

June 8, 1972
p. 3

Hearing Eyed On Park Route

By MICHAEL LOLLAR

State and federal highway officials said yesterday they plan to announce within 30 days a date for new public hearings in Memphis on location and design of the Overton Park leg of Interstate 40.

"The environmental impact statement in the case is very near completion," said David Wells, chief counsel for the Federal Highway Administration. "And we're making a vigorous attempt to hold the hearing itself within the next 60 days."

The environmental statement is being prepared by the Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with the Tennessee Highway Department.

Mr. Wells said that when the initial statement is finished—"probably within the next two weeks"—it will be circulated among all state and federal agencies concerned with the case, including the Citizens to Preserve Overton Park and other civic groups. "Those agencies will provide their input, pro and con, as the statement is circulated," he said.

Robert C. Odle, development engineer with the state Highway Department, said copies of the completed statement will then be furnished to government agencies "which will allow interested citizens to view or copy the statement. It will likely be voluminous, but if anybody is interested there probably will be copies for sale."

The hearing itself will then be held, Mr. Odle said, and everybody will be given a chance to be heard on request. "The entire proceeding will be recorded, and the transcript will be forwarded to the National Council on Environmental Quality along with the environmental impact statement."

Mr. Odle said the Council on Environmental Quality will then make its recommendation to Secretary of Transportation John Volpe on whether the statement is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

He said Mr. Volpe then will review the entire environmental statement and results of the public hearing before he makes a new decision on location and design of the highway segment.

OPB 26-13.1

Commercial Appeal