

THE POST

COVID-19

WORKPLACE

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ABOUT

As areas of the country begin to stabilize and stay-at-home restrictions are re-examined and lifted in the weeks and months ahead, organizations are faced with the challenge of how to bring employees back into the physical workplace. Architecture, planning, and interior design firm Solomon Cordwell Buenz (SCB) is helping owners, property managers, and tenants think about safe, thoughtful, and efficient recovery readiness plans.

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WORKPLACE CULTURE

The post-pandemic workplace will require a number of cultural and operational changes particularly in the short term as crisis response measures are implemented and organizations prepare for re-entry. However, this unprecedented time also presents an opportunity to take a step back and re-imagine the workplace of the future.

HOW CAN WE PREPARE TO RE-ENTER THE WORKPLACE?

It is critical to have clear communication about what the workplace will be like upon return. Some employees may expect minimal changes, while others will assume everything will be different.

PREPARING FOR CHANGE | RE-IMAGINING THE WORKPLACE

Establish a recovery readiness plan

Mobilize a cross-functional recovery team

Ensure building and tenant workspaces are safe, prepared, and resilient

Build trust and confidence with your tenants and workforce

REINFORCING CHANGE | RE-ENTERING THE WORKPLACE

Utilize signage, graphics, and wayfinding to clearly communicate new measures and protocols

Mobilize a team of “ambassadors” to welcome colleagues back and serve as a resource for questions or concerns

Promote employee health and wellness, business continuity, and a spirit of encouragement and optimism

MANAGING CHANGE | RE-ENFORCING EVOLUTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Monitor the effectiveness of guidelines and safety protocols in order to respond as needed

Ensure consistent and thoughtful communication for employees working both in the office and virtually

Develop an emergency response team for continuous response and readiness efforts



HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN THE WORKPLACE?

DECREASE DENSITY

In many cases, the only way to decrease density in the workplace is to reduce the number of employees in the workplace. This can be addressed by limiting the number of employees returning to office, or creating work shifts through the week for different groups of staff. Whatever the strategy adopted, special consideration must be given to how this can be part of a phased approach back to full capacity, if desired.

REDUCE OCCUPANCY IN SUPPORT SPACES

Look at how you can reconfigure support spaces for use by fewer staff. Reduce the number of seats in conference rooms to meet the 6-foot distancing guideline either by removing chairs or marking those that should not be used.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY

Take the lessons we've learned while working from home and apply them to the office. Limit in-person meetings, meet virtually, make phone calls instead of in person visits, etc.



HOW CAN WE OPERATE A HEALTHY, CLEAN, AND SAFE WORKPLACE?

PROVIDE PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Ensure the workplace is well-stocked with masks, gloves, and sanitizer offered throughout the space, but especially in high-touch areas.

REVISIT AND REVISE CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Review cleaning schedules and methodologies with building owners and service providers.

ENSURE TOUCH-FREE TECHNOLOGY IS OPERATIONAL

Check light sensors and automatic faucets and soap dispensers to ensure they are functioning properly.

COMMUNICATE TO BUILDING USERS AND EMPLOYEES

Install signage to communicate new protocols and best practices. This can include standing locations for queuing and in confined spaces such as elevators, hand washing reminders at each sink, and general reminders to wear masks and limit contact with others throughout the space.



IS NOW THE TIME TO RE-THINK THE STANDARD WORK WEEK?

WORKING REMOTELY

Some employees may prefer to continue to work from home indefinitely, be it due to health concerns or just personal preference. What impact will that have on the physical workplace and company culture?

WORK SHIFTS

Is there room for a new hybrid work model somewhere between working from home full-time and working in the office full-time? Are there ways to do both through a shift structure, with employees coming to office only on certain days and working from home on others?

STAGGERED WORK HOURS

Does the work day need to be 9-5? What if it were 7-7, with some employees opting to arrive early/leave early and others preferring to arrive late/leave late? Are there benefits to expanding the work day of the overall office in this way?

FLEXIBLE HOURS

Can we continue to offer flexible hours to accommodate various needs like childcare, or personal health and wellness?



WORKPLACE PLANNING

Office design is focused on creating engaged, collaborative, and dynamic workplaces that support an organization's culture. Today, however, we are working to balance these objectives with creating spaces that also provide a sense of safety and wellbeing.

The following pages evaluate current test fits for two SCB-designed office buildings using CDC and OSHA recommendations, suggesting ways to modify spaces today to meet current health safety and distancing guidelines, and looking at how we can re-plan workplaces to be resilient and flexible to respond to future challenges.

