



“By profiling each department’s workstyle, PLASTARC provided parameters for designing an open and adaptable workplace. In the process, they helped optimize use of space and radically reduce TCEQ’s physical footprint.”

~ Scott Nelson, Director of Community, Parkhill

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

Aligning Operations and Values

**Pre-Design
Participatory Design
Change Management**
Government
2021-2022
Austin, TX
1,800 staff
428,893 sqft

The environmental authority for the state of Texas, TCEQ has been headquartered for decades in a sprawling Austin campus. Its five buildings, products of a bygone era, were primarily composed of enclosed offices, cubicles, and conference rooms. But when Covid-19 forced the agency to switch to telework in 2020, a surprising, previously missing sense of connection started to emerge: those who worked primarily in the field no longer felt excluded from in-person meetings they could not attend, and office workers no longer had to contend with the headquarters’ stark physical barriers.

Taking note of these improvements, TCEQ leadership contracted PLASTARC to sculpt a workplace that would better serve its productivity and sustainability objectives. PLASTARC used surveys, interviews, and data analysis to holistically evaluate TCEQ’s workplace and propose a comprehensive infrastructure redesign. After quantitatively and anecdotally profiling the unique workstyles and needs of eight departments, PLASTARC recommended that TCEQ should implement unique workplace redesigns that tailored to each department, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach.

By re-framing each department’s office to focus less on individual ownership and more on communal functionality, PLASTARC demonstrated how TCEQ could take full advantage of remote work’s benefits and facilitate collaboration. This fostered a more inclusive exchange of ideas and helped TCEQ radically reduce its real estate footprint, and thereby become more environmentally sustainable. PLASTARC’s proposals were approved by leadership and are now pending approval from the State Legislature.



Methods

- Completed a comprehensive **analysis** of current and proposed floor plans
- Administered **surveys** to determine workers’ needs and preferences
- Conducted **leadership interviews** to establish departmental objectives
- Held employee **workshops** to inspire conversation and generate new ideas
- Presented a range of **re-programming scenarios** based on our research



Key Values & Outcomes

- Collaborated with Mmoser design team to create Activity-Based Working (ABW) floor plans that better serve workers’ individual needs and preferences
- Tailored pilot programs according to DocuSign’s real estate and technology portfolio, and trained in-house personnel to serve as pilot leaders moving forward
- Developed change management guidelines that DocuSign could use to seamlessly introduce and optimize a newly dynamic and inclusive workspace