

Telecommute Study

A Look Back & A Look Forward

CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 19, 2024

Telecommuting

- Hybrid work schedule
 - In-person & remote
- Flexible work schedule
- Work remotely – any location
- Remote work hub



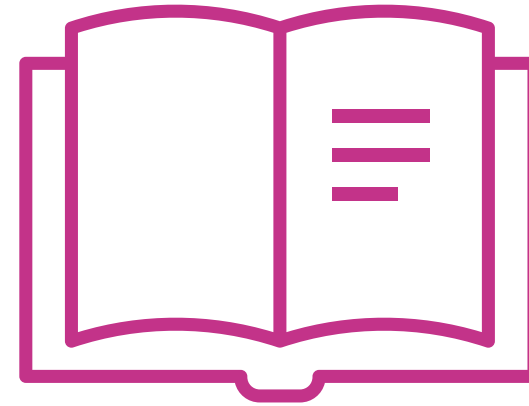
Project Overview

- Provide a snapshot of telecommuting in the region
 - Technical input and employer telework programs in the region
 - Transportation stakeholders & commuter services programs
- Assess impact of telework on the region's transportation network
 - Traffic data pre-during-post COVID 19 Pandemic
 - Technical analysis looking back and looking forward
- Identify resources related to telecommuting and telework programs
 - Best practices, guidebook and sample materials, such as agreements

Telecommuting is TDM Strategy

- TDM is a set of strategies and options aimed at reducing congestion and providing mobility choices that influence how people travel.
- TDM encourages people to move away from single-occupancy vehicles and explore alternative ways to get around.
- TDM isn't just about getting from point A to point B. It's also about planning smarter communities that support multi-modal options.

Research & Interviews



Project Working Group
Literature Review
Stakeholder Interviews

Project Working Group (PWG)

The PWG met at the initiation and wrap-up of the study.

PWG members provided input on TDM strategies and programs, with an emphasis on Telecommuting.

The following agencies were represented on the PWG :

- Leon County
- City of Tallahassee
- Office of Economic Vitality
- Florida Department of Transportation
- RideOn
- Florida State University
- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
- StarMetro

Literature Review

Broadband access is a necessity

Challenges to successful telework programs include addressing socialization and productivity concerns.

Miami-Dade TPO estimated that 30% of employees worked flexible schedules pre-pandemic. South FL Commuter Services is evaluating if telecommuting can become a long-term strategy to reduce congestion.

Employees who utilize telecommuting often demand less compensation, leading to cost savings for employers.

The development process can incorporate a concrete and achievable TDM framework.

Office of Economic Vitality (OEV)

The OEV works to attract a range of industries and professional services to Tallahassee/Leon County, such as manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, and IT/tech.

“Office of Economic Vitality aims to develop programs and initiatives... through the continuous coordination of the community’s economic development.”

<https://oeforbusiness.org/about/partners>

Working from home is an incentive to attract the best and the brightest talent.

OEV asked for a toolkit to provide employers with assistance on managing remote workers.



Florida State University (FSU)

Alternate Work Location Arrangement (AWLA)

Initiated the AWLA Pilot Program" in June 2021 and are finalizing policies for adoption.

Provides a flexible worksite arrangement on a temporary or fixed basis that serves the employees and the University's needs.

- **Telework:** FSU allows for eligible employees up to two (2) days per week of work from an Alternate Work Location.
- **Remote Positions:** Part of an incentive for recruitment is 100% remote working for positions based on highly skilled recruitment needs.

Florida State University (FSU) Transportation Office



Charges a Transportation Access Fee that covers all modes of transportation, also used to improve the overall transportation infrastructure of campus.

Created a fee for premier parking. Reserved student parking is \$415; It sold out in 1 day in 2023, program is expanding in 2024.

Parking further away remains free but is underutilized.

FSU offers park-and-ride lots on the periphery of campus, they are served by the university's circulators, and mostly vacant.

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) Transportation Office



Students primarily attend courses in-person. Recently announced new undergraduate and graduate online degree programs.

A transportation access fee is included as part of tuition, it supports transit. Students are not charged for parking.

Freshmen are permitted to bring cars to campus.

FAMU does not have a telework program currently but is interested in what other universities are doing and the effectiveness of their programs.

