APPENDIX M

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value – Aurora GO Station
Property Name: Aurora GO Station (121 Wellington Street East)

Description of property:

The Aurora GO Station property comprises a rectangular parcel, 1.4 hectares in size. The Aurora GO Station is a one-storey, wooden railway station located at 121 Wellington Street East in the Town of Aurora, in York Region. Built in 1900 by the Grand Trunk Railway, it was designed in the picturesque Stick Style, with a steeply pitched roof, gable peaks with decorative bargeboard, an open porte-cochere, and a projecting operator’s bay. The station is owned by Metrolinx/GO Transit and operates as a GO Station on the Barrie Line. It sits next to the railway tracks, in a mixed industrial and residential area. The station building is surrounded by commuter parking lots and is highly visible from Wellington Street East, a major arterial.

A small parkette with two commemorations is located at the north end of the site: a bronze plaque erected by Ontario Heritage Trust; and a bronze bell on a stone base, erected by the Aurora Board of Trade.

The Aurora GO Station is a provincial heritage property of provincial significance.

Cultural Heritage Value:

The Aurora GO Station building, built in 1900, is an excellent, representative example of the small, standard plan stations designed by the Grand Trunk Railway in the Stick Style between 1895 and 1905 for rural stations in southern Ontario. Beautifully restored, it retains most of its key original features. It is one of only two such stations with original features that are known to still be in service as a railway station.

The Aurora GO Station property is directly associated with the construction and operation of the Ottawa, Simcoe and Huron Union Railroad Company, which operated the first steam railway in Canada West. Aurora marked the terminus of the first leg of the steam railway, opened in May 1853. The Aurora GO Station property is directly associated with the inauguration of the first steam train in Canada West, which carried out its first journey, from Toronto to Aurora, on 16 May 1853.

The Aurora GO Station displays a high degree of craftsmanship in its Stick Style features and finishes, including gable peaks with bargeboard decoration, projecting operator’s bay, open porte-cochère with wooden pillars, exterior framing and paneling, and interior paneling.

The Aurora GO Station is the key resource that defines the railway character of the area. It supports the 19th century character of the neighbourhood to the west and north of the station.
The Aurora GO Station is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to the railway tracks and to the Railway Hotel, built in 1856 on the north side of Wellington Street East. A railway has operated on this site since 1853.

The Aurora GO Station operates as a landmark within the Town of Aurora. It is a highly visible reminder of the town's 160-year-old railway heritage, and a key focus for the town's current importance as a commuter suburb. It reflects the high value placed on heritage preservation by the town and citizens.

The Aurora GO Station is of provincial significance because it has a strong association with an event of importance to the province. The station property is the location of the inaugural trip of a railway engine on the Ontario, Simcoe and Lake Huron Union Railroad line in 1853. This was the first railway steam engine and the first steam railway to operate in what is now the province of Ontario. The event is commemorated by a plaque erected by the Ontario Heritage Trust at the station property.

**Heritage Attributes:**

The heritage attribute essential to the cultural heritage value or interest of the provincial heritage property is the station building. Key elements of the station building include:

- Its rectangular footprint and one-storey massing.
- Its domestic scale and delicate, pleasing proportions.
- Its steeply-pitched hip roof, and deep, overhanging eaves, broken by gables on the north and west (trackside) elevations.
- Features and finishes attributable to its picturesque Stick-Style design, including:
  - Bargeboard, King-posts, finials, pendants and arched brackets in the north-end and west-side gables;
  - The pattern of board-and-batten siding, vertical and diagonal boarding, and externally expressed framing on its exterior wall surfaces;
  - The open porte-cochere at its north end with its slender pillars and arched brackets.
- The articulation of exterior and interior wall surfaces as three horizontal bands, defined by the use of different wood surfaces.
- The placement and proportions of original openings, including the operator’s bay window and tripartite windows on the west, north and east elevations.
- The projecting operator’s bay window on the west/track side and all of its associated materials, including original glazing, wood trim, signage and signaling hardware.
- The treatment of the interior wall and ceiling surfaces, including wood paneling and boarding, cornices and door and window surrounds.
- Surviving original interior waiting room benches.
- The orientation and visual relationship between the station building and the railway tracks.
- The visibility and legibility of its heritage attributes when viewed from passing trains and from Wellington Street East.
The key attributes of the provincial heritage property that express its provincial significance are:

- The location, content, visibility and accessibility of the plaque erected by OHT in 2009 commemorating the first steam train in Canada West.

- The spatial and visual relationship between the plaque and the railway station, including the proximity of the plaque to the station and key views from the plaque towards the station.

- The spatial and visual relationship between the plaque and the section of railway tracks immediately adjacent to the railway station, including: the proximity of the plaque to the railway tracks; and key views from the plaque towards the railway tracks.

Metrolinx Heritage Property Boundaries: