

Chapter 26: Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

There are a number of resources, both natural and built, that would be expended in the construction and operation of the Proposed Actions. These resources include the materials used in construction; energy in the form of gas and electricity consumed during construction and operation of the Proposed Project; and the human effort (time and labor) required to develop, construct, and operate various components of the Proposed Actions. They are considered irretrievably committed because their reuse for some purpose other than the Proposed Actions would be highly unlikely. Although the Proposed Actions would result in a net overall increase in open spaces and a wider variety of land uses, the land use changes associated with the development of the Proposed Project may also be considered a resource loss. The Proposed Actions constitute an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of the Project Area as a land resource, thereby rendering land use for other purposes infeasible.

These commitments of land resources and materials are weighed against the public purpose and benefits of the Proposed Actions: to provide Columbia University, a leading educational institution both locally and nationally, with space for its long-term growth; and to facilitate the redevelopment of both the Project Area and in adjoining areas to be rezoned by allowing greater density and a wider variety of land uses, introducing substantial new publicly accessible open space, and improving the streetscape and connections to the waterfront. *