



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

## COMMITTEE REPORT

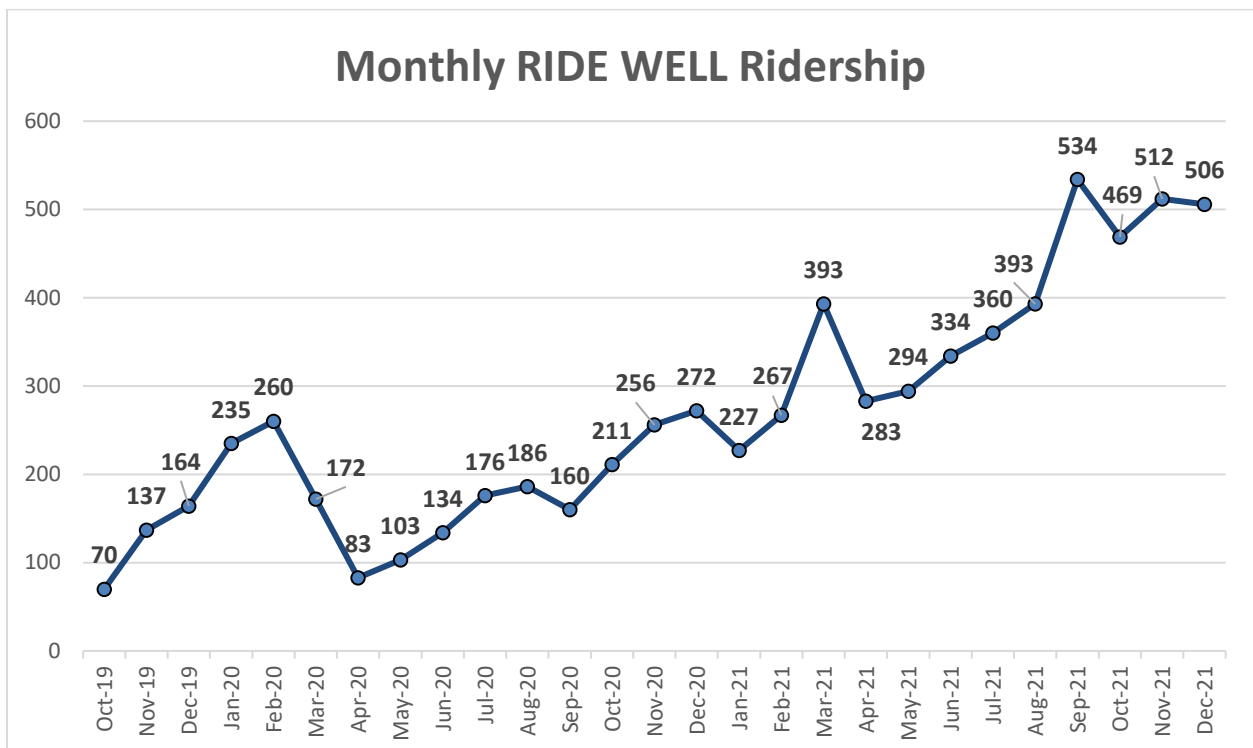
**To:** Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee  
**From:** Crystal Ellis, Director of Economic Development  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 18, 2022  
**Subject:** Economic Development – January Report

### RIDE WELL Rural Transportation

RIDE WELL had a strong finish to 2021 with 506 rides in December. This was down just six rides from 512 in November. Staff originally forecasted lower demand in December due to statutory holidays and the developing Omicron COVID-19 variant situation but the demand remained steady. Ridership will likely decrease in January 2022 due to the current public health and safety restrictions.

Month	Rides	Unique users	New users	Average rides per user	New accounts registered
October 2021	469	70	17	6.7	58
November 2021	512	76	16	6.7	57
December 2021	506	75	15	6.7	35

See the following month-over-month growth trajectory since service launch:





In 2021 there were 4,572 rides completed in comparison to 2020, which had 2,248 rides completed. The programme had 103% growth from 2020 to 2021. Factors that attributed to RIDE WELL growth in 2021 include:

- Easing of pandemic restrictions and reopening of business and activities.
- The majority of customers used the service for essential needs such as getting to work and medical appointments.
- The senior population increased use in the service. For example, from October to December 2021, 17% of completed rides were taken by seniors.
- An increase in recreational rides in the second half of 2021. For example, Centre Wellington Sportsplex was consistently one of the top destinations from July to December 2021.

As we move forward into 2022, RIDE WELL will continue to grow ridership through marketing and programme education. This will include digital and newspaper advertisements, radio ads, social media posts, working with youth partners, and exploring virtual webinars/presentations when applicable. Staff will also continue to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and adhere to public safety guidelines to ensure the safety of drivers and passengers. Passenger ridesharing is anticipated to resume in 2022 (when it is deemed safe to do so). This transition will require a strategic public communication and education effort leading up to the service change since the programme has not been ridesharing since March 2020.

