



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee
From: Crystal Ellis, Director of Economic Development
Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2022
Subject: Economic Development – April Report

RIDE WELL Rural Transportation

In April, RIDE WELL serviced 415 rides in comparison to 522 in March. It is important to note that although there was a decrease in ride numbers this past month, there were four fewer operating days in April (19 operating days) than in March (23 operating days).

On April 4, the service returned to ridesharing (pairing separate bookings into one vehicle) and we can report that of those 415 rides, 67 (16%) were shared. Data shows that 93% of the shared rides occurred within Centre Wellington. This is not a surprise, since the ride volumes are higher in Centre Wellington, the chance of ridesharing becomes more frequent in this area.



RIDE WELL
will return to
shared rides
on April 4

What you need to know:

- Bookings will return to a per-seat basis. Multiple rider discounts will apply to bookings with 2 or more seats booked.
- You may get paired with other community members taking the service to similar destinations.
- Ridesharing allows for more ride availability and flexibility!



Find out more at www.ridewell.ca



The following table compares monthly performance in 2022:

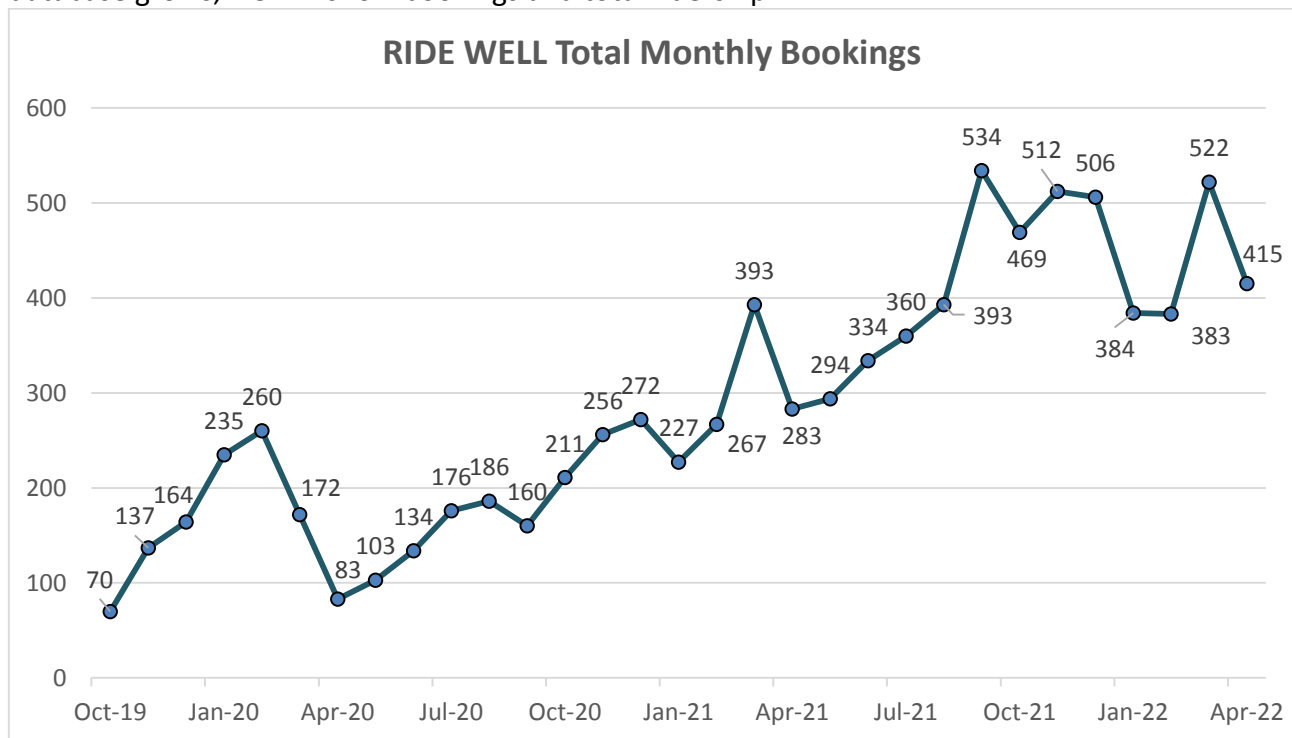
Month	Rides/ Bookings	Passengers	Unique users	New users	Average rides per user	Average Rides Per Day	New accounts registered
April 2022	415	425	76	9	5.5	21.8	40
March 2022	522	n/a	85	12	6.1	22.7	32
February 2022	383	n/a	67	8	5.7	20.2	28
January 2022	384	n/a	70	16	5.5	19.2	35

In April, RIDE WELL completed 19 youth trips. These trips were taken to the Skyline Community Hub in Fergus, and Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute (GCVI). We are also seeing frequent trips to local grocery store, retail locations, library, and various medical services.

