The
SWAGguide

[Strategic Workplace Advisory Guide]

Bringing together all of the **workplace modernization** pieces for project teams, facilities & accommodations groups, organizational leaders and anyone else looking for answers.
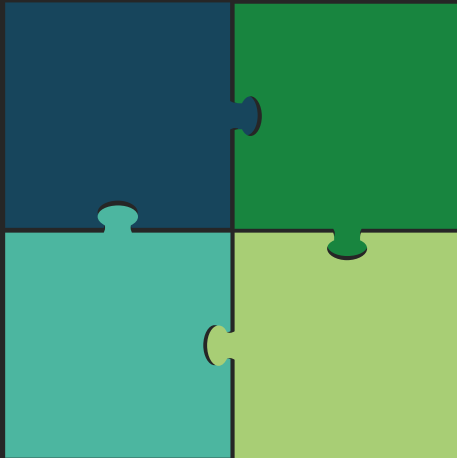
Presented by the Strategic Workplace Advisory Group (SWAG)
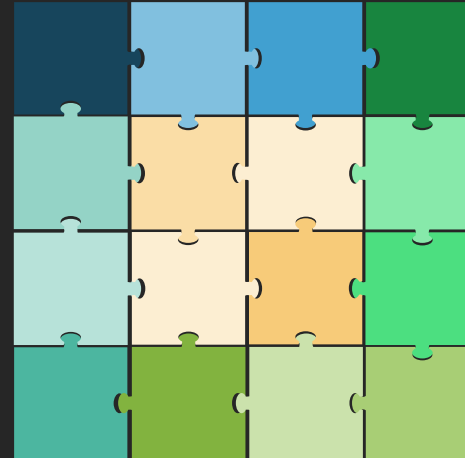
DRAFT

This guide has two parts:
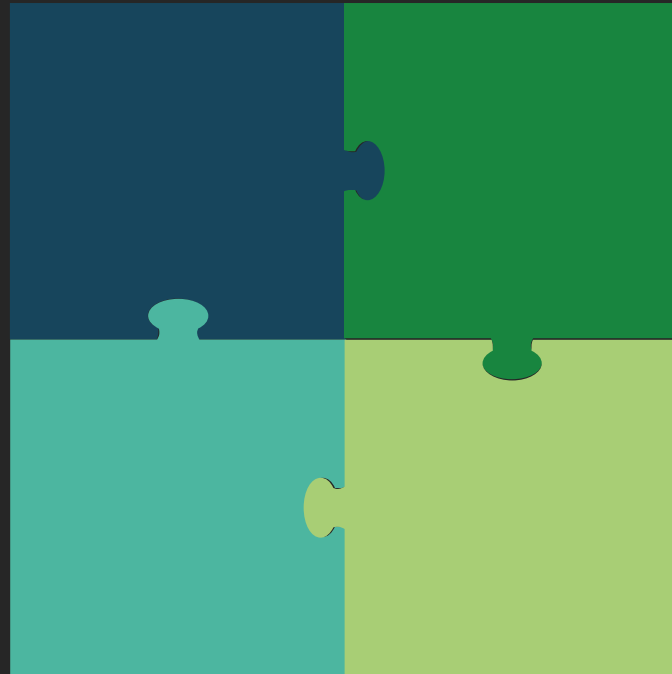
Part 1:
Level-setting

A click-through narrative that sets the foundation for part 2.

Part 2:
Practical solutions

Best practices and recommendations for workplace modernization projects.
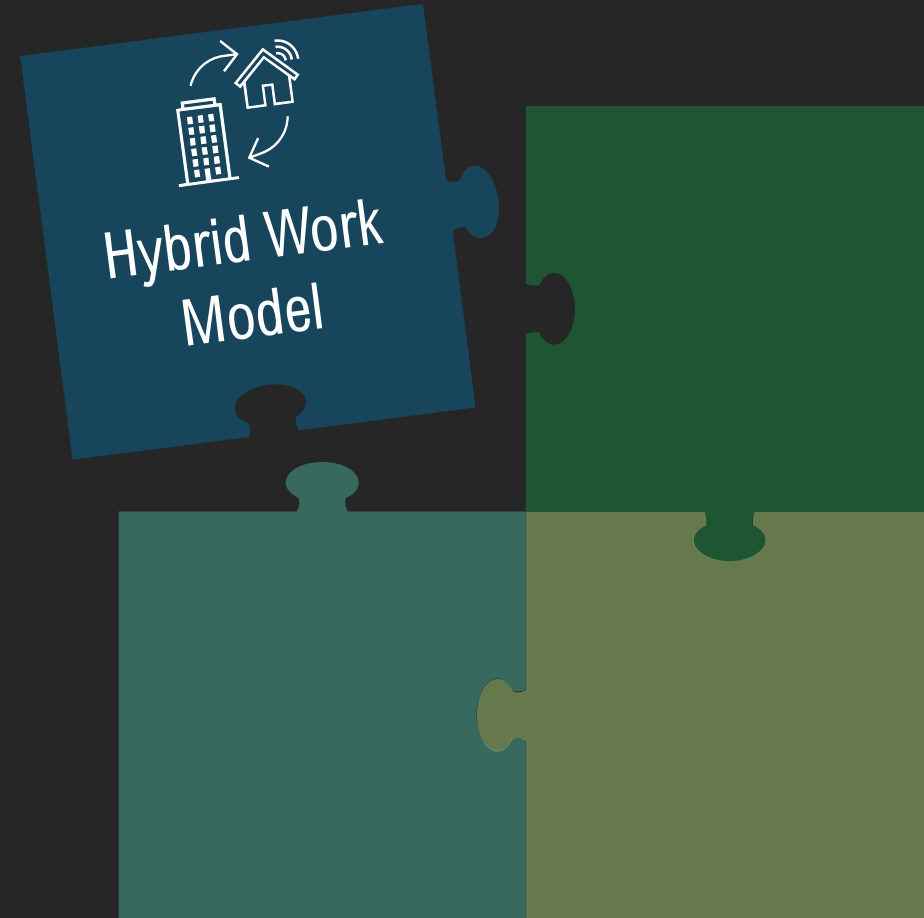
Part 1:
Level-setting

SWAG
GUIDE

Workplace modernization is about enabling a modern *way* of working. There are four crucial pieces required to make sense of this puzzle.

Hybrid Work Model

Portfolio Strategy

Physical Workspace

Workplace Utilization

Defining a clear hybrid work model is vital to manage the impacts it will have on the space and the people using it.

Hybrid Work Model

Why is this important ❓

Although a hybrid work model is **defined by the organization**, it will have a significant impact on both the space and the people using it. A well defined hybrid work model will help answer these questions:

SPACE

How much space is now required?

Which spaces are best suited?

Which space should be prioritized for modernization?

Can we / should we still use traditional office space?

Can we / should we release space?

PEOPLE

How will employees be impacted?

How is their work now different from before?

What should be communicated, to whom, and when?

What changes will need to be managed?
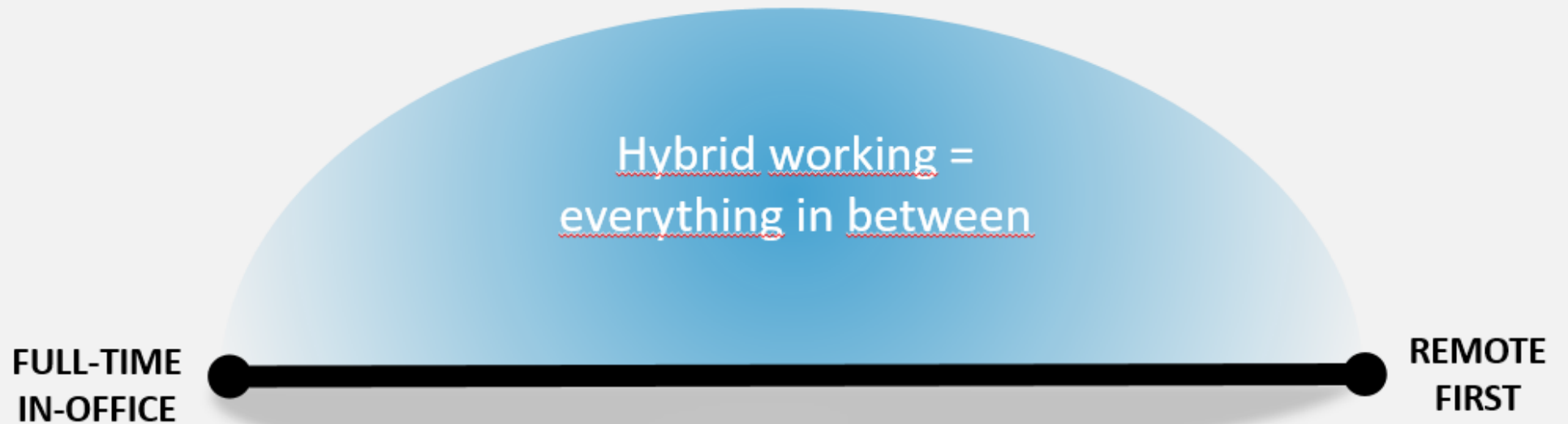
How will these changes be managed?

What is hybrid working ❓

Hybrid working is a flexible work model that provides a spectrum of work locations and arrangements, typically a balance between the office and remote work locations.