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

The Invest WELL Community Improvement Programme (CIP) closed 2021 with \$82,500 in approved funding, supporting ten projects. The following table provides a snapshot of the how funding was leveraged across public and private investments:

<b>Source</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Return on Investment (\$)</b>
Private Investment	3,945,706	
Wellington County CIP Contribution	82,500	1:47
Municipality CIP Contribution	113,864	1:34
<b>Total Project Value</b>	<b>4,142,070</b>	Overall CIP ROI = 1:20

Return on investment was strong in 2021 with a total Invest WELL CIP return on investment (ROI) of 1:20. This means that for every \$1 spent by Wellington County and Member-Municipalities, \$20 was invested by private business. The following table highlights the total ROI across Wellington County, and a breakdown by municipality:



Municipality	Private Investment	Municipal CIP	County CIP	Municipal ROI (\$)	County ROI (\$)	Total ROI (\$)
Wellington North	\$150,000	\$10,000	\$7,500	1:15	1:20	1:9
Minto	\$417,000	\$36,000	\$20,000	1:12	1:21	1:7
Centre Wellington	\$1,300,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	1:65	1:130	1:43
Erin	\$228,705	\$32,863	\$30,000	1:7	1:8	1:4
Guelph/Eramosa	\$110,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	1:11	1:22	1:7
Puslinch	\$1,740,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	1:348	1:174	1:116
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,945,705</b>	<b>\$113,863</b>	<b>\$82,500</b>	<b>1:35</b>	<b>1:48</b>	<b>1:20</b>

### Tourism Signage Programme

The deadline for 2022 signage application was November 30, 2021. In total, the County received seven formal applications for a total of 13 new signs. In addition, 17 businesses are up for contract renewal in 2022 for 36 signs in total. County staff continue to work with the businesses to finalize new signage locations and renewals for 2022.

The tourism signage programme has grown significantly since it first launched in 2018. See the below year-over-year breakdown of its performance:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (projected)
New Signage Locations	19	4	0	4	4
New Sign Panels/Tab Signs	25	33	3	23	14
New Businesses Participating	5	18	2	10	7
Total Signage Panel Locations	19	23	23	27	31
Total Tab Sign Locations	0	11	11	16	17
Total Number of Business Participating	5	23	25	31	37



## Taste Real

The Taste Real Holiday Food and Gift Guide was the focus of this year's holiday shop local promotions. The online gift guide featured 24 different categories of local food and gift ideas, category examples included Beauty and Wellness, Gift Baskets, Honey and Beeswax, Wool and Fibre gifts. New this year was a 'Unique Gifts from Wellington County' category that featured a curated list of locally crafted gift items. The gift guide was promoted through social media, supported by local radio ads, as well as print ads with the Wellington Advertiser, Guelph Mercury Tribune, Toque Magazine, and Neighbor Magazine.

Taste Real partner and Township of Mapleton business, **Sorry Sauce** is being recognized nationally! Sorry Sauce, a local hot sauce manufacturer, has won this year's Canadian Hot Sauce Award for best new sauce for their 'Curry Curry Hard Hot Sauce'. This comes on the heels of last year's Canadian Hot Sauce Award for best Jalapeno Sauce. Learn about more about the Sorry Sauce story from the December 29, 2021 Wellington Advertiser article: [Former musician finds success with award-winning hot sauce.](#)



## Talent Attraction

Actions from the Welcoming and Inclusion Assessment are underway. First steps in the actions rollout that are currently in progress include a Wellington County Immigration and Newcomers Welcome webpage, development of welcoming packages, and information at County libraries to reach and engage new residents. Newcomer events are also being organized in collaboration with the County Settlement office.

The Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin is hosting a webinar "How to Hire and Retain Newcomers and Refugees" on February 1<sup>st</sup> features Jim Estill, CEO of Danby Appliances, which is located in Guelph Eramosa. [Register for the event here.](#)

## Attainable Housing

Dominica McPherson, Director at the Guelph Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination, provided the Attainable Housing taskforce group, along with members of the municipal economic development group with Yes in My Backyard training on November 23. The session received positive feedback from participants and provided tools to combat not in my backyard comments as we encourage attainable housing development across the County. The session was recorded and is available to view. anyone.



