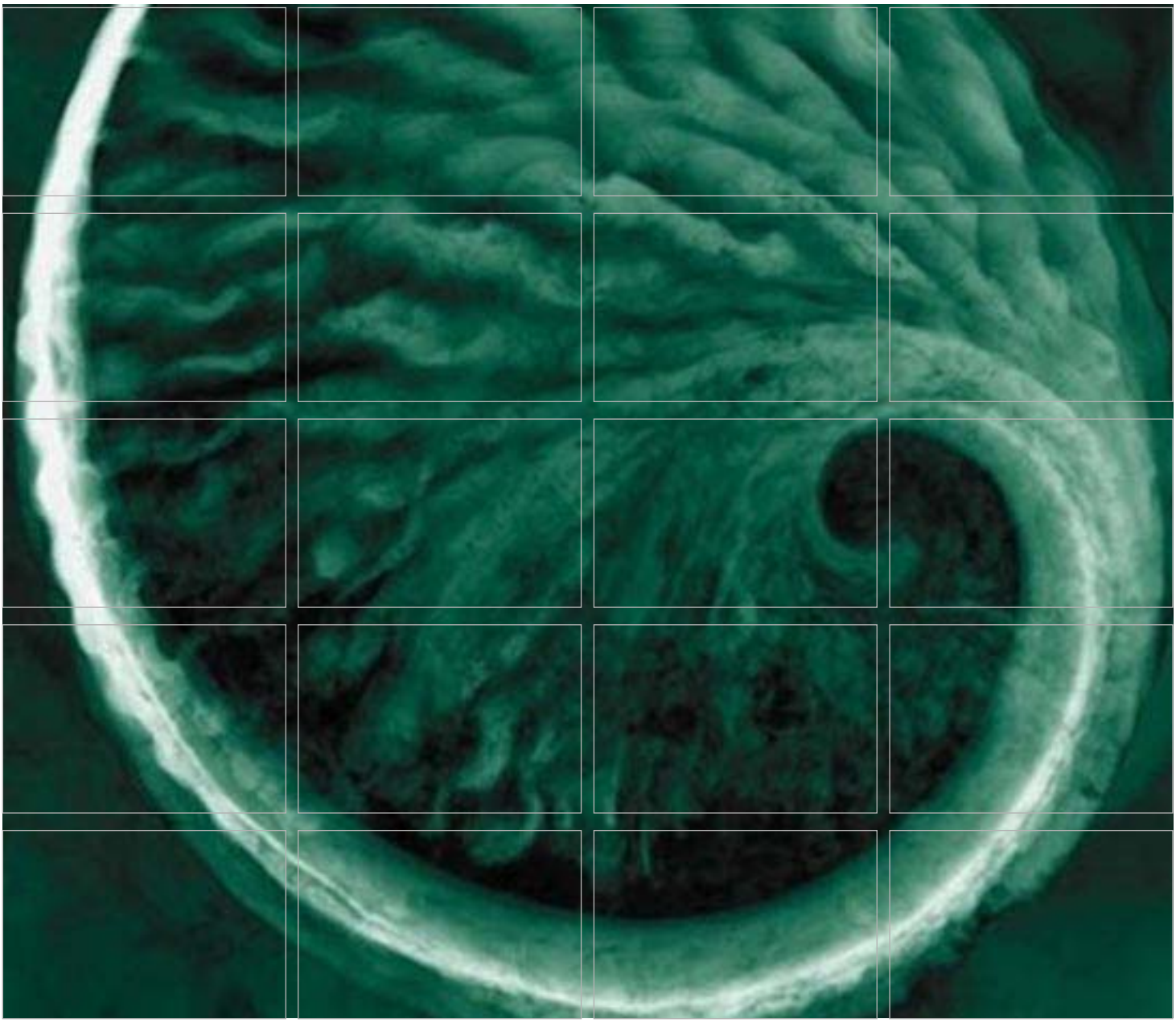

Draft Environmental Assessment

Connect Anoka County Community Broadband Network
Anoka, Isanti, and Ramsey Counties, Minnesota
Award NT10BIX5570071

Prepared on behalf of
Zayo Bandwith, LLC
Louisville, Colorado

and for
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
Washington, D.C.

