



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: July 10, 2020
Submitted by: Environment and Parks Department – Parks Division
Subject: Food Production – Parks

Purpose

To provide Council with an overview of options, costs, and implications associated with planting edible, but non-animal-attractant plants in City green spaces, and present a staff review of implications to consider costs and options for replicating the Victoria model of young plant distribution.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT staff be directed to proceed with the Food Production – Parks recommendations for planting non-animal-attractant plants in City green spaces as outlined in the report dated July 10, 2020 from the Environment and Parks Department – Parks Division regarding Food Production – Parks;

AND THAT the budget of \$39,790 to establish edible planting locations at City Hall, Pioneer Park, and the Arts Centre be referred to the Finance Committee to identify a funding source.

Background

At the Closed Council meeting held on June 9, 2020, Council passed and publicly released the following resolution on Food production:

CC20/112 to 114

THAT Port Moody invite the rest of the Tri-Cities to take part in a mapping study to identify available space on public and private land for community gardens;

AND THAT staff be directed to report back on options, costs, and implications associated with planting edible but non-animal-attractant plants in City green spaces;

AND THAT Port Moody support the Tri-Cities Farmer's Market to hold markets weekly in Port Moody all year;

AND THAT staff be directed to report back on costs and options for replicating the Victoria model of young plant distribution.

This report responds to the second and fourth clauses of the above resolution.

Food production activities on City lands currently include the community gardens, a recent offering of an edible food project, and education and outreach workshops on organic gardening for residents.

The City's first edible planter project, "Where the Wild Things Grow," was initiated by Parks staff in June 2017 in partnership with the Port Moody Public Library, with funding from existing operating costs. This initiative built upon the 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which highlights the need for enhanced community food security and social connectedness. The project intent was to demonstrate how people can grow their own food at home and to promote the aesthetic contribution that fruit and vegetable plants can provide to home gardens. From June through September, 16 containers fronting City Hall were filled with 100% organic soil and planted with a variety of fruit and vegetable plants, featuring different combinations of companion plantings. During the project, staff hosted weekly tours that promoted discussions and sharing of food production best practices. Despite being well received, this project was not continued in 2018 due to the increased maintenance levels required to support the fruit and vegetable producing containers when compared with maintenance requirements for annual display planters.

Environment staff have hosted organic gardening workshops as part of the *Port Moody Naturally* education and outreach programming for Earth Week. These workshops focused on backyard vegetable growing for beginner gardeners and included information related to site location of the garden, soil preparation, plant choices, seed choices, watering, sun exposure, bear-aware gardening, diseases, gardening resources, etc. Staff anticipate hosting more workshops in 2021 and beyond.

There are two community gardens in Port Moody, the Rocky Point Community Garden (2002), and the Port Moody Police Tri-Cities Community Garden (2013), with 16 and 62 plots respectively. Both gardens have a wait list.

Discussion

Edible Plantings on City Lands

As noted above, staff initiated a small food production project on City lands in 2017. In response to the following clause of resolution CC20/112 to 114:

AND THAT staff be directed to report back on options, costs, and implications associated with planting edible but non-animal-attractant plants in City green spaces;

Staff have identified three edible planting options to promote education and outreach for urban agriculture within City greenspaces for 2020-2021. The proposed edible planting options vary in scope and scale and include raised planters, container planters, and a range of existing landscape and horticulture beds. A table listing details of the three options, including locations, installation costs, maintenance costs, and site considerations is included as **Attachment 1**. The total cost for the edible planting options is \$35,790. Images of the three options are included as **Attachment 2**.

The three options and associated costs are summarized below:

- City Hall Front Entrance (containers and City Hall Circle) – \$17,790;
- Pioneer Park (raised planter) – \$9,970; and
- Arts Centre (Creation of a high-profile Victory Garden using existing landscape beds) – \$8,030.

Food production on City lands is a relatively new role for staff. Although traditional horticulture knowledge lends itself well to plant growth, urban food production requires detailed knowledge of parameters such as soil conditions, sun exposure, plant and seed selection, drainage, irrigation, disease, and bear-awareness. In light of the factors involved in the design, installation, and maintenance of successful edible food spaces on City lands, staff recommend moving forward in an incremental manner with the options listed above.

Parks Division staff will be collaborating with Environment Division staff on the edible plantings initiative for backyard gardening workshops and with the Port Moody Public Library for family-oriented education sessions on edible gardening. Successes, challenges, and lessons learned from this expansion into edible plantings will be reviewed and appropriate adjustments will be recommended for subsequent edible planting seasons. Staff will also coordinate with the Social Planner regarding the Tri-Cities Food Security Planning process to identify opportunities that may inform expansion or other adjustments to the edible planting initiative.

