



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Administration, Finance and Human Resources Committee
From: Justine Dainard, Project Manager Smart Cities Office
Date: Tuesday, September 14, 2021
Subject: **Smart Cities Report_Our Food Future project -September 2021 update.docx**

Background: Update on existing programmes and new pilots from the Our Food Future project.

COIL (Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad)

The COIL website – coil.eco – has been updated and contains a number of tools and resources, including information about new funding opportunities:

- The **Activate Circular Accelerator**. Intake closes soon for food and environment businesses who are ready to scale and become more circular. The Accelerator offers funding of up to \$30k as well as training and mentorship.
- The **Circulate CoLab**. Intake is open now for teams of companies proposing a partnered innovation answering the challenge of increasing circularity in upstream food systems. Three teams will receive \$20k to prototype their solution, which will compete for funding of \$100k to scale to a full demonstration project.
- The **Re(PURPOSE) Incubator**. Intake is launching this month for qualifying food companies to participate in a waste audit process resulting in a new value stream emerging from unavoidable waste.

These COIL programmes have been promoted through our Economic Development e-newsletter and on various social media channels.

Experimental Acre pilot

The Experimental Acre pilot being launched this fall is intended to support Wellington farmers who want to try a regenerative agriculture practice for the first time on a small scale during next year's growing season. The pilot supports the inherent risk of adopting an unfamiliar practice by providing a financial backstop to cover the yield losses and extra costs of trying something new on a small scale. Development of the pilot will be in partnership with Headlands Ag-Enviro consultant Mel Luymes. Funding for this pilot comes directly from Our Food Future; the number of participants is yet to be determined.

The Experimental Acre will also provide an opportunity for University of Guelph Students to work with the County. The ICON (Ideas Congress) class of undergraduates will be exploring what a Circular Economy model could look like on a farm, and an Arrell Food Institute graduate class will be assigned to work on co-creating the specific pilot supports our farm hosts will need.

Metrics captured from the pilots will include both high-tech and low-tech assessments of soil health, and will also be in alignment with standard greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting in order to support the County's Climate Change Mitigation Plan outlined in our Future Focused Report.

Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sector organic waste pilot.

The Circular Innovation Council, working with the Smart Cities team, is launching an organic waste pilot this fall. Scoped to run for at least three months, this pilot is intended to develop the route and relationships needed to establish a triple-bottom-line business case for the non-residential sector organic waste pick up. The objectives include economic efficiency, greenhouse gas emission reduction, and edible food diversion to local food security organizations. The pilot area will include the Arthur-to-Guelph corridor (Fig. 1); additional participants are still welcome.



Figure 1. Pilot inclusion area

Upcycled Food Festival

One of Our Food Future's partners, food business sustainability experts Provision Coalition, is launching the **Upcycled Food Fest** in October. The festival will take place across the GTA and will focus on food and meals which have been created from previously-wasted ingredients. There are plans to launch an upcycled ramen noodle meal kit made from a high-protein soy by-product; this kit will be available to purchase online or in grocery stores. More details will be available online at upcycledfoodfest.ca

Recommendation:

That the Administration, Finance and Human Resource Committee receive the Our Food Future report for information.

Respectfully submitted,

Justine Dainard
Project Manager, Smart Cities Office