

Not every city requires that you live close to work. I have always lived close to work and I have lived in several cities from Texas to multiple cities on the east coast including New York, Boston, and DC. But a carefully planned commute can give home buyers surprising new options in their home search in large well-planned cities such as Houston. There are survivable and livable commutes.

Houston and its outlying areas are built for "sprawl" - and I mean that in a positive sense - in the sense that residents have many good options and can live in almost any part of town (relatively) that fits their lifestyle and they can have a reasonable commute if they have a professional job and any degree of flexibility at all. We have the best highway infrastructure in the world here in the 4th largest city in the United States, and for example the med center in particular (including the burgeoning "satellite" centers) are built exactly off of those satellite rings and spokes so to speak, as are other professional centers.

So buyers working in these "hubs" can study the specific communities in which they might be interested. An affordable budget will buy you a respectable home in a respectable community and it should make you a happy buyer in a happy home in a happy, safe community. There are many pitfalls, make no mistake, so don't take with whom you work lightly when it comes to mortgage or real estate brokering, even if you decide to buy "new" -- but you can find it! (We recommend you use a REALTOR(r) even if you buy from a new home builder so your interests are represented.)

You do NOT need to live "near" your workplace to live comfortably in Houston. There are several commute patterns that could work for you where you could live in the neighborhood where you want to live, such as in Cypress or Clear Lake, or on the desirable north side in Spring or The Woodlands as many do (The Hardy Toll Rd is the Houston Autobahn) -- be open to the possibilities and above all else -- work with someone who knows the possibilities and can help you with them. Best wishes to all buyers and keep reaching out for advice. Some of your best advice may come from a broad survey of your coworkers and friends, too! Good luck.

*Nick Will is the Managing Broker of [Lelda Will Properties](#), the private real estate practice of brokers Lelda Will and Nick Will, and also of the forthcoming [Will & Allen REALTORS\(r\)](#), the separate brand under which their agents will practice, to launch in the new year 2010.*