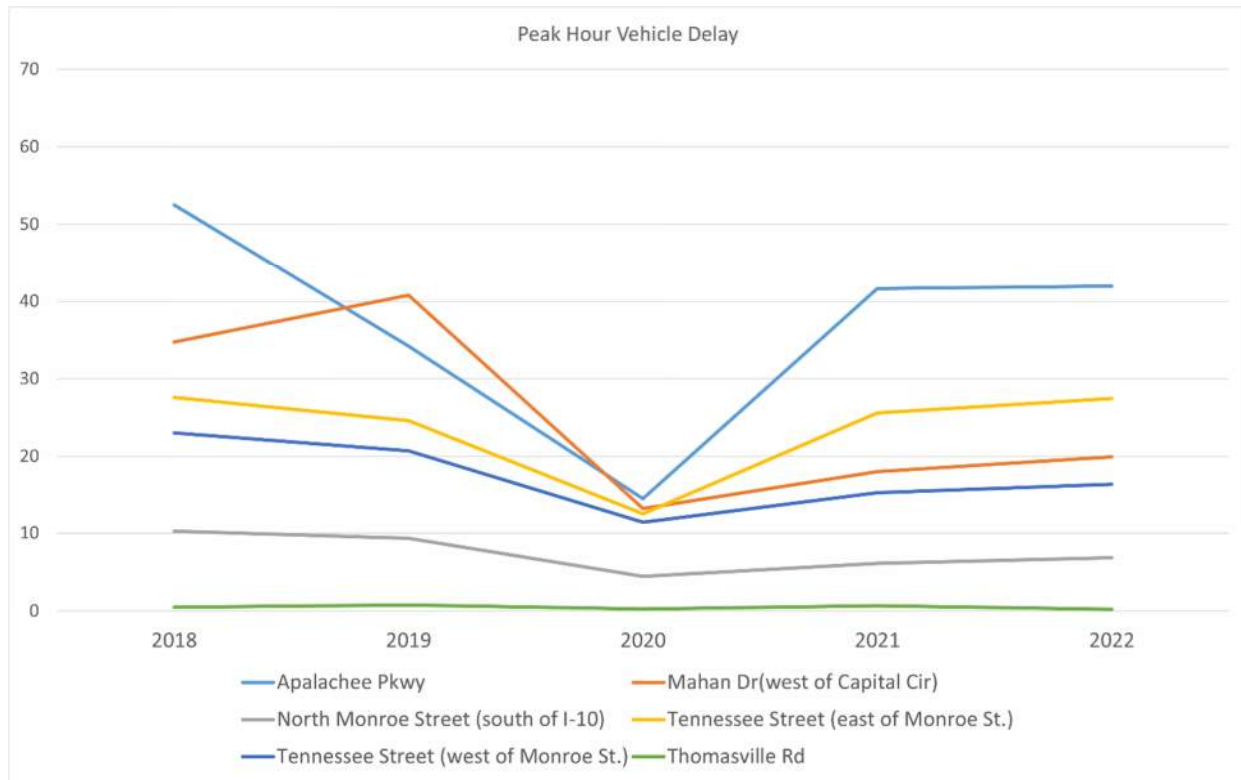


Figure 15 Peak-Hour Vehicle Hours of Delay on the Major Commute Corridors

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The majority of the workers, 53%, employed in Leon County both live and work within Leon County. A third (33%) of Leon County's workers live outside of the county and commute in, compared to 13% of workers that live in Leon County and commute outside of the county.
2. There are five major job clusters in Tallahassee. Most of these jobs fall into the county's top three job industries: education, government, and healthcare.
3. Upon primary scan, Leon County has good coverage of broadband internet access to support telecommuting. The surrounding counties have sparser coverage.
4. The major commuter corridors in Leon County have shown a significant reduction in traffic volume and delay in both peak and non-peak hours in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic when many WFH arrangements were in place.
5. On any given weekday WFH has a greater impact on morning peak traffic congestion. As for the evening peak, the impact of WFH was modest. The results are in line with the literature (Loo & Huang, 2022) noting that WFH has a more significant impact on morning peak congestion than its evening counterpart. In the morning peak, trips primarily revolve around work-related tasks, resulting in a higher concentration of activities both in terms of location and time (He, 2013; Szeto et al., 2017). On the contrary, during the evening peak, trips are more varied. In addition to commuting trips, individuals may engage in discretionary activities before heading back home (Yu et al., 2019).
6. Without the mandatory or voluntary WFH arrangements during the pandemic, the morning peak post-Covid (2021-2022) has rebounded to the pre-Covid levels (2018-2019) for most corridors analyzed.
7. The impact of WFH arrangements during the pandemic on peak hour traffic volume and traffic congestion is different across the study corridors. One possible reason is that the commute volume varies by job occupation. Traffic volume would be significantly reduced if it consisted of flexible job occupations (like professional services, IT, and government) compared to construction and healthcare.

REFERENCE:

- He, S. Y. (2013). Does flextime affect choice of departure time for morning home-based commuting trips? Evidence from two regions in California. *Transport Policy*, 25, 210–221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2012.11.003>
- Loo, B. P. Y., Huang, Z. (2022), Spatio-temporal variations of traffic congestion under work from home (WFH) arrangements: Lessons learned from COVID-19, *Cities*, 124, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.103610>
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- Yu, W., Bai, H.a., Chen, J., & Yan, X. (2019). Analysis of space-time variation of passenger flow and commuting characteristics of residents using smart card data of Nanjing metro. *Sustainability*, 11(18), 4989.

APPENDIX:

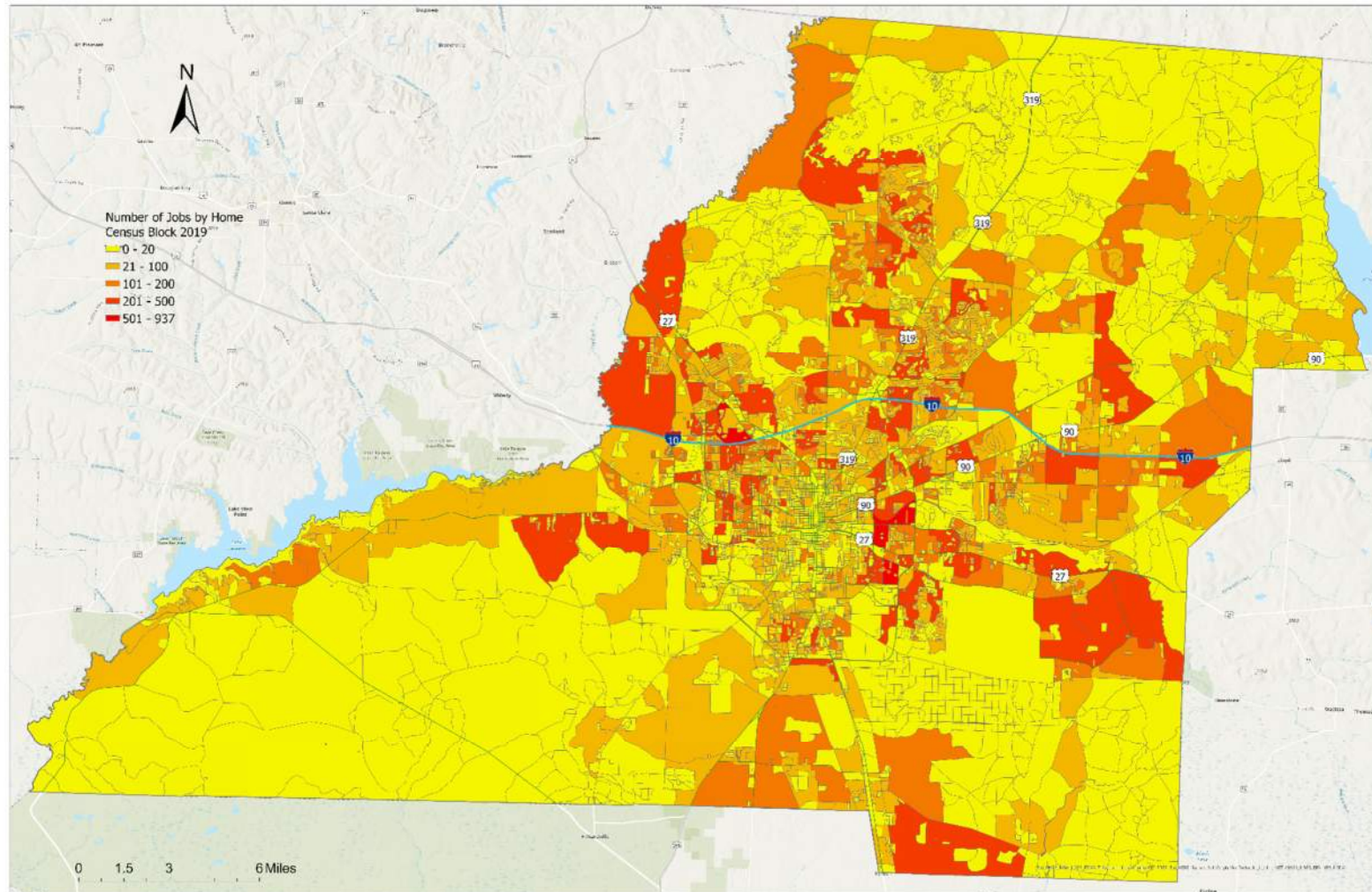


Figure 16 Job Distribution by Home Census Block in Leon County ([back to main text](#))

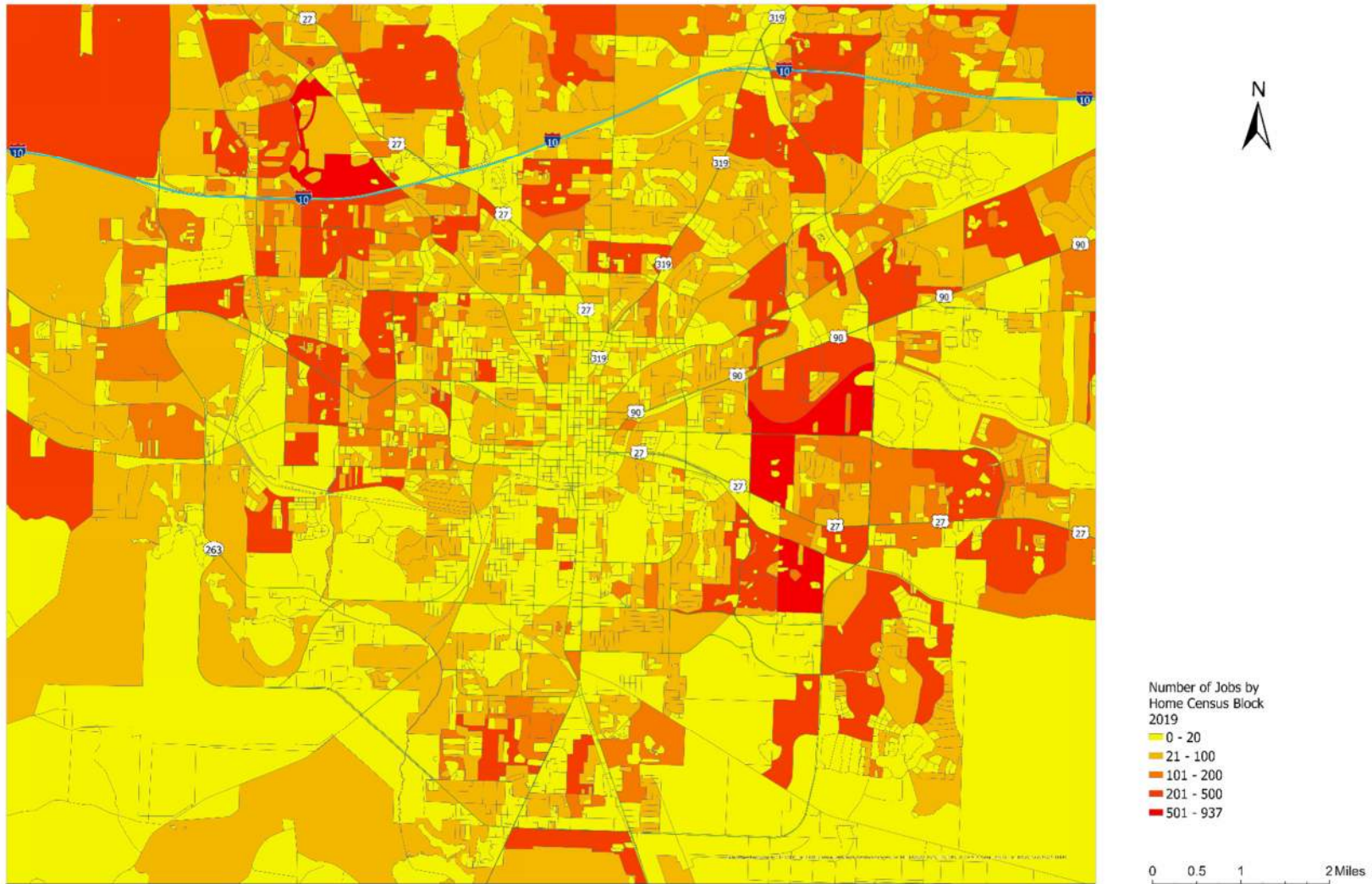


Figure 17 Job Distribution by Home Census Block in Tallahassee ([back to main text](#))

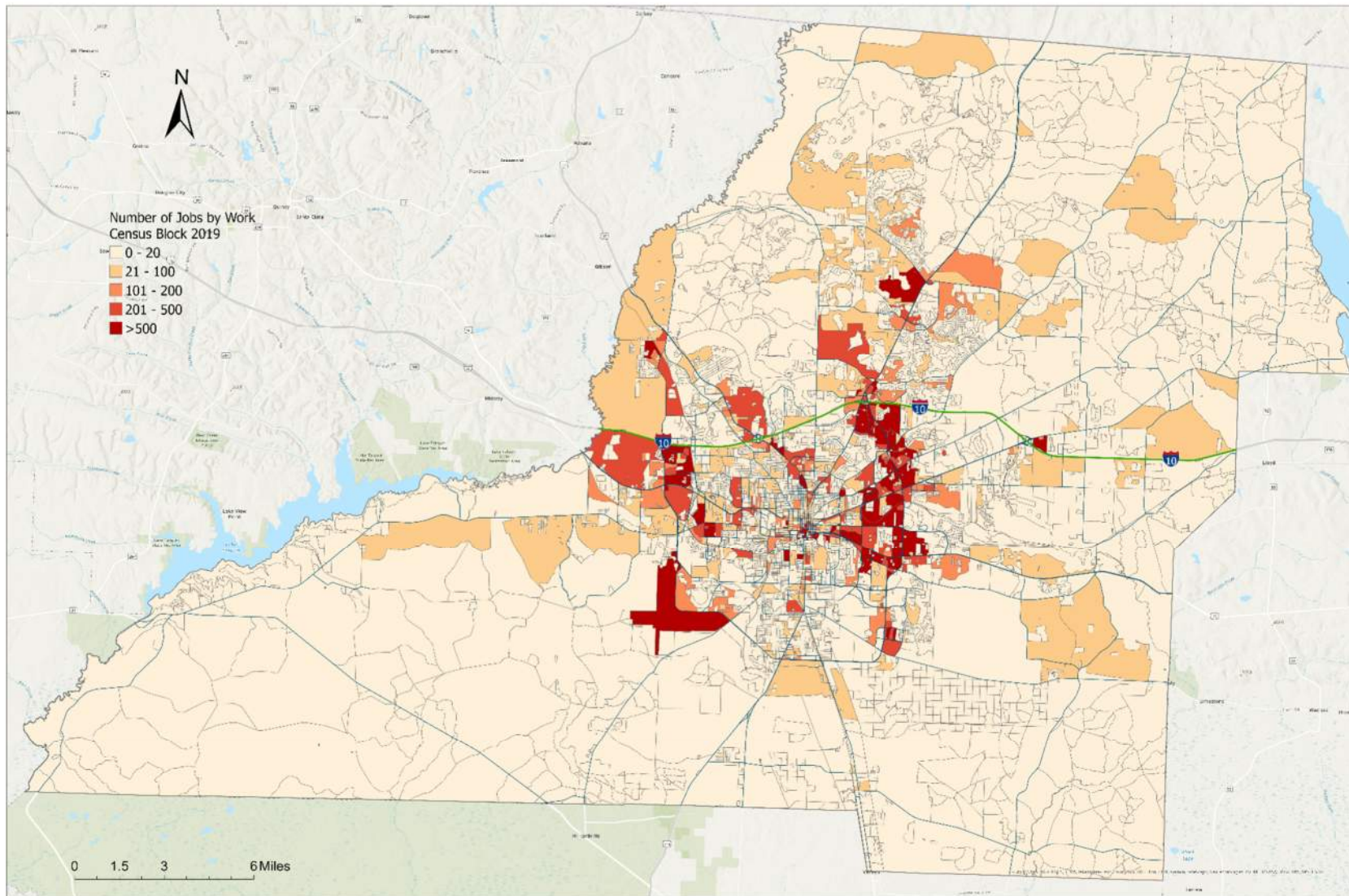


Figure 18 Number of Jobs by Work Census Block in Leon County ([back to main text](#))

