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Shaw Fears Fate Of Park I-40 Plan

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JACKSON, Tenn. — Tennessee Transportation Commissioner Eddie Shaw Thursday said he would favor not building a 3.6-mile section of Interstate 40 through Overton Park in Memphis at all if forced into a design that goes beyond the state's depressed and partially covered design.

"You can disregard any action on Overton whatsoever" if federal transportation officials rule in favor of a \$180-million cut-and-cover (slurry) tunnel, Shaw said in a speech to the Jackson Beaver Club, a businessmen's organization.

Shaw said the state has its share of the \$27-million cost of the partially covered design, but cannot afford the \$180-million cut-and-cover design. Tennessee would have to provide 10 per cent of the total cost to build either.

Shaw said Tennessee taxpayers would "run myself and the governor out of the state" if they agreed to build the \$180-million slurry tunnel design.

Memphis environmentalists fighting the

Overton Park expressway are a "highly organized, professional group" but they should compromise and accept the partially covered design as a workable solution to the long-pending impasse over the project, Shaw said.

The environmentalists are costing the state millions of dollars by delaying the project, which has risen in cost from \$3 million to \$20 million for the originally proposed design, Shaw said.

The commissioner said he has invited federal transportation officials from Washington and Atlanta to hearings June 2 and 3 on the state's latest impact statement on the partially covered design.

The impact statement officially will be presented to U.S. officials June 15, after which public hearings will be scheduled in Memphis, he said.

Shaw said he thinks the federal officials who will decide which route must be used "favor" the state's depressed and partly covered design.

The commissioner, speaking on another controversial highway topic, told the busi-

nessmen that he opposes building toll roads in Tennessee because they represent double taxation.

He said a proposed 31-mile toll road from Dyersburg to Jackson would cost \$84 million and that persons who traveled it would pay \$3.41 for a one-way trip.

"If that isn't double taxation, what is," he said.

Shaw said that it "doesn't make sense" to build toll roads because they rarely prove to be self-supporting and the state's bureau of highways can do the same job for less.

"It's somewhat of an embarrassing situation to serve on an authority you're not completely sold on," said Shaw, a member of the new Tennessee Tollway authority which last week authorized feasibility studies for two toll roads.

Shaw told the group to expect an increase in the state gasoline tax. His department, which has a 1976 budget of \$393 million, "will have to have more if we're going to keep up the job we're doing," Shaw said.