



Report Date: October 23, 2025

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-30

[Submit comments to the Board](#)

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: Director, Park Operations
SUBJECT: Stanley Park Hemlock Looper Response and Mitigation Plan Phase 3 – Contract Award

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (“Park Board”) authorize staff to negotiate to the satisfaction of the Park Board’s General Manager, the City of Vancouver’s (the “City”) Director of Legal Services, and the City’s Chief Purchasing Official and enter into a contract with Blackwell Consulting Ltd., for the continued forest mitigation and restoration works in Stanley Park to address risks associated with the hemlock looper outbreak, with an estimated contract value of \$4,504,221, plus applicable taxes, for a term lasting until services are complete, and funded through previously approved budgets;
- B. THAT the City’s Director of Legal Services, Chief Purchasing Official and Park Board’s General Manager be authorized to execute on behalf of the Park Board the contract contemplated by Recommendation A above; and
- C. THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by the Park Board’s adoption of Recommendations A and B above unless and until such contract is executed by the authorized signatories of the City as set out in these Recommendations.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

A Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI – PS20251269-VBPR) was issued in June 2025 to advance Phase 3 of the Stanley Park Hemlock Looper mitigation and restoration work.

The public RFEI process was open for four weeks and closed on July 3, 2025. There were 23 registered suppliers, however only one submission was received and subsequently reviewed by the evaluation team. The evaluation team was comprised of staff from Urban Forestry and Supply Chain Management. The submission was evaluated against criteria including professional and technical qualifications, experience with related work, demonstrated cultural and ecological sensitivity, and proposed methodologies.

The RFEI was advertised on the City of Vancouver website and BC Bid and the work was called in accordance with the terms and conditions of the City of Vancouver and Park Board Procurement Policies. The RFEI evaluation committee, and, subsequently, the Bid Committee, have considered the responses received, and on that basis recommend that the Park Board negotiate and if such negotiations are successful enter into a contract as described above with Blackwell Consulting Ltd.

BOARD AUTHORITY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

As per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over all areas designated as permanent and temporary parks in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within those parks. This includes decisions impacting management of Stanley Park.

All contracts with consultants and contractors related to this work will be in accordance with the Park Board Procurement Policy which is led by Finance and Supply Chain Management and Legal Services and applies to Park Board.

As per the [Park Board Procurement Policy](#) update approved in October 2025, all contracts with values of \$2,000,000 and greater require Council approval, with Vancouver Park Board, Park Board General Manager, City Manager and Director, Legal Services concurrence.

On [July 21, 2025](#), the Park Board approved staff to advance treatment for the Phase 3 hemlock looper response and enter into negotiations to execute a contract with Blackwell Consulting Ltd. for the continued forest mitigation and restoration works in Stanley Park to address risks associated with the hemlock looper outbreak.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Stanley Park is a 418-hectare (ha) park situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) (the “local Nations”). Approximately 263 ha (63%) of the park is forested with species associated with the Coastal Western Hemlock bio-geoclimatic zone including a mix of western hemlock, Douglas-fir, western red cedar, red alder, and big leaf maple.

The park has been leased from the Federal Government since 1908 with care and stewardship obligations falling under the jurisdiction of the Park Board. This includes authority to undertake on a regular basis and as may be required, all work necessary in the maintenance, planting, and the removal of dead or diseased trees and such other trees which may constitute a danger to the public, or which might cause damage to property.

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 non-motorized 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. In 2022, when the hemlock looper outbreak had not ceased and significant tree mortality was observed, professional forestry consultant B.A. Blackwell & Associates were engaged through a competitive procurement process. This project and treatments have been planned and implemented through ongoing consultation with several qualified professionals including but not limited to Registered Professional Foresters; Ecologists; Registered Professional Biologists; Landscape Architects; Archaeologists; and ISA Certified Arborists with Tree Risk Assessor Qualification (TRAQ).

Mitigation work since fall 2023 has been delivered between October and April each year in respect of bird nesting season, wildlife habitat considerations and peak tourism season.

