



SUMMARY

July 15, 2021, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm Via WebEx

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. State re-opening and approaches to work discussion (Scott Dewhirst facilitated)

Members shared the approaches to opening and lessons learned. The Forum will have a follow up discussion in October.

- Everett is fully open as of July 6, following CDC masking recommendations and attestation.
- Tacoma is opening the lobby in August and phasing people in. They are still under a telework directive.
- Seattle has an MOA with the unions regarding telework. There is a plan to return to the office on September 13. Details are still in discussion.
- Cascade has a two-phase transition. The office re-opened July 6 with staff rotating in person. After Labor Day, they will shift to a hybrid model; the details are being developed.
- Jeff Johnson reported that smaller systems in Pierce County are back at the office. Non-vaccinated employees must wear masks.
- Northshore Utility District is back in the office as of July 1.
- Renton is teleworking and developing telework policies.
- Alderwood staff are returning the week of July 19. They have hybrid commission meetings and get better participation this way.

Lessons learned and implementation opportunities:

- Teleworking is effective and many employees prefer it. The option to work remotely is desirable and an expectation. Retention could be an issue without it.
- Some customers value the telework benefit to the environment through trip reductions.
- Some Forum members experienced an increase in productivity, but not everyone.
- Health and safety concerns at the office are a concern for employees.
- Need to address flexibility for field staff and perceptions of fairness and inaccessibility of office staff who are teleworking.
- Challenges with teleworking and hybrid environment – some people do not want to use the technology or forget about the people who are remote, technology set ups particularly with hybrid meetings, and overall systems are not set up for it.
- Workspace opportunities: look at what people need, collaboration spaces, shift away from desktops to laptops and docking stations, records management, and paper use, providing equipment for telework, use of small lamp in-office to alert colleagues staff are in an online meeting, and downsizing space (Seattle).

- How do larger systems handle security, open meetings, permits and developer requests?
- Resources:
 - <https://hbr.org/podcast/2021/06/hybrid-work-is-here-to-stay-now-what>
 - Tacoma PPT – attached to the email.
 - Seattle PPT – to be sent separately at end of July or early August as return to office discussions are ongoing in July.

3. **Critical Supply Chain Issues** (Alex Chen facilitated)

Working together as a region is critical as we saw with the chlorine issue and droughts.

- The Forum agreed to look at supply chain issues for chlorine, coagulant chemicals, corrosion control chemicals, polymers, and liquid oxygen.
- The Water Quality Resiliency sub-committee will reconvene and report back in November. John McClellan agreed to continue as chair. Forum members will reconfirm membership.

4. **Operations Discussion** (Alex Chen facilitated)

- As a follow up to interest in how members handle various developer situations, Martha will create a survey and we can report back in November.

5. **Regional Resiliency Funding Strategy Update** (Martha Neuman, SPU)

- The sub-committee is getting ready to send out invitations for the stakeholder interviews and is starting to work on a “leave behind” piece for elected officials to build awareness.
- Martha will send out the project list so members can update it.

6. **Forum Communications Committee Update** (Kathleen Baxter, Everett)

- The website has been updated. <https://www.watersupplyforum.org/>
- The committee will look at a second round of updates in the fall.

7. **Emergency Management Coordination** (Jennifer Bailey, Everett)

Jennifer shared a draft workshop agenda for a fall workshop. Member feedback:

- A focus on coordination for communication, access permits for staff, transportation, and bottled water would be helpful and practical.
- Setting some goals for the workshop would be helpful.
- All day may be too much for people right now.
- November might be more realistic for in-person.
- Bellevue is a convenient location. Melina will connect Jennifer to some options.

8. **Forum housekeeping, other topics, and announcements**

- The Forum should revisit dues collection in October as the balance is still high.
- Melina shared state grant news from 2021 Capital Budget: [1080-S.PL.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#). The language about grants for affordable housing system development charges is Section 1074 on pages 55-57.

9. **Other Topics**

- Workforce development would be better discussed in 2022.

