



Corporation of the County of Wellington
Economic Development Committee
Minutes

October 19, 2021
Council Chambers

Present: Warden Kelly Linton
Councillor George Bridge (Chair)
Councillor Doug Breen
Councillor Campbell Cork
Councillor Jeff Duncan

Also Present: Councillor Steve O'Neill

Staff: Emma Bottomley, Student
Donna Bryce, County Clerk
Jana Burns, Director, Economic Development
Justine Dainard, Smart Cities Project Manager
Ken DeHart, County Treasurer
Crystal Ellis, Director of Economic Development
Andrea Ravensdale, Communications Manager
Scott Wilson, CAO

1. Call to Order

At 10:00 am, the Chair called the meeting to order.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3. Financial Statements and Variance Projections as of September 30, 2021

1/8/21

Moved by: Councillor Duncan

Seconded by: Councillor Breen

That the Financial Statements and Variance Projections as of September 30, 2021 for Economic Development be approved.

Carried

4. October 2021 Economic Development Update

2/8/21

Moved by: Councillor Cork

Seconded by: Warden Linton

That the County of Wellington Economic Development Update for October 2021 be received for information.

Carried

5. Elora Riverwalk Proposal

3/8/21

Moved by: Councillor Cork

Seconded by: Councillor Breen

That the Economic Development Committee support the Federal Economic Development Agency funding application for the Elora Mill Riverwalk Project.

Carried

4/8/21

Moved by: Councillor Duncan

Seconded by: Councillor Breen

That the Economic Development Committee consider contributing funding towards the Elora Mill Riverwalk Project.

Carried

6. Adjournment

At 11:31 am, the Chair adjourned the meeting until November 16, 2021 or at the call of the Chair.

George Bridge
Chair
Economic Development Committee



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee
From: Ken DeHart, County Treasurer
Date: Tuesday, October 19, 2021
Subject: **Economic Development Financial Statements and Variance Projections as of Sept 30, 2021**

Background:

This report is respectfully submitted in accordance with the County's Budget Variance Reporting policy, and provides an updated projection to year-end based on expenditures and revenues to September 30, 2021 for Economic Development.

Operations across all County departments have continued to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and are likely to see financial implications in various ways throughout the remainder of 2021. Impacts specific to COVID-19 are identified where applicable.

Operating

- Grants and subsidies currently shows no revenue to date. The entirety of grant funding relates to the Ride Well and Smart Cities programmes both of which will receive funding later in 2021. Additional funding will be received as expenditures are made during the remainder of the year. At this time Ride Well and Smart Cities grant funding is expected to come in on budget.
- User fees and charges received to date consists of Ride Well passenger revenue (\$18,700) which is likely to continue to be adversely affected by COVID-19 and result in a negative variance. Tourism signage revenue has exceeded the budgeted amount for the year (\$15,000 received to date). Taste Real event initiatives have and will continue to be reduced as a result of the pandemic. Overall user fees and charges may experience a negative variance between \$15,000 and \$20,000.
- Salaries and wages are under budget as the department has experienced staffing absences, vacancies and gapping due to the time needed to fill positions. The department has also completed a divisional review to better align positions with the needs within the department that will result in additional savings during 2021. Overall savings between \$50,000 and \$60,000 is anticipated by year-end.
- Supplies, materials and equipment expenditures are underspent to date as the majority of costs (\$110,000) related to the Smart Cities programme have not been fully incurred due to COVID-19. Projects are underway with the expectation that spending will pick up over the remainder of the year. Budget spending will be dependent on the ability to get projects done in that timeline. Any savings in this area will be offset by lower grant funding and therefore no variance is anticipated.
- Purchased services includes work on a number of projects that are underway or to be undertaken; including the Attainable Housing, Business Resiliency, Talent Attraction, economic data collection and analysis, and Taste Real activities. At this time budgeted expenses related to Community Transportation (Ride Well) as well as Smart Cities are underspent. Various savings are likely to result in planned projects and events, conferences and mileage in a range of \$160,000 to \$180,000.

