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Miss-Streets-X-Way
**U.S. Endorses
Freeway Link
Through Park**

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**Pack Says Route Location
Is Considered Final
After Federal OK**

By WILLIAM BENNETT
From The Commercial Appeal
Nashville Bureau

NASHVILLE, Jan. 18.—The United States Bureau of Public Roads has approved location of Memphis' east-west expressway through Overton Park and state officials Tuesday were pressing the design stage of the link.

"At this point," said State Highway Commissioner David Pack, "we consider it (the park location) to be final."

Rex Whitton, chief of the Bureau of Roads, wrote Pack he had his staff in the Washington, Nashville and Atlanta offices make "a thorough and deliberate review of this whole situation" and also to discuss the matter with interested persons.

"We find that the Tennessee Department of Highways has given adequate study and developed sufficient information to properly define the problem on which to base a decision," Whitton said.

"We can offer no objection to your decision and reaffirm our approval of this location."

Mr. Pack said every effort will be made to provide an expressway that is in keeping with the park's beauty. He said the route through the park probably will not be depressed, as was earlier considered. Rather, the plan is to have the route on grade and to make full use of landscaping.

The decision to route the expressway through the park was made over the protests of a group of Memphians who fear it will have an adverse effect on the parks' beauty.

But Pack said he thinks, on the contrary, it will enable Memphis to "put its best face forward" to non-residents.

Regarding aesthetic aspects of the routing, Whitton said he strongly endorses "the most exacting efforts to assure a finished product which is in keeping with the area and future park usage. We consider this to be absolutely essential and make it a condition to our action."

Design on the east-west link is well advanced, Pack said, and right-of-way acquisition will begin shortly. It is anticipated construction will get under way in 1969-70.

The commissioner said it had been determined that there would be no feasible alternative to the park location and to shift the location or to take it entirely out of the park might jeopardize the entire east-west route. This, he added, would place the future location of the new Mississippi River bridge "in an uncertain status."

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