

From: Fiaz Jadoon
Director, Economic Development & Strategic Projects

Subject: Land Use Review & Economic Analysis of the Pickering Federal Lands
Request for Proposal No. RFP2025-24
File: A-1440-001

Recommendation:

1. That the proposal submitted by SGL Planning & Design Inc. in response to Request for Proposal RFP2025-24 to undertake the Land Use Review & Economic Analysis of the Pickering Federal Lands, in the amount of \$79,114.00 (net HST) or \$87,852.00 (HST included) be accepted;
 2. That the total gross project cost of \$87,852.00 (HST included) and total net project cost of \$79,114.00 (net HST) be approved, in accordance with Section 10.04 (c), as the assignment is over \$50,000.00;
 3. That the Director, Economic Development & Strategic Projects be authorized to execute the Form of Agreement with the above mentioned consultant pursuant for Proposal RFP2025-24;
 4. That the Director, Finance & Treasurer be authorized to finance the net project cost of \$79,114.00 (net HST) consisting of \$70,000.00 funded from property tax supported operating budget (account number 10050.502230), as approved in the 2026 Budget, and additional \$9,114.00 funded from the same source to address the project overage; and,
 5. That the appropriate City of Pickering officials be authorized to take the necessary actions as indicated within this report.
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Executive Summary: The purpose of this report is to award RFP2025-24 for consulting services to complete a comprehensive Land Use Review & Economic Analysis of the Pickering Federal Lands. The City issued the RFP on November 24, 2025, seeking a multidisciplinary consultant team to evaluate development scenarios, assess economic opportunities, analyze infrastructure and environmental considerations, and prepare a strategic land use position to support the ongoing Formal Consultation Process on the Future Uses of the Pickering Lands.

The Pickering Federal Lands comprise approximately 8,700 acres of federally owned property in north Pickering. In January 2025, the federal government announced its intention to initiate a formal consultation process to determine future uses of the lands, engaging Indigenous communities, local governments, stakeholders, and the public. To support the City's participation in this process, an evidence-based analysis is required to inform Pickering's long-term vision and economic development position.

Request for Proposal No. RFP2025-24 was posted to the City’s bids&tenders portal on November 24, 2025 and closed on December 15, 2025. Seven proposals were submitted. The Evaluation Committee reviewed and evaluated the proposals using criteria outlined in the bid document. SGL Planning & Design Inc. achieved the highest overall score. Their proposal demonstrates:

- a strong and nuanced understanding of the Federal Lands’ historical, strategic, and policy context, including experience on prior Pickering planning initiatives
- a detailed and structured methodology aligned with the RFP’s required phases, including background review, economic impact modelling, scenario development, stakeholder engagement, and final strategy preparation
- a robust multidisciplinary team with expertise in planning, economics, transportation, infrastructure, agriculture, natural heritage, GIS, and engagement

The top-ranked proposal submitted by SGL Planning & Design Inc. in the amount of \$79,114.00 (net HST) or \$87,852.00 (HST included) is recommended for approval.

Relationship to the Pickering Strategic Plan: The recommendations in this report respond to the Pickering Strategic Plan Priority of Champion Economic Leadership & Innovation.

Financial Implications:

1. Proposal Amount

Proposal	\$77,745.00
HST (13%)	<u>\$10,107.00</u>
Total Gross Proposal Cost	<u>\$87,852.00</u>

2. Estimated Project Costing Summary

Proposal	\$77,745.00
HST (13%)	<u>\$10,107.00</u>
Total Gross Proposal Cost	<u>\$87,852.00</u>
HST Rebate (11.24%)	<u>(\$8,738.00)</u>
Total Net Project Cost	<u>\$79,114.00</u>

3. Approved Source of Funds - Operating Budget

Approved Code	Source of Funds	Approved Budget	Required
10050.502230	Property Tax	<u>\$70,000.00</u>	<u>\$79,114.00</u>
TOTAL		<u>\$70,000.00</u>	<u>\$79,114.00</u>
Net project costs Under / (Over) approved funds			(\$9,114.00)

The higher cost will be funded from anticipated operational savings achieved throughout the year.

Discussion: The purpose of this report is to award RFP2025-24 for consulting services to complete a comprehensive Land Use Review & Economic Analysis of the Pickering Federal Lands. The study will provide Council with an evidence-based position on future land uses, economic opportunities, infrastructure needs, environmental stewardship, and advocacy strategies, in light of the federal government’s 2025 decision to evaluate future uses of the Lands.

The Pickering Federal Lands represent one of the most consequential long-term planning areas in southern Ontario. Originally expropriated by the Government of Canada in 1972, totaling 18,600 acres across Pickering, Markham, and Uxbridge, the site was selected for a second international airport for the Toronto region. Preliminary airport work was halted in 1975, and the properties have since been leased to residential, farm, and commercial tenants under Transport Canada. Over time, major tracts were transferred to Parks Canada to establish and expand Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP): 4,700 acres in 2015 and an additional 5,200 acres in 2017; with 8,700 acres retained for future uses.

In January 2025, the federal government announced its intention to advance a formal consultation process to determine future uses of the Pickering Federal Lands, including the development of a comprehensive land management strategy and potential alignment with national transportation priorities such as the Alto High Speed Rail concept. This decision necessitates a comprehensive, evidence-based municipal position on the full range of potential land uses, economic opportunities, infrastructure requirements, and stewardship obligations.