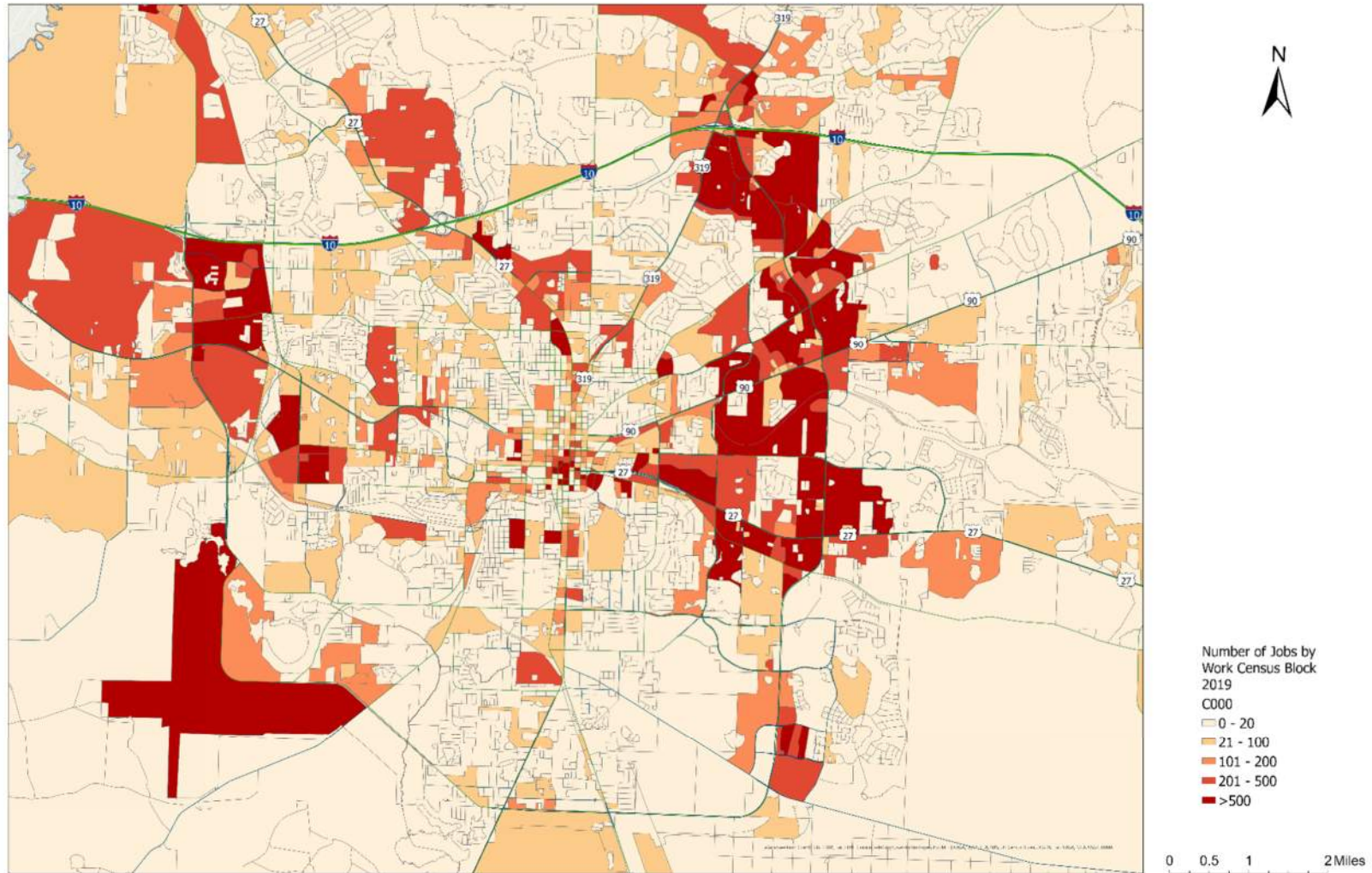


Figure 19 Number of Jobs by Work Census Block in Tallahassee ([back to main text](#))

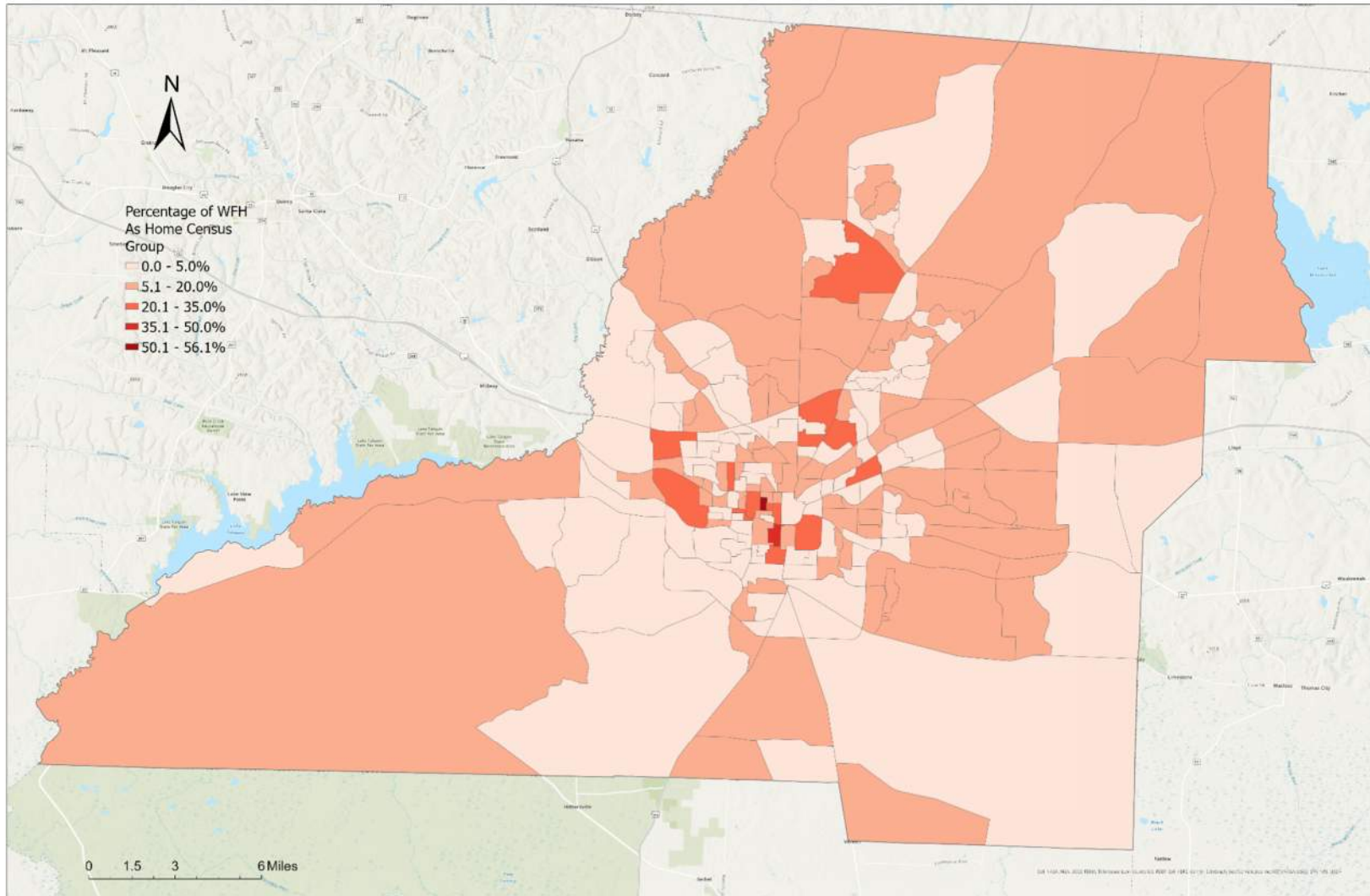


Figure 20 Percentage of WFH employees by Home Census Group (Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey) ([back to main text](#))

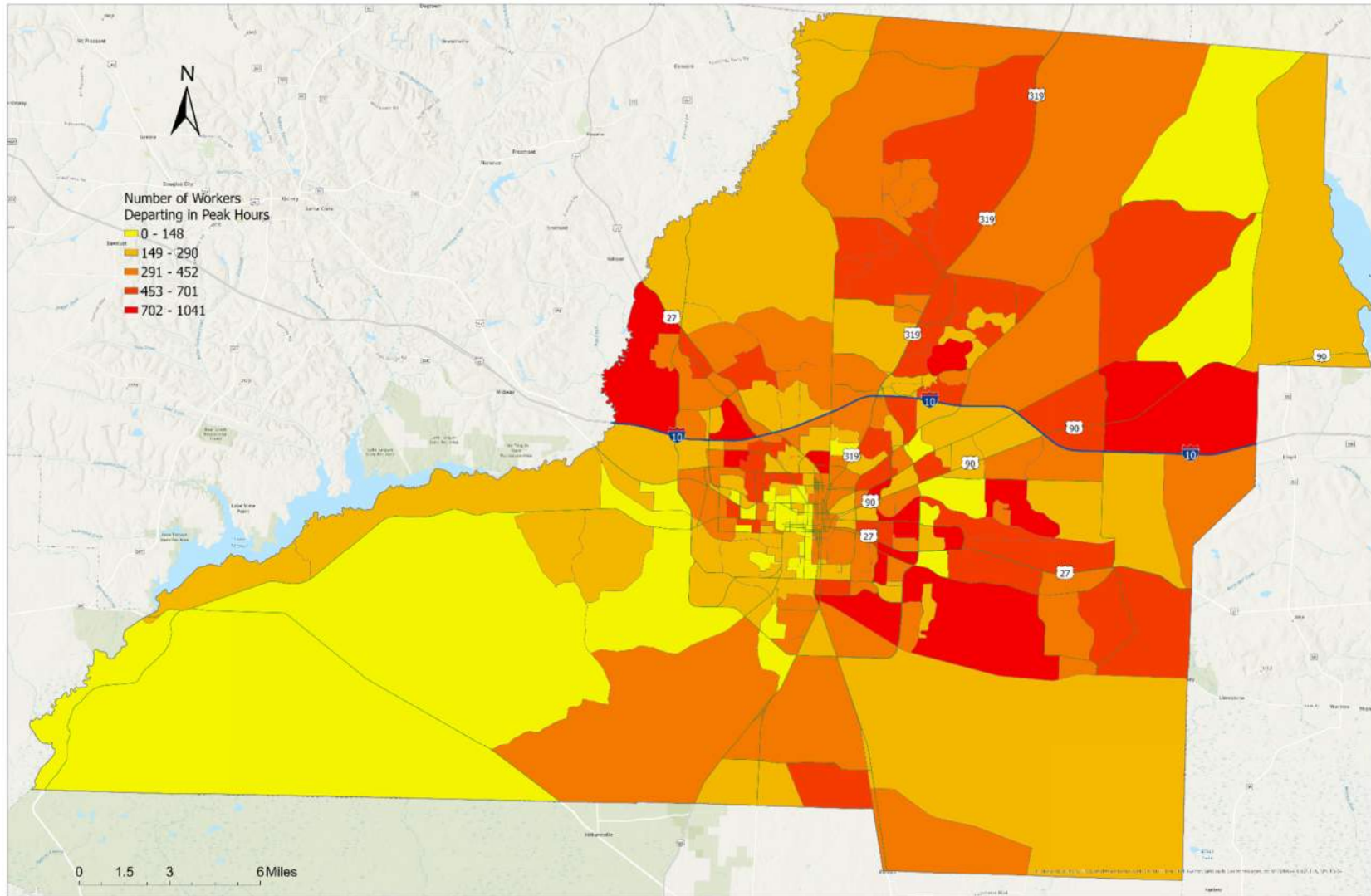


Figure 21 Number of Workers Departing in Morning Peak Hours (Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey) ([back to main text](#))