Apalachee Regional Planning Council

RideOn Commuter Services

Provides services to the employer and employees supporting alternatives to single occupancy vehicle commute.

Micro transit or flex services is one strategy to increase services to support commuters.

- Flex service is a "call ahead" curb-to-curb transportation service which serves a dedicated area. Tallahassee Star Metro flex buses provide connections to bus stops on North and South Monroe St.

More interest in bike facilities. Transit cannot accommodate e-bikes.

- Consider bike accommodations at transit stops.

Carpool and vanpool use decreased in pandemic, numbers are still down.

Greatest commuter needs remain in the rural counties.

Florida Department of Transportation District 5

ReThink Your Commute

Employer engagement is a primary strategy – program provides a presentation to new-hires on benefits of TDM.

Make parking expensive; City of Orlando pays money to employees who opt out of sponsored parking.

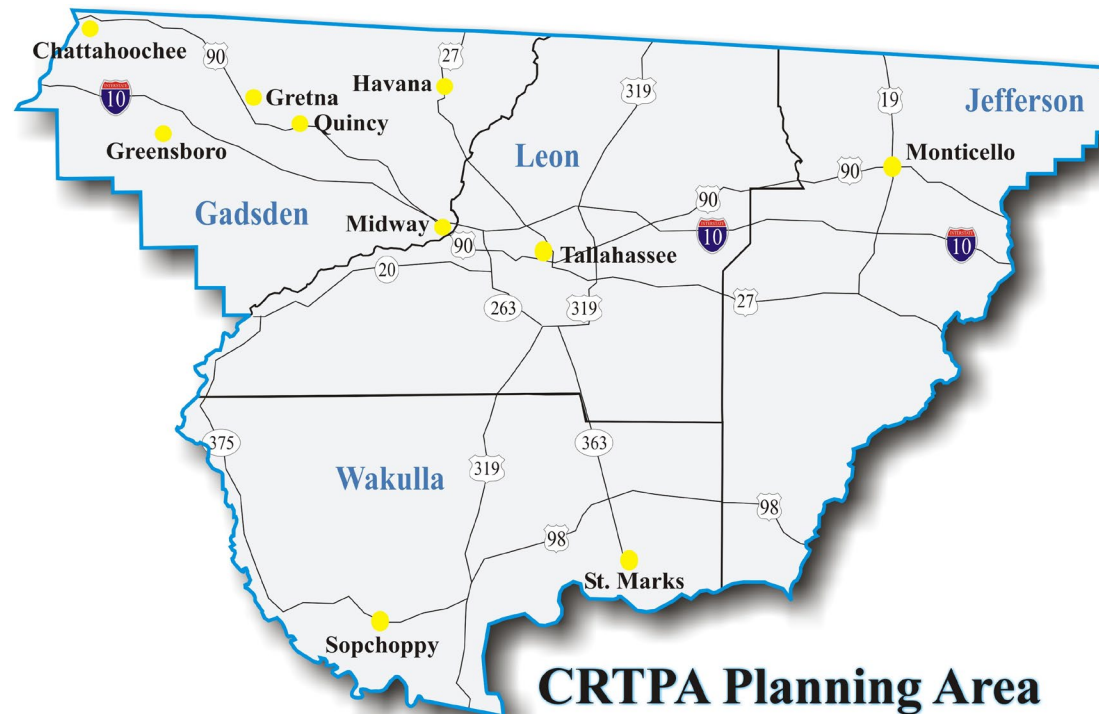
A significant number of Central Florida businesses have a hybrid policy, but the current push is to get staff back in the office.

Lake Nona development was built to include coworking spaces as well as broadband that supports working from home.

