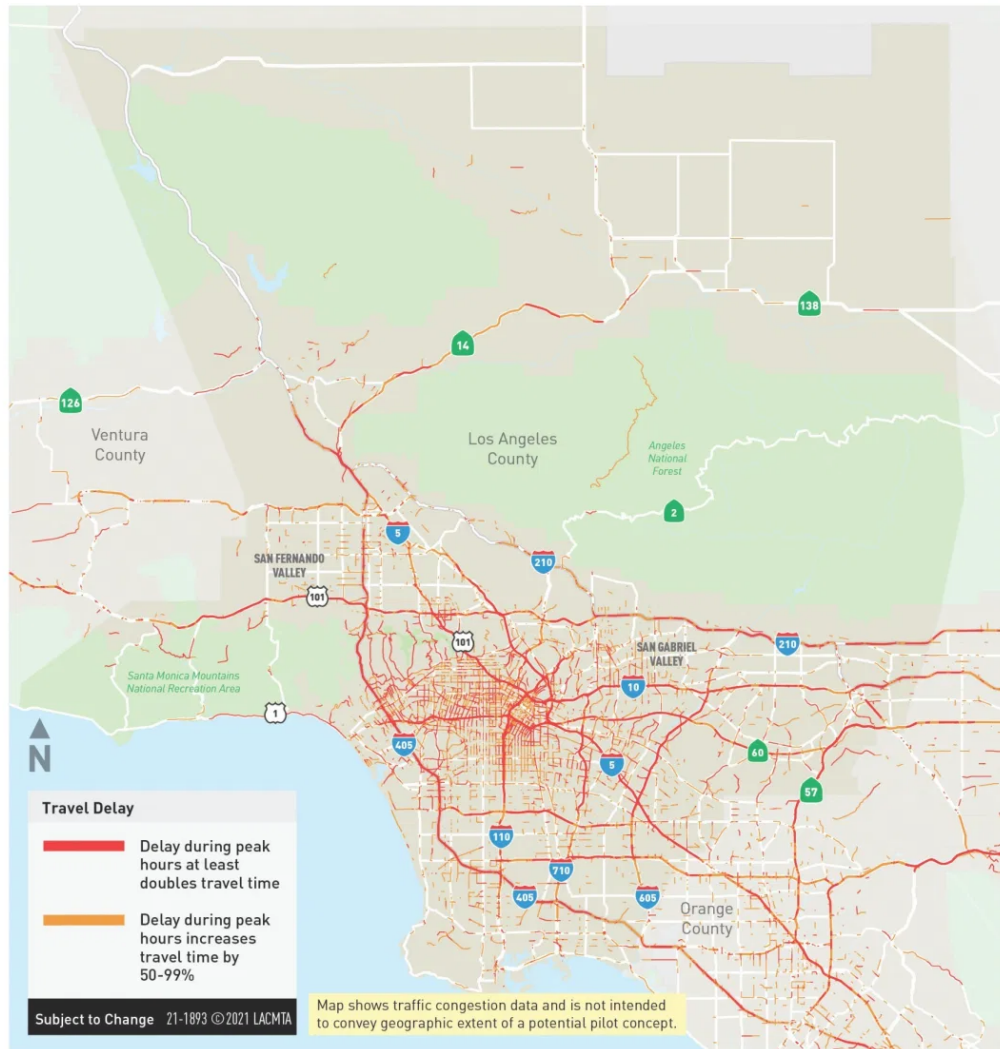


Traffic Reduction Study hosts virtual meetings to learn more about early concepts

BY [STEVE HYMON](#) , [FEBRUARY 9, 2021](#)

Traffic Reduction Study

Areas of Highest Traffic Congestion in LA County



A look at where traffic is worst in L.A. County.

L.A. traffic is a big problem. While the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced traffic congestion for the moment, traffic is likely to return as the pandemic eases, the economy improves, and the county’s population grows eventually.

Metro’s Traffic Reduction Study is exploring a new approach to

this ongoing problem by considering managing traffic through congestion pricing (i.e. tolls) and providing more high-quality transportation options. It's all part of Metro's larger [10-year plan](http://media.metro.net/about_us/vision-2028/report_metro_vision_2028_plan_2018.pdf) (http://media.metro.net/about_us/vision-2028/report_metro_vision_2028_plan_2018.pdf) to help the people of L.A. County get around more easily.

