

Does traffic leave you honking mad? Let Ms. Beep know

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In a more perfect world, or at least a more perfect Nashville, you'd be spreading out your newspaper and reading this on a subway, the picture of a relaxed commuter.

But transportation in the Midstate is not quite that easy — not yet.

You might be mentally coaching yourself right now to keep your cool when you're stuck in a sea of I-40 brake lights.

So this is where I come in.

This column will be here every week to answer your transportation questions — about planes, trains, bikes, carpooling vans or whatever you get around in.

So please, start sending me your questions, and I'll do my best to get them answered.

Here are a few to get you started.

Q. I don't understand why Nashville has HOV lanes because they are useless. You never see anyone in them, except the people who aren't supposed to be there. Please explain to me why you have them.

— Question posed to TDOT.

A. The HOV lanes are essential to promoting carpooling — and, in turn, reducing emissions and traffic congestion. One lane of area interstates is devoted to vehicles with two or more riders on the way to Nashville in the morning and on the way out at night. Single riders are free to use them during nonpeak hours.

Beyond the environmental benefits of rewarding carpoolers, TDOT says the lanes are cost-effective, too: The federal government funds 90 percent of the construction of HOV lanes, compared with 80 percent of most other interstate costs. The extra money saved is shuffled to other projects.

Q. I would like to know when we are going to get a traffic light at the intersection of Central Pike and Dodson Chapel Road in Hermitage. This area is very congested at all times, especially in the morning and afternoon.

— Franklin Pasos,
Hermitage 37076

A. Ask and ye shall receive. Metro Public Works officials have noticed the congestion there and are working with a developer for a traffic signal and additional turn lanes, spokeswoman Gwen Hopkins-Glascock said.

"There were a couple of tracts of property we had to secure, and we're still finalizing design plans, but I believe construction will start next year," she said.

Q. Concerning I-65 between Trinity Lane and Briley Parkway, I travel through here and noticed this is terrible ... there are holes, and it's like driving on washboards.

— Question posed to TDOT

A. TDOT agrees that road could use some smoothing but says the problems are due to regular wear and tear. They have plans to pave it next spring. Until then, I-65 drivers might want to leave the coffee in the cup holder until the Cumberland River is in sight. •