

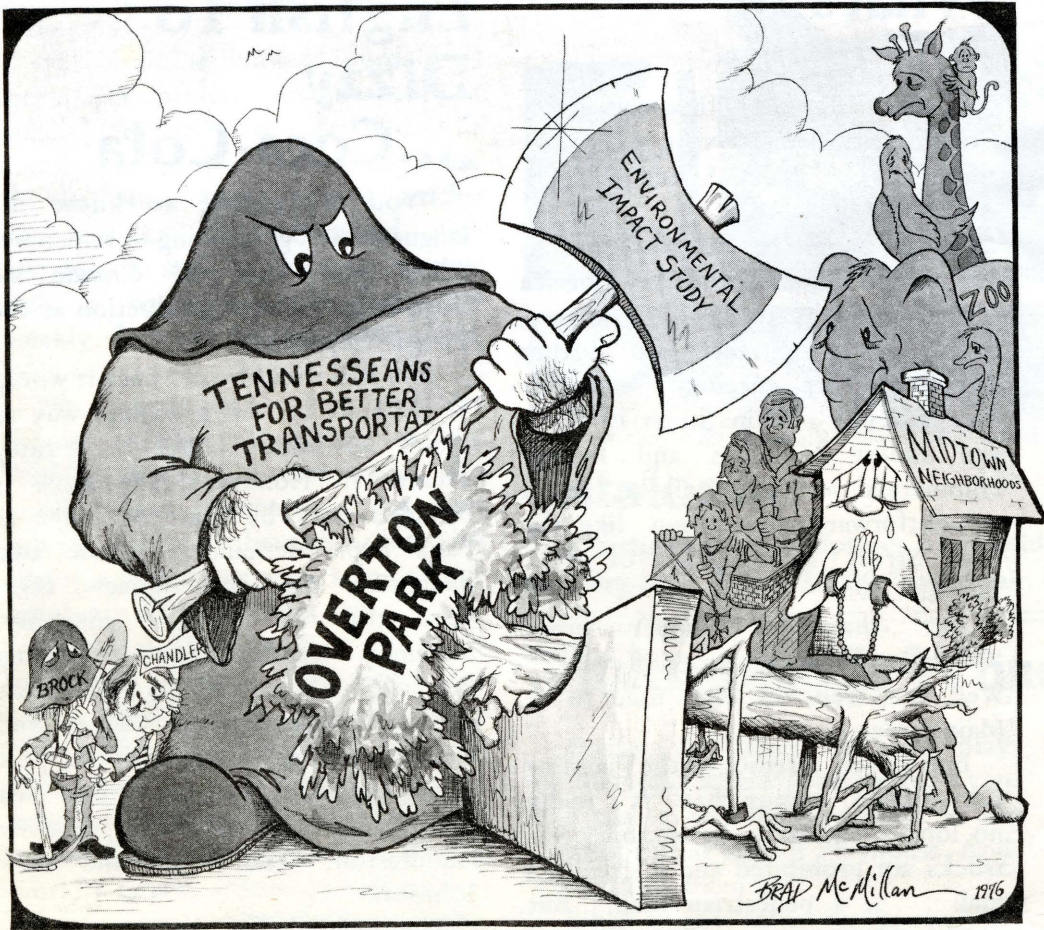
# Rhodes College Digital Archives - DLynx

## "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Fight the Expressway"

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# A Review

CARTOON BY BRAD McMILLAN



Interstate 40, From Claybrook Street to Bon Air Street, Shelby County, Memphis, Tennessee

or

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Fight the Expressway

This draft environmental impact statement will never make the best-seller list. However, there are heroic attempts at a new style of fiction, the what-you-don't-know-won't-hurt-you style. In recapitulating the build alternatives, such energy has been devoted to denigrating the no-build alternative that the premises of past actions remain unexamined, and any stimulus for new ideas is totally lacking. Unfortunately, there was not time to evaluate Senator Brock's offer to man a pick and shovel. (Would that go under the "do-nothing" category?)

In discussing the "social impacts of the 'do nothing' alternatives," the statement creates a scenario of the death of Midtown. "Personal development" is arrested; "interpersonal relationships suffer." "Public centers of activity" close. People move away; land use "incompatibilities" occur. Enter transient populations who have "less propensity to establish lasting interpersonal relationships, less individual identity with the area in which one lives, and, hence, less individual support for the preservation of community amenities and institutions." I was ready to slash my wrists and/or move to west Nashville when I asked: Who is the villain of this piece? *Heavy traffic*. Just in the nick of time my "personal physical, intellectual and spiritual development at centers of community activity" has been saved by Super I-40!

However this exciting denouement was interrupted by a pertinent question: Where is I-40 going to take the traffic that choked Midtown? To Downtown. By some twist of logic called casuistry, the anathema of Midtown, traffic, is just what Downtown needs for its revitalization. Only someone seems to have forgotten the hard-learned lessons of other cities.

