

Recommendations: Performance Benchmarks and Measurement Initiative

Purpose

- The vision of the telework transformation effort is to “significantly increase teleworking at WSDOT after the pandemic subsidies.” In support of that work, the core team created an initiative that focused on researching telework benchmarks.
 - o **The first goal of this initiative is to provide foundational information about what telework benchmarks are possible at WSDOT.** Teams can use these benchmarks as guideposts for discussions of what they want to accomplish, to determine the necessity of policies to support higher levels of telework, to inform level of investments, et cetera.
 - o **The second goal of this initiative is to determine the most effective way to measure the amount of telework across WSDOT.** This allows teams to identify what our agency has accomplished and to estimate the effects of additional efforts to support an increasingly modern and mobile workforce.
- The use of the benchmark(s) should be based on business needs. Once selected, current and future initiative teams can consider how factors such as **funding** (e.g., incentives, stipends), **level of effort** (e.g., support from supervisors, supportive policies, flexible work hours), and **externalities** can be utilized to increase teleworking to the desired level.
 - o This document summarizes the initiative team’s findings and recommendations for [creating benchmarks](#), [measuring telework](#), [ancillary considerations](#), and [facilities](#).

Methodology

- To create these recommendations, the initiative team conducted many hours of research into best practices related to telework. This included the following:
 - o Dozens of interviews both across WSDOT and with private sector companies.
 - o An extensive literature review and focused conversations with subject matters experts.
 - o Review of the recommendations by a variety of employees to ensure a range of perspectives.

Teleworking benchmarks

Recommendations: The initiative team determined three benchmarks should be achievable:

- **High - 40%** telework and above
 - o Based on eligible positions teleworking an average of **four days** a week.
 - o Examples of potential strategies: monthly stipends for home Internet cost; yearly stipends to setup home work stations; flexible work hours; moving from monthly to daily parking costs.
- **Medium - 30%** telework
 - o Based on eligible positions teleworking an average of **three days** a week.
 - o Examples of potential strategies: promoting remote working as a preferred alternative; daily incentives for teleworking; continued investment in IT infrastructure, collaborative software, and other network and technology solutions.
- **Low - 20%** telework
 - o Based on eligible positions teleworking an average of **two days** a week.
 - o Examples of potential strategies: support from supervisors for eligible positions to telework as much as they want; providing laptops.
- Update March 2021: WSDOT adopted agencywide telework goal of 30% to 40%.

The percentage of average telework necessary per (combined) job class groups to achieve High, Medium, or Low benchmarks:

Job Class Group	Total	High TW %	High TW #	Medium TW %	Medium TW	Low TW %	Low TW #
WSF FLEET	1435	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE WORKER	994	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER - DESIGN/TRAFFIC/UTILIT	881	80%	705	60%	529	40%	352
WMS BAND	604	80%	483	60%	362	40%	242
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING SPECIALIST	328	80%	262	60%	197	40%	131
IT POSITIONS	282	80%	226	60%	169	40%	113
TRANSPORTATION TECHNICIAN	229	60%	137	40%	92	30%	69
TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER - CONSTRUCTION	211	40%	84	25%	53	20%	42
SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATIVE	157	80%	126	60%	94	40%	63
EQUIPMENT TECHNICIAN	155	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS TECHNICIAN	135	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
FINANCIAL SERVICES	132	80%	106	60%	79	40%	53
BRIDGE ENGINEER	115	80%	92	60%	69	40%	46
BRIDGE MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST	108	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ENGINEER	91	80%	73	60%	55	40%	36
PROPERTY & ACQUISITION SPECIALIST	78	70%	55	50%	39	30%	23
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR	75	60%	45	40%	30	20%	15
MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST	62	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
HUMAN RESOURCE CONSULTANT	60	80%	48	60%	36	40%	24
COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT	50	80%	40	60%	30	40%	20
MAINTENANCE MECHANIC	46	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING TECHNICIAN	41	60%	25	40%	16	20%	8
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS/TMC	35	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY SPECIALIST	29	60%	17	40%	12	20%	6
PROGRAM SPECIALIST	21	70%	15	50%	11	25%	5
FORMS & RECORDS ANALYST	16	70%	11	50%	8	25%	4
EQUIPMENT TECHNICIAN SUPERVISOR	15	70%	11	50%	8	25%	4
DIRECTOR	12	80%	10	60%	7	40%	5
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST	12	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
MANAGEMENT ANALYST	11	70%	8	50%	6	25%	3
SAFETY OFFICER	11	60%	7	40%	4	20%	2
SIGNAL WORK	11	10%	1	5%	1	0%	0
CONTRACTS SPECIALIST	10	80%	8	60%	6	40%	4
INSPECTOR SPECIALIST	9	60%	5	40%	4	20%	2
CUSTODIAN	8	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST	8	80%	6	60%	5	40%	3
FACILITIES PLANNER	8	80%	6	60%	5	40%	3
Totals:	6485		2611		1924		1278
		High TW %	40%	Medium TW %:	30%	Low TW %:	20%

