

POST-COVID CORPORATE REAL ESTATE

Across industries and regions, COVID-19 is transforming corporate real estate.

For the many companies that experienced a successful transition to remote work, the pandemic has challenged traditional thinking about the quantity, type, and location of real estate investments.

The percentage of remote workers in the United States has doubled since the beginning of the crisis, and surveys show that more than half of companies plan to extend remote work policies indefinitely.^{1,2} Beyond the large shift to remote work, the pandemic has shifted attitudes, expectations, and norms around the employee experience and the role of the office. All of these factors have led many companies to reevaluate real estate decisions and take steps to mitigate future risks.



PRIORITIZING FLEXIBILITY

To safeguard against future financial losses, companies may prioritize flexible lease contracts, adaptable layouts, and locations easily accessed by car or bike.



ASSESSING SPACE NEEDS

The rise of remote work, combined with higher operational costs due to COVID-19 precautions, may incentivize companies to shrink their office footprints.



EMBRACING THE HUB & SPOKE MODEL

Companies may find that employees are better served by a larger number of small, decentralized outposts rather than a single, consolidated office location.



ADAPTING OFFICE BENCHMARKS

Even when the threat of COVID-19 has passed, traditional space planning guidelines are likely to shift as a result of new office models and ways of working.

The recent redesign of Perkins Eastman's Pittsburgh, PA office provided the opportunity to apply our workplace research and theories in real time. With an expanded remote work policy, the office features a mix of traditional and non-traditional workpoints along with meeting and collaboration space. The flexible plan realizes an overall 17% space reduction, and achieves \$1.5M in savings over a ten year lease.

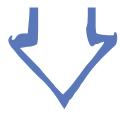


PRE-COVID OFFICE PLAN

- 14,230 USF
- **85** Dedicated Workpoints
- **61** Meeting Seats
- 43 Resource Seats



17% Space Reduction = \$1.5M Savings Over 10 Year Lease





POST-COVID OFFICE PLAN

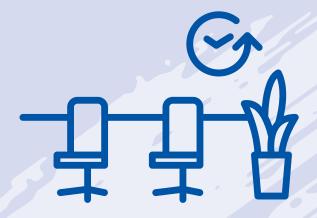
- **11,895** USF
- **3** Dedicated Workpoints
- 106 Free Address Workpoints
- 43 Resource Seats
- **64** Meeting Seats

PRE-COVID

OFFICE SF USAGE PER EMPLOYEE



Source: Moody's Analytics REIS. COVID-19 Will Force the Office Sector to Evolve (Further), 2020.



THE NATIONAL OFFICE VACANCY RATE HELD STEADY AT 16.8% IN Q4 2019

COMPARED TO 16.4% IN 2017 AND 16.7% IN 2018

Source: Moody's Analytics REIS. Office Preliminary Trends, Q4 2019.



3.6% OF THE U.S. WORKFORCE WORKED FROM HOME HALF-TIME OR MORE

Source: Global Workplace Analytics. COVID-19 Work From Home Forecast, 2020.

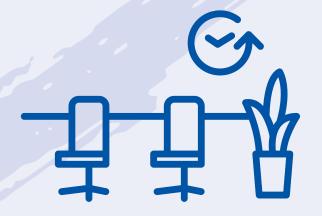
POST-COVID

AMERICANS INCREASINGLY WORKING REMOTELY



The % of U.S. workers who work remotely has doubled since the beginning of the crisis.

Source: Gallup. U.S. Workers Discovering Affinity for Remote Work. Gallup Panel, 2020.



THE NATIONAL OFFICE VACANCY RATE COULD EXCEED 20% BY 2021

Source: Moody's Analytics REIS. Moody's Analytics CRE Forecasts, 2020.



25-30% OF THE U.S. WORKFORCE MAY BE WORKING FROM HOME MULTIPLE DAYS PER WEEK

Source: Global Workplace Analytics. COVID-19 Work From Home Forecast, 2020.

PRIORITIZING FLEXIBILITY

It's not just employees who want more flexibility; in the face of uncertainty, flexibility is a key consideration for companies looking to mitigate risk and disruption.

As offices around the United States proceed with reopening plans, there is widespread reluctance to engage in long-term lease contracts. According to a recent survey by a global commercial real estate firm, the average office lease term fell 15% in the first five months of 2020.³ Cautious investors may drive a shift towards smaller and more agile real estate portfolios, which enable companies to respond to future unforeseeable disruptions.

