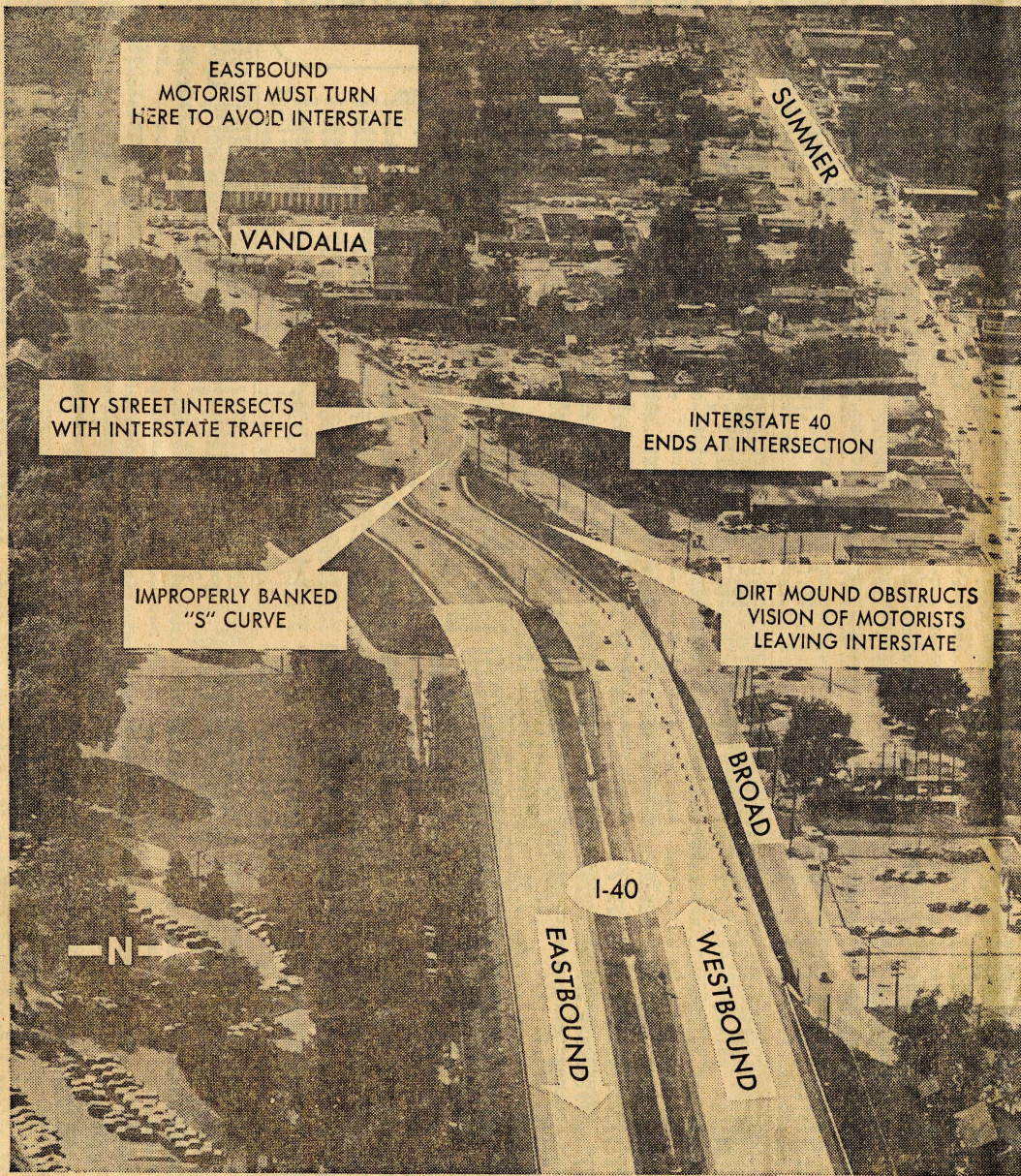


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It's Difficult, Against The Law, But Drivers Still Go East On Broad At I-40 Intersection
—Staff Photo by Fred Griffith

Hazards, Bad Drivers Lurk Where I-40 Meets Broad

The intersection of Interstate 40 and Broad, in the words of city Public Works Director Frank Palumbo, "was a hurried piece of work."

Drive west on the interstate. You'll find:

- An improperly banked "S" curve.
- A city street intersecting with interstate traffic. There is one traffic control—a yield right-of-way sign.
- A dirt mound obstructing the vision of motorists leaving the interstate.
- Signs that some drivers either don't see or choose to ignore.

You also may get hit by a car traveling east on Broad, even though all eastbound traffic is supposed to enter the interstate. Some motorists don't want to do that and try to sneak across the westbound lane to remain on the city street.

Interstate 40 ends at the intersection, a "temporary" thing built in the midst of the Overton Park hassle. Since the intersection was opened last spring, there have been a number of minor wrecks. On Sept. 27, Thomas Grace, 32, of 6203 Ivanhoe became its first fatality.

David Haines, vice president of Haines Electric Co. at Broad and Malcomb, has a good view of the action. He feels luck is the only thing that has prevented more deaths.

"People come zooming off the interstate, and when trucks come off that last curve, if they're going too fast, they lose it.

"We've had to replace two fences in front of our property where trucks have plowed into them.

"I've seen a half dozen accidents here."

First-hand observation bears out Haines' contention that many motorists leave the interstate at speeds in excess of the 30 miles an hour allowed by law. It's a dangerous practice.

The westbound interstate motorist entering the intersection has to negotiate the "S" curve. The first part of the curve is to the right. It is properly banked on the left side. The second part is a tight curve to the left. It's also banked on the left side. It has a tendency to throw a driver if he's speeding.

Coming out of the curve, interstate motorists find themselves on Broad. The dirt mound obscures their view of the intersecting street until they're into the flow of merging traffic. Westbound traffic on Broad is controlled by the yield sign.

Many motorists on Broad seem to ignore that sign. Some don't even look before charging into the flow of traffic.

There are no controls on which way the motorist leaving the interstate may turn. Most continue west on Broad. It's possible, however, to make what is almost a U-turn and go east of Broad.

It's even possible to cut across the intersecting westbound traffic and go north on Malcomb.

Meanwhile, there could be a hazard from the other direction—the driver who wants to continue east on Broad, even though it's against the law. To do this, the eastbound driver has to veer into the opposing lane, dodge a set of barrels designed to discourage this maneuver and scoot across traffic leaving the interstate.

The barrels have a "keep right" sign on them. There is a small detour sign at Broad and Vandalia telling drivers they must turn north or south at that point if they don't want to enter the interstate.

The Overton Park suit, which seeks to prevent the interstate from running through the northern sector of the park, has been in the courts since 1969. The route has been a subject of controversy for a decade and a half. The Broad exit was opposed by the environmental groups which are trying to block the park route, but U.S. Dist. Judge Bailey Brown gave the state permission to build it after the state argued that congestion at I-40 and

Highland—the old end of the interstate —was dangerous.

There is no way to tell how long the project will be tied up in litigation or what the outcome will be. The "temporary" exit at Broad could be the end of the interstate for years.

Palumbo, who doubles as city engineer, feels remedial action is necessary and can be taken.

"After that fatal accident, we began taking a look at it.

"I think that curve is on city right-of-way. I think the area needs review. That was a hurried piece of work and it was not all thought out.

"We might be able to say something in about three weeks."

State highway officials point to the fact court permission is necessary if additional work is done.

"It wasn't designed for permanent traffic operation," said Robert Odle, development engineer for the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

"We couldn't do any additional construction unless the court allowed us to. This is a matter of people disregarding the law."