

OPINION

LETTERS

The great 405 experiment

Re "Carpoolers, meet the 405," Editorial, May 23

Building a subway train beneath the 405, which The Times says would really get drivers off the freeway, would continue our destruction of L.A.'s vital bus transit system, but it would not decongest the freeway, and neither will this new carpool lane.

Reducing congestion reduces the cost of what the trip enables for the traveler and leads to more travel, always. The benefits of new road capacity accrue to new users, not to existing users.

Transportation economists have explained for 60 years that the only systemic solution to congestion problems is congestion tolling. The new HOV lane provides an important opportunity to manage it as a high occupancy toll lane, and we should.

All new road capacity should be priced.

JAMES E. MOORE II
Los Angeles

The writer is the director of USC's transportation engineering program.

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Now that the 405 north has its new carpool lane, we can finally ask the question: Will it decrease congestion? Most likely it will; one more lane will decrease congestion somewhere.

But will making the new lane a carpool lane decrease traffic? Having driven local freeways for decades, I have seen countless solo-occupant drivers violate carpool lane rules, but I have never seen one of them being given a ticket.

And remember that more than one person in a car does not make a carpool; it might make a family or a couple of buddies heading for a ballgame. More sophisticated research than head-counting is needed to identify a carpool.

DAVID EGGENSCHWILER
South Pasadena

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Your last sentence, "The day a subway train spans the length of the 405 will be the day people get off the 405," has it wrong because that day will never come.

What could and should be done is spanning the freeways with elevated monorails. With columns placed on the shoulders or in the medians, we could have mass transit make use of existing rights of way for far less money than subways.

With subways, tunnels must first be dug, one of the most difficult and expensive engineering projects.

BILL SAY
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