The desire for flexibility extends to the type of office spaces that companies are looking for, with increasing interest in flexible layouts that can be adapted to a range of configurations. In addition, companies may prioritize locations that are more easily accessed by car or bicycle, reducing employees' reliance on public transit.

As companies navigate the shift from fully remote work to in-office and hybrid arrangements, flexible workspace providers may find a post-pandemic foothold. Different from traditional coworking models, "flex space" providers offer low-commitment, fully-furnished and serviced spaces for corporate clients. Flexible workspaces—for collaboration, training, client presentations, and events—are available for rent on a short-term, membership-free basis. Such arrangements may enable companies to establish temporary, geographically dispersed physical locations with greater accessibility to employees and clients.

EVEN BEFORE COVID-19, FLEXIBILITY WAS A TOP PRIORITY FOR MANY WORKERS



OF GLOBAL BUSINESSES SAY THAT THEY USE FLEXIBLE **WORKSPACE POLICIES TO** ATTRACT & RETAIN TOP TALENT



OF WORKERS SAY THEY WOULD TURN DOWN A JOB THAT DIDN'T OFFER FLEXIBLE WORKING.



OF WORKERS SAY THAT HAVING A CHOICE OF WORK LOCATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN **WORKING FOR A PRESTIGIOUS** COMPANY.

Source: International Workplace Group. Global Workspace Survey, January 2019.

of cfos worry about a second wave of covid-19 infections affecting the return to work.

Source: PwC. U.S. CFO Pulse Survey, June 15, 2020.

of cfos plan to make remote work a permanent option.

Source: PwC. U.S. CFO Pulse Survey, June 15, 2020.



TO MEET POST-COVID DEMAND, WEWORK IS OFFERING READY-MADE "LIGHTWEIGHT" OFFICES FOR CORPORATE **USE.** FULLY FURNISHED AND MEMBERSHIP-FREE, THEY ARE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO EMPLOYEES AND MINIMIZE THEIR **RELIANCE ON PUBLIC TRANSIT.**

ASSESSING SPACE NEEDS

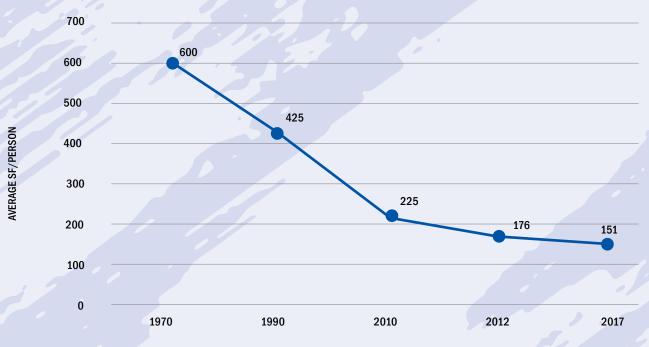
In addition to the demand for increased flexibility, COVID-19 has shaken up the way we think about office sizes.

The unexpected success of remote work has led many companies to question the need for every worker to have a permanent assigned workstation; employees who work remotely are happier and more productive, and save valuable time commuting to and from the office.⁴ In the six months since COVID-19 was declared a national pandemic in the United States, companies have invested heavily in technologies to improve the remote work experience. Now, they are better positioned to maintain a remote and blended workforce.

The shift towards smaller office footprints was in motion even before COVID-19; with the popularity of the higher-density open plan, the average square footage per employee decreased from 600 sf in 1970 to 151 sf in 2017.⁵ The increasing adoption of remote work, combined with higher operational costs due to increased sanitation, provides extra incentive to downsize—but the potential to reduce square footage may be tempered by the need to accommodate physical distancing. However, the potential to reduce square footage may be tempered by the short-term need to accommodate physical distancing within the office.

PRE-COVID

AVERAGE SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE SPACE PER EMPLOYEE



Source: USA Today, June 2012: SPUR Jan 2012; LA Times, Dec 2010, CoreNet Global via Cushman & Wakefield.

POST-COVID

80% OF COMPANIES ACCELERATED DIGITAL EXPANSION PLANS DURING THE LOCKDOWN.

69% PLANNED TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF THEIR OFFICE SPACE IN THE SHORT TERM.

Source: Reuters. CEOs speed up digital push and downsize offices, KPMG survey shows. August 24, 2020.

HOW DO YOU ANTICIPATE YOUR TOTAL OFFICE SPACE NEEDS WILL BE DIFFERENT THREE YEARS FROM NOW?

