
INTERNET FOR ALL

Finding of No Significant Impact

Pascua Yaqui Tribe (NT22TBC0290057)



U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Finding of No Significant Impact

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

Pascua Yaqui Fixed Wireless Sites – Coolidge, Guadalupe, Marana, Milagros, and Old Pascua

Overview

This document serves as the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the following project awarded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). NTIA has completed the sufficiency review of the recipient's Environmental Assessment (EA) and has determined that the project will not have a significant impact on the environment. The FONSI contains information related to the review.

Recipient Name:	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Grant Project Name:	Pascua Yaqui Fixed Wireless Sites – Coolidge, Guadalupe, Marana, Milagros, and Old Pascua
Grant Award No.	NT22TBC020057 Award/Sub-Recipient Award No.
Program Location:	Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal County, Arizona

Program Summary

The NTIA awarded a grant to the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, through the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP), as authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Division N, Title IX, Section 905(c), Public Law 116-260, 134 Stat. 1182 (Dec. 27, 2020) (Act). TBCP provides new federal funding for grants to eligible entities to expand access to and adoption of: (i) broadband service on Tribal Land; or (ii) for programs that promote the use of broadband to access remote learning, telework, or telehealth resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe project is called the Pascua Yaqui Fixed Wireless Sites – Coolidge, Guadalupe, Marana, Milagros, and Old Pascua and the proposed activities are scheduled to occur in Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal County, Arizona.

The Pascua Tribe completed an EA for this Project in February 2024. NTIA reviewed the EA, determined it is sufficient, and adopted it as part of the development of this FONSI.

The Project includes:

- **Project Activity 1 (Preferred Alternative):** The Proposed Action is comprised of five individual telecommunications facilities, including the construction and placement of three proposed monopole towers and the addition of two antenna collocation projects (one located on an existing self-support lattice tower, and one located on a building roof top).

Construction work for the proposed monopole sites (Coolidge, Marana, and Milagros) would begin with the project areas being cleared and graded as necessary using a mini-excavator / Skid Steer and a 4-foot diameter caisson being drilled at the tower center to a depth of 15 feet below ground surface. Additional excavation activities would include preparation for tower grounding and fiber and power vaults and associated conduits.

[Pascua Yaqui Tribe (NT22TBCo290057)]

Following initial civil work, concrete would be poured for the tower foundation and generator pads to be located within the tower compound. Following curing, concrete inspection and strength testing would then be conducted.

Once concrete inspections and strength testing are completed, cranes with a maximum reach of 100 feet would be utilized to assemble the top sections of the proposed monopoles. Ice bridges, antennas and cables, vaults and conduits, generators, and the grounding systems would then be installed, followed by backfill and compaction activities. Following completion of equipment installation and power and fiber connection, power up and testing activities would be completed. Installation of gravel and landscaping (as necessary), fencing, security hardware, and site signage would mark the completion of construction for each of the proposed monopole sites.

Similar methodologies would be used for the collocation activities at the existing self-support lattice facility (Old Pascua) but limited to the installation of new equipment within the existing tower facility. Construction methodologies for the Guadalupe site, which is a collocation on a building rooftop, would also be limited to the installation of equipment on the subject building and would require no ground disturbance.

Generators that are proposed to be installed at each of the tower sites would utilize outdoor propane tanks as a fuel source. Generators would be scheduled to run for 15 minutes each Monday between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. local time. The activity would be monitored to determine correct operation and voltage. The generators would also run in an emergency situation when commercial power is disrupted.

Based on a review of the analysis in the EA, NTIA has determined that the project, implemented in accordance with the preferred alternative, and incorporating best management practices (BMPs) and protective measures identified in the EA, will not result in any significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. The basis for this determination is described in this FONSI.

Additional information and copies of the Executive Summary of the EA and FONSI are available to all interested persons and the public through the NTIA website (<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/funding-programs/documentation-and-reporting>) and the following contact:

Amanda Pereira
Environmental Program Officer
Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG)
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 4878
Washington, DC 20230

Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide reliable wireless voice and data communications for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and populations in areas surrounding the Proposed Action sites, which would include between 100 and 450 Tribal households per tower. The enhanced capabilities and reliability of voice and data communications resulting from the proposed action would provide additional economic and educational opportunities and access to previously inaccessible telehealth care services for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and surrounding communities.

Native American tribes and reservations are consistently underserved communities as it relates to access to fiber and broadband communications infrastructure, which was previously considered a luxury, but is now a basic utility for households and businesses. While improvements to communications technologies continue to evolve and improve, Tribal communities are often located in rural areas that are geographically isolated with low population density, resulting in a lack of the necessary investment in communications infrastructure. Further, the use of alternative means of such communication (such as satellite Internet access) are prohibitively expensive for members of these communities. The lack of investment in such infrastructure results in disparities in the education, economic opportunities, health, and overall quality of life for current and future members of these communities. The Broadband Connectivity Grant from the NTIA provides needed access to funding for Tribal communities such as the Pascua Yaqui Tribe to help reduce such disparities.

Project Description

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe was awarded funds under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for the construction and modification of five (5) wireless facilities located throughout Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal County, Arizona. The projects will include the construction of three monopole towers (Coolidge, Marana, and Milagros) and two antenna collocation projects to be located on existing self-support lattice tower at the Old Pascua site and on a rooftop location at the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Complex Building (Guadalupe Site).

The projects are being completed as part of a larger initiative to improve communications infrastructure for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Additional actions that are proposed using the same grant funding, while functionally independent from the Proposed Action, include approximately 17,500 feet of proposed underground fiber within the newly constructed housing development Pascua Yaqui #7 that would service 122 homes and approximately 17.5 miles of proposed aerial and underground fiber that would run from an existing telecommunications tower site to an existing ISP Core facility located on the Pascua Yaqui Reservation in New Pascua. These two actions are being assessed separately from this Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action would improve access to reliable and modern wireless communications capabilities for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and surrounding communities. Benefits to the population would include, but not be limited to, improved communications infrastructure, increased educational and economic opportunities, and better access to healthcare services.

Analysis of Alternatives

The Pascua Yaqui EA includes an analysis of the alternatives for implementing the project to meet the purpose and need NTIA conducted a review of the recipient's analysis of alternatives for implementing the project to meet the purpose and need, including a review of the "no action" alternative, where applicable. Each alternative was evaluated for impacts against the "no action" alternative and impacts from other alternatives, as a component of selecting the preferred alternative. The following summarizes the alternatives analyzed in the EA.

Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative):

The Proposed Action is comprised of five individual telecommunications facilities, including three proposed monopole towers and two antenna collocation projects (one located on an existing self-support lattice tower, and one located on a building roof top).

Construction work for the proposed monopole sites (Coolidge, Marana, and Milagros) would begin with the project areas being cleared and graded as necessary using a mini-excavator / Skid Steer and a 4-foot diameter caisson being drilled at the tower center to a depth of 15 feet below ground surface. Additional excavation activities would include preparation for tower grounding and fiber and power vaults and associated conduits.

Following initial civil work, concrete would be poured for the tower foundation and generator pads to be located in the tower compound. Following curing, concrete inspection and strength testing would be completed.

Once concrete inspections and strength testing were completed, cranes with a maximum reach of 100 feet would be utilized to assemble the top sections of the proposed monopoles. Ice bridges, antennas and cables, vaults and conduits, generators, and the grounding systems would then be installed, followed by backfill and compaction activities. Following completion of equipment installation and power and fiber connection, power up and testing activities would be completed. Installation of gravel and landscaping (as necessary), fencing, security hardware, and site signage would mark the completion of construction for each of the proposed monopole sites.

Similar methodologies would be used for the collocation activities at the existing self-support lattice facility (Old Pascua) but limited to the installation of new equipment within the existing tower facility. Construction methodologies for the Guadalupe site, which is a collocation on a building rooftop, would also be limited to the installation of equipment on the subject building and would require no ground disturbance.

Generators that are proposed to be installed at each of the tower sites would utilize outdoor propane tanks as a fuel source. Generators would be scheduled to run for 15 minutes each Monday between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. local time. The activity would be monitored to determine correct operation and voltage. The generators would also run in an emergency situation, where the commercial power is disrupted.

The site locations and additional site-specific design details for each of the sites are described below. Site maps, plans, and photographs are also provided in Appendix A of the EA.

Coolidge Site:

The Coolidge site is located on privately owned land that is not owned by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. The project area is located in an area that does not appear to have been previously disturbed. A new 75-foot-tall monopole telecommunications structure and associated ground-level equipment

Finding of No Significant Impact



[Pascua Yaqui Tribe (NT22TBCo290057)]

(which would include an outdoor propane-fueled backup generator, an approximate 8-foot by 4-foot pad, and an approximate 22-inch by 29-inch by 48-inch equipment cabinet) would be constructed within an approximate 40-foot by 40-foot fenced compound. The proposed facility would include an approximate 130-foot-long underground fiber route. Fiber connections to a 3rd party carrier would be made via a hand vault that would be installed just outside the proposed compound. The 3rd party carrier would bring fiber to the site vault using existing rights-of-way and/or established easements.

