

Dude Where's My Carmageddon?

Posted on Friday July 15th by Eric Jaffe

Carmageddon, in case you just discovered the Internet, is the name for what will happen this upcoming weekend, when about 10 miles of Interstate 405 in Los Angeles normally traveled by at least 250,000 vehicles a day will be closed to traffic. The closure is expected to have a ripple effect on the back roads of L.A. that has Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa begging people to: "Avoid the area, or stay home. Go on vacation that weekend." Suffice it to say, many Angelenos are unhappy about this. So is Hitler.

A few people aren't so upset. They include the executives of JetBlue. The airline announced two round-trip flights between Long Beach and Burbank on Saturday for travelers who want to cross the city without fighting the traffic. The airfare for the 10-minute flight was \$4, including taxes and fees, and all seats sold out in two hours. (So what will checked bags cost? Two bits?)

Local bars, shops, and hotels are hoping to cash in on the congestion as well. The L.A.P.D. nixed the idea of an "impromptu block party" on the closed stretches of freeway, but those who do stay home can comfort themselves with some special Carmageddon group sex.

For those who do have to brave their cars, the musician Ken Elkinson has composed a six-disc box set of soothing songs intended to ease road rage, which he's offering for free download through the weekend. The L.A. transit authority is hoping to entice some travelers off the interstate with free fares on a number of bus and rail lines. (If it's free, is it still a fare?) Some people are looking forward to Carmageddon so much they want it to be an annual event.

Others, meanwhile, are taking umbrage to the fact that two days of road work have received more media attention than annual service cuts to public transportation typically get; writes Streetsblog L.A.:

If you contrast their coverage of just over fifty hours of 10 miles of the 405 to their run-of-the-mill coverage whenever bus riders lose hundreds of thousands of yearly service hours permanently, it really paints a picture.

Inconvenience drivers of a certain section of road for one weekend. Panic. Cut hundreds of thousands of hours of bus service permanently. Yawn.

At least the media blitz means the closures will come as no surprise. The L.A.P.D. even asked a handful of celebrities to tweet the word around, and many have complied, including Ashton Kutcher, who wrote:

LAPD askd me 2tweet: 405fwy btwn 10 & 101 will b closed July16-17. In xchange I would like a free pass on that stoplight tickt IT WAS YELLOW.

Well played, Dude.