February 2011
Revised March 8, 2001 and May 5, 2011

Delivering sustainable solutions in a more competitive world

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

APE	Area of Potential Effect
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BTOP	Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
BWSR RIM	Board of Water and Soil Resources Reinvest in Minnesota
CCI	Comprehensive Community Infrastructure
CEF	Considered Eligible Finding
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLIS	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CSAH	County State Aid Highways
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DIA	Direct Internet Access
DOC	U.S. Department of Commerce
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAR	Federal Airport Regulations
FBO	fixed base operations
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
Gb/s	Gigabits per Second
GIA	Grant-In-Aid
GIS	Geographic Information System
HRS	Hazard Ranking System
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Codes
JAZB	Joint Airport Zoning Board
MAC	Metropolitan Airports Commission
Mb/s	Megabits per Second
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918
MCBS	Minnesota County Biological Survey
MDA	Minnesota Department of Administration
MDNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
MGS	Minnesota Genealogical Society
MHS	Minnesota Historical Society
Mn/DOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
MSDC	Minnesota State Demographic Center
MSP	Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards

NAC	Noise Area Classification
NADP	National Acid Deposition Program
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPL	National Priorities List
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRI	Natural Resource Inventory
NTIA	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
OHW	Ordinary High Water
OSHA	Occupational Health and Safety Administration
PAM	Preservation Alliance of Minnesota
PLP	Permanent List of Priorities
PWI	Public Water Inventory
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RCRRA	Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
RFP	Request for Proposal
ROFA	Runway Object Free Area
ROW	Right-of-Way
SEF	Staff Eligible Finding
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SNA	Scientific and Natural Area
SPCC	Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
TCAAP	Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant
TCNS	Tower Construction Notification System
TH65	State Trunk Highway 65
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USCB	United States Census Bureau
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VIC	Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup
VOCs	Volatile Organic Compounds
WCA	Wetland Conservation Act
WIMN	What's In My Neighborhood
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
WPA	Waterfowl Production Area

The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) has awarded federal funding to Zayo Bandwidth, LLC (Zayo) in partnership with Anoka County to enable high-speed broadband services to government, businesses, community institutions, and local internet service providers in Minnesota.

The Connect Anoka County Community Broadband Network (hereafter referred to as the "Project") involves Middle Mile broadband infrastructure and the connection of 145 anchor institutions with approximately 240 miles of fiber, a comprehensive community infrastructure network. The Project plans to make broadband services available to Anoka County government, businesses, other anchor institutions, carriers, and Last Mile Providers, as well as parts of Isanti and Ramsey Counties.

The Project is designed to meet all seven BTOP Comprehensive Community Infrastructure (CCI) priorities and meet the needs of key stakeholders within Anoka County. Therefore, the Project facilitates the following:

- Provides immediate connectivity relief to the anchor institutions with cost-effective high speed transport services;
- Creates a public-private partnership for the delivery of a broadband solution;
- Provides economic enhancements to an area with lower incomes, high unemployment, and high foreclosure rates;
- Brings broadband to a community college in an economically distressed area that would otherwise be unable to afford to obtain services;
- Provides connectivity to public safety entities to allow for sharing of data, and implementation of technologies that could otherwise not occur; and
- Provides the opportunity to deliver Last Mile services to business and residents of the area.

The Project consists of three primary core rings, along with multiple distribution segments. These rings would include approximately 170 miles of overhead installation and approximately 70 miles of underground installation. The Project responds to concerns of residents, businesses, and institutions within Anoka County. As part of an information gathering effort conducted over the past year by Connect Anoka County, these groups cited the need for improvement and access to existing services.

An alternative to the Proposed Action includes a No Action alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed and unmet needs would continue in the unserved and underserved communities in Anoka County, as well as Isanti and Ramsey Counties. Of the two alternatives analyzed, the Proposed Action is found to best meet the purpose and need for action.

As part of this analysis, the environmental impacts of each alternative were addressed. The Project would not require the construction of any new buildings or sites. The 240 miles of fiber in Anoka County and the two surrounding counties would include the installation of the fiber with electronics located along the proposed route at pre-existing buildings. The proposed Project would follow along existing utility rights-of-way (ROWs) and existing infrastructure (e.g., road, railroads, etc.) ROWs to the maximum extent feasible.

