

1964

Ingram opposed

# Overton Park Route Seems All Settled

## Road Chief Says Alternate Paths Are Too Costly

By EDWARD L. TOPP  
Press-Scimitar Staff Writer

State Highway Commissioner David Pack said today after studying two alternate routes for the east-west expressway it seems certain it will go through Overton Park as originally planned.

It would cost too much for a route north or south of the park, he said.

### BIG EFFORT

"We have gone to considerable effort to see if we could go by alternate routes," Pack told The Press-Scimitar by telephone from Nashville.

"The information we have at hand now is that any other alternate route would be at considerable cost. It looks like it would cost between \$9 million and \$10 million."

### ALTERNATIVE

Pack again noted that one alternative could be to omit the east-west leg completely. Such a decision would leave Memphis with a north-south expressway and with perimeter expressways around the north and south limits of the city. And there would be no excuse for a new bridge, because the east-west route is the only entrance to the proposed bridge at the foot of Winchester just north of downtown.

Although phases of the Overton Park section of the east-west route are still under study, Pack said, "I think we pretty well know what the results are going to be."

### ANSWERS

"When we make a formal announcement (of the decision), I think we should have this well-documented. I want to be able to show the people why—when they ask about any part of it."

Visible signs of the Highway Department's interest in Overton Park have been noted recently and were reported to Mrs. Ralph Handy, president of Citizens to Preserve Over-

ton Park. Mrs. Handy said Victor Julia, a member of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, was walking through the park and saw some stakes driven into the ground.

Mrs. Handy wrote to the Highway Department asking about the stakes. In reply, Leon Cantrell, state programming engineer, wrote that the stakes are a "necessary evil" used by the engineers, and that they are part of a study now being made.

Patently untrue!  
just look at any map!!!

# Mayor Bucks Overton Park Expressway

By ELTON WHISENHUNT  
Press-Scimitar Staff Writer

Mayor Ingram said today he is opposed to the planned expressway through Overton Park at this time, and favored, instead, the completion first of the north perimeter freeway.

The north perimeter, from Summer across Wolf River to connect with the downtown area, is "relatively the same route as the one through Overton Park," Ingram said.

Ingram added he didn't know why the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads didn't approve and build the north perimeter first, "but I'm going to check into it and find out why."

### PARALLEL

He said the north route would be a successful route which might prevent the necessity of building the expressway through the park.

"The north route is practically parallel to the Overton Park route," he said.

"It beats the dickens out of me why they want to go through Overton Park. That route will take \$20 million off the tax rolls in demolished structures."

### GORE LETTER

Ingram's position was prompted by a letter from Sen. Albert Gore to Mrs. Ralph W. Handy of Memphis, chairman of the Citizens Committee to Preserve Overton Park.

Sen. Gore included a letter from Rex M. Whitton, director of U.S. Bureau of Public Roads.

Mrs. Handy charged that Whitton in one paragraph of his letter to Sen. Gore "distorted the facts."

### PLAN

The paragraph read: "The comprehensive plan for Memphis which has been adopted includes the Overton Park location. The City-County Planning Commission, Chamber of Commerce and responsible city and county officials have supported the need for the East-West Freeway and the location by the state."

Mrs. Handy challenged that city and county officials have supported the need and the Overton Park location.

A check with Mayor Ingram on whether the City Commission has adopted a resolution for or against brought the reply that it had not.

### NONE

"And to my knowledge none of the city commissioners has expressed themselves for or against," Ingram said. "I don't think any has taken a position on it."

The city's Park Commission has adopted a resolution opposing the route through the park.

Mrs. Handy got the Whitton letter from Sen. Gore after first writing Gov. Clement and asking for a report on a visit to Memphis some weeks ago by state and federal highway agents on the park route or alternate routes.

### CLEMENT REFUSED

Gov. Clement refused to send it to her. He had an assistant, Billy Shoulders, write and tell her "it would not be released."

She then wrote Sen. Gore and the senator wrote Whitton and got information she had sought from Clement.

Whitton said in his letter construction plans are being held up and the state "is continuing its review of this problem." Plans won't resume till "this matter is resolved."

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