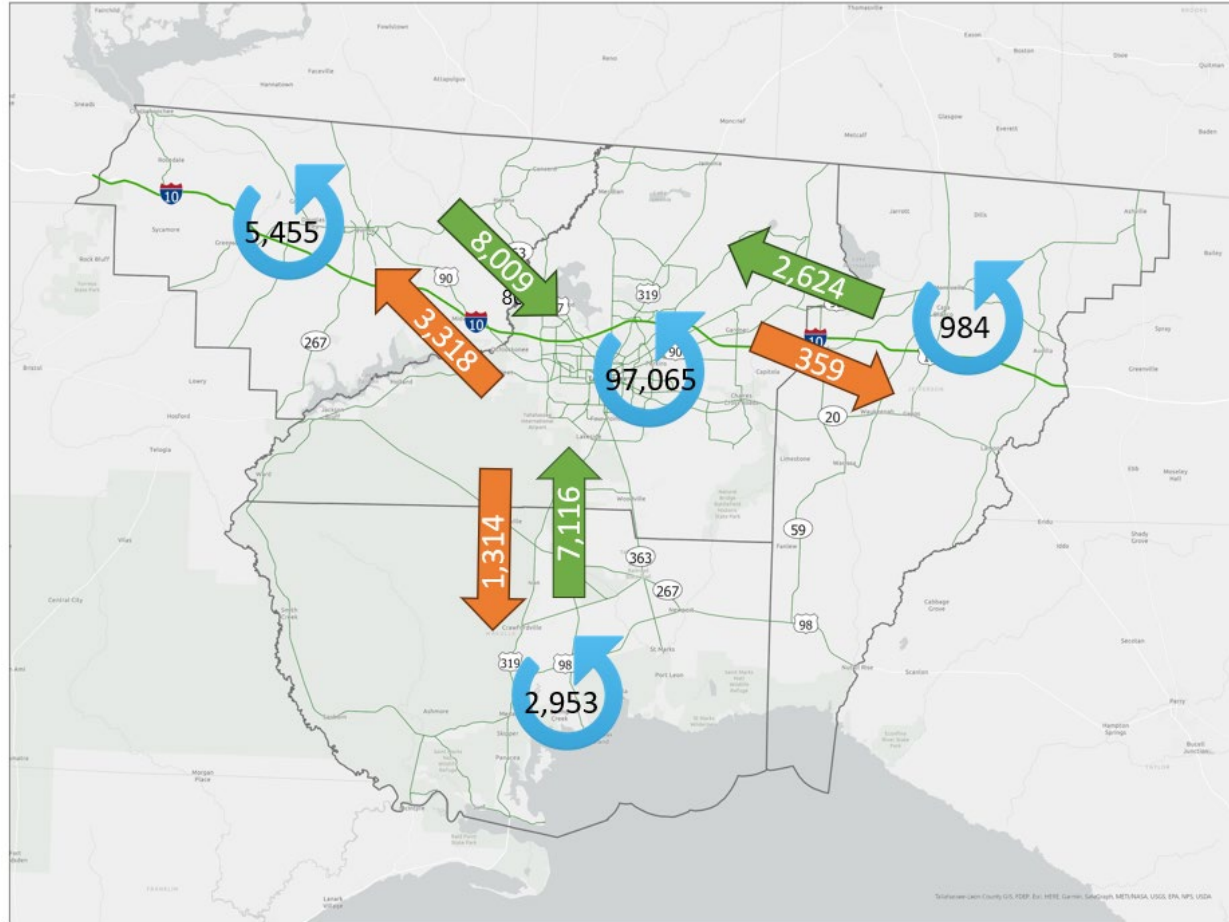
Lessons Learned

- Project Working Group
- Feedback from Agencies Implementing Telecommuting
- Feedback from Employers
- Literature Review

