

An Interstate Agency modernizes remote access, cuts costs, and keeps IT simple

How a U.S. metropolitan planning agency replaced Citrix with Parallels Remote Application Server (RAS) to give staff secure, one-to-one access to their office desktops from anywhere.



THE CUSTOMER

A regional U.S. interstate planning agency serving a multi-county metropolitan area across two states coordinates transportation and land-use planning on behalf of local and state government partners. Like many public agencies, it supports a hybrid workforce: staff split time between the office and home, and each employee is tied to a specific, dedicated desktop workstation rather than a shared pool of machines.

THE CHALLENGE

- **A strict one-to-one model:** Give every staff member secure remote access to their own physical desktop — not just any available machine in a pool.
- **A lightweight proof of concept** to validate the approach with a small group before a broader rollout.
- **Tight security** so remote sessions couldn't be used as a backdoor to bypass IT controls and RDP directly into a machine.
- **A licensing model** that flexes with actual usage rather than forcing the agency to overprovision for staff who aren't logged in every day.
- **Room to grow into adjacent use cases**, such as mapped network drives for a future fleet of company-issued laptops.



100%

of staff preferred RAS to their prior Citrix experience



1:1

Remote PC model — each employee, their own desktop



Lower

license consumption than originally budgeted for

THE SOLUTION

Working with the Parallels team, the agency stood up Parallels RAS as a proof of concept on its existing infrastructure, configured around its one-person, one-machine reality:

- **A Remote PC Static Provider** for deliberate grouping and management of machines, rather than one undifferentiated pool.
- **Static assignment at the host pool level**, guaranteeing each employee is mapped to their own designated desktop.
- **Security hardening** disabling inherited default RDP access and routing every connection through the RAS gateway — closing off any path to bypass RAS.
- **Concurrent-user licensing**, so a license is only consumed for the duration of an active session and returns to the pool at sign-out.

The initial setup and first successful remote session were completed in a single working session, giving the agency's IT team a repeatable framework for onboarding additional colleagues and machines.

THE OUTCOME

- **Staff reported the experience was as good as, or better than, Citrix** — with low-latency access to their office desktops from home.
- **Reduced remote access spend** compared to the prior environment, freeing up budget for other IT priorities.
- **Lower license consumption** than originally planned, giving the agency headroom to expand usage without an immediate cost increase.
- **Reduced administrative overhead** since the small IT team no longer needs to manage remote access permissions on every individual machine.
- **Now evaluating drive-mapping capabilities** to support an upcoming rollout of company-issued laptops — building on the same platform rather than introducing a new tool.

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“I don't really have any complaints about the software at this point. People seem just as happy, or happier, with it than Citrix — and it saved us money.”

**IT Lead,
U.S. Regional Planning Agency**

About Parallels RAS: Parallels Remote Application Server (RAS) is a virtual application and desktop delivery solution that gives public sector organizations secure, flexible remote access to physical PCs, virtual desktops, and applications — without the cost and complexity of legacy VDI platforms.