

12.0 SHORT-TERM USE OF THE ENVIRONMENT VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY AND IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE IMPACTS

This chapter documents the relationship between short-term use of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity as well as the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources associated with the proposed action. It has been updated to reflect the changes that have been made to the project since completion of the DEIS.

12.1 SHORT-TERM USE OF RESOURCES VERSUS MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

This project responds to required transportation improvements identified by regional and state planning documents, which in turn have considered existing and future transportation needs within the context of present and future land use development. The Preferred Alternative will result in impacts to fiscal, social, economic, physical and natural resources in the project area, including the use of state and federal funds for materials, labor, and right of way acquisition. However, it is anticipated that the costs associated with the Preferred Alternative will, in the long-term, be largely recovered through more efficient travel, improved safety, an increased tax base due to improved accessibility to existing and future land uses, and a long-term reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Refer to Chapter 5 of this FEIS for additional detail on impacts to social and economic resources. Specific short-term impacts to the natural environment (e.g., wetlands and wildlife) are discussed in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7 and will be mitigated to alleviate long-term consequences of project construction.

12.2 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative involves the commitment of a range of fiscal, social and economic, and physical and natural resources. While the public funds required for this project are not directly retrievable, the money spent can be considered a long-term investment in the economic vitality of the region.

Approximately 508 acres of land are required for the Preferred Alternative (this includes both total and partial acquisitions, but most likely includes more property than is actually required for the project; any land not required for permanent right of way purposes will be released from Mn/DOT ownership). Land used in construction is considered an irreversible commitment for the duration that the land is used for a highway facility. However, if a greater need arises for a different use of the land or if the highway 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.

Considerable quantities of fossil fuels, labor and highway construction materials such as cement, aggregate and bituminous material would be required for the Preferred Alternative. In addition, large quantities of labor and natural resources are used in the fabrication and preparation of construction materials. The use of these materials is generally considered irretrievable. The commitment of these resources is widely viewed as an acceptable trade-off for the benefits from which residents in the immediate area, state and region are anticipated to benefit, which include improved accessibility, safety, time savings, and greater availability of quality services. Some of the project materials may have salvage value and may be recycled at the end of the facility's design life.

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