As part of the Traffic Reduction Study, Metro this month is unveiling four early concepts that we're beginning to study to see if a traffic reduction program pilot could be successful in our region.

The concepts focus on parts of L.A. County that have long suffered from chronic traffic. One pair of concepts seeks to reduce traffic into and around downtown L.A. (DTLA). Another concept would try to reduce traffic between the L.A. Basin and the San Fernando Valley. The fourth concept would focus on reducing traffic along the I-10 corridor between Santa Monica and downtown L.A.

Since summer of last year, Metro has been holding listening sessions with the public and stakeholders to better understand their hopes and concerns about any potential pilot program. Metro is just beginning to conduct modeling and technical analysis of these four concepts. At the earliest, the pilot program would not begin until 2025 — after a lot more planning, public engagement and necessary approvals from the Metro Board of Directors and other governmental bodies.

Three virtual meetings are being in February to learn more about the concepts. To register for the upcoming meetings:

Wednesday, February 10, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

[Click here to register for this meeting](https://zoom.us/j/9171111111)

([https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAvfuiqDkvHtVDDIxEeHgVhVB8lAclge18](https://zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?zmt=9171111111))

Tuesday, February 16, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

[Click here to register for this meeting](https://zoom.us/j/9171111111)

([https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcpd-yhpjwrGNKiUNxdbxQMu3brTgflpPGg](https://zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?zmt=9171111111))

Saturday, February 27, 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

[Click here to register for this meeting](https://zoom.us/j/9171111111)

([https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMucuGhqDMuGNMIISfn1pODIMsiZ-YoiFE7](https://zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?zmt=9171111111))

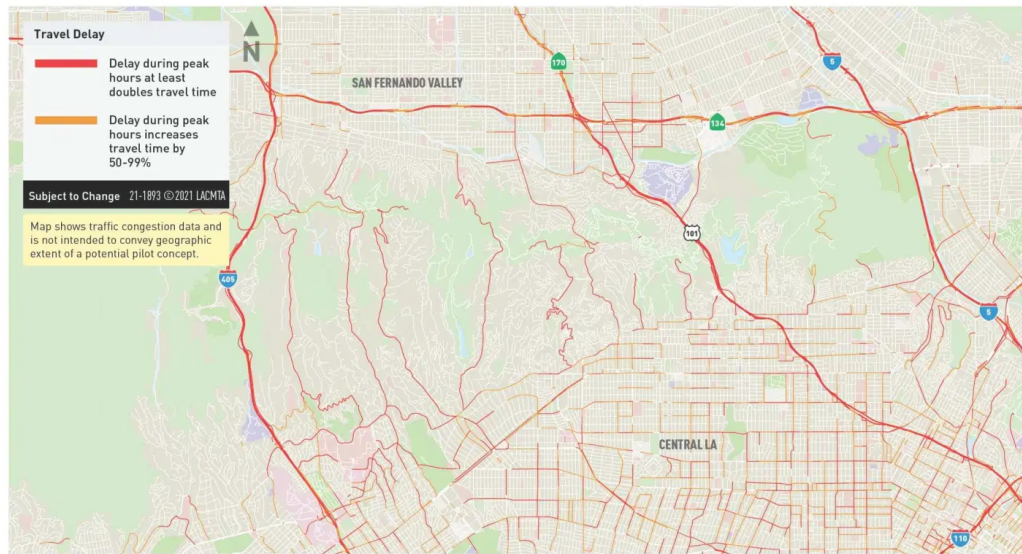
We know readers probably have some questions about the project:

What are the four concepts?

- The Santa Monica Mountains Corridor concept will explore managing traffic on freeways and parallel roadways that cross the Santa Monica Mountains between I-405 and I-5 to reduce heavy congestion from trips between the L.A. Basin and the San Fernando Valley. With few roads across the mountains, terrible traffic has for decades plagued the roads that cross the mountains.

