

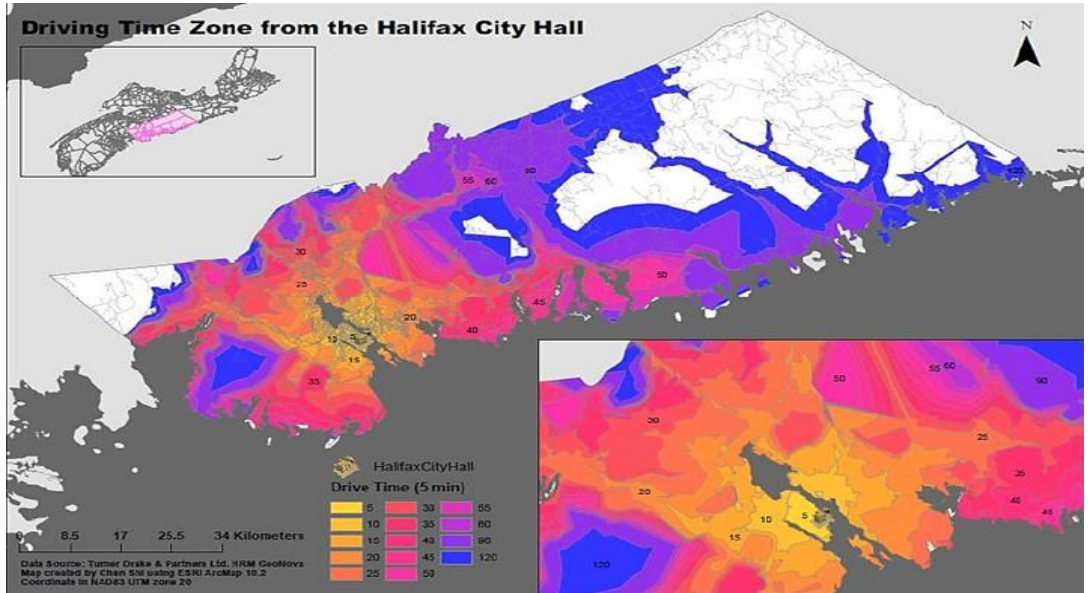
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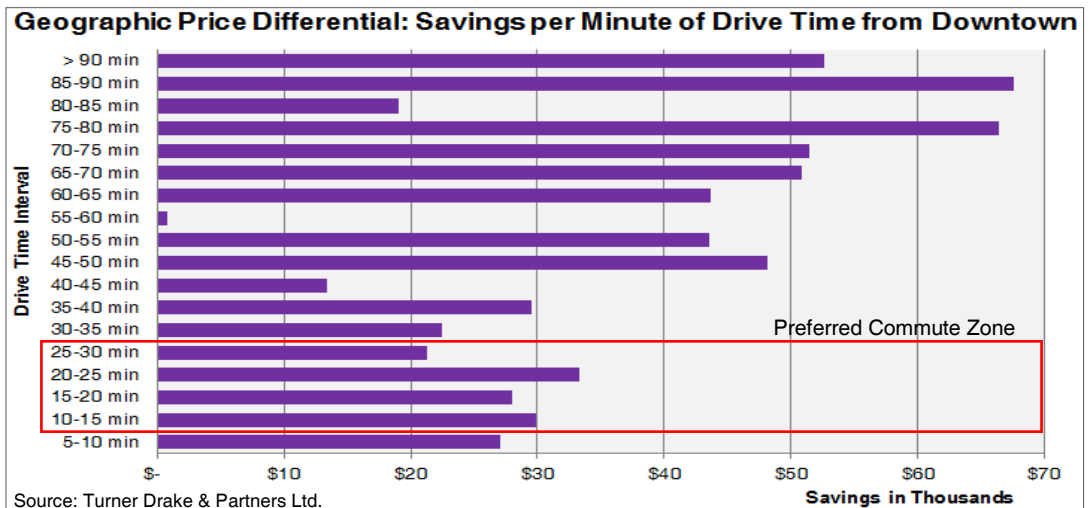
**Subject:** Work-Life: The Geographic Balance

**Comments:** How long are you willing to commute to work on a daily basis? According to a 2011 Statistics Canada Census Survey, 15 to 29 minutes is the preferred travel window. People are good at weighing their options, trading off travel time for housing cost. If you work downtown but live further from work, you can usually afford a bigger house. Where is the sweet spot in the preferred commute zone where you save the most money on housing for each minute of drive time from downtown?



Credit: Turner Drake & Partners Ltd.

Inspired by an analysis of four major Canadian cities in Maclean’s Magazine, TDP looked at average single family home prices in HRM for 2014, categorized by drive time in 5-minute intervals using street network analysis. The map above shows the distribution of drive time zones. The table below shows how much average sale prices for each commute zone vary per minute versus the average house price within 5 minutes of City Hall.



Source: Turner Drake & Partners Ltd.

So there you have it ... the sweet spot within the preferred commute zone which best trades off housing costs with travel time lies in the 20 to 25 minute band! Why? Well cities generally follow a monocentric pattern with values falling as distance increases from the downtown: Halifax is no exception. Within the HRM preferred commute zone (15 to 29 minutes), real estate values increase by an average of \$8,558 per minute of travel time. Employment nodes outside the Central Business District such as Burnside Industrial Park (in the 15 to 20 minute zone) and Bedford (in the 25 to 30 minute zone) can also boost house prices. Although commute time is rarely the sole criteria impacting the domicile decision (several TDP staff enjoy one hour daily commutes) it features prominently in most house purchase decisions. A fact that has significant implications for new housing development ...

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