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"Expressway Decision Needed"

Item Type	Article
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Publisher	Commercial Appeal
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Download date	2026-06-18 01:51:09
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10267/29607

CPD

Dec. 19, 1974

Expressway Decision Needed

CLAUDE S. BRINEGAR has resigned as secretary of transportation at a critical point in the Overton Park expressway case, just as his predecessor, John Volpe, did. But there is still time for him to make a decision on the route before leaving office. We hope he does.

A relatively small group of Memphians remains adamantly opposed to the park proposal. The city and state governments, however, support it. Memphis civic leaders have gone to Washington to plead for the route, as have Mayor Wyeth Chandler and other city officials. Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), Rep. Dan Kuykendall (R-Tenn.) and Gov. Winfield Dunn have worked persistently to get the expressway completed through the park. So there should be no question about local support or the urgency that the city attaches to the case.

The central decisions to be made are whether there is a prudent and feasible alternative route and whether the proposed design, partial depression, will unduly damage the park. Brinegar, who has been thoroughly familiarized with the issues, should not have to ponder over them long. His department expects to finish processing the Overton Park plans early next month. Brinegar's resignation is not effective until Feb. 1.

If the secretary leaves the mat-

ter up to his successor, the case may be in for another lengthy delay. After all the years of argument and numerous court hearings, that would be a slap in the face to Memphis and Tennessee. The Ford administration, struggling already with credibility problems, should be anxious to show it can be responsive.

The expressway fight has been a celebrated cause among environmentalists. It has given them much pleasure and reason for pride. It's time that the rest of the city received due consideration, the President's housecleaning notwithstanding.

OPE 22-37