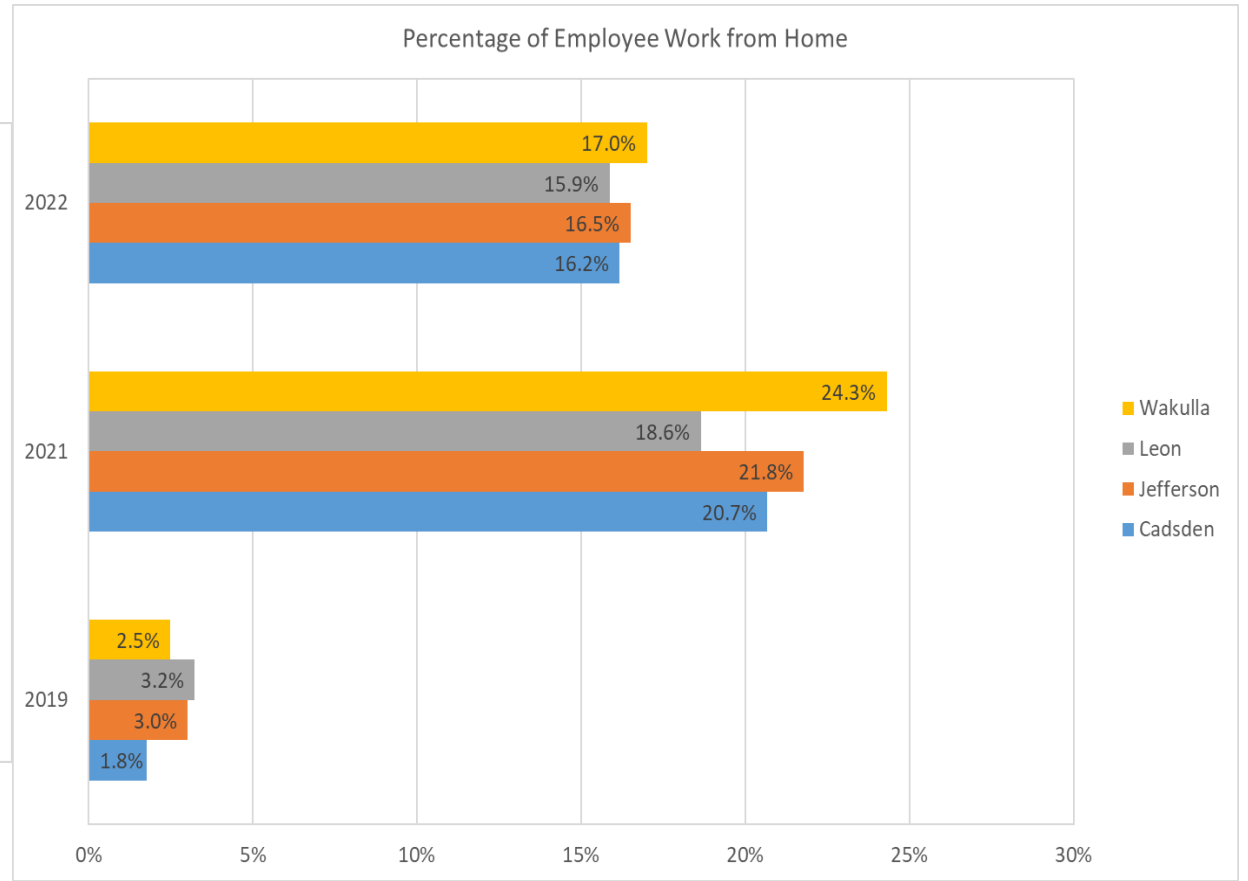
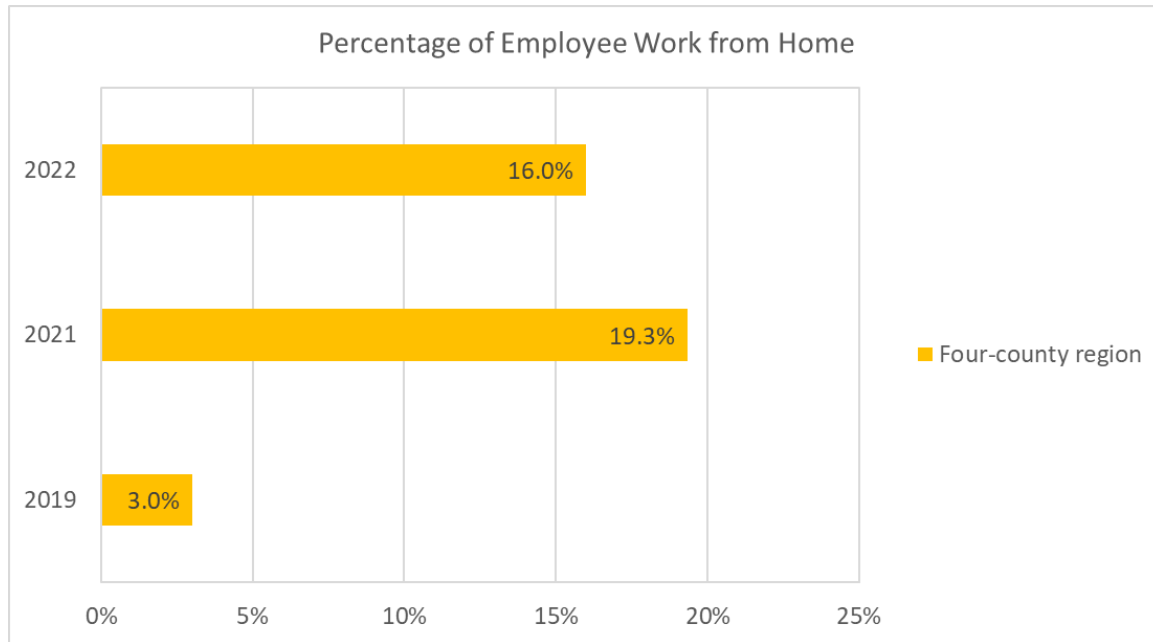
Past, Current & Future Conditions