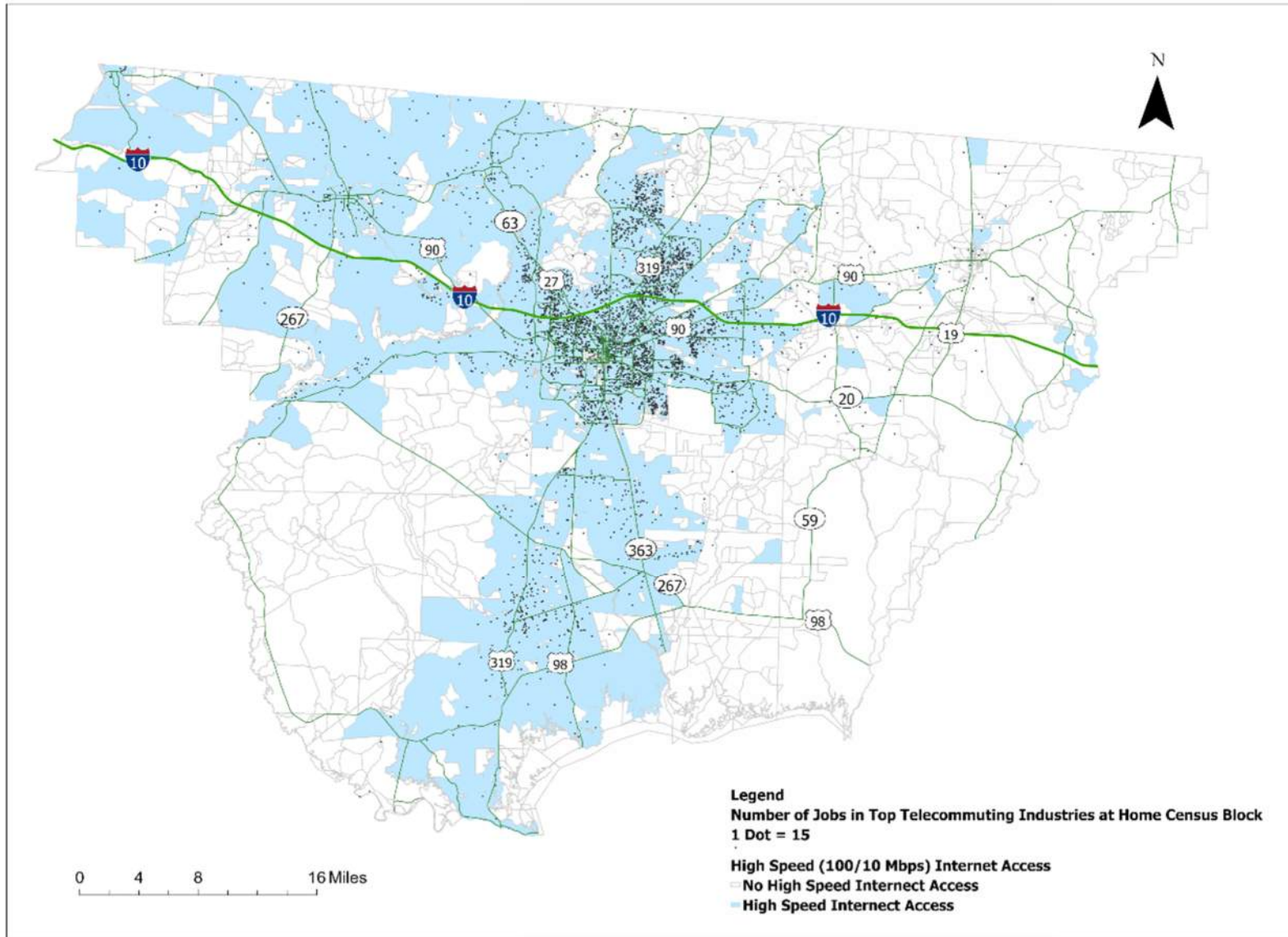
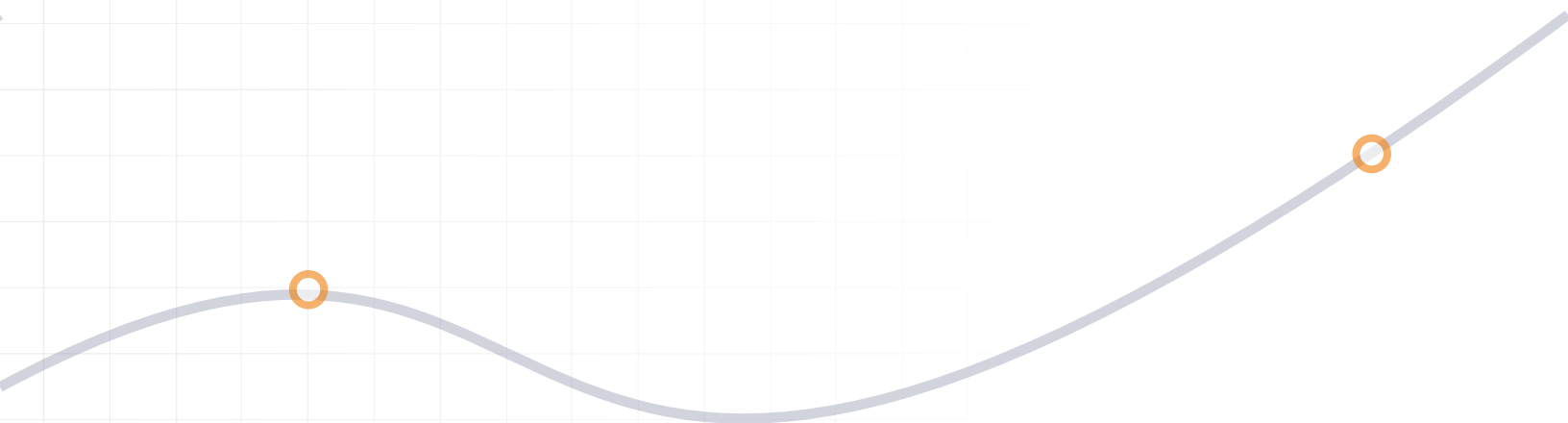


Figure 22 Broadband Coverage (Source: FCC National Broadband Map) ([back to main text](#))

Appendix C: Stakeholder Interviews



Leon County/City of Tallahassee Office of Economic Vitality

The Office of Economic Vitality (OEV) coordinates the activities of a team of economic development professionals focused on developing programs and initiatives that advances the community as a hub for economic competitiveness while simultaneously leveraging ideas, innovations, and intellectual capital through the continuous coordination of the community's economic development partners.

In a meeting with the Office of Economic Vitality, the Director questioned if in-office work schedules will return to pre-Covid normal. In the Spring of 2023, the online OEV Data Center shows the Unemployment Rate in Leon County was approximately 2.5 percent. At the time of this interview, July 2023, the rate was hovering around 3 percent. A low unemployment rate puts the employees in the driver's seat, allowing employees to negotiate telecommuting as part of a compensation package. Working from home is an incentive to entice the best and the brightest. The OEV is attempting to attract professional services, healthcare, transportation, manufacturing, and IT to Tallahassee. With a few exceptions, most of these industries have positions suitable for telecommuting.

Although employers prefer to have their employees back in the office, the OEV acknowledged that employers will reduce their overhead cost by allowing employees to work from home. Suggesting on the flip side some employees are tired of virtual meetings and have experienced Teams and Zoom fatigue.

In the OEV December 2023 Newsletter, the Director notes a key take-away from a recent Economic Conference with regard to office vacancy rates. Namely, Post-COVID, there is a noticeable comeback in the demand for office spaces, indicating a shift towards a more hybrid work model. Staff at the OEV identified that a toolkit that could be provided to employers to assist with managing remote workers would be very helpful, and asked if one could be provided as a part of this study.

One of the area's biggest private employers, Danfoss TurboCor, requires everyone to work in person. Current employer space needs are for warehouse and site suitable research and manufacturing locations, to accommodate businesses similar to TurboCor.

Meeting attendees acknowledged that the availability of free parking affects individual trips. A comment was made that lessening the amount of parking required for new commercial office and mixed-use development may encourage telecommuting. Other factors affecting commuter trip generation include:

- Available and affordable daycare
- Access to a car pool program
- Staggered work schedules

For more information on the Office of Economic Vitality please see their website <https://oevforbusiness.org/>.



Florida State University (FSU) Transportation & Parking Services

FSU is confronted with internal traffic issues; one reason is that students are driving between garages between classes. There seems a reliance on single occupancy auto use even when traveling within the campus. FSU has technology that monitors the number of unoccupied parking spaces to track parking utilization. The garages are mostly full, but the surface lots have some capacity. Employees pay \$10.42 per paycheck for parking and levels within the garage are reserved for them. Students are afforded free parking. In 2023 FSU started a program that offers students reserved parking at a fee of \$415 a year. It sold out in one-day. The program may be expanded.

StarMetro provides two circulators for FSU students, staff, and faculty. Students pay a transportation access fee to have free bus services, which includes the circulator bus service as well as access to Starmetro on all of its routes. FSU offers park-and-ride lots on the periphery of campus, they are served by the university's circulators, and are not at capacity. Demand is less than prior to the pandemic – there are a number of employees who only work on campus three-days a week. The university receives reports that show the ridership. FSU Transportation Department staff suggested that students need to be better educated about the circulator.

Online classes are offered, but on-campus students numbers are similar to the pre-pandemic levels. Overall enrollment is highest it has ever been. Other options for decreasing vehicle congestion during commute hours are:

- No longer allow freshmen to bring cars.
- Make premier parking a fee and parking further away free
- Do not start classes at 8 AM

For more information on the FSU Transportation Services please see their website <https://transportation.fsu.edu/>.

Best Practices from Agencies Promoting Travel Demand Management



Florida Agriculture & Mechanical University (FAMU) Office of Parking & Transportation

Through a meeting on July 11 with Deputy Parking Director Todd Kemp the CRTPA was able to further understand drivers of trip generation in and around Florida A&M's campus. FAMU has in-office requirements for some positions and the vast majority of teaching staff/faculty are expected to work in-person. Some departments were predominantly teleworking at the time of the interview. FAMU has an adopted Telecommuting Policy, UP-03-01, which govern remote work for employees.

Prior to the interview, FAMU had begun researching what other employers were doing elsewhere to gauge the magnitude of effectiveness of a telework program. The university has flexible work schedules with shifts from 7 AM to 4 PM, 8 AM to 5 PM, 9 AM to 6 PM, and 10 AM to 8 PM. The university does provide at home equipment for teleworking in some cases and also an internet allowance.

Students are mostly required to come to class. Online classes that existed prior to the pandemic are still being offered in an online format. Classes that presented in-person lectures and went online because of the pandemic, are now back to an in-person format. The university did not allow Freshmen to bring vehicles to campus up until the pandemic. After the pandemic that policy changed and freshmen are now permitted to bring vehicles.

Data on parking, including parking space count and how many parking spaces are used, is kept by the university. Students and faculty do not pay for parking, a transportation fee is included in tuition that covers the provision of parking. Through the interview it was established that parking is not a scarcity but premium parking access can be afforded through the purchase of a parking permit.

Part of the transportation fee included in tuition is for StarMetro services. FAMU has contracted with StarMetro so that university students can ride the bus for free. Venom Express is a transit bus that was previously operated by StarMetro and now is operated by FAMU. The route travels within campus, off campus, and goes to the engineering school. It is a fixed route, with headways every 30 minutes.

FDOT District 3—Regional Commuter Assistance Program

The Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) staffs RideOn Commuter Services, which covers the Capital Region. RideOn promotes the use of TDM strategies that improve mobility, while reducing vehicle miles traveled. RideOn works with local governments, employers, and stakeholder partners like CareerSource, which provides comprehensive employment services for the region. RideOn recommends universal adoption of TDM strategies such as compressed work weeks or flexible scheduling (set core hours, with customized start and end times), which can also significantly reduce peak hour congestion. In order to increase vehicle occupancy, RideOn provides free carpool matching for individuals, and assists with establishing vanpools for long-distance commuters. RideOn also offers a free Emergency Ride Home Program for those who regularly log trips to work or school using fuel-efficient modes. See Appendix D for additional information.

The greatest need for additional transportation options is in the rural counties, where transit service is limited, if available at all. The Florida Department of Transportation currently partners with Enterprise Commute to provide a commuter van and monthly fuel, at a 50 percent subsidy (for more information on the FDOT Rural Van Pool program please see the handout in Appendix D). Stronger support for remote work would also significantly reduce travel demand from these rural communities.

Additionally, feedback from citizens indicates strong interest in re-establishing a City bikeshare program, preferably, with a fleet that includes bikes with electric assist. Sustainable Tallahassee is also advocating for low-interest loans and/or subsidies for residents who need assistance in purchasing an e-bike as a commuter vehicle.

RideOn staff strongly recommends development of a remote work training program which could be offered to Tallahassee's largest employers. Clear best practices have emerged from lessons learned during the pandemic. The wide variations in both productivity and financial success demonstrate that far more is needed than a template or toolkit. The curriculum needs to provide the specific management skills that have been proven necessary to effectively lead a remote or hybrid workforce. In the past, such a certification program was offered on-line by the Center for Urban Transportation Research at University of South Florida.

For more information on FDOT's Regional Commuter Assistance Program, please visit RideOnTogether.org.

Central Florida Commuter Services

Like the FDOT D3 RideOn program, reThink Your Commute provides commuter services to Central Florida FDOT District 5. Staff from Central Florida Commuter Services noted that the State of Florida permits state agencies to allow for telework pursuant to § 110.171, Florida Statutes (F.S.). This section requires state agencies to “review all established positions and designate those positions that the agency deems eligible for telework. The agency shall ensure that this information is current and available to its employees and managers.” This statute permits state agencies to allow telework for appropriate positions. Individual state agencies determine implementation of their telework program. One example discussed was the State of Florida Department of Revenue’s (DOR) telework program. The DOR webpage provides the agency’s policy, procedure, agreement, and guidelines implementing telework. In addition, see Appendix D for information on telework at DOR, as well as the ReThink Draft Guidebook on TDM, which discusses developing and implementing a Telecommute program.

Employer engagement was identified as a primary TDM strategy in lessening the number of commuters. Central Florida Commuter Services discusses workplace needs with employers to help them develop a telecommuting policy. Employers are provided with information on work from home procedures, including what needs to be in place to successfully telecommute, should a company or agency allow for telework. A significant number of Central Florida businesses have a hybrid policy, allowing employees to work from home some days of the week, but there is a push to get staff back in the office. Central Florida Commuter Services has a relationship with their local Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) chapter, providing another avenue to inform and encourage the use of travel demand management (TDM) strategies.

In addition, at places of business the Central Florida Commuter Services provides presentations to new hires on the benefits of TDM. Two of the selling points presented are the environmental and fiscal benefits of TDM. Central Florida Commuter Services provides marketing materials on why TDM strategies (transit, van and carpools, telecommuting) are good for the environment by reducing single occupancy vehicle trips. Financial incentives may be offered to employees to encourage them not to drive to work. For example, one solution identified is to make parking expensive. The City of Orlando pays money to employees who opt out of sponsored parking.

Other factors identified by Central Florida Commuter Services in removing vehicles from their roadways:

- Expansion of broadband, Lake Nona was identified as a community intentionally equipped to allow people to work from home because of a significant investment in broadband
- Universities in the area offering online courses
- Vanpooling and the lesser expensive traditional option of carpooling

For more information on the reThink Your Commute program please see their website <https://www.rethinkyourcommute.com/>.



Florida State University (FSU) Office of Human Resources

Florida State University employs roughly 12,000 employees. FSU's Associate Vice President for Human Resources indicated that on any given day about 70 percent of staff are on campus, compared to prior to the pandemic when over 95 percent of staff worked in person. Service positions, such as maintenance workers and food servers, have to report to campus. People working for the university, outside of teaching and hands-on positions, are afforded opportunities to work from alternate work locations

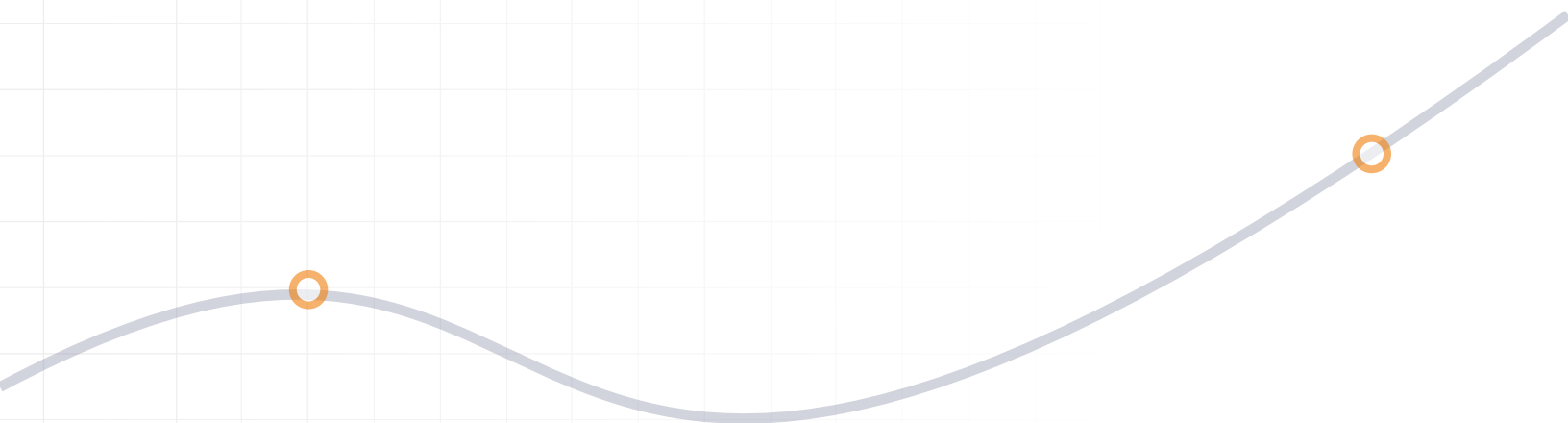
FSU permits various hybrid work schedules. Employees can opt into this hybrid work schedule, with supervisory approval, or choose to report to the workplace five-days a week. This approach started as a pilot during the pandemic and continues currently. For more information on the FSU Alternate Work Location Arrangement please see the reference guide as part of Appendix D.