Guadalupe Site:

The Guadalupe site is located on fee land owned by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. A new 20-foot-tall non-penetrating roof mount telecommunications structure and antennas would be installed on the rooftop of the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Complex Building. Pre-existing fiber connections are already available at the subject building.

Marana Site:

The Marana site is located on fee land owned by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. The project area is located in an area that appears to have been previously cleared on multiple occasions. A new 75-foot-tall monopole telecommunications structure and associated ground-level equipment (which would include an outdoor propane-fueled backup generator, an approximate 8-foot by 4-foot pad, and an approximate 22-inch by 29-inch by 48-inch equipment cabinet), would be constructed within an approximate 25-foot by 55-foot fenced compound. The proposed facility would include an approximate 85-foot-long underground fiber route. Fiber connections to a 3rd party carrier would be made via a hand vault that would be installed just outside the proposed compound. The 3rd party carrier would bring fiber to the site vault using existing rights-of-way and/or established easements.

Milagros Site:

The Milagros site is located on fee land owned by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. The project area is located in an area that appears to have been previously graded. A new 75-foot-tall monopole telecommunications structure and associated ground-level equipment (which would include an outdoor natural gas or propane-fueled backup generator, an approximate 8-foot by 4-foot pad, and an approximate 22-inch by 29-inch by 48-inch equipment cabinet) would be constructed within an approximate 40-foot by 40-foot fenced compound. The proposed facility would utilize an approximately 100-foot-long aerial fiber route that would span from a proposed pole within the proposed tower compound to an existing pole adjacent to W 44th Street. The 3rd party fiber carrier would bring fiber to the proposed pole using existing rights-of-way and/or established easements.

Old Pascua Site:

The Old Pascua site is located on fee land owned by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Antennas would be collocated on an existing 80-foot tall self-supporting lattice telecommunications structure and associated ground-level equipment would be installed within an existing fenced compound, including an approximate 5-foot by 10-foot backup generator/outdoor propane tank pad, an approximate 64-inch by 36-inch by 36-inch equipment cabinet, an approximately 100-foot long fiber route to an established, pre-existing fiber connection, and a power route that would be approximately 50 feet long (option 1) or 65 feet long (option 2). All construction activities would take place within the existing compound.



[Pascua Yaqui Tribe (NT22TBCo290057)]

No Action Alternative: No action was also considered. This alternative represents conditions as they currently exist in Arizona. The EA examined this alternative as the baseline for evaluating impacts relative to other alternatives being considered.

Under the no action alternative, it is assumed that no Federal funding is provided by the Broadband Connectivity Grant of the NTIA for the construction and modification of wireless telecommunications facilities. The existing communications infrastructure in areas of the Proposed Action would continue to operate in their current capacity with no changes to communications capabilities for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe or surrounding communities and would provide no relief to the unserved or underserved communities of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

Alternatives Considered but Not Carried Forward: No other alternatives were considered or evaluated in the EA.

Findings and Conclusions

The recipient’s EA analyzed existing conditions and environmental consequences of the preferred alternative, other alternatives, and the no action alternative for potential impacts in the major resource areas of Noise, Air Quality (including greenhouse gases [GHGs]), Geology and Soils, Water Resources, Biological Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, Aesthetic and Visual Resources, Land Use, Infrastructure, Socioeconomic Resources, and Human Health and Safety. The results of the analysis are summarized in the table below:

Resource Area	Preferred Alternative	No Action Alternative
Noise	No Significant Impact	No Impact
Air Quality (including greenhouse gases [GHGs])	No Significant Impact	No Impact
Geology and Soils	No significant Impact	No Impact
Water Resources	No significant Impact	No Impact
Biological Resources	No significant Impact	No Impact
Historic and Cultural Resources	No significant Impact	No Impact
Aesthetic and Visual Resources	No significant Impact	No Impact
Land Use	No significant Impact	No Impact
Infrastructure	No significant Impact	No Impact
Socioeconomic Resources	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Human Health and Safety	Positive Impact	No Impact

The sections that follow provide a brief narrative for those resource areas where there has been a potential impact indicated in the table above or provide a summary of the results of required consultation with the appropriate agency or agencies.