TELEGRAPH TOWER

LOCATION

Oakland, CA

SIZE

750,000 SF

28 stories

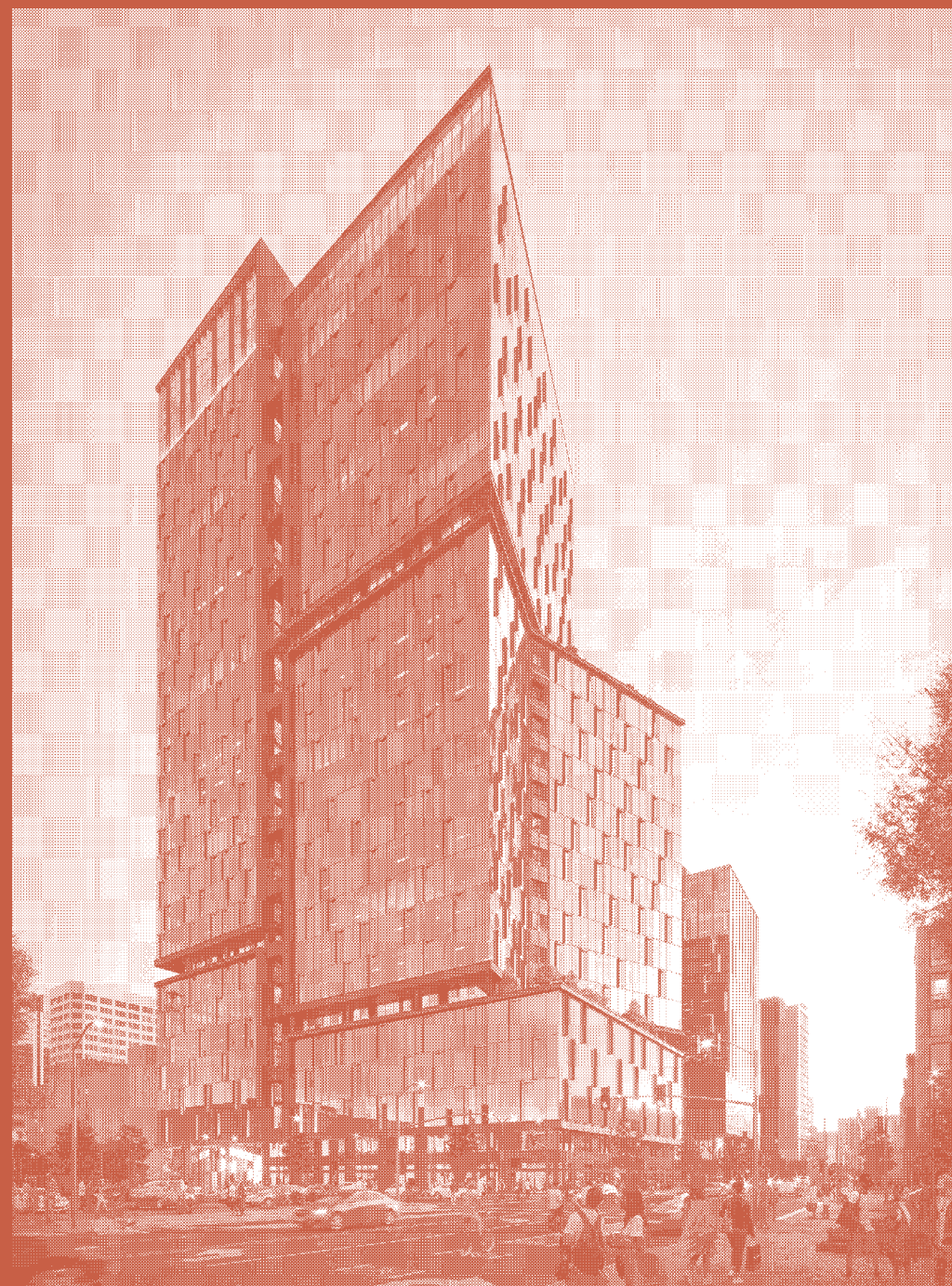
30,500-33,500 SF floor plates

SUSTAINABILITY

Targeting LEED Gold

STATUS

In Design



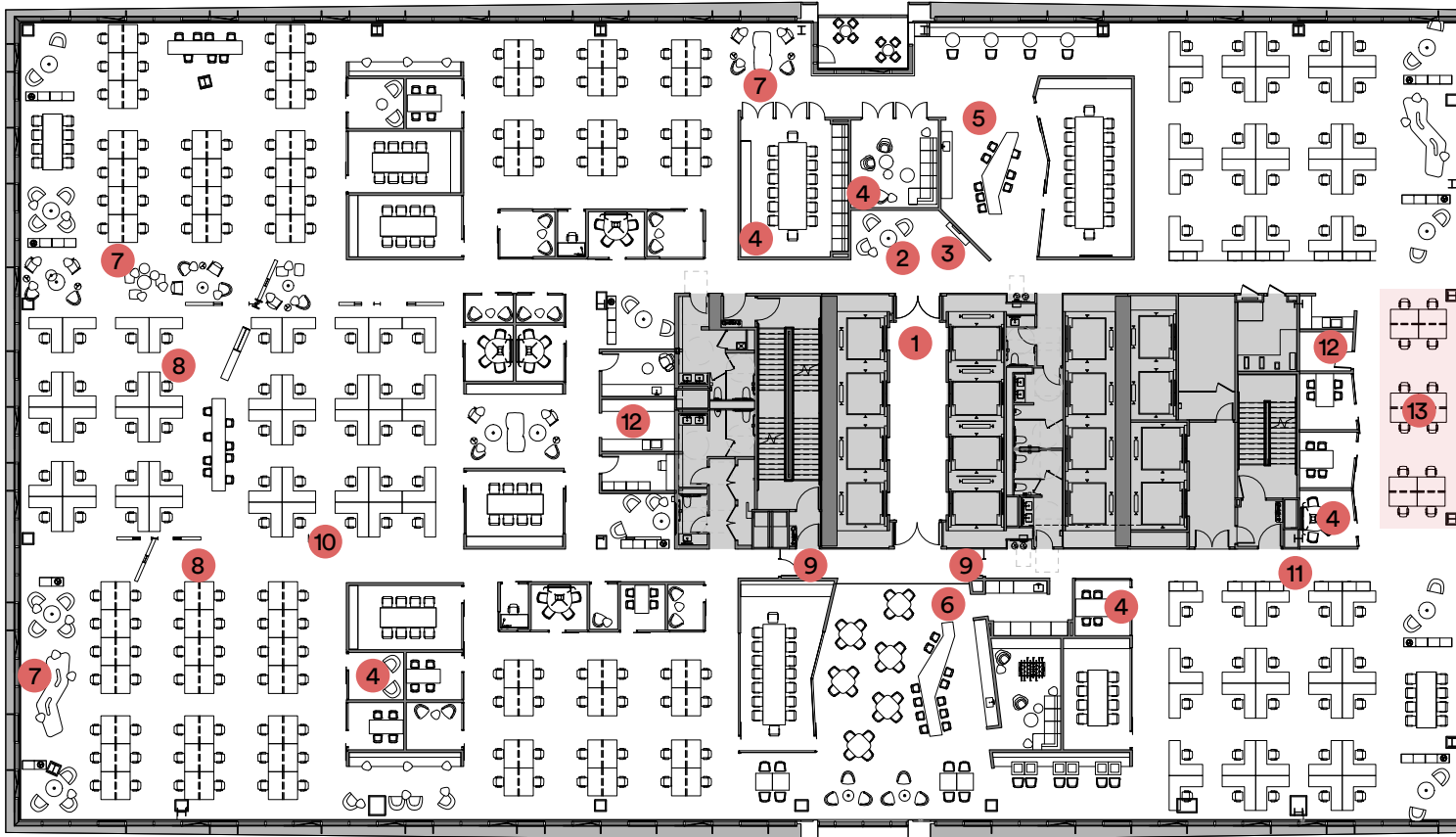
CURRENT

37,737 RSF

164
RSF / PERSON
230 TOTAL WORKSTATIONS

0.7
CONF. SEAT / PERSON
164 TOTAL SEATS

0.6
COLLAB. SEAT / PERSON
139 TOTAL SEATS



- 1 Entry door handles are high-touch
- 2 Reception seating does not meet distancing guidelines
- 3 Virtual Receptionist (meets guidelines)
- 4 Meeting rooms seating does not meet distancing guidelines
- 5 Break-out seating does not meet distancing guidelines, shared beverages and snacks not recommended
- 6 Lunchroom seating and kitchen appliance layout does not meet distancing guidelines, multi-user space, high-touch equipment, shared beverages and snacks not recommended
- 7 Collaboration areas do not meet distancing guidelines
- 8 Bench-style workstations do not meet distancing guidelines
- 9 Access door handles are high-touch
- 10 Two-way circulation throughout does not allow for adequate distancing
- 11 Files are not adequately separated from workstations
- 12 Multiple open copy/print areas dispersed throughout (meets guidelines)
- 13 Hoteling workstations do not meet distancing guidelines and are multi-user, high-touch