The Attainable Housing public awareness campaign is in progress with the support of Letter M Marketing. We were aware of the hesitation in communities to support new housing developments that differ from traditional single-family dwellings. As we embarked on the public awareness strategy, we are becoming more aware that those who are struggling to find suitable housing in our communities are reluctant or often afraid to attach their name to their own need for attainable housing. Having to stand up to strong community voices that oppose development, those in need are in vulnerable situations and are not feeling welcome or able to speak up. It is important that we be thoughtful of how this also contributes to our being a welcoming community in Wellington County. With this in mind, the communications approach for the public awareness campaign will be respectful of those who are sharing their housing challenge stories and alter the approach to respect their privacy. Once reviewed by the taskforce, the campaign will begin roll out in the coming weeks.

Staff are kicking off the opening of the County Community Improvement Programme (CIP) this month, working with RCI Consulting to add attainable housing incentives. Staff are seeking innovative housing concepts to pilot, Home Opportunities is a unique model that is showing promise and locations are being investigated.

### **Awards of Excellence, Economic Development Council of Ontario**

Wellington County Economic Development has been named as a finalist for two Economic Development Council of Ontario (EDCO) awards in the Community Economic Development (Rural) Award category. The projects up for awards are the Taste Real Farmers' Market Box Series and the Wellington County Connectivity Guidebook for Rural Ontario. Winners will be announced at the annual EDCO Conference on April 7, 2022.

### **Experience Wellington**

On-location filming for Experience Wellington promotional videos continues this winter. To build our winter promotional imagery, December shoots included Downtown Erin Shopping during the Window Wonderland event, Elliott Tree Farm, Christmas Market at the WCMA, Rockwood Parade of Lights, and the Elora Santa Claus Parade. Additional footage will include winter activities like sledding, skating and horse drawn wagon rides.



Elliott Tree Farm, Hillsburgh

### **Webpage Analytics**

Website google analytics for 2021 show that the Wellington County Businesses Directory is the top visited page on the Economic Development site. This is followed by RIDE WELL and the Wellington County Takeout Map. On our Taste Real site, the Farmers' Market Box was the most popular page followed by the Farmers' Markets page. The popularity can be attributed to the



excellent promotions campaign and collaboration with local markets in 2021. Overall webpage view for the top ten pages within the Economic Development and Taste Real websites total 161,953 page views for 2021.

<b>Economic Development Webpage</b>	<b>Total Views</b>	<b>Unique Views</b>
Wellington County Business Directory	31,629	10,147
RIDE WELL - Business - Wellington County	5,847	4,680
Frequently Asked Questions - Business RIDEWELL FAQs	5,642	4,847
Takeout Map - Business - Wellington County	5,033	4,335

<b>Taste Real Webpage</b>	<b>Total Views</b>	<b>Unique Views</b>
Farmers' Market Box - Taste Real - Wellington County	10,032	8,340
Taste Real - Farmers' Markets - Wellington County	8,396	6,422
Taste Real Farm Shares - Wellington County	8,047	5,654
Taste Real - Butter Tarts - Wellington County	5,200	4,621

### **Business Supports**

A listing of current business support programme information is attached for information.

### **Other Activities**

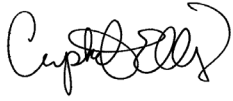
- 75 enquires received from November 8, 2021 to January 6, 2022. Ride Well (35), Taste Real (16), Business/General (8), Business Directory (5), Housing (4), Venue/Property Enquiry (4), Smart Cities (2), Immigration Services/Talent Attraction (1).
- Economic Development Division organizational review was completed to align staffing needs.
- Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin's annual [EmployerOne Survey](#) is open until January 31, 2022.
- Crystal participated as a panel speaker at the Growing Your Workforce Conference on November 23 as part of the Partnership to Recovery session that highlighted the Western Ontario Workforce Strategies and projects in Wellington, Simcoe and Chatham-Kent.
- The Economic Development Team supported the WCMA for the Christmas Market on December 10 and 11.
- Crystal participated in the RFP process for the EV Charging Network project.
- Staff are supporting the Food Hub Feasibility project, a part of the Our Food Future initiative.
- Toque Magazine Business Feature in the Winter Edition include: Elliott Tree Farm in Erin, and Top Ten Gift Ideas crafted by local farm, food and drink businesses.
- Shop Local advertising in Chamber of Commerce coupon books.
- Business e-newsletters sent November 25 and December 17.
- Taste Real e-newsletters sent November 19 and December 17.



**Recommendation:**

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal Ellis', with a stylized, cursive script.

Crystal Ellis  
Director of Economic Development



# Financial Supports for Businesses

January 2022

## [Ontario COVID-19 Small Business Relief Grant](#)

Eligible businesses (with fewer than 100 employees) subject to closures as a result of the province's move to the modified [Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen](#) as of January 5, 2022 will receive a grant of \$10,000. Applications to open within the coming weeks.

