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"Letters to the Editor: 'Taking Overton Park Apart', 'Make Them Pay', 'Forget It'"

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OPE 23-12 and 13

Taking Overton Park Apart

Sunday,
Feb. 16, 1975

To The Commercial Appeal:

After 19 years of arguments, frustration and litigation, the construction of I-40 through Overton Park has been blocked by the words, "Prudent and Feasible." Anyone in their right mind—except a handful of environmentalists and judges—can look at a map and quickly determine the true meaning of those two words.

Anyway, the city still holds the last card in this long game—and it is a trump card—if the mayor and City Council have the guts to play it.

The city could declare Overton Park no longer "Prudent and Feasible," move the zoo to the penal Farm, close the golf course, fence in the doughboy statue and build a wall around the art academy and gallery. The rest of the so-called

park could be sold, at a handsome price, for development similar to what is taking place at the old Colonial Country Club grounds in East Memphis.

Then, since a public park would no longer exist, the gap in I-40 could be quickly closed like it should have been long ago.

HARVEY B. WELDON

Arlington

Make Them Pay

To The Commercial Appeal:

I read with interest the letter in the Feb. 9 edition of The Commercial Appeal from the woman who wants to keep this "a city of good abode."

I, too, would like Memphis to be a "city of good abode." I con-

tribute the desolate look of the area east of Parkway, between Broad and Hollywood, and around Overton Park and Parkway to the incompleting expressway.

I contribute the overcrowded condition of the southern route of the existing expressway to the incompleting east-west leg. I contribute the plight of downtown Memphis, the deserted streets and problems that exist there after dark to the incompleting east-west leg.

The city of Memphis, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Association as well as the merchants individually should file a suit to collect the "excess cost to build today" from the people and organizations that have so selfishly fought to prevent this much needed route through the city. It would be money well spent just to compel them to spend their money and attempt to defend themselves from many other irate Memphians whom I feel sure would be happy to join in such an effort. And it just might make them shut up!

RENEE S. JASON

1033 June Road

have read is the one by a Memphis woman in last Sunday's paper. From personal observation, it seems to me that location of I-40 statewide is one colossal blunder. It should never have been run through the densely populated areas of Nashville and Knoxville.

Try getting through either place 7 to 9 a.m. or 4 to 6 p.m. The local traffic has so congested the interstate that cars move at a snail's pace. Is this what Memphis people want? No alternatives through the park are sensible or desirable. So I say forget about the park route, leave the park to the animals. As was suggested by the woman, complete I-240 from the junction of Summer to the junction at Watkins and Overton Crossing. Route I-40 over the new bridge around I-240 to the junction on east. I-55 traffic would use the old bridge over the present route.

This is not a perfect solution but it would keep interstate traffic on the outer perimeter around densely populated areas and would not disturb your park.

W. L. BRYANT

Leachville, Ark.

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

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Forget It

To The Commercial Appeal:

Thousands of words have been spoken and printed relative to completing I-40 through Overton Park. So far the most practical solution I