

Expressway Compromise Urged

To The Commercial Appeal:

Too bad Henry Kissinger isn't a Memphian. A negotiated compromise seems the only fair solution in the 16-year-old Overton Park expressway war.

On one side the anti-expressway conservationists have a just cause. It would be disastrous to build an exposed freeway through the park because of the resulting traffic noise and exhaust fumes. Likewise, a makeshift route along beautiful North Parkway or Poplar Avenue, though perhaps legal by present environmental laws, would be equally detrimental to the park and city.

All one must do is look at the 10-lane Katy Freeway in Houston, Texas, which runs outside and along the northern border of Memorial Park, to see what a freeway can do to an island of beauty and peace in an urban sea. Not only do the conservationists have this aesthetic argument on their side, the federal law setting standards on detrimental effects of expressways through park land rules out the possibility of an exposed freeway through Overton Park.

Our city and state officials should wake up to reality and accept this fact. It should not have been a surprise to anyone that Secretary Volpe rejected the proposed freeway design. He had no choice. The law required it on the grounds of environmental standards.

But let's turn over the coin. What happens to the right-of-way which has been bought? Would the city have to pay back the two million dollars it received (and has already spent) for park land? Then there is the property taxes the city has lost for years on this 3.7-mile leveled strip of land. That's quite a bit of money down the drain for a city government that doesn't have sufficient funds to carry out desperately needed projects.

And can the environmentalists really expect the government to completely redesign the freeway along the Cypress Creek-L&N Railroad corridor and put this hardship on hundreds of families who would be forced to give up their homes, not to mention what it would cost to implement such an inferior start-from-scratch route at this stage of the game?

I almost hesitate to comment on the proposal that the remaining I-40 route through Memphis be abandoned altogether, and that the north I-240 loop be used for through-city traffic. There are six interstate highway bridges crossing the Mississippi River below St. Louis; two of them are at Memphis. Traffic from much of the Southeast and Ohio Valley must cross these bridges to the West and Southwest. It seems beyond belief that any-

one could propose eliminating the main, direct approach to one of these bridges and put a stopper in the funnel. Also the damage locally to our three county area would be incalculable.

What is the answer to this dilemma? Compromise! For once the people of Memphis must act unselfishly for the good of our city, and indeed

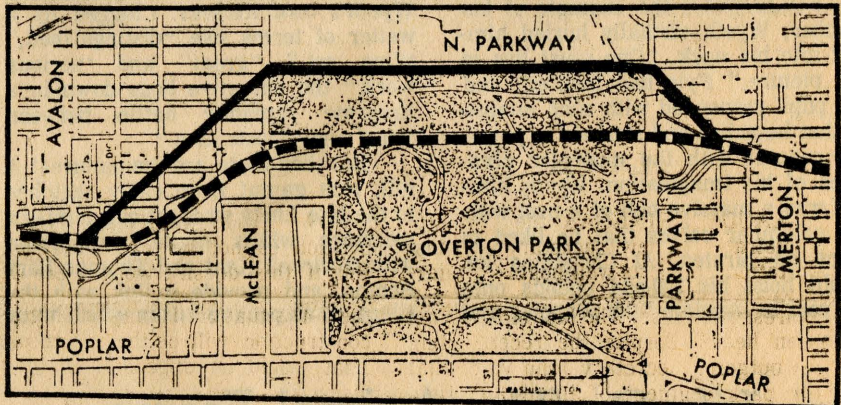
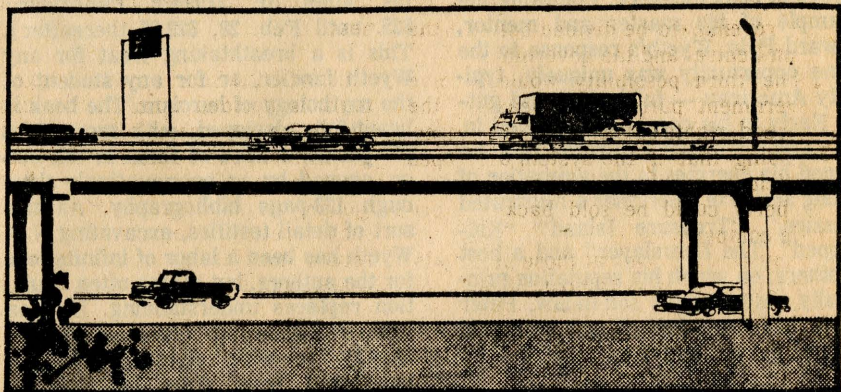
the nation; each giving a little, each taking a little.

We cannot continue to act in childish stubbornness. Therefore, I support Representative Dan Kuykendall's compromise proposal that the I-40 freeway be built through the park via a cut-and-cover tunnel design from East Parkway to McLean.

NESS OLSEN

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Run It On Top Of Parkway



To The Commercial Appeal:

It seems to me that now is the time for the state and the I-40 opponents to compromise.

The opponents clearly won, but surely they don't wish to see hundreds of residents displaced. While there are alternatives that can be used, all of them require extensive destruction of residential areas.

Since the cost is not a factor in determining feasibility, according to Volpe, a quick, simple route, with opponents concurring, would be to ban the bus route thru Overton Park, and run the three east-bound lanes elevated above the bus right-of-way. Not one tree would have to be cut, and any noise would be above the park. The three west-bound lanes could be built as elevated lanes above North Parkway neutral strip.

Either this or tunneling under

should eliminate the objection to the opponents. I-40 must be completed soon. I suggest that the State talk to the opponents on what they will accept.

LOUIS M. GARNER

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HE AGREES

To The Commercial Appeal:

The state highway department ought to realize the expressway will never go through Overton Park and find the best alternative.

May I suggest an elevated road over North Parkway from East Parkway to McLean. Many other cities have used elevated expressways where the road bed could not go on the ground.

This is the simplest and best solution to this problem.

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