Water Supply Forum

Tacoma Water Employee Survey

Return to Work

July 15, 2021

Definitions

- Hybrid Workforce = Work population made up of workers at the business location and workers at remote locations
- Primarily Telework = 60% or more of the work week from a remote work location
- Primarily in the Office = 60% or more of the work week at a Tacoma Water location

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

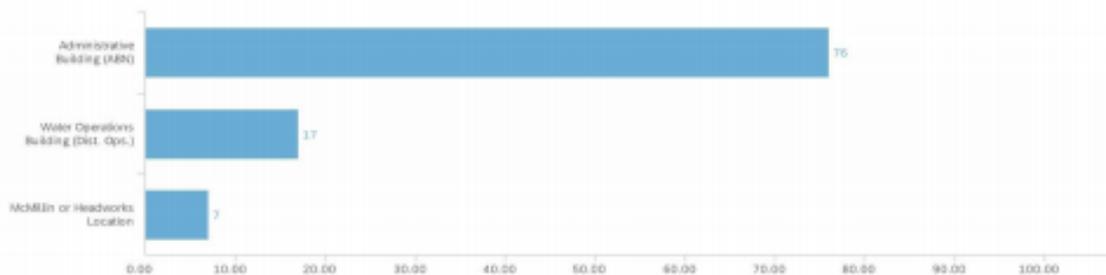
- Focus Group Discussions



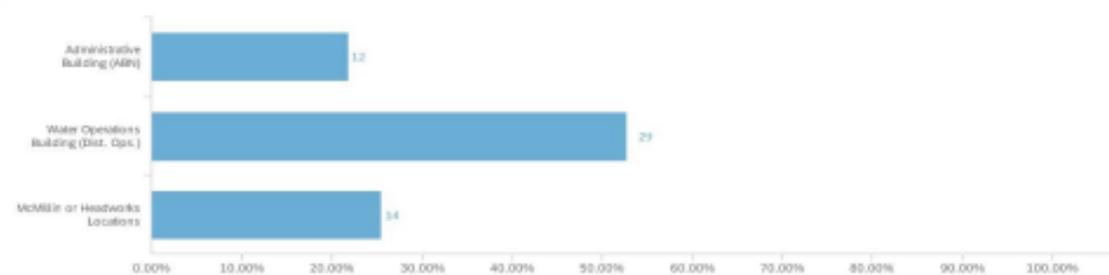
		M&C	C&Eexp	P&E	WS&T	BS
1	Core Team	Stuart Vaughan	Marcy Trent	Jessica K. & Carol Powers	Craig Downs	Hannah Johnson
2	Field Workers w/ Computer	Chris Preston, Carlos Camacho		Jeff Stone, Mike Haley	Daniel Broussard	Eric Sheck, Lisa Sievers
	Field Workers w/o Computer	Chris Costa, Mike Huber				
3	Office Staff + USS		Chris Hicks	Celine Mina, Duc Vuong		Alyssa Flores
	Planners (collaborative)	Jennifer Routh	Charelle Walls	Casey Jarbeaux		Jenn Laughlin
4	Technicians w/AutoCADD + USR + GIS		Rochelle Gandour-Rood	Melinda York, Emily Woodward		Mary Hasty
	Admin Support	Jennifer Wilson	Anna Coy, Clare Litsky	Melissa Anderson	Shelly Hals	Alyssa Boettger
5	Field Supervisors	Lance Matney, Bill Thompson	Salina Fleischer	Jason Scott		
	Operations Mngrs	Jim Goodman, Gary Gates	Dan Martin	Geff Yotter	Scott Hallenberg	
6	Office Supervisors	Bill Reynolds	Shelly Shaffer	Jesse Angel, Michael Washington		Andy Simpson
	ADM and DM	Seth Doull	Jennifer Airey	Shannon Wall	Greg Volkhardt	Mike Petrie

