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Sunday, June 17, 1973

Road Chief Surveys Routes For I-40, Favors Overton

WASHINGTON, June 16.—(UPI)—The head of the Federal Highway Administration made an unannounced visit to Memphis this week with his Tennessee engineers and the deputy regional chief from Atlanta to look into the routing of Interstate 40 through Overton Park.

Norbert Tiemann reported in Washington that the superhighway should be taken through the park because "there isn't any other way to go.

"I looked at the alternative routes and the park and in my judgment the alternative routes are not feasible."

The ultimate decision in the 17-year-old controversy, however, is up to Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar, who has appealed a remand order by U.S. Dist. Judge Bailey Brown sending the case to him for decision.

Although Tiemann would not say which routes through the park would be accept-

able to him and to Brinegar, he did give some cost figures for several proposals.

The least expensive route, he said, would utilize a depressed highway and cost about \$7 million. Going up the price ladder, Tiemann said a cut-and-cover tunnel would cost about \$57 million, and a bore tunnel about \$147 million.

The cut-and-cover tunnel entails digging out a tunnel and covering it with a steel and concrete roof. The roof would be covered with soil and plants to protect the scenery of the area. Environmentalists have successfully halted the project in the past.

But the next step must be taken by the state, Tiemann said.

"Now it's up to the State of Tennessee to submit its plan," Tiemann said. There has been no word from the state when its proposal for I-40 will be resubmitted to the government.

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Sun. June 17, 1973

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June 17, 1973

OPE 21-43