

7.0 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

7.1 OPEN SPACE, COMMUNITY CHARACTER, AND ZONING

The Project, like any development project, involves a trade-off between open space – with the environmental aesthetic benefits it provides – and development. The Project, as documented above, will provide a much-needed variety of housing for various income brackets; along with construction-related and long-term employment associated with Orchard Village at Carriage Hill for local citizens. The Project may also result in increased local spending during construction, by new residents of the Town of Brunswick, as well as by employees of Orchard Village.

The change in character of the Project site itself may be the most prominent irreversible commitment of resources. While not fundamentally irreversible in terms of physical science, development of this site effectively alters its character permanently. The use of the Planned Development District process and clustering, which the Town has endorsed in their Comprehensive Plan, is allowing this site to be planned and developed in a manner that preserves the existing rural character as well as the natural and physical resources of the Site and the surrounding areas to the maximum extent practicable.

The current zoning of the Project site does allow for residential use, and therefore, the Project is not in conflict with the uses the Town has determined to be acceptable and compatible through their Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations.

Appropriate and adequate mitigation measures have been proposed to prevent the degradation of the surrounding land use from its current rural residential/suburban character.

7.2 VEGETATION, HABITATS, AND TOPOGRAPHY

While approximately 22 acres of vegetation will be permanently lost as part of the Project and converted to impervious surfaces (1 acre of impervious surface currently exist), the remaining 179.39 acres will remain pervious in one form or another. Further, all disturbed areas will be revegetated, and numerous precautions, provisions, and mitigation measures will be employed to minimize the potential for additional impacts related to the removal of vegetation.

The Project, through the removal of vegetation and alteration of the existing forms of vegetation, including the conversion of wooded areas to lawns and landscaped areas, will result in the permanent alteration of habitat for the resident species of deer, birds, and small mammals. This loss of habitat is considered to be minimal and the impact short-term due to the proposed construction of lawns and landscaped areas that are anticipated to result in an increase in the population of songbirds and small mammals, and not an overall decrease in animal populations.

The Project will also alter the topography of the Site. While all efforts will be made to avoid altering steep slopes to the extent practical, re-grading will be required to implement the Project as designed. The mitigation measures to be included in the SWPPP, combined with proper construction techniques and

Best Management Practices (BMP's), will all work to mitigate potential adverse impacts related to slope disturbances.

7.3 WATER RESOURCES

The Project proposes permanent disturbances to wetlands and tributaries under the jurisdiction of the ACOE for combined road and utility crossings. These crossing will require compliance with NWP #14; which may require compensatory mitigation strategies.

The proposed disturbances to tributaries and wetland related to the utility crossings will require compliance with NWP #12 and, therefore, these areas will be fully restored to pre-disturbance conditions. The proposed restoration, combined with the use of proper construction techniques, BMP's, and compliance with NWP #12 and the SWPPP, the potential for permanent losses to these resources will be mitigated to the maximum extent practicable.

7.4 COMMITMENT OF ENERGY AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

The development of the Project will also require a commitment of energy and construction materials. Construction materials include concrete, steel and other related materials and equipment. This commitment of resources will span the proposed five-year implementation period. The increased need for and utilization of building materials for the Project is not anticipated to result in any adverse impacts by itself.

Energy resources will also be utilized during construction. These impacts are discussed below in *DEIS Section 9 - Effects on the Use and Conservation of Energy*.