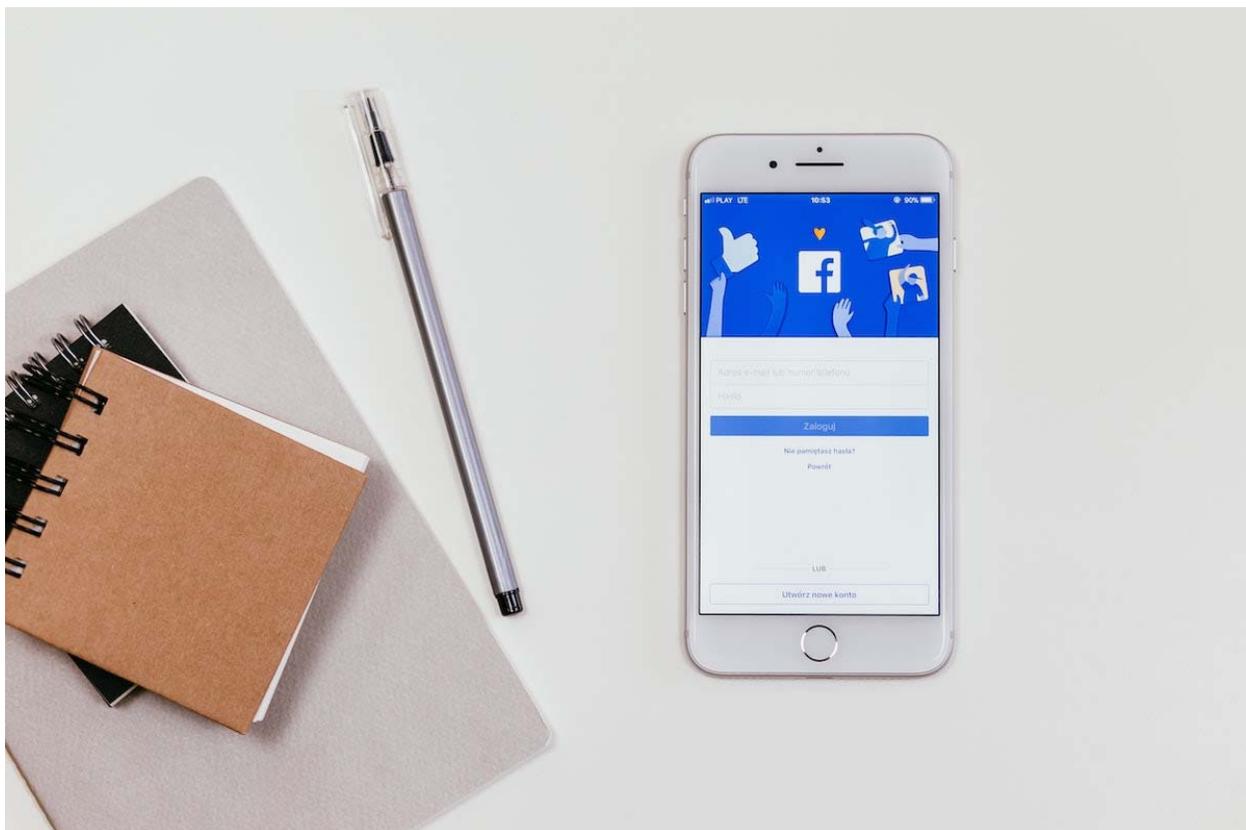# Facebook is coming for Philadelphia. What could that mean for local tech?

Recruiting plans related to more permanent remote work policies could further push the city's status as a "highly regarded IT ecosystem" and increase diversity at the social media giant.

By Paige Gross / staff - May 22, 2020

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The shift to remote work is changing the United States' most notable tech companies. At **Facebook**, forthcoming policies also mean a new hiring focus on cities outside of Silicon Valley and New York City — which could have big implications for Philadelphia.

