



Press Release
Survey Shows Popularity of
Teleworking Rising Dramatically

For Immediate Release

July 18, 2007

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SURVEY SHOWS POPULARITY OF TELEWORKING RISING DRAMATICALLY

Percentage of Commuters Teleworking Jumps From 13% to 19% in Three Years

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The number of area workers who are opting to telework -- and the number of businesses and agencies that are helping them do so -- has increased considerably over the past three years, according to a report released by the Commuter Connections program at today's monthly meeting of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB).

The third "State of the Commute" survey reveals that 19 percent of commuters in the region have teleworked, or performed their regular office duties from home, in 2007. That figure is a significant change from 2004, when 13 percent of respondents said they teleworked. Among federal employees, the number of telecommuters jumped from 7 percent in 2001, when the survey was first conducted, to 12 percent in 2004 and 16 percent in 2007. More than 6,000 workers from 11 area jurisdictions were surveyed for the report, which is produced once every three years.

"The numbers are in and the message is clear: more people are realizing that teleworking is a favorable choice for everyone involved," said Congressman Frank R. Wolf (R-Va.), who has been promoting telecommuting for years. "It gets cars off the road, helps the environment and can even assist employers in attracting and retaining quality employees."

Respondents who worked for federal agencies, which support approximately 340,000 of the region's jobs, were also most likely to have access to incentives for alternative commuting options. Metrocheck subsidies, services for bicyclists, and other such incentives were available to 85 percent of federal employees surveyed, compared with 40 to 60 percent of respondents who worked for the private or nonprofit sector and state and local agencies. Both numbers are

significantly higher than other metropolitan areas nationwide, where 30 to 40 percent of employees report similar incentives and services.

Telecommuters worked from home for an average of 1.5 days per week. Twenty-four percent of respondents who did not telecommute said they would choose to do so if employers were to give them the opportunity. Nearly 40 percent of those who do work from home said their employers offer formal teleworking programs, compared to 32 percent in 2004 and 27 percent in 2001. Others worked out informal agreements with their supervisors.

Commuter Connections works with local employers to promote telecommuting, as well as alternatives to drive-alone commuting, as a way to relieve roadway congestion and improve the quality of the region's air. Drive-alone commuting decreased from 74 percent in 2004 to 71 percent in 2007.

"These numbers are certainly encouraging," Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, said. "As the region continues to grow and develop at a rapid pace, **it is encouraging to note that there is an** increasing number of employers who are formalizing their telework programs."

For a full summary of the survey results, email hmueller@mwcog.org.

Commuter Connections is a program of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia Departments of Transportation as well as the U.S. Department of Transportation. For more information, visit www.commuterconnections.org.

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National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Memorandum

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Nicholas Ramfos
Director, Alternative Commute Programs

SUBJECT: Highlights from the 2007 State of the Commute Survey

DATE: July 18, 2007

The Commuter Connections Program conducted a regional telephone “State of the Commute” (SOC) survey in the spring of 2007 to explore regional commute travel patterns and other commute trends. The results of the new survey can be compared with those from similar surveys conducted by Commuter Connections in 2001 and 2004.

The 2007 survey interviewed 6,600 workers in the Washington metropolitan region, with 600 in each of 11 jurisdictions. The samples for all SOC data were expanded to the total worker population in the respective counties. For the region, the worker population was 2,614,990 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Feb-March 2007).

Highlights of Survey Results

Teleworking grew substantially between 2004 and 2007, and considerable potential exists for additional telework growth (Table 1)

- Almost 19% of regional commuters said they teleworked at least occasionally in 2007, a substantial increase from the 2004 level of 13%. Teleworking grew in nearly every demographic and employer segment in which telework is feasible .
- Teleworking among federal agency workers continues to grow. In 2007, 16% of respondents who worked for federal agencies teleworked, compared to 12% in 2004 and only seven percent in 2001. Table 2 shows the incidence of teleworking by type of employer.
- The 2007 survey also found that an additional 24% of commuters who do not telecommute today “could and would” telecommute if given the opportunity. These respondents said their job responsibilities would allow them to telecommute and they would like to telecommute. About two-thirds of these interested respondents said they would like to telecommute “regularly,” while one-third would like to telecommute “occasionally.”

- Among current teleworkers, nearly four in ten (39%) said they teleworked under a formal arrangement. The remaining teleworkers worked under an informal agreement with their supervisor. Formal programs have increased over the past six years. In 2004, 32% of teleworkers had a formal arrangement and in 2001, the percentage was only 27%. This appears to demonstrate greater employer acceptance of formal telework arrangements.
- Days per week teleworked in 2007 was 1.5 days on average, up from the 1.3 days per week estimated in the 2004 survey and the 1.2 days per week estimated in the 2001 survey.
- The impact of teleworking on congestion and air quality has increased significantly: reductions in daily vehicle miles of travel increased by 50% from two to three million between 2004 and 2007 (Table 3).