FSU was intentional about returning employees to campus at the same time the students returned. Flexible schedules were offered to ease employees back into an in-person work environment. Supervisors have flexibility to stagger schedules or allow for four ten-hour days if business needs can still be met. One of the primary reasons the flexibility is offered is to facilitate increased retention. For positions where retaining employees is a challenge, full time remote work may be permitted

For those persons employed in a full-time remote position, FSU provides resources including physical office setup (i.e., computer and monitors) and an internet allowance. These same resources are not provided for employees who opt for a hybrid work schedule. These types of resources are provided on campus and it would double costs if the same equipment and internet is purchased for someone's home.

For more information on employment with FSU and their Alternate Work Location Arrangement please see their website <https://hr.fsu.edu/>.

Appendix D: Policy Guidance



The following sections of this appendix provide language employers could use in crafting their own telecommuting policies.

Purpose/need

The (employer) supports Hybrid Telework when appropriate and recognizes that, when properly implemented, Hybrid Telework may improve performance, assist in recruitment and retention of critical employees, reduce employee turnover, and result in a cost savings through a reduction in leased office space and office energy use.

This Pilot Hybrid Telework is designed to enable the (employer) to evaluate the desirability of a permanent Telework Policy and will expire no later than (insert date). Prior to or upon expiration of this Pilot Hybrid Telework Policy, the (employer) will review productivity and performance of Telework Employees for the period this Pilot Hybrid Telework Program remains in effect. Pending the outcome of such review, the (employer) may begin offering Telework on a permanent basis.

Definitions

A. Telework: An arrangement that allows an employee to conduct all or some of his or her work away from the official worksite during all or a portion of the employee's established work hours on a regular basis.

B. Hybrid Telework: A work arrangement that allows a Telework-Eligible Employee to Telework one to two days per week and requires the Telework-Eligible Employee to work a predetermined number of days in the (employer)'s provided office.

C. Telework: A work arrangement that allows a Telework-Eligible Employee to conduct some duties and responsibilities away from their assigned (employer)-issued workspace during a portion of the Telework-Eligible Employee's established work hours on a regular basis. The term Telework is considered to be synonymous with Hybrid Telework.

D. Telework Agreement: A document that establishes the rules and responsibilities associated with a Telework-Eligible Employee's ability to Telework.

F. Teleworker: A Telework-Eligible Employee who has been approved for Telework and has an executed Telework Agreement in effect.

Identify all positions eligible for telework

The (employer) recognizes that the job duties and responsibilities of certain positions do not lend themselves to a Telework option. Provide the framework to determine whether a position is appropriate and eligible for Telework.

In identifying positions appropriate for telework, some basic considerations are:

- A. Whether the job requirements accommodate working away from the official worksite on a recurring basis;
- B. Whether required contact with other employees and customers is predictable (and therefore, manageable);
- C. Whether there are identifiable portions of the job which can be done away from the official worksite; and
- D. Whether the work output for this position is specific and measurable;
- E. Whether the position handles sensitive or confidential information;
- F. Whether the job requirements accommodate working away from the normal work site on a regularly scheduled basis;
- G. Whether there are identifiable portions of the job which can effectively be performed away from the normal work site;
- H. Whether the job duties can be accomplished at a comparable level at an alternate work site; and
- I. Whether the Division or Office is able to monitor job performance and successful completion of job duties.

Select categories of employees may request and be considered for participation in the Employee Telework Program with a minimum of two (2) full workdays in the office per workweek. A full workday is eight (8) or more hours.

The determination of a position's eligibility for Telework will require a Division Director (or equivalent) to provide their respective Deputy Chief Financial Officer (DCFO) (or equivalent) with a supporting proposal for review and approval by the DCFO (or equivalent).

Private Firm Considerations

- A. Benefits to the work unit or (employer)'s productivity
- B. Office workload
- C. Office space reduction or multi-use
- D. Equipment reduction or multi-use
- E. Financial impact reduction through increased returns or yields
- F. Impact on other employees (ability to interact with teleworker and morale)
- G. Impact on customers
- H. Environmental conditions

Requirements and procedures for Teleworkers

Teleworkers are subject to the same rules regarding conduct, attendance, leave, performance standards, and discipline as other employees. Teleworkers must obtain supervisory approval before taking leave. Accurate time sheets must be submitted by the employee.

The teleworker agrees to work at the assigned office or approved telework location and not from any other unapproved site. Failure to comply with this provision may result in termination of the Telework Agreement and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.

The teleworker is prohibited from conducting face-to-face business at his or her established telework location. Failure to comply with this provision may result in termination of the Telework Agreement and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.

Teleworkers are required to maintain normal working hours.

Employees must be able to work the minimum number of full workdays in the office as outlined in (Telework Policy), to be deemed eligible for consideration to participate in the Employee Telework Program. Any exceptions must be approved by the (management).

An employee shall not telework if on approved leave.

Telework may only be performed on a Hybrid basis. Employees may perform Hybrid Telework one to two days per week. Participation in the (employer's) Telework Policy is voluntary.

Employees who have been approved to work a flexible work schedule are ineligible to participate in hybrid telework.

Employees on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) are not eligible for the Employee Telework Program.

Positions at a Bureau Chief (or equivalent) level, or higher, are not eligible for Telework.

Establish Telework Agreement

Prior to beginning Telework, the Telework-Eligible Employee and supervisor must complete a Telework Agreement. This form must be provided to the (human resources), which is responsible for the overall coordination and maintenance of correspondence and documents associated with Telework. The Telework Agreement, which will be maintained in the Telework-Eligible Employee's official personnel file, must include at a minimum:

- A. The established workdays and normal work hours;
- B. An explanation as to how supervision will be provided;
- C. A requirement that the Telework-Eligible Employee check-in with their immediate supervisor at least once on each day they work remotely;
- D. An explanation as to how work products and outputs will be monitored and reviewed;
- E. An explanation as to how attendance and leave records will be maintained and processed;
- F. A maximum response time for the Telework-Eligible Employee to report to their in-office workspace if requested by a supervisor;
- G. Details (physical address, phone number, point of contact) related to the Telework- Eligible Employee's Telework location;
- H. An acknowledgement by the Telework-Eligible Employee that their productivity and performance during established work hours will be monitored, using all resources available to the (employer);
- I. An acknowledgment that approved secondary employment cannot be performed during work hours or using employer resources;
- J. A specific description of how technology requirements will be met at the Telework location.
- K. Telework agreements will be reviewed in conjunction with the Teleworker's annual performance evaluations

A telework agreement is not required, for:

Performance of required work duties away from the official worksite and outside of established work hours on an occasional basis and sporadically working away from the official worksite during all or some portion of the established work hours. These arrangements may be used by the supervisor or manager to accommodate extenuating circumstances by allowing an employee to maintain productivity away from the official worksite;

1. Performance of required work duties on an occasional basis, and which are away from the (employer)-issued workspace or outside of established work hours.

2. Duties and responsibilities that, by their nature, are routinely performed in the field, away from the employee's (employer)-issued workspace.

Temporary intermittent adjustments to the base work hours due to extenuating circumstances and/or to meet the needs of the (employer), are permitted provided the changes are agreed upon between the immediate supervisor or manager and the employee. Significant or long-term changes to the agreed upon telework schedule must be documented with an updated **Telework Agreement** which must be signed, approved, and processed in the same manner as an original request in order to comply with statutory, procedural, and annual reporting requirements.

Screening Employees for telework success

Telework does not suit everyone or every job. The following guidelines are offered for use by supervisors and managers when considering whether telework is an available option for an employee. The following criteria must be met before an employee can be screened for telework.

An employee of the (employer) who has been employed with the (employer) for at least six (6) months, and is not on a Performance Improvement Plan, and does not have an evaluation score below an aggregate score of less than 3.0 on the most recent performance evaluation. Employees who have been disciplined (i.e., received a written reprimand, suspension, or performance-related demotion) within the past 12 months are not eligible to Telework.

In assessing an employee's eligibility for Telework, first, the (employer) will consider whether the employee meets the definition of Telework-Eligible Employee. Next, the (employer) will consider the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities (including any performance weaknesses) to evaluate whether they can effectively perform their job duties while Teleworking. Factors that will be considered are:

- A. Access to a employer-issued computer;
- B. Ability to work independently;
- C. Comfort level with required technology;
- D. Past performance levels;
- E. Ability to communicate successfully with other parties;
- F. Reliable internet connectivity and telephone service at Telework location;
- G. Dependability and trustworthiness; and
- H. Level of self-motivation and self-direction.

Employee Considerations

- A. Performance and disciplinary history
- B. Employee workload
- C. Degree of self-motivation and need for supervision

- D. Dependability and trustworthiness
- E. Organization and time management skills
- F. Home workstation: It is essential that employees find a home office space that is free of distractions and provides the needed privacy.
- G. Level of job skills
- H. Extenuating circumstances

Equipment and security needs

The (employer) may, but is not required to, provide equipment for Telework. The (employer) will not cover the cost of repair or maintenance of the Teleworker's personal equipment. The Teleworker is required to use an (employer) issued computer for all work performed off site.

The supervisor and Teleworker must agree upon the equipment to be used in Telework prior to approval. Subject to the supervisor's approval, state-owned equipment may be used for Teleworking if:

- A. The Teleworker's present equipment is not needed at the office and can easily be moved;
- B. The Teleworker's present equipment is portable and can easily be moved; or
- C. The (employer) has additional equipment, suitable for Telework, and available for use by a Teleworker.

The (employer) and the Teleworker will follow security controls as outlined in (Cyber Security Policy No.). The Teleworker must apply all approved safeguards to protect employer owned equipment and supplies. All official state records, files, and documents must be protected from unauthorized disclosure or damage and returned safely to the office once the Telework Agreement is no longer in effect.

Teleworkers must maintain a home internet service with sufficient upload and download speeds capable of supporting all required job duties and responsibilities. Teleworkers will be responsible for using personal leave in the event of a service interruption, power outage, or if there is no remote work available. The (employer) will not provide or reimburse the cost of any equipment, installation fees, or monthly service charges for Teleworkers to have the required internet connectivity.

The (employer) is not responsible for operating costs or any other costs associated with setting up or maintaining the telework location such as furnishings, maintenance, repairs, utilities, etc. The teleworker may be reimbursed for authorized expenses incurred while conducting official business for the (employer).

The teleworker and the supervisor shall discuss and impose mandatory safeguards that shall be taken by the teleworker to ensure protection of (employer) documents and records from unauthorized disclosure or damage. All records, papers and correspondence must be safeguarded and immediately returned to the work unit by the teleworker upon request, upon termination of the Telework Agreement, if the employee changes positions, or separates from the (employer).

The teleworker's manager(s) and the IT Services Manager must approve the use of any teleworking equipment. The use of a teleworker's personal equipment for teleworking requires a written request from the teleworker and approval from the upper management, which could include the Chief Executive

Offices or their designee. Equipment provided by the teleworker shall be at no cost to the (employer) and will be maintained by the teleworker. Use of (employer) owned computer equipment and peripherals is subject to Cost Center Manager approval and the availability of equipment and funding.

Teleworkers must maintain a home internet service with sufficient upload and download speeds capable of supporting all required work activities. Employees will be expected to use personal leave time in the event of service interruption, power outage, or if there is no work available. Employees have the option of reporting to their designated office location to mitigate use of personal leave. Communication should be made to ensure the outage is not impacting the designated office location prior to reporting. If the outage is on the part of the (employer), reporting to the designated office location will be determined based upon the needs of the (employer). The (employer) will not provide or reimburse the cost for any equipment, installation fees or monthly service charges for teleworkers to have the required Internet connectivity. (Employer) owned computer equipment and peripherals must be protected against damage and unauthorized use.

When IT support is needed and cannot be accomplished remotely, teleworkers must bring their (employer) owned equipment to their designated office for support. Teleworkers may not use (employer) owned equipment, or software for personal activities. Approved (employer) owned equipment must be listed on the Telework Agreement and returned to the (employer) within two (2) working days if the Telework Agreement is terminated, the employee changes positions, or separates from the (employer).

The teleworker and their immediate supervisor or manager shall discuss and impose mandatory safeguards that shall be taken by the teleworker to ensure protection of (employer) documents and records from unauthorized disclosure or damage. All records, papers and correspondence must be safeguarded and immediately returned to the work unit by the teleworker upon request, upon termination of the Telework Agreement, if the employee changes positions, or separates from the (employer).

Guidance to manage staff remotely and processes for remote managers

Immediate supervisors or managers are to meet daily with the teleworker on each telework workday. This is required to be a Teams call or a phone call, and the supervisor is expected to discuss specific work assignments, due dates, productivity expectations, and to review completed work, etc. [An email is not acceptable.] Employees who are in telework status are expected to take and return calls as required. Immediate supervisors or managers may assign new work tasks or review progress status by email, telephone, or other means as needed. Immediate supervisors or managers are expected to monitor work performance and productivity just as they would in a traditional work environment.

The Telework Plan section of the Telework Agreement must be completed to document the employee's general work duties and to develop monitoring and supervision plans.

Employee participation in the Telework Program is voluntary and may be terminated in writing at any time by the employee.

Employee participation in the Employee Telework Program is discretionary based on the approval of the (employer) and the employee's immediate supervisor or manager and is in no way to be considered an entitlement. Participation may be terminated by the employee or (employer) via email at any time.

The upper management is responsible for ensuring that adequate in-office staffing levels are in place at all times to maintain productivity.

These arrangements may be approved by the supervisor or manager to accommodate extenuating circumstances by allowing an employee to maintain productivity away from their (employer)-issued workspace. Such off-site work should not be performed on a routine basis and should not exceed more than a few hours.

Participation will not adversely affect the employee's eligibility for advancement or any other employment rights or benefits.

Teleworkers are subject to the same rules regarding conduct, attendance, leave, performance standards, and discipline as other employees. Teleworkers must obtain supervisory approval before taking leave and submit accurate timesheets.

Teleworkers agree to allow their immediate supervisor, manager, or other (employer) designated staff to inspect the telework site during the teleworker's established telework hours after receiving a 24-hour written or verbal notice. Teleworkers may waive the required notification time if they choose. In the event of a job-related accident while teleworking, the teleworker agrees to allow immediate and follow-up inspection(s) at the telework site as needed.

A teleworker may be called into their official work location by the employee's immediate supervisor or manager at any time, in order to meet work unit or (employer) needs. When called in after the workday has begun, traveling to the official work location during telework hours is considered work time and the teleworker is not considered to be "in travel status" during this time.

A teleworker whose schedule includes time in the office location and time at the telework location within the same workday shall consider travel time to and from the two locations as personal time and shall not record the time as work time.

Teleworkers are expected to meet or exceed performance and productivity standards while participating in the Employee Telework Program. Failure to do so shall result in revocation of the teleworker's participation in the Employee Telework Program.



The Department of Revenue's Telework Program and Policies web page provides an example of how one State of Florida Agency has established a framework for teleworkers as well as for the managers.

This information provided is an example of how the State Employee Telework Program is implemented pursuant to §110.171, 2023 Florida Statutes (including Special Session C).

[Click here to access: Department of Revenue Telework Program](#)

Telework at the Florida Department of Revenue

Telework Policy

The Department's Telework Policy provides procedures and step-by-step guidance to supervisors, teleworkers, and employees who are interested in telework. You can view the Department's Telework Policy and supporting documents below.

- Telework Policy — The policy framework for telework at the Department of Revenue.
- Telework Procedures — Detailed telework procedures for Department employees and supervisors.
- Telework Agreement — An agreement between the Department and teleworkers that establishes the terms and conditions of a telework arrangement.
- Alternative Worksite Safety Checklist — Checklist for assessing whether an alternative worksite is free of fire and safety hazards.
- Guidelines for Developing Alternative Work Strategies — Guidelines for Department managers to make an efficient work site plan by utilizing telework and flexible work schedules.

Eligibility for telework

The Department of Revenue identifies positions that are suitable for telework based on the job duties of each position. In addition to the position requirements, individual employees must have the ability to work independently and successfully communicate with customers, coworkers and their supervisor. You can view the guidelines the Department uses to determine eligibility below.