Implementation Timeline Update:

- **Phase 1** – Completed (Q4 2023 – Q1 2024): mitigation and restoration of 25% of the forest area (7201 total trees removed: 3543 trees under 20 cm diameter and 3658 trees over 20 cm diameter)
- **Phase 2** – Completed (Q4 2024 - Q1 2025): mitigation and restoration of 12.2% of the forest area (1329 total trees removed: 636 trees under 20 cm diameter and 693 trees over 20 cm diameter);
- **Advanced Phase 3** – Completed (Q1 2025 - Q2 2025): mitigation and restoration of 20% of the forest area (2486 total trees removed: 1284 trees under 20 cm diameter and 1202 trees over 20 cm diameter); and
- **Phase 3** – Final phase as proposed in this report - estimated to be completed between Q4 2025 – Q1 2027

The purpose of the RFEOI process is to pre-qualify respondents for a subsequent closed RFP limited to successful proponents. As there was a single respondent in this case, the City entered negotiations directly with Blackwell who responded to a more detailed scope with an updated workplan and quotation.

DISCUSSION

Earlier phases of work prioritized forest areas with higher levels of use and greater exposure to public activity, critical infrastructure, and vehicular access, such as the Causeway, seawall, Stanley Park Drive, and North Lagoon Drive. 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 continue addressing ongoing public safety risks, forest health concerns and wildfire risks in the remaining, untreated forested areas.

The Phase 3 RFEOI was issued in the accordance with Park Board's Procurement Policy. One response was received from Blackwell Consulting Ltd. Based on the evaluation team's review, it was determined that the 40-meter treatment option submitted by Blackwell Consulting Ltd. best met the Park Board's requirements balancing risk mitigation, reduced environmental impact and best overall value.

A detailed comparison of the three mitigation options proposed by Blackwell Consulting Ltd. and staff's recommendation to advance the 40-meter assessment boundary was presented in the Park Board Report dated [July 16, 2025](#). Following Park Board approval of recommendations, the 40-meter assessment boundary approach was brought forward in negotiations with the proponent. 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.

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. Although these trails experience less daily foot traffic compared to previously treated areas, they remain part of the active trail network and are subject to recreational and operational use throughout the year. Therefore, from a public safety perspective, these trails are

considered the primary target to mitigate risk from declining trees for this final phase. Risks to infrastructure, archaeological and cultural assets will also be mitigated with wildfire risk reduction being a beneficial by-product of the treatments.

Following execution of a contract, the proposed timeline for planning and implementation associated with this phase extends from Q4-2025 to Q2-2027. The work is expected to begin with preparatory investigative works, including archaeological assessments completed by a separate consultant in consultation with the local Nations and site-specific treatment prescriptions. Targeted tree removal is to be scheduled outside of the bird nesting period. Phased ecological restoration is expected to extend over two winter seasons (Q1/Q2 2026 and Q1/Q2 2027). The extended duration accounts for an assessment of all previously treated areas and tree planting supported by the remaining two years of seedling donations from Western Forest Products.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The estimated contract value for the entire potential term, including all possible extension terms, is \$4,504,221, plus applicable taxes. In keeping with the Park Board's independent service mandate to deliver best value for park users and citizens, staff are not seeking additional funding to advance Phase 3 works as the cost estimate provided by Blackwell is supported with available funding.

[On May 27, 2024](#), Council approved a one-time 2024 Park Board Operating Budget increase of \$11.1 million, specifically for the Stanley Park hemlock looper response, funded from the general revenue stabilization reserve. As a result of the RFEOL, the Park Board can achieve cost certainty for the proposed 1.5-year contract term. The expected fulfillment of this contract would substantially complete Phase 3 and minimal future work would be required to mitigate the risk of the Hemlock Looper Moth.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Park Board Procurement Policy requires that all contracts, renewals, extensions, and any other forms of commitments and contracts will be on terms and conditions approved by the City Solicitor.

All contracts awarded by Council valued at \$2,000,000 or greater will be signed by Vancouver Park Board General Manager, the City Manager, and the Director of Legal Services.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, staff will proceed to negotiate final contract terms to advance Phase 3 works with Blackwell Consulting Ltd. Following agreement to execute the contract, mobilization is expected to commence in the fall of 2025, with mitigation work scheduled through the end of March 2026, as well as into the fall of 2026. Restoration work is anticipated in spring 2026 as well as early 2027.

Staff will continue to provide updates to the Board and the public as this final phase progresses, including milestones related to risk mitigation, replanting, restoration, and monitoring. Should changes arise during implementation, staff will return to the Board with updates or additional recommendations as needed

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APPENDIX A**Phase 3 - Approved 40-meter Assessment and Treatment Boundary for Remaining Areas in Stanley Park**