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"Alternate X-Way Routes 'Exercises in Futility'" and "City Ranks Lowest On Safety List"

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The real "break" in Pollard's testimony came around 4 P.M. on Friday. See whether Sat PS and/or Sun. C.A. best the story: of his evasive answer re meeting

Memphis Press-Scimitar

Downtown Arm. - of which he is and was a member.

ECAST: Chance of showers through tomorrow. High in low 80s. Low around 60. (Details on Page 2.)

MEMPHIS, TENN., FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1971

TELEPHONES: NEWS AND GEN WANT ADS CIRCULATION

As Engineer Sees It

Alternate X-Way Routes 'Exercises in Futility'

By TOM JONES and KAY PITTMAN BLACK
Press-Scimitar Staff Writers

The chief engineer for Harland Bartholomew and Associates, who recommended the Overton Park expressway route, said in Federal Court today that further studies of suggested alter-

nate routes would only be "exercises in futility."

William S. Pollard Jr., now president of his own consultant firm, said, "Every action that has taken place since our early studies of alternates makes our decision more explicit." He added that no further studies could change his decision to route the expressway through the park.

Overton Park expressway would be outdated by 1985 and could not handle projected traffic.

Pollard characterized Lackner's interpretation of the route as "a complete misconstruance. They (conclusions) are in specific and in general in error."

Lackner emphasized that the letter was written before he became an attorney in the case.

Pollard, in answering a question of Judge Bailey Brown, said that his firm only briefly studied a proposal for just one east-west expressway because it obviously was not feasible. Present plans call for one east-west expressway to run through Overton Park and another one to be built parallel to Southern Avenue.

Much of this morning's session was spent studying
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City Ranks Lowest On Safety List

By MENNO DUERKSEN
Press-Scimitar Staff Writer

Memphis has the worst traffic safety rating of any city in its population group in the nation, according to statistics compiled by the National Safety Council.

The ratings, for cities of from 500,000 to 750,000 population, shows people have been dying in traffic in Memphis this year at the rate of 3.8 per 10,000 registered vehicles and 15.4 per 100,000 population.

Indianapolis, Ind., has the best record in the nation in this group with ratings of 1.2 and 5.8.

Memphis has had 79 traffic fatalities this year compared to 72 at this time last year.

The city set an all time high of 115 traffic fatalities in 1969 and the total for last year was 104.

Memphis has been "near the bottom" in traffic safety several times in recent years, but this is the first time in the memory of veteran police traffic officers that we have attained the "worst" category in cities of our size.

Although the plaintiffs opposing the park route have maintained that the City Council was "boxed in" by federal highway officials and endorsed the route, Pollard said he attended the meeting and heard no threats or intimidations. "The presentation (to the City Council) was made from drawings of alternate alignments," he said. "The nature of the presentation was one of considerable care . . . and cost was not to be the controlling item."

Pollard also contradicted a letter to a local newspaper from Michael Lackner, one of the attorneys for the plaintiffs, which stated that the present designs for the

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Engineer Firmly Rejects Alternate X-Way Routes

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an alternate route proposed by one of the witnesses for the objectors, Robert Conrad, a California urban planner. Pollard said that the alternate, which uses the L&N Railroad right-of-way, was "simply not" feasible. He said the railroad would have to be relocated and that this would "further disrupt the community. The disruptive effect would be much greater than the pure physical taking of houses. It adds needless air pollution."

Conrad's alternate included three interchanges severely criticized by Pollard. Pollard said the interchange at Jackson and Hollywood would take approximately 20 acres of land and would present left-turn problems.

The Jackson interchange from University to McLean would "have to have new streets," Pollard said, adding that the interchange "would intrude into residential neighborhoods. It would be quite physically disruptive."

Another interchange proposed by Conrad would be located behind the high-rise Woodmont Apartments on N. Parkway. Pollard said this plan would again require new streets to be paved and possibly would have a ramp near the corner of the apartment building. He said the exit ramp would deposit motorists in the "very congested area" near Sears on N. Cleveland.

Pollard concluded his review of the alternate routes, by again emphasizing that they were not feasible. "After 16 years of evaluation and

efforts to improve it (Overton Park route) and concern for the park, it is still the only feasible and prudent route," he said.

Answering a question of Judge Brown's, Pollard recalled that he made the study of the L & N alternate route in 1958 after being hired by the state. "The residential area west of the park seemed to be the focus (of the concern) more than the park itself," he said.

"Anything unknown is suspect. The terms barrier and Chinese wall had been used. We made elaborate studies to prevent unnecessary community disruption."

Pollard said the effect of relocating the route would only cause further disruption, because the community had adjusted to the Overton Park route. "In Memphis for the past 16 years, the community has moved forward. The route has been printed in local hand-outs and maps.

"Something different would only . . . be more disruptive. The longer the plan exists, the more public confidence for it. This very lawsuit is a form of disruption. Each time a new consideration of routes is announced, there is a flurry of calls wanting to know the details."

Pollard said that each year, since 1955 and 1958, the comprehensive planning study has been updated.

He said, "Each year, because of the concentration of people, the route location for Interstate 40 narrows and proves to be more and more the only route. It tests over and over again for validity . . . in regard to traffic desire, where people want to go, where they live, and

where the major concentrations are."

Pollard said that, in a study he made recently, his firm stated that "in general, a mass transit system or a rapid transit system for Memphis was not recommended.

"The public continues not to use these (public transportation) facilities in the city at an alarming rate . . . And because of the long, flat urban area (of Memphis) there is no one large pickup point in areas where a large number of people could be picked up at one point." He said Memphis is better designed for a motor transit system.