

# Administrative Backgrounder

Councillor Notice of Motion

<b>Title</b>	<b>Potential Historic Designation of Victoria Trail Bridge (Councillor Derouin)</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide information in response to Councillor Derouin’s Notice of Motion made at the October 22, 2024 Regular Council Meeting.
<b>Proposed Motion(s)</b>	That Council direct Administration to prepare information, analysis, and options regarding the potential historic designation of Victoria Trail Bridge.
<b>Previous Council / Committee Direction</b>	<p><u>April 23, 2024 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 123/24: That Council accept the Alberta Heritage Survey and Register of Historic Places lists for Sturgeon County as information.</p> <p><u>February 27, 2024 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 063/24: That Council direct Administration to prepare a list of sites with historical significance on provincial and federal inventories within Sturgeon County.</p>
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	<p><b><u>Strategic Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Meaningful Community Connections</b> - To acknowledge and celebrate Sturgeon County’s history and relationships with Indigenous and other communities.</li> <li>• <b>Thriving Communities</b> - Engaging cultural, historic, and civic amenities.</li> <li>• <b>Environmental Stewardship</b> - Beautiful, surprising places with high standards; integrated natural spaces and trail systems.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 1556/21:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>3. Cultural Vitality: 3.3 Valuing Heritage, Historic and Natural Assets</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Section 3.3.1</b> <i>Should foster connections to the County’s natural and historic assets through the conservation and preservation of significant structures, buildings, districts, landscapes, and archaeological resources.</i></p> <p><b>Section 3.3.2</b> <i>Should recognize the importance of natural and historic assets by facilitating partnerships with government and</i></p>

	<p><i>local interest groups by developing a management program that protects and enhances the valued assets.</i></p> <p><b>Section 3.3.3</b> <i>Shall refer to the Province of Alberta Historical Resource Database when evaluating subdivision and development proposals (where applicable) to ensure that adequate regard is given to identified assets.</i></p> <p><b>Section 3.3.4</b> <i>Should initiate the development and implementation of a Cultural Mapping Plan to explore the County’s heritage assets.</i></p> <p><b>Section 3.3.5</b> <i>Should engage the community to identify locally significant sites and experiences to incorporate a sense of place through designs that enrich the community.</i></p>
<p><b>Statutory Requirement Considerations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities are statutorily empowered, though not required to designate historic resources.</li> <li>• The Alberta <i>Historical Resources Act</i> states that landowners are eligible for compensation (notwithstanding a waiver) in the event of economic loss resulting from historical resource designation. However, in this case the owner is Sturgeon County.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alignment to Levels of Service Delivery</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage management is not a level of service currently provided by Sturgeon County. As such, the County does not proactively undertake heritage management activities such as identifying sites, or establishing an inventory. However, legislative requirements under the <i>Historical Resources Act</i> apply to all landowners in Alberta.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anticipated Human Resource Requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing information, analysis, and options regarding the potential historic resource designation of Victoria Trail Bridge would require approximately six hours of staff time. Additional time may be required to assess the bridge to determine whether its preservation as a historical site is financially feasible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anticipated Financial Resource Requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work contemplated does not require additional financial resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Background Information</b></p>	<p><b>Process for Historical Designation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical resource designation can occur on a municipal, provincial or federal level.</li> <li>• A legally designated historic resource carries specific meanings and protections as prescribed under the Alberta <i>Historical Resources Act</i>. This designation would impose certain restrictions on the County in relation how the bridge is maintained and preserved.</li> </ul>

- Not all 'old' sites/structures are deemed automatically historically significant. Further, not all historically significant sites/structures become designated (and protected) historic resources.
- Should Council direct Administration to pursue the historic designation of Victoria Trail Bridge and/or the Victoria Trail, Administration would advance the steps required for municipal designation and the process of assessment for provincial designation.

#### **The Victoria Trail - Background**

- Sturgeon County is home to a rich tapestry of built and cultural (i.e., tangible, and intangible) heritage, including examples of Indigenous, agricultural, residential, environmental, and industrial history.
- The Victoria Trail (also sometimes known as the Carlton Trail or Fort Garry (Winnipeg) Trail) was an early and primary over-land travel route for exploration, mission, and settlement in the Canadian West. It has sometimes been called the first highway in western Canada. The entirety of the trail network formerly spans hundreds of kilometres, as Métis Red River Carts, horses, and foot traffic carved their way across the landscape, heading east and west to and from what today are Edmonton and Winnipeg.
- Though many segments of the original path have been lost to time, many remain as either built road, or road allowance, which can still be seen on maps, and often on the landscape.

#### **The Victoria Trail Bridge**

- While the Victoria Trail is not found on the Provincial Historical registry, there are private enthusiasts who may consider sites such as the Victoria Trail Bridge as historically significant. These private individuals create informal lists of historic sites as well as conduct research and publish information about the stories which animate and give these places relevance and meaning.
- Sturgeon County's Victoria Trail was constructed in 1931 and spans the Redwater River, located north of Highway 38 and west of the confluence with the North Saskatchewan River, which itself was jointly recognized as a Canadian Heritage River by the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada earlier this year.
- The Victoria Trail Bridge is an example of a steel truss design with a wooden substructure. While not clear, it appears that it was relocated to its current site sometime between 1952 and 1972.
- The bridge has a series of restrictions in place, including height, width, weight, and speed, and in recent years has been the subject of several maintenance issues and closures due to cracking of some

	<p>of its steel members. The bridge is currently slated for outright replacement in 2028.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functionally maintaining the Victoria Trail Bridge ‘in place/as is’ as a legally protected historic resource may be cost-prohibitive.</li> <li>• If directed to undertake research and analysis, Administration would bring more fulsome information for consideration at a future Council meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Attachment(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attachment 1: Area Map and Images of Victoria Trail Bridge</li> <li>2. Attachment 2: Progression Map – Survey, Inventory, Designated Resources</li> </ol>
<b>Report Reviewed by:</b>	<p>Martyn Bell, Acting Manager, Planning &amp; Development Services</p> <p>Milad Asdaghi, Acting General Manager, Development Services</p> <p>Travis Peter, Interim County Commissioner – CAO</p>