Noise

The Proposed Action would result in a negligible and temporary increase in noise levels during construction and installation activities. Construction activities would occur only during daytime hours. Following construction, increases in noise levels would also be negligible and would result from occasional and temporary noise associated with the operation of backup generators in the event of a power outage in the project location areas. Based on these considerations, no significant noise impacts are expected to occur because of implementation.

Air Quality

The Proposed Action would result in negligible and temporary increase in air emissions at and near the Proposed Action sites during construction and installation activities as a result of equipment operation and ground disturbing activities. Both equipment operation and ground disturbing activities would be temporary and would occur over only a few days at each Proposed Action site. To minimize the generation of airborne particulate (dust) emissions as a result of ground disturbance, best management practices (BMPs) (e.g. wetting and stabilizing exposed soils, minimizing exposed soils, and minimizing traffic across unpaved areas) would be implemented. Additionally, the maximum footprint of the Proposed Action at each of the sites would be less than 0.1 acre, thus minimizing the amount of exposed soil subject to dust generation. Further, development activities would be subject to both state and local air quality regulations which have been developed to address current air quality non-attainment and in accordance with the Arizona State Implementation Plan (SIP). Following construction, the operation of backup generators would contribute minimally to air emissions. Generators would operate on natural gas and propane and would only operate for short periods of time in the event of a power outage in the project location areas. Only generator engines meeting current EPA air quality standards would be utilized.

Geology and Soils

The Proposed Action would not result in any ground disturbing activities for the Guadalupe site and ground disturbing activities for the remaining four sites would take place in areas measuring less than 0.1-acre. Based on the small scale of soil disturbance that would be required for the Proposed Action, impacts to the quality of soil or surrounding soil and geologic conditions would be negligible.

Water Resources

The Proposed Action would not be located within the vicinity of any surface waters. Further, although the Proposed Action at the Milagros, Marana, and Old Pascua sites are located within the Upper Santa Cruz & Avra Basin sole source aquifer area, the anticipated groundwater levels at the Proposed Action sites where ground disturbing activities are required would be well beneath the extent of any excavation activities, no water withdrawals are proposed, and the passive uses of the proposed communications tower sites are not anticipated to result in adverse effects to groundwater quality. Based on the small footprint and relatively flat terrain of the Proposed Action sites, changes to existing stormwater runoff rates or impacts to water resources as a result of erosion and sediment runoff are expected to be non-existent or negligible. Where applicable sediment and erosion control best

[Pascua Yaqui Tribe (NT22TBCo290057)]

management practices would be implemented, such as silt fencing or sediment traps, and erosion control mats.

Biological Resources

Official species lists generated from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system, were reviewed for species that may be present at the Proposed Action sites. Based on a review of the information provided by the IPaC tool and site inspections, none of the Proposed Action sites were determined to provide suitable habitat for federally listed or proposed species. Based on the previously disturbed nature of the Proposed Action sites and/or the lack of suitable habitat, the NTIA Environmental Program Officer made a “no effect” determination for each of the Proposed Action sites and site-specific consultation with the USFWS beyond the official species list requests was not necessary. Additionally, Project Evaluation Requests were sent to the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) for each of the Proposed Action sites. The AZGFD responded indicating that “As the proposed project is located in a previously disturbed area, with the present habitat providing relatively low value to wildlife, the Department does not anticipate any significant adverse impacts to wildlife resources would occur as a result of this project.” Documentation of the Informal Biological Assessments prepared for each Proposed Action site and AZGFD consultation is provided in Appendix E of the EA along with the USFWS list of potentially occurring species and habitat descriptions in Table 5-1of the document.

Historical and Cultural Resources

The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (AZ SHPO) was provided with a Class III Cultural Resources Survey Report Summary Form (SRSF) for the Coolidge site since the undertaking would be located on privately owned land. Although the remaining Proposed Action sites are located on lands owned by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, the AZ SHPO was also provided with a Class III Cultural Resources Survey Report Summary Form (SRSF) for the Guadalupe and Marana sites and a full Class III Cultural Resources Survey Report for the Milagros site, per the direct request of the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Historic Preservation Office (PY THPO). The PY THPO stated that they would only assume the role of SHPO on reservation/trust lands and would work collaboratively with SHPO on the projects on Tribal owned fee lands.

A Class III Cultural Resources Survey Report was submitted to the PYT THPO. On behalf of the NTIA, the THPO made a no adverse effect determination for each of the tower sites.