- Guidelines for Evaluating Position Eligibility — a tool managers use to determine whether the job duties of a position are suitable for telework.
- Employee Individual Self-Assessment — a tool to help employees decide if they have suitable characteristics for telework.

Some factors affecting employee eligibility for telework

The Department will consider several factors when making final decisions regarding telework. While the agency may consider a position suitable and an employee eligible, opportunities for telework are limited. Below are some of the factors the Department considers when making final telework decisions.

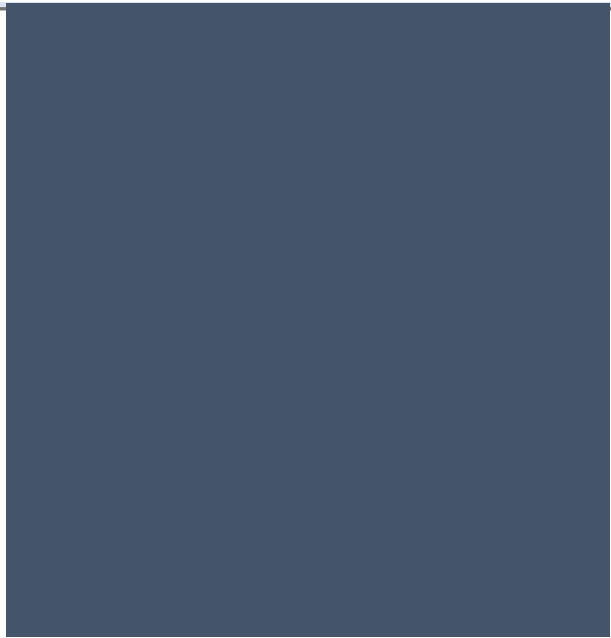
- The ability to perform duties outside of the usual place of work.
- The benefit to the agency.
- The employee's performance record, knowledge, skills, abilities, and work habits.
- The availability of resources to provide on-going secure network access, communications, or other required equipment.
- The work unit's ability to provide essential services to customers.
- The impact on work flow and other work unit employees.

Positions currently suitable for telework

The Department generally considers a position suitable for telework, unless the physical absence of the position would have an adverse impact on the work unit's productivity, reduce the service provided to customers, or unnecessarily raise the cost to taxpayers. The Department will continue to review this list and make updates as necessary. To view the positions the Department considers suitable for telework, review the Positions Eligible for Telework list.



Florida Department of Revenue
5050 West Tennessee Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399



reThink Your Office

A Guide on Telecommute
Programs for Employers

reThink Your Commute, A Program of the
Florida Department of Transportation

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Chapter 1: Telecommuting 101

Overview

When deciding if a Telecommute Program is right for your business, you may be asking whether the company will fundamentally benefit from telecommuting.

This manual is designed to help determine if the company has positions or whole departments that are potential candidates for telecommuting. This manual also includes the benefits of telecommuting, the potential concerns to address in advance of launching a Telecommuting Program, and a list of ten steps to implement a program at your company.

Starting a Telecommute Program at your place of work may seem overwhelming at first. There are just so many things to consider! But you're in luck. This manual will take you step by step through the process and if you have any questions or need assistance along the way, the reThink team is there to guide you.

***“Work is something you do,
not somewhere you go.”***

If you decide to implement a Telecommute Program, it could be one of the best decisions you make for your company.

What is telecommuting?

Telecommuting is a work option that allows employees to perform work duties from a location other than their principal worksite. This includes working from home, on the road, or at other satellite locations conducive to working.

Also known as teleworking, telecommuting has gained attention over the last 40 years because of the potential benefits to the employee and the employer. The trend actually started in the 1960s with Jack Niles, a consultant rocket scientist to the U.S. Air Force. Niles is known as “The Father of Telecommuting” and later focused his research efforts specifically on telecommuting, launching a pilot telecommute program within the private sector.¹

Since the launch of the first telecenter in Marne-la-Valle, France in 1980, some of the largest companies in the world have implemented Telecommute Programs, reaping the benefits for both their employees and their bottom-line.¹ Telecommuting is expected to become the most common mode of work for American workers. Currently, an average of 5% of Central Floridians work from home.²

Tele-What?

If you are not familiar with Telecommute Programs, you may see a few words throughout this manual that you may not recognize. Below is a list of “Telecommuting Vocabulary” that will assist you in the formation of your program.

- **Coworking**

Working independently but alongside others that are typically in the same field; coworkers could meet up through computer networks or at locations other than your primary worksite

¹ Dr. Wendell Joice, “History of Telework (1972-1998),” Telework America Online Curriculum, Workshop 1: Getting Educated, 1998: 1-3. <http://www.teleworknetwork.com/pdfs/63.pdf>

² US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

- **Jelly Coworking**
Casual coworking that occurs on a short-term basis; jelly coworking often takes place at coffee shops, homes, or at an office
- **Jelly Site**
A location where casual coworking can take place, such as a coffee shop or library; jelly sites are best categorized as temporary locations for telecommuters
- **Satellite Offices**
Workspaces that are outside of the home and away from the conventional workplace, yet easily accessible to the employee³
- **Telecommuter**
An employee of a company that permits them to perform work duties from a location other than the principal worksite; also known as teleworkers, mobile worker, web commuter, e-worker, agile worker, virtual worker, or nomad worker⁴
- **Telecommuting Coordinator**
Designated employee (management level) who oversees the development and execution of a Telecommute Program
- **Telework Center**
Offers workstations and provides office facilities and services to individuals working outside of their primary worksite; fees are typically associated with telework centers⁵
- **Virtual Office**
Individuals located at different locations, working together, using the same computer network⁴

Who's Telecommuting?

From small businesses to corporate giants, many companies now allow their employees to work from home.

According to CNN Money's report of the "100 Best Companies to Work For," 82 of the top 100 best companies offered telecommuting as a perk. These companies allow their employees to work at home at least 20% of the time. Top companies like Cisco and Intel have at least 80% of their workforce working from home on a regular basis and is a heavy factor contributing to overall worker satisfaction.⁶

Telecommuting has also been successfully implemented in city governments, such as San Antonio, Texas; St. Paul, Minnesota; Foster City, California; and many others. State and federal agencies are also employing telecommuting as an effective strategy in their own organizational frameworks.

³ N.B. Kurland and D.E. Bailey, "Telework: The advantages and challenges of working here, there, anywhere, and anytime," *Organizational Dynamics*, Autumn (1999): 54.

[http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/glossary_entry.php?term=Satellite%20Offices,%20Definition\(s\)%20of](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/glossary_entry.php?term=Satellite%20Offices,%20Definition(s)%20of)

⁴ <http://workingfromanywhere.org/>

⁵ GSA U.S. General Services Administration, "Alternative Workplace Solutions." (2012). <http://www.gov/portal/content/102702#3>

⁶ <http://workingfromanywhere.org/>

What are my local resources in Central Florida?

The great news is that you do not have to go it alone! As a Central Florida employer, you have many resources available to you to help you establish and implement your Telecommute Program.

Your first call should be to reThink, FDOT's District 5 Regional Commuter Assistance Program at 1-866-610-RIDE (7433). We provide free consulting services to walk you through this manual and the process to set up a Telecommute Program for your company.

Additional resources, such as virtual office locations and sample agreements, are included in appendices to this manual.

Chapter 2 – Benefits

Snapshot of Savings & Incentives

For the Employer⁷

- Elevated profits due to increased productivity
- Ability to continue operations in the face of a natural disaster, pandemic, or influenza outbreak
- Increased employee retention which reduces training and recruitment costs
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced or eliminated real estate costs
- Decreased electricity and water bills
- Reduced relocation costs by allowing new hires to maintain household in other areas

For the Employee

- Less wear and tear on personal vehicle, saving people money on vehicle maintenance costs
- Reduced gas consumption due to fewer trips to the worksite
- Save an average of \$4,300 a year in transportation costs⁸
- Increase in personal time
- Smaller carbon footprint
- Increase in disposable income
- Reduced costs for dry-cleaning
- Less exposure to office sicknesses, leading to fewer visits to the doctor
- Reduced stress levels, leading to reduced health costs
- Overall improved quality of life with a focus on work-life balance

For the Community³

- Reduction in carbon emissions due to fewer vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Improved air quality thanks to reduced VMT
- Conservation of natural resources due to fewer car trips to work
- Reduction in traffic congestion
- Decreased wear and tear of roads and highways
- Increased stability in local economy due to companies being able to continue operations in the face of a natural disaster, pandemic, or influenza outbreak
- Lower prices for goods and services
- Improved overall health of a community

Tell me more about these benefits ... Is it only the employee who benefits?

Everyone benefits! Not only do the employer and their employees benefit, so does the community.

By allowing employees to work from home, or from locations closer to their home, people will drive fewer miles each day. Fewer cars on the road means fewer emissions released into the air we breathe. Fewer trips to work mean fewer trips to the gas station. Less money spent on car repairs means more money available for the things you and your family really need.

⁷ GSA U.S., General Services Administration & Telework Exchange, Eliminating Gridlock, “The Benefits of Telework,” 9-11.

<http://archive.teleworkexchange.com/pdfs/The-Benefits-of-Telework.pdf>

⁸ Calculated based on an average 15-mile one-way commuting distance and AAA’s 2011 “Your Driving Costs” rate of \$0.585/mile

How do employers benefit?

- **Telecommuters increase their productivity by as much as 10-20%**

Employees who are allowed to work from home and have flexible work schedules can be more productive because of fewer distractions and less interruptions.³

- **Ensure continuity of operations**

In the event of a natural disaster, pandemic, or influenza outbreak that prevents your workforce from traveling to the worksite, you will be prepared. Having the capability to set up your workforce at home will allow your company to get back to “business as usual” faster than other companies.³ Your workforce will also be less likely to catch or spread disease because they won’t be exposed to potential contagions at the worksite.

- **Improve employee recruitment & retention**

Offering the option of telecommuting increases the pool of potential employees from which your company could hire. From persons with disabilities to people across state lines, offering potential employees the option to work from home could transform your workforce.³

Allowing existing employees the option to work from home can also be a tool to retain great employees. If faced with the need to relocate, an employee that does not have to be in the office every day may be able to keep their position instead of resigning.

- **Reduce lateness and absenteeism**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2009, the average commute to work was 25 minutes, adding up to 50 minutes a day in time spent traveling.⁹ By allowing employees to work from home, the time that was normally spent commuting to work can instead be used for essential activities like dropping kids off at school, going to the doctor for preventative care, preparing meals, or exercising. This means fewer sick days and fewer instances of tardiness.

Does your workforce tend to pass around the office flu? Telecommuting reduces exposure to contagious illness, which in turn reduces absenteeism.³

- **Reduce office overhead**

Developing a robust Telecommute Program for your company can lead to incredible cost savings, starting with reducing or eliminating the costs associated with maintaining office space. This reduction in real estate will also lead to less water and electricity consumption, leading to even more savings throughout the year.

Office overhead will also be reduced if telecommuting allows your company to retain quality employees. By not having to replace key workers, your office will not have to cover the overhead expense of training new employees.¹⁰

How do employees benefit?

- **Immediate cost savings (give yourself a raise!)**

⁹ Brian McKenzie and Melanie Rapino, “Commuting in the United States: 2009,” U.S. Census Bureau, American Survey Reports, no. 15, (2011). <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acs-15.pdf>

¹⁰ Janet Caldwell, “Working Outside the Box: A Study of the Growing Momentum in Telework,” Institute for Electronic Government, IBM Corporation, 2009: 12. http://www.ol.ibm.com/industries/government/ieg/pdf/working_outside_the_box.pdf

Working from home can save your employees money by reducing the number of trips they make to the worksite. Driving less means less wear and tear on a personal vehicle, which means less maintenance costs and fewer trips to the gas station. Considering that commuters spend an average of \$4,300 a year just to get to work, not having to put that money towards transportation could translate into a nice raise – without negotiating with your boss!⁸

- **Improved morale and job satisfaction**

Flexible work schedules lead to employees that are less stressed, more productive, and happier with their job.³

- **Expanded work opportunities**

Through telecommuting, individuals are no longer limited to job opportunities within a certain geographic area.

- **Reduced commute time**

With an average commute time of 50 minutes every day, working from home frees up the time that is usually spent in a vehicle. Employees can use that time for activities like exercise, preparing meals, or other important needs.

- **Improved quality of life: achieving a work-life balance**

Telecommuters often cite a better work-life balance due to the ability to structure their workdays for ultimate efficiency. Not to mention, not having to fight rush hour traffic can reduce the amount of stress your employees experience each day as well. All of this combined improves the quality of life for participating employees.

How does the community benefit?

- **Telecommuting contributes to a greener environment**

Transportation is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions.¹¹ Reducing the number of cars on the road not only affects traffic congestion, but also the quality of the air we breathe. Telecommuting also helps conserve natural resources; not driving to work every day means workers use fewer gallons of gas.

- **Improves quality of life**

Telecommuters contribute to the overall improvement of the quality of life for everyone in their community. Reducing the number of cars on the road reduces emissions, which means the air we breathe is safer. This can reduce the amount and severity of illnesses related to air quality. Plus, fewer traffic snarls and cleaner air lead to happier people. By avoiding the rush hour commute, individuals avoid the stress associated with fighting traffic. Happier, healthier people add up to an improved quality of life.

- **Lower prices for goods and services**

In 2010, traffic congestion cost the United States \$101 billion dollars for the 4.8 billion hours people were stuck in traffic, wasting 1.9 billion gallons of fuel.¹² Introducing Telecommute Programs can decrease this waste by reducing the number of cars on the road, which can translate to less delay for business deliveries

¹¹ US Environmental Protection Agency."U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory," <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/usgginventory.html>

¹² David Schrank, Tim Lomax and Bill Eisele, "2011 Urban Mobility Report," Texas Transportation Institute, September 2011: 5.

and services. Decreasing the amount of time spent in traffic can decrease the cost of goods and services once they hit the market.

- **Economic stability**

If a natural disaster, terrorist attack, pandemic influenza, or other major emergency occurred, there could be significant down-time before people return to work, which could result in lost wages. By equipping your company and your employees to work from home in advance of a major emergency, members of your community would not find themselves in potential economic distress.³ Having businesses in your community shut down operations due to a major emergency for a short or extended period can affect your local economy. Businesses in a community that can be up and running due to Telecommute Programs during a disaster will greatly contribute to the economic stability of a town. Allowing people to earn wages and purchase goods and services will keep a community afloat during tough times.

Who's doing it? How have they benefitted?

- **IBM**

- Forty percent of its 386,000 employees do not have an “official” office
- An additional tens of thousands of workers telecommute at least some of the time
- Since 1995, office space was reduced by 78 million square feet
- 58 million square feet were sold at a profit of \$1.9 billion
- In 2005, total savings from energy management was \$22.9 million ⁴
- In 2007, in the U.S. alone, IBM’s telework program saved more than five million gallons of gas and reduced CO₂ emissions by 450,000 tons

- **Dow Chemical**

- Reduced its field support operations from twenty-one offices in 1990 to eight in 1995
- Administrative costs have dropped by fifty percent annually
- Fifteen percent attributed to commercial real estate costs
- Productivity increased by thirty-two percent
- Ten percent through decreased absenteeism
- Sixteen percent by working at home
- Six and one-half percent by avoiding commute time ¹³

- **Sun Microsystems**

- For over a decade has utilized a Telecommute Program called “Open Work”
- In 2008, almost 19,000 employees were telecommuting
- Fifty-six percent of Sun’s population work from home or in a flexible office
- Between 2002 and 2008, Sun has saved \$387 million in reduced office space and utility costs ¹⁴

- **AT&T**

- In August 2010, more than 11,000 employees telecommute

¹³ Jeff Zbar, “Slimming down with telework – Dow Chemical sheds a slew of offices by turning its sales into a virtual team,” Network World, 2002. <http://www.networkworld.com/net.worker/columnists/2002/1209zbar.html>

¹⁴ Ann Bednarz, “Sun’s ‘Open Work’ program sheds light on telecommute savings,” Computer World, 2008.

