

***FINAL DRAFT***

**State of Oklahoma  
Office of State Finance**



**Environmental Assessment (EA)**

**For**

**Oklahoma Community Access Network (OCAN)**

**Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)**

**&**

**National Telecommunications & Information Administration  
(NTIA)**

**1401 Constitution Avenue, NW**

**Washington D.C. 20230**

*Prepared By:*

Oklahoma Department of Transportation

Environmental Programs Division

200 NE 21<sup>st</sup> Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73105

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## **Executive Summary**

The Oklahoma Community Access Network (OCAN) is a collaborative partnership between private and public entities committed to the state's existing infrastructure and is Oklahoma's lead for establishing the state's national fiber footprint. The key state agencies in this partnership comprise the Oklahoma Office of State Finance, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The awarded grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) through the Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will supplement existing state assets with federal funding to address the significant disparity in broadband access between urban and rural areas in the state.

The purpose of the proposed project is to extend broadband and advanced network services and offerings to community anchor institutions both directly and through targeted public/private partnerships. The need for the project is to correct significant communication/information shortfalls and deficiencies related to insufficient broadband access to the underserved areas of the state.

The proposed project consists of installing fiber optic backbone along designated state highway routes. A total of 1005 miles of fiber optic cables will be installed underground within the existing state right-of-way and fiber routes to 32 anchor facilities will be run underground along city streets. This installation will be completed in six (6) phases varying in length from 92 to 237 miles. In order to keep the installation within the public right-of-way, only the underground option for the installation of fiber optics was considered in the environmental assessment.

Early in the project development process, consideration of methods for implementing broadband technology presented the following alternatives: no action, installation of underground cable, aerial construction, and wireless technology. Installation of underground cable was selected as the preferred alternative because it was deemed most versatile and more conducive to accommodating potential mitigation measures required to be implemented. Aerial construction was determined not feasible with respect to issues related to operation and maintenance. Wireless technology did not provide sufficient band width capacity to support the network. The no action alternative does not support the proposed project's purpose and need.

ODOT is the lead agency for conducting the environmental assessment, and has completed the environmental analyses, through coordination with the interested environmental and government agencies, in developing a comprehensive evaluation of the effects of the broadband fiber-optic installation on the respective natural, physical, cultural, and socioeconomic resources throughout the project area. Department Specialists have performed area studies in consultation with the

State Historic Preservation Office, the Oklahoma Archeological Society, tribal governments, the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality. Through the consultation process, each agency was given the opportunity to comment on the potential effects of the proposed project on the environment.

The consulted agencies have all submitted responses and/or permit requirements related to the proposed project. After reviewing study reports and agency comments, there are no adverse effects or significant impacts to the existing environment. In the resource areas studied, overall impacts assessed for Biological Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, and Water Resources are determined to be minor. Impacts to Noise, Air Quality, Climate, Greenhouse Gases, Global Warming, Geology and Soils, Land Use, Infrastructure, Socioeconomic Resources, and Human Health and Safety are determined to be negligible.