

3. Existing Conditions and Environmental Consequences

3.17 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Implementing one of the Carolina Crossroads reasonable alternatives would involve a commitment of a range of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. Use of the land for constructing the Carolina Crossroads project would be an irreversible commitment of these resources during the time that the land is used for the project. However, if a greater need for use of the land arises, or if the transportation system is no longer needed, the land could be converted to another use. At present, there is no reason to believe such a conversion would be necessary or desirable. A considerable amount of fossil fuels, labor, and highway construction materials such as cement, aggregate, and bituminous material would be expended. Additionally, large amounts of labor and natural resources would be necessary for fabricating and preparing the construction materials. These materials are generally not retrievable, but they are not in short supply, and their use would not have an adverse effect on the continued availability of these resources.

Constructing the Carolina Crossroads would also require a substantial expenditure of irretrievable funds. The commitment of these resources is based on the premise that residents in the area, the region, and the state would benefit from the improved quality of the transportation system. These benefits would consist of improved mobility and savings in travel time, both of which are anticipated to outweigh the commitment of these resources (Appendix G).

Wetlands in the Carolina Crossroads study area would be lost as discussed in Chapter 3.7: Water Resources, though the loss of these wetlands would be mitigated.

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