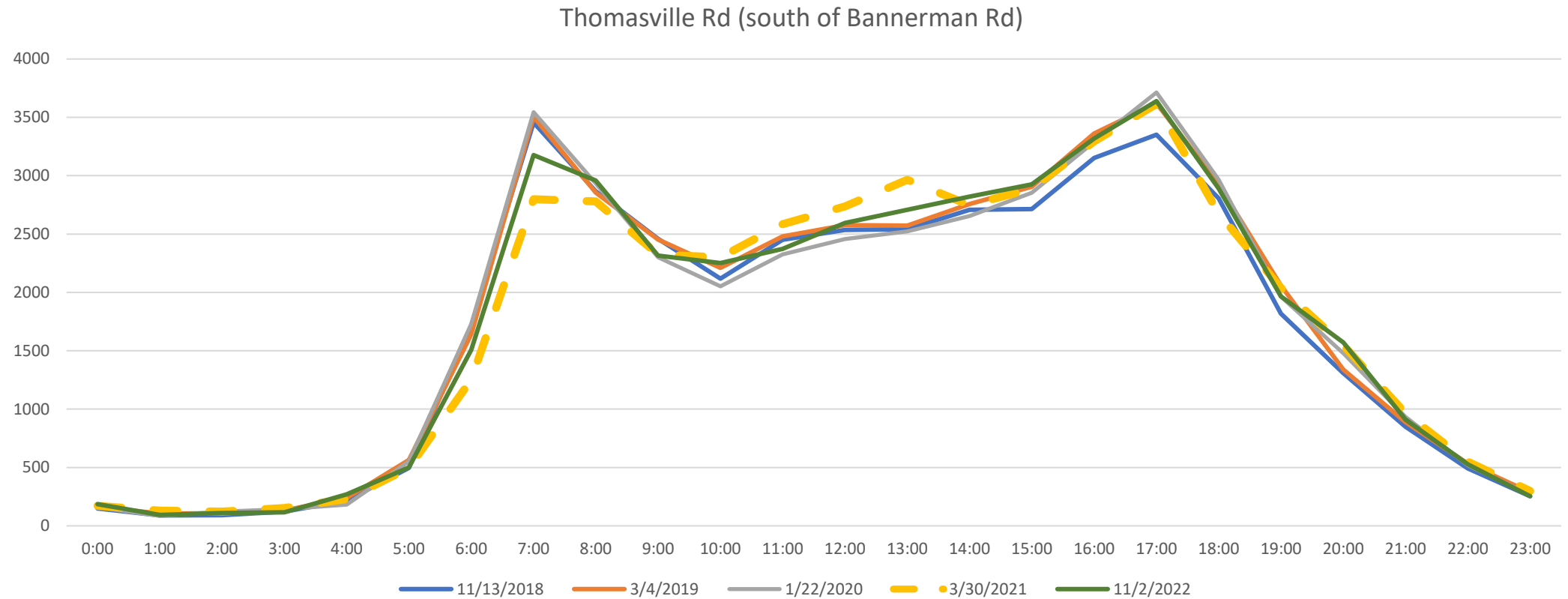
Commmute Patterns



Replica Data

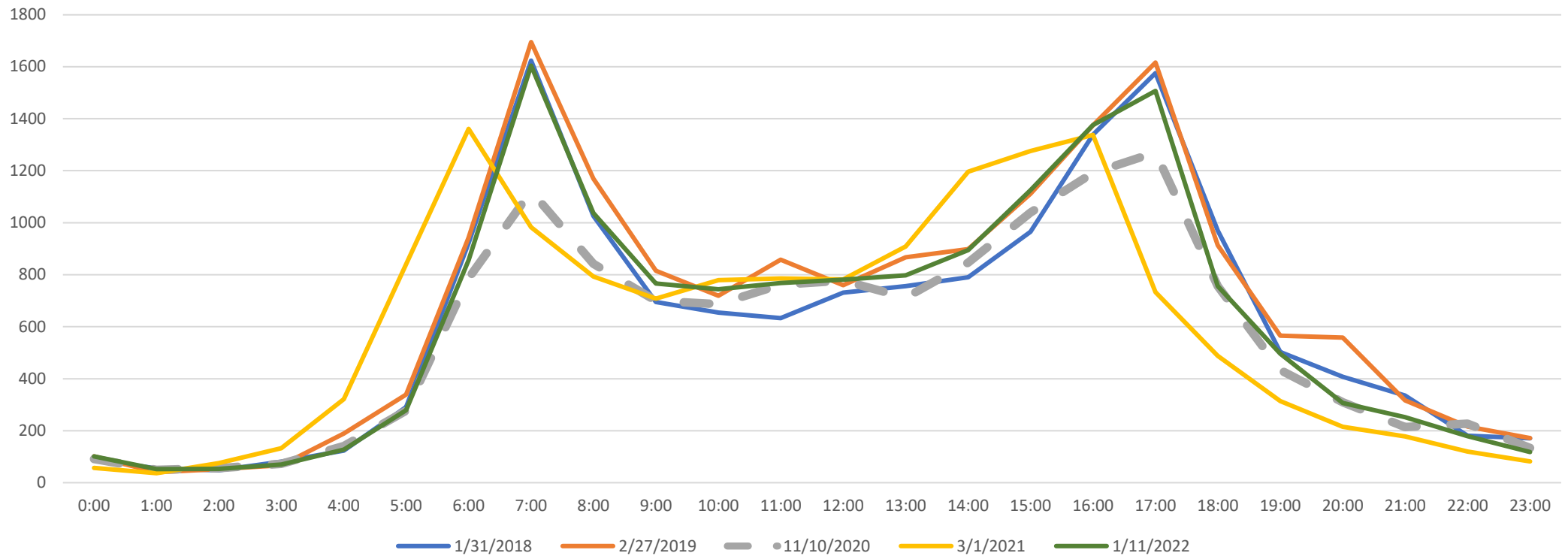


Hourly Volume Results from Portable Traffic Monitoring Sites

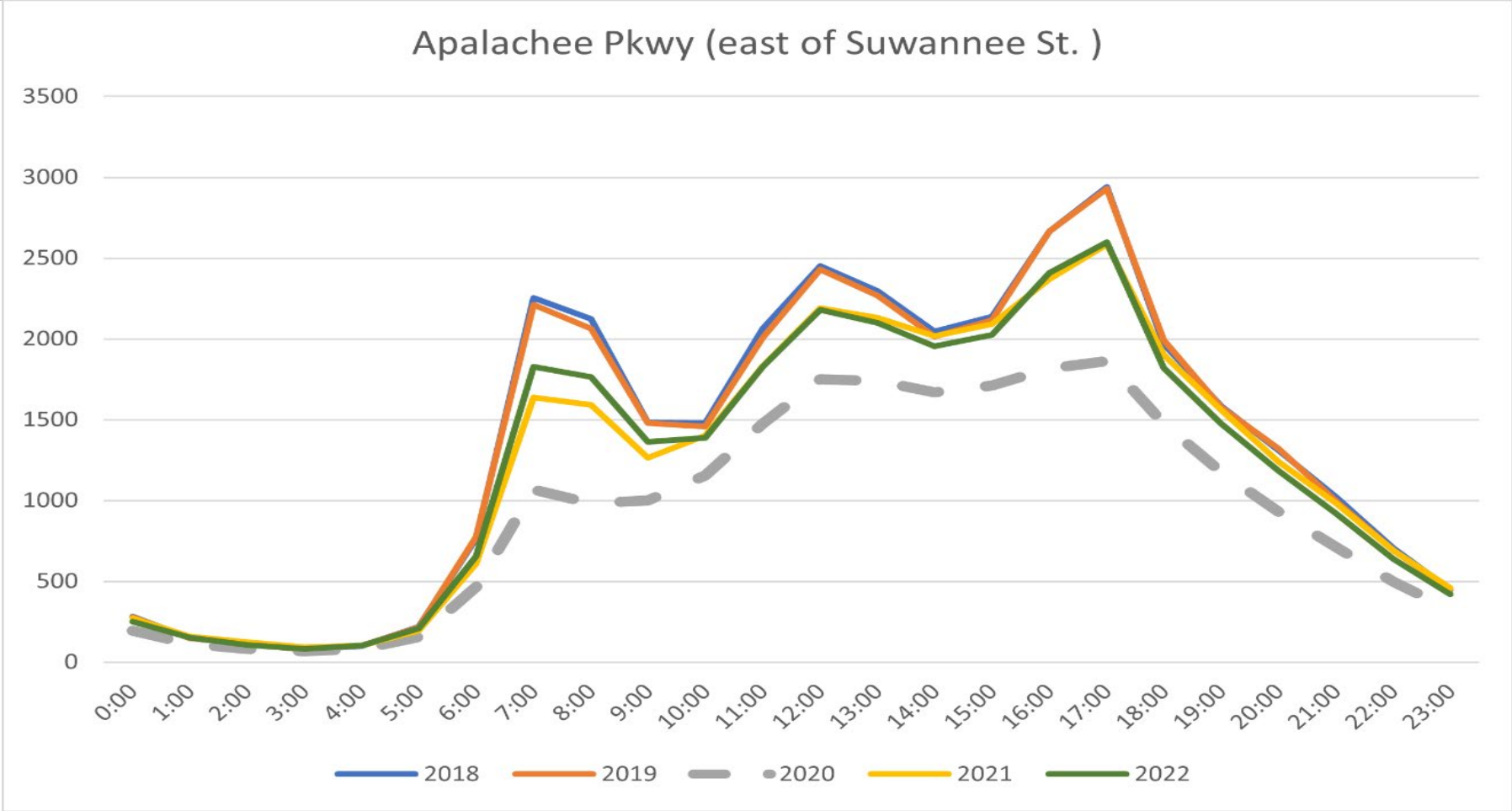


Hourly Volume Results from Portable Traffic Monitoring Sites

Capitla Circle SW (east of Springhill Rd)



Hourly Volume Results from Permanent Traffic Monitoring Sites



Potential Impacts of Telecommuting