Notes about the data shown in the table above:

- On June 26, 2020, HR representative Holly Sage sent the initiative team information from HRMS for all filled WSDOT positions (6,765 positions in total).
- The data included a variety of information about each position including region; city; org code and title; position classification title; if the position was marked eligible or ineligible for telework; if the position had a telework agreement in place; and the level of telework.
- The team combined classifications that only differed by level (e.g., transportation planning specialists of level 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 had their numbers removed and were combined into a single transportation planning specialist category).
- The team further combined classifications by positions that produced similar work and had approximately the same capability for telework (e.g., oiler, able seamen, chief mate, ticket seller, and other frontline WSF fleet job classes were combined into a single WSF fleet category).
- For ease of use and to make the data more meaningful, any combined job categories with fewer than five people were excluded.
 - o This left 96% of the original data, which was more than enough to be representative.

Methodology for creating benchmark scenarios:

- Once the data was cleaned and organized, the team assigned three different percentages of telework to each classification.
 - o Whenever possible, the team assigned 80% to represent four days, 60% to represent three days, and 40% to represent two days to the telework eligible positions; lower percentages were assigned for occasional teleworkers; no telework was assigned for field-essential staff.
- In order to assess which positions could attain those telework levels, the team relied on the following:
 - o Percentage of a classification's positions that were designated as telework eligible/ineligible on their CPDs.
 - o Percentage of a classification's positions that had telework agreements in place and how many days of telework the agreement included.
 - o Interviews about classification duties.
 - o Research about classification duties.
 - o Institutional knowledge about classifications.
 - o Feedback from the core telework transformation team.
- There were some positions where it was impractical to use the 80/60/40 split (e.g., construction engineers on the east side of the state that work on construction sites for eight months a year and can only telework the four months they are in the office).
 - o Additional interviews were conducted to understand what a reasonable telework amount for those "in-between" positions would be and percentages were assigned accordingly.
- **Assigned percentages were also discussed with and reviewed by Heidi Mabbott, Classification and Compensation manager.**
- Ultimately, scenarios are based on ~3,000 WSDOT positions being able to telework most or all of the time (e.g., IT, HR), ~3,000 positions being able to rarely or never telework (WSF fleet, maintenance workers), and ~600 being able to telework occasionally (construction engineers).

Teleworking measurements

Recommendations:

- **Track participation:** Track telework participation using information gathered by the IT department that will capture the number of unique users who remotely log onto the system each day (this appears possible).
- **Share results:** Make data available at the user level, so it can be linked to org code (no personally identifiable information will be used or kept).
- **Manage data:** The PTD data team will build a dashboard to be the recipient of those data. The data team will create the dashboard, where end users can examine the information temporally and at aggregated levels from agency wide down to individual organizations.
- Finally, the team **recommends that telework tracking begin as soon as the data team can work with IT to stand up the process.** This will provide valuable information as telework numbers (potentially) begin to attenuate as employees move towards the new normal.
- Update March 2021: Some were concerned about detailed data (e.g., org level) showing low telework levels; the final dashboard only shows telework data at the agency level.

