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Memphis Park Expressway

Roads Official Makes Tour of Overton Park

By CHARLES A. GOODMAN
Press-Scimitar Staff Writer

Possible minor changes of plans for an East-West expressway through Overton Park are being discussed by officials of the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads and Roger

Middaugh, chief project engineer for Buchart-Horn, who have the design contract with the state.

Two Bureau representatives from Nashville met yesterday with Middaugh following an earlier meeting at the Parkview Hotel with the Citizens Committee to Preserve Overton Park, of which Mrs. Ralph W. Handy is chairman.

The Memphis committee seeks to get officials to re-route the expressway now planned through the middle of the park.

POSSIBLE CHANGES

"We discussed the possible elimination of the high retaining walls flanking the expressway through the park, also the moving of an interchange," said Middaugh. "But any change we would make would have to be ordered by the state highway department."

Middaugh said preliminary work on the Overton Park section of the expressway would not begin until late spring and that changes could be made before then.

John Cobb, division engineer for the Federal Bureau of Public Roads, of Nashville, toured the park with members of the Citizens Committee. Dr. Arlo Smith, biology professor at

Pr. Sec. 11-18-64

Southwestern, a committee member, pointed out old trees which would be uprooted by bulldozers if the present expressway route is maintained.

WIDOW

Another member, Mrs. Watkins Overton, widow of the late mayor for whose family the park was named, said the park was bought in 1901 for \$110,000. She said residential lots in the neighborhood now sell for about \$19,000.

At lunch at Southwestern, Frank Ragsdale, president of Memphis Transit Authority, said the Overton Park route for the expressway was based on traffic surveys which were many years out of date and no longer valid. He said traffic requirements are now much heavier in the southern and southwestern part of Memphis which would not be served if the expressway goes through Overton Park.

COMPLETION URGED

"The vigor of our Downtown area would be far better served by the completion of the circumferential expressway serving the north and south of the county, than by the building of an expressway way east through Overton Park," said Ragsdale.

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