One option could be tolling between I-405 and I-5. Another option would explore a smaller area between US 101 and I-5. Current transit options in this corridor include local and express buses, the D Line (Red) subway run by Metro and two Metrolink commuter rail lines, with future exploration to augment transit and provide more diverse, reliable travel options.

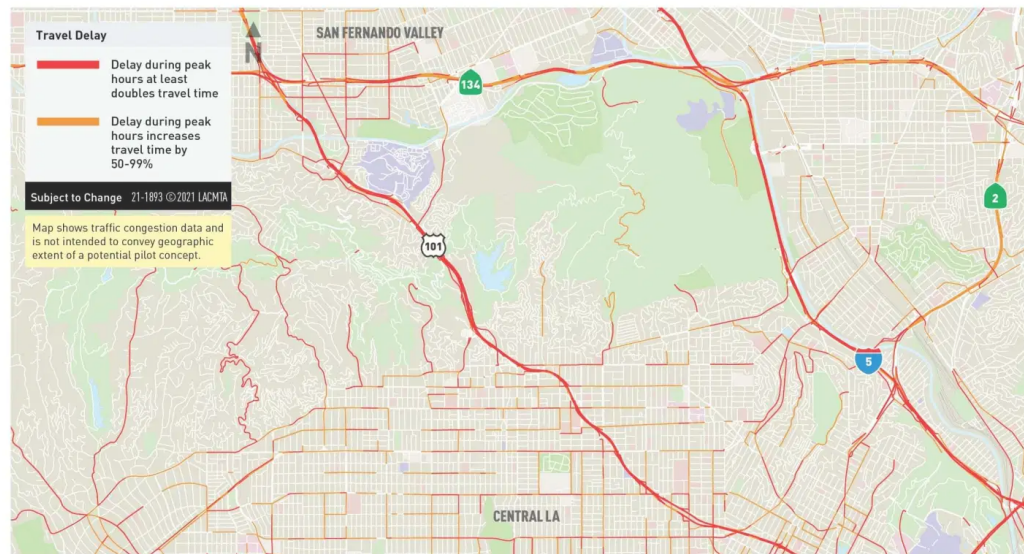
Traffic Reduction Study Concept Consideration Area 1A: Santa Monica Mountains



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Traffic Reduction Study

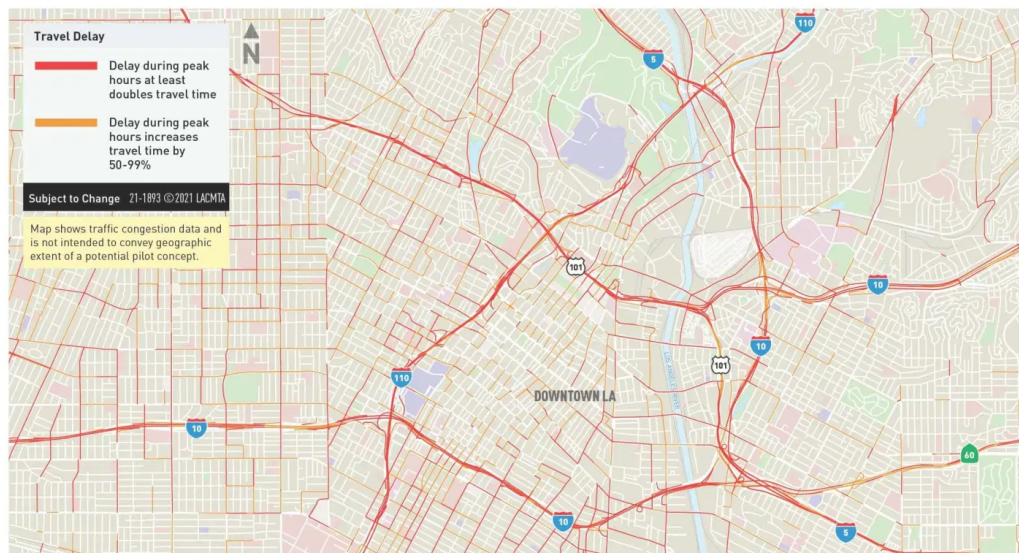
Concept Consideration Area 1B: US-101 & I-5



(https://io.wp.com/thesource.metro.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/21-1893_map_TRS_Concepts_jo_v12_final-1B-scaled.jpg?ssl=1) • The Downtown L.A. Freeway Corridor concept will explore managing traffic congestion on freeways running to and through downtown L.A. Heavy congestion on these freeways results from trips to downtown or passing through the area. DTLA is served by dozens of bus lines run by Metro and other local bus agencies, several Metro Rail lines (from the San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, Westside, Long Beach and South Los Angeles) and five Metrolink commuter rail lines. The study would explore adding other transportation improvements as well.