[http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9105218/Sun s open work program sheds light on telecommute savings](http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9105218/Sun_s_open_work_program_sheds_light_on_telecommute_savings)

- Ninety-two percent reported in a survey that telecommuting helps them achieve a healthy work/life balance
- Sixty-three percent report they are able to work a flexible schedule on their telecommute days
- The telecommuters eliminated 175 million commute miles per year
- Annual fuel savings of approximately eight million gallons with a net annual reduction of 76,273 metric tons of CO₂ equivalents ¹⁵

¹⁵ "Telecommuting," People and Community, AT&T. <http://www.att.com/gen/corporate-citizenship?pid=17892>

Chapter 3: Considerations

While there are some issues to address in advance of launching your Telecommute Program, careful planning and coordination within your company can address these issues before they ever emerge.

Addressing topics like managing your teleworkers, setting up internet security protocols, outlining potential expenses to establish the program, and addressing potential liability issues is an important first step in setting up your program.¹⁶ The following section will outline these and other major areas of concern.

Managing Telecommuters

Are your employees really working when they are out of your sight? Or are they playing Farmville all day?

Shifting to an off-site workforce can cause heartburn in some managers. It is typical for managers to fear the loss of control, worrying that the result can be a decrease in productivity, potential security issues, or a loss of teamwork within the company. How these issues are dealt with largely comes down to policy and training.

Taking the time to address the concerns of your management team and offering them assistance in making the shift will be an essential first step in launching your Telecommute Program. The section below outlines potential pitfalls of managing a teleworkforce and how to avert them.

- **Clearly Communicate Expectations**

Good communication between managers and their employees regarding expectations is the key to making a telecommuting arrangement successful. But the same is true for your current work arrangement. Your management team has probably already outlined expectations for their team, from meeting deadlines to appropriate workplace behavior.

Shifting to a mobile workforce will require stricter adherence to these guidelines. To make sure expectations have been clearly communicated to your workforce, it is suggested that these expectations be documented in a written policy. Outlining expectations regarding when work should begin every day, expectations for timeliness in responding to emails and returning phone calls, differentiating between work-time and break-time, and other areas can help address concerns before they even arise. You may want to require all teleworkers to “sign off” on this outline of expectations before being allowed to work from home. Make sure to circulate the list of expectations to the employees that are not going to be working from home, so it is clear their co-workers working from home are not just getting a free pass.

- **Structure Work Assignments As Specific Tasks with Specific Deadlines**

Allowing people to work from home is an opportunity for managers to sharpen essential management skills.¹⁷ Managers will need to focus on measuring work performance based on results, as opposed to just witnessing their employees sitting at their desks.

Your managers can start the transition to this type of management style by structuring work assignments as specific tasks with specific deadlines. Breaking up work assignments in this way may mean more work

¹⁶ United States Governmental Accounting Agency, Statement of Robert E. Robertson, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues, “Telecommuting: Overview of Challenges Facing Federal Agencies,” GAO-01-1116T (Washington, D.C., 2001), 1.

¹⁷ ZD Net. “Tips for Effectively Managing Teleworkers,” <http://www.zdnet.com.au/tips-for-effectively-managing-teleworkers-120281062.htm>

for your managers; however, doing so will ensure positive results from your employees and can contribute to an increase in productivity thanks to clearly outlined expectations.

As your managers and their team adjust to the new work arrangement, they may choose to not rely on the specific task-by-task assignment structure. As long as the work is getting done to your satisfaction, it may be best to let them loosen tight requirements and make adjustments that work for their department.

- **Building the “Virtual” Team**

Encouraging team work in the office can sometimes be a challenge; trying to achieve the same thing without your employees being physically in the same room may seem impossible!

But it does not have to be that way. Make it clear that you expect your employees to rely upon each other for their areas of expertise even when they are not sharing office space. Outline acceptable ways for your team to collaborate, from instant messaging to conference calls. Employees can access and work on the same document if off-site workers are connected to your company’s server through a virtual private network (VPN). This ability will help co-workers continue to work together on projects.

- **Use Face-Time Efficiently**

Occasionally, your telecommuters may need to report to the office to attend meetings. When these occasions arise, make good use of the time. It can be easy to get caught up in “catching up” and meetings can quickly dissolve into social hours. While encouraging rapport can boost morale, do not allow a visit from a telecommuter to disrupt the office environment. This can mainly be addressed by a proactive manager that structures meetings effectively.

- **Become Familiar with Basic IT Issues**

Managers of telecommuters should be able to provide basic IT assistance to their workforce. Being able to address issues, such as adding network printers or offering guidance on editing a document, without having to contact IT every time can be a big time saver. But do not try to rewire the mainframe on your own! Always rely upon the professionals when it comes to security issues, downloading and installing new programs, and major computer updates.

- **Provide Feedback and Opportunities to Grow**

Your employees want to be successful – even if it does not seem like it all of the time. If you are unhappy with their work performance or if you are uncomfortable with the amount of time it takes them to complete tasks from home, make sure you address these concerns with the employee early on in the telecommuting agreement. A Telecommute Program can quickly be derailed by one bad experience; make sure the program is successful by not letting any nagging concerns grow into major problems.

Some employees do not want to work from home due to concerns their absence will mean fewer opportunities to advance within the company. By structuring work assignments, setting clear goals, and outlining a plan for an employee’s advancement, high-quality employees will be attracted to telecommute positions. Having a company-wide Telecommuting policy will also ensure that managers from other departments understand contributions from a telecommuter are just as vital to the company’s bottom line as those from a worker based out of the office.

Budgeting for the Telecommuter

Many businesses are moving away from stationary equipment, such as the desktop computer and desk phones, and moving towards laptops and mobile phones for their employees. As such, you may already be providing your employees the equipment needed to telecommute.

Accommodating a mobile workforce may require a special budget, especially if your workers are not already equipped with laptops and cell phones. If your employees will be working from a telework center, your company may need to cover the expense of renting satellite office space.

These expenses could be offset by the decreased costs of overhead and conventional office space requirements. Work with your Finance or Procurement department to identify the most cost-efficient sources for the mobile equipment needed and compare the potential savings if you can decrease the square footage on your office space lease. If your business needs to supply new equipment for each of your teleworkers, this fact is a significant consideration as to whether a Telecommute Program is feasible for the company. The financial commitments may determine whether you continue developing the program.

Liability

Employers may be concerned about liability questions and how workers' compensation applies to telecommuters. Injuries occurring during or due to the performance of work duties are generally covered under workers' compensation regulation.

Workers' Compensation

The employer must provide coverage to employees if injuries occur during and/or because of the performance of work duties. How does this apply to your future telecommuters? Most workers' compensation policies will cover an employee for accidents occurring at home while the employee is working on behalf of their employer. This allowance is consistent with court precedent applying workers' compensation coverage to employees incurring accidents while performing errands out of the office for employers and during on-call time.

In addition to maintaining adequate workers' compensation coverage, you should also require your employees to maintain a hazard-free environment at their home office to reduce the risk of injury consistent with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). Does this mean the manager will have to inspect the home office of every potential telecommuting employee to ensure they are working in a safe environment? A 2000 OSHA policy directive says no; however, you may wish to require that your managers make some effort to ensure their team members' home offices are properly equipped. To further cover the company, establish an agreement between the company and the employee to clearly define how the employee can ensure their own safety at home while working and have them certify their home workspace is free of hazards. Appendix C includes a Sample Home Office/Environment Self-Assessment Form as a resource.

Equipment

Slips and falls are not the only area of liability relevant to an employer. Liability for the maintenance of company equipment, as well as the employee's personal equipment, utilized in the performance of their work duties could also be a concern. With proper planning, these issues can be dealt with early and not be a concern later.

Most businesses are required to have adequate insurance covering the replacement of office equipment and furniture in case they are damaged or stolen. Commonly, employer property insurance policies provide limited coverage for office equipment temporarily away from the insured premises or while traveling, but

does not extend to equipment that is permanently stationed in a home office. Due to the typical limitation in coverage, arranging for liability coverage on equipment utilized by telecommuters may require other measures. Some options include but are not limited to the following:

- Extending the company's Commercial General Liability (CGL) insurance to cover off-site locations from which your employees may be working. Extending this coverage is generally not cost-prohibitive. A telecommuting center or "jelly" site may provide this additional liability coverage.
- The employee takes out home business insurance. The cost of this type of coverage is generally not cost-prohibitive to the employee, averaging from \$35-\$150 annually.
- The employee takes out a rider on their home insurance policy with the employer paying for the added insurance coverage.
- You have an agreement with the employee that releases the company from liability for any damages occurring to that equipment assigned to that employee for off-site use.

Other Options

You may be happy to hear that, other than the standard Workers' Compensation coverage, employers are not required to maintain additional insurance on telecommuters. If an accident should occur at home that is not covered under an indemnified work-related activity, the telecommuters can look to their homeowner's insurance for coverage, just as they would during non-telecommuting situations. Individuals that work from home should investigate the coverage provided through their homeowner's insurance provider.

In addition to some of the strategies noted above, you as the employer could base some of your Telecommute Program policies on the State of Florida's State Employee Telecommute Program, as outlined in Florida Statute 110.171. This statute establishes provisions for the Florida State Employee's Telecommute Program that void liability for the maintenance of an employee's home equipment even in use for state business.¹⁸ A provision is also in place to require the manager of the telecommuting employee to ensure the employee has the proper equipment required to conduct their job duties.¹⁹ Liability for injuries occurring at telework sites is also covered, providing that employees are covered under Workers' Compensation regulation, as provided for in Chapter 440, F.S., even when working off-site.²⁰ Also, the state statute requires that the employee provide a written agreement to the State attesting that their off-site work space meets state requirements and further limiting the State's liability for injuries that may occur in that work space.²¹

Security Issues

Will your company's information be secure if your employees work on vital documents from home? One of the biggest concerns that most businesses have is how to secure and protect proprietary files. Does your company already have employees that work from a laptop while traveling? Are these employees able to access the company's network from that laptop? If this is the case, you may already have security measures in place that could also apply to your telecommuting employees. If not, security should be addressed before initiating your Telecommute Program.

¹⁸ State of Florida, Title X Public Officers, Employees, and Records, Chapter 110 State Employment, Part I, General State Provisions, "State Telecommute Program," Chapter 110.171(3)(g), F.S., Tallahassee, FL, 1999.

¹⁹ State of Florida, Title X Public Officers, Employees, and Records, Chapter 110 State Employment, Part I, General State Provisions, "State Telecommute Program," Chapter 110.171(3)(h), F.S., Tallahassee, FL, 1999.

²⁰ State of Florida, Title X Public Officers, Employees, and Records, Chapter 110 State Employment, Part I, General State Provisions, "State Telecommute Program," Chapter 110.171(3)(j), F.S., Tallahassee, FL, 1999.

²¹ State of Florida, Title X Public Officers, Employees, and Records, Chapter 110 State Employment, Part I, General State Provisions, "State Telecommute Program," Chapter 110.171(3)(l), F.S., Tallahassee, FL, 1999.

Any device that accesses your network from a remote location is an extension of that network. An unsecured telecommuting device, like a personal computer, could create additional risk to your network, as well as jeopardize the security of your information systems. To minimize security risk, many employers require that the telecommuter use only company-maintained remote devices that are centrally managed and monitored. There are many options available to employers for providing remote access, including virtual private networks (VPN), remote systems controls, and individual application access.

Most organizations are surprisingly capable of implementing telecommuting with little additional technology or security protocol. If your workplace utilizes smart phones, laptops, has web-based email systems, or uses web-based time collection, then you already have the systems needed in place.

An example of what one organization is doing is the Treasury Inspector General Tax Administration's (TIGTA) three-pronged approach to securing remote access. The first part of TIGTA's strategy is to use a VPN with encrypted data flowing between a remote device and the internal network. Then, TIGTA only allows company equipment (i.e. laptops and desktop computers) with pre-loaded anti-virus, anti-spyware, and firewall software to access the network. The third part of TIGTA's strategy is training to increase security awareness in their workforce – for both teleworkers and non-teleworkers.²²

Taxes

Tax law can be a daunting topic for even the most seasoned business person. The best advice is to consult with a tax attorney, as tax laws vary between states. If you do consult a tax specialist, make sure you come prepared with a list of your questions and concerns, such as double taxation, unemployment benefits, and available tax incentives.

Double Taxation

Most employees pay taxes in the state where the work is performed. In most telecommuting scenarios, the home office and the satellite work location will be in the same state. But what if your telecommuters will be working from a different state? In that instance, you may have a situation where the employee could be taxed doubly, which may outweigh the benefits of telecommuting.

The question to ask your tax professional is whether the state your employees telecommute from utilizes the "at the convenience of the employer" test. If the state your employee works from uses this standard, that state could seek to tax the employee's income in addition to income taxes they may already be assessed from the state in which your business resides.

New York State taxes the full income of a telecommuting employee performing work for an employer located within the state, even if the employee performs the work from another state. This even applies if the worker telecommutes only part-time.²³ If your company is based in a state with such requirements, your telecommuters may be negatively affected due to the potential for double taxation.

- **Unemployment Benefits**

In the unforeseen chance a telecommuting employee should need to collect unemployment benefits, the employee that has been doubly taxed may face challenges recouping funds paid through income tax. Unemployment benefits are generally only available from the state in which the employee physically resides and are most likely to be looking for new employment. One way for the employer to address this

²² Florida Department of Transportation, *Teleworking Information*, prepared by Jacobs Carter Burgess (Orlando, FL, 2008), 3.

²³ WorkingMother.com, "Telecommuter Tax Fairness," Working Mother Media, <http://www.workingmother.com/taxes-policy/2010/09/telecommuter-tax-fairness>

concern is to provide telecommuting employees a tax credit for the amount they are taxed by their state of residence.

- **Telecommuter Tax Act**

A version of the “Telecommuter Tax Act” (H.R. 2600) has been proposed in multiple years (2005, 2007, and 2010) to address the issue of double taxation, but the bill has not yet been passed. In the meantime, some questions to ask your tax professional include the following:

- Does the state the employee is working in utilize the “convenience of the employer” rule?
- If the “convenience of the employer” rule is in effect in the employee’s state of residence or predominant teleworking site, then how will the work scenario be scrutinized to determine if they will be doubly-taxed?
- Are there any thresholds to consider, such as taxation being triggered by the number of days an employee works from a site in their state?
- Does the nature of work performed trigger taxation by the state from which they work?

Tax Incentives

What about tax incentives? Unfortunately, there are currently no federal tax incentives available to employers who offer telework. While only a handful of states offer tax incentives to employers, there is a trend to encourage telecommuting through state tax benefits.

