

# Expressway Plan Given Label Of 'Fad' In 1953

Here is a chronology of events concerning the Overton Park expressway issue which led up to yesterday's ruling by Transportation Secretary Brock Adams:

1953 — City Engineer Will Fowler sees expressways as "a fad" but tours other cities around the country to see what they have. He voices support for an expressway in Memphis but foresees controversy.

1955 — City Commission (now City Council) receives expressway study done by Harland Bartholomew & Associates which calls for circumferential expressway and east-west route through Overton Park.

1956 — Meeting held at Trinity Methodist Church, in the path of planned expressway, in which persons voice opposition to park route.

1957 — Opponents gather 10,000 signatures to support their cause and hear William S. Pollard of Bartholomew firm discuss the plan.

1964 — Citizens to Preserve Overton Park is formed at a meeting in which County Commissioner James W. Moore says a tunneled expressway could be run through the park.

1966 — The park route is approved by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, later placed under the Department of Transportation, which prompts state Highway Commissioner David Pack to declare the park route "final."

1968 — Opponents of park route go before City Council, which initially opposes the route but changes its stand a month later after meeting in executive session.

1969 — Opponents go beyond rallies and meetings and file suit in federal court seeking preliminary injunction to stop construction of expressway. Case set for 1970. State Highway Department announces bids to be let on I-40 and estimates cost for park route to be \$4.7 million. Secretary of Transportation John Volpe endorses park route.

1970 — U.S. Dist. Judge Bailey Brown of Memphis grants defendants — Transportation Secretary Volpe and state Highway Commissioner Charles Speight — summary judgment. Brown rules there are not adequate issues in the case to warrant a trial. Appellate courts uphold Brown's ruling. Then the park-route opponents obtain a stay of action from the U.S. Supreme Court which later remands the case to Brown's court for full review of Volpe's 1969 approval of the 3.7-mile link through the park.

1973 — Under instructions by Brown to follow the National Environmental Protection Act, Volpe changes his ruling and endorses an expressway tunnel.

1975 — Departing Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar rules out partially

depressed route through Overton Park and offers tunnel plan as one of three alternatives. Brinegar's successor, William Coleman, endorses tunnel but Gov. Ray Blanton says the state could not financially participate in the \$160-million project.

1976 — After the state submits an alternative and cheaper plaza design, Coleman promises to rule on the proposal by the end of the year.

1977 — Proponents and opponents visit transportation officials in Washington to air their views. A visit by Federal Highway Administrator William Cox to examine alternatives firsthand follows.

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