4.21 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

This section has been updated since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR based on refinements to the LPA. A vertical line in the margin is used to show where revisions have occurred to this section since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, excluding minor edits for consistency and correction of formatting and minor typographical errors. These revisions do not change the CEQA impact determinations of this section.

CEQA Section 15126.2(c) requires a discussion of any significant irreversible environmental impacts that would be caused by implementation of a proposed project. Generally, a project would result in significant irreversible environmental impacts if any of the following would occur:

- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.
- The project consumption of resources is not justified (i.e., the project involves wasteful energy use).
- The primary and secondary impacts would generally commit future generations to similar uses.
- The project involves uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

These thresholds were used to determine significant irreversible environmental impacts that would potentially occur under all of the alternatives.

Under the No Build Alternative, no new infrastructure would be built within the project area, aside from projects currently under construction or funded for construction and operation by 2035 in Metro's *Long Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP).

The TSM Alternative does not have a construction component, beyond installation of bus stops and minor curb modifications, and would not have an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable resources associated with construction. Operating new shuttle bus service under the TSM Alternative would rely on the use of nonrenewable resources or a commitment of physical resources, such as metal, for the expanded bus fleet. Operation of the TSM Alternative would increase energy consumption due to maintenance and operation of the expanded bus fleet. The use of fossil fuel would be necessary to provide electricity and fuel for buses, worker vehicles, and maintenance operations.

Construction of the build alternatives, including the LPA, would entail the one-time, irreversible, and irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable resources, such as energy (fossil fuels used for construction equipment) and construction materials (such as lumber, sand, gravel, metals, and water). Additionally, labor and natural resources would be used to produce construction materials that are not generally retrievable. However, these materials are not in short supply and usage would not result in a significant impact on continued availability of these resources. Construction of one of the build alternatives, including the LPA, would also require a substantial one-time expenditure, which is not retrievable, of both local and federal funds.

Land used to construct proposed facilities is considered an irreversible commitment during the period the land is used. After construction is completed, land used for construction staging would be available for other uses. The project would potentially commit land at stations, potential portal and pedestrian bridge sites, and street right-of-way to transit uses. Some station pedestrian entrances and other aboveground elements of the project would be located on sites with existing commercial and retail uses, and would not require a substantial land commitment. The commitment of long-term land resources is consistent with the policies of the City of Los Angeles which promote transit uses.

The consumption of nonrenewable resources related to the build alternatives, including the LPA, would include water, petroleum products, and electricity. Tunneling activities would require water for slurry for the tunnel boring machines and in water cooling towers. While much of this water can be recycled and reused, these processes would also create wastewater that would require disposal. In addition, fossil fuels would be used for transporting workers and materials during construction, and electricity and fuel would be used for trains, stations, and worker vehicles for maintenance and operation during the life of the project. The amount and rate of consumption of these resources would not result in significant environmental impacts or the unnecessary, inefficient, or wasteful use of such resources because they would increase transit use (which increases energy efficiency) and decrease automobile use (which uses fossil fuels).

The Regional Connector Transit Corridor project benefits would include improved mobility, transit accessibility, and energy and time savings. The resources committed and consumed for the build alternatives, including the LPA, would be considered appropriate because regional and area residents and visitors would benefit from improved transit services, which, in turn, would result in an overall decrease in the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable resources. For example, transportation sources account for over 40 percent of the energy consumed in California. The project is expected to remove passenger cars from the regional roadway network, easing the increase in vehicle miles traveled, and the usage of fossil fuels. The build alternatives, including the LPA, would annually reduce regional vehicle miles traveled by approximately 96 to 102 million miles, and reduce annual mobile source energy consumption by approximately 596 to 635 billion British Thermal Units (BTUs). Therefore, the project can substantially decrease the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources. Refer to Section 4.11, Energy Resources, of this Final EIS/EIR for more detail regarding reductions in annual mobile source energy consumption.

The project consists of a light rail connector, which would include transit stations, pedestrian station entrances and train portals, potential pedestrian bridges, and a potential automobile underpass. These components of the project would use household-type cleaning materials, such as detergents and cleansers. Oil, solvents, and other materials would be used for train maintenance in relatively small volumes and are not considered acutely hazardous materials according to the National Institute of Health. There is the potential for hazardous materials/waste spills to occur; however, the storage and disposal of hazardous materials/waste would be conducted in accordance with all federal and state requirements to prevent or manage hazards. In the unlikely event that a spill does occur, remediation would be conducted accordingly. Therefore, there would be a minimal risk of irreversible damage caused by an environmental accident associated with hazardous or acutely hazardous materials.