- Transfer payments:
 - Payments made to date include funding for Business Support Agencies including payments to the Business Centre Guelph Wellington, Innovation Guelph, Launch It Minto as well as BR+E Fund payments to six lower tier municipalities. Additional Business Support Agency grants and BR+E funding will be processed over the remainder of the year with no variance anticipated.
 - Additional payments in this line item relate to the one-time budgeted funding of \$200,000 added in the 2021 budget to fund various business recovery efforts. To date just over \$166,000 has been transferred to Saugeen Economic Development Corporation, Community Futures Development Corporation of Wellington Waterloo as well as additional sponsorships to the Town of Minto and Township of Centre Wellington to aid businesses as they recover from the financial impacts of COVID-19.
 - The Community Improvement Plan Implementation Fund is likely to be at a reduced level due to the pandemic and temporary business closures. So far the County has approved seven CIP requests that would provide \$57,500 and local municipal staff have indicated there are more applications coming. Staff are continue to engage with municipalities to provide grant funding to as many projects as possible and at this time expect that \$80,000 of \$160,000 budgeted amount will be committed. The 2021 TIEG grant payment will be made in the amount of \$45,064 after the full annual taxes have been collected – in November.

Capital

Economic Development began 2021 with a total approved budget of \$1,172,500 consisting of two projects. To date staff completed one project to close this month. The table below also accounts for life to date spending for total available funding of \$800,000.

Economic Development	May 31, 2021	Sept 30, 2021
Open Capital at Dec 31, 2020	\$ 372,500	\$ 372,500
plus: 2021 Approved Capital Budget	\$ 800,000	\$ 800,000
plus: 2021 In-Year Budget Adjustments	\$ -	\$ -
2021 Total Approved Capital Budget	\$ 1,172,500	\$ 1,172,500
less: Previous Years Capital Spending	\$ (345,776)	\$ (345,776)
Available Capital Funding for 2021	\$ 826,724	\$ 826,724
2021 Capital Spending to date	\$ -	\$ (32,216)
Open Purchase Orders	\$ (22,040)	
Closed Projects		\$ 5,492
Uncommitted Approved Funding	\$ 804,684	\$ 800,000

Economic Development Capital	LTD Budget	LTD Actuals	Remaining Budget	Comments
Wellington Signage Strategy	\$372,500	\$377,992	(\$5,492)	Work is complete and project is ready to close. The General Capital Reserve will fund the minor negative variance.
SWIFT 2.0 Implementation	\$800,000	-	\$800,000	The SWIFT budget represents the municipal share of the fibre buildout throughout the County. The project will proceed once approval from upper levels of government is complete.
Total Economic Development	\$1,172,500	\$377,992	\$794,508	

Overall, Economic Development is close to budget on a variety of initiatives that are undertaken on a yearly basis and under budget on staffing, Ride Well contract costs and CIP payments. The Ride Well and Smart Cities projects represent significant revenue and expenditure amounts within the Economic Development budget, which will continue throughout the remainder of the year with an uncertain impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently it is anticipated that there may be savings between \$320,000 and \$340,000 at year-end.

Recommendation:

That the Financial Statements and Variance Projections as of September 30, 2021 for Economic Development be approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Ken DeHart, CPA, CGA
County Treasurer



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

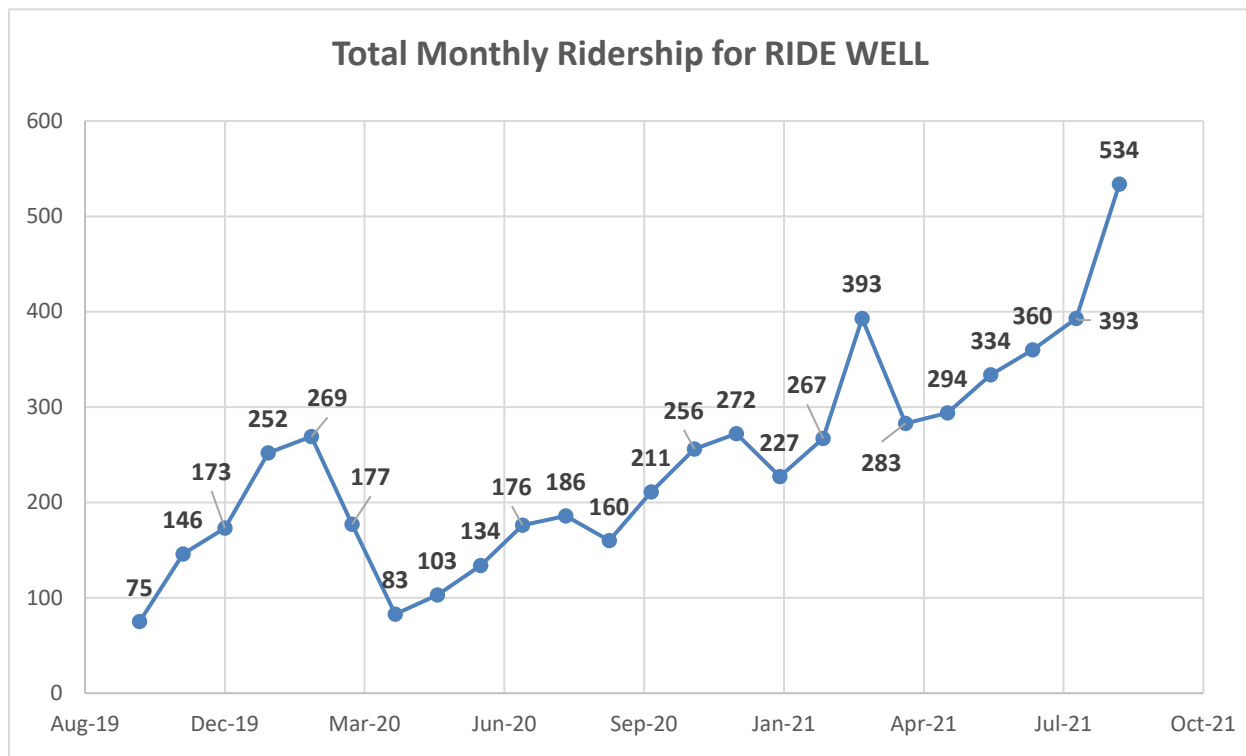
COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee
From: Crystal Ellis, Director of Economic Development
Date: Tuesday, October 19, 2021
Subject: Economic Development – October Report

