

OPINION

EDITORIALS



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LETTERS



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

CAMERAS and electronic sensors stand over the toll lane south of Slauson Avenue on the 110.

Transit and its toll

Re "Leaders tout 110 toll lanes, but some grumble," Nov. 11, and "L.A. enters era of toll roads," Nov. 10

Now that we have to pay money to drive on some lanes of the "free" way in Los Angeles, it seems we need to find a new name. How about "Let's-rip-off-the-middle-class roads" or maybe "Pay-again-for-roads-you-already-funded-through-gas-taxes?" Or perhaps, "Poor-people-can-ride-in-transit highways."

As usual, people with plenty of money will have favorable treatment; the tolls will not really matter to them.

Low-income people get a break in the fees, but are really expected to carpool or ride slow, inconvenient transit.

But the shrinking middle class will have to keep paying, and most will just have to sit in the slow lane and seethe.

GINA FRIERMAN-HUNT
Sierra Madre

Transportation economists have argued for 60 years that the only serious means of reducing traffic congestion is implementing congestion tolls.

Without tolls, drivers ignore the costs of the delay and air quality impacts that their choices inflict on others. With ideal tolls, a driver only travels if the benefits to him exceed the costs of the trip, including the costs his choice inflicts on everyone else.

Expanding road capacity provides benefits for new users, but no congestion relief. Building rail transit lines increases congestion so long as more rail means reducing bus service and transit ridership.

Opening the I-10 High Occupancy Toll lanes is probably the most important transportation management step that Los Angeles has taken in years.

JAMES E. MOORE
Los Angeles

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If the transportation planners want to try to fool us into thinking that the new lanes are anything more than a money grab, they may want to find a better spokesman.

Immediately after the Times article explained that carpools still continue to be able to travel for free, state transportation official Marco Ruano is quoted that carpool lanes themselves have "become a victim of (their) own success" and are getting crowded on some routes.

So let's get this straight. The lanes, previously paid for through taxes, are already over capacity, but now will allow current carpools in — as long as they buy a transponder — and solo drivers as well.

So everyone pays something, and more cars are in the lanes.

Somehow that relieves that carpool lane congestion?

RICHARD WAGONER
Rancho Palos Verdes

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Although as a retiree I very infrequently need to travel the 110 freeway, I would have liked to get a transponder to use the toll lanes.

But I am appalled that there is a charge per month just to maintain a transponder account — even when not used. It is an obvious ploy for revenue.

ROBERT HELFMAN
Los Angeles