

# Rx for a 405 headache

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Allow me to be blunt: it's going to be a mess out there.

As you may have heard, the 405 Freeway is being shut down through the Sepulveda Pass for 53 hours next month to accommodate demolition of the Mulholland Bridge, part of a massive freeway-widening project. The closure—an essential safety precaution—will begin before midnight on Friday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, and continue into the pre-dawn hours of Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup>.

Each weekend, roughly 500,000 vehicles move through this stretch of freeway, where detours are difficult to map and navigate because of the area's mountainous geography. Beyond the obvious traffic implications, life for residents and businesses in the 10-mile impact zone will be challenging, at best. As the county supervisor for this district, my office has been working closely with the project team, and I assure you that we're committed to doing everything we can to anticipate and ease the pain for all.

But the truth is that we must work together by planning now.

Obviously, the best way to steer clear of the aggravation zone and reduce congestion is to stay home that weekend or make plans in the neighborhood, like catching a movie at the local theater. If you're supposed to work, try to change your schedule, take a couple vacation days or telecommute.

If you must hit the road, chart a course using the region's many other freeways. You may end up driving more miles, but I guarantee you'll get to your destination faster than by gambling on 405 detours that could leave you stuck for hours.

For those of you who think you can outsmart this potential mother of all traffic jams, my advice is simple: save your

gas. After representing the San Fernando Valley and Westside for more than three decades as a Los Angeles city councilman and county supervisor, I know virtually every shortcut in those parts—and none will work because of the sheer volume of vehicles being taken off the freeway.

In the days and weeks ahead, you'll be hearing lots more about the 405 closure from the folks at Metro, who are not only spearheading the construction project but launching a massive public outreach campaign. We don't want anyone surprised by the enormity of the undertaking and its inevitable fallout. (For Metro's latest information on the I-405 Sepulveda Pass widening project, click [here](#).)

It's been my experience that, armed with the facts, Angelenos can be very enterprising, especially when it comes to their roads. Just think back to 1994, after the Northridge Earthquake, when a portion of the Santa Monica Freeway collapsed and was closed for nearly three months. Yes, there was plenty of frustration but motorists adapted and coped. While this upcoming closure will be a pain, it's only for a weekend. So if you roll with the realities, you'll avoid a trunk load of aggravation.

*For more, listen [here](#) to my KPCC interview with Larry Mantle on AirTalk. Also, visit the special "405 Report" section of my website and follow my freeway updates on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*

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