

## OPINION

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Why spread-out  
L.A. needs railRe "Fix the rail lines we  
already have," Opinion,  
May 8

Aaron Renn is correct that federal funds should go mainly toward maintaining existing rail transit lines instead of building new ones. He is wrong, however, to say that the rail network in Los Angeles County should not be expanded.

I disagree with his assessment that urban rail works best only in cities with large central business districts. Los Angeles has some of the greatest density in the nation served by light rail and subway networks. These lines service single-family home neighborhoods such as Pasadena, West L.A., Crenshaw, Hollywood and other communities.

The Los Angeles region comprises numerous business centers, not just a single major downtown area. I live near the business district around LAX and take buses and trains to the business districts of Santa Monica, downtown Los Angeles, Wilshire and El Segundo.

MATTHEW HETZ  
Los Angeles

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Renn notes that The Times places the cost of Los Angeles rail projects at \$9 billion.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority conceals many costs of major capital projects in general overhead rather than charging costs to specific projects. Thanks to this and other non-standard accounting practices, it is difficult to determine exactly what Metro has spent on rail, but a meaningful estimate is possible.

Accounting for hidden costs, expressing past costs in current-year dollars, and accounting for current-year operating costs, debt service and capital replacement, Metro's cumulative rail costs are more than \$25 billion for all lines operating and currently in construction.

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