Reduce by more that 25%

3%

Reduce between 16 and 25%

12%

Reduce between 5 and 15%

15%

Stay about the same

19%

Increase between 5 and 15%

26%

Increase between 16 to 25%

16%

Increase more than 25%

9%

Source: PwC US Remote Work Survey, June 25, 2020. Base: 113 US executives.

EMBRACING THE HUB & SPOKE MODEL

In addition to reassessing their space needs, companies are taking a critical look at location.

COVID-19 has created profound shifts in real estate values, inflating costs in the suburbs while devastating urban markets. In a recent survey of the Site Selectors Guild, 64% of participants said they were more likely to expand to suburban areas, compared to 10% for large urban areas.⁶ Density—the very quality of urban centers that once made them so appealing—is now a liability. And reliance on public transit presents an additional drawback. As companies embrace remote work at a larger scale, they may find that employees are better served by a larger number of small, decentralized outposts rather than a single, consolidated office location.

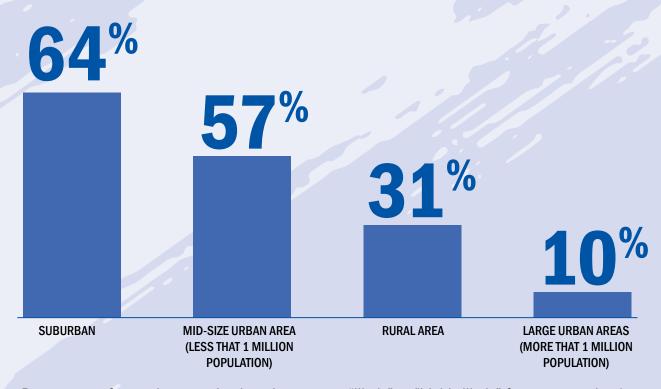
With growing interest in the "hub and spoke" model, major companies including Deloitte and KPMG are reportedly exploring this option.⁷ As a strategy for corporate real estate asset management, this approach can save costs and mitigate risks, as well as provide convenience and flexibility for employees.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS VERSUS SUBURBAN MARKETS

Effective rents in central business districts (CBDs) are projected to decrease nearly twice as much as suburban markets.

Geography	2019 Effective Rents PSF	2020 Effective Rent Change (Forecast)	2009 Recession Effective Rent Change (Actual)
Central Business Districts	\$40.53	-14.00%	-12.50%
Suburban Markets	\$23.29	-8.90%	-6.70%

Source: Moody's Analytics REIS. COVID-19 Will Force the Office Sector to Evolve (Further), 2020.



Percentage of consultants rating location type as "likely" or "highly likely" for an expansion/relocation project in the 12 months.

Source: Site Selector's Guild. Based on survey of Site Selector's Guild members, week of June 29, 2020.

ADAPTING OFFICE **BENCHMARKS**

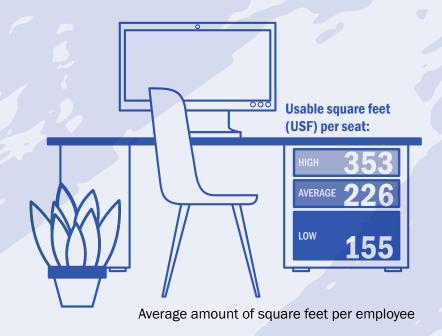
As employees begin to re-enter the workplace, the typical office layout will change.

With the threat of COVID-19 still looming, organizations are working within mandated density limits and other constraints to provide physical separation and distance between employees. This includes changes not only for workstation seating areas, but also circulation paths, reception areas, collaboration spaces, and lounges. According to research by a global commercial real estate company, physical distancing requirements as a result of COVID-19 will increase the average square foot per employee by as much as 50%.8

Even when the threat of COVID-19 has diminished, standard office planning guidelines are likely to change. Expanded remote and flexible work policies may drive a shift towards hoteling and hot-desking and away from assigned desks for every employee. However, while the ratio of traditional to non-traditional workpoints diminishes, there may be a larger allocation for communal spaces and special amenities.

