



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

## COMMITTEE REPORT

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**To:** Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee  
**From:** Crystal Ellis, Director of Economic Development  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021  
**Subject:** Economic Development – September Report

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### Keep Well Emergency Business Sustainability Fund

The Keep Well Fund was established by County Council in March 2020 to support Wellington County businesses during the pandemic. The Fund has been administered by the two Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC) serving Wellington County: Wellington Waterloo Community Futures (WWCF) and the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation (SEDC). The total amount distributed through the Keep Well Fund was \$891,400, and provided 60 loans with an average loan amount of \$15,108 and 290 jobs supported. An updated status of the loan repayment as of June 30, 2021 is provided below.

Waterloo Wellington Community Futures	
Loan Advanced	\$ 740,400.00
Principal Paid 2020	(32,042.47)
	\$ 708,357.53
Principal Paid June 2021	(68,574.57)
Loan Principal Balance at June 20, 2021	\$ 639,782.96
Loan Interest outstanding per CKW 557	\$ 295.29
Total outstanding	\$ 640,078.25

Saugeen Community Futures	
Loan Advanced	\$ 151,000.00
Principal Paid 2021	(4,313.50)
	\$ 146,686.50
Principal Paid March 2021	(30,178.70)
Principal Paid June 2021	(5,934.81)
Loan Principal Balance at June 20, 2021	\$ 110,572.99

Only one loan has not been paid. As of June 30, 2021 no payments have been made on the \$8,000 loan (CKW 557) set up as doubtful at the end of 2020 and it remains at risk for non-repayment and has interest owing of \$295.29.

### **Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) – Recovery Actions**

Wellington County Business Recovery Grants, administered by the two Community Futures organizations in Wellington County are now closed. In total 158 grants were approved and funding has been disbursed. The three grants available included the Business Safety Supply and PPE Grant, Business Services Support Grant, and the Physical Adaptation and Technology Grant. An update on the disbursement of funds is shown for each organization below.

#### **Saugeen Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)**

Total funding allocation of \$43,000. Supporting the Town of Minto and Township of Wellington North.

<b>SEDC Grants</b>	<b>Number of Grants Approved</b>	<b>Total Approved Funding</b>	<b>Total Disbursed Funding</b>	<b>Total Number of Disbursed Grants</b>
Business Safety Supply and PPE Grant	19	\$12,136	\$12,136	19
Business Services Support Grant	18	\$14,127	\$12,579	18
Physical Adaptation and Technology Grant	14	\$16,185	\$14,637	14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>\$42,448</b>	<b>\$39,352</b>	<b>51</b>

The SEDC grant information is based on a June 30, 2021 disbursal date. In total, 28 businesses have received funds, 17 in Wellington North and 11 in the Town of Minto. Of these, a total of \$39,352 has been disbursed, leaving \$3,648 in available grant funding. Since June 30, an additional \$2,000 has been paid out. The following sectors have been accommodated: Agriculture (8), Service (6), Construction (1), Manufacturing (1), Tourism (1), Hospitality (1), Retail (8), Healthcare (1), and Wholesale (1).

#### **Waterloo Wellington Community Futures (WWCF)**

Total funding allocation of \$107,000. Supporting the Township of Centre Wellington, Town of Erin, Township of Guelph Eramosa, Township of Mapleton, and Township of Puslinch. In total, 65 businesses received funding, 38 in Centre Wellington, 9 in Erin, 9 in Guelph Eramosa, 7 in Mapleton and 2 in Puslinch.

<b>WWCF Grants</b>	<b>Number of Grants Approved</b>	<b>Total Approved Funding</b>	<b>Total Disbursed Funding</b>	<b>Total Number of Disbursed Grants</b>
Business Safety Supply and PPE Grant	26	\$17,746	\$17,746	26
Business Services Support Grant	39	\$34,532	\$34,532	39
Physical Adaptation and Technology Grant	47	\$55,872	\$55,872	47
<b>Totals</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>\$108,150</b>	<b>\$108,150</b>	<b>105</b>