Hybrid working =
everything in between

FULL-TIME
IN-OFFICE   REMOTE
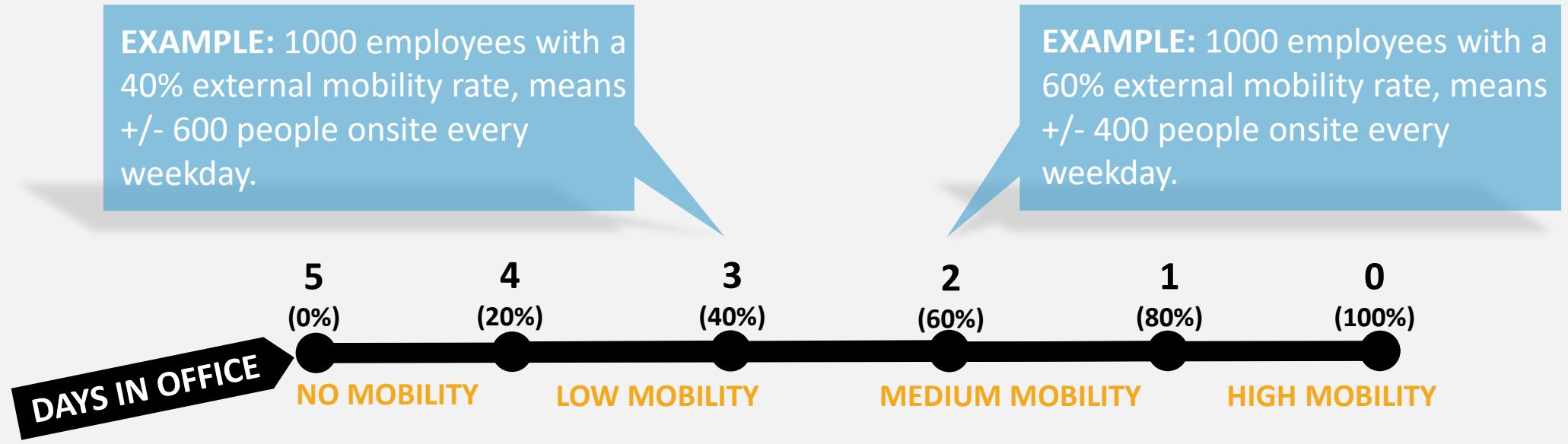   FIRST

Most people have experienced a version of this over the last few years. However, a hybrid work model is <u>more than just working from different locations</u> on any given day…

Hybrid Work Model

What defines a hybrid work model ?

There are two major factors that define a hybrid work model. The first being the **level of external mobility.** This refers to the movement between someone's primary workplace and any alternate work location. Simply put, this means days in office vs days working remotely.

EXAMPLE: 1000 employees with a 40% external mobility rate, means +/- 600 people onsite every weekday.

EXAMPLE: 1000 employees with a 60% external mobility rate, means +/- 400 people onsite every weekday.

5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
(0%)	(20%)	(40%)	(60%)	(80%)	(100%)

DAYS IN OFFICE

NO MOBILITY   **LOW MOBILITY**   **MEDIUM MOBILITY**   **HIGH MOBILITY**

External mobility will determine the percentage of employees that need to be accommodated in office space on any given day.

Not factored into these numbers is the percentage of regular daily vacancy (leave, field work, vacation, etc.)
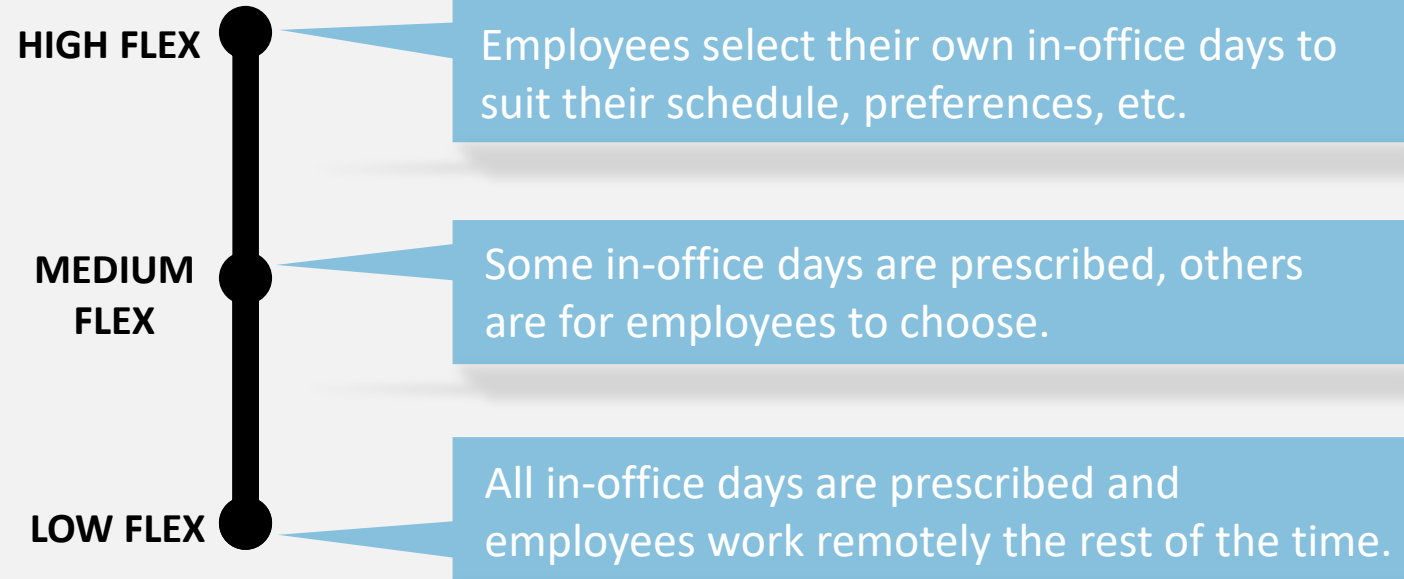
What defines a hybrid work model ?

The second factor to be considered is the **level of flexibility**. This refers to the choice an employee may or may not have to self-select the specific days on which they work from the office.

HIGH FLEX

Employees select their own in-office days to suit their schedule, preferences, etc.

MEDIUM FLEX

Some in-office days are prescribed, others are for employees to choose.

LOW FLEX

All in-office days are prescribed and employees work remotely the rest of the time.

Although predictability can be helpful for managing the space requirements & occupancy levels, flexibility empowers employees to plan their own meaningful interactions which then contributes to a more positive workplace experience.

While certain in-office days of the week may be more popular at first, availability of workpoints, mixed with personal preferences for quiet vs chaos in the office, will likely help level out utilization patterns over time
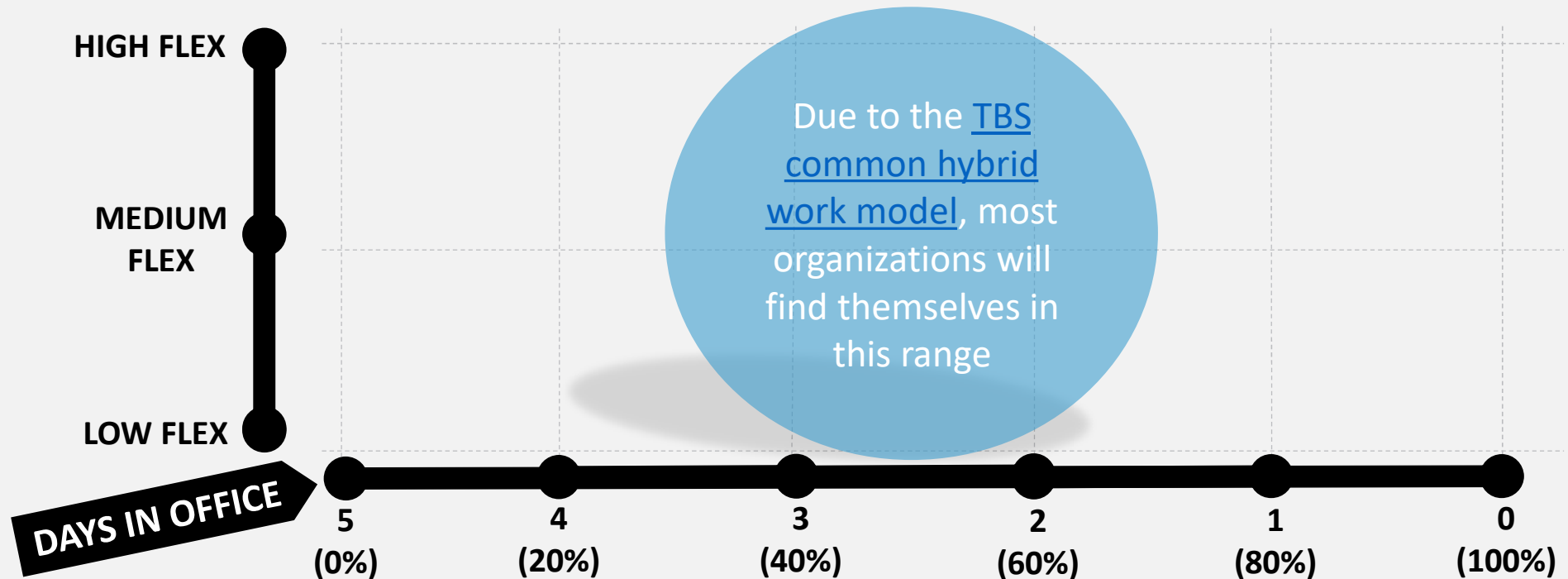
What defines a hybrid work model ❓

When both of these factors are combined, a hybrid work model can be defined. A well defined model can then be translated into more accurate space requirements.

HIGH FLEX

MEDIUM FLEX

LOW FLEX

Due to the TBS common hybrid work model, most organizations will find themselves in this range

DAYS IN OFFICE

5	4	3	2	1	0
(0%)	(20%)	(40%)	(60%)	(80%)	(100%)

A Client Accommodations Service Advisor (CASA) can help determine space requirements relative to any hybrid work model.

