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CA p. 6

I-40 Ramp Makes Sense

THE STATE Highway Department has asked United States Dist. Judge Bailey Brown to permit construction of a temporary ramp for Interstate 40 at Broad and Malcomb. This entrance and exit ramp would extend one block into an area now prohibited for construction because of the Overton Park expressway controversy. We think the request is sensible and should not become a part of that dispute.

The ramp would help alleviate traffic congestion at I-40 and Highland. The left turns involved in leaving the expressway to go south on Highland or to enter the expressway coming south on Highland create a critical traffic situation on that busy thoroughfare. The ramp at Broad and Malcomb would ease the problem at Highland, which is now the final entrance and exit point on the completed segment of the city's east-west expressway.

Opponents of the park route of the expressway argue that the request is ill-timed because of an environmental impact statement on the park route expected next week from the state Highway Department, and a public hearing scheduled here next month on the controversy. We disagree. The park debate should not intrude on use of the existing expressway. The arguments that the ramp would encourage more traffic and that the expressway is not designed for local drivers ignore

the reality of present use of the finished leg.

THE RAMP is temporary and would be removed when Secretary of Transportation John Volpe resolves the routing question and the expressway is completed.

In view of the years already consumed by the dispute, it seems reasonable to provide this ramp and thus ease the traffic flow in a badly congested area. We hope Judge Brown will agree and allow construction. The remaining Interstate 40 link, regardless of where it goes, is still several years from completion. In the meantime, motorists should be able to use the existing expressway as safely as possible.

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