## **Additional Recovery Activities**

- Workshop and event sponsorship has been provided to Centre Wellington for Google My Business workshop series, LaunchIt Minto Canva workshop for businesses and sponsorship for Innovation Guelph's Innovation Expo. We are working directly with the Business Centre Guelph Wellington and LaunchIt Minto to provide funding for fall business workshops, as many felt business were not eager to engage in programming over the summer and wanted to wait for fall.
- Website updates have been made to the Experience Wellington website [www.experiencewellington.ca](http://www.experiencewellington.ca) over the summer. The previous site required updates to bring it back in line with the County website. The landing page highlights five key areas:

Experience and Explore  
Eat, Shop, Stay  
Taste Real Local Food  
Wellington County Museum and Archives  
Events Calendar

- Information and Business Resources continues to be updated and maintained on the [Economic Development webpage](#).
- Promotional videos are under development and feature activities across Wellington County.
- Items still under consideration and development for the fall include Shop Local newspaper advertisements, Wellington County online app (staff are reviewing different platforms).

## **Standards and Poor's Credit Review**

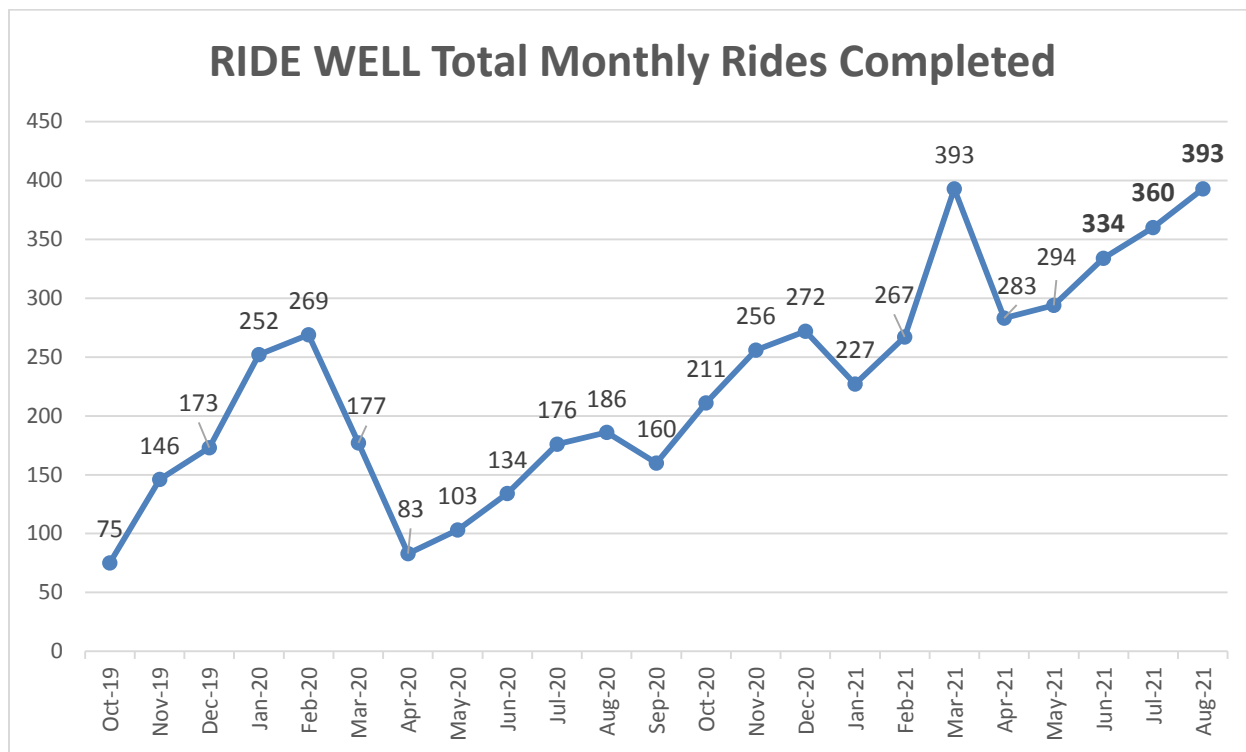
Economic Development staff collaborated with the Treasury team to present an economic snapshot of Wellington County for the annual Standards and Poor's Credit Rating review on July 8, 2021. The County of Wellington maintained its AA+ credit rating, with a stable outlook. You will find the link to the [Economic Development credit review presentation here](#) and [Standards and Poor's Ratings update here](#) on the County website.

