



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: October 28, 2025
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Meeting Date: November 26, 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

Recommendations

- A. THAT Council authorize City staff to negotiate an agreement with Blackwell Consulting Ltd. ("BCL"), under which BCL will provide tree removal and associated services in Stanley Park, with an estimated total contract value of \$4,504,221 over an initial 1.5-year term and a 1-year optional extension term (the "Agreement"), to be funded from Park Board Operating Budget.
- B. THAT Council delegate its authority to execute the Agreement to the City's Director of Legal Services, Chief Procurement Officer, and General Manager of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation;

FURTHER THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by Council's approval of Recommendations A and B unless and until the City executes and delivers the Agreement.

Purpose and Executive Summary

The City's Board of Parks and Recreation requires the services of a qualified urban forestry consultant for the continued forest mitigation and restoration works in Stanley Park to address risks associated with the hemlock looper outbreak. Park Board is advancing the final phase to address ongoing forest health concerns, wildfire risks, and public safety risks in the remaining forested area.

The City issued a Request for Expressions of Interest and staff on the evaluation committee and the Bid Committee have considered the responses and recommended that the City negotiate an agreement with Blackwell Consulting Ltd.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The City's Procurement Policy (ADMIN-008) requires Council approve contracts with a total value greater \$3,000,000 following review and recommendations by the City's Bid Committee. The Bid

Committee has considered the bids and recommends Blackwell Consulting Ltd. as the successful Respondent.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The City's Board of Parks and Recreation requires the services of a qualified urban forestry consultant for the continued forest mitigation and restoration works in Stanley Park to address risks associated with the hemlock looper outbreak. The project team will be led by a Registered Professional Forester and include staff or sub-consultants with extensive experience in forest health and tree risk assessment, forest operations, arboriculture, planning, landscape architecture, urban ecology, integrated pest management, wildfire risk assessment, silviculture planning and implementation, as well as technical support for administrative, geomatics and mapping deliverables.

Stanley Park has approximately 18 million visitors annually and according to Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure data, approximately 50,000 vehicles pass along the Stanley Park Causeway and over the Lion's Gate Bridge daily, not including various modes of transportation that utilize internal park roads and trails. Urban Forestry identified the hemlock looper infestation in Stanley Park in 2020 and monitored tree and forest conditions for tree-related risks associated with public safety and wildfire. Earlier phases of work prioritized forest areas with higher levels of use and greater exposure to public activity, critical infrastructure, and vehicular access. These areas posed elevated risks associated with dead and declining trees in proximity to high traffic areas. Park Board is now advancing the final phase to address ongoing forest health concerns, wildfire risks, and public safety risks in the remaining forested area.

The purpose of the RFEOI was to identify suppliers with the capability to meet the City's requirements for tree removal and associated services while offering a competitive price and satisfactory service.

Discussion

The City issued publicly a Request for Expressions of Interest PS20251269-VBPR-RFEOI on March 3, 2025 for Tree Removal and Associated Services in Stanley Park. The City advertised the RFEOI on the City of Vancouver website and BC Bid, in accordance with the City's Procurement Policy (ADMIN-008).

The RFEOI was issued in accordance with the City's Procurement Policy (ADMIN-008).

The City received responses from:

- Blackwell Consulting Ltd.

The response was evaluated, using both quantitative and qualitative factors, by an evaluation team comprised of representatives from the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation under the stewardship of Supply Chain Management, to assess each response's overall value. The requirements focused on respondent's experience in successfully performing similar work. The intent was to identify qualified consultant teams with demonstrated expertise in forestry, wildfire risk reduction, ecological restoration, and sensitivity to cultural resources when delivering this type of work. Respondents were required to submit a minimum of two implementation strategies, which

were reviewed to consider a series of criteria, including public safety, wildfire risk reduction, environmental considerations, archaeological and cultural values, operational considerations, recreational and tourism values as well as economic considerations and cost estimates.

Some of the criteria considered in the overall evaluation process included:

- Respondent overview;
- Key personnel;
- Past experience with similar projects;
- Project schedule and proposed work plan;
- Social diversity and indigenous participation; and
- Financial estimates.

Although 23 suppliers registered, only one bidder chose to submit a proposal that was received and subsequently reviewed by the evaluation team comprised of staff from the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation's Urban Forestry team and Supply Chain Management.

The evaluation team concluded that the proposal submitted by Blackwell Consulting Ltd. met the City's requirements and provided the best overall value to the City. Typically, the purpose of the RFEOI process is to pre-qualify successful respondents to a second phase closed RFP. However, in cases where there is only one qualified respondent there is provision in the RFEOI language to enter direct contract negotiations with the single respondent. As there was a single respondent in this case, the City, is recommending entering final negotiations with Blackwell.

Blackwell Consulting Ltd. submitted three implementation options with differing extents of treatment – the width of the assessment buffer from each trail is the primary differentiating factor that influences the extent of treatment, and the quantity of hazard trees removed. The assessment buffer refers to the distance into the forest from each trail or road where trees are assessed for risk and potential treatment. In simple terms, the wider the buffer, the more forested area will be treated, and more risk mitigation provided; the trade-off being increased costs and increased potential impact to ecological assets and natural environment due to the expanded treatment area. Blackwell Consulting Ltd. and Urban Forestry used an iterative process to revise the proposed work scope and arrived at a solution that met the objectives of the project and finalized the financial proposal to complete the work.

This final scope of work (Phase 3) of this hemlock looper mitigation and restoration work in Stanley Park will focus on a 40m assessment and treatment buffer along trails within the remaining interior forested areas that were not included in earlier phases. In addition, a limited number of hazard trees identified outside of the 40m treatment buffer will be treated to further reduce risk to the public. These areas, totaling approximately 57 hectares, include Lees Trail, Lovers Walk, Tatlow Walk and perimeter trails around Beaver Lake.

Financial Implications

Finance has reviewed and confirmed that funding is available from Park Board Operating Budget. As a result of the RFEOI the City is able to achieve cost certainty for the proposed 1.5-year term.

Legal Implications

The City's Procurement Policy (ADMIN-008) requires the Director of Legal Services to execute all contracts with a total value greater than \$3,000,000 that have been awarded by the Bid Committee and Council.