- Staff Questionnaires

100 Office Staff respondents



55 Field Staff respondents

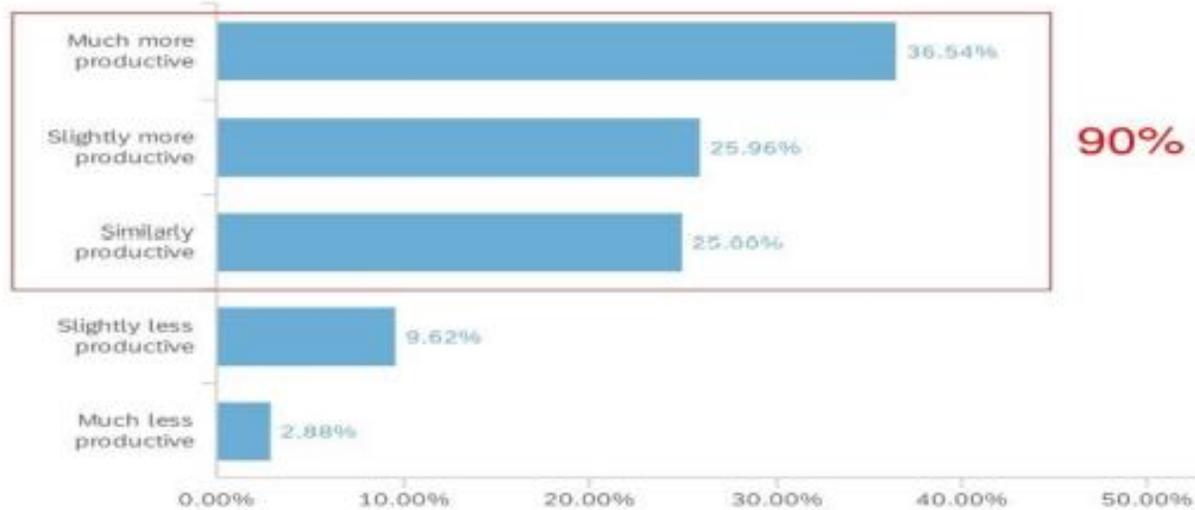


EFFECTIVENESS OF TELEWORKING

Teleworker survey

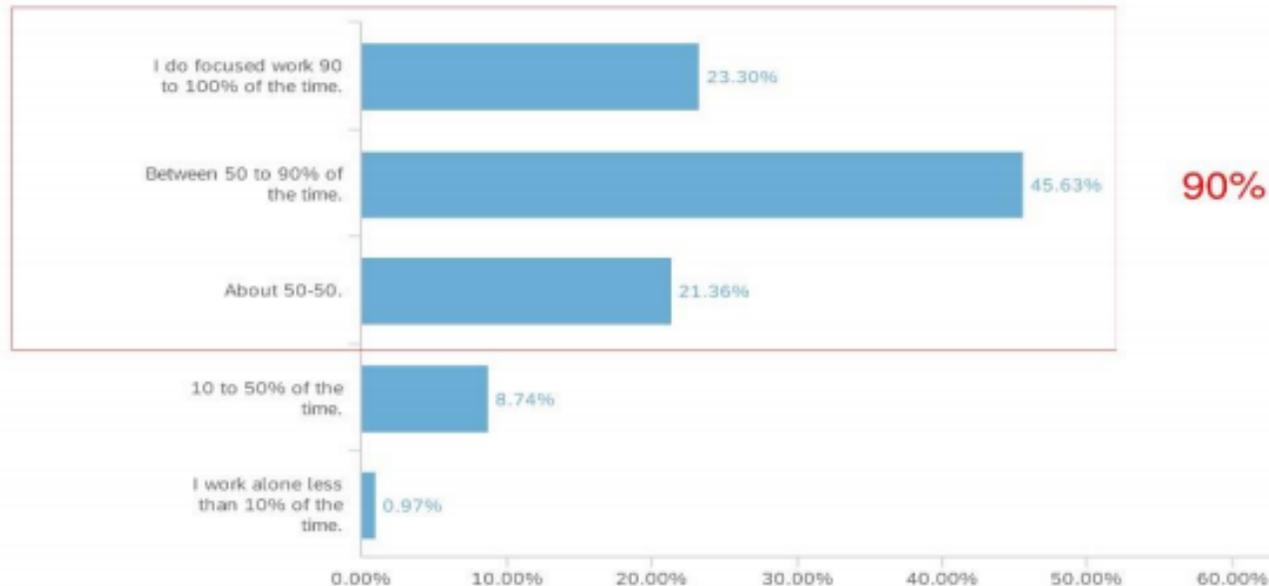
90% are much more, slightly more, or similarly productive working from home

Q1 - While working from home, I feel I am:

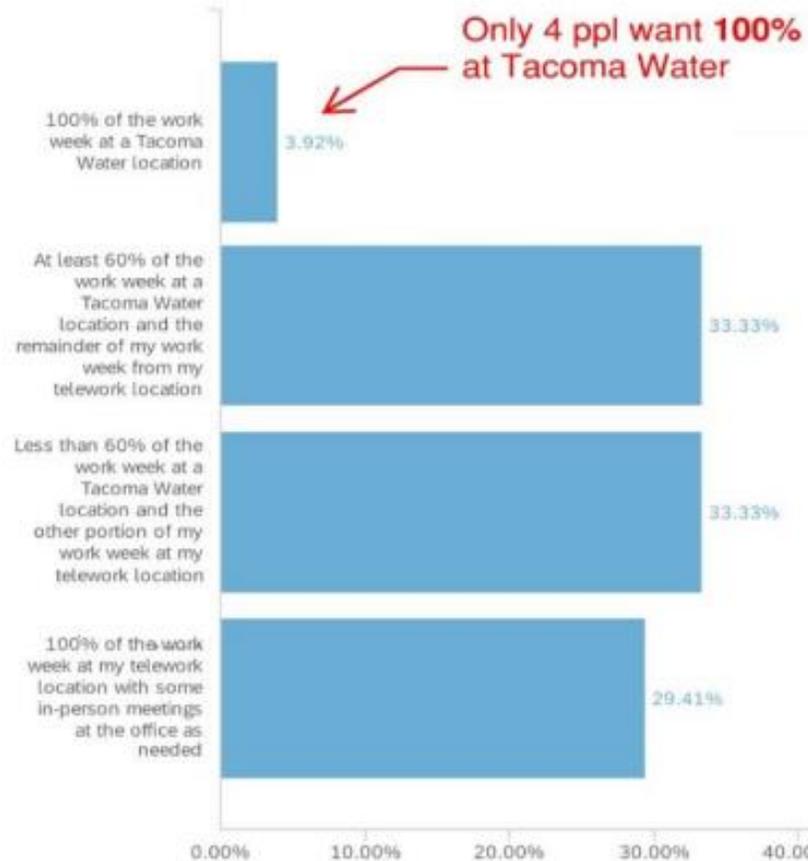


Teleworker survey

90% spend 50% or more of their time doing focused work alone at their desk



Teleworker survey

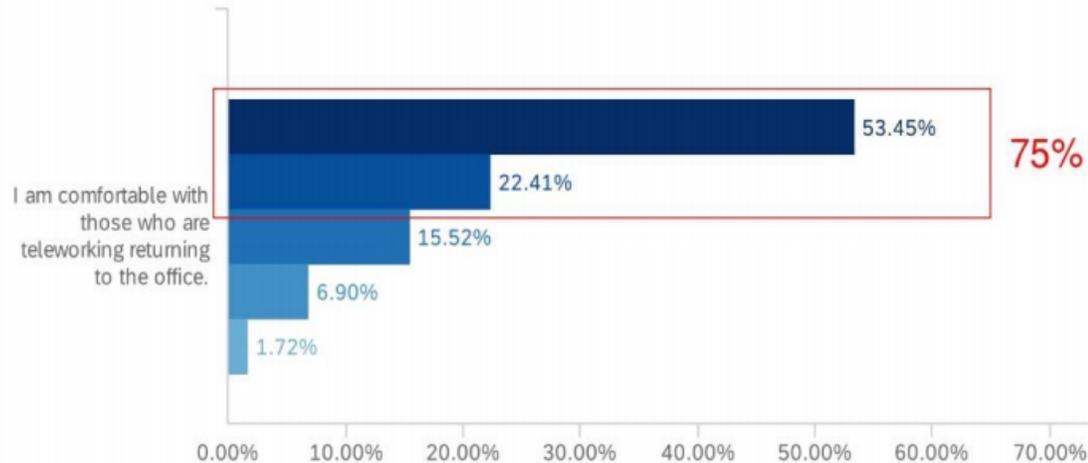


- *1/3 require dedicated workspace*
- *1/3 require shared workspace for 1-2 days/week*
- *1/3 only need collaboration space in office*

Non-Teleworker survey

75% of field staff want teleworkers to return to the office
Comments indicate communication is the primary concern

 **Delays, extended timeframes, unanswered calls, too much waiting**



- *“Less emails/phone calls that go unanswered for long periods of time when they return.”*
- *“As an organization I feel we are more productive when people are at the office.”*
- *“Less email back and forth and a quick cubicle visit will eliminate a lot of confusion.”*
- *“More lively. Improved collaboration. Less time in virtual meetings. Quicker addressing of questions.”*