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There ARE Transportation Silver Linings in the Dark COVID-19 Catastrophe: Cameron on Transportation

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In the post-COVID-19 world (whenever that may be) commuters will be asking themselves one question: Is this trip really necessary?

Sure, when the quarantining is lifted and the life threatening virus seems to have passed (at least until it returns next fall), we may look forward to getting back on the train and on the crowded highways.

But the weeks of not commuting have changed our attitudes toward work and the necessity of travel. Going forward, I think we will be making that daily trek a lot less often and that will have a profound effect on transportation.

Sure, plumbers can't telecommute, but knowledge workers can. And they make up a large portion of southwest Connecticut's population. They've been working from home just fine in recent weeks. So they'll be asking themselves (and their employers) if a daily schlep into their New York City office is really necessary, or if they can continue to work from home two or three days a week.

Being self-employed, I have worked from my home office for over 35 years. I sure don't miss the daily grind, nor the office politics, and love my work so I end up doing it six or seven days a week: it's not a job but a passion.

- **SEE ALSO:** [‘Years, If Ever’ For Metro-North to Get Back to Pre-COVID Levels, Says Metro-North Chief: Cameron on Transportation](#)(May 17)

When I started my consultancy I didn't have a computer or even a fax machine. Today, the average home has as much communications gear as at the office. We don't need a physical presence "at work" to be working.

We will all be wearing face masks for many months to come any time we leave our homes. And work meetings won't involve shaking hands or exchanging business cards. Business travel? Not anytime soon.

I have a neighbor who used to make almost weekly flights to London for a single meeting or business luncheon. That was nuts before COVID-19 and is certainly unnecessary now.

So in an ironic way, this virus might actually be a blessing for commuters.

Our trains and highways used to be crowded because we all bought into an outdated social construct that "work" was something we did from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, at an office. Rush hours were called "peak periods", just like when the virus was at its worst.

Post-COVID-19 we can flatten that commuting curve on the roads and rails.

Ridership on Metro-North need not peak in rush hours if it can be spread out over the hours or days. And I-95 need not be a parking lot if people are working from home or staggering their hours.

Parking won't be as much of an issue if demand drops. And we've already seen New Yorkers opting for walking or bicycling instead of taking the bus or subway.

Less traffic should mean faster delivery times for trucks and shorter commutes for those who must drive. And we'll all be burning less fuel, cleaning our air.

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Fewer cars on the road should mean a reduction in traffic accidents. Driving less, our car insurance premiums should go down.

If we're not wasting time commuting, we'll have more time for our families, for volunteer work and our personal interests (and health-giving sleep).

As horrendous as this virus has been, it's given us all a chance to rethink our priorities. Life is too short to work at a job you don't like or waste hours a day getting there.

Post-COVID-19 will be a new world for commuters.

Jim Cameron has been a Darien resident for more than 25 years. He is the founder of the [Commuter Action Group](#), sits on the [Merritt Parkway Conservancy](#) board and also serves on the Darien RTM and as program director for Darien TV79. The opinions expressed in this column, republished with permission of Hearst CT Media, are only his own. You can reach him at CommuterActionGroup@gmail.com.