

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 27, 2020

Item 29, Report No. 20, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on May 27, 2020.

29. SOVEREIGNTY GARDEN PILOT PROGRAM

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendations contained in the following resolution of Councillor Racco, dated, May 20, 2020.

Member's Resolution

Submitted by Councillor Racco

Whereas, the City of Vaughan approved Green Directions Vaughan, the City's community sustainability plan, in December 2019; and

Whereas, Green Directions Vaughan promotes the improvement of community well-being through the support of local food, the Agricultural System and the Agri-Food Network; and

Whereas, the COVID-19 pandemic will cause a rise in food insecurity due to the economic challenges that the pandemic has also caused; and

Whereas, on April 25, 2020 the province of Ontario re-opened community gardens and declared them an "essential source of fresh food" for people, including those who are facing food insecurity, during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, The Transformation Initiative proposed a six-month pilot project (May 2020 to October 2020) to address the following objectives:

1. To provide immediate food security for the underserved community in Vaughan through collective community action and strategic partnership;
2. To empower communities by fostering a culture of resiliency through urban agriculture;
3. To demonstrate the case for a transformative and resilient food system through local, sustainable and decentralized production and distribution; and

Whereas, the intent of the Sovereignty Garden pilot program is to encourage private property owners in Vaughan to grow fresh produce and provide the produce to local food banks and other local food organizations; and

Whereas, the proposed role of the City is to provide services in-kind to assist with project endorsement, communications and marketing, sponsorship and corporate engagement and supporting the collection and distribution of produce; and

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Whereas, The Transformation Initiative was founded in 2020 to act as an industry catalyst to transform markets and economy and to bring people together collaboratively to create sustainability solutions; and

Whereas, the proposed role of The Transformation Initiative is project management, marketing and outreach, tracking participation and providing communication support; and

Whereas, the full scope of the pilot program, including City responsibilities, has not yet been determined.

It is therefore recommended:

1. That the Sovereignty Garden pilot program be endorsed in principle; and
2. That City Staff work with Transformation Initiative to determine the scope and logistics of the pilot program and report back to Mayor and Members of Council on Staff's recommendation on whether to proceed with a pilot; and
3. That City Staff provide a report to Council with consideration of the viability and sustainability of this program in future years should the pilot program be undertaken in 2020.

MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

Meeting/Date	COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2) – MAY 20, 2020
Title:	Sovereignty Garden Pilot Program
Submitted by:	Councillor Sandra Racco – Ward 4

Whereas, the City of Vaughan approved Green Directions Vaughan, the City's community sustainability plan, in December 2019; and

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Whereas, the proposed role of The Transformation Initiative is project management, marketing and outreach, tracking participation and providing communication support; and

Whereas, the full scope of the pilot program, including City responsibilities, has not yet been determined.

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recommendation on whether to proceed with a pilot; and

3. That City Staff provide a report to Council with consideration of the viability and sustainability of this program in future years should the pilot program be undertaken in 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Sandra Racco
Councillor, Ward 4 (Concord/Thornhill North)

Attachment

1. Sovereignty Gardens Overview Proposal



Sovereignty Gardens

A community grow & share initiative

Imagine if our rooftops, backyards, and laneways were used to grow food for the most vulnerable.

What if we could...

- Empower individuals? • Promote civic responsibility?
- Start a food revolution? • Create resilient communities?
- Cultivate food security? • Achieve zero hunger?

Why we need this initiative now:

- Food security experts are warning the global pandemic could lead to supply shortages, higher prices and a growing nutrition gap between rich and poor.
- One in eight households across the country is food insecure; this represents 4.4 million people, the largest number recorded since Canada began monitoring food insecurity. This number does not include people living on First Nations reserves, some remote northern areas, or the homeless.
- According to Nick Saul, CEO of Community Food Centres: Our food banks don't have the capacity to deal with community demand, saying that even before the COVID-19 outbreak, the charitable sector was "not coming close" to addressing the need.

Pilot Project: A Call to Action

We are asking Ontarians, who are willing and able, to cultivate their own fruit and vegetable gardens.

Our goal is to provide fresh produce to local food banks, supporting underserved communities in response to overwhelming economic hardship and compromised nutritional needs.

The intention is to mimic the success of the "Victory Gardens" of past generations. By the end of WW2 there were over 200,000 Victory Gardens in Canada, producing 57,000 tonnes of vegetables.



Sovereignty Gardens

We have a clear path forward

Our Objectives:

- To provide immediate food security for under-served communities in Ontario through collective community action and strategic partnerships;
- Empower communities by fostering a culture of resiliency through urban agriculture;
- Demonstrate the case for a transformative and resilient food system, and ultimately, food sovereignty, through local, sustainable, and decentralized production and distribution.

The Process:

- **Phase 1:** We will develop partnerships from across the sectors including:
 - food banks
 - property developers
 - consultants
 - municipal governments
 - non-profit organizations
 - financial institutions
 - urban farmers
 - industry associations
 - food distributors
- **Phase 2:** We will launch the pilot project to establish business and operating models, including the expected return-on-investment.
- **Phase 3:** We will create an outreach strategy to engage communities across the province.
- **Phase 4:** We will build a high profile campaign that will celebrate the successes of the program, the partners, the growers, and the local food movement.
- **Phase 5:** We will build upon the success of the pilot project and develop a long-term growth strategy.

For more information, please contact:

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