Drive alone commuting appears to have fallen somewhat since 2004

- About 71.0% of weekly commute trips made to worksites outside the home were made by driving alone. This represented a decrease from the 74.1% of weekly trips that were drive alone in 2004 and the 72.6% that were drive alone in 2001.
- Weekly commute trips made by alternative modes appear to have increased from 2004 to 2007, though some of the reported increases are so small that they may not be statistically significant. Train use increased from 12.7% in 2001 and 12.8% in 2004 to 13.5% in 2007 and bus use grew from 4.6% in 2007 and 4.7% in 2004 to 5.2% in 2007. Carpool and vanpool trips increased from 6.1% of weekly trips in 2004 to 7.6% in 2007 which was the same percentage as in 2001. Bike/walk use increased slightly from 2.4% in 2001 and 2.3% in 2004 to 2.7% of weekly commute trips in 2007.

Availability of worksite commute assistance services remains high (Table 4).

- Over half of respondents (54%) said their employers offered one or more alternative mode incentives or support services to employees at their worksites, the same percentage as in 2004. This is significantly higher than other metropolitan areas around the country, where typically 30 to 40 percent of employees report access to these types of incentives and support services at their work places.
- The most commonly offered services were Metrochek/transit/vanpool subsidies (33% of employees) and commute information (20%). About one in six respondents said their employers offered preferential parking (16%), services for bikers and walkers (17%), or guaranteed ride home (12%).
- Respondents who worked for federal agencies were most likely to have incentive/support services available (85%), compared with 40-60% of respondents who worked for other types of employers. Respondents also were more likely to have access to all types of incentive/support services if they worked for large firms rather than for small firms. And incentives and support services were far more common among respondents who worked in the core area jurisdictions (Alexandria, Arlington, and District of Columbia); eight in ten of these respondents had access to services compared to about half who worked in Fairfax, Montgomery, or Prince George's Counties, and four in ten of those who worked in jurisdictions outside these areas.

Most commuters continue to have free worksite parking available.

- The majority of respondents (65%) said their employers offered free, on-site or off-site parking, about the same percentage as that reported in 2004 (66%) and 2001 (65%).
- Federal agency employees were least likely to have free parking (53%) compared with more than 70% of employees working for private firms and 83% of respondents who worked for state/local governments. Free parking also was much less common in the core area of the region. Only four in ten of respondents who worked in these areas had free parking, compared with at least three-quarters of other respondents.

Table 1
Summary of Current and Potential Teleworking
 All Respondents who are not Self-Employed/Work at Home
 (n=6,168)

Teleworking Status	2007	2004
Currently teleworking	18.7%	12.8%
Number of current Teleworkers	456,000	320,000
Average Number of Days Teleworking Per Week	1.5	1.3
- Job responsibilities allow teleworking and INTERESTED in teleworking (“could and would”) for Non-Teleworkers	24%	17%
Number of Non-Teleworkers that “Could and Would” Telework if given the opportunity	570,000	400,000

Table 2
Summary of Teleworking by Employer Type
 All Respondents who are not Self-Employed/Work at Home

	All Respondents	
	2007	2004
Employer Type		
Private/Non-profit Employer	21%	15%
Federal agency	16%	12%
State/local agency	7%	6%

Table 3
Summary of Telework Impact on Congestion & Air Quality

	All Respondents	
	2007	2004
Impacts		
Daily VMT	3,000,000	2,000,000
Daily Gallons of Gas Saved	133,000	100,000
Daily Tons of NO _x Reduced	2 tons	1.5 tons

Table 4
Alternative Mode Incentives and Support Services Offered by Employers
 2007, 2004, and 2001 SOC Surveys

Alternative Mode Incentives and Support Services	Employer Offered Service *		
	2007 SOC (n=6,076)	2004 SOC (n=6,866)	2001 SOC (n=6,860)
Metrochek/other subsidies for transit/vanpool	33%	31%	29%
Information on commute options	20%	22%	25%
Bike/pedestrian facilities or services	17%	14%	9%
Preferential parking for CP/VP	16%	16%	19%
GRH for emergencies/unscheduled overtime	12%	12%	19%
Financial incentives/subsidies for CP	5%	4%	7%
None – employer doesn't offer any services	46%	47%	49%

* Might add to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

Likely Reasons for Changes in Commuting Behavior

The increases in the number of teleworkers in the region as well as the slight decrease in the drive alone rate and increases in public transportation use can be attributed to a number of different factors: the higher levels of traffic congestion; rising gasoline prices; the importance of commute benefit programs to the business community to attract and retain employees; the formalization of telework programs at employment sites; and the need for business continuity in the aftermath of a natural or man-made disaster.