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*(See also news item, over,  
cont'd from paper.)*

## Fresh Look At I-40

THE DECISION by the executive committees of the Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce and Future Memphis to give up on the Overton Park route for Interstate 40 can be regarded as a non-partisan victory for all of Memphis inasmuch as it for the first time has brought together the proponents and opponents of that plan. Only a spirit of cooperation can truly make it a victory.

Two decades is long enough for a city to be divided over such an issue.

Difficult as it may be to find, there must be a solution to that vexing problem which will serve the needs of the entire community and on which everyone can agree. Let us get on with finding that solution.

SOME MAY DEPLORE the fact that the decision calls for yet another study of the problem. It is true the stack of studies has grown tall in City Hall over the years. But perhaps by bringing in fresh thinking from outside Memphis now we yet will find that elusive alternative.

Certainly Memphis and the State of Tennessee seem to have exhausted all the possibilities they have been able to find.

The idea of using the L&N right-of-way through North Memphis, even if the railroad were willing to surrender it, has been sensibly abandoned because it would balkanize the city and create animosities that should not exist. Anyhow, that route would be too far north to be practical now that the north leg of I-240 is nearing completion.

The so-called North Parkway alternative never should have even been considered.

THE PARKWAY SYSTEM is one of the best features of Memphis, a tribute to sound city planning early in this century. It should be preserved largely as it exists.

The plaza plan — a modified tunnel — through Overton Park has been flatly rejected as unacceptable under law by the federal government.

A full-scale tunnel remains a possibility, but really only on paper, for the cost of such a project is far too high for either Memphis or the State of Tennessee to contemplate even with federal assistance. We long have opposed that kind of cost as a solution.

So Memphis has been stymied.

FORTUNATELY THE decision to complete the north leg of I-240 has bought time for Memphis in which to make the hard decisions about what to do

with what exists of the proposed Overton Park route.

Perhaps the first plan should be to wait to see what the completion of the north leg does for traffic. The degree to which it serves to move interstate traffic around the present city will determine more than anything else the extent to which provision must be made for handling the remaining traffic east and west through the city.

Certainly there should be no rush now to carve new parkways through the city, as the opponents of the park route seem to be suggesting in the proposal they presented to the Chamber of Commerce and Future Memphis.

There is no more reason to be adamant about such extremely costly and disruptive proposals at this time than there is now to stand fast on going through the park. The opponents of the park route should keep in mind the fact that even with the concessions being made by those who favored the through-the-park route, public opinion in Memphis remains heavily with those who have advocated ripping through Overton Park.

This is not the time to dictate new proposals. Rather it is a time to fall back and allow new concepts to be presented.

We are not in a position to propose definitive plans. But it is possible to at least think in new terms.

IT MAY EVEN be that the sensible solution to the highway problem would be to consider the one alternative which a previous secretary of transportation offered us — namely, greater emphasis on mass transit. We recognize that is not a popular idea in Memphis where so many citizens have become wedded to their automobiles and where there is no tradition of commuting. But perhaps a plan that envisions a high grade of express transit would satisfactorily link the new future developments in downtown Memphis with the growing eastern and north-eastern reaches of the community. It is one possibility that certainly should not be rejected out of hand.

We would hope that planning experts with their experience in other communities could offer still more proposals which would be reasonable.

THE PROPONENTS of the park route have made a major concession in agreeing to seek other means of resolving the problem. The opponents of that park route now are obligated to respond in kind. Together they and we will find a way.