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Francisco than there were before the pandemic.

Mar. 02, 2023



By Sam Moore SFGate, San Francisco (via TNS).

Those working in downtown San Francisco abandoned the area in droves at the start of the pandemic, but exactly how many might surprise you.

According to a recent report from the city's Budget and Legislative Analyst, there are about 150,000 fewer office workers on any given workday in downtown San Francisco than there were before the pandemic.

The report attributes this downturn largely to the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, but other factors had repercussions as well, namely, the effect of online

shopping on the retail industry. Regardless of the cause, this shift in the landscape of

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Despite the barrage of layoffs that's impacted the tech industry over the past year, the report highlights an increase of about 14,000 in jobs in the professional, scientific and technical sectors since 2019. However, because these jobs are now largely remote, this increase isn't doing much for downtown; in fact, this shift to remote and hybrid work models is what's fueling the area's struggle to recover.

As of 2022, downtown San Francisco had the lowest level of post-pandemic recovery of 62 North American cities analyzed in an Institute of Governmental Studies study, the report notes. At 31%, the city also had the highest rate of jobs in professional, scientific and management services — all areas that are “compatible with remote work.”

The report estimates that before the pandemic, the average downtown employee was spending \$168 per week at businesses in the Financial District, Mid-Market and Union Square neighborhoods. As of January 2023, office attendance downtown was at 43% of what it was prior to the pandemic, and experts don't predict this number to reach 100% any time soon, if ever.

“One notable academic study from 2021 concluded that remote and hybrid work arrangements with fewer days in the office are here to stay,” the report said.

Because of this, the report notes that the city should prepare for shortfalls associated with a decrease in property, business, sales and hotel taxes downtown.

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