

Urban Transportation Commission Draft Teleworking Resolution - July 11, 2023

WHEREAS the long term trend over the past decade in the Austin labor market has been for increasing numbers of people to work from home or other locations outside their employer's location, going from 5.7% in 2010 to 8.7% in 2019 before the Pandemic

AND WHEREAS the post-Pandemic return of employees to offices is taking place far more slowly than recent news items would suggest, for example, as of 6/21/2023, the Kastle Back to Work Barometer shows that the current office occupancy rate in Austin has achieved only 58.2% of the pre-Pandemic level (despite headlines of businesses requiring employees to work in their offices)

AND WHEREAS the City of Austin competes with other employers in both the private and public sectors and the availability of telework opportunities will increase the size of the potential employee pool by opening opportunities to those for whom travel to a City of Austin facility difficult, such as those living far from City of Austin facilities, those who have disabilities and those who have difficulty arranging for child care

AND WHEREAS substantial numbers of employees teleworking could result in substantial floor space or entire city buildings becoming available for other purposes, as the Deloitte Consulting report forecast for Travis County

AND WHEREAS the preponderance of studies on employee productivity show that allowing employees to work from home increases productivity

AND WHEREAS the Joint Sustainability Committee Recommendation No 20230628-4 identifies the environmental benefits of encouraging teleworking

AND WHEREAS the chances of successful outcomes in switching to teleworking are increased if managers and employees receive training in best practices for remote work

BE IT RESOLVED that, the Urban Transportation Commission recommends that the Austin City Council implement a permanent option for all employees whose job duties permit teleworking to telework some or all of the time and should move towards implementation of that option by requesting that the Interim City Manager finally deliver the report on the advantages and disadvantages of teleworking which was requested by Council in June, 2022. The report should contain at least the following information:

A proposed list of which job classifications and positions are suitable for teleworking.

The estimated financial impacts of offering teleworking as an option for those employees whose job classifications are suitable, similar to the report prepared by Delotte Consulting for Travis County.

The report should identify which properties would become available for other purposes, such as affordable housing, or lease termination if a substantial fraction of employees who were eligible for teleworking at those locations chose to do so.

The report should also identify costs associated with expanding teleworking, such as additional IT costs, costs to update personnel policies and procedures, and training costs associated with learning to work and manage in a distributed environment, a skill many managers don't currently possess.