## [Ontario Business Costs Rebate Programme](#)

Eligible businesses that are required to close or reduce capacity will receive rebate payments equivalent to 50 percent of the property tax and energy costs they incur while subject to the current capacity limits. Online applications for this programme will open January 18, 2022, with payments to eligible businesses provided retroactive to December 19, 2021.

## [Six-month interest- and penalty-free period](#)

The province is providing a six-month interest- and penalty-free period to make payments for most provincially administered taxes. The six-month period will begin January 1, 2022 and end July 1, 2022.

## [Ontario Together Fund](#)

Provides funding to firms and organizations for projects that support either Ontario's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or Ontario's preparedness for future public health emergencies. Funding may include a conditional grant up to 75% of eligible project costs to a maximum of \$2.5M and/or complementary supports and services. Application period open until March 31, 2022.

## [Reconnect Ontario 2022](#)

Provides funding for festivals and events which occur between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023 that have a tourism economic impact and motivate visitors to rediscover Ontario. Application period open until February 2, 2022.

## [Southwestern Ontario Development Fund](#)

Provides support for projects and investments to businesses, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations for economic development in southwestern Ontario. Application intake opening February 9 to March 23, 2022.

## [Tourism Economic Development and Recovery Fund](#)

A cost-sharing programme designed to provide non-capital funding to projects that either encourage the development of innovative new tourism products, support tourism investment and/or build the capacity of Ontario's tourism industry. The programme also supports innovative tourism recovery projects aimed at increasing tourism within Ontario to address the reduction in global travel as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). Accepting applications on an ongoing basis.



### **Canada Summer Jobs 2022**

Provides wage subsidies to employers (not-for-profit organizations and private sector organizations with 50 or fewer full-time employees) to create quality work experiences for young people aged 15 to 30 years during summer 2022. Employers can apply for funding now until January 25, 2022.

### **Tourism and Hospitality Recovery Programme (THRP)**

Targeted wage and rent support for eligible businesses, charities, and non-profits in the tourism or hospitality sector or those affected by a qualifying public health restriction.

### **Local Lockdown Programme**

A way businesses, charities, and non-profits subject to a qualifying public health restriction may be eligible for wage or rent support through the Tourism and Hospitality Recovery Programme (THRP), even if they are not in tourism or hospitality.

### **Hardest-Hit Business Recovery Programme (HHBRP)**

Targeted wage and rent support for hard-hit eligible businesses, charities, and non-profits outside of tourism or hospitality that have been deeply affected since the start of the pandemic.

### **Ontario COVID-19 Worker Income Protection Benefit Programme**

Employers can get reimbursed for up to three days pay (max \$200/day) paid to employees on paid infectious disease emergency leave until July 31, 2022.

### **Tourism Relief Fund (TRF)**

Supports tourism businesses and organizations to adapt their operations to meet public health requirements while investing in products and services to facilitate their future growth. Contributions to businesses will be either non-repayable contributions up to \$100,000 for up to 50% of eligible costs OR fully repayable contributions up to \$500,000 for up to 75% of eligible costs.

### **Canada Small Business Financing Programme**

For small businesses to get loans from financial institutions by sharing the risk with lenders. Up to a maximum of \$1,000,000 for any one borrower.

### **Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS)**

Canadian businesses, non-profit organizations, or charities who have seen a drop in revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible for a subsidy to cover part of their commercial rent or property expenses. Extended until October 23, 2021. Note: The government is proposing to continue COVID-19 business support programmes until May 2022.

### **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)**

As a Canadian employer who has seen a drop in revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic, you may be eligible for a subsidy to cover part of your employee wages. This subsidy will enable you to re-hire workers, help prevent further job losses, and ease your business back into normal



operations. Extended until October 23, 2021. Note: The government is proposing to continue COVID-19 business support programmes until May 2022.

### **Canada Recovery Hiring Programme (CRHP)**

Provides a subsidy on eligible salary or wages to help hard-hit businesses hire new workers, increase workers' hours, or increase wages at a pace that works for them. As with the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, eligible employers can apply for support after each four-week period of the programme. Note: The government is proposing to continue COVID-19 business support programmes until May 2022.

### **Useful Links**

- Government of Canada [Business and Industry Resources](#)
- Province of Ontario [COVID-19 Help for Businesses in Ontario](#)
- Province of Ontario [Business and Economy](#)
- Province of Ontario, [OMAFRA Funding Programmes and Support](#)

### **Local Business Support Agencies**

- [Wellington Waterloo Community Futures](#)
- [Business Centre Guelph Wellington](#)
- [Innovation Guelph](#)
- [LaunchIt Business Exploration Centre](#)
- [FindYourJob.ca](#)