Increased accessibility of cars is

always accompanied by a decline in public transportation. Now take this increased traffic and dump it on Downtown. There will be more cars which remain idle during the workday which occupy more parking spaces which creates the need for more land for parking which causes land use to spread and smear which entails the need for more cars to get to the more distant services. These cars need more parking spaces — meanwhile Downtown's tax base is eroded.

Traffic is a self-perpetuating problem and accommodation of traffic only serves to increase it. This environmental statement does not contain one positive proposal for the diminution of traffic, only the rerouting of it. The southern leg of I-240 affords a perfect example: "Average daily traffic counts show that the southeast quadrant of the I-240 loop is being forced to carry more traffic than it was designed to service efficiently." "Congestion difficulties with the 'do-nothing' option will be the fate of the entire I-240 ring by 2000. To a great extent this condition will occur, however, regardless of the final disposition of the I-40 corridor demand." I-40, like I-240, is another case of planned obsolescence. ". . . There will exist a sizeable demand for express transit service by the year 2000 due in large part to congestion and the associated travel time delay along the I-40 corridor."

Yes, Virginia, there is a mass transit system somewhere. The statement discusses at great length the "possibility" of accommodating "high occupancy vehicles" in busways or in contra-flow lanes, yet not one of the build alternatives for I-40 through the park contains the incorporation of this possibility. Clerical oversight?

Another oversight occurs in the statement's "History of the uncompleted Section of I-40." The review of litigation is complete up to Secretary Volpe's decision not to route I-40 through the park, January 19, 1973. What is not in the statement are Volpe's suggestions that (1) I-240 combined with local street improvement, (2) the L and N corridor, (3) broadened use of public

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transportation facilities, or (4) any combination of the above would meet the transportation needs of Memphis: "Listing these possible alternatives should not, of course, be construed either as an endorsement of any of them or as an exclusion of any other alternative that I have not mentioned. Likewise it should not be construed as a finding that the 'no build' alternative has been rejected."

The statement also neglects to state the 6th District Court's ruling of April 3, 1974. The Court in a unanimous decision concluded that the Secretary must scrutinize proposed highways in order to protect parklands and is not required to specify any particular route as a "feasible and prudent" alternative to the proposed (park) route. If one route is disapproved then it is incumbent on the state to propose another route to the Secretary which he will either approve or disapprove.

Why then is this statement devoted to maximizing the feasibility of an already disapproved park route? Perhaps a look at the Supreme Court opinion of March 2, 1971, might enlighten us. "It is obvious that in most cases considerations of cost, directness of route, and community disruption will indicate that parkland should be used for highway construction whenever possible. Although it may be necessary to transfer funds from one jurisdiction to another, there will always be a smaller outlay required from the public purse when parkland is used, since the public already owns the land and there will be no need to pay for right-of-way. And since people do not live or work in parks, if a highway is built on parkland, no one will have to leave his home or give up his business. Such factors are common to substantially all highway construction. Thus, if

**NOTICE: Those unable to speak at the hearings on August 18 and 19 in the City Council Chamber may submit a written statement before August 29 to:**

**Mr. Henry K. Buckner  
Department Attorney  
Tennessee Department of Transportation  
412 Frost Building  
161 8th Avenue N.  
Nashville 37203**

Congress intended these factors to be on an equal footing with preservation of parkland there would have been no need for statutes. . . . But the very existence of the statutes indicates that protection of parkland was to be given paramount importance."

The insidious rationale of the unknown, unnamed authors of the statement is revealed in the casual unconcern for the people who must

CITY HEALTH —

## Community Mental Health Centers

With increasing public awareness of the magnitude and severity of our contemporary mental health problem, a large number of governmental, professional, and private organizations have joined in an attack on mental disorders directed toward better understanding, more effective treatment, and long-range prevention.

Although the federal government provides leadership and financial aid, the states and localities actually plan and run most of the mental health services. In addition, the states establish and supervise their own mental hospitals and clinics. A number of states have pioneered the development of community mental health centers and rehabilitation services.

The Memphis area has five community mental health centers which are located in the northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest parts of the city and at the UT medical complex. These locations are called *catchment areas*, meaning these centers will refer callers to the appropriate mental health centers in their district.

All of the community mental health centers offer such basic services as marital and family therapy, individual counseling, counseling for children and youth, and medication clinics. The Northeast and Southwest centers are the most progressive and expansive in terms of the number of staff, services, and responsiveness to the need in the community for more information about the services available.

Both of these centers have established an Adult Day Treatment program for individuals who have been hospitalized previously for emotional difficulties. This service not only provides an alternative to hospitalization but works toward transition back to community living.

Through the Consultation and Ed-

(Continued on page 2)

live with I-40: "With a massive visual barrier in place the freeway could become a demarcation line between different individual attitudes toward maintenance of the quality of the living environment." We are subtly told that I-40 is not just a highway but a barrier. Who will be caught on the wrong side?

—Pat Waters