TYSONS PARTNERSHIP SURVEY REPORT / JULY 2020

LIVING & WORKING IN A PANDEMIC

TysonsPartnership.org
In mid-July 2020, Tysons Partnership issued a public survey asking questions about living and working during a pandemic to understand how people in and around Tysons and the D.C. metro area feel about the very different times we are living through now.

Respondents were able to answer questions from their individual point of view and from that as an employer.

We received over 700 responses to the survey, with roughly half from people living or working in and around Tysons. The basic respondent demographics appear on page 6 of this report. The survey questions addressed issues such as school reopening, working from home, returning to office-based work, shopping, dining, and transit. A single “do you have anything else you’d like to add?” open-ended question gave people the opportunity to comment broadly, giving us a qualitative sense of what is at the top of people’s minds.

With the minute-by-minute of news coverage on these topics, our findings are less about blockbuster surprises than a confirmation of the many opportunities for public and private entities to think innovatively, collaborate, and consider a wide range of human emotions as they continue evolving their responses to a stubborn public health crisis.

Our intention is to set a baseline of understanding that could be tracked through another survey in roughly six months, so we hope that readers of this report will respond again in the future, helping us and our many Tysons stakeholders to listen, learn, and take positive actions for our community.

Sol Glasner
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WORKING FROM HOME

33% of respondents report that working from home is lonely. This percentage is low relative to a 2019 Cigna study that found that 61% of Americans reported feeling lonely.

When asked to rank the reasons for returning to the workplace, respondents prioritized three things that reflect a craving for social interaction:

- Working in-person with their team/colleagues (66%)
- Impromptu, face-to-face connections (66%)
- Socializing with colleagues (46%)

When asked, “Working from home is wonderful for my family life. It would be ideal to continue working from home a few days a week, even after a vaccine is available. However, I would like to go to the office to be a part of the community in the future.”

16% of individuals with children under 18 at home are 16% more likely to report issues focusing on their work.

TRANSIT

23% of respondents say that their dependence on transit is an issue for them being able to return to in-person working, but less than 10% of respondents are comfortable riding public transportation now. 50% are waiting for a vaccine to be available before they return to transit.

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I hope that we will learn good lessons from this. We don’t all need to be on the road at the same time every day to commute to an office.”

“We do not need to return to how we used to do things which was unhealthy with long commutes and lack of personal/family time.”

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50% Won’t use transit until vaccine available
23% Depend on transit to return to work
LESS THAN 10% Comfortable with transit now
33% of respondents say that working from home is lonely.
66% Working in-person with their team/colleagues
66% Impromptu, face-to-face connections
46% Socializing with colleagues

INSIGHT

Many commenters expressed appreciation for the time taken back from commuting and hope the change will be long-term, presenting a massive issue for transit and eventually, traffic.

To restore trust and ridership, WMATA and other local public transportation systems should provide transparent communications and visible, enforced safety measures or risk seeing significant investments lose their value. This time is an opportunity to test new initiatives, such as capacity tracking apps or pilot programs for dedicated bus lanes or special fare zones.
Nearly all of my work can easily be done from home, so there’s really no professional reason for me to go into the office. I am confident that my employer will implement strong health and safety controls, but if there’s no need to go, then I probably won’t for a very long time.

We need to go back to work and children need to be back to school. Staying at home in front of the screens affects emotional and social welfare of my family, our neighbors, and our community.

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Those individuals are twice as likely to feel comfortable sending their children to school than those who have support. A number of comments made the connection between childcare or school and parents’ ability to work effectively from home.

70% of respondents trust their employer to provide a safe work environment during the pandemic. However, only 25% of employers are confident they can deliver on that trust. Employers report being challenged by a lack of clear guidance on what is safe and creating a safety plan (35.7%), difficultly sourcing enough PPE (25%), or sourcing cleaning supplies (21%).

What challenges may prevent you from coming back to the office?

- 58% I am fearful of returning before there is vaccination or treatment
- 49% I think working from home is excellent and don’t see a need to return
- 23% I am dependent on public transportation
- 16% I am dependent on childcare or eldercare availability
- 35% A member of my family or I am part of a high-risk population
- 2% A member of my family has exposure to COVID-19 as part of their work

10% of respondents with children under 18 DO NOT have childcare support in or out of household.

"Teachers are not disposable. We have families and an alternative way to deliver education to our students instead of putting us, our students, and all of our families at risk."

"[You] presume that I could return to work—but I can only do that if there are schools and childcare available. They are not. Therefore I cannot return to work. If schools aren’t doing their jobs, how can parents?"

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INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE

Respondents are nearly 4 times more likely to hug a friend they haven’t seen recently only after a vaccine is available than they are today.

13% of respondents will not shake hands with a new client even after a vaccine is available.

“To me, protective measures include knowing what safety precautions others have taken. I will hug a friend that I know has been following guidelines. I will not get near a friend who goes to a bar and refuses to wear a mask.”

“Businesses that require masks but don’t enforce the rule have to enforce the rule. I see so many signs that say masks required, and then people don’t wear them or pull them down.”

“Right now, masks should be MANDATORY for every business worker and every single customer, inside or outside.”

GETTING MORE ACTIVE

When protective measures are in place to their satisfaction, respondents are ten times more likely to participate in an activity than when the government lifts restrictions alone.

“I feel that everyone in all levels of government is doing double talk about the virus and safety because of the economic implications.”

“The government lifting restrictions does not give me a lot of confidence in the safety of doing a particular activity—it just makes that activity available to me to do if I so choose.”

Essential workers are twice as likely to:

• Participate in economic activities if they can do so outdoors.
• Shop at an outdoor mall than an indoor mall, and they are more likely to do so as safety measures are instituted and followed.

INSIGHT

“Mask-wearing was the hottest topic in the open-ended comments, with the vast majority of commenters favoring mask-wearing and its enforcement by businesses, indicating that employers or businesses would be supported in requiring their use.”

INSIGHT

“Restaurants and retail will continue to benefit from expanded outdoor areas that allow them to operate at a higher capacity and maintain proper distances between diners and pedestrians. Additional measures like masks and hand sanitizer can further protect and attract guests. Heat lamps and umbrellas can extend the outdoor dining season.

Commercial property owners should leverage their outdoor spaces for tenants, share spaces with other office neighbors, and seek partnerships with restaurants and retailer to enhance the sense of community and offer conveniences.”
RESPONDENT POOL

702 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES
• 491 individuals in our response pool are working
• 470 work from home
• 452 are working full time
• 188 of respondents have children under the age of 18 at home
• 23% are essential workers

TYSONS PERSPECTIVE
• Zip codes considered Tysons and the surrounding areas: 22027, 22043, 22101, 22102, 22180, 22182
• About half of respondents—347—live or work in Tysons and the surrounding zip codes

32 BUSINESSES
• 18 within Tysons and the neighboring zip codes

COVID IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT
• 71% of individual respondents are working full time
• 3.5% of individuals had been laid-off, furloughed as a result of COVID-19

LIVING SITUATION
• 14% of respondents live alone
• 73% live with a spouse or partner
• 30% have children under 18

RACE
• 14% of respondents are Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, or other ethnicities/races
• 78% of respondents are white
• 8% preferred not to answer

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