Executive Summary

In 2018, the Town of The Blue Mountains retained Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Stantec) to complete environmental studies associated with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process for three bridges in the Town of The Blue Mountains, Ontario. The completion of the Municipal Heritage Bridges Cultural, Heritage and Archaeological Resources Assessment Checklist for the three bridges determined that a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report was needed for each bridge. This conclusion was determined by the age and type of the bridge structure, the potential for adjacent structures over 40 years old, its connection to a local community, and its potential inclusion as part of a cultural heritage landscape. The completion of the Cultural Heritage Evaluation Reports will inform the preparation of a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment terms of reference that will determine the design or removal solution for each bridge.

The subject of this Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report is Bridge No.13. The bridge is situated on Main Street, 400 metres east of Grey Road 13, in the Town of The Blue Mountains, Ontario. The bridge was constructed in 1950 and it is a timber deck on steel girder bridge supported on concrete abutments.

Bridges No. 13 met criteria (iii.i) of Ontario Regulation 9/06 and scored 15 points per the Ontario Heritage Bridge Guidelines. The conclusion that the bridge has Cultural Heritage Value or Interest is supported by the evaluation carried out against Ontario Regulation 9/06, which is the only criteria required for establishing Cultural Heritage Value or Interest in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Manual. Accordingly, Bridge No. 13 was found to have Cultural Heritage Value or Interest as it met one criteria (iii.i) under Ontario Regulation 9/06, this determined the requirement of an impact assessment to be included within the Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report.

Bridge No. 13 is considered to have Cultural Heritage Value or Interest as per the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process, and thus an impact assessment was included as part of this Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report. The impact assessment addresses anticipated impacts to the heritage attribute identified for the bridge, namely its connection to the rural character of the area as a one lane bridge with timber decking and no safety barriers. This type of structure, still utilized by vehicles, is found in rural areas of the province where traffic is minimal and is indicative of its time and place.

Presently, the Town of The Blue Mountains has no identified impacts to the bridge, however the impact assessment addresses the potential for alterations and demolition as part of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process. The following mitigation measures are recommended for Bridge No. 13:
1) Retention with sympathetic modifications is the preferred option as Bridge No. 13’s Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and heritage attribute would be conserved. Any rehabilitation to the bridge needs to be sympathetic to the structure, including its timber decking which is an important component of the rural character of the bridge. If Bridge No 13 needs to be removed due to its deteriorated conditions or safety factors documentation and salvage is the next preferred option.

2) Documentation and salvage is the second preferred option for Bridge No. 13 should it be determined retention is not feasible due to the deteriorated condition of the bridge and/or health and safety risks. Documentation activities should consist of the full heritage recording of the bridge through photography, photogrammetry, or LiDAR scan. Salvage activities should consist of the identification and recovery of re-useable bridge components by a reputable salvage company or charity. Materials that should be considered for salvage include the steel girders, and timber decking. The documentation and salvage work should be carried out under the direction of a Cultural Heritage Specialist in good professional standing with the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals.

To finalize this evaluation, this Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report should be submitted to the Town of The Blue Mountains for review and approval.

The Executive Summary highlights key points from the report only; for complete information and findings, the reader should examine the complete report.