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Dr. Gridlock

Your transportation guide around the Beltway and beyond

Carmageddon looms for Los Angeles

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Driving in the Washington area is no picnic under the best conditions. But commuting in Los Angeles — where everybody seems to drive — is an entirely different animal. Imagine how we would react in this region if our public transportation options were largely shut down this weekend — along with the Capital Beltway.

That's the kind of situation drivers in Los Angeles are about to endure. A 10-mile stretch of the 405 Freeway will shut down this weekend due to construction work, a situation that's been dubbed "Carmageddon" because of the expected traffic impact. Transportation officials have urged drivers to stay home and are worried about a ripple effect wreaking havoc on traffic throughout the region.

Some Angelenos might be huddled under their beds, clutching portable GPS devices and hoarding canned goods. But others are reacting in different ways. Musician Ken Elkinson, who created a collection of songs to ease driving stress, is letting people download his tunes for free. JetBlue used the opportunity to offer deals and, in the process, snag some publicity. The discounted flights sold out in a flash.

And there are those who wanted to use the freeway for block parties and bicycle rides, but those ideas were shot down by the Los Angeles Police Department.

So how would you react if many of your transportation options were eliminated this weekend, readers? Would you bike everywhere, just stay home or leave town entirely? To see how Carmageddon goes this weekend, check out #carmageddon on Twitter.