RIDE WELL

October 1, 2021 marks two years of service for the Ride Well rural transit programme. In September, Ride Well reached a new monthly high in ridership with 534 completed rides. This is up 141 rides from August, and is the highest month-to-month increase to date. September had 73 different users (unique users) book rides, within that group 23 were new riders and 50 repeat riders. There was an average of 7.3 rides per user in September. Also of note, 44 new Ride Well accounts were created in the month of September.

The relatively high frequency of usage paired with the growth in the number of unique users is responsible for this monthly increase. Please see the total monthly ridership from October 2019 to September 2021 below:



The following charts provide additional breakdown and insight into where rides occurred in July, August and September and what municipalities are seeing increases:

	Pick Ups			Drop Offs		
	July	August	September	July	August	September
Centre Wellington	186	241	338	186	239	339
Wellington North	59	51	67	77	70	65
Minto	40	45	30	24	20	35
City of Guelph	32	23	60	43	46	66
Guelph/Eramosa	14	22	23	4	8	9
Puslinch	13	7	9	17	8	13
Mapleton	12	3	3	5	1	3
Erin	4	1	4	4	1	4
Total	360	393	534	360	393	534

The last three months has shown significant changes in the proportion of ridership among the municipalities. The most populated municipality in Wellington County, Centre Wellington has shown the largest increase in proportion (11.6%-point increase of pick-ups) since July; In September, nearly two-thirds of ridership occurred in in Centre Wellington. The City of Guelph also had a notable increase of 2.3% points in pick-ups since July.

Taste Real

With the end of farmers' market season, Taste Real's two market promotional initiatives draw to a close. The curated **Farmers' Market Box** campaign proved to be an excellent way to promote all eight local markets and introduce residents to a large number of products grown and prepared in Guelph Wellington. 422 boxes were sold over four months amounting to \$25,000 in additional sales for market vendors. Businesses were thrilled with the extra revenue and with the opportunity to introduce their products to a wider audience, while organizers were pleased to showcase a taste of their market to households across Wellington County and Guelph.

This summer also saw the launch of the new Taste Real **Farmers' Market Trail** featuring market profiles and promoting visits to a variety of local markets. 43 completed trail passports have been received back by October 5 equaling 165 market visits. Participants are entered to win one of seven prize packs. Market organizers and staff are interested in continuing to build on the successes of these new initiatives for 2022.



The **Fall Rural Romp** promotes local food and agriculture, and popular fall outings until October 31. The campaign contains virtual and in-person events, a Fall Flavours Map listing over 50 unique fall-inspired foods, beverages, and farm products, and encourages individuals to create their own self-guided tour. Individuals are encouraged to browse the selection of online agriculture education videos, as well as order Fall Rural Romp Kits containing family-friendly fall food activities and seasonal recipes.

Staff is currently preparing a new marketing campaign for the online Taste Real **Holiday Food and Gift Guide** to be launched in November. The guide lists ingredients for your holiday meal, as well as gift ideas and where to purchase them locally. New marketing materials will feature photos of an array of local products and encourage residents to shop local this holiday season.