The following table provides a summary of these impacts for both alternatives:

Table ES-1. Summary of Environmental Impacts for the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternatives.

Resources Area	Proposed Action	No Action Alternative
Noise	- May result in temporary indirect effects associated with auditory impacts from construction activities and equipment	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Air Quality	- May result in temporary indirect effects associated with exhaust emissions from construction vehicles and dust particulates and pollutants from construction activities	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Geology and Soils	- May result in temporary impacts during the construction phase, including soil compaction, alteration in surface water drainage and infiltration due to soil compaction, disruption of	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative

Resources Area	Proposed Action	No Action Alternative
	agricultural practices, and crop damages during the growing season - May result in temporary impacts associated with construction, such as transporting invasive plant species into adjacent agricultural fields	
Surface Water Resources	- May result in temporary impacts during construction due to sediment reaching water resources; thus, degrading water quality as a result of increased turbidity	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Groundwater Resources	- May result in groundwater contamination from equipment leaks or refueling when directional boring or vibratory plowing techniques are used for installation	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Wetlands and Floodplains	- No direct or indirect impacts are associated with this alternative	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Vegetation and Habitat	- May result in temporary impacts associated with construction, such as soil and vegetative disturbance and transporting invasive plant species into adjacent agricultural fields	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Wildlife	- May result in temporary impacts associated with construction, such as ground disturbance, tree clearance, and displacement	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Threatened and Endangered Species	- May result in temporary impacts associated with construction, such as ground disturbance, tree clearance, and displacement	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Historic and Cultural Resources	- May result in permanent impacts to archaeological sites, if construction activities disturb an intact cultural context below the ground surface	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Aesthetics and Visual Resources	- May result in minimal visual impacts that alter the scenic quality and natural appearance of the landscape due to construction activities and the presence of construction equipment	- No direct or indirect impacts would result from this alternative
Land Use	- May positively impact existing service through provision of new technology and support for future development - May result in temporary indirect effects associated with visual and auditory impacts from construction activities	- No direct impacts would result from this alternative - Indirect impacts include the continuing lack of adequate broadband services
Infrastructure	- May result in temporary indirect	- No direct or indirect

Resources Area	Proposed Action	No Action Alternative
	effects associated with visual and auditory impacts from construction activities	impacts would result from this alternative
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	- No direct impacts to residences and businesses are anticipated - May positively impact existing service through provision of new technology and support for future development - May result in temporary indirect effects associated with visual and auditory impacts from construction activities - Would generate additional jobs - Would provide short-term influx of income to the counties - No disproportionate impact would be placed on minority populations or low-income groups	- No direct impacts would result from this alternative - Indirect impacts include the continuing lack of adequate broadband services
Human Health and Safety	- Potential to encounter existing soil and groundwater contamination during construction - May result in temporary indirect effects associated with visual and auditory impacts from construction activities - Potential for accidents related to typical construction projects	- No direct impacts would result from this alternative - Indirect impacts include the continuing lack of adequate broadband services
Cumulative Effects	- No cumulative impacts have been identified as part of this Project	- No direct or indirect cumulative impacts would result from this alternative

The significance of the Proposed Action has been analyzed based on the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) Regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) context and intensity criteria (Section 1508.27). The Proposed Action is not reasonably expected to cause significant adverse impact to the existing environment within Anoka, Isanti, and Ramsey Counties with regard to the various resource areas evaluated as part of this assessment.

The Proposed Action is expected to improve high-speed broadband services available to users and providers in Anoka County and parts of nearby Isanti and Ramsey Counties. The proposed Project would bring substantially upgraded broadband service with speeds between 100 Mb/s and up to 10 Gb/s to anchor institutions through the deployment of 240 miles of broadband infrastructure.

As shown by the information and analysis presented herein, implementation of the Project would not significantly impact the overall quality of the human and natural environment. All beneficial and adverse impacts of the Proposed Action have been addressed to reach a conclusion of no significant impacts. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) for this action is not necessary.