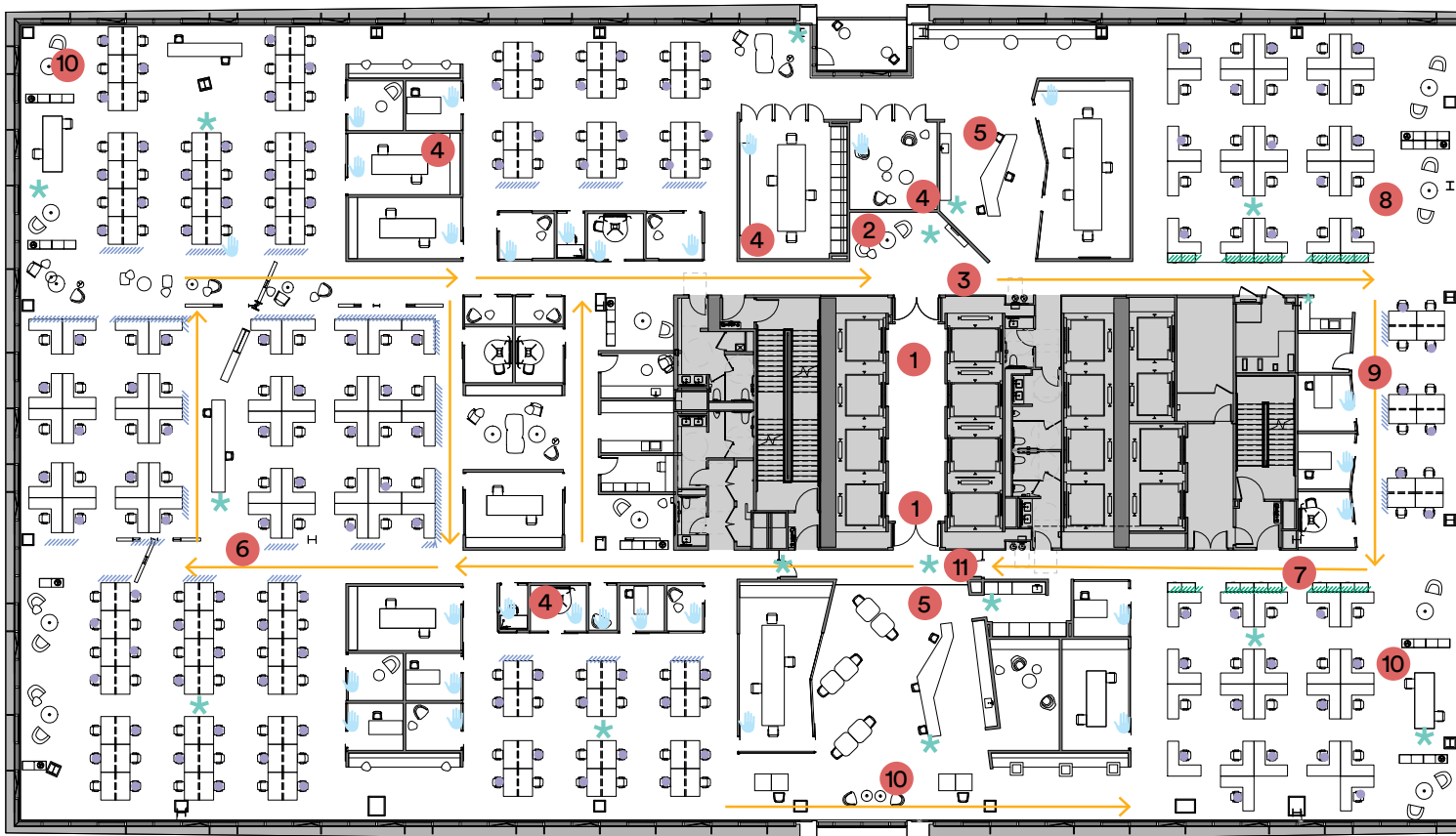
MODIFIED

320
RSF / PERSON
118 TOTAL WORKSTATIONS

0.4
CONF. SEAT / PERSON
45 TOTAL SEATS

0.5
COLLAB. SEAT / PERSON
53 TOTAL SEATS

In order to meet CDC and OSHA recommendations, the total number of occupied workstations is reduced by 50%. Conference and collaboration seating is reduced by approximately 70% and 60% respectively. This plan requires a supplemental work from home schedule or shift structure to the work week to accommodate the full employee base.



- 1 Entry doors propped open
- 2 Lounge seating reduced and rearranged to provide proper distancing
- 3 Virtual Receptionist enhanced with proximity temperature scanner and PPE Station provided
- 4 Meeting room seating reduced and arranged to allow for proper distancing, new room capacity and layout posted, touchless hand sanitizer station provided at each entry
- 5 Break-out seating reduced and arranged to allow for proper distancing, new room capacity posted, touchless hand sanitizer station provided, beverages and snack service suspended
- 6 Tall gallery panels added between major circulation paths and workstations
- 7 Glass screens added between files and workstations, touchless hand sanitizer station provided
- 8 Workstation use reduced to every-other station by assigned work days
- 9 Hoteling stations converted to assigned workstations
- 10 Collaboration furniture reduced and rearranged to provide proper distancing

← One way circulation
 Touchless hand sanitizer station
 * PPE Station (sanitizer, masks, gloves, cleaning supplies)
 ● Occupied Seat

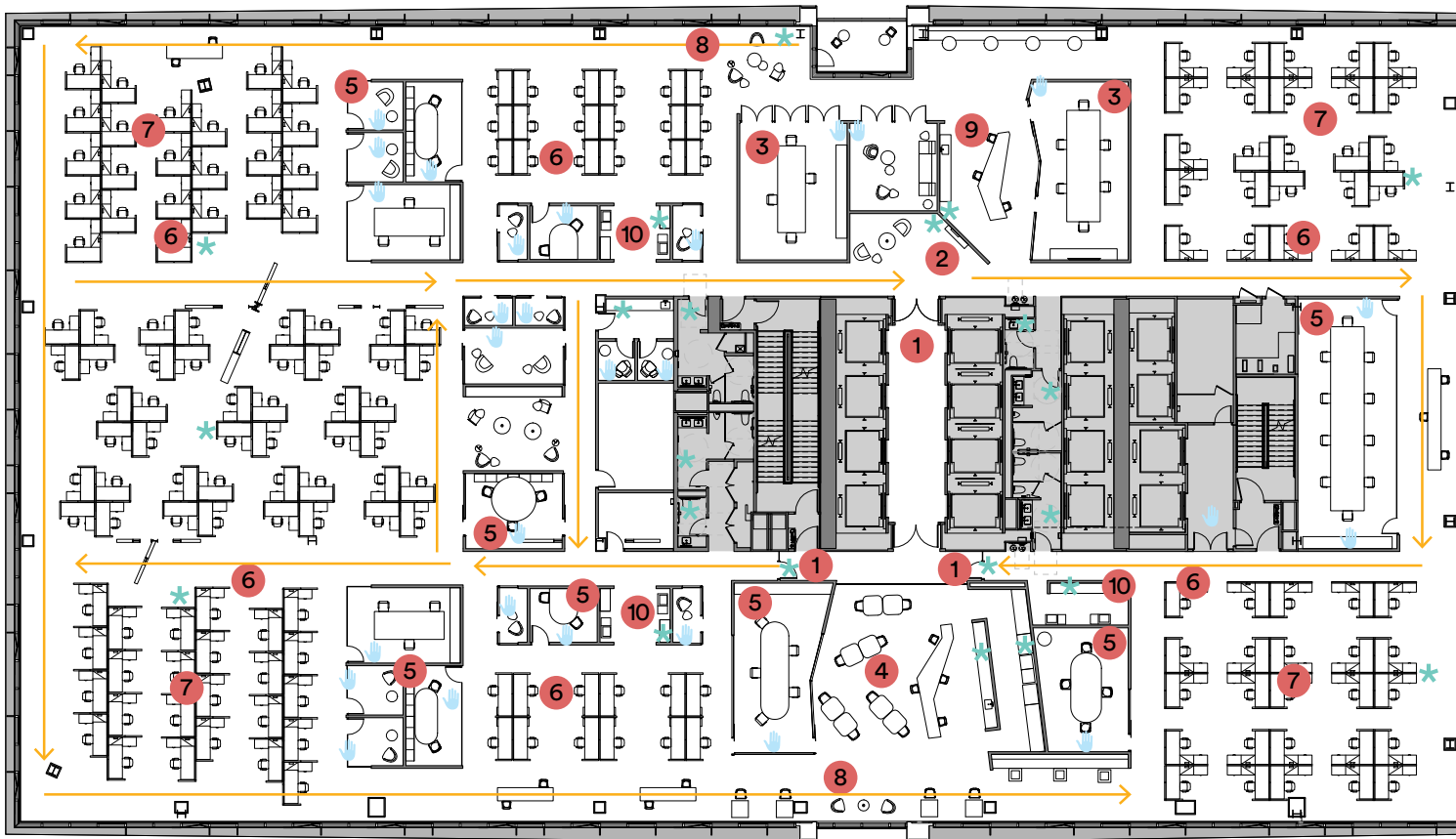
REPLANNED

218
RSF / PERSON
173 TOTAL WORKSTATIONS

0.3
CONF. SEAT / PERSON
52 TOTAL SEATS

0.2
COLLAB. SEAT / PERSON
25 TOTAL SEATS

By replanning the floor, workstation loss from the original 210 is reduced to only a 20% loss. Significant collaboration seats are lost to provide the additional space needed for appropriately distanced workstations. Conference seating remains essentially the same, with reduced usage when distancing guidelines are in place.



- 1 Touchless entry
- 2 Virtual Receptionist with proximity temperature scanner and PPE Station
- 3 Meeting rooms for use with external participants. Sized for no more than 10 people when distancing guidelines in place and more as guidelines are relaxed, room capacity posted, touchless hand sanitizer station provided
- 4 Lunchroom seating is minimal and dispersed, with appliances/equipment arranged to create multiple work areas that are spaced appropriately, beverages and snacks provided when permitted
- 5 Meeting rooms for use with internal participants only. Sized for no more than 10 people when distancing guidelines in place and more as guidelines are relaxed, room capacity posted, touchless hand sanitizer station provided
- 6 Workstations with taller panels along major circulation paths for separation. Made of hard surface materials for effective cleaning
- 7 Planning changes include sizing and orienting workstations to meet distancing guidelines, integrating PPE Stations throughout, and providing additional circulation paths along the perimeter of the floorplate
- 8 Smaller collaboration areas with limited seating when distancing guidelines in place with capacity for more as guidelines are relaxed
- 9 Satellite cafes reduce use of lunchroom
- 10 Multiple open copy/print areas dispersed throughout

← One way circulation
 ✋ Touchless hand sanitizer station
 ✳ PPE Station (sanitizer, masks, gloves, cleaning supplies)

