

Automobiles

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Options for Angelenos As Interstate 405 Closes

LOS ANGELES residents this weekend are facing a 53-hour closing of the 405 freeway, the primary north-south highway through the city's West Side, as road crews take a sledgehammer to the Mulholland Drive bridge. The work threatens to clog streets near the Interstate, leading many Angelenos to call the impending bottlenecks, honked horns and frayed nerves Carmageddon.

But while Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has urged citizens to stay home and barbecue, many residents intend to maintain forward momentum at any cost.

For its part, JetBlue made that cost negligible, offering \$4 flights each way from Long Beach Airport to Bob Hope Airport in Burbank. Though the "Fly Over the 405" promotion carried the whiff of novelty, that did not prevent all seats for the four flights from being reserved.

Briles Wing and Helicopter, a charter flight service in Van Nuys, is offering \$150 one-way trips from Van Nuys Airport in the San Fernando Valley to either Los Angeles International or

Santa Monica airports. The round-trip fare is \$275. The company will accept walk-up customers on a first-come-first-served basis, according to its Web site.

Flying over the gridlock is not the only mobility option available to Angelenos, but other strategies may put them in handcuffs. The Los Angeles Police Department is preparing to intercept a potential unauthorized run of the closed freeway by the Midnight Ridazz bicycle club, which organizes frequent group rides throughout the city.

For drivers intent on braving the roads, Ken Elkinson, a Southern California composer, has made his opus, "Music for Commuting," available for free downloads this weekend. As Wheels reported, "The tracks are relaxing, but seem better suited to lulling a driver to sleep than inching down Sepulveda Boulevard."

The city's mass-transit system is adding 61 buses to eight popular routes, and the subway is also girding for higher ridership.

The 405 reopens at 5 a.m. Monday. JONATHAN SCHULTZ