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Concept Consideration Area 2: Downtown LA Freeways

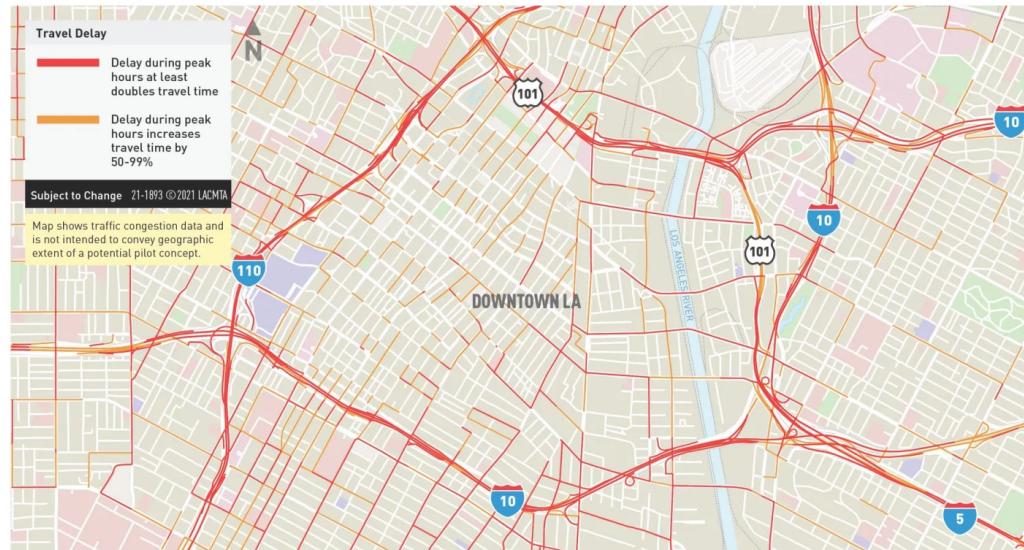


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- The Downtown L.A. Cordon concept will explore managing traffic coming into the central area of DTLA. This area is bound by several of the most congested freeways in the county, including the I-110, I-10 and US 101. Again, downtown is already home to numerous bus and rail lines and other key projects are under construction. The Regional Connector will tie together three Metro light rail lines for faster trips to and through DTLA with fewer transfers and the D Line (Purple) Extension is extending the subway from downtown all the way to Westwood via Koreatown, the Miracle Mile, Beverly Hills and Century City. Additional transportation improvements would be explored for this area as part of the study.

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Concept Consideration Area 3: Downtown LA