320 N SANGAMON

LOCATION

Chicago, IL

SIZE

312,600 SF

13 stories

23,000-26,000 SF floor plates

SUSTAINABILITY

Targeting LEED Silver

STATUS

Under Construction



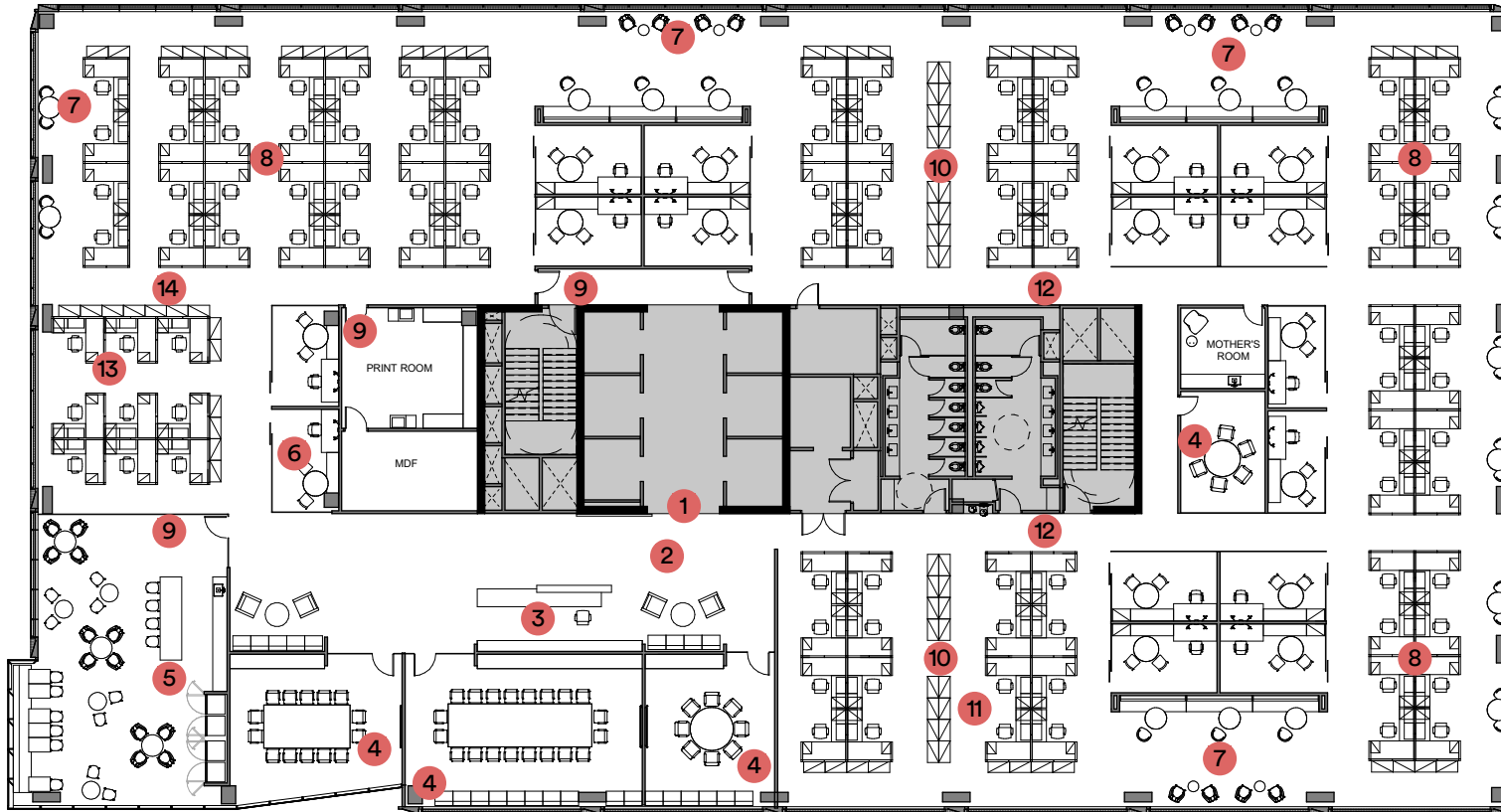
CURRENT

24,935 RSF

227
RSF / PERSON
16 TOTAL OFFICES
94 TOTAL WORKSTATIONS

0.4
CONF. SEAT / PERSON
48 TOTAL SEATS

0.5
COLLAB. SEAT / PERSON
55 TOTAL SEATS



- 1 Entry door handles are high-touch
- 2 Reception seating does not meet distancing guidelines
- 3 Open reception desk does not provide for distancing or separation from visitors
- 4 Meeting rooms seating does not meet distancing guidelines
- 5 Lunchroom seating and kitchen appliance layout does not meet distancing guidelines, multi-user space, high-touch equipment, shared beverages and snacks not recommended
- 6 Private office guest seating does not meet distancing guidelines
- 7 Collaboration furniture does not meet distancing guidelines
- 8 Workstations that face each other do not meet distancing guidelines
- 9 Access door handles are high-touch
- 10 File bank adequately separated from workstations (meets guidelines)
- 11 Workstations sized and arranged (back-to-back) appropriately to meet distancing guidelines (meets guidelines)
- 12 Two-way circulation throughout does not allow for adequate distancing
- 13 Workstations sized and arranged (all forward facing) appropriately to meet distancing guidelines (meets guidelines)
- 14 Files not adequately separated from workstations