How does hybrid working benefit people ❓

Hybrid Work for Employees
Employees want flexibility and autonomy over the way they work. A hybrid work model can provide flexibility in the *"where" and "when"* of work, to support individuals' and teams' ability to make in-office time purposeful. To further enhance the experience, modern workplaces that are purposely designed to support hybrid working can provide flexibility for *"how"* someone chooses to use the workplace.

Hybrid Work for Leaders
Leaders know that promoting modern and flexible ways of working contribute to a positive workplace experience. More than ever, a modern workplace culture (and virtual culture!) is critical for attracting new talent, employee retention, and empowering a high performing workforce. Modern workplaces, purposely designed to support flexible and mobile ways of working, can greatly contribute to achieving this positive workplace culture.

Hybrid work is still in its early phases of evolution, but most agree that it is here to stay!

Portfolio
Strategy

No matter what hybrid model
is defined by an organization, it
will have a major impact on
the overall portfolio strategy.

Portfolio Strategy

Why is this important ❓

In response to the government-wide shift from 'office-first' to a hybrid work model, the federal workplace portfolio must be re-aligned to ensure responsible and effecient use of space. It must support modern and flexible ways of working, as well as anticipated shifts in common practices, such as de-centralized hiring.
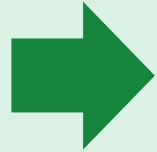
➡️ A [PSPC Client Accommodation Service Advisor (CASA) and/or Service Delivery Manager](#) can guide organizations in finding answers to questions like these...

> How much space is now needed for a hybrid workforce?

> Which existing spaces should be reopened, retained or released?

> How can the GCcoworking program fit into a portfolio strategy?

> How can organizational growth be absorbed within the current portfolio?

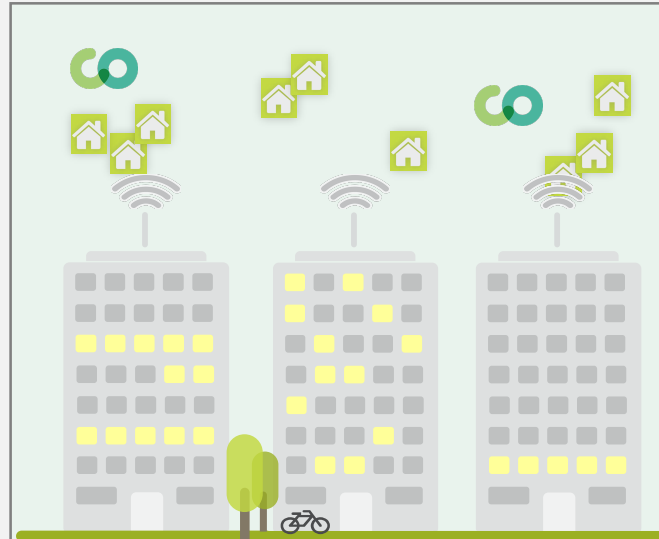# What is the future of federal office space ❓

Where we **were**...
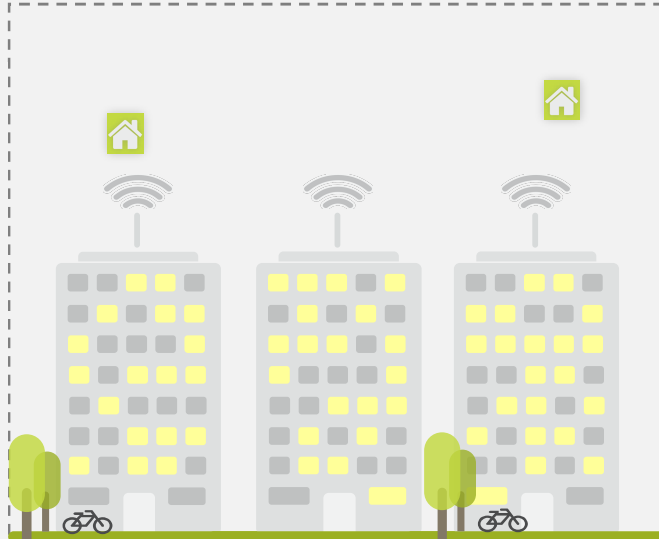
Everything is assigned
- Floors to departments
- Workstations to employees
- Static/individualistic workplaces

Little to no variety or flexibility for employees

GCcoworking not yet available

Where we **are**...

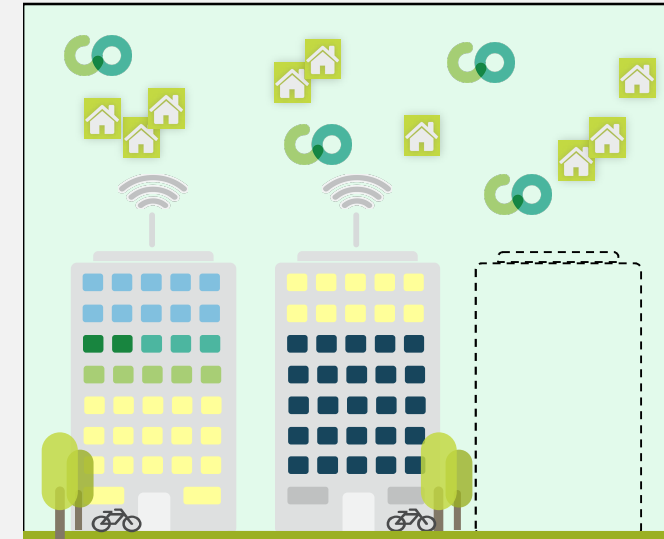Return to Office
- Departments going unassigned
- Many consolidating/releasing space
- Consideration for some interdepartmental space

Some variety and flexibility

GCcoworking sites available nationally

Where we're **going**...

Office Long Term Plan
- Continue modernizing workplaces
- Right-sizing departmental space
- More interdepartmental space

More variety and flexibility for employees

Expansion of GCcoworking

Right-sizing = reducing = greening!

What are the benefits of variety and flexibility in the portfolio ❓

With hybrid working, mobile technology and digitized work being the norm, employees can gain access to various work locations to support their work activities, schedules, needs and personal preferences. Along with a culture of trust and purposeful collaboration, this helps to enable a healthy, modern and productive workforce.

What is GCcoworking ❓

GCcoworking is a network of modern workplaces located across the country where employees from over 40 departments can work as an alternative to their homes or primary workplace. GCcoworking locations enable interdepartmental networking which can lead to new partnerships and new ideas.

GCcoworking

Supports GCworkplace Vision

Supports mobility & flexibility

Supports work-life balance

Provides access to tech enabled space

Supports collaboration & co-creation

Reduces commute times & GHG emissions

What is meant by workplace modernization ❓

Many departments are choosing to adopt an unassigned workplace strategy to ensure an efficient and responsible use of space for the new reality of hybrid working. While this strategy can work in any office space*, a workplace purposely designed to be unassigned will result in a better overall employee experience. Thankfully, GCworkplace was developed to be flexible in design and utilization.
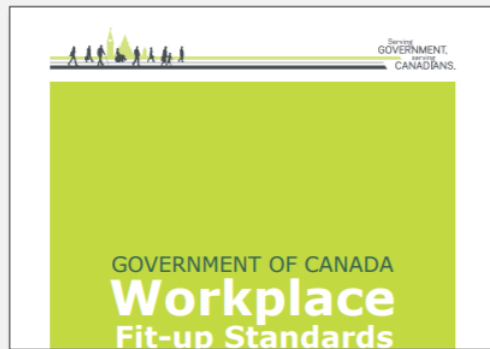
All Fit-Up Policies & Funding Accountabilities
As well as design standards for:
- Ministerial and Deputy Head
- Quasi-judicial
- Call/Contact Centre

► GoC Workplace Fit-Up Standards

Design standard for all GENERAL PURPOSE OFFICE SPACE
in effect since April 2019

► GCworkplace Design Guide

Non-standard / non-recurring space
not typically found in all offices
- Labs
- Warehouses
- Clinics

► SPS Guideline ► SPS Assessment Tool

Special Purpose Space
(SPS)

* Strategies for using traditional workplaces in an unassigned way will be covered later in this guide...

A modern portfolio strategy is further enabled by modern workplaces. GCworkplace, the current design standard for all general purpose office space, is the ideal workplace design concept for a hybrid workforce.
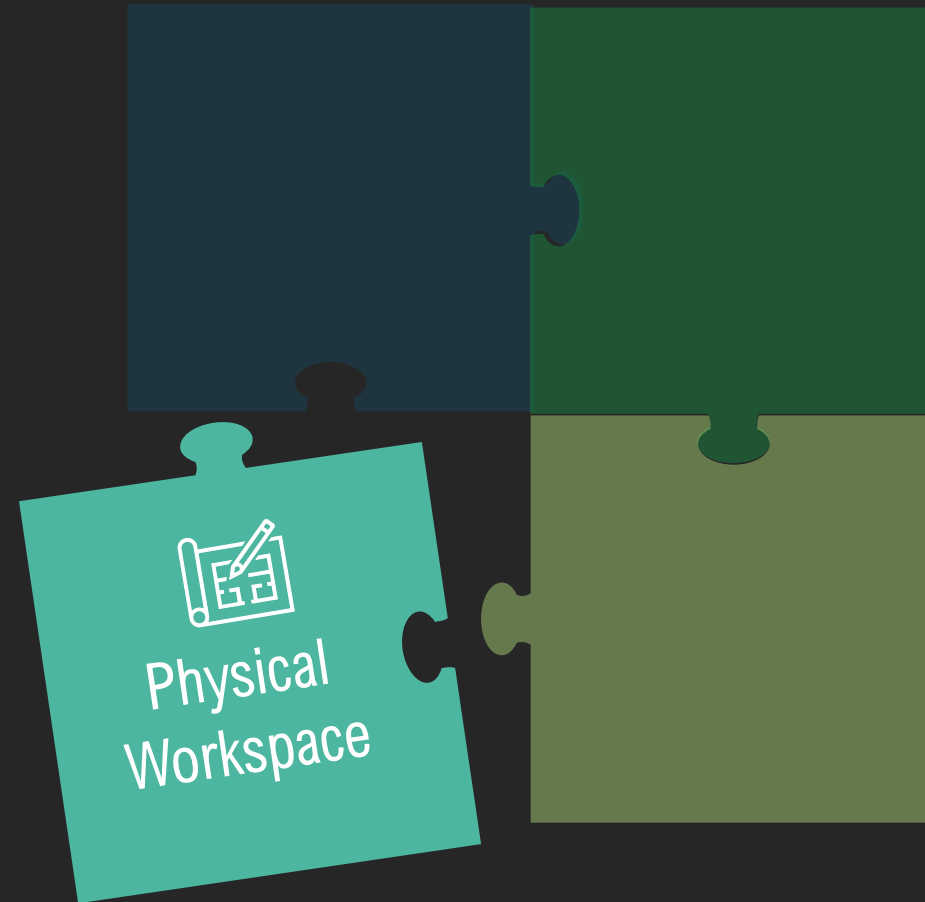
Physical Workspace

