



# Section 4.21

## Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

*California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines* 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 would 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 No Build Alternative provides the baseline conditions for comparing the impacts of all of the alternatives.

The TSM Alternative has a limited construction component and would not have an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable resources associated with construction. Operation of enhanced bus services 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 fuels would be necessary to provide electricity and fuel for buses, worker vehicles, and maintenance operations.

Construction of the build alternatives would entail a one-time, irreversible, and irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable resources such as energy (fossil fuels used for construction vehicles and equipment and in the manufacturing process for project components) and construction materials (such as lumber, sand, gravel, metals, and water). In addition, labor and natural resources would be used to produce construction materials that are not generally retrievable. However, these materials are generally not in short supply and usage would not result in a significant impact to continued availability of these resources.

Construction of the light rail transit (LRT) build alternatives would also require a substantial one-time expenditure, which is not retrievable, of local and perhaps federal funds. This expense would be offset by the direct and indirect benefits to the local and regional economy from new construction employment, purchases of construction materials and services, and long-term economic development opportunities resulting from a LRT system.

Land used to construct proposed facilities is considered an irreversible commitment during the period the land is used. After construction is completed, the project would potentially commit land at stations, park and ride facilities, a maintenance yard, and street right-of-way (ROW) to

transit uses. Some station pedestrian entrances and maintenance facilities for the project would be located on sites with existing commercial, retail, and industrial uses, and would not require a substantial land commitment. The commitment of long-term land resources is consistent with the policies of the County of Los Angeles and local jurisdictions within the project area which promote transit uses, as discussed in Section 4.2, Land Use and Development, of this Draft EIS/EIR.

The consumption of nonrenewable resources related to the build alternatives would include water, petroleum products, and electricity. Fossil fuels would also 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 Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project benefits would include improved mobility, transit accessibility, and time savings. In addition, the build alternatives would result in total annual net energy savings compared with the No Build Alternative (2035). The resources committed and consumed for the build alternatives would be considered appropriate because regional and local 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 would remove passenger cars from the regional roadway network, easing the increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and the usage of fossil fuels.

Maintenance of the transit stations, pedestrian station entrances, pedestrian bridges, and maintenance facilities associated with the LRT alternatives 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 these 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, as discussed in Section 4.11, Geotechnical/Subsurface/ Seismic/Hazardous Materials, of this Draft EIS/EIR. 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.