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Cost Of Tunnel Through Park Set At \$119 Million

An Interstate 40 tunnel through Overton Park can be built for \$119 million using the slurry-wall method, officials said yesterday.

Councilman A. D. Alissandratos said U.S. Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman "hopes to reduce the cost somewhat" from estimates supplied by an engineering firm conducting a \$50,000 study of the slurry-wall method.

"He seemed very anxious to get this completed in the near future," said Alissandratos, who met with Coleman Wednesday in Washington.

Coleman advanced the slurry-wall

proposal April 21, estimating its cost at \$160 million. Other DOT sources estimated the cost as low as \$100 million.

The two-level tunnel, about 5,000 feet long, would complete the 3.7-mile I-40 gap through Memphis. The route through the park has been blocked by environmentalists for years.

The slurry-wall method was proposed as a way of minimizing damage to the park. Instead of digging the tunnel at an angle, trenches would be dug and filled with concrete and steel to form the outside walls of the tunnel. The earth between the walls would then be removed.

Alissandratos said an environmental study of the slurry-wall method was "as good as finished. Now they're waiting for the design from the state."

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