Why is this important ❓

Although modernizing the WAY we work can be done in almost any office space, the user experience is better in a workplace that is purposely designed to support this flexible way of working*.

GCworkplace 〉 is the Government of Canada's General Purpose Office space design standard. It is a modern, efficient and inclusive workplace design strategy which supports a flexible way of working.

is designed to enable

Activity-Based Working (ABW) 〉 is a flexible way of working that offers all employees equal access to a variety of workpoints, and the autonomy to choose the optimal settings for their tasks and functions.

➜ [Short ABW Video](#)

*Check out these [survey results](#) from the inaugural phase of GCworkplace

What's different from traditional office design ❓

Physical Workspace

GCworkplace is based on lessons learned from previous initiatives, like Workplace 2.0, and research on global workplace trends. Key differences include the introduction of **acoustical zones, variety of workpoints**, and **centralized personal storage**, which all together create a **workplace ecosystem***.
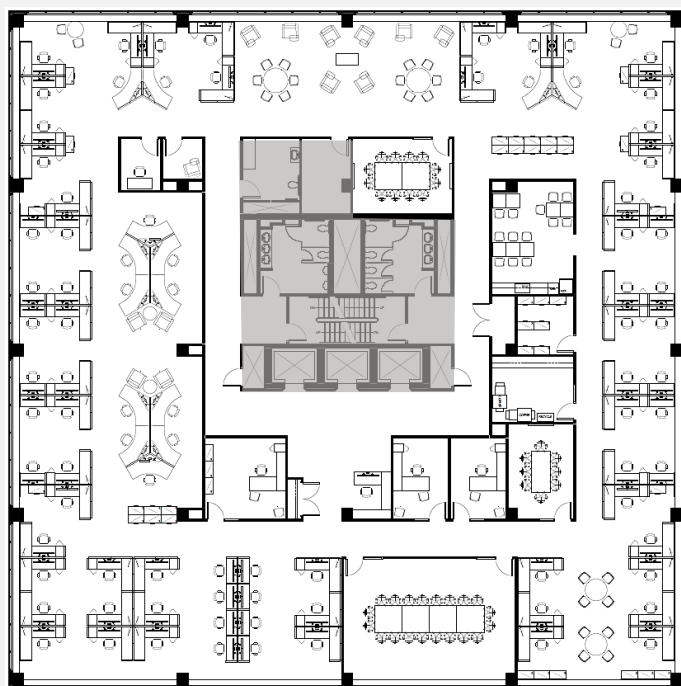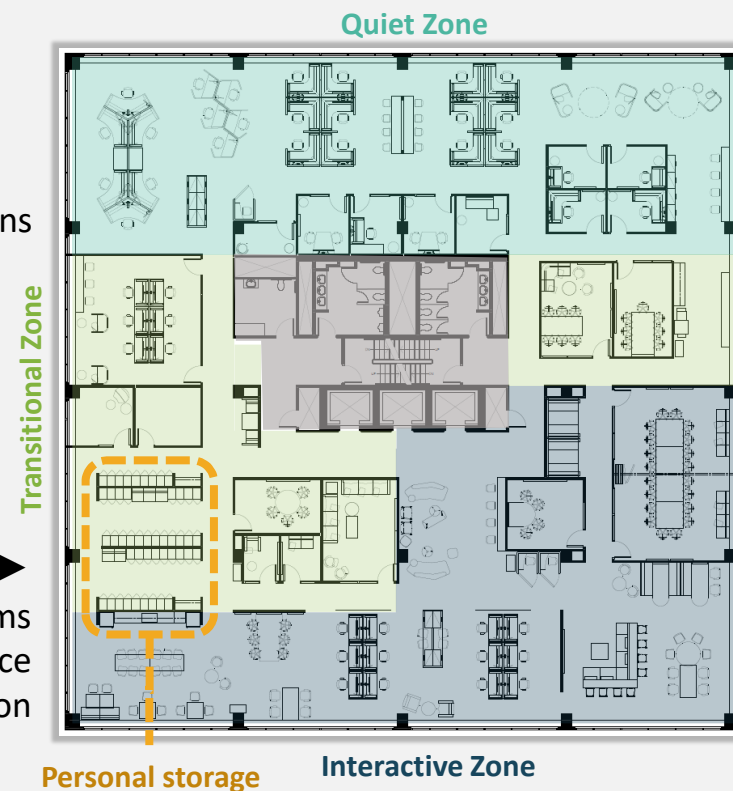
◄ **Traditional Workspace**
- x Individualistic
- x One size 'misfits' all
- x Limited acoustical considerations

GCworkplace ►
- ✓ Supports individuals & teams
- ✓ Provides variety and choice
- ✓ Acoustical & visual separation

Quiet Zone

Transitional Zone

Personal storage   **Interactive Zone**

*Check out the GCworkplace Design Guide for more information

What is meant by a workplace ecosystem ❓

The ecosystem is a network of interconnected work settings, such as **workpoints**, **zones** and **other amenities**, that serve its population and their various activities. The ecosystem must remain intact for it to work effectively and provide flexibility and choice to users.

Acoustical Zones
Quiet
Transitional
Interactive

Workplace Ecosystem

Workpoint variety
Enclosed individual
Enclosed collaborative
Open individual
Open collaborative

Support Spaces
Wellness room
Lockers
Kitchenette
Business center

It is like a well-oiled machine with each part working in harmony to create an efficient and productive work environment for all occupants.

Example: assigning all focus rooms to specific individuals would remove access for everyone else to this type of individual acoustic/visual privacy
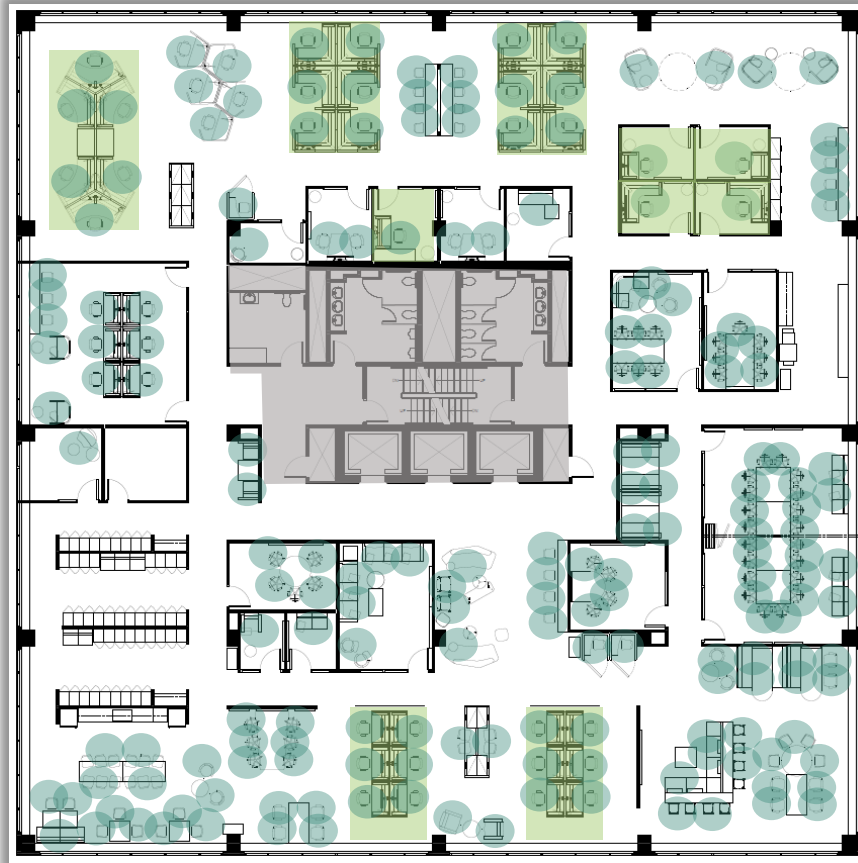
What is a workpoint ❓

GCworkplace offers a wide range of work settings, which support various workplace activities, to then enable user flexibility. Workpoints are everything from an individual open workstation, to a seat in an enclosed project room. GCworkplace offers an almost 2:1 ratio of workpoints to occupants*.