## **RIDE WELL**

On June 28, 2021, the Government of Ontario announce a two-year extension to the Community Transportation (CT) Grant Programme. This provides RIDE WELL with a funding extension of \$242,514 for operations until March 31, 2025.

RIDE WELL ridership continues to grow and showed positive numbers over the summer months. August 2021 matched our highest monthly total to date with 393 rides completed. The graph below shows the total monthly growth, including the summer 2021.

Due to increased demand for morning trips, RideCo will be adjusting their driver schedule and hours to provide better supply. This will reduce the amount of time violations, failed searches due to high demand, and average search delay (i.e. the time requested in comparison to the earliest time provided) to create a better quality of service. The adjustment will commence on October 4, 2021.



**June Overview:** RIDE WELL completed 334 rides in June, an increase from 294 rides in May. The average cost of a ride in June was \$8.08 and the average distance 11.73 km. While there was a decrease in both the number of unique users (40) and new users (5) from the previous month, June averaged 8.4 rides per user. This is the second highest monthly average rides per user since the service launched in October 2019, and was the primary driver of growth for June.

**July Overview:** Ride Well completed 360 rides in July, an increase from 334 in June. The average cost of a ride in July was \$9.23 and the average distance was 13.98 km. There was significant growth in the number of unique users (67) and new riders (23) from June. There was a decrease in average rides per use to 5.4, indicating that the primary driver of growth was due to more unique users and new riders.

**August Overview:** RIDE WELL completed 393 rides in August. This is same number of monthly rides from March 2021, and matches the highest number of monthly rides by RIDE WELL since it launched. The average cost of a ride was \$8.26 and the average distance 11.56 km. There was a decrease in both the number of unique users (51) and new riders (11) from July. However, there was a significant increase in the frequency of usage, averaging 7.7 rides per user. Notably, 51 unique users is the third highest monthly total since launch. Growth can be attributed to a high unique user count, paired with a high frequency of use rate.

Top pick-up locations June to August:

Address	Description
Fergus	Residential Property

Clifford	Farm Property
Ponsonby	Residential property
Elora	Residential complex
Elora	Subway
Fergus	Centre Wellington Community Sportsplex

Top drop-off locations June to August:

Address	Description
Elora	The Handsome Devil Bistro
Fergus	Axcys Finishing Inc.
Elora	Residential complex
Fergus	Centre Wellington Community Sportsplex
Guelph	LaPointe-Fisher Nursing Home
Mount Forest	Wellington Produce Packaging
Fergus	Fergusson Place, Residential Complex

### RIDE WELL Registered User Survey

From June 16, 2021 to July 16, 2021, the County of Wellington Economic Development Division conducted a survey for all RIDE WELL registered users and received responses from 202 individuals.

The purpose of the survey was to answer the following questions:

- Who is the existing RIDE WELL customer base and how are they are using the service?
- What aspects of the service do customers enjoy?
- What aspects of the service do customers find challenging?
- How can the County of Wellington improve the service for all registered users?

The survey revealed several key findings from both our active users and from non-users, those that have never taken the service. Below is a summary of key findings for both Active User and Non User survey respondents.

	Active User Key Findings	Non-User Key findings
<b>How many survey respondents have used the service?</b>	46% of all survey respondents have taken Ride Well and are classified as Active Users	54% of all survey respondents have never taken Ride Well but have registered for an account.
<b>Where are the majority of survey respondents located in Wellington County?</b>	72% of Active users live in Centre Wellington (51%) and Wellington North (21%)	69% of Non-Users live in Centre Wellington (33%), Puslinch (13%), Guelph Eramosa (12%) and Wellington North (11%)
<b>Are survey respondents urban or rural residents?</b>	81% of Active Users live in town rather than in the countryside	63% of Non-Users live in town rather than a countryside
<b>How old are survey respondents?</b>	49% of Active Users are age 45+ 16% were under 24	66% of Non-Users are aged 45+ 9% were under 24

