



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: December 19, 2024
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Meeting Date: January 22, 2025
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TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities

FROM: General Manager of Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and Chief Procurement Officer

SUBJECT: Contract Award for Tree Removal and Associated Services in Stanley Park

Recommendation

THAT Council receive this report for information.

Purpose and Executive Summary

B. A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd was contracted by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation in 2024 for Phase 2 to plan and deliver critical operational treatment works for trees impacted by the hemlock looper moth in Stanley Park.

A change order with a value of \$3 million has been awarded by Bid Committee to B. A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd. on behalf of Council to start using some of the approved budget for Phase 3 of the tree removal project to expedite additional high-priority mitigation work required in Stanley Park.

The City's Procurement Policy requires that if an award is made under the Extended Authority of Bid Committee during Council recess the contract award will be reported to Council at the next scheduled meeting.

Urban Forestry staff have engaged independent third-party professionals to assess the high impacted areas of the park. There is clear evidence that dead trees resulting from the hemlock looper moth outbreak are rapidly deteriorating and many are becoming structurally unstable.

Recent weather events in the Fall of 2024 have demonstrated that the deterioration of dead trees is progressing much faster than anticipated, outpacing the phased plan for risk mitigation and restoration.

The current Phase 2 budget covered work up to early January 2025, however the work window that respects bird nesting season extends until the end of March. The timing required to facilitate a public procurement process to complete an RFP will not allow to continue working immediately on the emerging priority risk mitigation areas. There is the plan to issue another RFP for Phase 3 in 2025 to continue the treatment work.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

On the public meeting of December 9, 2024, Park Board Commissioners supported staff's recommendations and voted in favour to advance mitigation and restoration of the Phase 3 work in Q1 2025 once the change order scope of work was finalized.

On December 17, 2024, a time when Council and Park Board were not scheduled to meet during at least the next four (4) weeks, the Bid Committee invoked its extended authority under Section 13.6 of the Park Board Procurement Policy, to approve on behalf of the Park Board and Council a change order to the current contract with B. A. Blackwell and Associates Ltd. with an estimated value of \$3 million dollars plus applicable taxes available from the one-time 2024 operating budget increase for the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to fund the next phase of immediate work required to mitigate safety risks, funded from the general revenue stabilization reserve and approved by Council on May 28, 2024.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with this report.

Context and Background

A Hemlock Looper moth outbreak in Stanley Park has resulted in dead trees and a health and safety risk as many of the trees are rapidly deteriorating and becoming structurally unstable. There is a multi-year plan to prioritize high risk areas and a phased approach to address the remaining of the impacted trees.

The Park Board engaged through a public procurement RFP competition in 2024 a multi-disciplinary consultant with expertise in environmental management, forestry operations, urban forest assessment and project management to plan and deliver critical operational treatment works for trees impacted by the Hemlock Looper moth as part of Phase 2 of the tree removal and required associated services.

Urban Forestry staff has engaged independent third-party professionals to assess the high impacted areas of the park. Recent weather events in the Fall of 2024 have demonstrated that the deterioration of dead trees is progressing much faster than anticipated, outpacing the phased plan for risk mitigation and restoration. Operations staff have responded by clearing park roads of fallen trees and debris to reopen for vehicular access, but some segments of trails remain closed at this time.

Discussion

The City issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) PS20240681 on February 14, 2024 for Phase 2 of the Tree Removal and Associated Services to continue to plan and deliver critical operational treatment works for trees impacted by the Hemlock Looper moth in Stanley Park. The RFP was

advertised on City of Vancouver website and BC Bid and the work was called in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Park Board Procurement Policy. Bid Committee considered the responses received, and on that basis awarded on April 8, 2024 a contract for a one year term to B. A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd with a value of \$2,759,045.72 plus applicable taxes.

The project team is led by staff or sub-consultants with extensive experience in forest health and tree risk assessment, forestry operations, arboriculture, planning, landscape architecture, urban ecology, invasive species management, wildfire risk assessment, silviculture planning and implementation, as well as technical support for administrative, geomatics and mapping deliverables.

Urban Forestry staff have reported that recent significant increases in the frequency of tree failures and the deteriorating condition of dead hemlock trees in Stanley Park highlights the urgent need to advance the treatment of high use areas from the Phase 3 scope in Q1 2025 and capitalize on the remaining window for treatment outside of the bird nesting window and in advance of peak tourism season.

The risk of not advancing additional high-priority mitigation work in Q1 2025 will necessitate longer term closures of forest areas and potential closures of adjacent roadways including Stanley Park Drive and North Lagoon Drive. This will impact traffic and visitors to the park. Public safety and worker safety will be jeopardized if this work is not advanced in the short-term and restricted access to the park will impact events in permitted use areas of the park that may need to be delayed or cancelled. Furthermore, dry woody surface fuel will build up, creating conditions that are more susceptible to natural and human-caused fire ignitions. Prolonging risk mitigation work will increase the risks for contracted forestry workers and internal Operations staff tasked with working in the affected forest areas.

A change order of an estimated value of \$3 million has been awarded on December 17, 2024 as part of the current contract with B. A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd. to expedite additional high-priority mitigation and restoration work during Q1 2025.

Some of the contemplated work will focus on the removal of high-risk trees on both sides of Stanley Park Drive and North Lagoon Drive on the west side of Stanley Park, along the remaining section of the seawall from the area referred to as Siwash Rock to Second Beach and targeted clearing of obstructions in the areas where trails are currently closed to the public.

Financial Implications

Finance has reviewed the cost of the goods and/or services and concurs that funds are available for the change order from the one-time 2024 operating budget increase for the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, funded from the general revenue stabilization reserve and approved by Council on May 28, 2024.

Legal Implications

The Park Board Procurement Policy requires the Director of Legal Services to execute all contracts with a total value greater than \$2,000,000 that have been awarded by the Bid Committee and Council.