WORKPOINT
any setting within a GCworkplace from where someone can work

VS

WORKSTATION
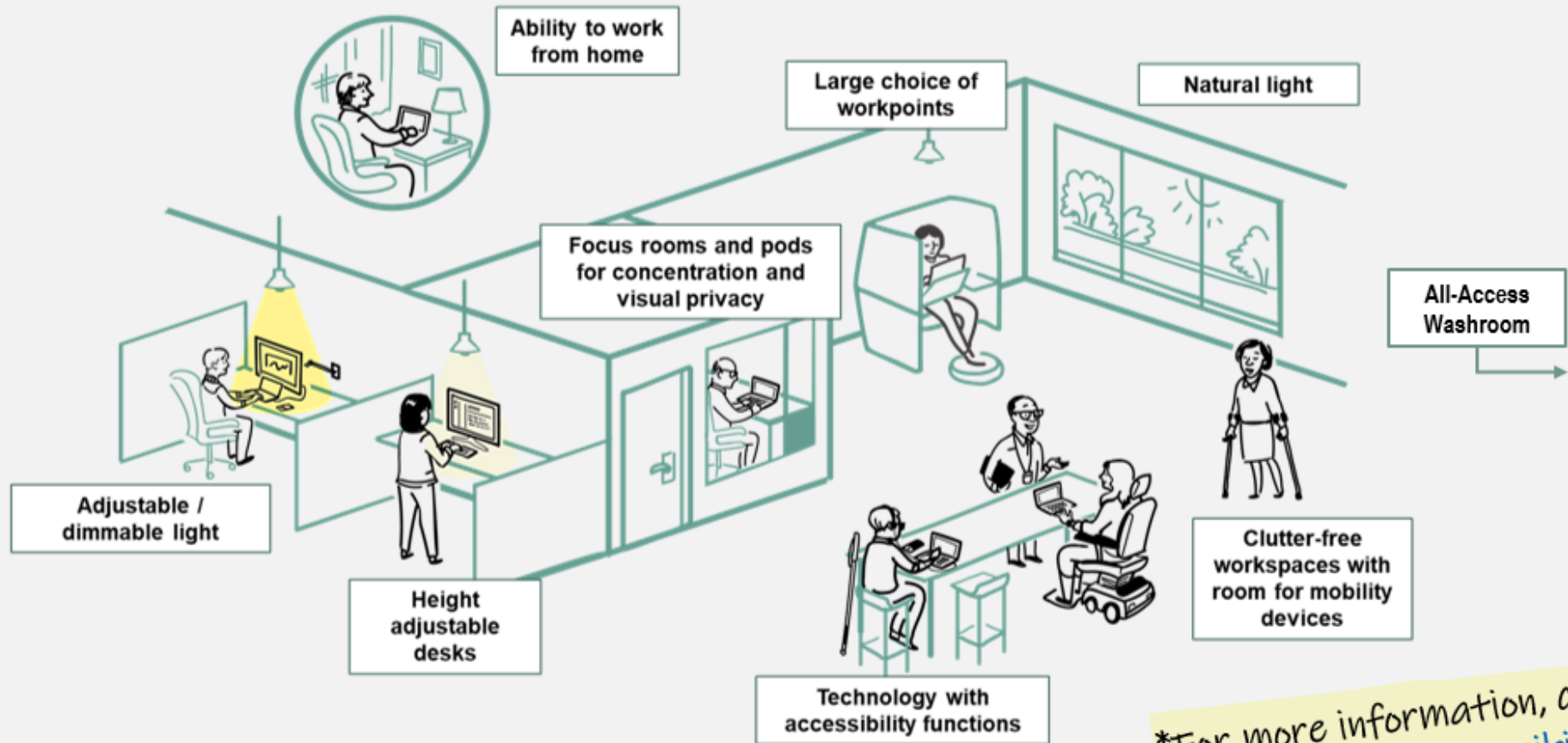one type of workpoint (open individual) within a GCworkplace

*The ideal quantity and distribution of workpoints is determined through functional programming & the GCworkplace Space Planning Workbook

What makes GCworkplace accessible and inclusive ❓

In addition to adhering to the latest accessibility built environment standards, GCworkplace offers its users **variety** & **choice** to support a wide range of physical and cognitive abilities*.

Ability to work from home

Large choice of workpoints

Natural light

Focus rooms and pods for concentration and visual privacy

All-Access Washroom

Adjustable / dimmable light

Height adjustable desks

Technology with accessibility functions

Clutter-free workspaces with room for mobility devices

*For more information, check out GCworkplace Accessibility and Inclusivity

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GUIDE

Workplace
Utilization

The last, and possibly the most misunderstood piece of the workplace modernization puzzle, is the way a ⋀GCworkplace is intended to be used...

Why is it important ❓

Like anything else, the best results are usually achieved when the RIGHT tool is used the RIGHT way. Using a GCworkplace for activity-based working is the **KEY** to successfully optimizing space utilization while promoting a positive user experience.

GCworkplace **+** **ABW** (Unassigned) **=** **Positive Workplace Experience**

Tool   *Intended use*   *Desired result*

Keep in mind, activity-based working is a utilization strategy in which everyone has equal access to a wide variety of workpoints. Each person has the autonomy to self-select where and how they carry out their various daily activities based on their personal needs and preferences. Although this concept is often referred to as *'unassigned seating'*, it is much more than just sharing workstations.

Why is unassigned seating essential to GCworkplace ❓

The word 'UNASSIGNED' has gotten a bad reputation with the focus being on employees 'losing their workstation or office' when really, it is the **KEY** to freeing people from one imposed location, to then gain access to an entire workplace.

Now, with mobile technology and digitized work being the norm, employees are **empowered to choose** the work setting and environment that best suits their own activities, needs, abilities and personal preferences within the office, at any given time.

Traditional, assigned workplaces have their challenges...

What are the benefits of activity based working (ABW) ❓

With an equal access, unassigned use of space, as well as a 'one-workpoint-at-a-time' etiquette, GCworkplace provides an almost 2:1 ratio of total workpoints to target onsite occupancy; meaning there will always be ample variety of available workpoints to be used throughout the day.

For employees…

- ✔ Choice and flexibility of where & how to work
- ✔ Adaptable to personal needs & preferences
- ✔ Access to a wide range of amenities and workpoints, both open and enclosed

For asset management…

- ✔ Design is adaptable to suit varying functional requirements
- ✔ Eliminates many common tenant service requests
- ✔ Significant reduction in custom modifications for Duty to accommodate (DTA) and ergonomic requirements

For the office portfolio…

- ✔ Optimizes use of space
- ✔ Enables departments to 'right-size' their office portfolio to reflect their updated requirements for a hybrid work model

One Region reported a 90% reduction in DTA cases when they moved to a Gcworkplace and adopted activity-based working

Hybrid Work Model

Portfolio Strategy

Physical Workspace

Workplace Utilization

Workplace utilization has an significant and direct correlation to each of the other pieces…

Why is traditional office utilization inefficient ❓

Pre-pandemic observations have revealed a 40% average vacancy rate in office utilization on any given day, at any given time. With a hybrid work model, this inefficient use of space - *often referred to as the **swiss cheese effect*** - is exacerbated.
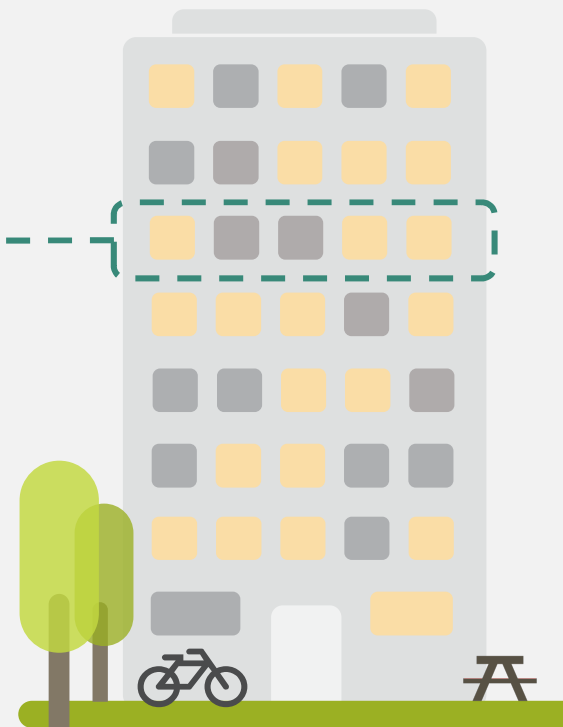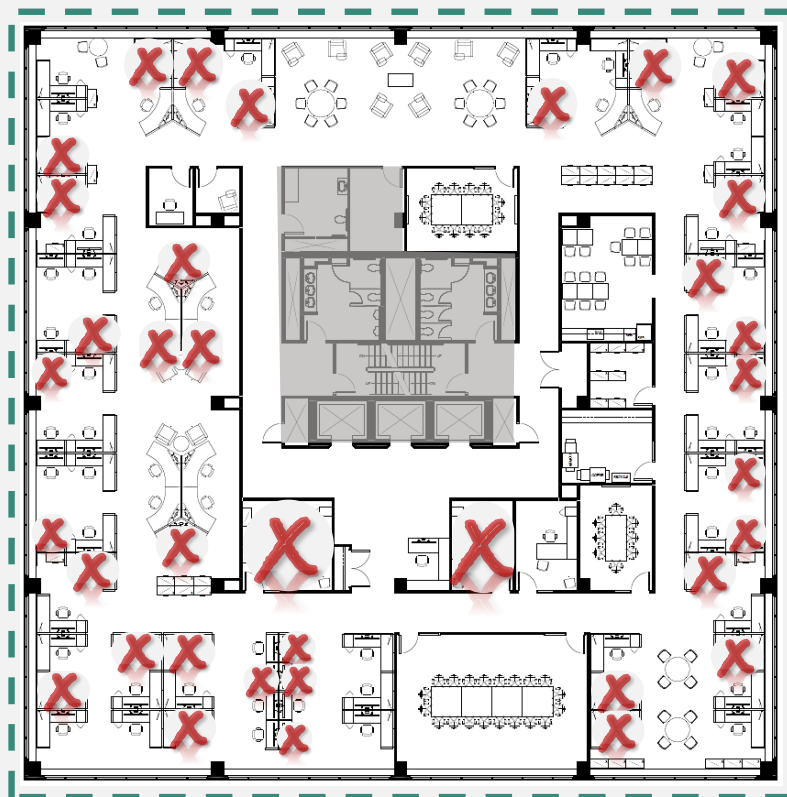
These space inefficiencies are then multiplied over every floor of every building...

