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A carpooler in the HOV lane beats traffic buildup on the 405.



PHOTO: LUIS INZUNZA

Transportation Institute Says Metro's Efforts Making Dent in L.A. Congestion

- Congestion reduced from 98 hours in 2002 to 95 hours in 2003

By ED SCANNELL

(May 12, 2005) Traffic congestion in L.A. and Orange counties tries the patience of the most patient driver. But there's some encouraging news.

The Texas Transportation Institute's 2005 Urban Mobility Report concludes that the multi-pronged approach of transportation agencies, including Metro, reduced the number of hours drivers in L.A. and Orange counties wasted in traffic from 98 hours per year in 2002 to 93 hours in 2003.

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"The Texas Transportation Institute's conclusion supports Metro's longstanding belief that a 'one size fits all' approach is not the best way to chip away at traffic congestion," said CEO Roger Snoble. "It takes a variety of tools, everything from carpool lanes to public transit to information technology, to better manage the traffic on our streets and highways."

While this year's report notes that a slowdown in California's economy in 2002 and 2003 may have resulted in a decline in cars and trucks on streets and highways, it also credits operational improvements, including an increase in freeway ramp metering and freeway

surveillance cameras, and better incident management with lessening the annual hours of delay in Los Angeles and Orange County.

‘Starting to whittle away’

“We’re starting to whittle away at this,” said the Texas Transportation Institute’s David Schrank, co-author of this year’s Urban Mobility Report.

“Knocking off three or four hours of delay per year is something you may not notice, but it’s a start,” he said. “As a major urban area makes more of these operational improvements, diversifies its land use and expands public transportation, those three or four hours will turn into six or eight.”

While the annual Urban Mobility Report does not study the impact of individual transportation improvements, Schrank says each improvement may eliminate one to three percent of the traffic congestion that plagues large urban areas, including the Los Angeles region.

“What we’re seeing is that each of these treatments eliminates some delay,” said Schrank. “Because of that, the more you can put out there the more delay you can eliminate.”

- [More!](#) Transportation Institute Cites Benefits of Public Transit