For example, the State of Georgia offers The Georgia Telework Tax Credit, which allows a one-time tax credit of up to \$20,000 to offset expenses incurred to expand or launch a Telecommute Program (this tax credit is available through The Clean Air Campaign). The Georgia Telework Tax Credit also offers annual credits of up to \$1,200 per new teleworker. Colorado and Washington also offer tax incentives.²⁴ Florida does not currently offer any tax credits or incentives to businesses which offer Telecommute Programs to employees.²⁵

In certain cases, the employee may be able to deduct home office equipment, supplies, and/or transportation costs from their taxes. Under IRS regulations, if the telecommuting work arrangement is considered “at the convenience of the employer,” which is determined through rigorous IRS requirements, the employee is excluded from deducting expenses related to telecommuting. To qualify for deductions for supplies, equipment, and travel expenses related to telecommuting, the home office must be used as the principal place of business or the location where the employee meets and serves customers, patients, and/or clients. If telecommuting is at the discretion of the employee on an infrequent basis and secondary to the main business location, then the employee would not be able to deduct office supplies from their taxes.²⁶

To be certain of the applicable tax codes and filing requirements, an employee considering telecommuting should consult a tax professional to obtain details on whether they qualify for deductions under the applicable state tax codes.¹

Wage and Hour Compliance

A happy employee is a productive employee! And possibly an employee that is prone to work more than they may record on their timesheet. Without a time-collection and monitoring procedure in place that is tailored

²⁴ Center for Urban Transportation Research, “States Citing Telecommuting by Purpose,” University of South Florida National TDM and Telework Clearinghouse, <http://www.nctr.usf.edu/clearinghouse/statestatutes.htm>

²⁵ WorkingMother.com, “Telecommuter Tax Fairness,” Working Mother Media, <http://www.workingmother.com/taxes-policy/2010/09/telecommuter-tax-fairness>

²⁶ Greenstein, Rogoff, Olsen, & Co., LLP, CPA’s, “Tax Benefits Give Added Incentives to Telecommuting”, GROCO Reading Room, http://www.groco.com/readingroom/tax_telecommuting.aspx

for telecommuting, there is the potential that your telecommuters may work more hours than they actually report. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), also known as the Wages and Hours Bill, unless an employee is classified as exempt, all time worked must be accurately documented and overtime must be paid to the employee at time-and-a-half compensation rates. Positions considered exempt are executive, administrative, and professional staff. If your telecommuters do not fall within these categories, then any overtime must be paid for at time-and-a-half rates.

Make sure you protect your company from inadvertently violating the law by putting in place a time collection policy that encourages your telecommuters to accurately account for the time they work. As part of the time collection protocol, you should clearly define all work duties to be performed from home and the expectation that all hours worked are to be documented. When outlining these expectations, you can also address how telecommuters will mark the “beginning” and “end” of the work day, as well as the process to request overtime hours.

Chapter 4: Implementation

This next section will outline the essential steps to implement a Telecommute Program for your company.

Step One – Identify a Telecommuting Coordinator and the Telecommute Committee

Your Telecommuting Coordinator will oversee the development and execution of your company's Telecommute Program. This person will lead the cost/benefit analysis and the telecommute committee; develop your company's policies and procedures; train and assist managers to implement telecommuting within their respective departments or divisions; and address telecommuting issues within respective departments (management, HR, legal, etc.). Your Telecommute Committee will guide the development of policies and procedures for the program. It is essential that you have representatives from key departments on the committee. Important departments to include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Executive Office
- Human Resources
- Information Technology (IT)
- Communications
- Financial/accounting
- Legal
- Green team (Your company may not have one in place, but if it does, you should include a member.)

Step Two – Perform a Cost/Benefits Analysis

You will likely need to tap many resources within your business to outline the full breadth of potential costs and benefits of implementing a Telecommute Program. Keep in mind that there are both direct and indirect costs and benefits.

Potential Direct Benefits

- Energy Savings – Perform an energy audit for facilities that may be closed due to employees moving to home offices
- Facilities – Determine if square footage could be downsized by moving your workforce to home offices
- Parking – Determine the potential savings by reducing parking needs, particularly if your company pays for parking
- Productivity – Estimate the potential increase in productivity from fewer instances of absenteeism

Potential Indirect Benefits

- Worker Retention – Retain quality employees by allowing them to telecommute; maintaining your current work force means you won't have to bear the heavy cost of replacing and training new employees
- Organizational Effectiveness – Estimate the potential increase in organizational effectiveness

Potential Direct Costs

- Taxes – Will your company or your employees be affected by increased taxes related to telecommuting?
- Liability Insurance – Will you have to extend your liability insurance to cover home-based employees?
- Workers' Compensation – Is your current workers' compensation sufficient to cover employees working at home?
- Equipment – Determine who will be providing the equipment to be used: the employer or the employee. If the equipment is to be provided by the employer, will this be an additional expense above and beyond

the cost of current equipment? Will equipment located in the teleworker's home be serviced by the company, and will this increase the cost of support services?

- Software – Will the teleworker require additional software licenses? If so, can this cost be offset by the reduction in licenses that may not be required at the main place of business?
- Security – Will you need to provide the teleworker with remote access to your server and network? If so, will you need to set-up a virtual private network (VPN) system?

There are online calculators available to assist you in performing this cost/benefit analysis. The following two online resources are offered as a starting point and may be of use to your organization:

- Sample Cost-Benefit Analysis for Off-Site Telecommuting – <http://panel.telecommutect.com/eval/index.php/calc>
- Telecommuting360 Commuting Cost Calculator – www.telecommuting360.com/commuting-cost-calculator

Step Three – Draft Policies and Procedures

You will want to create solid policies and procedures for many, if not all, of the following areas:

- **Telecommute Program Policy**

Draft a policy that outlines your company's full stance on telecommuting, including a mission statement, a complete definition of what qualifies as "telecommuting" for your company, the goals of the program, and all pertinent rules and procedures that telecommuters must follow.

- **Key Telecommute Program Personnel & Support Systems**

Outline the responsibilities of all individuals involved in facilitating the Telecommute Program. Be sure to include an organizational map to represent the hierarchy of decision-making in regards to this program. Also include procedures for requesting technical support (e.g. IT issues) and ordering supplies for home. Identify a Human Resources representative that is the point person for issues specific to telecommuters.

- **Telecommuting Application & Procedure to Identify Potential Telecommuters and Telecommuting Positions**

Define eligibility and how to apply to participate in the Telecommute Program. Outline the eligible positions and duties that can be performed from home. See "Step Four" for more direction on this element.

- **Telecommuting Agreement**

Outline the participant's responsibilities as a telecommuter. This agreement should include the rules and guidelines of the Program as they relate to the individual telecommuter, including but not limited to the following:

- Expectations for communicating with management from home
- Expectations for how to submit work for review
- Expectations regarding collaborating with co-workers
- Time collection guidelines
- Policy regarding sick leave and vacation time as regards telecommuters
- Framework for performance evaluations, including how telecommuters can continue to grow within the company
- Procedure to terminate the telecommuting arrangement, should that be required

- **Emergency Operations Procedure**

Outline the responsibilities of all telecommuters in the case of a natural disaster, emergency, pandemic, or terrorist attack.

- **Liability Policy**

Define all potential liabilities of the Telecommute Program, from taxes to workers' compensation, and outline the company's position and requirements relating to these areas.

Step Four – Identify Potential Telecommute Positions and Employees

In this step, you will identify which positions could transition to work-from-home arrangements, as well as identify which employees would be effective telecommuters. You will need input from your pool of potential telecommuters to complete this step, so now may be a good time to communicate to your staff that your company is beginning this process and looking for their feedback. Relay this information to your workers through email messages, posters, fliers, announcements at staff meetings, and any other means of communication that your worksite has available.

- **Determine job duties that could be performed from home**

To begin this step, it may be easiest to determine which job duties could *not* be performed from home. For example, activities that require heavy equipment to complete (like manufacturing or food preparation) are likely inappropriate for telecommuting. Likely, this elimination process will leave you with a list of positions that require activities like report writing, computer programming, or research.

- **Outline qualities and work habits expected of your telecommuters**

Even though a job could be performed at home, that doesn't mean that each one of your workers would be successful working from home. Make a list of the qualities and work habits you expect of your telecommuters, such as the ability to stay on task, consistently meeting deadlines, and asking for guidance and input on their work products. These criteria will help your management team fairly assess the potential for each interested employee to enter into a telecommuting agreement.

- **Create an Employee Self-Assessment Form**

Provide a survey to each employee in a position that has been identified as a potential work-from-home job class. The self-assessment survey should include a list of the qualities you require in your telecommuters, as well as expectations and evaluation criteria specific to telecommuting. Allowing employees to determine whether or not they would be successful telecommuters is an important step in gathering the most effective telecommuters possible.

- **Create an Employee Home Environment Self-Assessment Form**

Once employees have been identified as potential telecommuters, they should evaluate whether their home environment is free of hazards and adheres to the company's safety standard. You may require that the employee's manager perform an inspection of the home office in question to certify the assessment. This certification should be part of the employee's Telecommuting Agreement. Some basic points to include in this assessment are the following²⁷:

- Is the space reasonably quiet and free of distractions?

²⁷ Department of Management Services, State of Florida, "Telecommuting for the Home Office" (2011),

http://www.dms.myflorida.com/media/hrm_files/state_employee_telecommuting_program/telecommuting_checklist_for_the_home_office

- Does the space seem adequately ventilated?
- Are any stairs with four or more steps equipped with handrails?
- Are all circuit breakers and/or fuses in the electrical panel correctly labeled?
- Do circuit breakers clearly indicate if they are in the open or closed position?
- Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that could cause physical harm (e.g. frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires, flexible wires running through walls, exposed wires fixed to the ceiling)?
- Are electrical outlets three-pronged (grounded)?
- Is the computer equipment connected to a surge protector?
- Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit movement?
- Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways?
- Is the space crowded with furniture?
- Are the phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside the baseboards?
- Are floor surfaces clean, dry, level, and free of worn or frayed seams?
- Are carpets well secured to the floor, and free of frayed or worn seams?
- Is there a fire extinguisher in the home that is easily accessible from the office space?
- Is a well-functioning smoke detector in close proximity to the work space?

Step Five – Outline the Daily Operations Plan

Before you launch your Telecommute Program, create a plan on how the program will be managed day-to-day. This plan should describe how the employee-to-manager relationship will function. It should also describe how the employee will receive and submit work, as well as the process for evaluations and feedback. Though this should be included in the overall Telecommute Program Policy, it is good to have this as a stand-alone document for day-to-day reference.

While the list of topics will be expanded based upon your company's unique policies, the Operations Plan should address topics such as:

- Chain of Command
- Time Collection
- Scheduling
- Communication
- Work Flow
 - Obtaining work
 - Submitting work
 - Document/data storage and availability for co-workers
- Equipment – employee/employer responsibilities
 - Maintaining and servicing equipment
 - Downtime if malfunctioning equipment is being serviced
- Progress reporting
- Sick and vacation leave
- Safety
- Conflict management
- Emergency events/continuation of operations plan

Step Six – Create a Checklist of Supplies & Equipment

List the supplies and equipment that your telecommuters will need. A list of basic supplies includes the following:

- Laptop (with secure VPN capabilities)
- Printer/copier/scanner all-in-one
- Paper
- Phone
- Air Card or WiFi hot-spot enabled cell phone
- Writing utensils
- Stapler & staples
- Tape and dispenser
- Other supplies pertinent to the position

Determine whether equipment and supplies will be provided by the employer or the employee. You will also want to outline a plan for asset management, the provision of virtual equipment, and the process to service equipment.

- **Asset Management**

Supplies and equipment provided by the employer should be inventoried and tagged as assets of the business for tracking purposes.

- **Virtual Equipment**

Will a Virtual Private Network (VPN) or other security protocol be required by your employees to conduct their job duties? If so, the equipment and software requirements should be outlined and provided.

- **Servicing Equipment**

Outline the plan for servicing equipment located in the employee's home, as well as addressing any technology issues (e.g. virtual security features). Will your current service contract cover equipment in other locations? Will equipment, such as laptops, have to be sent to the servicing company; if so, what procedure should the employee follow for shipping and time without the equipment? Can virtual security issues be addressed directly between the employee and the respective servicing company? Or will the employee be required to go through the employer to have equipment serviced and receive technical support on virtual security issues?

Step Seven – Train & Prepare Your Management Team

Your telecommuting coordinator will oversee the implementation of your company's Telecommute Program, but your team of managers will maintain operations on a daily basis. Ensure success by addressing the concerns of your managers in advance and provide adequate resources prior to the launch of the program. Managers of telecommuters will want to focus on the following:

- Clearly communicating expectations
- Assigning specific tasks with specific deadlines
- Encouraging teamwork despite co-workers not being in the same place at the same time
- Efficiently using meetings and face-to-face time
- Addressing basic IT issues
- Providing feedback and opportunities for growth

Step Eight – Select and Transition Employees into Telecommuting Arrangement

- **Selection of Employees**

With the employee self-assessments in hand, you can select the employees to transition to telecommuting arrangements. Be sure that each future telecommuter completes and submits the Telecommuting Agreement, as outlined in Step Three. A sample self-assessment form is included in Appendix C.

- **Transition Plan**

Outline a plan for transitioning employees from a traditional work arrangement to a telecommuting arrangement. Allow time for your telecommuters to set up their home office, as well as time to work with IT to establish security protocols and getting server connections in place.

Step Nine – Launch Your Program!

Now that you have the details in place, it is time to officially launch the program. With the assistance of reThink and the procedures you've followed to get to this point, your program launch should go easily.

Step Ten – Evaluate the Program

To ensure the effectiveness of the Telecommute Program within your company, it is imperative that the Telecommuting Coordinator conduct frequent evaluations and address any issues as soon as they arise, especially in the first few months of the program's launch. If the overall cost of the program is exceeding the benefits, or if productivity has experienced a dramatic decrease, these issues may require further training of management or other strategies to improve the viability of the Telecommute Program.

Appendix A
Telecommuting Resources in Central Florida

- **reThink, FDOT District 5 Regional Commuter Assistance Program**
Offers free consulting advice and assistance on the set-up of your Telecommute Program



719 S. Woodland Boulevard, DeLand, FL 32720
866.610.RIDE (7433)
www.reThinkYourCommute.com
info@reThinkYourCommute.com

- **Orlando Public Library**
Third floor office space available featuring two tables, 12 chairs, a white board, wi-fi access and an LCD TV monitor. The space is available for \$20 for four consecutive hours and renters can invite up to 11 others. You must have an Orange County library card with no unpaid fines to reserve the space.



101 East Central Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32801
(407) 835-7481
www.ocls.com

- **Urban ReThink**
Telecommuting center; meeting rooms; copier/scanner/fax; secure Wi-Fi and server space; onsite café; monthly rates start at \$105; daily/weekly rates also available



625 East Central Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32801
(407) 704-6895
urbanrethink.com
mail@urbanrethink.com

Appendix B
Sample Employee Self-Assessment Form

[COMPANY NAME] Telecommute Program - Employee Self-Assessment Form

Employee Name: _____

Department & Supervisor/Manager: _____

Position/Title: _____

1. Please provide a brief outline of your job duties below. Make sure to include duties that you feel could be performed from home, as well as the amount of time each takes.

2. Please describe your work habits and your approach to completing assignments.

3. Do your work duties require the use of large equipment currently only available at the worksite? If yes, please describe the specific duties and equipment.

4. How much/often do you require the assistance of co-workers to complete assignments? How much/often do you require the assistance of your supervisor/manager to complete assignments?

5. If you have children at home, are you able to arrange/maintain your current dependent care plan to allow yourself to work from home on your current schedule?

6. Do you have access to transportation so that you could visit the worksite on-demand if requested?

7. Do you have an appropriate, well-equipped space in your home that could be designated as work space? If yes, would you be willing to allow your supervisor/manager to inspect and certify your home office set-up?

Signature _____

Date _____

Manager's Signature _____

Date of Receipt _____

Appendix C
Sample Home Office/Environment Self-Assessment Form

[COMPANY NAME] Telecommute Program – Home Office Self-Assessment Form

Employee Name: _____

Department & Supervisor/Manager: _____

Position/Title: _____

Please complete the questionnaire below.

	YES	NO
1. Is the space reasonably quiet and free of distractions?		
2. Does the space seem adequately ventilated?		
3. Are any stairs with four or more steps equipped with handrails?		
4. Are all circuit breakers and/or fuses in the electrical panel correctly labeled?		
5. Do circuit breakers clearly indicate if they are in the open or closed position?		
6. Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that could cause physical harm (e.g. frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires, flexible wires running through walls, exposed wires fixed to the ceiling)?		
7. Are electrical outlets three-pronged (grounded)?		
8. Is the computer equipment connected to a surge protector?		
9. Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit movement?		
10. Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways?		
11. Is the space crowded with furniture?		
12. Are the phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside the baseboards?		
13. Are floor surfaces clean, dry, level, and free of worn or frayed seams?		
14. Are carpets well secured to the floor, and free of frayed or worn seams?		
15. Is there a fire extinguisher in the home that is easily accessible from the office space?		
16. Is a well-functioning smoke detector in close proximity to the work space?		

