

3.9 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Resources, both natural and man-made, would be expended in the construction, renovation, reuse and operation of developments projected to occur as a result of the proposed action. These resources include the building materials used during construction or renovation; energy in the form of gas and electricity consumed during construction and operation of buildings by various mechanical and processing systems; and the human effort required to develop, construct, renovate, and operate various elements of projected and potential developments. These elements are considered irretrievably committed because their use for some other purpose would be highly unlikely.

The proposed action is expected to result in approximately 957 dwelling units (including 191 affordable dwelling units); 434,141 square feet of commercial space (153,581 square feet of retail space, 10,625 square feet of FRESH supermarket space, 34,110 square feet of restaurant space, 144,978 square feet of office space, and 90,847 square feet of parking garage area); and 47,946 square feet of community facility space on the 24 projected development sites. This would result in a net change in development between the No-Action and With-Action scenarios at these 24 projected development sites of approximately 738 additional dwelling units (191 of which would be affordable housing units), 36,844 square feet of retail space, 10,625 square feet of FRESH supermarket space, 24,169 square feet of restaurant space, 7,782 square feet of community facility space, 16,573 square feet of office space, and net decreases of 27,612 square feet of hotel space and 78,152 square feet of automotive-related, storage and other space. As a result, the proposed rezoning and related actions would require the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of energy, construction materials, human effort, and funds. As indicated in Chapter 3.14, “Energy” in the EAS, it is estimated that the 24 projected development sites would generate a net increase in energy consumption of approximately 108 billion BTUs in annual energy use compared to the No-Action condition.

Although the proposed action would result in the transformation of the Webster Avenue corridor from a low-scale commercial district to higher-scale residential and commercial districts and the preservation of lower density residential developments within the neighborhoods of Bedford Park and Norwood, the land use changes associated with the development of the proposed Webster Avenue Rezoning may also be considered a resource loss. Projected and potential development under the proposed action constitutes a long-term commitment of sites as land resources, thereby rendering land use for other purposes infeasible. Further, funds committed to the design, construction/renovation, and operation of projected or potential developments under the proposed action are not available for other projects.

The proposed action constitutes an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of the project sites as a land resource. These commitments of land resources and materials are weighed against the public purpose and benefits of the proposed action, which are to provide a substantial amount of residential and commercial development in an area with significant transportation infrastructure to support development. It would replace

low-scale automotive-related commercial uses and revitalize the Webster Avenue corridor with new residential and commercial development that would be compatible with residential and mixed-use development in surrounding neighborhoods.