Geographically, the lands lie immediately north of Highway 407 and near Highway 7, adjacent to RNUP and within a landscape of high value natural heritage systems (Duffins Creek and Rouge watersheds). The area overlaps portions of Ontario’s Greenbelt/Natural Heritage System, with ecological corridors and protected countryside that require careful integration of any future land use strategy.

The City is at a critical moment as federal decision-making, environmental responsibilities, and regional priorities all intersect, making it essential to act now to ensure Pickering helps shape, rather than reacts to, the future of the Pickering Federal Lands. With federal consultations underway, the City has only a limited window to influence decisions that will determine land

management, conservation boundaries, and compatible long-term uses while ensuring sustainable economic activity.

Request for Proposal No. RFP2025-24 was posted to the City's bids&tenders portal on November 24, 2025 and closed on December 15, 2025, seeking a qualified consulting firm to deliver the Land Use Review & Economic Analysis and guide Council's strategic direction. The RFP requires a multi-phase approach: rigorous background review, structured stakeholder engagement, scenario development balancing economic development, conservation and community needs, and a final land use strategy with an implementation framework and formal presentation to Council. The work program emphasizes economic impact modelling across scenarios, servicing and transportation considerations, environmental and agricultural constraints mapping, and clear advocacy strategies with senior governments. The timeline calls for project kickoff in late January 2026, final report by end of March 2026, and presentation at the April 2026 Meeting of Council.

Proposals were assessed through the RFP's multi-stage evaluation process, including mandatory submission checks, scoring of non-price criteria (Understanding of Objectives; Team Experience and Qualifications; Methodology & Work Plan and Price), Proponents were required to demonstrate capacity to deliver all requested phases and outputs within the defined schedule, as well as experience conducting complex, multidisciplinary land use and economic analyses for large, strategic planning areas.

SGL Planning & Design Inc. is recommended for award. Their submission demonstrates a nuanced grasp of the historical evolution and current status of the Federal Lands, acknowledging the implications of the 2025 federal decision and the interplay between economic development, environmental stewardship, agriculture, transportation, and community needs. Their proposal positions the Pickering Federal Lands as a "once-in-a-generation" opportunity and articulates how scenario-based planning can credibly inform Council's advocacy with senior governments. This understanding is grounded in SGL's long-standing work in Pickering, including the Northeast Secondary Plan Study, the Seaton Community Plan, and other assignments that have shaped growth, land use frameworks, and engagement practices, providing them with a strong local foundation to deliver a strong strategic position for Council.

SGL proposes a five-phase methodology that directly mirrors and best meets the RFP requirements:

- **Phase 1 (Background Review):** Policy and land use analysis; market and economic assessment; servicing and transportation scan; environmental and agricultural constraints mapping; and an executive summary of preliminary findings.
- **Phase 2 (Engagement):** A tailored communications and engagement plan, Council interviews, targeted focus groups, and content for Let's Talk Pickering to gather broad community input efficiently and transparently.

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- **Phase 3 (Land Use Strategy Development):** Preparation of three conceptual land use scenarios, identification of infrastructure/community facility needs, high-level cost and timeline estimates, and a pros/cons evaluation framework.
 - **Phase 4 (Draft and Finalization):** Draft recommendation report, staff review and revisions, culminating in a final strategy and economic analysis.
 - **Phase 5 (Council Presentation):** A Council-ready briefing and presentation of findings, preferred scenario, and implementation steps.

This structure ensures traceability from background evidence through scenario evaluation to final recommendations, delivering the clarity and rigor needed to inform Council decisions under tight timelines.

The project will be led by Paul Lowes, Project Director/Manager, who brings 35 years leading official plans, secondary plans, zoning reviews, and large interdisciplinary teams; frequent expert testimony before the Ontario Land Tribunal; significant experience delivering defensible policy frameworks. Additionally, David Riley will be the Land Use Strategy Lead. David is a specialist in official plan reviews, community planning permit by-laws, zoning and policy studies, with broad experience in land use mapping and analysis across southern Ontario.

Collectively, the project team has delivered numerous municipal studies and land use strategies and has a track record of converting complex technical analysis into concise, actionable recommendations suitable for Council decision-making. Their familiarity with Pickering's geography, policy frameworks, and growth trajectory is a distinct advantage.

Selecting SGL Planning & Design Inc. ensures that the City's analysis of the Pickering Federal Lands will be comprehensive, timely, and strategic. Their deep understanding of the site's history and current federal direction, coupled with a rigorous methodology, strong project management, and a well-qualified team with direct Pickering experience, positions the City to engage confidently with senior governments and stakeholders. The resulting land use strategy and economic analysis will provide Council with clear, evidence-based choices and a practical implementation path, advancing Pickering's strategic goals while safeguarding environmental and agricultural values and enabling long-term economic opportunity.

Staff recommend awarding consulting services to prepare the City's Land Use Review & Economic Analysis of the Pickering Federal Lands to SGL Planning & Design Inc., in the amount of \$79,114.00 (net HST) or \$87,852.00 (HST included), to equip the City with a forward-looking, evidence-based framework that clarifies land use options, protects environmental and agricultural assets, and identifies economic opportunities, ensuring Pickering is positioned to advocate effectively, plan proactively, and lead with confidence as federal decisions evolve.

Attachment: None.

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Recommended for the consideration
of Pickering City Council

Original Signed By:

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