Scenarios were generated and then modeled using the Northwest Florida Regional Planning Model.

Generating Scenarios

Using replica data, the following scenarios are created based on the CRTPA's 2045 Cost Feasible Plan from the Regional Mobility Plan :

- Low – 15%:
 - WFH percentage remains at the same status as of Fall 2022
- Medium – 20%:
 - Policy incentives and telecommuting technology advancing
- High – 25%:
 - WFH percentage approaches pandemic levels

Scenarios Configuration

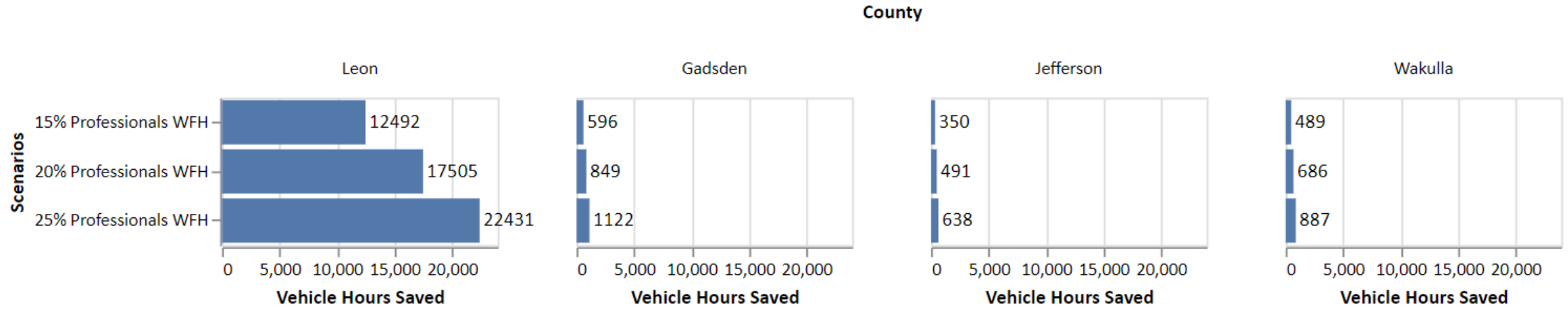
Model parameters of each scenarios were modified

- Trip generation rates – **home-based work trip**
- Trip attraction rates – **for the types of jobs that permit telework**
- Considering the model base percent for employees working from home is 3%.
 - For example, Scenario 1 has 15% WFH, it indicates a 12% reduction.

