



REGIONAL TELEWORK INITIATIVE

2009 -2010 OVERVIEW AND OUTCOMES



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Defining Telework

- Working remotely – other than at the workplace
- Extends the workplace beyond traditional settings
- Is a voluntary arrangement and not an entitlement
- Reduces work-related trips
- Requires planning and consensus building
- Depends upon technology
- Depends upon job and employee suitability
- Depends upon management commitment



Initiative Goals

Support Regional Transportation and Environmental Planning Objectives

- Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program and Congestion Management Plan
- Federal transportation project development / programming
- Air quality maintenance and improvement
- Mobility and multimodal transportation options

Support Regional Economic Development Activities

- Maintenance of the Region's competitiveness in the global marketplace
- Advocacy for the business community
- Grantmaking and technical assistance
- Implementation of MVPC Priority Growth Strategy, the Region's comprehensive plan

Meet the Region's future challenges

- Minimizing growth in single-occupancy vehicle trips
- Addressing increased fixed and variable transportation costs
- Encourages growth and promotes sustainable development



Initiative Tasks

- Assess telework ‘state of the practice’
- Affirm Initiative Goals
- Conduct regional outreach and telework capacity building
- Implement specific activity, i.e. Pilot Program
- Monitor and report on outcomes



State of the Practice

Telework's popularity is increasing. Why?

- Business cost management
 - Real estate
 - Travel and transportation expenditures
 - A “green” initiative
- Employee Retention
 - Employee or firm relocation \neq separation
 - Salary and benefits negotiating tool
- Employee Productivity
 - Work/life balance
 - Better communication among time zones
- Continuity of Operations Planning



State of the Practice

- Telework practice data varies widely; precise measurement is at present infeasible
- Predictably, telework is more feasible for information-based jobs, and less so for jobs involving extensive equipment or face-to-face contact with colleagues
- # of teleworkers in workforce has grown, but telework/total job hours per employee has declined
- “# of U.S. employees working remotely at least one day per month increased 39%, from approximately 12.4 million in 2006 to 17.2 million in 2009” Source: WorldatWork Telework Trendlines TM 2009
- Telework growth has proven relatively independent of most employer promotions and other incentives
- Telework arrangements are both formal and informal



Affirm Initiative Goals

- Develop MVPC as a regional telework resource
- Obtain feedback from regional stakeholders on needs
- Shift MVPC emphasis from region-wide practice surveys to conduct of a pilot program



Regional Outreach

- **Contacts**
 - Transportation industry colleagues
 - Region's Chambers of Commerce
 - Employers in region, and
 - Workforce agencies
- **Public Information Sessions**
 - April 2010
 - September 2010



Pilot Program

- Sought participation from a range of firms and employment sectors
 - Small (1-20 employees); medium (21-100 employees) and large (greater than 100 employees)
 - Obtain telework practice information according to job descriptions
- Planned for at least three representative case studies
 - Employer with an established, formal telework program
 - Employer with informal telework arrangements
 - Employer considering implementing telework



Pilot Program

- Initiated April 2010
- Offered and promoted through November 2010
- MVPC Telework Consultant efforts
- Regional Transportation Management Associations' efforts
- Some interest, but no firm commitments



Takeaways

- The most successful telework incentive programs are found in cities, regions or states where there is:
 - A mandate to improve air quality
 - Extreme congestion
 - A government requirement, and
 - Active support from business leaders and business advocacy groups.



Takeaways

Factors relevant to outcome of MVPC Telework Initiative included:

- Lack of interest among the region's business leaders
- Corporate restructurings and acquisitions, plus economic downturn sharply reduced interest
- Decision-makers in key firms were not accessible
- Reluctance to disclose business practice information
- For some firms, telework was implemented long ago
- If firms required consulting services, they hired consultants directly



Recommendations

MVPC to remain a regional resource
and advocate for telework

- Maintain access to existing web-based resources
- Refer inquiries to MassRIDES, Merrimack Valley TMA and The Junction TMO as appropriate