

AS OUR roads get busier every year, people are seeking ways to reduce their commute times to improve their quality of life. Traditionally, the solution has been to live closer to your workplace, but sometimes this can mean sacrificing quality of location.

For some, the solution to this is semigration, a new trend gathering impetus in South Africa.

Using data supplied by Tracker, Lightstone has provided average travel times to Johannesburg and Cape Town from their outlying suburbs.

Peak travel times from Midstream, Centurion and Pretoria to Johannesburg are 40, 60 and 80 minutes respectively; while travel times from Millerton, Belville and Durbanville to Cape Town are 40, 45 and 60 minutes.

Locally, travel times from Ballito, Berea and Hillcrest to uMhlanga are 45, 35 and 60 minutes respectively. The total time spent commuting

Commute times impact property values

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Gareth Bailey



PROPERTY MATTERS

thus averages 1.5 to 2 hours a day in the major cities but can be substantially longer in the event of traffic incidents.

It comes as no surprise that property values are affected by proximity to key business nodes and transport routes.

An example of commute times affecting property values is seen in the surge of values after the construction of the Gautrain. The average value of properties in the suburb of Sandton rose by more

than 96% between 2010 and 2016 while in neighbouring Rivonia – only a short bus ride away from the station – the average price rose just 59%.

People buying along our North Coast are no different and are also seeking to reduce time spent commuting. However, they are not prepared to do so at the expense of quality of location. I think more people in this segment of our market treat their primary residence as a sanctuary rather than a utilitarian home.

An increasing number of people are relocating their families from Gauteng to secure estates on the North Coast where they can enjoy the subtropical climate; warm ocean and coastal forests; world-class promenades; and abundance of top schools, new shopping centres

and restaurants. Some of the most popular estates spanning uMhlanga to Ballito include Izanga, Ilawaan Forest, Signature Sibaya, Gold Coast Sibaya, Zimbali, Simbithi and a growing number of new estates launching further northward.

The breadwinner often travels to Gauteng during the week and returns on a Thursday or Friday. These homeowners achieve their primary goal of living in a quality environment and, given the 10 minute trip to the airport and 1 hour flight to Gauteng, they don't have to sacrifice much more than the average commute times experienced in the major cities.

While the semigration trend was initially most prevalent along the Atlantic Seaboard in Cape Town, there has been a significant shift toward the North Coast. Two of the

main factors affecting Cape Town negatively include the city's traffic congestion and, most recently, its water shortage. It seems that KZN's road infrastructure is pre-empting demand with the completion of three massive new interchanges at Umgeni, uMhlanga and Ballito within just a few years of each other. In addition, the relocation of the airport to the North Coast has ultimately been a significant enabler of the semigrant trend in our area.

● Bailey is Pam Golding Properties area principal for Durban Coastal. For further information visit www.pamgolding.co.za or contact Pam Golding Properties KZN on 031 207 5584

