

3.18 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Implementation of any of the four build alternatives would involve the commitment of a range of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. Land used in the construction of the proposed roadway widenings and extension is considered an irreversible commitment during the time period that the land is used for a roadway facility. However, if a greater need arises for use of the land or if the roadway facility is no longer needed, the land can be converted to another use. At present, there is no reason to believe such a conversion would ever be necessary or desirable. Impacts to habitat and farmlands would also be irreversible and irretrievable. Replacement of these resources is provided as mitigation.

Considerable amounts of fossil fuels, labor, and roadway construction materials such as cement, aggregate, and bituminous material would be expended to construct the roadway improvements. Additionally, large amounts of labor and natural resources are used in the making of construction materials. These materials are generally not retrievable. However, they are not in short supply and their use would not have an adverse effect upon continued availability of these resources.

Any construction of roadway improvements would also require a substantial one-time expenditure of both State and federal funds, which are not retrievable. However, savings in energy and time associated with reduced congestion and a reduction in accidents would offset this expenditure. In addition to construction and right-of-way costs, the widened roadway would increase costs for roadway maintenance, including pavement, roadside, litter/sweeping, signs and markers, electrical, and storm maintenance.

The commitment of these resources is based on the concept that residents in the immediate area, region, and State would benefit from the improved quality of the transportation system. These benefits would consist of improved accessibility and safety, which are expected to outweigh the commitment of these resources.

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