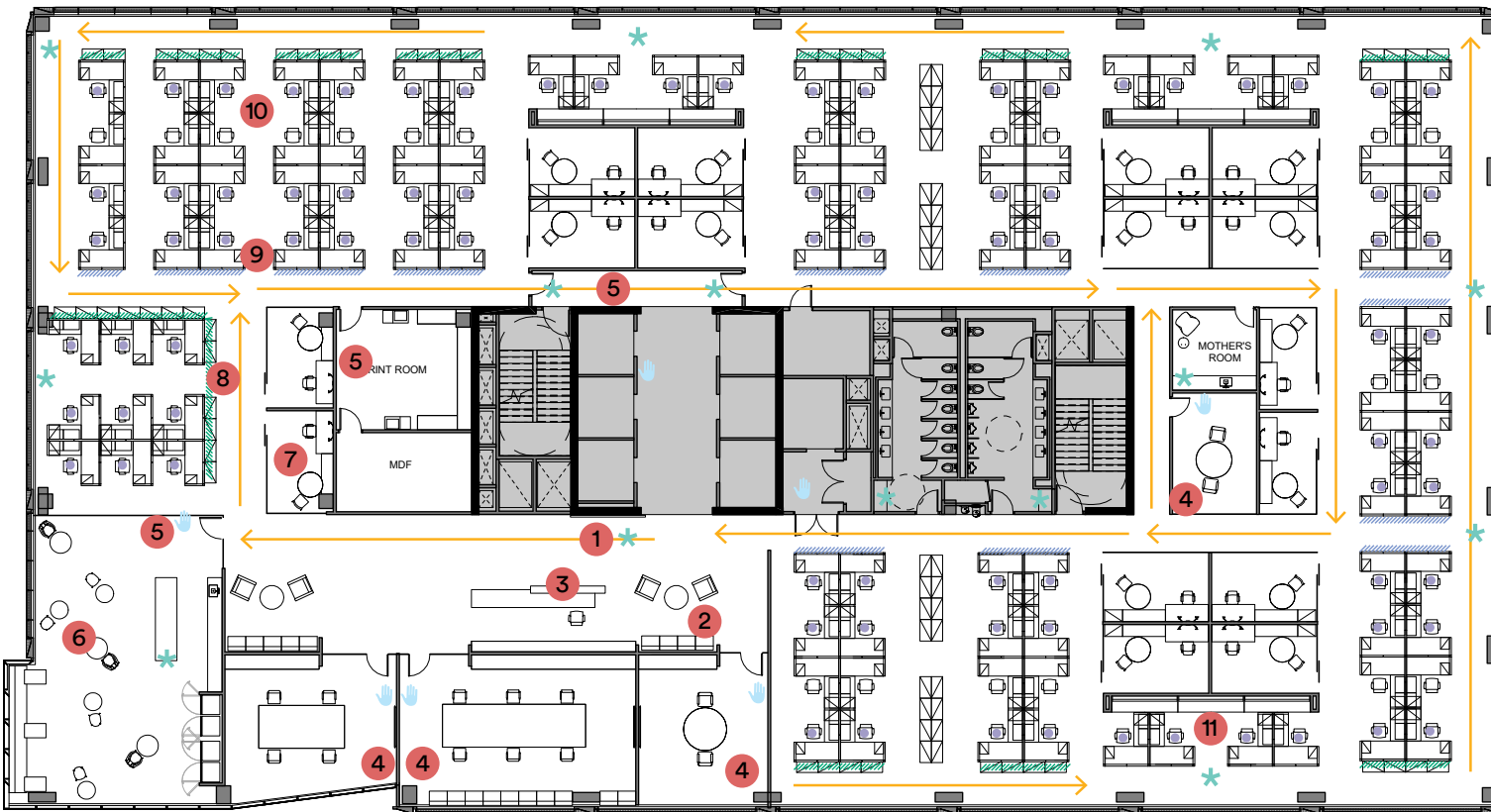
MODIFIED

247
RSF / PERSON
16 TOTAL OFFICES
85 TOTAL WORKSTATIONS

0.1
CONF. SEAT / PERSON
14 TOTAL SEATS

0
COLLAB. SEAT / PERSON
0 TOTAL SEATS

In order to meet CDC and OSHA recommendations, the total number of occupied workstations is reduced by 10%. Impact to private offices is limited only to number of guests allowed. Conference seating is reduced by approximately 70% and all collaboration space is re-used for workstations. This plan requires a limited supplemental work from home schedule or shift structure to the work week to accommodate the full employee base.



- 1 PPE Station located at entry
- 2 Lounge seating rearranged to provide proper distancing, signage/barriers installed to limit banquette seating
- 3 Glass screen added reception desk to provide separation, proximity temperature scanner installed
- 4 Meeting room seating reduced and arranged to allow for proper distancing, signage/barriers installed to limit banquette seating, new room capacity and layout posted, touchless hand sanitizer station provided at each entry
- 5 Entry and access doors propped open
- 6 Lunchroom seating reduced and arranged to allow for proper distancing, new room capacity posted, touchless hand sanitizer station and PPE station provided, beverage and snack service suspended
- 7 One guest chair removed per office
- 8 Glass screens added between files and workstations
- 9 Tall gallery panels added between major circulation paths and workstations
- 10 Workstation use reduced with signage/barriers installed to indicate usage restriction
- 11 Collaboration area is repurposed for additional workstations

← One way circulation
 ✋ Touchless hand sanitizer station
 ✱ PPE Station (sanitizer, masks, gloves, cleaning supplies)
 ● Occupied Seat

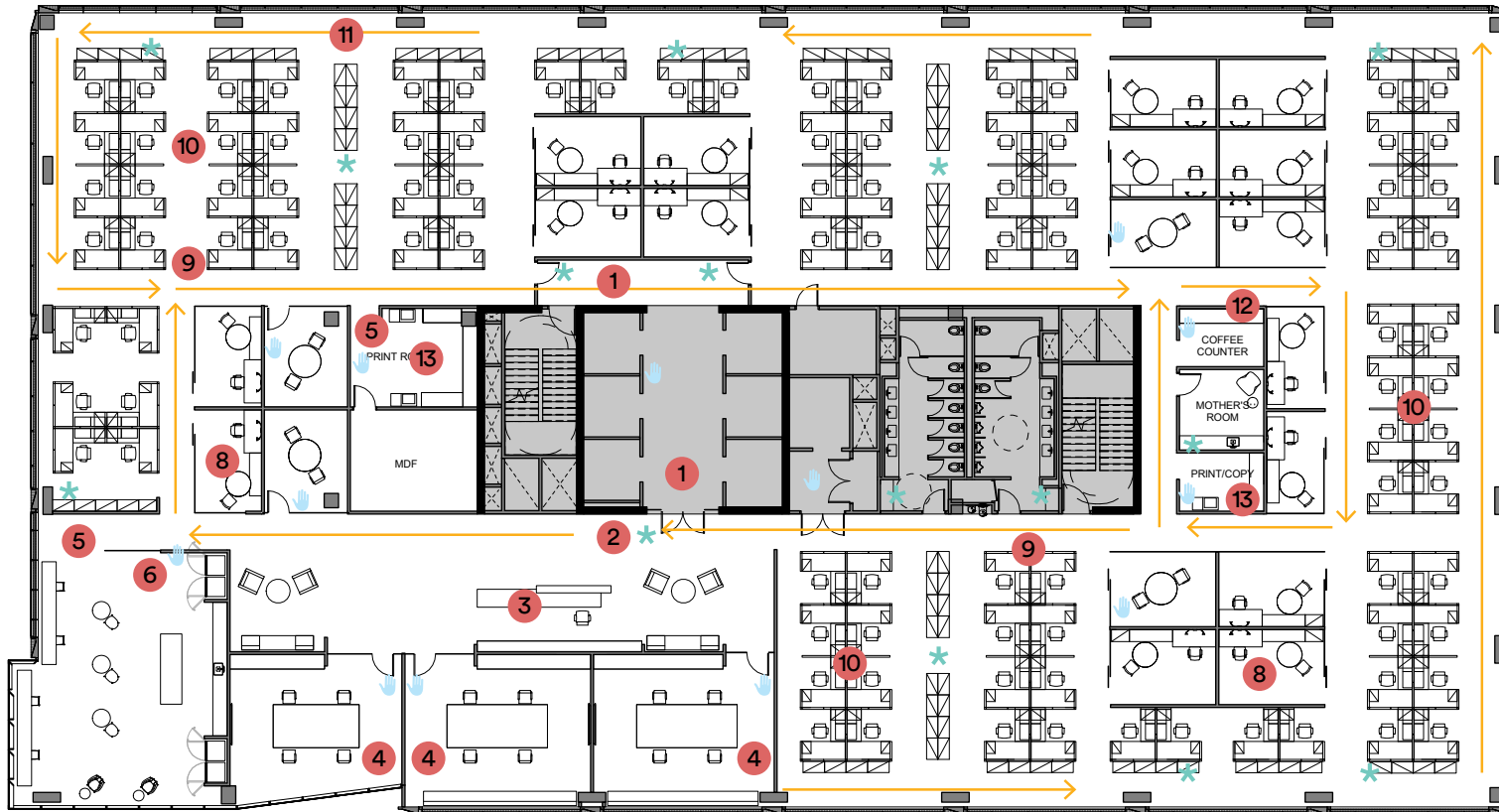
REPLANNED

225
RSF / PERSON
16 TOTAL OFFICES
95 TOTAL WORKSTATIONS

0.2
CONF. SEAT / PERSON
20 TOTAL SEATS

0
COLLAB. SEAT / PERSON
0 TOTAL SEATS

By replanning the floor, all workstations and offices from the original plan are maintained. Collaboration seats are lost to provide the additional space needed for appropriately distanced workstations. Conference seating remains essentially the same, with reduced usage when distancing guidelines are in place.



- 1 Touchless entry
- 2 PPE Station and proximity temperature scanner
- 3 Reception desk designed to provide separation
- 4 Meeting rooms designated for use with external participants. Sized to accommodate no more than 10 people when distancing guidelines in place and more as guidelines are relaxed, room capacity posted, touchless hand sanitizer station provided
- 5 No entry doors to print room and increased soundproofing
- 6 Lunchroom seating is minimal and dispersed, with kitchen appliances and equipment arranged to create multiple work areas that are spaced appropriately, drinks and snacks provided when permitted.
- 7 Meeting rooms designated for use with internal participants only. Sized to accommodate no more than 4 people when distancing guidelines in place and more as guidelines are relaxed, room capacity posted, touchless hand sanitizer station provided
- 8 One guest chair per office when distancing guidelines are in place
- 9 Workstations with taller panels along major circulation paths for separation. Made of hard surface materials for effective cleaning
- 10 Workstations oriented to meet distancing guidelines
- 11 Planning changes include reducing the number of workstations, incorporating file banks, and providing additional circulation paths along the perimeter of the floorplate
- 12 Satellite cafes reduce use of lunchroom
- 13 Multiple open copy/print areas dispersed throughout

← One way circulation Touchless hand sanitizer station * PPE Station (sanitizer, masks, gloves, cleaning supplies)

WELLNESS

Wellness in the workplace was trending far before the current pandemic, but will become a much higher priority in the post-COVID workplace. Select concepts offered by the WELL Building Standard, a certification system that is focused on the impact of buildings on human health and wellness, are especially relevant as we think about how the workplace can help support a workforce as they adjust to a new normal.

