

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prince of Wales Bridge is an existing, out of service railway bridge, that crosses the Ottawa River between the City of Ottawa (Ontario) and the City of Gatineau (Québec) on the O-Train Trillium Line. The Prince of Wales Bridge was constructed in 1879 and the superstructure was reconstructed in 1926. The Bridge is formed by two structures (north and south) separated by an island – comprised of six spans in the south structure and seven spans in the north structure. The clear width of the structure is approximately 5 m, carrying one track only. The total crossing length is 989 meters. The south span of the south structure crosses over the National Capital Commission (NCC) Ottawa River Pathway. The NCC Voyageurs Pathway crosses the existing railway track on the north approach of the north structure. The Prince of Wales Bridge is located approximately 500 m upstream of the Chaudière Falls Ring Dam.

The City of Ottawa purchased the currently out of service railway bridge from Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in 2005 for a future, longer-term transit crossing. The Prince of Wales Bridge is being retained as a future rail transit bridge in the City's Three-Year Rail Network Plan as filed with the Canadian Transportation Agency. In 2013, the bridge was identified as a future "Major Pathway" in the City's Transportation Master Plan and is identified in the Ottawa Cycling Plan Affordable Cycling Project List.

The Prince of Wales Bridge is listed on the City's Heritage Register under Section 27 (1.2) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, but it is not currently a designated heritage structure under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The City sees the bridge as an asset that can be improved to accommodate active transportation (walking and cycling) between Ottawa and Gatineau on an interim basis. The use of the bridge for active transportation is imbedded in the plans of the NCC, as well as the City of Ottawa and City of Gatineau.

The objective of the EA is to investigate reasonable alternatives for an interim use of the bridge as a multi-use pathway crossing of the Ottawa River that connects the existing pathways in the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau. Three alternative solutions were considered as part of this study. They include: Do Nothing; Add a New Interim Multi-Use Pathway to the Existing Prince of Wales Bridge Deck; and Widen the Existing Prince of Wales Bridge to Accommodate a New Multi-Use Pathway. Following the development of evaluation criteria and the evaluation of alternative solutions, the addition of a New Interim Multi-Use Pathway to the Existing Prince of Wales Bridge Deck was recommended as the preferred solution. The preferred solution proposes that the existing track structure would be retained but covered to protect for potential future rail use. A new multi-use pathway timber deck will be constructed directly on the existing timber ties with an approximate 5.0 m width. The on-land portions of the pathway (at the approaches and Lemieux Island) will measure 3.0 m wide. At the south approach, a new asphalt pathway connecting the City of Ottawa Trillium Pathway to the bridge deck will be constructed. On Lemieux Island, an asphalt pathway will be implemented along the west side of the existing rail track. This will require modifications to the rail bed, vegetation removal, grading and the placement of fill. At the north approach, an asphalt surface will be constructed directly on top of the railbed overtop of the rails, supported by retaining blocks at the margins. Coverings of the existing bridge deck and at the rails at the north approach is intended to be an interim measure where a conversion back to rail use can be achieved with relative ease, if required, for future railway operations.

The preferred solution promotes a positive shift towards walking and cycling thereby providing a positive impact on the region's overall contribution to Climate Change and the reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from transportation sources and a healthy lifestyle.

This study has been undertaken in accordance with Ontario's *Environmental Assessment Act*, fulfilling the requirements for a Municipal Class EA process for a Schedule 'B' project (Municipal Engineers Association, October 2000, amended in 2007, 2011 and 2015). The study outlines the process which was undertaken to confirm the preferred solution for the Prince of Wales Bridge to accommodate an interim multi-use pathway that connects the City of Ottawa with the City of Gatineau. The study documents the project challenge and opportunity, summary of existing conditions, evaluation of alternatives, a description of the preferred solution, public, agency and Indigenous consultation undertaken throughout the study, identification of impacts, mitigation and monitoring measures, and the identification of approval requirements.