City of Victoria – *Get Growing Victoria*

Staff have prepared the following synopsis of the City of Victoria Edible Seedling Community Distribution Project in response to the following clause of resolution CC20/112 to 114:

AND THAT staff be directed to report back on costs and options for replicating the Victoria model of young plant distribution.

In April 2020, Victoria City Council directed staff to temporarily reprioritize operations in the existing municipal nursery for the growth and distribution of 75,000 edible plant seedlings to be distributed by community partners to support community members. The City of Victoria Food Systems Coordinator, in communication with staff, has confirmed that 50,000 edible plant seedlings have been distributed to date with another 25,000 to 30,000 anticipated for distribution in August.

Get Growing Victoria prioritizes support for people who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and want to grow food at home, but may be facing barriers to access food plants and garden materials, or are facing barriers to access fresh, locally grown food. An overview of *Get Growing Victoria* is provided as **Attachment 3**. Several key foundational factors had been in place for some time prior to the Council direction for edible plants distribution that enabled a swift launch of the project. These factors include the establishment of the City's Urban Food Table, a food policy council, two and a half years ago. Volunteers meet monthly to provide advice on the development of policies and programs to support urban food production and pollinators. Many members of the Urban Food Table are also members of the food growing community who receive grants under the City's *Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator Grants* program.

Urban Food Table volunteers were instrumental in providing advice for the project structure, particularly distribution options for the plant seedlings during COVID-19. In addition, the City was able to reallocate \$30,000 of remaining 2020 grant funds to provide support to three existing edible foods programs for the distribution of the edible plants (i.e. Greater Victoria School District, LifeCycles Project Society, and Farm to School BC). Details on the program, including seedling varieties chosen, seed suppliers, community partners, distribution, eligibility, and other City urban food production resources are included in **Attachment 3**. The following list identifies other City resources in place to support the program:

- 6,000ft² cold-frame greenhouse space;
- 2.5 FTE nursery staff to plant seeds and grow/weed vegetable seedlings (~4 weeks in April and June);
- 1 FTE Food Systems Coordinator;
- established City programming for Community Gardens and Orchards, Food Production Businesses, and Boulevard Gardening;
- established Grant Programs for City Micro-grants, Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator Grants, and My Great Neighbourhood Grants;
- 30 Community partners; and
- \$65,500 budget for Food Starts, Education and Outreach, and Distribution and Delivery.

Get Growing Victoria is an inspiring model for food growing and distribution to support those who have experienced loss of work, those who are immunocompromised, people with disabilities, seniors, indigenous people, at-risk youth, families in need, and/or people who self-identify as food insecure during COVID-19. Replication of a similar program in Port Moody would not be achievable at this time due to a number of factors, including: insufficient staff resources; absence of greenhouses; lack of specialized food growing programs, grants and funding; and a need for better identification and coordination of food security and food production community partners.

Though the City is not currently poised to embark on a program of this magnitude, we are moving in a direction that supports strong community foundations aimed at deepening understanding of local food security and food literacy. A successful Union of British Columbia Municipalities grant was announced this spring for the Tri-Cities and Village of Anmore Food Security Assessment and Action Plan. This regional funding will enable a food security assessment for the Tri-Cities and the Village of Anmore that includes the identification of assets, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and recommendations for action. As learned from the *Get Growing Victoria* program, implementation of food growing initiatives to promote food security and food literacy requires strong ties to build capacity between community and municipal partners. Work on the Plan will facilitate and foster these ties to better position the City to consider promotion of appropriately-scaled food security and food literacy plans and programs in the future.

Other Options

THAT the report dated July 10, 2020 from the Environment and Parks Department – Parks Division regarding Food Production – Parks be received for information.

Financial Implications

To establish new edible planting locations at City Hall, Pioneer Park, and the Arts Centre, a funding source will need to be identified for the budget of \$35,790. A breakdown of budget costs is provided in **Attachment 1**.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Staff will hold community outreach workshops and programs throughout the growing season to share information with residents about growing edible plants on City lands.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

Enhancing food security is consistent with the Healthy Communities priority in the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Plan.

Attachment(s)

1. Future Options for Edible Plantings.
2. Edible Planting Locations.
3. *Get Growing Victoria*.

Report Author

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General Manager of Environment and Parks

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Food Production - Parks.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Future Options for Edible Plantings.pdf - Attachment 2 - Edible Planting Locations.pdf - Attachment 3 - Get Growing Victoria.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jul 20, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Dorothy Shermer, Corporate Officer - Jul 17, 2020 - 3:46 PM

Rosemary Lodge, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Jul 17, 2020 - 6:55 PM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Jul 18, 2020 - 11:01 AM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Jul 20, 2020 - 10:41 AM