Air

Water

Materials

Nourishment

Light

Mind

Movement

Thermal Comfort

Sound

Community

Innovation

CAN THE WORKPLACE BE A PLACE TO DE-STRESS?

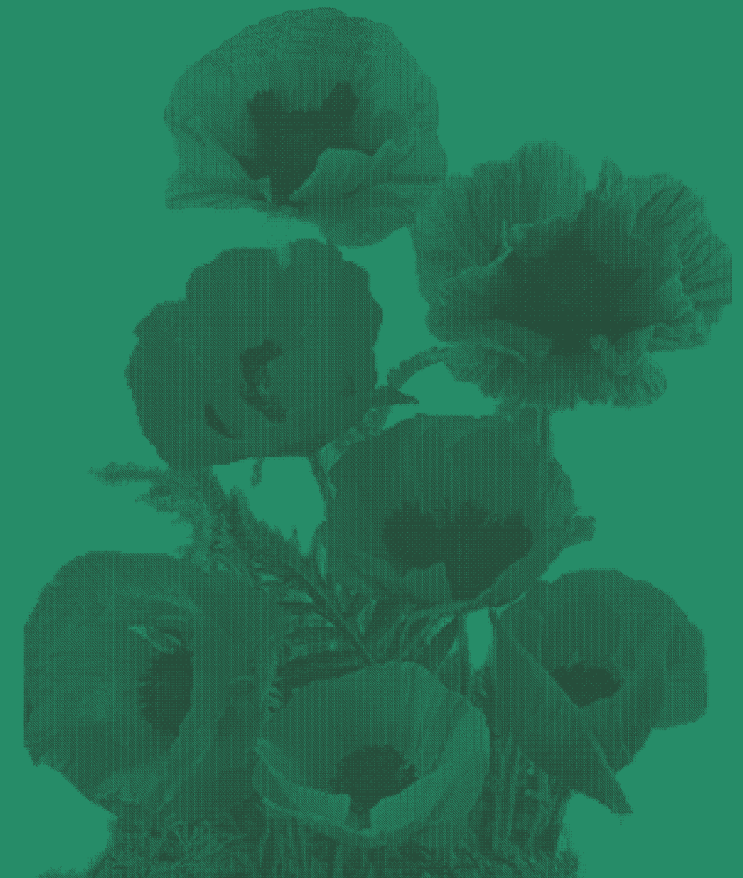
The workplace can promote a state of wellbeing in which individuals are able to live to their fullest potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their community. Working within the context of an increasingly stressed society and economy, it's important to find ways to offer mental and emotional respite and relief in the workplace.

OFFER MINDFUL PROGRAMMED SPACES AND EXPERIENCES

- Meditation Rooms
- Yoga / Tai Chi Practice Spaces
- Relaxation / Napping Pods
- Outdoor Space
- Classes and Support Groups

PRIORITIZE RESTORATIVE DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Indoor Nature (Biophilia)
- Adequate Levels of Daylight
- Access to Views
- Improved Air Quality



HOW CAN WE FOSTER COMMUNITY IN THE POST-COVID WORKPLACE?

COVID-19 has made us realize the power and significance of our sense of community in the workplace. By now, we've all participated in a virtual social gathering, but it doesn't compare to the comfort of an in-person chat with a colleague while grabbing a refill on coffee. We know our workplace won't be the same, and that our in-person interactions, be they planned or un-planned, will continue to be limited. So, how will the notion of community manifest in the post-COVID workplace?

Branded PPE and signage

Increased office-wide communications
(newsletters, slide shows, virtual town halls)

Legacy and employee-focused in-office digital
media (old photos, past events, family photos, etc.)



CAN MATERIALS HELP CREATE A CLEANER AND SAFER WORKPLACE?

For information on the role of materials in health safety, workplace design is looking to healthcare. Countless materials have been studied in relation to pathogens; however, research specific to COVID-19 is limited as it is a novel virus. While some materials have performed well in lessening transmission due to their actual composition, far more are noted for their ability to be thoroughly cleaned.

GLASS

Due to glass being non-porous and durable, it can be cleaned with a cleanser as harsh as bleach without damaging the integrity of the product.

COPPER

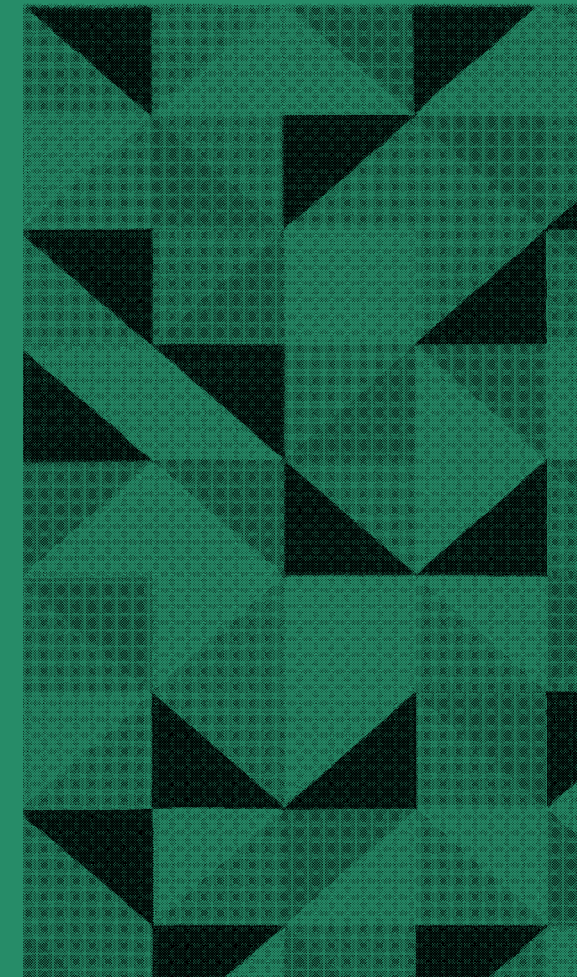
Viruses live on copper and copper alloys for less time than other metals, making them a good option for high-touch hardware and fixtures.

TEXTILES

A porous surface, textiles are less hospitable for viruses. A bleach-cleanable finish on textiles helps them withstand cleaning without degrading.

CARPET

Low-touch and a porous surface, solution-dyed carpets can better withstand bleach cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing.



SYSTEMS

Building systems combined with innovative and emerging technologies have the potential for significant impact on creating healthier office buildings and workplaces. From touchless navigation of high-traffic, high-density areas, to changes in how, and how much we ventilate our workplaces, is COVID-19 a catalyst for re-thinking how we design office buildings?

180 WALNUT

LOCATION

Cincinnati, OH

SIZE

371,000 SF

15 stories

25,000-27,000 SF floor plates

SUSTAINABILITY

Targeting LEED Silver

STATUS

Under Construction



HOW CAN WE MAKE LOBBIES SAFER?

