



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 1, 2020**

Date: September 24, 2020

From: Councillor Ben Isitt and Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Subject: Keep Growing, Victoria

Background:

In the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic in our community, many residents were alarmed by the sight of bare grocery store shelves and many people expressed heightened concerns about local food security. This fear was met head-on by many in our community who either took up growing their own food or reinvigorated their passion for gardening.

The City of Victoria has increased its support for urban food production over the last several years including the establishment of the Urban Food Table, launching the Growing in the City initiative and increasing support for community gardens and allotment gardens.

The renewed urgency and local passion for overcoming food insecurity was recognized by the City of Victoria when, for the first time since the Second World War, the City began growing food in its greenhouses in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This program, proposed in the March 26th, 2020 motion from Councillor Isitt and Councillor Loveday entitled "Scaling Up Growing in the City for Community Resilience", was developed and implemented by City Staff and partner organizations into an important food security program for our community. This program, now titled Get Growing, Victoria, has partnered with 42 community organizations to distribute 81,000 food starts geared towards vulnerable residents and those who would otherwise not have access to growing their own food. Get Growing, Victoria also distributed food growing materials and contributed to the creation of valuable educational resources.

Get Growing, Victoria has been a great success and a bright spot in a challenging time and is a representation of how our community can build back better from Covid-19. It is recommended that Council endorse in principle the continuation of Get Growing, Victoria as an annual program and invite information from staff and feedback from the Urban Food Table and other stakeholders.

Recommendations:

That Council:

1. Endorse in principle the continuation of Get Growing, Victoria as an annual program.
2. Direct staff to report back on the results of the 2020 Get Growing, Victoria program and on the implications of continuing the program annually in 2021 and future years
3. Invite input from the Urban Food Table and other stakeholders on the continuation of Get Growing, Victoria.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isitt', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Isitt

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Loveday', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Loveday