Tourism Signage Programme

The County of Wellington is now accepting applications for the 2022 pay-to-play tourism signage season. The application deadline is set for November 30, 2021 and installation will take place in Spring 2021. Economic Development staff are working with the member-municipalities to start out-reach to tourism businesses that may be interested in signage.

Talent Attraction - Wellington County Welcoming and Inclusion Assessment Survey Actions

In the past weeks, discussions were held with the Municipal Economic Development Group on the 4-point recommendations from the survey. Further analysis was done on the survey data to analyze the data by municipality and a final report of the survey is in progress. Consultations will continue with municipal staff and other key stakeholders to gather information on what is happening now in our communities in order to finalize the Plan of Action for the recommended four areas. The four key areas include: Community Welcoming Initiatives, Collaboration with businesses and support services organizations, Easier Access to Critical Information, and Local Government and Business Leadership.

Key Points

- Conduct an environmental scan to find out what is happening in each municipality and develop the Wellington County immigration story.
- Newcomers are not always knowledgeable of what they can and cannot do and often can show sign of frustration. So be prepared to listen, provide advice and refer them to other support services organizations who can better help them.

- Ensure that key community stakeholders, including municipal EDOs, are aware of the newcomers that are settling in their communities.
- Prepare information package of key information that newcomers will need and locate them in key access points.
- Remember that the basic needs of newcomers are the same as what all family need. Finding a decent job is the main key that unlocks everything else (home, vehicle, childcare support, schooling, friends, business, etc.).
- Always have an updated list of the support services organizations serving your community and key contact persons there.
- Be knowledgeable of the basic things a newcomer, based on immigration status, can and cannot do.
- Develop a marketing framework using story telling that connects all the main themes recommended for further action.

Smart Cities – Our Food Future

Our Food Future will be issuing a mid-term progress report as they reach the end of their second year this December. Early impact calculations indicate that the project is on-track and building successful supports for our region. Some findings are listed in the infographic below:



This October will see the launch of the **Upcycled Food Fest**, created by local food business sustainability experts Provision Coalition. The festival will take place across the GTA and will focus on meals created from previously wasted ingredients. An upcycled ramen noodle meal kit made from a high-protein soy by-product will be launched; this kit will be available to purchase online or in stores and is also available at Fergies Fine Foods in Fergus. More information can be found at upcycledfoodfest.ca.



As reported last month, the Circular Innovation Council and Smart Cities office will be launching a **Non-residential Sector Organic Waste Pilot**. The service is being planned to start the first week of November. This pilot is intended to develop the route and logistics needed for organic waste pick up in the “Industrial, Commercial and Institutional” sector. Additional participants are still welcome.

Attainable Housing

While the market has begun to cool locally, the Canadian Real Estate Association has shown that it is only due to the essential disappearance of affordability locally. The CREA predicts a further 20% increase in prices to the end of 2021 with a further 5% increase predicted in 2022. This will bring the average sale price to \$718,000 nationally, up from the \$630,000 current value.

The Attainable Housing Public Awareness Strategy planning is underway. With the message of Make Wellington County Home, the following strategic directions, as guided by the Taskforce, will frame the campaign:

- Humanize the situation through storytelling.
- Dispel myths and biases.
- Be highly visual: infographics, photos and video over extensive written content.
- Establish communications partnerships.
- Create platforms and opportunities for dialogue.

While there are many in our communities that are attentive to the need for diverse housing options in Wellington County, the awareness campaign will push for a whole community imperative. Staff are coordinating Yes in My Backyard training, contra to NIMBYISM, to ensure the Taskforce is prepared to address the negative comments that may arise through this process. The Poverty Elimination Taskforce of Guelph Wellington will be providing the training. The campaign will kick off in November and continue through 2022.

Other Activities

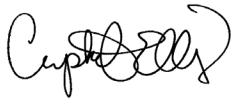
- 35 enquires received including Taste Real, Business/General, Ride Well, Internet/Smart Cities, Housing, Venue/Property Enquiry.
- Crystal was invited to participate in a roundtable discussion on Rural Transportation at the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) annual conference on October 4.
- Attainable Housing Taskforce Group met on October 7.