Between 17 and 19 federally recognized tribes were identified that may attach religious and cultural significance to Historic Properties within the areas of each proposed undertaking. All Native American Tribes that have expressed interest within this area have either concurred with the project or expressed no further interest. Non-responsive tribes for Milagros, Marana, Old Pascua, and Guadalupe were not escalated as those projects are located on lands owned or held in trust for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the THPO has made No Adverse Effect determinations. Documentation of THPO consultation is included in Appendix F, of the EA.

[Pascua Yaqui Tribe (NT22TBCo290057)]

Aesthetic Visual Resources

The Proposed Action would include the installation of antennas on existing structures and three proposed 75-foot-tall monopole telecommunications towers. While residential development is located within the vicinity of the Proposed Action sites, impacts to any aesthetic or visual resources would be minimal, since the Guadalupe and Old Pascua sites would involve installation activities on existing structures and the remaining proposed towers would, at 75-feet in height, have a similar impact as other infrastructure (i.e. power lines and utility/light poles) that already exists in the viewshed of the of the Proposed Action sites.

Land Use

The Proposed Action would result in no changes in the land use at the Guadalupe and Old Pascua sites. The overall land use for the larger tracts on which the remaining three proposed tower sites (Coolidge, Marana, and Milagros) would also remain the same, and the Proposed Action would result in no changes to surrounding property land uses.

Infrastructure

The Proposed Action would require additional energy demands for each of the wireless facilities, including a temporary increase during construction and installation activities. However, the overall increase in energy demand for the Proposed Action would be within the existing capabilities of local electrical distribution providers during construction and implementation as well as for continued operation of the wireless facilities. No new public roadways would be required for the construction of the Proposed Action, and since the Proposed Action involves unmanned wireless facilities, no water and sewer infrastructure would be required. While minimal impacts to local traffic would potentially occur during the staging and construction portions of the Proposed Action (particularly for the Marana and Milagros site, which are located immediately adjacent to public roads), there would be no long-term impacts to traffic as a result of the operation of Proposed Action.

Socioeconomic Resources

The enhanced capabilities and reliability of voice and data communications resulting from the Proposed Action would provide additional economic and educational opportunities and access to previously inaccessible telehealth care services for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and surrounding communities. This would not only provide a more equitable distribution of these vital services but also increase the sense of security and wellbeing among these communities.

Health and Human Safety

The Proposed Action would not require the handling or use of any hazardous materials. During construction, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety standards would be enforced for contractors and their employees. Further, the Proposed Action would result in improved access to healthcare services for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and surrounding community members.

[Pascua Yaqui Tribe (NT22TBCo290057)]

Cumulative Impacts

The Proposed Action is comprised of the collocation of antennas on an existing building and tower structure and three proposed 75-foot-tall towers that would be constructed within compounds of less than 0.1-acre in size. The Proposed Action is part of a larger initiative also being funded by a grant from the NTIA to improve communications infrastructure that, while functionally separate, also includes the installation of aerial and underground (via direct boring or via existing conduits) fiber that would service the Pascua Yaqui Tribe community.

Any impacts to the environment from the Proposed Action and associated actions, when combined with other past, present, or potential future actions, would be minimal. Further, the minimal negative impacts to the environment from the Proposed Action and associated actions would be greatly outweighed by the benefit to quality of life for the populations surrounding the proposed project areas. There are therefore no foreseeable cumulative effects that would result from the Proposed Action.

Public Comment

NTIA conducted a public comment period for the Pascua Yaqui EA. Public notice was placed in the Arizona Star, a local newspaper of general circulation. The notice of the proposal and EA was also posted on NTIA's website for national exposure. The notice described the proposed project and comment process and provided guidance on where to view the document and federal points of contact. The comment period began on April 19, 2024, and concluded on May 18, 2024. No comments were received by the NTIA.

Decision

NTIA concludes that constructing and operating the project as defined by the preferred alternative, identified BMPs, and protective measures, will not require additional mitigation. A separate mitigation plan is not required for the project. The analyses indicate that the Proposed Action is a major federal action that will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. NTIA has determined that preparation of an EIS is not required.

Issued on May 30, 2024 by:

AMANDA PEREIRA Digitally signed by
AMANDA PEREIRA
Date: 2024.05.30
12:46:33 -04'00'

Amanda Pereira
Environmental Program Officer
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
U.S. Department of Commerce Room 4874
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20230