



Urban Transportation Commission
Recommendation 20230711-004: Bike Lane Blockage

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;

AND WHEREAS the 2020 strategic mobility plan identified increasing the share of Austinites teleworking as a strategy to achieve a 50/50 mode share.;

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.

Date of Approval: July 11th, 2023

Record of the vote: 6-0 vote with Commissioner Wheeler absent and Commissioner Smith off the dias

Attest: Christopher Parks, Staff Liaison