

Letters To The Editor

OPE-24-17

'Obscene Fantasy'

To The Commercial Appeal:

The proposed routing of I-40 along North Parkway in front of gracious Hein Park and lovely Southwestern is the most preposterous idea I have heard since J. Frances Hume in 1912 proposed going over Niagara Falls in an oversized Stetson. The Niagara Falls venture was never completed, and neither will the North Parkway scheme. It is an insulting slap in the face to the Hein Park residents. It would be just as appropriate to build the midway of a circus on North Parkway. The proposal is obscene fantasy.

I like to fantasize as much as the next man, but my dreams are much more normal. I imagine myself as rich as J. Paul Getty, or having a harem of sultry, Oriental beauties like an oil rich Arabian potentate, and, sometimes, I have a reverie in which I-40 is completed by suspending a ribbon of concrete from a series of balloons — like the barrage balloons over England in World War II.

Like Tantalus, the citizens of Memphis are being teased with all kinds of economically impossible schemes, such as a tunnel and cut and cover. These bizarre and novel ideas are pure madness. Just about as practical as suspending the expressway from balloons.

The route through Overton Park is the only feasible way. If you add up all land and trees that have been condemned and lost along the right-of-way by individuals, you will find they have suffered a lot more than will the citizens of Memphis if the expressway goes through the park. Collectively, the people of Memphis should willingly accept the necessity of the Overton Park route as philosophically and responsibly as individuals who were forced to accept condemnation of trees, land and beauty.

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CA July 28, 1975
Midtown Destruction

To The Commercial Appeal:

As a resident for the past six years of Midtown, I have witnessed with deepening depression the callous and downright wanton destruction of the historic city.

Most of downtown looks like lunar landscape and it seems the only interest the East Memphis nouveaux-riches have in my neighborhood is how they may pass through it at high speed.

The latest conception, which calls for the obliteration of North Parkway, is something of a high-water mark in this characteristic civic insensitivity and irresponsibility. Those who proposed,

"studied" and advocate the plan, live nowhere near ground zero.

The best that could have happened to the Overton Park expressway was never to have been conceived; but now, at very least, further vandalism in the name of "progress" should be dismissed out of hand. If people wish to enrich and entertain themselves downtown and then to withdraw to the quiet and safety of the suburbs, let them put up with the inconvenience of getting there; or how about an inter-urban railroad winding the length of Walnut Grove?

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