

St. Louis, Mo.
Mfcs - Parks - Overton
Pr. Sci 7-31-64

Professional Engineers' Chief Supports Overton Route

We wish to commend you for your editorial, "Let's Stick to the Facts About the Expressway." We think it is the kind of responsible thinking that represents not only good engineering thinking but good newspaper thinking and good citizen thinking. We agree with your observation that there is nothing wrong with citizens protesting anything they want to protest. You observe that this kind of right is "the very life blood of democracy." The thing we particularly appreciate is your emphasis that with every right goes a corresponding responsibility. You then develop that it is the responsibility of people who protest to remain factual and to inform themselves.

We have talked with the members of our group who are responsible for the recommendations which led to the decision to locate the East-West freeway through Overton Park. We are informed that in excess of 20 alternatives were studied and analyzed in great detail. We are convinced that the recommending engineers believe their recommendations to be in the best total public interest. We understand that the solution, even though it be the best solution among the reasonable alternatives available, is not one which the recommending engineers particularly "like." Here we deal with the question again of the greatest good for the greatest number, and this is the answer that responsible professionals have arrived at after careful and thorough investigation.

We support it!

B. B. WINSETT,
President, Memphis Society of
Professional Engineers

PS 6-21-64

stupid reasoning

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Routes Studied To Avoid Park

By PAUL VANDERWOOD
Press-Scimitar Staff Writer

The state Highway Department has begun to survey possible new east-west expressway routes which would go around Overton Park.

Leon T. Cantrell, project engineer, said today from Nashville that one new possibility lies north and another south of Overton.

The department also is studying the feasibility of moving the proposed East Parkway interchange with the expressway entirely out of Overton Park, instead of part in the picnic ground as planned.

"We have begun to appraise property for the possible routes north and south of the park, and land to the east for an interchange," Cantrell said.

"We expect to have our data within 30 days. We know these new routes would be more expensive to construct (rather than going through the park), but the question is, how much more?"

The department also is determining how much more motorists would be spending if forced to drive around the park, rather than passing on a direct line through it, Cantrell said.

'EXTRA COST'

"If you have to drive an extra mile to get around the park, and it costs each driver 11 cents a mile to do it, you've running into considerable extra cost," Cantrell said.

A group of Memphians have banded into a group called Citizens for the Preservation of Overton Park and urged the expressway not go through the park.

Memphis Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Association say that enough studies have been made, the route through the park has been decided the best and now it's time to "get going" on construction.

21 POSSIBILITIES

Cantrell noted that Harlan Bartholomew & Associates, who drew up the city's master expressway plan, suggested 21 possible avenues for the east-

west. All were considered by the state Highway Department, which then determined that the route must pass through Overton Park, where it would be below ground level.

"We already have decided that the road should go through the park," Cantrell said. "These studies will either support us, or show us we are wrong. If we're wrong, of course adjustments will be made."

Meanwhile, Dr. Arlo I. Smith, Southwestern biology professor, who is active in the preservation group, was in Nashville today conferring with state Highway Commissioner David Pack about the expressway route.

DENIES CHARGES

Mrs. Ralph W. Handy, chairman of the preservation organization, said charges that her group's actions are "politically motivated" are not true. "We are not a political group, although we may use our vote to accomplish our goal. Other than that, our members are voting their personal choices."

Mrs. Handy said the City Beautiful Commission and the City Department of Public Works have given her organization the cold shoulder—"and aren't even interested in listening to our side of the story."

As it now stands, only one-half of the East Parkway interchange would take Overton Park property. Preservation people want it entirely out of the park.

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