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Saving Seen In Park I-40 On New Plan

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NASHVILLE — Preliminary estimates Wednesday indicated \$20 million might be shaved from construction costs if the Overton Park interstate design was changed from a stacked lane concept to side-by-side roadways.

The possibility was outlined by representatives of the New York engineering firm of Singstad, Kehart, November and Hurka during a conference here that preceded start of a study of the side-by-side approach to a cut-and-cover design for the Overton Park stretch of Interstate 40.

However, the engineers also said a side-by-side approach would be wider compared to the stacked design and double the amount of park disruption while being built.

The new study, authorized by the U.S. Transportation Department at the request of state Transportation Commissioner Eddie Shaw, follows another that indicated the stacking of two three-lane segments would cost about \$119 million, plus state-paid maintenance of about \$450,000 annually.

The engineering firm's representatives — Irwin Toporoff and Howard Wegener — stressed that their estimates concerning a side-by-side design were tentative. They said they should have a definitive report ready by the end of this month.

Toporoff explained to Tennessee Development engineer Robert Odle and other state transportation officials that much of the savings envisioned would come because as excavation goes deeper, costs grow, particularly because of the water problem.

A second penalty of the stacked design, in addition to the depth involved, is that the approaches on the east would necessitate a three-level interchange.

It is anticipated that excavation would go only about 30 feet deep with the side-by-side approach, compared to a penetration of perhaps 70 feet with stacked lanes.

However, Toporoff pointed out the side-by-side concept would require the tunnel width to be about 135 feet or more. The stacked design would require only an 80-foot-wide excavation.

And Toporoff also said the side-by-side concept would mean the park would be disrupted for about two years, compared to one with the stacked lanes.

The reason for that is the stacked plan would call for the use of a slurry wall technique that would allow for the tunnel to be partly excavated and then the top put on and the park restored before excavation was completed.

The side-by-side concept would call for total excavation before the top of the tunnel was installed.

U.S. Transportation Secretary William Coleman Jr. has approved tentative plans for the stacked traffic lanes but, Shaw noted, he hasn't said where the state would find its 10 per cent share of the construction cost.