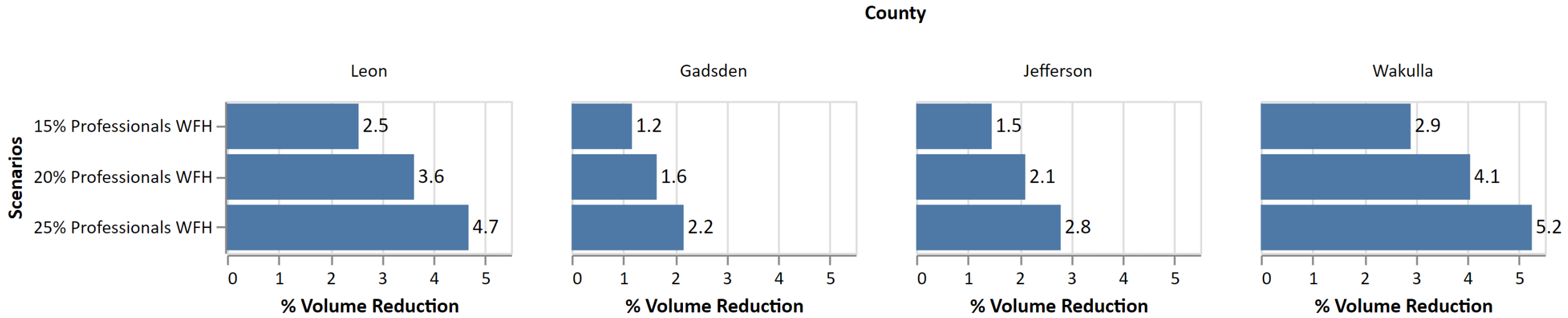
Results:

- Scenario 1: 12% reduction on rates
- Scenario 2: 17% reduction on rates
- Scenario 3: 22% reduction on rates

Vehicle Hours Saved



Vehicles Hours Saved



Volume Reduction by County

Telecommuting Considerations

- Pros and Cons
- Telecommuting policy and program resources

Telecommuting

Benefits

- Travel time savings for employees
- Ease peak hour congestion
- Economic savings for employers (reduced real estate need, utility costs)
- Worker recruitment and retention

Telecommuting

Trade-Offs

- Increased discretionary trips in non-peak hours
- Workers live further away (sprawl)
- Decreased demand for office space
- Economic impacts to surrounding businesses

Consideration of Costs & Benefits

Costs

- Employment Law and OSHA Concerns
- Collaboration
- Software for meetings/file sharing
- IT infrastructure changes may be necessary
- Security issues
- Equipment Costs
- Management mistrust

Benefits

- Community: decreases congestion
- Community: decreases traffic accidents
- Community: reduces fuel consumption
- Employers: improves employee satisfaction
- Employers: reduces attrition
- Employers: save money
- Employers: expands the talent pool
- Employees: save time and money

Goals

Clear goals & objectives with milestones are critical to assessing the effectiveness of any effort.

Employers- What are Your Goals?

Identify Goals - Possible objectives

- Reduce the number of in-office employees
- Reduce spatial need
- Reduce utility consumption
- Improve employee moral
- Ensure continuity of operations during an event

Quantify - Potential fiscal implications

- Costs to implement for employer and possible employee
- Savings in operational costs

Evaluate - Practicable framework and metrics

- Surveys
- Data Collection

Technical Report and Appendices



Capital Region Telecommute Study A Look Back & A Look Forward

Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency
FEBRUARY 2024



Technical Report Key Outcomes:

- 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

Technical Report & Appendices

- Appendix A - Literature Review
- Appendix B - Current Conditions
- Appendix C - Stakeholder Interviews
- Appendix D - Policy Guidance



Discussion