



Carver County Open Fiber Initiative (CCOFI)
Carver County, Minnesota

Environmental Assessment Report Prepared for:
The National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program

Submitted By:
Carver County Administrative Services
Carver County Government Center
600 E. 4th Street
Chaska, MN 55318

JANUARY 27, 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Carver County, Minnesota was awarded a grant by the NTIA to provide broadband infrastructure to communities throughout Carver County. Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the NTIA must conduct an Environmental Assessment of the proposed action and evaluate environmental consequences of the proposed action against alternative actions that meet the purpose and need of the project.

The proposed project consists of construction of approximately 122 miles of fiber optic cable along various existing right-of-ways and utility easements throughout the project area. The fiber will be installed using vibratory plow and directional drilling technologies. Directional drilling will be used in locations where surface disturbances must be minimized such as central business districts within communities and under sensitive environmental locations such as wetlands or stream crossings.

This Environmental Assessment reviews the impacts of the Preferred Route, an Alternate Route and a No Action alternative to various aspects of the environment. Areas considered include: Noise, Air Quality, Geology and Soils, Water Resources, Biological Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, Aesthetic and Visual Resources, Land Use, Infrastructure, Socioeconomic Resources and Health and Human Safety.

The analysis of the project, constructed using the methods described, showed no significant adverse impacts during construction or operation for the Preferred Route to any of the resource areas described above. The Preferred Route was specifically routed to avoid conflicts with sensitive environmental and cultural resources. Due to this intentional modification to avoid these sensitive areas, an Alternate Route was not proposed. As there are no significant impacts along the Preferred Route, the Preferred Route is recommended.

INTRODUCTION

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) solicited proposals for the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) to expand broadband infrastructure to underserved populations. Carver County, Minnesota submitted a proposal to provide broadband infrastructure to communities throughout Carver County.

In July of 2010, the NTIA awarded a grant to Carver County for implementation of the proposed project. Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the NTIA must conduct an Environmental Assessment of the proposed action and evaluate environmental consequences of the proposed action against alternative actions that meet the purpose and need of the project. This Report has been prepared to meet these requirements.