

#### **4.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS, PROJECT IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

This chapter provides the analysis of the potential environmental impacts that would arise with implementation of the North Connector Project (Project). Sections 4.1 through 4.13 describe the existing environmental conditions in the Project area by environmental resource category. In addition, each section evaluates the environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the Project and provides mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts resulting from the Project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a significant impact on the environment is defined as, “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by a project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.” The CEQA Guidelines direct that any determination of a significant impact to the environment be based on scientific and factual data. Each section in this chapter evaluates impacts according to significance criteria established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines in accordance with California state law.

#### **FORMAT OF ISSUE SECTIONS**

Each environmental issue section begins with a description of the methodology used to evaluate impacts to each resource category arising from implementation of the Project. This is followed by a description of existing conditions within the Project area and a discussion of the regulatory setting in which the project would unfold. Finally, each section concludes with a discussion of the Project impacts and mitigation measures to reduce those impacts. Analysis of environmental issues are organized so that the discussion of the issues not discussed further and impacts that would be considered less than significant and that do not require mitigation precede the discussion of significant and potentially significant impacts. Any identified significant or potentially impacts are numbered and shown in bold type, with the corresponding mitigation measures numbered and indented. Significant and potentially significant impacts and mitigation measures are numbered consecutively within each topic.

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