Here's a [funny video](#) on inefficient space utilization, because who doesn't love a funny video?!

Workplace
Utilization

...and how it
relates to:

Physical
Workspace

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How does activity based working improve space utilization❓

With activity based working, employees can untether from one specific spot and gain access to an entire **ecosystem** of work settings to find what best suits their functions, tasks, and personal preferences.

Quiet Zone

Focus Work

Phone Call

Transitional Zone

Routine Tasks

Quick Chat
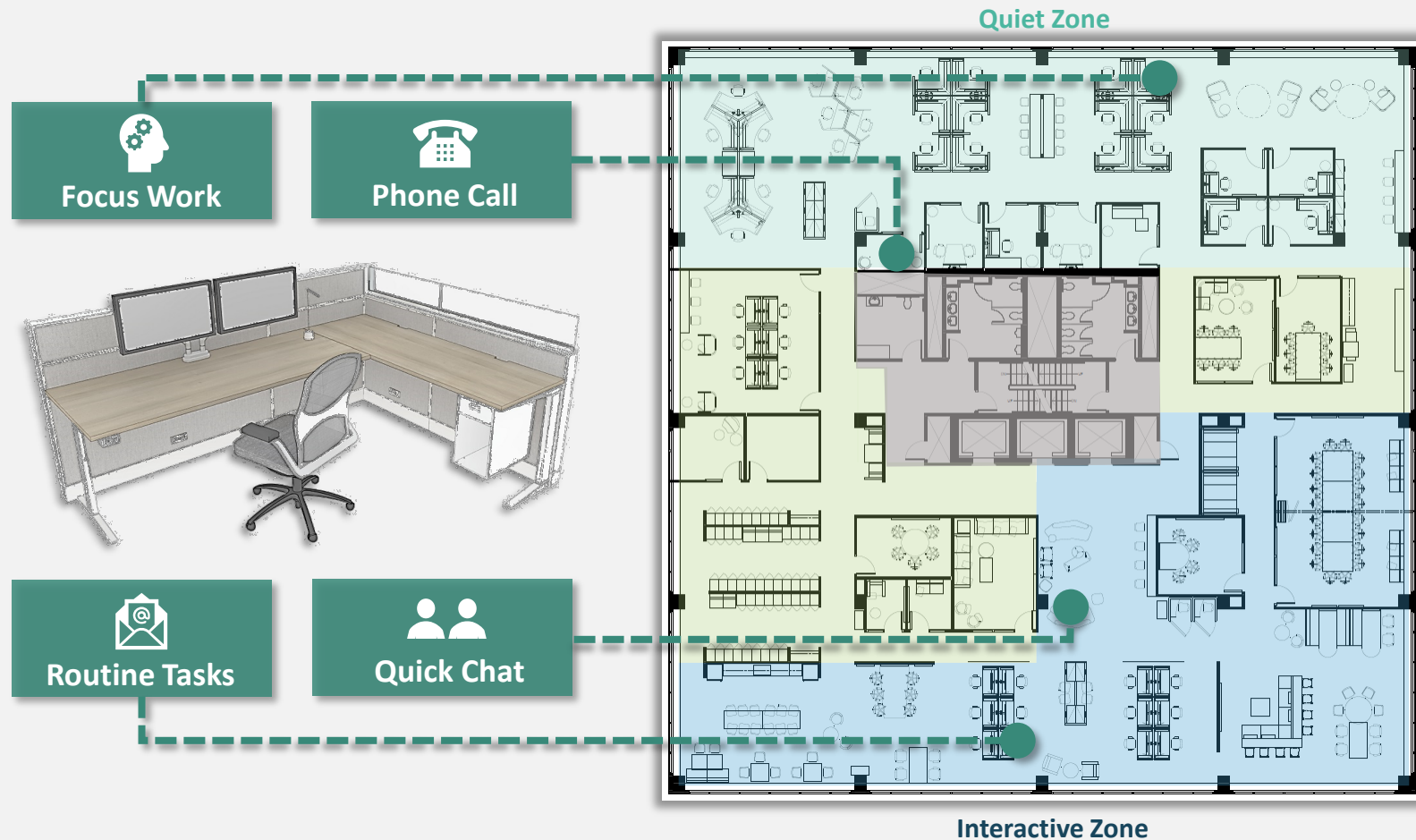
Interactive Zone

Remember...
GCworkplace
provides an
almost 2:1 ratio
of workpoints to
the number of
target onsite
occupants

Workplace
Utilization

...and how it
relates to:

Hybrid Work
Model

How does this optimize workplace utilization ❓

Optimizing is NOT about densifying space, it's understanding that with hybrid working now being the norm, regular daily vacancies, and unassigned space utilization, a GCworkplace can serve a larger **population** than its **onsite target occupancy.**

OCCUPANTS
the individuals physically in the workplace at any point in time

VS

POPULATION
all individuals who have been given access and permission to use the workplace in question

Space optimization can also enable space 'over-programming'

How does this help to 'right-size' the portfolio ❓

With the combination of a **activity-based working** and a **hybrid work model**, where a percentage of employees are working remotely at any given time, the portfolio can be **optimized** (over-programed), thus eliminating the 'swiss cheese' effect on a large scale.

Assigned Utilization

Unassigned Utilization

Available space
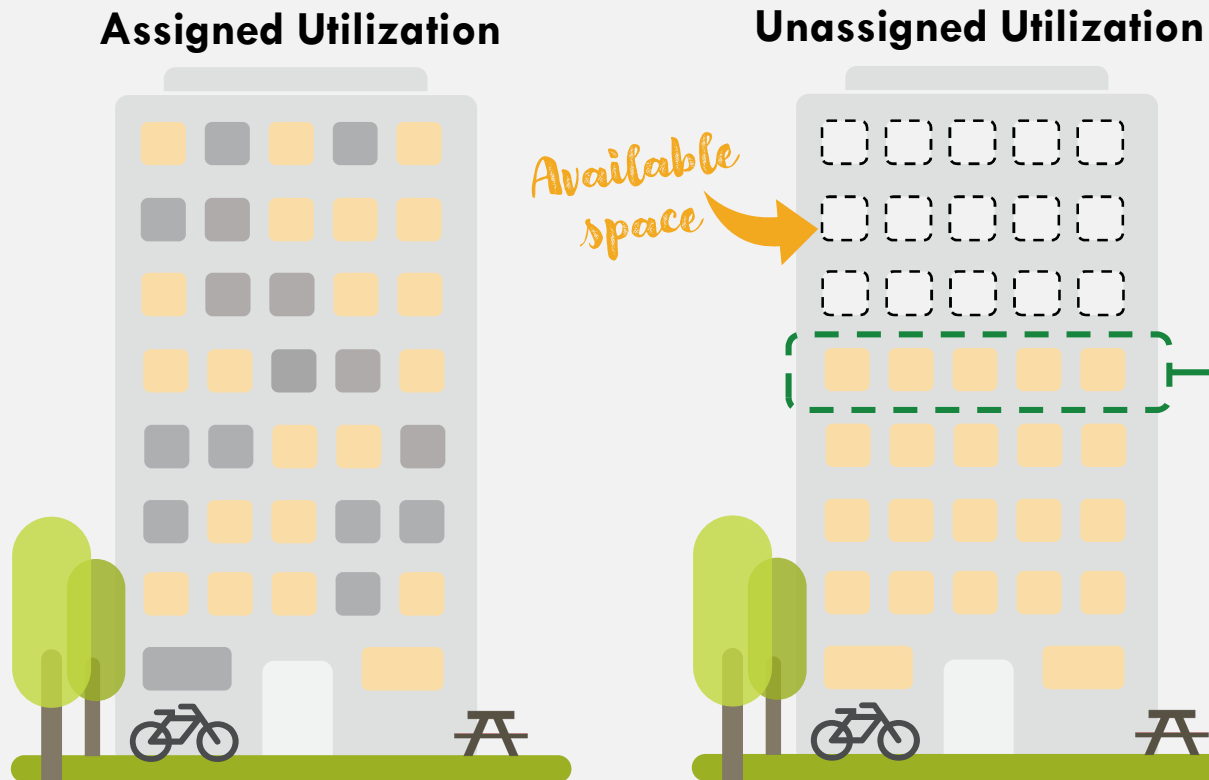
Example:

GCworkplace floor for 100 onsite occupants:

Impact of different hybrid work models:
NO remote work ▷ can serve 100 total population
LOW remote work ▷ can serve 120 total population
MED. remote work ▷ can serve 150 total population
HIGH remote work ▷ can serve 180 total population

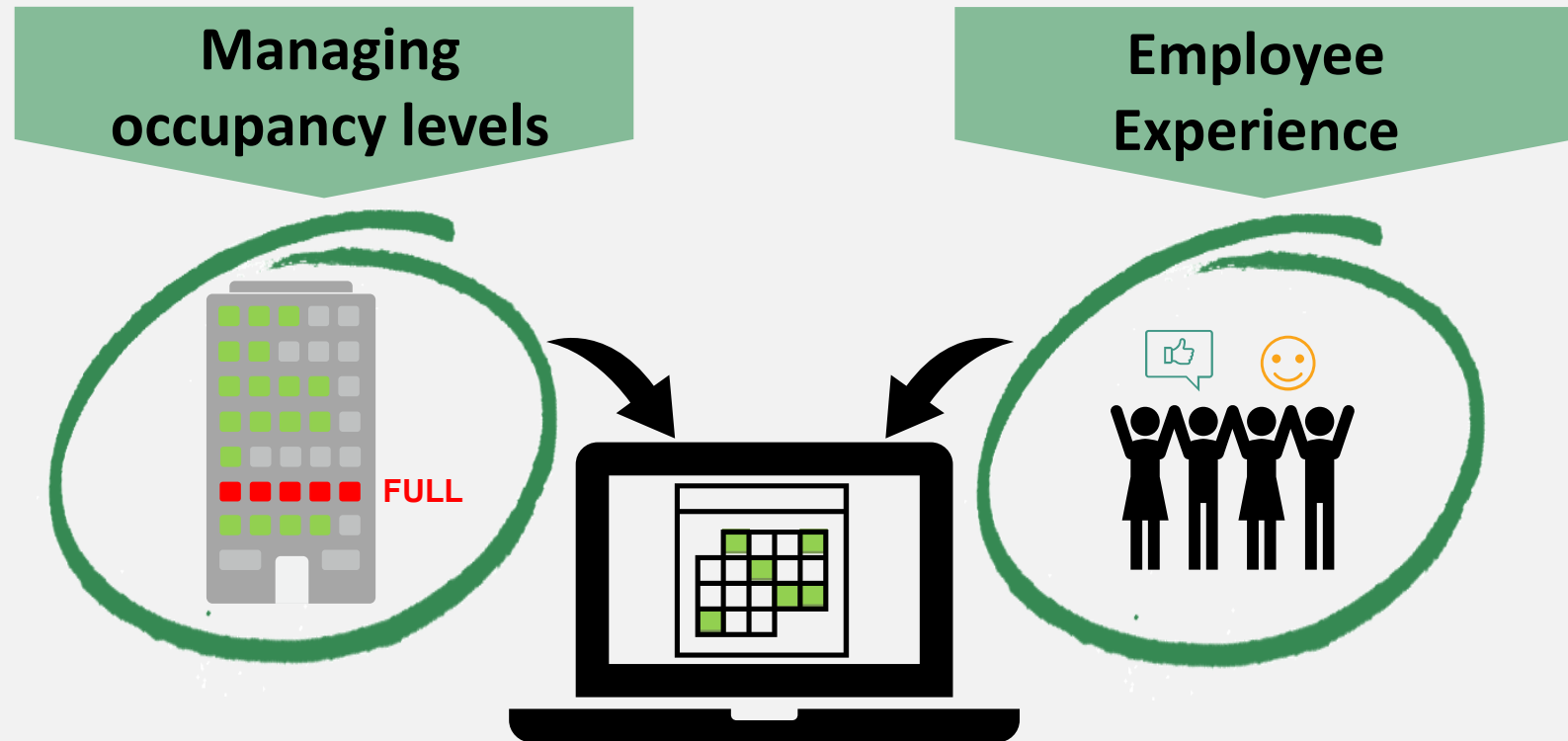*Remember... a PSPC CASA can guide organizations in calculating their new space requirements*

How are occupancy levels managed with over-programming ❓

With so much flexibility and efficiency in space utilization, there are two major considerations:

Managing occupancy levels

Employee Experience

FULL

A major enabler to both, is the use of a **space booking tool**. However, in order for a space booking tool to be a successful enabler, it must align to the workplace's utilization intention – which in the case of GCworkplace, is activity-based (unassigned).

What space booking strategy is best for GCworkplace

A space booking tool is a great way to manage occupancy levels when over-programming a GCworkplace within a hybrid work model. However, requiring every workpoint to be booked prior to its use would greatly hinder the overall workplace functionality and experience.

Aside from meeting rooms, a "**general admission**" type booking prior to using a GCworkplace will ensure occupancy levels are managed while allowing occupants to **freely use the entire workplace** based on their own individual needs and preferences, throughout the day.

For most individual workpoints,

If you can see it... you can use it!

Different types of workplaces: - WP2.0, traditional, GCworkplace - have different booking considerations

How can a booking tool make or break the employee experience ❓

'General Admission' Booking	VS	**'Workpoint for the day' Booking**

✓ Reassurance that there will be room for you when you get there by booking a general admission to the floor

✗ Showing up to someone sitting in your booked station

✓ Moving to another, better suited workpoint at any time by simply seeing that it is vacant

✗ Not making use of the variety of available workpoints because booking and unbooking every time is a deterrent

✓ Using informal collaboration spaces, like a lounge or chat point, for impromptu exchanges with colleagues

✗ Wanting to move to a workpoint that looks vacant but is booked in the system

Interesting fact: Most organizations, both public and private, that have adopted an activity based workplace over the last 10 years, report abandonning their workpoint booking system within just a few months of using their new workplace, realizing that it was not only unecessary, but in fact a major pain point in the user experience.
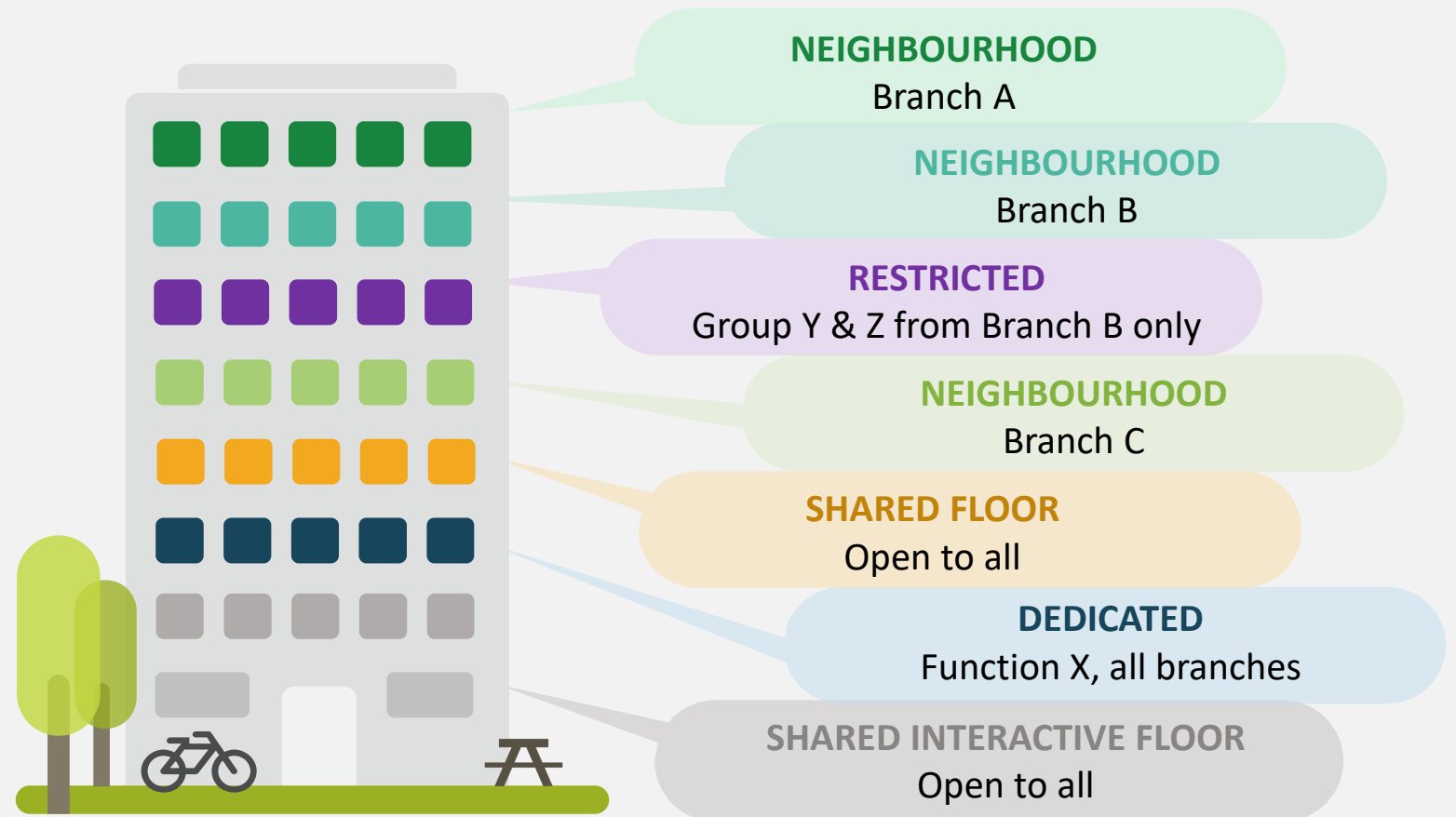
Workplace
Utilization

...and how it
relates to:

Portfolio
Strategy

What are modern space allocation strategies ❓

While choice and flexibility are great, too much choice in location can lead to losing a sense of belonging, especially for someone's primary workplace.

Neighbourhoods are a popular strategy for space utilization where an entire floor is assigned to a specific Branch. This approach promotes team cohesion and creates a sense of familiarity, while still providing ample variety and choice.