LOBBY DESK

Provide recommended six feet of separation from and between guests

Utilize a virtual check-in kiosk

Limit the number of building guests through a timed schedule

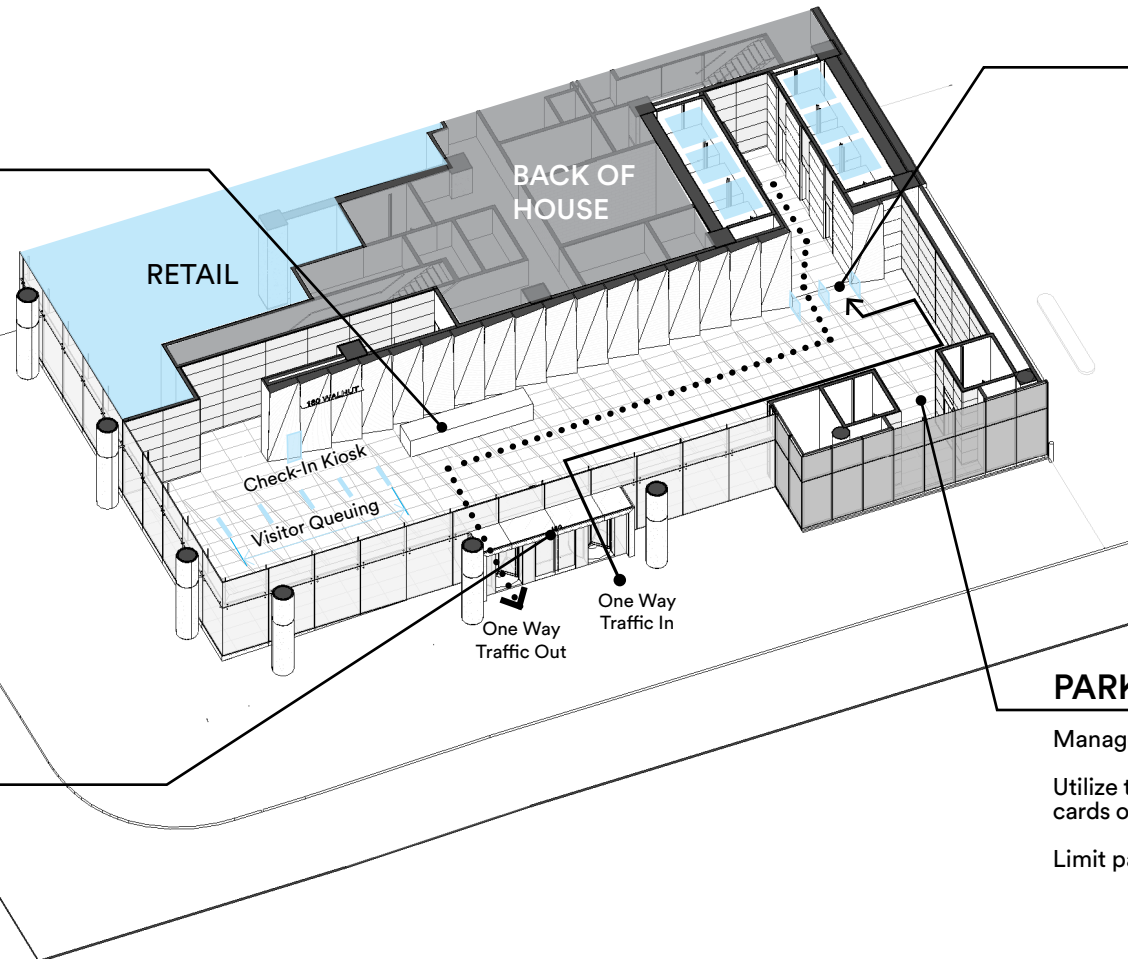
MAIN ENTRY

Upgrade contact materials of high-touch hardware

Disinfect according to CDC guidelines

Upgrade to automatic revolving door (note, size of revolver increases with automation)

Implement one-way circulation



PASSENGER ELEVATOR LOBBY

Pull queuing into main lobby space to allow for adequate distancing

Utilize destination dispatch technology to reduce the number of passengers in each cab

Utilize touchless technology such as ID cards or phone scanning to call elevators

Upgrade security methods to include biometric turnstiles or smart phone Bluetooth-enabled key fobs

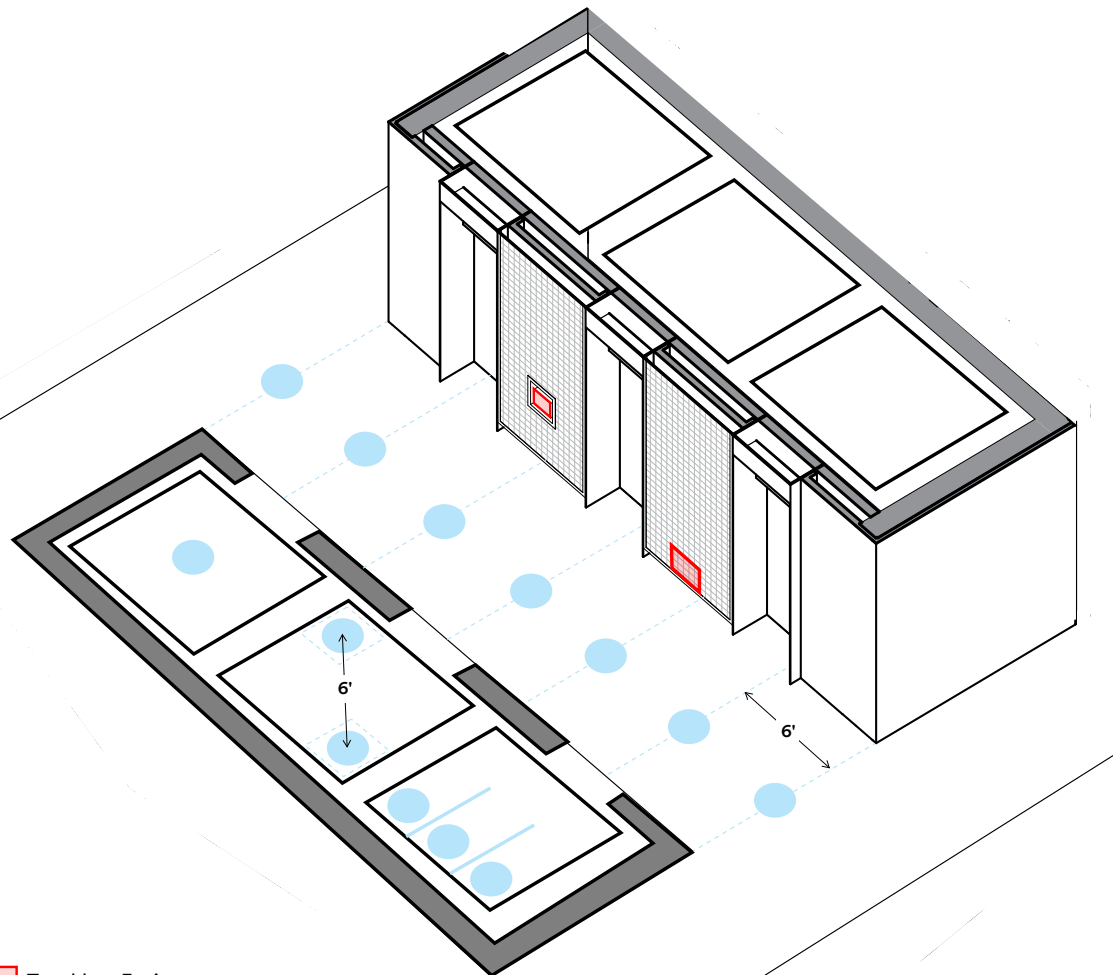
PARKING ELEVATOR LOBBY

Manage queuing in main lobby space

Utilize touchless technology such as ID cards or phone scanning to call elevator

Limit passengers per cab

HOW CAN WE TRANSPORT BUILDING USERS SAFELY?



