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Slurry-Wall Project May Force Fund Bid

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NASHVILLE — Tennessee Transportation Commissioner Eddie Shaw said Monday the state may seek complete federal funding for the more-than-\$100-million Interstate 40 tunnel under Overton Park, should the slurry wall technique be forced on the state.

And should the federal government not agree to complete or virtually complete financing of the project, there "absolutely" would be a lengthy delay in construction of the parkway segment while the state attempted to stockpile its share of the cost, he said.

Meanwhile, in Washington, David Wells, chief counsel of the Federal Highway Administration, said Shaw's proposal would require congressional authorization.

At present, he said, "no such authority" (for total federal financing) exists in federal law."

Shaw made it clear he is no more en-

thusiastic about the slurry wall, cut-and-cover technique than he was when he appeared at a news conference in Memphis late last month.

He said he still is convinced the cut-and-cover approach would cost at least \$180 million to construct, plus \$2 million annually to maintain.

And the state, he pointed out, does not have the 10 per cent for such funding that would be needed under normal federal requirements for financing interstate projects.

Shaw said the state would yield to the compromise tunneling technique if forced to by the federal government, but added, "I would be opposed to this system."

Shaw, who stressed Gov. Ray Blanton is as firmly opposed to cut-and-cover as he is, said the state should know in what direction it must go to complete the Overton Park link of Interstate 40 in less than six months.

The commissioner repeated it is his preference that the stretch go through the park as originally planned, with no tunnel feature whatever.

Environmentalists have successfully fought such a design in the courts through the years.

The private consulting firm of Singstad, Kehart, November and Hurka has completed a study of the slurry wall tunnel, and federal officials believe the project could be accomplished for about \$100 million.

Shaw said the consultants are expected to give U.S. Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman, who originally suggested the slurry technique be considered, a final report on the study next week.

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