

January 16, 2024



RETREAT AGENDA ITEM

TELECOMMUTE STUDY

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

A presentation related to the findings of the Telecommute Study will be provided by Kittleson and Associates, project consultant. The study evaluated the impacts of Covid 19 stay-at-home orders on congestion in the CRTPA Region, assessed telecommuting trends, challenges, and opportunities, and evaluated the potential impacts to the transportation network based upon three different scenarios.

BACKGROUND

The Telecommute Study explores how teleworking can impact transportation demand and reduce peak-hour traffic congestion in the four-county region. The interest in telecommuting came about unexpectedly when, in 2020, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic created a significant increase in telecommuting. Pandemic stay-at-home orders dramatically reduced travel and congestion in the region, even in 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. Scenario planning demonstrates that implementing telecommuting programs can affect area traffic and is an effective Transportation Demand Management strategy. Building upon lessons learned about pandemic travel behavior, as well as input from regional employers, the study illustrates 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.

In addition, the report presents:

- Relevant Transportation Demand Management and telecommuting research.
- Findings from a review of current, pre-pandemic, and pandemic commute patterns.
- Key input received through stakeholder interviews.
- Resources for employers for developing a telecommuting program.