	24% were aged 25-34 11% were aged 35-44 9% were aged 45-54 40% were aged 55+	11% were aged 25-34 16% were aged 35-44 21% were aged 45-54 43% were aged 55+
<b>What are the survey respondents household income ranges?</b>	53% have an income less than \$50,000 23% have an income of 50,000-\$75,000. 24% have an income of 75,000+.	27% have an income less than \$50,000. 23% have an income of 50,000-\$75,000. 50% of Non-Users have a household income of \$75,000+.
<b>How many cars per household do survey respondents have?</b>	32% have no vehicle 34% have 1 vehicle 34% have 2 or more vehicles	11% have no vehicle 43% have 1 vehicle 46% have 2 or more vehicles
<b>How often do survey respondents use the service?</b>	49% rely on the service for infrequent usage (less than once per month). 30% use it 1 to 4 times per month.	N/A
<b>Why are people using or not using the service?</b>	Top 3 reasons respondents like the service: 1. Affordability 2. Lack access to a vehicle 3. Door-to-door service	Top 3 reasons respondents have not used the service: 1. They own their own vehicle 2. Lack of knowledge/information about Ride Well 3. Limited service hours
<b>What are people using the service for? And what would convince people to use the service?</b>	Top 3 reasons respondents use the service: 1. Appointments 2. Commute to work 3. To visit friends or family	Top 3 things that would convince respondents to use the service: 1. Extended service hours (evenings and weekends). 2. More information. 3. COVID-19 cases decrease and restrictions easing.

Actions moving forward:

**1. Marketing Campaign:** The survey revealed a significant number of respondents have not used Ride Well due a lack of information or understanding of the service. As an immediate first step, we are planning a new marketing campaign that focuses on key information about Ride Well; this will include what the service is, how it works, and when it is available.

In addition, survey respondents revealed that newspaper ads in the Wellington Advertiser and Social Media have had the best reach to both Active and Non-Users. We are planning to further boost our reach through these avenues with additional ads in the newspaper and a sponsored social media campaign that will have better reach across additional mediums (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).

**2. Outreach to Youth and Young Adults:** While only 16% of Active Users were under the age of 25, the survey revealed a customer acquisition opportunity for these age groups. Of survey respondents, Active Users outnumbered Non-Users. Additionally, the largest Active User group was aged 25-34. This indicates that younger populations likely enjoy using the service, but have not been effectively reached by our marketing efforts to date.

We are planning to target this audience more heavily through partnership with schoolboards, youth organizations, and the sponsored social media campaign to highlight an opportunity to use the service to get to school, work, and social activities.

**3. Prepare for Service Growth:** We are anticipating to build on current momentum and continue the growth due to additional marketing efforts, through partnerships, and a reduced threat to COVID-19. To ensure we prepare for this growth, we will be investing in customer service training for drivers. This is in recognition that our users do not currently share rides, and therefore are experiencing a high quality of service. As COVID-19 restrictions ease, we will return to the ridesharing model that was originally intended, where customers book individual seats and share their rides. Customer Service training will equip the Ride Well drivers both to maintain a positive in-vehicle experience and to re-educate the customer base on the return to the initial service delivery model.

In Spring 2022, we are planning to hold a general public survey to monitor the success of marketing campaign. This will allow sufficient time for the public to learn more about the service and provide feedback on its effectiveness.

You will find a copy of the survey results attached to this report for your information.

### **Invest WELL Community Improvement Programme (CIP)**

The County received one new CIP application from the Township of Puslinch for the development of a new Medical Centre in Morriston. The application was approved for \$10,000 under the Invest MORE funding stream as it proposes a construction value of \$1,740,000 creates new jobs, and is in the target health care sector. This is the first Invest Well Community Improvement Project that has been approved for the Township of Puslinch.

Two projects were completed over the summer months. The Grist Mill project in the Town of Erin completed its project, which converted a dilapidated building off Main Street into a revitalized storage facility. The building was previously vacant and had been an eyesore in downtown Erin. and the property owner has plans to convert the storage facility into a garden centre in downtown Erin.

The Waterloo Educational Services improvement in Guelph Eramosa completed their façade improvement project in downtown Rockwood. The building had been experiencing leaks that was impacting both existing business tenants, and preventing them from attracting new business tenants. The project also completed vacant office renovations to attract more businesses and jobs to Rockwood.

Below are the before and after images of the renovation of the Grist Mill project in the Town of Erin.