Other measurements considered but not recommended:

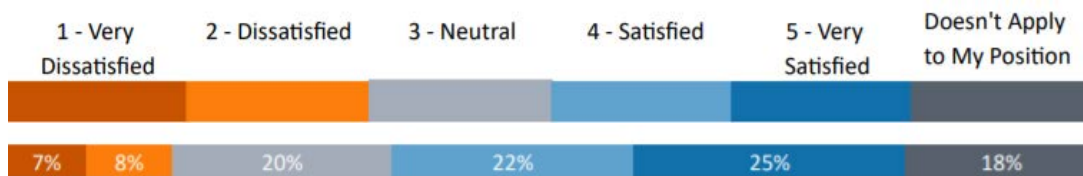
- Note: Up to 10 methods of tracking teleworkers were considered, but the solution involving IT's information takes less work to setup and maintain, and it collects the data through a passive mechanism, which lowers the chances of under-reporting.
- Using a calendaring mechanism, such as the Rideshareonline website.
 - **Important note:** If a policy is established that incentivizes teleworking in a similar way to the current incentive program for active transportation and carpooling, this is a viable method.
 - Unless that happens, the initiative team anticipates severe under reporting, as most people will not take the time to calendar their telework days.
 - Regardless, remote login tracking should be a superior method, as some people, even with the incentive, will not log their telework days (i.e., passive tracking is still better than active).
- Using ReadyOps (DOT's system for capturing where people work and potential exposures).
 - While ReadyOps is capturing telework data, the number of people reporting each day are decreasing, overall, which would lead to underreporting.
 - It is also not a permanent solution, as it will be abandoned at some point.
- Using DOTtime (DOT's payroll system).
 - Adding a telework checkbox to the schedule tab of DOTtime is possible, but it would take a fair amount of work.
 - While the checkbox would be available, the initiative team expects many people not to remember to use it, especially from the 1,200 exemption coded employees.
- Tracking telework using surveying.
 - WSDOT attempts to limit the number of surveys sent agency wide, so this information would not be able to be collected in a timely manner.
 - Response rates are less than 100 percent, and the people who do respond might not be representative, which leads to issues of under- or overreporting.

- Tracking telework through software (e.g., a program that would pop up each morning and ask if the user is teleworking).
 - This option would create a considerable amount of work in order to develop the software, push it to everyone’s computer, and maintain it.
 - The literature indicates such tracking software is often considered intrusive by employees, which can have an alienating effect.
 - Consequently, there is no reason to think the numbers reported would be accurate.

Ancillary considerations

Recommendations:

- The initiative team **recommends monitoring changes in the answers given to the following question (currently number 23) on the Washington State Employee Engagement Survey:**
 - Please rate from “Very Dissatisfied” to “Very Satisfied” your feelings about “Mobility: the ability to work remotely from a variety of locations, such as your home or alternate work sites.”



- The initiative team also recommends a second telework survey.
 - o Timeframe should be a two-week period from late August and early October.
 - o In addition to reusing many of the telework-specific questions, **the team recommends we should add questions related to future telework.**
 - Patterned after the recent Goldsmith/WSF relocation survey, questions should include the number of preferred days of telework after COVID, expected and necessary supervisor support, necessities to make telework successful, et cetera.
 - These questions will introduce hypothetical bias (i.e., people are unreliable when predicting their future behavior), but they will provide a rough estimate for the desire to telework and potentially help to inform which of the target scenarios would most closely match with the expectations and wishes of WSDOT employees.
- Update March 2021: A fall survey was conducted and showed that WSDOT employees were interested in teleworking at a 35% rate before any additional efforts to promote remote work.

