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Authors	Riker, Jefferson
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Plan For Rerouting Gains Support

By JEFFERSON RIKER

The drive to relocate the expressway away from Overton Park gained momentum yesterday, and it appears that several City Council members look with favor on rerouting.

During their morning executive session, councilmen heard arguments from Dr. Arlo Smith, a Southwestern professor, Mrs. John Hines and Mrs. William Deupree, who are striving to keep the highway out of the park's forested area.

"I think you've scored some points," Downing Pryor, council chairman, told the delegation. Councilmen Philip A. Perel, Jerred Blanchard and Mrs. Gwen Awsumb obviously supported relocation, Mr. Perel to the point of presenting his own alternative route swinging north of the park.

"Just because we've reached this point (in the present route planning) we don't have to go through with it," Mrs. Awsumb said. She cited a freeway project in San

Francisco which would have "ruined" the waterfront, but was halted by irate citizens.

Mrs. Deupree told of a similar citizen effort in connection with New York's Broome Street expressway.

The controversial Overton Park route, which would divide the park, was the subject of a lengthy battle which at one time threatened plans for an east-west expressway and the new Mississippi River bridge, now in the early stages of construction.

The route was laid out by engineers and not by urban planners, Dr. Smith said.

"The evidence indicates that very little consideration has been given to those human values that we talk about," Dr. Smith said. "Out of 21 possible routes there must be at least one alternate that is almost as reasonable, almost as cheap."

An expressway route along the northern edge of the park would be the only "logical"

route if the expressway must cross the park, Dr. Smith said, because it would take only a strip 150 feet wide the length of the park. A drawback, he said, would be possible adverse effects of noise, vibration and fumes on the Overton Park Zoo's animals, an objection raised in previous discussions.

Jerrold A. Moore, the city's chief administrative officer and former director of the Memphis - Shelby County Planning Commission, said, "The east-west expressway is essential. We're going to need another east-west expressway."

Mrs. Awsumb said she was concerned the additional expressway might invade Audubon Park.

The council's discussion of the Overton Park route came on the eve of a visit to Memphis by Lowell Bridwell, federal highway administrator, who is in town today for discussion of the routing with Mayor Henry Loeb and others.

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