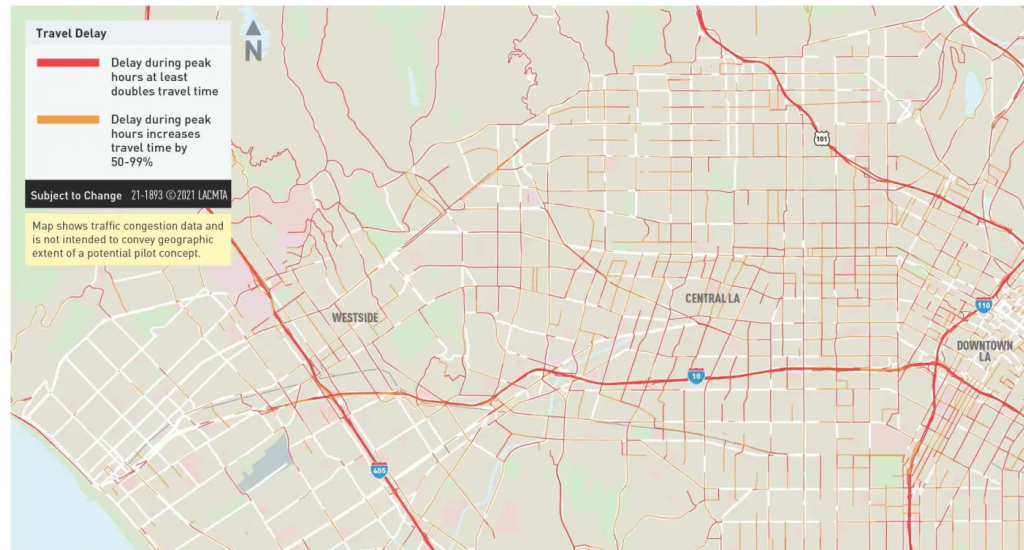


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- I-10 Corridor concept west of Downtown L.A. will explore managing traffic on I-10 between Santa Monica and DTLA. There's heavy congestion between downtown L.A. and communities to the west, including Santa Monica, Culver City and West L.A. To mitigate potential spillover traffic, the I-10 and parallel arterials will be included in the analysis.

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Concept Consideration Area 4: I-10 West of Downtown LA



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This corridor already has local and express buses and the E Line (Expo) along with the future D Line (Purple) that will run between the Westwood VA Hospital, Century City, Beverly Hills, the Miracle Mile, Koreatown and DTLA. The study will include looking at ways to augment transit and provide more diverse, reliable travel options.

How does congestion pricing work?

Traffic exists because the number of people in cars who want to use the roads (demand) at a particular time is much greater than the actual space available (supply) to handle all of the vehicles.

Congestion pricing is a tool to manage roadway demand. When used as part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce traffic, congestion pricing can encourage some people to change the

way they travel some of the time. This could include traveling at a different time; taking a different route; using a different mode, such as taking transit, walking, biking or rolling; carpooling; combining and reducing trips; telecommuting, or; traveling to another destination.

It only takes a small number of people to change the way they travel to have a big impact on traffic. Most people will not be able to make a change, so the price must be low enough to allow people to continue to afford driving, but high enough to encourage some people to change their travel behavior. Equity is a key consideration in any pilot program and fee structure.

The law of supply and demand applies to almost all products and services in the U.S., from housing and utilities to food and other forms of travel. When something that is in short supply is free or inexpensive, demand will be much higher than available supply. Many businesses, utilities, and other entities use pricing to manage demand so that a limited supply can be enough for everyone.

The transit options in my area are not frequent and available enough for my needs. What do you mean by providing high-quality transportation options? I'm not seeing them right now.

Part of the study includes implementing better transportation options before any congestion pricing tolls would be introduced, which is currently anticipated to be in 2025. Improvements could include adding bus or rail service and frequency, better walking and rolling conditions, better and more incentives for carpooling and increased telecommuting options. There are likely other

improvements that we will explore as we engage with

communities and conduct technical analysis.

In addition to reducing traffic, congestion pricing would also improve the speed and reliability of transit service. With additional improvements on top of these improved conditions, transit can be a true high-quality option for more people.

What is Metro going to do with the revenues from any pilot pricing program?

Any pilot program concept will focus on reducing traffic, providing more high-quality transportation options and supporting other outcomes to improve public health and safety, economic and environmental justice and economic vitality. Based on other programs around the world, we anticipate that congestion pricing would generate funds that could be available to invest in communities served or affected by a pilot program. This would include communities within the geographic boundaries and those whose members travel to or through a pilot area as well. Metro will work with communities and partnering agencies to identify investments that would be made.

When would the tolls take effect?

The project's current schedule has the Metro Board deciding this summer which concept to continue studying and developing. Upon completion of the study, which is anticipated in Spring 2022, the Metro Board of Directors will decide whether to implement a traffic reduction pilot program in partnership with one or more cities. Getting to an actual operational pilot program would still require federal and state approval, system design and deployment, with a pilot program launch anticipated by 2025.

How could a traffic reduction pilot program support low- or fixed-income county residents and communities, especially those who have historically been disadvantaged or are still recovering from the COVID-19 crisis?

