

Public transport, urban development and property values

By [Jill Lloyd](#)

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Transport plays a critical role in urban development for a number of significant reasons but, globally, the cities that generally top the lists in surveys measuring urban quality of life are those that prioritise public transport, affording people ease of access to key areas and amenities.



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Public transport is crucial to the liveability of a city, and in cities like Cape Town where exponential densification has extended to the outer-lying suburbs with a proliferation of new or growing commercial nodes throughout, public transport is especially important.

However, in many areas, like the Southern Suburbs, the public transport system is still very poor, with the two main options being ones that most people wouldn't even consider using anymore.

Rising cost of fuel

The trains are notoriously unsafe and unreliable and the driving standards of many minibus taxis is so poor that one should probably take out life insurance before getting into them.

With the ever-rising petrol price, it has also become very costly to run two cars per family on a daily basis, so if one person were able to hop onto a bus every day instead, it would make a significant difference to monthly expenses – and the congestion on the roads.

Also, in the current economy, many households simply can't afford to run two vehicles and there are several residential pockets in the Southern Suburbs that have no easy access to public transport at all. If a safe, reliable transport system was introduced to the area, it would certainly stimulate the market – and boost property values - in suburbs like Claremont, Kirstenhof, Lakeside, Grassy Park, Kenwyn, Wetton, Ottery, Woodside Park, Lower Kenilworth and Rondebosch East.



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Areas with public transport more desirable

Some people believe that having public transport links in a suburb makes it less desirable, and whilst this may be true for a short period during the construction phase because of noise and inconvenience, in most cases quite the opposite is true. Research supports that easy access to public transportation makes local properties even more desirable, and that people are increasingly favouring neighbourhoods that offer reliable and convenient transport systems.

Residents on the Western and Atlantic Seaboards and in the City Bowl have been enjoying the MyCiti bus service for a number of years already and roll-out to other areas has been on the cards but has yet to be implemented.

I am often asked by potential buyers from the Blouberg/Milnerton/Tableview area when the Southern Suburbs Citi Bus route will be operational and what the route will be, but unfortunately it looks like it may be some time yet.

According to the MyCiti website, the next major phase of MyCiTi (phase 2A) is currently underway in the most densely populated parts of Cape Town and will directly link town centres in Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain with Claremont and Wynberg, with services planned to commence in 2023.



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Southern Suburbs accessibility

It's not only Southern Suburbs residents who are affected by the lack of public transport links, but also those who work in the area and must travel a considerable distance daily from suburbs like Khayelitsha and Langa. The Southern Suburbs is very difficult to access for many of the people who work here as there is simply not enough transport to bring workers to the areas. Not only must they get up ridiculously early to get to work on time, it's also very expensive, especially if they work six days a week.

Golden Arrow buses do still operate to Wynberg, but they are very old, the routes slow and also expensive – it costs R168 per week for a five-day clip card – and an additional R38 per single trip thereafter. And people then have to spend more money to catch taxis to other suburbs like Claremont where a large number of people work in the commercial node.

Most people would love to use public transport, but they are apprehensive to do so. I used to think nothing of hopping on the train to go and visit friends in Fish Hoek. It was a lovely journey and I felt perfectly safe, but sadly I would not even consider doing so now. A reliable, rapid bus system like MyCiti in the area would make an enormous difference, not only to people's

lives, but in general as it would also ease the congestion, especially at peak times when there are many one-passenger cars on the road.

It would probably also stimulate growth in the commercial sector as many more people from other areas would be inclined to work or open businesses here.

School bus service

Considering the number of schools in the area, if the city could also find a way to introduce a school bus service in the Southern Suburbs, it would ease traffic even further.

If there were well-supervised, safe buses that dropped the kids off right at their school, it would be well supported and would stop the overloaded taxis that disgorge piles of children from their depths every day. The transport that is currently used for many children is often unsafe.

I think it's safe to say that a functional and safe public transport system almost always improves the value of business properties, single-family homes, and multi-tenant buildings in an area.

Besides the obvious benefits of having a convenient alternative when necessary, public transport can reduce congestion for people who do use cars, conserve fuel, lower emissions, and improve the economy.

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