- Justine participated in Call to Action: Addressing the Digital Divide in Guelph-Wellington, organized by Guelph Community Health Centre on October 7.
- Justine was a guest on [The Back 40](#) Podcast presented by Trillium Mutual Insurance, discussing the Our Food Future project.
- Wellington County Picnics online photo contest received 22 photo entries for a chance to win a Wellington County picnic basket prize.
- Christina consulted with 10C about future opportunities at the Guelph Farmers' Market.
- Business e-newsletter sent September 23.
- Taste Real Newsletter sent October 1 featuring Fall Rural Romp, Harvest Fun, Pumpkin Time, Apple Season, Local Thanksgiving, ongoing events.

Recommendation:

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal Ellis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Crystal Ellis
Director of Economic Development



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee
From: Crystal Ellis, Director of Economic Development
Date: Tuesday, October 19, 2021
Subject: Elora Riverwalk Proposal

Background:

The Elora Mill, a subsidiary of Pearle Hospitality, is proposing a partnership with the County of Wellington to develop the Riverwalk, a new public space in downtown Elora. The location is an undeveloped area along the south bank of the Grand River, between Badley Bridge and Jack R. MacDonald Bridge. The waterfront area is approximately two-thirds owned by the Elora Mill and one-third owned by the County. The Riverwalk is part of the Elora Mill South development, which will expand the downtown core and includes plans for boutique services, shops, restaurants and creative spaces for artists. The Riverwalk consists of concrete seating and ramped walkways, with lighting and landscaping that lead down to a waterfront boardwalk. It will be publicly accessible and AODA compliant. The GRCA has helped guide the design to ensure the sustainability of the ecosystem and the stability of the riverbank. The target completion date for the Riverwalk is end of 2022.

The value of the proposed Elora Riverwalk includes:

- Rehabilitation of deteriorating and non-use space.
- Providing the public with access to the river.
- Encouraging safe, outdoor post-pandemic activity.
- Regardless of mobility or economic status, the Riverwalk is an accessible community space.
- Creates a new, unique space for events and activities, ie: pop-up market, music on the river.
- Cultural organizations have the opportunity to use this space as an event venue.
- Alleviates pressure in the downtown core, moving people into a new space, creating a different experience and view.

Elora is the tourism gateway within Wellington County and visitor numbers have confirmed this. Most recently, attention has come from Conde Nast Traveler and Travel and Leisure Magazine, both recognizing Elora as a top small town destination in Canada. As residents and tourists drive through Wellington County to get to Elora, County Economic Development staff seek ways to drive awareness of the diversionary and complementary activities and experiences across the County. Visitors who stay overnight spend three to four times as much as daytrippers, the Elora hotel enables the rest of Wellington County to benefit from such visitor spending. The Roger Brooks Downtown Study recognized Elora as the main draw for visitors, again, staff can utilize this to elevate the other assets and businesses across the County, through packaging, promotion and signage. Pearle Hospitality has expressed a desire to assist in marketing efforts to promote the many other things to do in Wellington County.

The County has traditionally taken the approach that as one community benefits from a new business, all communities benefit through increased taxes. In addition to development charges and job creation, once fully completed in 2030, the Elora South development is estimated to pay annual property taxes of \$1,871,581 where \$923,723 is paid to the County specifically.

The Riverwalk has an estimated project cost of \$2,745,900. To execute the project, the Elora Mill requests the County collaborate on a Federal grant application, including a financial commitment. The Elora Mill has proposed the project be funded four ways between the Elora Mill, the County, and a funding request to the Federal Government in addition to a request to the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Pearle Hospitality’s request for funding is as follows:

Elora Mill	\$915,300
County	\$915,300
Grant Sources (including requests to the Federal Revitalization Fund and the GRCA foundation)	\$915,300

Staff recognize, as a rural municipality accessible outdoor spaces are limited in Wellington County. As a partial property owner, the Riverwalk enables the County to part take in activating the south bank of the Grand River in downtown Elora and provides opportunities for community groups across the County to use the space. This site would add to the Wellington County tourism portfolio that includes trails, heritage downtowns, farms, festivals and spectacular libraries. Staff recommend we support this project in a financially responsible fashion, given the most recent Council budget discussion. As we enter a post pandemic period of recovery, supporting the increase of tourism activity in our communities may wish to be considered.

Below are images to provide context of the site and its proposed redevelopment.



Arial view of the property, left side owned by Elora Mill, right side County property.



Current view of South Bank



Current View of North Bank



Proposed Riverwalk on South Bank

Recommendation:

That the Economic Development Committee support the Federal Economic Development Agency funding application and consider contributing funding towards the Elora Mill Riverwalk project.

Respectfully prepared and submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Crystal Ellis".

Crystal Ellis
Director of Economic Development