

**Future of (How We) Work Task Force  
Meeting #10: Office Space 1/19/2021  
Notes**

**How do we reimagine our office space to accommodate the flexibility needed for our future workforce?**

As we wrapped up 2020, we shared a survey with our Future of (how we) Work Task Force members to learn about their plans for 2021. When asked about what they believe their future will be, more than three quarters of respondents indicated they anticipated having a flexible operating model with large portions of their workforce working remotely at least some of the time. This creates a new set of challenges around how we utilize our office space to reinforce culture and meet our shifting needs. KSA invited three thought leaders to share their approach to tackling these challenges: Nancy Siefert, VP and Global Director of Interiors & Insights at Jacobs, Jovana Abu-Ali Design Lead for Global Interiors at Jacobs, and Mark Moreau General Manager of CIC Massachusetts.

**Highlights:**

- **Change is Accelerating**  
There has been a trend toward more flexible office spaces for the last decade, but the COVID-19 Pandemic has accelerated that trend as technology and corporate culture embraces remote work.
- **Understanding how your people use space is critical**  
Designers are leaving behind long held formulas and ratios about space planning and instead are asking big questions about how employees in this next phase are going to need to use space. Jacobs has used this pandemic time to study these shifting dynamics. Broadly they identified five core space needs: Learning/Mentoring, Group/Team, Social Interaction, Decompress, and Focused work. In pre-pandemic times, all of these space needs were accommodated largely in the physical space, with only “decompression” being something that existed predominantly in a virtual space. Early research shows that in the future, all of these needs will be met in a physical and virtual space at the office.
- **Be explicit in creating new culture around space uses**  
Part of reimagining space is creating new cultural norms for how spaces are used. Utilizing signage and defining those norms is a critical part of making new spaces work for on site employees.
- **Safety is key**  
Regular testing, new signage and guidelines about physical distancing, outdoor space, and quality airflow will be critical for ensuring team safety and comfort.