Grist Mill exterior before



Grist Mill exterior after

## Taste Real

Taste Real has spent considerable time over the summer supporting local farm and food businesses through a variety of new and revised marketing campaigns to encourage residents and visitors to engage with businesses in an effective and safe way.

The curated **Farmers' Market Box initiative** featuring a different local market every two weeks has been continuing through the summer. Boxes are available for pick up or delivery to households within Wellington County and Guelph and have been selling out quickly. This is not only an excellent marketing opportunity for local vendors, but each market box also facilitates approximately \$3,000 worth of additional sales for market vendors. In addition 5,000 **Farmers' Market Passports** have been distributed to markets and tourism outlets starting mid-June. The brochure promotes visiting a variety of local markets and collect stickers along the way, allowing participants to enter in a contest (closing in October) to win one of seven prize packs.



With an aim to promote local outings and support restaurants and food businesses, the new **Wellington County Picnics initiative** features an **online picnic locations map**, the takeout food map, as well as tips for a litter-less picnic outing and disposing of waste properly. Until October 1, individuals are encouraged to participate in a social media photo contest using the hashtag **#wellingtoncountypicnics** for a chance to win one of seven picnic baskets worth \$250. Staff worked with partner municipalities to distribute 15,000 promotional postcards and 1,000 picnic kits containing a wooden spork, pair of branded sunglasses, and information on initiatives to select restaurants within the community. The promotional kits were handed out by the restaurants along with takeout orders as a surprise to say thank you to customers for supporting local businesses.



Image: Staff at The Old Post, Harriston promoting the Picnic Kits

The **Fall Rural Romp** will once again be hosted in a revised format this year to discourage large gathering numbers at individual businesses and farms. The campaign will start at the end of September and run until October 31 and includes a variety of components. The **Fall Flavours Map** lists over 50 unique fall-inspired foods, beverages, and farm products and encourages individuals to create their own fall-inspired self-guided tour. The **Fall Feature Pages** promote available local farm and food outings, such as pumpkin patches, harvest fun yards, baking, picnics, farm and food events, as well as ingredients for a local Thanksgiving feast. The Romp page also features access to learning about agriculture and food through a variety of online resources, video farm tours, and more. New this year are **Fall Rural Romp Kits** containing family friendly, home-based, fall food activities are available to be ordered from the Taste Real website.

Other activities and promotions over the summer months included:

- Toque Magazine featured Pfisterer Farm and the Farmers, Market Trail.
- Facilitated local food options for Summer Concert Series at the Wellington County Museum and Archives.
- Taste Real and Experience Wellington ads in Erin Fall Fair Guide, Rural Route, Guelph-Eramosa Community Guide, Wellington Advertiser, Rural Voice as well as advertising and interviews on local radio stations.
- Resumed listing local events on the Ontario Culinary Tourism events calendar.
- Consulted with Centre Wellington Tourism, RTO4, and the Elora Distilling Company about the creation of a Gin Trail.
- Wellington County featured as a Butter Tart Destination in Readers Digest July article, the article can be found at the following [link "Where to Find Ontario's Best Butter Tarts"](#)

## **Talent Attraction - Wellington County Welcoming and Inclusion Assessment Survey**

As part of Economic Development Division's ongoing efforts to attract and retain more new residents to support workforce needs, the Economic Development Division conducted a Welcoming and Inclusion Assessment Survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine the extent to which the County communities are welcoming to new residents. The findings will support actions to attract and support new residents as well as engage businesses with potential workforce.

The Survey was conducted using two main approaches: a **mixed research approach** which included the review of secondary data and the collection of primary data using quantitative and qualitative survey instruments; and a **convenience non-probability sampling approach** which means that only respondents that were willing and available participated in the survey.

Two online questionnaires were administered during July 6 to August 6 – one targeting **New and Existing Residents**, and the other **Businesses and Organizations**. Additionally, 18 persons were interviewed (8 business/organization and 7 newcomers/resident) to gather some qualitative data.

In addition to collecting key demographic data on the population that participated, data was also collected that allowed the respondents to indicate their perceptions on some key themes that characterized welcoming and inclusive communities including diversity and inclusion, social capital and community support services.

During the survey period a total of **327 newcomers/residents** and **65 businesses and organizations** participated. It is worthwhile to note that 32% (105) respondents were newcomers/new residents and 49% were elected officials/board members.

