

'WALK-TO-WORK': FINDING TAKERS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE

In this time of rising fuel costs and high stress levels, a workplace that is closer to home not only reduces the financial burden but also boosts employee morale and efficiency.

ANURADHA RAMAMIRTHAM explores the concept, in Pune

How would you feel if you could avoid the traffic snarls you face every morning and reach office in 10 minutes flat? How about just strolling back home after a hectic day at work? In cities like Mumbai and Pune, where people spend hours travelling to and from work, the concept of 'walk-to-work' may find many takers.

The phenomenon of residential enclaves that are far from workplace hubs, is basically the result of mercenary and unregulated development. In areas of Pune, where this kind of disconnect is most evident, the trend cannot be reversed in developed areas. However, it can be arrested in the newer areas if a scientific and planned model of urbanisation is implemented.

The 'walk-to-work' concept has gained a lot of momentum in Pune the last few years. This is quite evident from the popularity of integrated townships and the increasing density of residential real estate development around the city's IT and manufacturing hubs. "There is a lot of scope for catering to this concept, which is rapidly becoming a necessity. Projects based on the 'walk-to-work' concept have massive implications in terms of traffic decongestion and reduction of air and noise pollution. Moreover, they lead to in-

creased well-being of residents because of the reduced stress and the fact that they can spend more time with their families," says Sanjay Bajaj, managing director-Pune, Jones Lang LaSalle India.

The rising concerns about poor infrastructure in the city are encouraging developers to come up with 'walk-to-work' projects, leading to a spurt in commercial-residential complexes. Lately, the surge in demand for residential property has been observed at locations which have good connectivity. Additionally, the city has seen a lot of migrants from other cities, adding to demand from buyers. Pune is also a growing IT hub and the growing populace means increasing requirement for better infrastructure for the city. With the ever-increasing traffic snarls in the city the 'walk-to-work' concept will bring in a significant makeover, also allowing people to dedicate more quality hours at work rather than spending maximum time in travelling.

The presence of the IT hub in Hinjewadi and completion of the Mumbai-Pune express highway has led to a rapid increase in demand for residential development in the western areas of Pune like Baner, Pashan, Wakad, Hinjewadi and Yashwade.

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"Located in close proximity to the emerging IT hubs of Pune, our projects Kalpataru Harmony at Wakad, Kalpataru Estate at Pimple Gurav and Kalpataru Serenity at Manjri,

were designed keeping the work-life balance of our consumers in mind and establishing the concept of 'walk-to-work' culture," informs a Kalpataru spokesperson.

Pune is gearing up for enhancing its infrastructure and

accessibility factor with multiple development projects, to enable commuting with ease. Therefore, many city dwellers opt for a residential space near their offices. "With the concept of 'walk-to-work' being highly spoken about, it is increasing-

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ly being preferred so as to spend comparatively less time in travelling. Ajmera's project Aris in Koregaon Park, has been planned with serious consideration for the connectivity aspect. The project is situated in the heart of Pune city and its location facilitates connectivity across the city," opines Dhaval Ajmera, director, Ajmera Realty and Infra India Ltd.

Today, lifestyles are changing fast. People are trying to avoid travelling too much so that they can spend with their family. Co-existence of commercial and residential complexes always complements the 'walk-to-work' culture and gains greater significance in rapid urbanisation. In a city like Pune, it is every working person's aspiration to live as close to their office or place of business as possible. As a selling point for residential projects, such proximity is hard to beat and demand for such homes is huge.

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WITH THE EVER INCREASING TRAFFIC SNARLS IN THE CITY, A 'WALK-TO-WORK' CONCEPT WILL BRING IN A SIGNIFICANT MAKEOVER, ALSO FACILITATING PEOPLE TO DEDICATE MORE QUALITY HOURS AT WORK.