PRE-COVID INDUSTRY BENCHMARKS 2017-2020

Benchmarking metrics were calculated from 42 Perkins Eastman projects designed between 2017 and 2020



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Usable Square Feet

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Close Office vs



		DIE Square F USF) Per Sea			orkstation	Open Collaboration		
INDUSTRY	HIGH	AVERAGE	LOW	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	
All Industry Average	353	226	155	24%	76%	72%	28%	
Financial	221	149	89	12%	88%	65%	35%	
Law	524	391	244	75%	25%	76%	24%	
Non-Profit	636	242	128	27%	73%	69%	31%	
Science & Technology	239	187	150	13%	87%		33%	
Technology	349	188	127	19%	81%		28%	
Consumer Product	183	153	124	7%	93%	78%	22%	
Government	318	271	225	17%	83%		23%	

INDUSTRY IMPACT

Finance

The adaptability of processes and services to virtual platforms eased the shift to remote work for many financial services firms. COVID-19 has accelerated a digital transformation that was already in motion, paving the way for an industry-wide shift. A PwC survey of financial services companies found a dramatic change in attitudes towards remote work in the finance industry; where only 29% of companies surveyed had the majority of their employees working remotely at least one day per week before COVID-19, 69% said that they are planning for the majority of their employees to work remotely at least one day per week going forward.⁹ There is an opportunity for considerable cost savings through the expansion of remote and flexible work policies within the financial services sector.

Law

Similar to finance, the transition to remote work has been largely successful within the legal industry. COVID-19 has brought an increased openness to new ways of working; firms that offer flexible working arrangements have an advantage in recruiting and save money on overhead costs. Video and teleconferencing have proven to be successful platforms for legal services, including mediation, depositions, and litigation. With few drawbacks to remote work, law firms have found significant cost savings in subleasing portions of their existing space or downsizing to smaller office spaces. However, it was noted in our roundtable discussions that mentoring and training—essential to the professional development of new lawyers are difficult without face-to-face interactions. Law firms may see a departure from the traditional office model, with fewer assigned desks and enclosed offices, but there will be an ongoing need for spaces to support in-person collaboration, learning, and mentorship.



BEFORE COVID

29% OF FS COMPANIES HAD AT LEAST 60% OF THEIR WORKFORCE WORKING FROM HOME AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK.





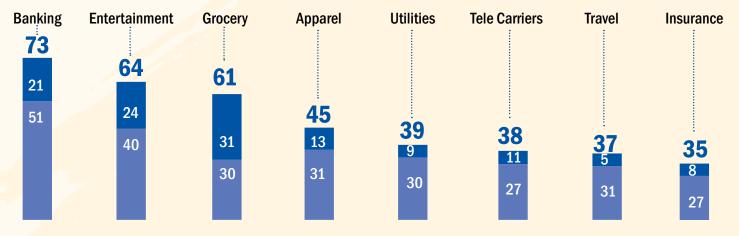
Source: PwC U.S. Remote Work Survey, June 25, 2020. FS employer base of 50.



"IN A SURVEY OF 222 LAW FIRM LEADERS, MOSTLY FROM SMALL OR MID-SIZED FIRMS, 72% SAID THEY EXPECT THEY WILL NEED LESS OFFICE SPACE AND 19% SAID EXPECTED THAT DROP TO BE BY MORE THAN 25%."

Source: Thompson Reuters Law Firm Leaders Survey, June 5, 2020.

DIGITAL ADOPTION, BY INDUSTRY, % OF DIGITAL ACCESS



INDUSTRY IMPACT

Non-profit

The non-profit sector has been affected on multiple fronts by COVID-19. Smaller offices with limited internal IT support struggled with the initial transition to remote work. Sudden restrictions on public gatherings shut down traditional fundraising efforts, such as galas and auctions, many of which take place in the spring. Under financial pressure, many non-profits pivoted to online events and other creative solutions for fundraising. Now, after months of working remotely, non-profits may choose to reassess their physical space needs. Smaller businesses may find cost savings in shared meeting and office spaces with short-term rental options, fully furnished and supplied with basic amenities.

Life Sciences

Pharmaceutical and medical technology companies have been uniquely challenged by COVID-19. Under extraordinary pressure to produce medical equipment and supplies, efforts to ramp up production has been hampered by social distancing mandates and supply chain issues. According to McKinsey surveys, companies across all R&D related groups estimate productivity has fallen between 25 and 75% as a result of remote working. 10 While the need for office space may decrease as administrative tasks go remote, laboratory space will remain in high demand. There is increasing interest in office space that has the potential to be converted into laboratories, with features including high ceilings (15+ feet), ample space for equipment, foundations that can withstand vibration, and appropriate zoning and building code clearance.11

IN A SURVEY OF MID-SIZED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS BETWEEN MAY 27 AND JUNE 9, 2020:





Source: Independent Sector. Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Large and Mid-sized Nonprofits, May 27-June 9, 2020. Includes responses from 110 mid-size nonprofit organizations.



