

University of Illinois
“UC2B Project”
Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband — Below Ground
(UC2B Middle Mile & Last Mile Infrastructure)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Prepared for
NTIA

On Behalf of



Urbana-Champaign
Big Broadband

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0. Executive Summary

UC2B (Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband) is a Last Mile and Middle Mile project in Illinois sponsored by the City of Urbana, the City of Champaign and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The project was awarded American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding through the Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program (BTOP) through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) division of the U. S. Department of Commerce.

The purpose of the project is to provide affordable broadband services to anchor institutions and underserved populations in the Urbana-Champaign area. The project area encompasses the cities of Urbana and Champaign, a contiguous part of the Village of Savoy, and parts of unincorporated Champaign County. When completed, the project will deliver affordable broadband services in 11 census block groups defined as underserved and to 26 anchor institutions within that area, as well as to anchor institutions, businesses and residences in other parts of the Middle Mile footprint for a total of 143 anchor institutions.

The installation of this network will be accomplished with underground fiber optic cable construction in rights-of-way along roads, under paved urban streets and with private easements. The project will not require any installation of buildings or other above ground structures.

After a review of potential environmental impacts and consultations with the Illinois Historical Preservation Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it was determined that a number of environmental impacts are possible, although none likely to cause significant impact, apart from the positive impact that would accrue to socioeconomic resources in the area.