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## **Survey Findings Track the Impact of COVID-19 on Massachusetts's Business Landscape**

### **Over 120 Massachusetts-based Companies Reflect Employer Sentiments Amid Pandemic**

Boston, MA – Ninety-three percent (93%) of those who can work from home are working from home, according to the results of a survey that was released today by the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership (MACP) and its business association collaborators. Overall, 78% of the employees of the 122 respondents, mostly office-based companies who completed the latest MACP survey on the subject, are working at least part-time from home.

“The results continue to confirm what our virtual meetings are telling us, people are still largely working from home, including over 95% of us here at Putnam,” said Putnam Investments CEO, Robert Reynolds, who also chairs MACP. “Many of the business leaders I talk with echo the experience that we are having here: high productivity company-wide with the continued ability to service our clients, all while offering our employees safety, comfort, and convenience, especially in order to meet their own family obligations and, of course, stop the spread of the virus.”

The collaborative survey, the third such led by MACP, also included respondents from the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council (MassTLC), Massachusetts High Tech Council (MHTC), the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce (GBCC), Associated Industries of Massachusetts (AIM), Massachusetts Business Roundtable (MBR), Massachusetts Biology Council (MassBIO), Middlesex 3 Coalition, and NAIOP Massachusetts – The Commercial Real Estate Development Association.

MassTLC CEO Tom Hopcroft played an especially important role in the survey, engaging broad participation from across the tech sector. “The survey findings echo CEOs sentiments about reimagining the workplace of the future,” remarked Hopcroft. “We will see many more offices reconfigured to support greater collaboration and socialization of an increasingly flexible and distributed workforce that has found it can be productive working remote.”

In addition to 66% of companies reporting that they are already at or exceeding pre-pandemic levels of employment, all but 3% expect to achieve the same in the future. That good economic news is countered by the survey finding that 28% of companies are considering either moving employees or their company out of state, a concern to which MACP CEO, Jay Ash, a former state economic development secretary, said state policy makers should pay close attention.

“The pandemic has taught businesses that they can be as productive working remotely as they can being tethered to their workplace. This is going to put huge pressure on the state’s ability to recover the jobs we’ve lost, as job growth and related investment can seemingly take place almost anywhere in the country or world, placing higher cost-of-doing business states, like Massachusetts, at a competitive disadvantage that policy makers will need to consider and work to overcome,” said Ash.

In addition to companies considering out-of-state options, 38% of employers said they are considering reducing their office space footprint in Massachusetts, and 14% reported considering moving a portion of their urban office space to a more suburban location.

“This survey is critical for our industry and our economy,” said Tamara Small, CEO of NAIOP Massachusetts, The Commercial Real Estate Development Association. “With over 80% of respondents expecting to be back in offices in some capacity next year, the findings show that employers recognize that there is tremendous value with the collaborative, in-person work environment that cannot always be replicated virtually.”

#### **Other key findings regarding work-from-home:**

- 93% of employees who *can* work from home are currently working from home.
- 52% of companies report that they are operating 100% remotely.
- 72% of the companies surveyed report that 90% or more of *all* their employees are currently working remotely.
- 90% of companies report over 50% of *all* employees are currently working from home.
- 51% of the workforce is estimated to continue to be working remotely at least part time even after a treatment for COVID-19 has been deployed, over three-times the number of employees than before the pandemic.
- 49% of employees are likely to be working remotely at least part time into July 2021, with 81% of employees anticipated to be working from the office, at least part of time, in 2022.

#### **Factors Contributing to Return to Workplace Policies & Employee Productivity**

The survey confirms that there has been a cautious return to the workplace across all office-based sectors, with many companies extending their work from home policies well into 2021. There are many factors contributing to how and when employers will bring employees back. The top three factors are the availability of a treatment (78% of companies), a decline in reported infection rates (52% of companies), and, tying for third, employee sentiment and the availability of childcare options for kids, ranging from childcare to the opening of schools (38% of companies). For companies based in Boston or Cambridge, the availability and safety of public transportation also hit 39%.

“During the last 10 months the biomedical community has done a truly remarkable job to produce new diagnostic tests, medicines, and, most recently, effective vaccines for people with

COVID-19,” said Jeffrey M. Leiden, M.D., Ph.D., Executive Chairman of Vertex Pharmaceuticals and Vice Chair of MACP. “The survey data shows that as these new options are more widely adopted employers will have more confidence in resuming activities and returning to on-site work, which in turn, will lead to the acceleration of our economic recovery.”

The survey was conducted from November 23<sup>rd</sup> to December 8<sup>th</sup> of 2020, with 122 companies representing 130,306 employees in Massachusetts participating. The majority of the surveyed employers, 50%, are headquartered in the Boston/Cambridge area, with another 42% located in suburban areas within 495, and 8% outside of 495.

### **About MACP**

The Massachusetts Competitive Partnership is a non-profit, non-partisan, 501(c)(4) public policy group comprised of chief executive officers of some of the Commonwealth's largest businesses. The Partnership's goals are to promote job growth and competitiveness in the Commonwealth by working in collaboration with public officials and business and civic leaders in Massachusetts. MACP's mission is to promote job stabilization and growth across the full spectrum of business and within all geographic regions of the Commonwealth.