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Greater Washington Partnership Releases Refreshed Employer Reopening Snapshot, Transit Tracker, and Back-to-Work Barometer Aimed at Helping Employers and Capital Region Residents Make Safe Reopening Decision

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Washington, D.C. — Today, the Greater Washington Partnership released its second Capital COVID-19 Snapshot. The Snapshot synthesizes survey results from employers across the Capital Region about their reopening and resiliency plans. The survey was conducted in collaboration with Ernst & Young LLP (EY) and other regional partners to increase regional information and data sharing so employers can make more informed decisions about reopening and to help public agencies better understand when employees are expected to return to their offices and worksites.

In addition to the Snapshot, the Partnership released an updated Transit Tracker encompassing all transit agencies from Baltimore to Richmond, as well as a new Back-to-Work Barometer in cooperation with Kastle Systems. The Transit Tracker delivers ridership and capacity data provided by the region's public transportation agencies to help employers and employees make informed decisions about returning to worksites. The Back-to-Work Barometer uses Kastle Systems data on average building occupancy levels to help decision-makers understand the pace of the return to worksites since March 2020.

“Since the release of our first Capital COVID-19 Snapshot, our region has continued to struggle along with the rest of the country to get a clear handle on what to expect through 2021. We're all heartened by the phenomenal work on vaccines and encouraged by the next administration's commitments at the federal level to speed response in all ways, but it's clear that it will take much of the year to get to herd immunity. The Partnership is committed to supporting employers across the Capital





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Region as they navigate this ongoing and unprecedented crisis,” said **JB Holston, CEO of the Greater Washington Partnership**. “This refreshed regional analysis, as well as the data tools reporting the status of some of our critical transportation and real estate infrastructure, will help employers make informed decisions that ensure a safe, inclusive, and timely return to work for all their employees. We also encourage everyone to access our clearinghouse of information about reopening research and best practices.”

“EY maintains a large presence across the Capital Region, and our firm is committed to ensuring the safety of our professionals first and foremost. Cross-jurisdiction and sector information sharing remains critical to an effective path towards reopening and recovery,” said **Kevin Virostek, Greater Washington Managing Partner, Ernst & Young LLP**. “We are proud to continue supporting the Greater Washington Partnership’s efforts to collect and disseminate essential data and information to aid decision-makers in their reopening and resiliency plans.”

“Americans have been living through a period of intense uncertainty since March 2020 — struggling with an unprecedented pandemic and the economic distress it has caused. To provide some clarity on the issues facing American businesses, Kastle Systems has been studying keycard, fob and KastlePresence mobile app access data and analyzing the anonymized data to identify trends in how Americans are returning to the office,” said **Mark Ein, Chairman of Kastle Systems**. “With the collaboration of the Greater Washington Partnership, we’re pleased to be able to share these important insights for businesses in the Capital Region as they develop and implement new strategies to safely and effectively bring their employees back to worksites.”

The Capital COVID-19 Snapshot: Planning for a Return to Worksites reiterates the importance of increased regional information and data sharing, so employers, both large and small, public and private, can make more informed decisions about reopening and public agencies can better understand when employees are expected to return to their worksites. The report highlights several key areas that all employers and regional leaders can consider as they are developing plans to reopen:





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Return to Worksites:

- Vaccines, schools, and employee sentiment are driving reopening plans and decisions to bring employees back. Six out of ten employers believe having a vaccine readily available is key to reopening safely.
- Since August, employers have delayed the phased approach to reopening their worksites by about three months. On average, respondents estimated that three-quarters of their workforce will be on-site by fall 2021.
- Disrupted workplace interactions are becoming a challenge for Capital Region employers. Close to half of the respondents rated employee mental health, loss of collaboration, and organizational culture loss as top areas of concern. These factors were more concerning to employers than productivity, revenue, and loss of customers.

Future Plans:

- While 58% of employers reported that their workforce is teleworking full time during the pandemic, only 1% expect most of their workforce to telework full time after the pandemic. Half of respondents expect most of their workforce to telework some of the time (one to two days per week) after the pandemic.
- Most employers (75%) do not plan to make changes to their real estate or office footprint in the next 12 months. However, larger employers (1,000+) were more likely to say that they plan to reduce their worksites or workspaces with more permanent telework and flexible work arrangements.

Employee Safety and Resilience:

- Most employers indicate that rapid testing and improved ventilation systems are the top solutions that can make workplaces safe in the face of the pandemic. Over half (56%) believe that rapid testing that delivers immediate results at the point of care is the top solution to keep worksites safe.
- While employers remain concerned about transit agencies' ability to ensure passengers wear masks, provide sanitary vehicles, and limit crowding, the level of confidence in transit agencies' ability to provide safe transportation has grown since August.





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The Capital COVID-19 Snapshot: Planning for the Return to Worksites was conducted between November 11-December 11, 2020, with 172 unique employers participating from the Washington, Baltimore, and Richmond metro areas representing 139,000 employees. Working closely with EY, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Tysons Partnership, Federal City Council, Greater Washington Board of Trade, Arlington Chamber of Commerce, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, Prince Georges Chamber of Commerce, Connected DMV, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, DC Sustainable Transportation, and leading business organizations throughout the Capital Region, this effort intends to enhance coordination and understanding of the reopening strategies and perceptions across stakeholders and jurisdictional boundaries.

The Partnership conducted the first Capital COVID-19 Survey between August 10-28, 2020, and published those results on September 14, 2020. This version of the Snapshot can be found [here](#).

The Partnership will update the Transit Tracker and Back-to-Work Barometer as data is available so that all public and private decision-makers and residents have access to regular, timely, and actionable information. To explore the Snapshot, review the key findings, and explore the Transit Tracker and Back-to-Work Barometer tools, please visit <https://www.greaterwashingtonpartnership.com/capital-covid-snapshot/>.

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About the Greater Washington Partnership

The Greater Washington Partnership is a first-of-its-kind civic alliance of CEOs in the region, drawing from the leading employers and entrepreneurs committed to making the Capital Region — from Baltimore to Richmond — one of the world's best places to live, work, and build a business. Working in collaboration with leaders across our communities, the Partnership connects and leverages the region's extraordinary assets





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to advance inclusive, actionable solutions that strengthen the Capital Region as a leading global region and center for commerce and innovation.



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