#1 of 10: Spread in Mean Commute Across the Market, in Minutes (2024)

Wilmington’s commute spread leads NC by 31.8 minutes

ALEX Intelligence, 2026

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THE DATA

31.8

Spread in Mean Commute Across the Market, in Minutes (2024)

The gap between St. James and Wilmington is the largest in North Carolina.

This 31.8-minute spread reflects a deepening spatial divide in the Cape Fear region. St. James, at 50.3 minutes, stands as the farthest from central work hubs, while inner-ring communities like Kings Grant and Murraysville average under 23 minutes. This imbalance is not just a travel time issue—it's a structural indicator of unequal access to opportunity and infrastructure.



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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-26-wilmington-commute-spread

01

Accessibility is the new equity metric

In a market where population growth continues to outpace transit planning, the commute spread reveals that proximity to jobs is not evenly distributed. Areas with shorter commutes—like Murraysville and Kings Grant—will see sustained demand, while places like St. James face long-term disinvestment risks. This is not just about travel time; it’s about who gets to participate in the local economy.

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The market is stratifying by mobility

As the median commute increases across the region, the real estate value gap is widening. Communities with stable, short commutes are becoming more desirable, reinforcing price premiums. Conversely, places with longer average commutes—like St. James—face a self-reinforcing cycle: fewer workers, less business activity, and declining public investment. This is not a temporary congestion issue—it's a foundational shift in regional economic geography.

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