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Mayor Rates Prospects Better For Completion Of I-40 Here

Prospects for completion of Interstate 40 through Memphis looks "more promising," Mayor Wyeth Chandler said last night after a meeting in Nashville with Gov. Winfield Dunn.

"But I'm not wreathed in optimism," Chandler said.

State officials are still working on a final plan for completion of the I-40 leg through or around Overton Park, he said.

Chandler and Dunn both declined to discuss details of the new plan, but "we're together on it," Chandler said.

"The state is really working on it. We would all rather have the original plan, but we realize some changes will have to be made. Everything looks really pretty good."

"The state within a matter of days or weeks is going to resubmit a plan for the completion of Interstate 40 through Memphis," Dunn said.

"The original route through Overton Park is what we considered the easiest,

the simplest and the most economical."

Dunn said Chandler wants to do what the city can to make the new proposal acceptable to federal officials.

"Wyeth is anxious for this administration to get something done. We're going to go back and update the environmental impact and weigh the alternatives."

The Overton Park route has been tied up in the courts by environmentalists for the past five years.

"We've got a lot more work to do," said state Transportation Commissioner Robert F. Smith.

"Frankly, I don't want to say anything until we've got something concrete in our hands, and we don't."

Chandler said completion of the expressway is a top priority here.

"I'd say it's among the top three priorities in the City of Memphis," he said. "Crime, I guess, would be at the top and housing, maybe, No. 2. But it's right up there among them."

Crime

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