NEIGHBOURHOOD
Branch A

NEIGHBOURHOOD
Branch B

RESTRICTED
Group Y & Z from Branch B only

NEIGHBOURHOOD
Branch C

SHARED FLOOR
Open to all

DEDICATED
Function X, all branches

SHARED INTERACTIVE FLOOR
Open to all

Workplace
Utilization

...and how it
relates to:

Portfolio
Strategy

Why are "micro neighbourhoods" NOT recommended ❓

If the concept of neighbourhoods is applied in a way that is too specific, such as assigning areas of a floor to specific teams, it compromises the ecosystem's functionality. As a result, the space offers fewer choices, less efficiency in utilization, less flexibility, and zoning becomes almost impossible.

Team A

Team B

Team C
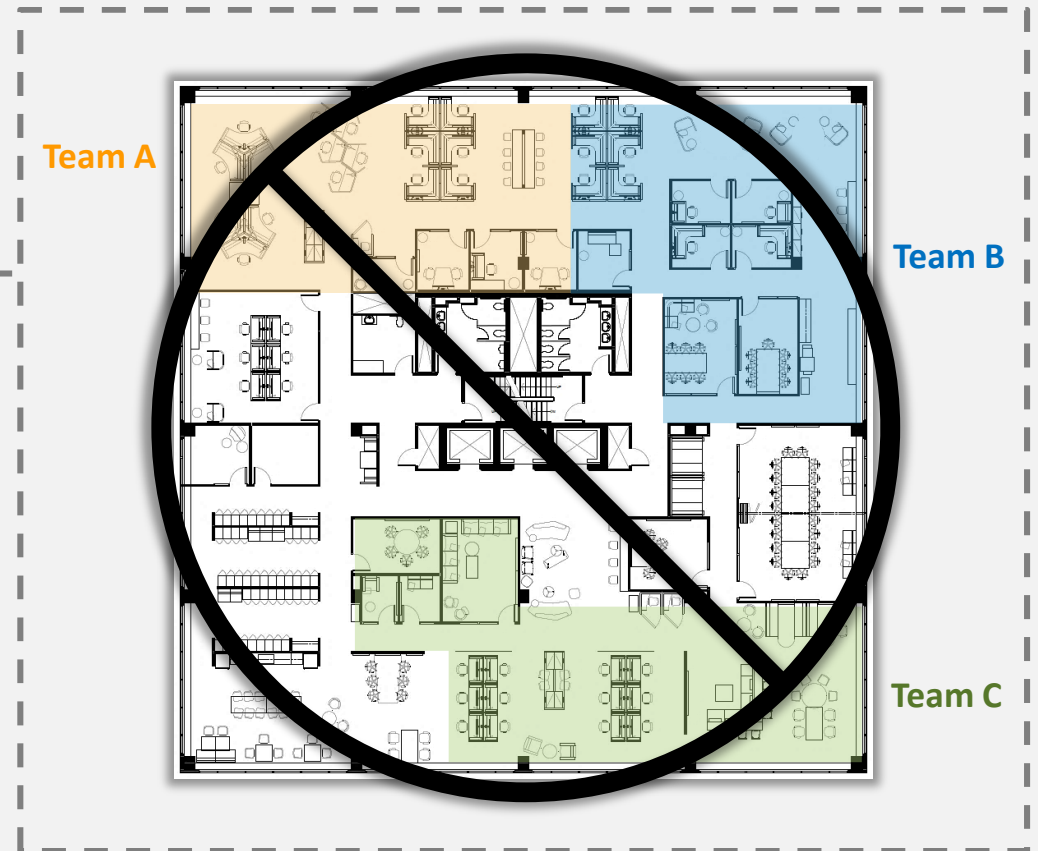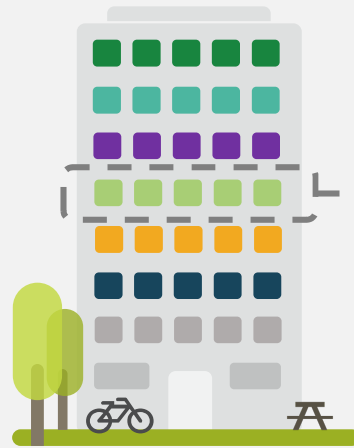
In other words, this effectively reverts back to old ways of assigning space and takes away the flexibility, benefits and advantages of activity-based working.

Workplace Utilization

...and how it relates to:

Physical Workspace

What circumstances would require a dedicated space ?

Starting with the assumption that all workpoints are **shared by default** will allow for maximum flexibility. However, certain instances, like physical security requirements, fixed equipment or hardwired lines, may require a dedicated space or priority use.
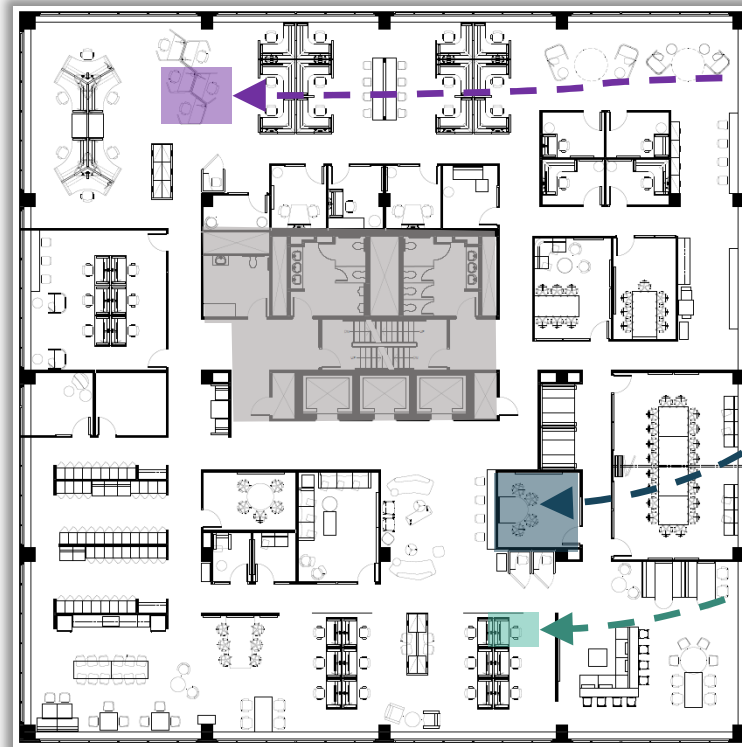
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT / HARD LINES
(ex: GCSI terminal, etc)

PRIORITY ACCESS
(ex: priority use by ADM)

SPECIFIC FUNCTION
(ex: workplace concierge, conflict resolution office)

SECURE AREA
(ex: secure suite on a secure floor)

In an activity-based work environment, like GCworkplace, space is designed for functions and activities, not titles or levels.

Special functions & requirements should be identified during functional programming

With only about 4% of office space having been modernized to ▲GCworkplace in the last few years, the reality is that most organizations are in the difficult position of having to support hybrid work with mostly traditional workplaces...

Workplace Utilization

...and how it relates to:

Hybrid Work Model

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March 2023

How can traditional workplaces support hybrid working ❓

In order to provide flexibility to all employees, and to ensure efficient use of office space, or accommodate any recent growth, modern unassigned utilization is possible in any space.

1. Go unassigned

Adop a shared use / clean desk policy for all workstations and offices to ensure an efficient use of space

2. Define Zones

Divide the existing space into 3 zones to provide acoustical separation

3. Centralize personal storage

When possible, remove storage towers from workstations and centralize to encourage unassigned use

4. Repurpose space

Large offices can become small meeting spaces, and smaller rooms can become phone booths or focus rooms

5. Upgrade Furniture

Upgrade to height adjustable workstations surfaces to enhance ergonomics and flexibility for unassigned use

6. Manage the change

Communicate and manage changes for employees to ensure a successful transition

Part 2 of this guide will provide more details on unassigned use of traditional office space
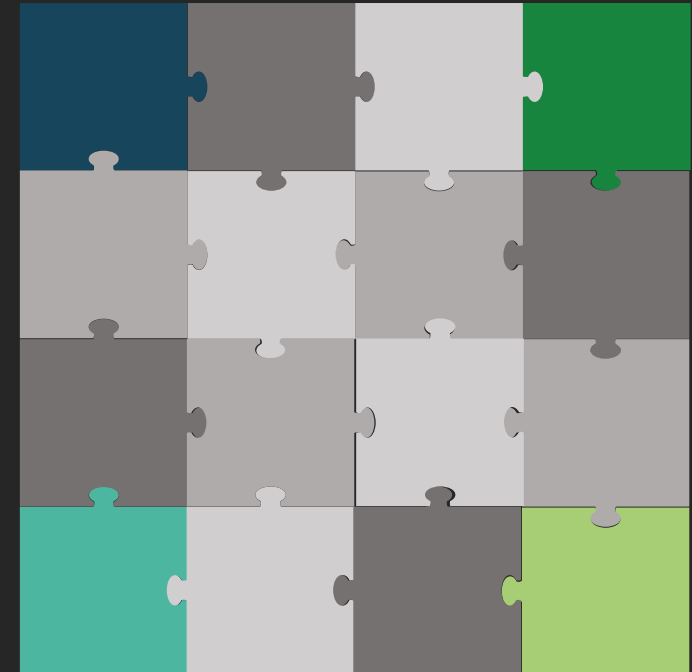
Practical Solutions

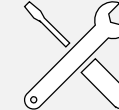**Table of Contents**

Look for these!

FYI
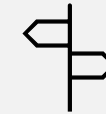
For Decision

For Action

Consideration

Available Change Management Activity

Available Tool

Requires input or action from one or more members of your integrated project team

IM
Information Management

IT
Information Technology

Sec
Security

HR
Human Resources

CM
Change Management

SWAGguide
March 2023

Practical Solutions

Part 2 Content
Coming Soon

Please don't hesitate to contact the
Strategic Workplace Advisory Group (SWAG)
for questions or comments