Equity will be a core priority of the Traffic Reduction Study.

While everyone will benefit from less traffic and time savings, not everyone may be able to shoulder the additional costs, even if the price is low.

Each of the concepts that are explored in the study will be analyzed for their potential benefits and burdens on low-income households and communities. Once these have been identified, Metro will work to develop a suite of transportation improvements and low-income assistance programs to increase the benefits and address the burdens. For example, utility services have implemented assistance programs for low-income households to ensure electricity is affordable for everyone.

I already pay lots of taxes. Why are you considering charging me more money to drive?

Congestion pricing is a direct user fee — much the same as paying for electricity, water or other road tolls — and is designed to manage roadway demand and reduce traffic.

Utilities use congestion pricing to ensure that people and businesses have the electricity, water and gas they need when they need it. For example, if we use too much electricity at once during periods of high demand, such as on hot summer afternoons, the grid would be stressed. We would have to worry constantly about blackouts. Pricing is used to avoid this outcome

and to shift power usage to other parts of the day. By contrast, our roads are not priced, and, on an almost daily basis, we are subjected to gridlock that has many negative effects on individuals and communities. We're exploring the use of congestion pricing to manage traffic and provide people with more options to get around L.A. County smoothly — no matter when or how they choose to travel.

Related



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COVID-19 update; Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021

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In "Transportation Headlines"



Why are we pursuing a Traffic Reduction Study?

September 16, 2020
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 **12 replies** >

No to congestion pricing!

★ Loading...

Yes to congestion pricing!

★ Loading...

You people are insane.

★ Loading...

Some of those images show false data. They show traffic travel info on Mt. Hollywood Dr. which is closed to non-official motor vehicles. There are no traffic sensors or controls on that road.

★ Loading...

Looks great and is much needed

★ Loading...

If this gets anywhere near implementation, I envision a ballot proposition to prohibit congestion pricing.

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Another way to take money of the citizens isn't enough

for them all the taxes what we pay.

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I hated my FasTrak & returned it due to the monthly fees charged even when I didn't use it.

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After decades of bad planning by other government entities, they've now told the transportation people to fix it using only their limited toolset.

So your plan is to penalize us. Wonderful.

Want to create real change? Look to the companies. If this isn't a money grab but a legitimate attempt to create lasting change, the companies are where the changes must occur.

If a company had to pay a fee for each employee that traveled to a job site by solo occupancy vehicle, and the calculations were based on how *far* their employees had to drive, a lot of companies would quickly relocate to areas where more abundant housing or closer to mass transit and they'd start incentivizing their employees to seek modes of transportation besides the solo car.

(And if that's too complicated, levy a tax on the number of parking spaces they companies pay for and prohibit them from passing that tax onto their employees, even if they charge their employees for parking as well as an

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if they charge their employees for parking as well as an increased daytime tax on parking garages used by commuters.)

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Congestion pricing is always a great idea, and carpools can be used as a response even without any transit infrastructure, but you should also study express buses on the now faster freeways. And return the money in the form of lower sales taxes, people are already tired of too much taxes.

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NO USER FEES ON ANY ROAD. We all own the roads, legally we own an 'undivided' share of everything paid for by our taxes, including the streets. Therefore we own the roads. We cannot be charged to use what we already own! This is another devise to hurt the poor and give the rich and the commercial interests better auto access, while attempting to force the rest of us to use an unreliable, inadequate, dirty public transit system. Benefit to the rich. screw the poor. If this is attempted, THERE WILL BE A STATEWIDE BALLOT MEASURE TO PERMINTELY BAN ALL USER FEES ON CALIFORNIA ROADS that are paid for by taxes. When the government abuses use, we fight back!!!

★ Loading...

If the MTA can identify transit corridors that they

believe needs tolls why not improve service along those corridors with bus lanes and light rail enticing those in cars to use the faster mode, the MTA? Of course this is the complete opposite of what the MTA strives for, cutting bus service instead of increasing it. This mentality goes back to the time when there was two different agencies, LACTC and the RTD, when the Transit Commission threatened the RTD with cuts in subsidies if the RTD did not cut back the increased service brought about by the reduction in fares from 85 cents to 50 cents.

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