□ Touchless Environment

● Social Distancing

REDUCE DENSITY

Reprogrammed destination dispatch technology reduces the number of passengers in each cab

Stair use can reduce number of elevator users

COMMUNICATE AND IMPLEMENT DISTANCING MEASURES

Floor graphics to indicate distanced queuing in elevator lobby

Floor graphics to indicate standing in elevator cabs

Temporary partitions in elevator cabs

ELIMINATE HAND TOUCH

Foot operated call buttons eliminate high-touch hand controls

Remote call systems and apps enable users to call elevators from smart phones

Non-contact door and button tools allow for no-touch operation



Foot-operated call buttons

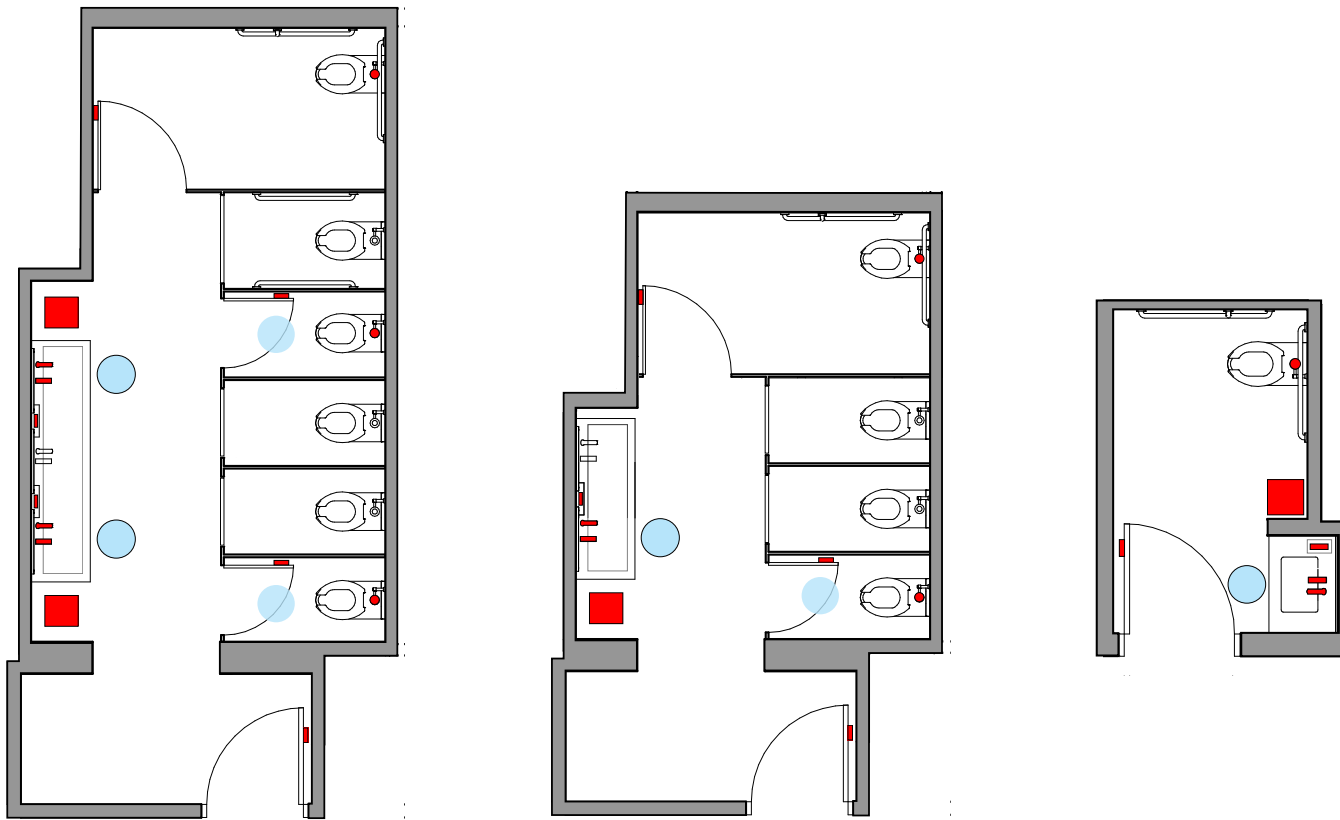


Elevator calling app



No-contact tool

WHAT CHANGES DO WE NEED TO MAKE TO BATHROOMS?



- Touchless Environment
- Social Distancing

ELIMINATE HAND TOUCH

- Automatic or foot activated door openers
- Automatic flush valves
- Automatic faucets and soap dispensers
- Automatic paper towel dispensers with adjacent waste bins

COMMUNICATE AND IMPLEMENT DISTANCING MEASURES

- Limited occupancy
- Graphics and signage

INCREASE CLEANING

- Review and increase frequency of cleaning
- Ensure restrooms are well stocked with supplies
- Review cleaning products effectiveness against viruses

WHAT CHANGES CAN WE MAKE TO HOW WE VENTILATE OFFICES?

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a renewed awareness of the importance of indoor air quality standards in office buildings. Current mechanical codes and standards allow a large amount of air to be recirculated, rather than refreshed, in an office building, increasing the chance of transmission of a virus. OSHA recently published a guide for businesses to prepare their workplaces to be in compliance with the 1970 Occupational Health and Safety Act for COVID-19 which includes engineering controls such as high efficiency filters and increased ventilation. Local municipalities are investigating changes to their building and public safety ordinances to include improved air quality standards to ensure safe workplaces during and after the pandemic.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE INDOOR AIR QUALITY?

POTENTIAL MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Ventilation rates can be increased to bring in more of fresh air.

HEPA rated MERV filters can be used to trap infected particulates.

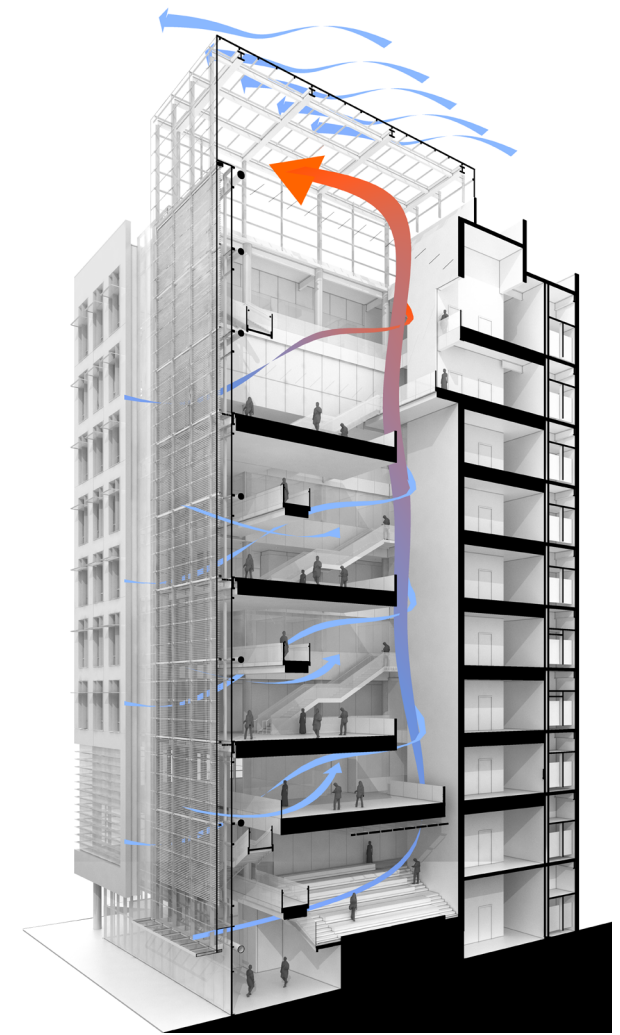
UV air purification systems can be installed to can both detect and remove the virus from the air.

Office shell and core buildings and tenant interiors can be designed or retrofitted to meet higher air quality standard certifications such as RESET which require real-time monitoring of TVOC temperature, relative humidity, particulate matter, and CO2 levels to improve air quality long term for healthier work spaces.

Natural ventilation strategies to supplement fan supported HVAC equipment can provide additional fresh air and improved ventilation standards for buildings in suitable climates.

Installing indoor air sensors can evaluate the condition of existing space, and monitor a workplace over time in order to make adjustments or tune the mechanical systems to the occupancy patterns over a work day.

Floor-by-floor fan systems rather than centralized systems can offer flexibility to isolate single floors that may experience an outbreak rather than the entire property.



SOLOMON CORDWELL BUENZ

Solomon Cordwell Buenz (SCB) is an architecture, interior design, and planning firm with a thoughtful design vision and a dynamic national imprint. Since 1931, SCB has made a lasting visual impact on skylines, campuses, and neighborhoods nationwide. From offices in Chicago, San Francisco, and Seattle we offer our expertise to clients across the country, helping them achieve their goals, serve their constituents, and create unique built environments. Our approach is to ask questions, listen, and develop the best design solution for each individual project. We are future-oriented, continually challenging ourselves to design to a higher standard, innovate at every level, and give our clients more as we achieve design excellence.

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