

But the 457 pp. EIS, dated Jan. 12, 1973, is stamped "DRAFT" but entitled "Final E... Statement"!

COMMERCIAL APPEAL

PAGES 19 TO 26

Saturday Morning, November 30, 1974

Park Route's Bid Faces More Delay

By MORRIS CUNNINGHAM

From The Commercial Appeal Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29.—Tennessee's revised application to route a 3.7-mile segment of Interstate 40 through Overton Park probably will not be acted upon by Transportation Secretary Claude S. Brinegar until sometime next year, Transportation Department sources predicted Friday.

An analysis of the revamped application, which was submitted to Brinegar by Gov. Winfield Dunn on Oct. 3, is not expected to be completed and submitted to Brinegar personally before January, the sources said.

The analysis is being prepared jointly by three Transportation Department agencies—the Federal Highway Administration, the Office of Assistant Secretary for Safety, Environmental and Consumer Affairs and the Office of General Counsel.

"It's a slow process at best," a source said, "and with three agencies involved, and the Christmas holidays coming up, it will take even more time. Personally, I'd look for the end of January."

Even after the analysis reaches Brinegar, more time probably will be consumed before he makes a decision.

"I think that before the secretary can accept one of the state's proposals,

the environmental impact statement will have to be put in final form," source said.

The 157-page environmental impact statement of June 30, 1972, the source explained, was never put through the final step.

"It was only a draft," he said.

"It will depend upon what the lawyers say," he continued. "They could say that we have to revise and update it, and circulate it for comment for 45 days, before we send it to the council and agencies for the 30 days.

"Then decisions would have to be made about revisions in response to the comments. That would further prolong the process.

The state's revised application again recommends a partially depressed route through Overton Park, the state's position from the beginning, but adds that the state will settle for a cut-and-cover tunnel, though the estimated cost is tenfold.

Under federal laws, which environmentalists have employed in fighting a park route, the transportation secretary must find there is no prudent and feasible alternative to going through a public park, and also that the design minimizes environmental damage before the project may proceed.