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Page 6

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I-40 Cut-And-Cover Best

OF THE REMAINING options for filling the Memphis gap in Interstate Highway 40 left by outgoing Transportation Secretary Claude S. Brinegar, the cut-and-cover through Overton Park is by far the best.

It is disappointing that because of prevailing laws Brinegar found the plan favored by the State of Tennessee — a partially depressed highway through the park — to be out of the picture. But that decision comes as no surprise.

Disappointing also is Brinegar's failure to settle the route question once and for all. A detailed application for a decision was put in Brinegar's hands last Oct. 3 by Winfield Dunn, then Tennessee's governor, and Brinegar said he would begin on the matter that afternoon. As it is, Brinegar has left office with the issue unresolved and it is now in the hands of the new transportation chief, William T. Coleman Jr., who will have to familiarize himself with the details.

But at least Brinegar narrowed down the alternatives.

Of the three he left, only the cut-and-cover tunnel through the park — using the right-of-way already owned by the state — makes sense.

The proposition for tunneling under North Parkway should be

studied, Brinegar said. But while he felt it might be feasible, he noted that the record does not show it to be prudent. Considering the fact that it would mean tearing up busy North Parkway for a stretch passing a city school, a college and a high-rise apartment building, and would require the tearing down of more homes for the approaches, it is definitely not prudent. There has been enough disruption of homeowners and others in the area already.

The third so-called alternative, a "no-build" plan, is no solution at all. Just living with a gap in a nationwide through highway which has climbed mountains and crossed broad rivers and cut through other major cities is totally unsatisfactory.

AND THAT BRINGS us back to the proposal to go through Overton Park with a highway that is depressed and under cover. This was the alternative that Dunn and Memphis Mayor Wyeth Chandler felt Brinegar had been waiting for them to support when they went to him last October.

That is the plan for state and local officials to fully support now, and we hope they will keep the wheels turning in Washington. It would be good to get the go-ahead at last in 1975.



M. MARCEL MARCEAU,
A DISTINGUISHED VISITOR IN TOWN,
HAS GRACIOUSLY VOLUNTEERED
A PROGRESS REPORT ON
I-40 THROUGH OVERTON PARK...