A GLOBAL COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE FIRM PROJECTS A 16% INCREASE IN PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING THROUGH 2025, INDICATING AN INCREASED DEMAND FOR LABORATORY SPACE.

Source: Bloomberg. Here Comes the Life Sciences Land Rush. CityLab, September 15, 2020.



COMPANIES REPORT THAT R&D LABS ARE OPERATING AT BELOW 50% OF NORMAL CAPACITY

Source: Bloomberg. Here Comes the Life Sciences Land Rush. CityLab, September 15, 2020.

INDUSTRY IMPACT

Government

As the worst public health crisis in more than 100 years, COVID-19 has placed significant pressure on the government sector. In the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, agencies mounted an emergency response to a public health crisis that was unprecedented in scale. Months later, it is evident that COVID-19 will permanently transform many government services and programs. The accelerated adoption of digital technologies may reduce the need for office space, or change how existing real estate assets are used and where they are located. As cited in an article on the World Bank blog, changes stemming from COVID-19 "will complicate longstanding public asset challenges, such as the need to address inefficient, poorly maintained, and expensive public buildings," but potentially result in "re-imagined and more effective public portfolios."12

Technology

COVID-19 is driving significant changes in the technology sector, accelerating the adoption of remote work. Facebook and Twitter announced plans to permanently extend remote work policies for existing employees and to recruit new remote workers. The largescale shift to remote work has significant real estate implications; as noted in a recent New York Times article, expensive tech hubs like Silicon Valley and New York could be greatly impacted if other companies follow Facebook's lead. Likewise, there is speculation that COVID-19 may accelerate plans for larger companies to install outposts in suburban and less densely populated locations.

PUBLIC SECTOR ASSET TYPES THAT MAY EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES:







Public Facilities



Public Spaces

Source: World Bank Group. Will COVID-19 change how we manage public sector real estate? Sustainable Cities, 2020.

PROJECTED 2020 CHANGES: EFFECTIVE RENTS AND EMPLOYMENT

MSA	2020 Effective Rent Change (Forecast)	2020 Employment Change (Forecast)
New York	-20.3%	-3.01%
San Francisco	-17.0%	-3.80%
San Jose	-16.2%	-3.52%
Orange County	-14.0%	-3.24%
Boston	-12.6%	-2.81%

Source: Moody's Analytics REIS. COVID-19 Will Force the Office Sector to Evolve (Further), 2020.

WORKPLACE RE-IMAGINED: THEORY IN PRACTICE

As the global pandemic drags on, Perkins Eastman is working to understand how architecture can respond to the disruption and change resulting from COVID-19. We are engaged in research to stay abreast of trends and best practices, working across practice areas to develop insights that will enable us to better serve our clients.

Our research on workplace has been focused on transformation: Is the office still relevant? How will its role change in the aftermath of COVID-19? The answers to these questions have far-reaching implications for corporate real estate, influencing decisions and strategies in asset portfolio management for years to come.

In the past six months, we have seen a collective shift in attitudes about work, the role of technology, and expectations around health, safety and well-being in the workplace. The workforce that returns to the office will be different than the one that left it behind; the office must respond to new ways of working, new expectations and norms, and evolving health and safety guidelines. These changes will not only shape the future of work but the physical form of the office itself.

THE WORKFORCE HAS EVOLVED

THE WORKPLACE MUST BECOME



Mobile & Flexible

A Communal Destination



Digitally Habituated

A Blended Environment



Focused on Well-Being

A Healthy Harbor

THE WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE IS...

communal destination for a mobile & flexible workforce.



Wide variety of flexible & collaborative spaces



Convergent space typologies



Fewer desks, more meeting areas

embedded with digital tools to engage employees and enhance their experience.



Optimal balance of analog and digital collaboration tools



Embedded technology to support work, collaboration and employee health & safety



Flexible infrastructure to enable innovation and change

a safe, supportive environment that benefits the whole employee.



Anti-microbial and healthy materials



Healthy air circulation, filtration and humidity levels



Biophilic design



Design strategies to encourage movement and connection

WORKPLACE **RE-IMAGINED:** THEORY IN **PRACTICE**

With the government order to close all non-essential offices in March, Perkins Eastman's Pittsburgh staff joined millions of workers in the mass transition to telecommuting. With the lease contract of our 14,230 usf office ending in April 2021, it was clear that decisions about the new space should be carefully considered. If employees continued to work remotely in some capacity, how much space would they need? And, more importantly, what would that space look like?