During the social media giant's weekly virtual town hall Thursday, founder and CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** said that he believes the future for the social media platform's work can happen largely remotely.

In the next five or 10 years, he estimates about 50% of the company's 45,000 employees could be fully remote. The announcement came just days after **Twitter** announced that it will embrace remote work for any employee who wants to continue in that environment, even after the coronavirus pandemic eases up and employees will be able to return to offices.

"It certainly makes sense to aggressively open up remote hiring," Zuckerberg said during the 55-minute video. "And we're going to couple that with a more measured approach to opening permanent remote work for employees."

Some Facebook offices will begin reopening this summer, but with lower numbers of in-office staff, he said.

"Culture is built very carefully over time." Zuckerberg said. "Products can sometimes get built in a matter of months, but culture is built day by day over years, decades. I think we need to take a long-term approach to how we think about remote work, because this is fundamentally changing our culture."

The founder then went on to say this new attitude toward the future of the company's work will allow for broader recruiting in cities where Facebook doesn't currently have a presence. This will allow the company to improve diversity — now opening up to people who live in different communities and have different backgrounds and perspectives, he said.

This also includes recruiting remotely from cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Zuckerberg said, as well as plans to add new hubs in Denver, Dallas and Atlanta.

In a public statement, **Lori Matloff Goler**, Facebook's VP of human resources and recruiting, wrote that "over time, we expect most of our workforce to be spread across large parts of the U.S. and beyond."

"We'll also begin to open up opportunities for some current employees to work remotely so that we can learn from their experience to help us get this right," she said.

"Facebook going remote work will engage a larger diverse applicant pool to work with the company, and more importantly, sustain and keep them."Brigitte Daniel, Wilco Electronic Systems

Neither announcement from Facebook outlines how many jobs will be coming to the Philly area or the other cities mentioned, or just what the recruiting will look like. But it's clear that a tech giant like Facebook setting up (remote) shop in Philly would have an impact on our tech scene.

Wilco Electronic Systems EVP **Brigitte Daniel**, who was an outspoken advocate for diversity in tech hiring during the **Amazon HQ2** pitch process in 2018, agrees that Facebook casting a wider net for tech talent will ultimately bring diversity to the company, and could push inclusion on the national level for tech hiring.

"Many diverse employees sometimes prefer living where there is more representation in cities like Philadelphia, Atlanta, DC, Chicago," she said in an email to **Technical.ly**. "Facebook going remote work will engage a larger diverse applicant pool to work with the company, and more importantly, sustain and keep them."

The financial benefits are also there, she said. There's an opportunity for more families to own homes, and build tech talent in more affordable cities. The downside, Daniel said, comes with any remote work — that in-person interaction can often spur innovation, and that much of Facebook's appeal is its office life.

Site selection consultant **John Boyd**, who's advised companies like **Boeing**, **AT&T** and **PNC Bank** in their own office location selection process, said that this move for Facebook was likely inevitable, as more and more companies seriously consider remote work. The pandemic likely just accelerated these plans, he told Technical.ly.

Thousands of employees moving to remote work will have an effect on things like the housing market, labor market and recruiting dynamic, Boyd said. It will positively impact the environment, as commutes for certain folks will become nonexistent, and space devoted to parking could be turned into housing or green space. But there may not be as much support for high-cost transit projects if many people aren't relying on it for work anymore.

"That said, there will likely be a lot of public advocacy pushback with people concerned about inflation and gentrification," Boyd said.

But overall, it could further push Philadelphia's status as a "highly regarded IT ecosystem," with access to local colleges and universities graduating tech talent every year.

It's not clear how employee salaries would be adjusted outside of Facebook's hometown of Menlo Park, where Boyd said the current average Facebook employee makes about $240,000 and lives in the area where an average home price is $2.4 million.

Zuckerberg said that if employees do decide to move to lower-cost areas, salaries will likely be lowered.

The plan to open up these remote jobs goes into effect "in the coming weeks," Matloff Goler said.