### **Main Findings**

According to our preliminary results, the following are the main findings:

1. Overwhelmingly, the newcomers that are present in the County communities were Canadian citizens. Of the 105 newcomers and new residents, 88 or 84% were Canadian citizens who came from other Canadian cities. Moreover, from the whole sample of 327 respondents, 93% (304) were Canadian citizen, 6% (19) were permanent residents and 1% (3) were temporary workers.
2. Both new immigrants and Canadian citizens alike said that the County communities are generally welcoming to newcomers, despite indicating the need to address a few concerns. 75% indicated that 'they feel culturally secure in Wellington County'.
3. Overall, respondents indicated that the Settlement Officers and those sponsoring newcomers to come to live in the County were very supportive and critical in helping them to settle.
4. A number of respondents indicated that they experienced great difficulty in knowing where to access critical information and also felt alone or not being a part of the

community since there was no welcoming activity to introduce them to the community on their arrival.

5. The top three reasons newcomers and residents gave for choosing to live in Wellington County are:
  - Can achieve desired lifestyle or quality of life
  - Family Ties/Connections
  - Feels safe
6. However, businesses and organizations said that they believe the top three factors that will attract newcomers to Wellington County are:
  - Small town feel
  - Great for family
  - Safety/Attractive job opportunities
7. The policies and practices of businesses and organizations in the County are trending positively in support of diversity and inclusion. This is also supported by 94% of respondents indicating that they have a relationship with newcomers at varying levels. 35% said they have a very active relationship with newcomers. According to the businesses and organizations, the main factors they perceive as affecting their engagement with newcomers are:
  - Unsuitable job opportunities
  - Language barriers
  - Lack of transportation
8. The perceptions of the attitudes of newcomers and residents toward diversity and inclusion were generally positive. 93% felt that 'equality should be promoted among all groups regardless of ethnic origin' and 84% supported that 'it is a good thing to have people of different ethnic groups living in the County'.

### **Key Recommendations for Future Action**

**Community Welcoming Initiatives:** Some of the new immigrants expressed feelings of 'unwelcomeness' and disconnection from the community. They suggested that community leaders should organize activities to help welcome newcomers to the communities.

**Collaboration with businesses and support services organizations:** Businesses and organizations are central to helping many newcomers find their way and realize their dreams. Therefore, greater effort to collaborate with them must be made to help address some of the challenges that they face in helping integrate newcomers into the community.

**Easier Access to Critical Information:** Many newcomers said they experienced great difficulty in accessing critical information when they arrived. Given that the County has 14 libraries scattered across the communities, it was suggested that they should be promoted as central hubs where information can be accessed. The libraries are staffed with information management professionals who can help newcomers access the information they need.

**Local Government and Business Leadership:** It is generally believed that everything rises and falls on leadership. It is suggested that local government and business leaders should embrace and communicate clearly on why newcomers are important to the communities. Some newcomers believe that some of the long term residents still see them as a threat to their space. Therefore, it is important for the leaders to help dispel those fears and educate them on the importance role that newcomers can play in help to revitalize the communities.

Next steps in the Welcoming and Inclusion project will be to work with our municipal partners to fully develop an action plan to address the results of the survey.

### **Connectivity Guidebook**

Committee was provided with a digital version of the Connectivity Guidebook for Rural Ontario develop by the Economic Development Division and Wilton Consulting at the June committee meeting. Hard copies of the guidebook have since been printed and distributed. In July, 3,720 guidebooks were delivery directly to Wellington County farm addresses through a Canada Post unaddressed mail delivery. Copies were also provided to municipal offices, partner organizations and libraries. The booklet is available by request through the Economic Development office and available online at [www.wellington.ca/internet](http://www.wellington.ca/internet).

### **Smart Cities – Our Food Future**

Our Food Future project continues to create more connections and opportunities for businesses and making it easier for producers and businesses to connect with resources. To that end, the following tools and opportunities have been launched.

