

For Immediate Release:

Telework Part of the New Normal for Many Employers

May 27, 2020 (Denver, CO) - Over the past few months, COVID-19 has affected nearly every aspect of our daily routines, including how and where we work. In an effort to adhere to statewide orders and to slow down the spread of the virus, many Colorado employers swiftly implemented temporary telework policies and practices. Working from home immediately became the new normal for most employees across the state.

Now, as Governor Polis and other leaders begin to support employers and businesses in reopening, a group focused on reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality is asking employers to continue encouraging people to work remotely. Way to Go, a partnership between the Denver Regional Council of Governments and a group of traffic-busting organizations, has launched a new campaign called Telework Tomorrow, designed to make telework the new normal.

Currently, the Denver region's vehicles contribute one-third of the ozone precursors emissions and 20% of the greenhouse gas emissions. A significant change in teleworking could have dramatic benefits for our region's traffic congestion. Similar to other metro regions throughout the country and around the world, the Denver area's traffic congestion decreased dramatically with the appearance of COVID-19 and the associated stay-at-home orders. DRCOG's data shows that rush hour has been a breeze on busy roadways like I-25 and I-76. (See image below.) And while the data is only preliminary, our air quality has improved dramatically as well.

"Everyone was thrown into this unique experiment," Allison Redmon, Manager of the Way to Go program, said. "Our Commuter Consultants have always promoted telework and the Denver region already enjoyed a fairly high percent of telework participation. When *everyone* was asked to work from home, we decided to investigate and learn about their experiences. The good news is that there's a tremendous appetite for continuing this behavior."

During the pandemic, Way to Go implemented separate surveys of commuters and employers in order to better understand the benefits and challenges companies and employees are experiencing with telework, and to determine future plans. The employer survey was conducted in partnership with Colorado Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). The survey results point to a strong desire to continue these practices even as we move towards a return to our old routines.

Most employees have quickly adapted to working from home, using platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and the Google Suite to conduct business without skipping a beat.

- 83% of employees were satisfied or very satisfied with their telework experience.
- 76% reported they were either just as productive or more productive working remotely.
- Similar positive results were reported for quality of work (76% the same or better) and meeting deadlines (90% the same or better).
- 46% of employees stated that they would prefer to work remotely all the time versus commuting to work.

- 63% of employees surveyed claimed they are likely to telework after stay-at-home restrictions are lifted.

Employer respondents were largely senior human resource professionals. Overall, employer experiences and attitudes are very positive. Not only have many organizations been able to continue working effectively, but many have seen added benefits.

- 81% of HR executives reported that senior managers in their organizations have more favorable attitudes towards teleworking today than before the COVID-19 outbreak, and 73% HR executives reported that their supervisory managers have more favorable attitudes.
- 29% of respondents mentioned that telework had enabled them to continue business operations and service to their customers.
- 15% of the employers even described how telework enabled them to discover new possibilities in how they work, and new ways of doing things.
- The number of employers who permit telework is expected to rise from 78% before COVID-19, to 86% in the future.

Yet while most employers indicate expanded telework will be likely, most organizations are still determining the specifics of a return-to-work plan...and that's where the Way to Go team and their Telework Tomorrow tools can help.

The goal of Telework Tomorrow is to support employers as they prepare to transition back to a new normal way of working, with more people staying off the roads. Through Telework Tomorrow, Way to Go's Commuter Consultants are working one-on-one with companies in the Denver region to create and implement formalized and customized telework policies. To learn more about Telework Tomorrow and to download the toolkit, visit waytogo.org/teleworktomorrow.

Contact

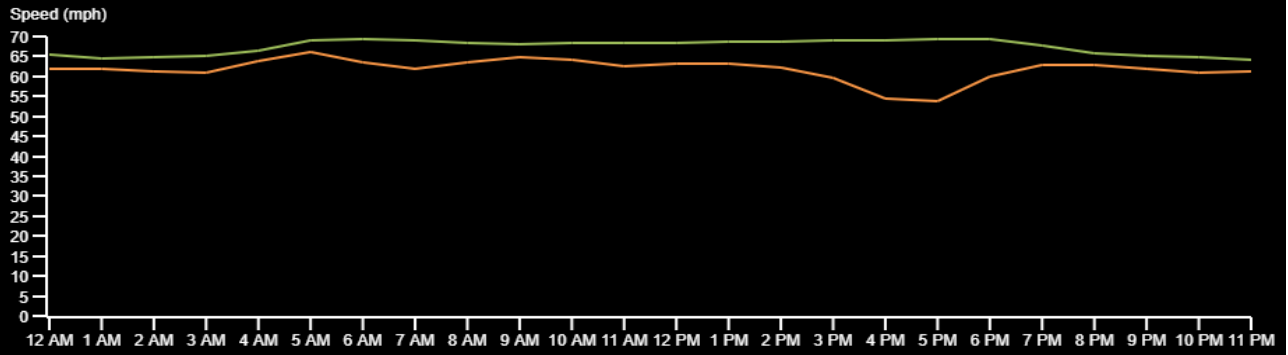
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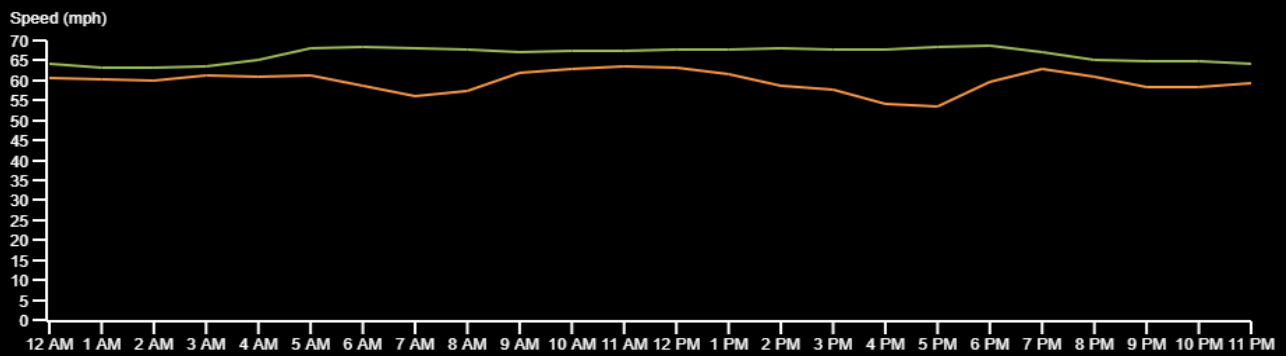
509.413.8410