Telework agreements:

- Telework agreements are currently the official way of tracking the telework numbers WSDOT reports to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Governor’s Office (GO).
 - Tracking telework this way is problematic, because the current percentage submitted to OFM/GO is a binary distinction based not on the amount of telework but on the number of employees with agreements that indicate 1-2 days of telework every two weeks. In other words, when it is reported that 12 percent of our employees are teleworking per agreement, it means 12 percent are teleworking at least 10 percent of the time, which indicates the overall amount of actual telework days per all WSDOT employees could be as low as 1.2 percent.

- The initiative team **recommends working with OFM and the Governor's Office to use remote logins instead of telework agreements as WSDOT's official telework numbers.**
- If telework agreements continue to be used for reporting purposes, the initiative team recommends the following:
 - **Update the telework agreement form to have more categories for number of days an employee is teleworking.**
 - **Require that a new agreement is submitted for each employee teleworking post-COVID.**
 - o **Eliminate all previous telework agreements, as many submitted during the pandemic will no longer contain accurate information.**
 - o Report not on the percent of telework agreements in place but on the percent of telework indicated per the agreements.

Other measurements considered but not recommended:

- Adding questions to the employee exit survey pertaining to telework.
 - o After speaking with Heidi Mabbott, the employee exit survey is only used by about 15% of employees who leave WSDOT. A question already exists asking for the top three reasons people are leaving, and one of the choices relates to flexibility of work (both time and place).
- Tracking employee turnover.
 - o While this might be worthwhile, there would be no causal link to the new telework policies.
- Tracking satisfaction and productivity.
 - o Surveying is the primary way the initiative team identified to attempt to track these numbers, which would be infrequent and not necessarily reflective of reality.
- Establish training on telework best practices (e.g., webinars, LMS series) and tally the amount of people who have taken the training to determine if employees are growing our skills.
 - o Tracking the number of people taking training is not adequately informative.
 - If training is created, it could simply be required, like IT security training is now.
- Number of people using certain types of collaborative software, such as Microsoft Teams.
 - o According to IT, this would be extremely difficult and perhaps impossible to do.
 - o Difficult to capture context: if there is more or less usage, what is causing it? It might be people becoming more familiar with software (more) or people using their phones more (less).
- Using measurements that are already in place, such as on-time payment performance.
 - o This is a promising idea, but the team recommends these measurements remain with their respective divisions.

Facilities

Recommendations:

- The initiative team **recommends not setting targets for facility reductions at this time.**
- Instead, the team **recommends working through telework target setting, telework policies, and other necessary steps and then assessing how this will impact facilities and what kinds and amounts of reductions are possible.**
 - o There are a lot of moving parts that make it difficult to set targets related to facilities.

Possible future facility recommendations:

- Consider setting performance targets based on reduction of money spent to lease facilities.
 - o Over 60% of WSDOT facilities are maintenance sheds, which do not make sense for potential reduction; focusing on the elimination of expensive leases could hold the greatest benefit while shifting the focus from square footage reduction, which is less financially impactful.
- Consider setting performance targets based on reduction to facility maintenance costs.
 - o Facilities is drastically underfunded, only having enough money to cover ~40% of WSDOT's facility needs. This has forced facilities into only repairing or replacing things once they break, no matter how glaring the need is before that. Consider exploring what can be done from a facilities standpoint that would allow WSDOT to get closer to a state of good repair for our buildings and how that can work in tandem with increased telework.

Next Steps

- The core team should select the preferred benchmark and provide it to initiative teams.
 - o Update March 2021: WSDOT selected a 30% to 40%, or 35% for shorthand, telework target.
- Stand up initiative team to create telework measurement dashboard.
 - o Update March 2021: Dashboard is complete and deployed. So far, telework numbers are hovering around 50% agencywide; this is before office staff is allowed to return to their workspaces.
- Stand up initiative team to conduct second telework survey.
 - o Update March 2021: Survey is completed. Staff indicated high levels of interest in telework, and reported being productive and satisfied. A summary of results is available upon request.