### **Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL)**

The COIL website – [coil.eco](http://coil.eco) – has been updated and contains a number of tools and resources, including the information about new funding opportunities:

- **Activate Circular Accelerator.** The intake is now open for food and environment businesses who are ready to scale and become more circular. The Accelerator offers funding of up to \$30,000 as well as training and mentorship.
- **Circulate CoLab.** The intake is now open for teams of companies proposing a partnered innovation, answering the challenge of increasing circularity in upstream food systems. Three teams will receive \$20,000 to prototype their solution, which will compete for funding of \$100,000 to scale to a full demonstration project.
- **Re (PURPOSE) Incubator.** The intake will launch in September for food companies to participate in a waste audit process resulting in a new value stream emerging from the unavoidable waste.

### **Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) sector organic waste pilot.**

The Circular Innovation Council, working with the Smart Cities team, is launching an organic waste pilot in October. Scoped to run for nine months, this pilot is intended to develop the route and relationships needed for a triple bottom line business case in the “ICI” sector organic waste pick up.

The objectives include economic efficiency, greenhouse gas reduction, and edible food diversion to local food security organizations. The pilot area will include the Arthur-to-Guelph corridor, and additional participants are still needed.

### **Attainable Housing**

The Taskforce met in July to discuss next steps related to the public awareness campaign. The goal of the campaign is to change public sentiment, encouraging greater awareness of the need for and support of more housing options in Wellington County. Economic Development has spoken with community members ranging from business owners to residents that would like to humanize the results of people unable to enter the housing market and how that affects our community. We have retained The Letter M Marketing to assist with the campaign. As our member municipalities are the front line staff to our communities, we met with them on September 10 to discuss the project and their role. We intend for a highly visual and compelling community-based social marketing campaign, illustrating how existing residents' lifestyles are affected if we cannot find housing for those we need to work in our communities. We also intend on communicating that Wellington County's economy strongly relies on attracting employees who can access housing and that providing attainable options translates into retaining the character and personality of our communities.

We are currently gathering stories and sourcing relevant data, and will schedule a meeting with the Taskforce to confirm the campaign details and goals.

The other item that was developed over the summer was the creation of the scope of work for the County's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) amendment. Beginning this fall, we will be working with RCI Consulting to open our CIP and include incentives for Attainable Housing activities, as well as conducting a review of our CIP to ensure clarity and consistency in its programme and eligibility requirements. This work will be complete by summer 2022 and economic development will be supporting this work with the development of the new applications and scoring documents.

Finally, the Taskforce will be receiving a presentation September 15 from Home Opportunities Non Profit, showing their model of affordable home ownership for consideration in Wellington County. The Taskforce has expressed its desire to welcome opportunities for exploring innovative options to increase our housing supply.

### **Other Activities**

- 169 enquires received from June 10 until September 10. Taste Real (105), Business/General (25), Ride Well (16), Internet (7), Venue/Property Enquiry (6), Housing (4), Welcoming and Inclusion (4), Employment/Workforce (2).
- Tourism signage, four new signs will be installed in fall 2021 for Erin Hill Acres (formally Wintersinger's Christmas Tree Farm).
- Wellington County Workforce Session with Western Ontario Warden Caucus (WOWC) was virtually hosted on July 5 to help inform the Western Ontario Workforce Strategy.
- Attainable Housing Taskforce Group met on July 28 and September 15.

- Crystal participated in a facility tour of manufacturer Minus Forty in Georgetown on July 20, the company is working towards relocating to Guelph Eramosa.
- Staff were asked to share the Farmers' Market and Picnic Programme as example of best practices at the Agriculture Economic Development Community of Practice "Growing Agri-Tourism Initiatives in Your Community" webinar hosted by OFA and OMARFA on August 19.
- Crystal attended the Saugeen Student Start-Up Program 2021's end of summer event, celebrating the young entrepreneurs on August 24 in Hanover.
- Christina attended a farm tour at 3 Gen Organics, an innovative, regenerative, and diversified hog/feed farm branching out into value-added products, on-farm retail, and event space on September 9.
- Staff facilitated the donation of 300 white pine tree seedlings to Mississaugas of the Credit 'First Nation for Caring Together Week'.
- Business e-newsletter sent June 22, July 19 and August 17.
- Taste Real e-Newsletters sent on June 24 and June 30.

**Recommendation:**

That the Economic Development Committee approve the Economic Development September Report.

Respectfully submitted,



Crystal Ellis  
Director of Economic Development