

The New York Times

Wheels



The Nuts and Bolts of Whatever Moves You

July 14, 2011, 3:57 pm

The 405 Closing: a Myriad of Options to Keep Angelenos Moving

By JONATHAN SCHULTZ

This weekend, Los Angeles residents face 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 planned work threatens to clog surface streets near the Interstate, leading many Angelenos to call the impending amalgam of bottlenecks, honked horns and frayed nerves Carmageddon.

But while Los Angeles 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 nonstop flights from Long Beach Airport to Bob Hope Airport in Burbank. Though the "Fly Over the 405" promotion carried the unmistakable whiff of novelty, that did not prevent all seats for the 40-mile flight from being reserved in less than four hours.

Briles Wing and Helicopter Inc., a charter flight service based 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 might 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 motorists intent on braving the roads, Ken Elkinson, a Southern California composer, has made his six-disc opus, "Music for Commuting," available to download for free this weekend. But 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 system is also girding for higher ridership.

The 405 reopens on Monday at 5 a.m.