

3.22 Irretrievable and Irreversible Commitment of Resources

NEPA requires a review of irreversible and irretrievable effects that occur from the development of the Proposed Action. Irretrievable effects apply to losses of production, use, or commitment of non-renewable natural resources. Irreversible effects apply primarily to the use of non-renewable resources, such as minerals or cultural resources, or to those factors that are only renewable over long periods of time, such as soil productivity. Irreversible effects also include the loss of future options.

The No Action Alternative would not change the current commitment of resources.

Under the Proposed Action, irretrievable and irreversible commitments of resources would occur from the use of land, fill and gravel resources, electrical energy, fuel, and labor. The commitment of energy and labor for construction is considered irretrievable and irreversible. These resources are not in short supply, and resource use would not have an adverse effect on continued availability of these resources. Any construction would require an expenditure of both state and federal funds, which is not retrievable.

The Proposed Action would involve an irretrievable and irreversible wetland loss. The project minimized the amount of wetlands being affected. The project includes measures to protect wetlands that would otherwise be at risk from future development such as converting wetlands near Tina Lake from private to public ownership.

Land used in the construction of the Proposed Action is considered an irreversible commitment during the time period the land is used for the project. In the long-term, if a greater need arises for the use of the land or the road is no longer needed, the land can be converted to another use. At present, it is not expected that such a conversion would be necessary or desirable. The Proposed Action represents a small portion of land

in the surrounding region and is consistent with local plans.

The commitment of these non-renewable resources is based on the premise that area residents would benefit from the improved quality of the transportation system. Benefits include improved accessibility, time savings, and greater availability of services. The benefits are anticipated to outweigh the commitment of these resources.