Signature _____

Date _____

Manager's Signature _____

Date of Receipt _____

Appendix C
Sample Telecommute Application

[COMPANY NAME] Telecommute Program – Telecommute Application

Employee Name	
Department	
Supervisor/Manager	
Position/Title	
Current Worksite	
Proposed Home or Satellite Office Address	

Describe your current job duties and which of these duties could be performed from a home or satellite office.

Do you think there are any potential security issues in regards to company data and working from home? If yes, please provide more information.

How often would you like to telecommute? For example, once a week or every other day?

Please describe the off-site work space you intend to use while telecommuting.

Please list the equipment you would need provided to you in order to effectively telecommute.

Please explain any potential distractions or obligations during the day that may present challenges to you working from home (e.g. childcare, etc.).

What is your plan to address the issues outlined above?

Any additional information your supervisor/manager should know?

To be completed by the Employee's Supervisor/Manager	YES	NO
Are the job duties to be performed appropriate for telecommuting?		
Is the company able to supply the necessary equipment to perform these job functions?		
Is the employee's previous job performance indicative of being able to telecommute?		
Is the employee's off-site work location conducive to telecommuting?		
Are there potential cost savings from allowing this employee to telecommute?		
Approved for reassignment as a telecommuter?		
Comments: <div style="background-color: #cccccc; height: 200px; width: 100%;"></div>		

Signature _____

Date _____

Manager's Signature _____

Date of Receipt _____

Appendix D
Sample Telecommute Agreement

[COMPANY NAME] Telecommute Program – Telecommute Agreement

Employee Name	
Department	
Supervisor/Manager	
Position/Title	
Telecommute Coordinator	
Home or Satellite Office Address	
Contact Information While Telecommuting	
Telecommute Work Schedule	
Inventory of Equipment Provided by the Company	
Inventory of Equipment Provided by Employee	
General Job Duties to be performed while Telecommuting	
Is this Telecommuting Agreement a part of a Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)?	
Home Office Self-Assessment Form on file?	
Acknowledgement of Security and Protected Data Protocol on file?	

Signature _____

Date _____

Manager's Signature _____

Date of Receipt _____



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA

Remote Working Arrangement Program Manual

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The Remote Working Arrangement Program at the University of Central Florida offers a flexible work schedule and the ability to work offsite at an approved home office location, given the employee meets and adheres to the requirements described in this manual.

The University of Central Florida retains the right to terminate this program at any time at its sole discretion. If it is terminated, employees working remotely will be asked to return to their jobs within the university office setting. Also, if an employee's work performance or behavior is not acceptable, the supervisor may pursue the disciplinary process and/or require the employee to return to work onsite at the university. If the employee does not return on the agreed upon date, this will be deemed a voluntary resignation and will be treated as such per university policies and procedures.

Employees who request to utilize this program do so based on having been provided information about the program and the pros and cons of working remotely.

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Remote Working Arrangement Program Manual is to provide guidelines for both managers and employees interested in remote work.

Definition

A Remote work arrangement in which an employee performs their regular work at a Remote Workplace, for a specified portion of the workweek, or the entire workweek. The program may be utilized at the departmental managers' discretion and is not an employee benefit or right.

The Remote work program should not be viewed as a substitute for dependent care. The university expects that remote employees will arrange for dependent care. It is the employees' responsibility to ensure that they are fully able to complete their work assignments and to interact with university personnel over the phone or internet meeting in a professional environment.

In limited circumstances, remote work could involve special projects or work for another department. Temporary arrangements for a nonrecurring remote work schedule of two months or less may be handled informally by the department. A formal Remote Work Agreement is required in Human Resources for a recurring schedule of over two months. For emergency preparedness, remote work agreements must be kept on file with the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in the college or department.

Intention

Remote work is intended to create flexible conditions that will enhance the capability of both the employee and the university to meet/exceed the stated goals and objectives more effectively.

Benefits & Disadvantages

The Remote Working Arrangement Program is not designed for every employee. The lure of household chores and family distractions can easily undermine performance. However, when implemented successfully, employees can experience increased productivity, savings on commuting costs, a better work/life balance and enhanced morale.

Program Overview

Remote Work Agreement

Employees interested in participating in the UCF Remote Working Arrangement Program must complete the *UCF Remote Working Arrangement Request* and submit it to their supervisor for approval processing. New hires approved for remote work are required to complete the UCF Remote Working Arrangement Request with their new hire paperwork. Vice President or Provost approval is required for an exception to the requirement for six months service at the Central Workplace.

Expectations for Participation

Eligibility to participate in a Remote Work Arrangement is conditional upon agreement from the employee that he or she will be able to establish a proper working environment and have the skills necessary to perform their tasks assigned independently. Some important items to consider include:

- The Remote Working Arrangement Program is not to be used as a substitute for childcare or other personal responsibilities. It is important to ensure that dependent care obligations or other family obligations do not interfere with work.
- It is expected that employees who work remotely will devote all of their effort to university business while working at the alternative workplace. Disruptions such as personal visitors during work hours are not acceptable, and personal telephone calls should be kept to a minimum.
- The supervisor or designee will need to approve annual and sick leave in advance when being taken during times scheduled to work at home.
- All remote employees are required to obtain their supervisor's approval prior to working overtime.
- The supervisor must approve any changes to the employee's work schedule in advance.
- University equipment and files will be required to be returned to the university if work from home is terminated by either the employee or the university.

The employee:

- Must have the ability to perform all essential functions of the position from the Remote Workplace.
- Must have the ability to provide an appropriate work environment at home, which meets university standards such as setting up an ergonomically correct workstation.
- Must possess productive and organized work habits.
- Must have both strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Must be able to adhere to assigned work hours.
- Must comply fully with the university's attendance and time recording procedures and will accurately report and record all working hours.
- Must maintain a performance appraisal of at least "Satisfactory" or "Effective".
- Must be reliable, maintain confidentiality and work well independently.
- Must adhere to all university policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Must attend mandatory and other requested meetings on campus, including training sessions, workshops, etc.
- Must possess independent problem-solving abilities.
- Must maintain an appropriate level of professional demeanor and represent the university with respect and dignity.

Salary, Benefits and Onsite Meetings

Remote Working Arrangement Program employees' salary, job responsibilities and benefits will be identical to those of employees not working remotely. In addition, employees approved for the program agree to comply with all existing position requirements of their regular onsite office setting as well as any newly established requirements in the future. There may be times employees will be asked to come to the office on a day when they were scheduled to work from home. Some of these instances include departmental staff meetings, training sessions, etc. Employees are required to attend these events on the university campus.

Tax Implications

It will be the employee's responsibility to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a home office area, traveling, and maintaining residence in Florida. The university will not provide tax guidance, nor will the university assume any additional tax liabilities on an employee's behalf. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss these matters in greater depth.

Supervisor Responsibilities

- The supervisor must advise employee of final determination (approval or denial) of the remote work request based upon the decision of the Dean, Director, or Department Head (DDDH) or designee.
- The supervisor will decide tasks to be assigned to the employee. Work assignments for the Remote Workplace will be handled in the same manner as they are for the Central Workplace.
- The supervisor will be responsible for assigning specific work hours to each employee working remotely. The number of working hours will be monitored regularly.
- Work hours determined by the supervisor will be communicated to team members, clients, and co-workers.
- The supervisor will be tasked to clearly define performance requirements and standards that are measurable and results oriented.
- The supervisor will regularly monitor and communicate regarding the employee's performance in accordance with departmental and university policy.
- If an employee's behavior or performance is not satisfactory, the supervisor has the right to terminate the program and/or recommend disciplinary actions as appropriate in accordance with university policy.

Confidentiality

Sensitive university information should not be removed from university facilities without explicit written authorization by appropriate university management. Such information includes, but is not limited to files, employment and financial records.

Sensitive information is governed by various State and Federal laws and regulations as well as university policies such as policy 4-008 Data Classification and Protection, and includes any and all information that, if released, could cause harm to the university by virtue of such release. Therefore, university employees, without exception, must adhere to such policies and regulations and maintain confidentiality of such information at all times.

Therefore, individuals working remotely are required to understand and abide by all university's policies and procedures.

Workspace and Work Site Inspection

The employee must ensure that the home office is a separate space set aside to allow the employee to work efficiently. For additional information and/or assistance in identifying risk factors present at your workstation as well as specific recommendations on how to address them, contact Environmental Health and Safety or visit <http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/ergonomics>.

The university has the right to visit the employee's home to ensure that the designated work location meets safety, ventilation and ergonomic standards. Such visits will not be scheduled without giving the employee a 24-hour prior notice and will be conducted during normal business hours.

The university does not pay for costs associated with working at home, such as electrical, heating, A/C, etc. (with possible exception of a voice/data line).

Remote Work Equipment

The university may provide equipment such as computers, laptops, tablets, printers, communication devices, and software needed to perform the employees' work assignments. The equipment must be protected against damage and unauthorized use. Equipment must be used for official UCF business, be managed and supported by University IT, and its use must comply with the University Information Technology & Security policies and standards. For more information you may visit <https://policies.ucf.edu/> or <https://infosec.ucf.edu>.

University provided items remain the property of the University of Central Florida and must be returned to the university upon request. In case of extended illness, resignation, or termination; or if the program ends, it is the employee's responsibility to personally return all university equipment.

The university may reimburse the employees for the cost of installation and monthly service of telephone/High Speed Internet line(s) during the length of the Remote Work Agreement. This is considered to be for the university's purposes only, and not for personal use.

The following safeguards must be followed:

- Maintain appropriate physical security for computers and computing devices storing or transmitting confidential, highly restricted, or restricted information. This is especially important for all storage devices, such as laptops and tablets as well as portable USB drives, CDs, memory cards, cloud storage systems, etc. to follow university policies 4-007 and 4-008 to protect university data.
- In compliance with University Security Policies and Standards, university data must reside on university equipment or UCF sanctioned Internet cloud data storage systems (e.g., OneDrive) and not on personal devices or in personal cloud storage systems.
- Enable full disk/device encryption using current industry standards, such as BitLocker or FileVault.
- Ensure that no one else has access to the university equipment.
- Connect to the University of Central Florida internal network through the university's virtual private network (VPN) prior to performing job responsibilities on your officially assigned computer, or through the use of personal device to gain access to university networks (e.g., office desktop or virtual machine).
- Keep the operating system and malware protection current by installing the latest security patches and updates.

Additional minimum recommendations if a home wireless network is being used:

- Change the default administrator password for the wireless router. The password should be difficult to guess and aligns with the UCF Password Standards.
- Turn on the highest level of encryption supported by your wireless router and the devices connecting to it (e.g., WPA2/AES, etc.). The encryption keys should be long and difficult to guess.
- Change the default SSID and associated password.
- The wireless router's built-in firewall should be enabled.
- Regularly update your wireless router software through the manufacturer.

The university, as needed, will provide remote employees with office supplies. Employees' out-of-pocket expenses for other supplies will not be reimbursed unless prior written approval of the manager has been received. The university will repair and replace damaged university equipment unless it is lost, damaged or stolen through the employee's negligence or abuse.

Employees must inform their departmental security coordinator, the UCF Police, and their departmental property management personnel if a computing or storage device is lost or stolen. In addition, employees must contact the UCF Information Security Office's Security Incident Response Team (SIRT) at sirt@ucf.edu immediately if the missing device contains or is suspected to contain highly restricted or restricted data.

University IT staff are responsible for managing and supporting authorized software applications under the University's control. University IT staff are responsible for reviewing and revising these security controls and access as necessary (e.g., when employees have been transferred or terminated).

Travel and Home Expenses

Travel and mileage between home and office will not be reimbursed.

UCF will not be responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental cost (e.g., utilities) associated with working remotely from the employee's residence. For example, home-related expenses such as construction, renovations, heating/air conditioning, lighting, or electricity are not reimbursable. The university will also not be responsible for the maintenance and/or repair of personally owned equipment utilized for Remote work arrangement.

The employee may be entitled to reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for UCF, as provided for by applicable policies and regulations.

Accidents and Injuries

The university will be responsible for any work-related injuries under Florida workers' compensation laws, but this liability is limited to injuries resulting directly from work and only if the injury occurs in the designated work area during the assigned work hours. Any claims will be handled according to the normal university procedure for Workers' Compensation claims.

As stated in the workers' compensation laws, the university will be responsible for injuries at the work home site, if the site is ergonomically maintained. The employee is responsible for any injuries and liabilities arising from his/her own negligence.

Any time an accident or an injury occurs, whether or not the employee wishes to seek medical care, it must be reported to AmeriSys. This should be done by the supervisor and employee, if available, as soon as possible. For additional information regarding the reporting process, visit the Workers' Compensation page on the HR website (<https://hr.ucf.edu>).

University's Right to End a Remote Work Arrangement

The university or department manager has the right to end arrangements for working remotely at their sole discretion with a fourteen (14) day prior written notification. If the employee chooses not to return to their campus work location on the expected date, failure to do so will be considered a voluntary resignation and will be treated as such under university standard policies and procedures.

Insurance

The employee agrees to carry a sufficient amount of homeowner's or renter's insurance to cover loss or damage to the equipment provided by the university, in the event that the university deems such a loss or damage is the employee's responsibility. Employees who work remotely from their home should consult with their insurance company or broker to purchase a business pursuits type rider on their homeowner's or renter's insurance policies. Current policies may be null and void without these riders or endorsements as a result of the workers' compensation coverage that is provided by the university for work related injury while on work time.

Conditions & Terms of Remote Work

Conditions and terms of employment will not change for an employee participating in a Remote Work Arrangement. Salary, benefits, vacation, leaves, and other rights and responsibilities will be equal to those of an employee working onsite.

Remote employees are subject to and must abide by all university and departmental policies and procedures. University policies governing the use of university equipment, facilities, including but not limited to, software, support services, internet, telephones, vehicle, etc. shall apply at the home work site.

Performance Evaluation

The employee will participate in and be subject to the university performance evaluation process of goal setting, review and evaluation as do the Central Workplace employees. As part of the on-going supervisory and management activities, the employee will discuss with their supervisor the specific work assignments, time expectations for completion of such assignments, and will review these goals and objectives as necessary. The employee's assigned work will be completed according to procedures agreed upon by the supervisor in accordance with guidelines and standards set forth in the employee's performance evaluation document, and in accordance with departmental and university policies and procedures. Work performance expectations will remain the same as for those employees who work at the Central Workplace.

Management Controls

The employee will comply with established management directives, which will include, but are not limited to:

- In person meetings with management as requested and/or required.
- Regular ongoing communication with supervisor.
- Participation in staff meetings (via phone or in person).
- Submittal of periodic written activity/status reports, as required by the supervisor.

Sick Days, Vacation, Floating Holidays, and Leaves of Absence

Any use of sick days, vacation time (annual leave), or personal business must be approved by the supervisor. The employee must obtain prior approval for leave usage, in accordance with established university procedures. All leave must be reported as per policy.

If you are seeking a remote work arrangement to manage a health or caregiving-related situation for yourself or a family member, you should contact the Human Resources Leave Section to determine if your situation would be more appropriately considered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or the Office of Institutional Equity if it should be explored as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Privacy

The employee acknowledges that the university-provided electronic mail, all forms of electronic data communication systems, voice message systems, electronic storage systems, and computer systems utilized for university business are not private and may be monitored, reviewed, or searched by the university.

Amendments

The remote assignment may be amended, modified or supplemented by the department or university, as necessary, to conform to the department's needs or desires in connection with the remote employee's alternate workplace arrangements, to conform to changes in the policy or procedure, or as otherwise necessary to address business needs or to comply with laws, rules, or regulations.

Program Agreement

Nothing in this agreement shall be deemed to create any right, interest, or expectancy of continued employment.