The first step was to gather feedback from our employees. From a business standpoint, working from home was a successful experiment; employees had remained productive and engaged. But did they want to come back to the office? Our firm-wide employee survey found that most employees wanted to continue working remotely at least one day a week, but very few wanted to work remotely all of the time. And, unlike our employees in Manhattan, many employees in Pittsburgh have sufficient space to accommodate working from home.



THE FUTURE OF THE WORKPLACE











Collaborating | Mentoring | Learning | Socializing | Refuge

	Current FTEs	% of Headcount	Avg days/wk in office	Weighted FTEs	Weighted %	Trad. WP	Non-Trad. WP	Resource/ Collaboration	Trad. WP	Non-Trad. WP	Resource/ Collaboration
Marketing / Communication	4	7%	3.5	3	7%	70%	20%	10%	4.9%	1.4%	0.7%
Admin/Operations	2	3%	5	2	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	5.0%	0.0%
Non-Technical	5	8%	2.2	2	6%	20%	70%	10%	1.1%	3.9%	0.6%
IT	1	2%	5	1	3%	0%	100%	0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
Architect ID/Production/Specs	26	44%	3.5	18	46%	75%	5%	20%	34.4%	2.3%	9.2%
Architect ID/Manager	10	17%	3.5	7	18%	50%	30%	20%	8.8%	5.3%	3.5%
Leadership	11	19%	3.0	7	16%	10%	70%	20%	1.6%	11.5%	3.3%

A Perkins Eastman-generated assessment of worker personas in our Pittsburgh, PA office found that permanent desks are not needed for every employee.



65% OF EMPLOYEES DESIRE TO WFH ONE OR MORE DAYS A WEEK EVEN WHEN IT IS SAFE TO RETURN TO THE OFFICE.

Source: Perkins Eastman 2020 Remote Work Survey

AVERAGE RENT

Location	Average Monthly Rent	Average Apartment Size
Manhattan, NY	\$4,208	703 sq. ft
Pittsburgh, PA	\$1,258	812 sq. ft

Source: Rent Cafe.





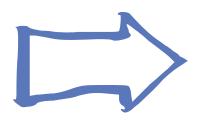
PRE-COVID OFFICE PLAN

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- 43 Resource Seats (Library, Visualization Lab, Scrum Areas)





POST-COVID OFFICE PLAN



17% Space Reduction

\$1.5M Savings Over 10 Year Lease

11,895 USF

- 3 Dedicated Traditional Workpoints (6' desks)
- 41 Free Address Traditional Workpoints (6' desks)
- 65 Free Address Non-traditional Workpoints (IT Work Bench & Touchdown)
- 43 Resource Seats (Library, Maker Lab & Scrum Areas)
- **64 Meeting Seats (Phone, Focus & Meeting Rooms)**

1.79 seating options per employee*

^{*}In the case that all employees are at the office on the same day, the new floor plan provides 1.79 seating options per employee (152 seating options for 85 FTEs).

WORKPLACE **RE-IMAGINED:** THEORY IN **PRACTICE**

The re-design of Perkins Eastman's Pittsburgh office space applies concepts for the post-COVID workplace. It presented an opportunity to reassess our space needs and programmatic requirements, ultimately leading to a design that better supported our employees. At the same time, the new plan realizes an overall space reduction and achieves significant cost savings.

The new office is conceived as a destination for an agile workforce, focusing on communal spaces for working and socializing. Movable furnishings and a flexible technology infrastructure allow for fluid reconfiguration. Special considerations to protect the health and safety of employees, including a designated mudroom and handwashing station at the office entry, are integrated into the design. Permanent, assigned desks are replaced by a combination of traditional and non-traditional workpoints. As a flexible model, the new office is designed to adapt easily to changing needs and priorities over time.

Proposed Test Fit Plans: Future-proofing the Office Environment



The floor plans above show a range of possible configurations and uses to which the office may adapt as needs and priorities change over time.





THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

The Design Strategy Team would like to thank all of our roundtable participants, industry leaders who generously lent their time and experience to help us gather key insights and data regarding changes in the workplace across a variety of disciplines. To our PEople, who participated in one of our most in-depth, and urgent surveys; your continued work at Perkins Eastman is invaluable.















































































ENDNOTES

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