



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

**To:** Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee  
**From:** Justine Dainard, Project Manager Smart Cities Office  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 18, 2022  
**Subject:** **Our Food Future project – January 2022 Update**

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**Background:** Update on programmes within the Our Food Future project.

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### Reaching a milestone

The Our Food Future project is at the halfway point of its four-year scope, and is pleased to report that one of our three main goals – that of 50 new circular food businesses, collaborations and social enterprises – has already been reached. Later this month we will be releasing an updated promotional video on the [foodfuture.ca](https://foodfuture.ca) website, and in February the Smart City Offices of the County and the City of Guelph will be presenting our Midterm Report to both Councils, with more details on the progress made to date.

### Looking ahead

Our Food Future and COIL have many projects, pilots, and pieces of research underway; these will be mapped and profiled in the upcoming Midterm Report. While all of these activities will have a benefit to the County due to our partnered participation, included below are updates and descriptions for items of particular interest:

#### **Cyber security in agriculture**

Building on the success of the Connectivity Guidebook, cyber security workshops were offered in November and were well received. In order to offer further support, local farms were offered a free on-site visit by a digital security firm to review best practices and address site-specific questions. Some free visits are still available, please contact our department if interested.

#### **Connectivity speed tests**

We expect both federal and provincial funders to release new broadband expansion money this year. To ensure that we have good data telling us how successful past expansion has been and where improved service is still needed, we will be launching a campaign to ask residents to run household speed tests (Fig. 1).

#### **Institutional, commercial and industrial (ICI) organic waste pilot**

This pilot launched in November 2021, and is projected to run until June, 2022. There are currently 45 participants, including Groves Hospital and several County housing buildings; new participants are welcome to join. In its first month, this pilot diverted 23 tonnes of food waste from landfill to high-grade compost, and one tonne of edible food to local food security organizations.

### **Food hub feasibility study**

This study launched in April 2021 and is co-funded by Our Food Future and NGEN Next Manufacturing, Canada's Innovation Supercluster for advanced manufacturing. Our team of consultants – Pollinate Inc. with Michael Keegan and Associates – have been researching food hub models and working to understand our region's food production needs through a series of stakeholder surveys and interviews. By this spring they will present us with a report illustrating the challenges and opportunities of our region, as well as a recommendation on the type of food hub which could be feasible and sustainable here.

### **David Suzuki Foundation report**

The David Suzuki Foundation has been asked to prepare background research to inform the upcoming Place-based Carbon Accounting Study's RFP. The report is due in early February 2022.

### **Place-based carbon accounting study**

In March 2022 the Smart Cities office will issue an RFP for a team of consultants to model pathways to the carbon market. Many of the activities of the Our Food Future project and of departments in the County could qualify under verifiable protocols for GHG-reduction; this project is intended to help us map and understand the data management, record-keeping and reporting processes required to gain financial benefit from the carbon credit markets and other ecosystem services models.

### **Experimental Acres on-farm pilot**

This project will support farmers transitioning to regenerative climate friendly farming practices, track which practices are of most interest, and learn how municipal actions can fill a gap in incentivizing uptake of these new approaches. Up to 12 Wellington farm hosts will be supported, and partnerships with neighbouring counties have already been established.

### **Wellington soil symposium**

This will be a hybrid live-online public event on March 4, 2022. We will be inviting the agricultural sector to join us to celebrate local farming and to share current knowledge of farming for improved soil health targets.

### **Another exciting COIL announcement coming this month**

The Smart Cities Offices of Guelph and Wellington will be announcing a new zero waste initiative through the Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL) on January 20, 2022. This initiative will launch with a significant local private-public sector collaboration in place to explore new strategies for reducing waste or finding new potential for unavoidable waste across several industries.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Economic Development Committee receive the Our Food Future report for information.

Respectfully submitted,



Justine Dainard  
Project Manager, Smart Cities Office