Speed for Interstates in 10 counties in CO (674 trncls), PENA BLVD, CO-470, CO-E-470, US-6 between I-70 and Kalamath St, NORTHWEST PKWY, CO-58, US-36 between Baseline Rd and I-25/US-87, US-285 between CR-120/S Parmalee Gulch Rd and CO-95/Sheridan Blvd, E-470, and NORTHWEST PKY
Averaged per hour for March 25, 2019 through March 29, 2019 and March 23, 2020 through March 27, 2020

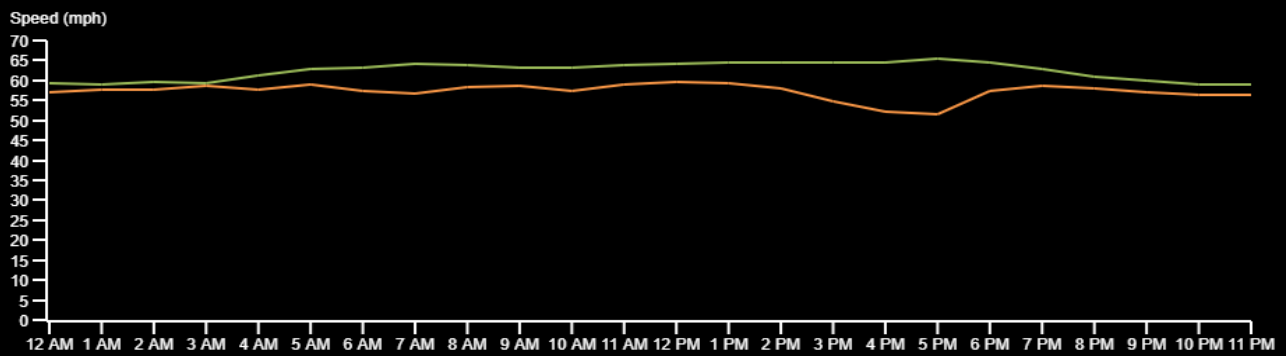
Northbound



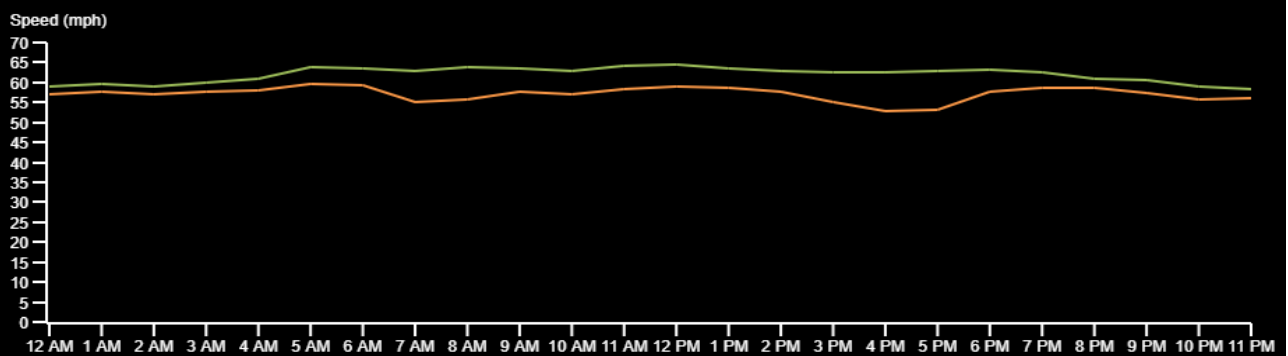
Southbound



Eastbound



Westbound



A comparison in highway speeds in the Denver region from March 2019 and March 2020. The green line indicates no drop-in speed at typical rush hour times, showing the significant decrease in traffic congestion.