Staff have been working with Dillon Consulting to review the hourly service rate for RideCo operations. It has been identified that retaining and attracting new drivers for the service is an increasing challenge. This factor has been heightened by the recent increase of fuel prices. The recommendation to increase the service fee from \$30 to \$34 per hour will be implemented. The change is within the allocated annual budget.

RIDE WELL is showing growth in 2022, which is driven by an increased number of monthly riders using the service more frequently. Additionally, RIDE WELL can now track the total number of

passengers in vehicles over a month. The following graph show overall and 2022 ridership, as our database grows, we will show bookings and total ridership:



Invest WELL Community Improvement Programme

Staff received and approved four 2022 Invest Well Community Improvement applications in the past month, all under the Invest MORE funding stream.

The Old Post at 33 Elora St S, Unit 3, Harriston was approved for \$2,500. The project will expand patio seating around and behind the building, as well as beautification efforts with planters and lighting. The expansion will also help the business access the rear entrance to the building for easier access to washrooms and other amenities. The Town of Minto approved the project for \$3,000 under their municipal CIP, and the applicant estimates the total costs to be \$9,000.

Dan Michael Investment Inc. at 35 Erin Park Drive, Erin was approved for \$5,000. The project includes construction of a new builders' and contractors' yard in the Erin Industrial Park. The Town of Erin approved \$2,500 for this project, and the applicant estimates costs to be \$648,288.53.

Excel Fine Cars at 9591 Wellington Road 124, Erin was approved for \$7,500. The project is a complete façade improvement of a car mechanic, sales and shop along Wellington Road 124 at the entry into downtown Erin. Improvement work includes new roof, brickwork, new signage, and landscaping. The Town of Erin approved \$8,000 for this project, and the applicant estimates costs to be \$64,000.

Kulhay Wellness Centre at 165 Main St., Erin was approved for \$2,500. The project will be constructing new accessibility features, such as a ramp and an automatic sliding door. This will allow a critical business in the downtown core to access new clientele and improve building safety. The Town of Erin approved \$2,500 for this project, and the applicant estimates costs to be \$10,185.

Taste Real


Taste Real continues to host virtual monthly **Farmers' Market group meetings** for market managers and other stakeholders, such as public health, in order to address common concerns, provide support and work on collaborative initiatives. This forum has been invaluable for local markets to assist each other with resources, advice, vendor recruitment and collaborative promotional activities.

The Taste Real **Farmers' Market Box** 2022 programme has launched. Orders can be completed on our website at <https://www.wellington.ca/en/business/tr-farmers-market-box.aspx>. The Farmers' Market Boxes cost \$59 and feature a curated selection of products from a different local farmers' market every two weeks. Boxes are available for pick up and a home delivery option is available to anywhere in Wellington County or Guelph for a \$5 flat fee. This initiative adds significant sales for vendors, promotes the markets, and provides an opportunity for new and emerging local businesses to get their products in front of a larger audience.

The 2022 Farmers' Market Box schedule has a different market every two weeks and orders close one week before delivery day or when sold out.

- Guelph Farmers' Market. Delivery: Tuesday, June 7.
- Elora Farmers' Market. Delivery: Tuesday, June 21.
- Rockwood Farmers' Market. Delivery: Tuesday, July 5.
- Wellington North Farmers' Market. Delivery: Tuesday, July 19.
- Erin Farmers' Market. Delivery: Tuesday, August 2.
- Minto Farmers' Market. Delivery: Tuesday, August 16.
- Mapleton Farmers' Market. Delivery: Tuesday, August 30.
- Aberfoyle Farmers' Market. Delivery: Tuesday, September 13.

Farmers' Market Trail Passports are now available at each farmers' market, libraries, tourism outlets, and the Economic Development Office. Market-goers can collect a stamp each time they visit a different market for a chance to win a local food prize pack. The Trail will be featured as a key food tourism itinerary on the Great Taste of Ontario platform (beginning of June) and is a great way to draw locals and visitors to explore Wellington's outstanding communities. A copy can be requested on our website here <https://www.wellington.ca/en/business/tr-farmersmarkets.aspx> or by emailing ecdev@wellington.ca.

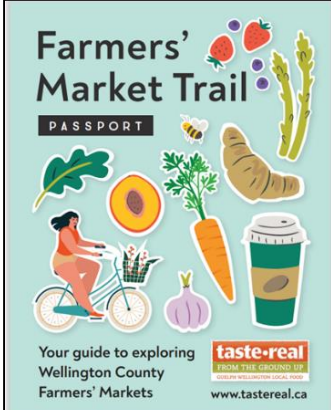


Market Box Series
DELIVERY

Explore our farmers' markets from home or surprise someone with a delicious gift!

Order curated market boxes delivered to your door this summer and fall. Each box features a different Wellington County and Guelph Farmers' Market.

For dates and details see www.tastereal.ca



Farmers' Market Trail
PASSPORT

Your guide to exploring Wellington County Farmers' Markets

taste-real
FROM THE GROUND UP
SUPPORTING WELLINGTON LOCAL FOOD

www.tastereal.ca

After two years, the **Spring Rural Romp** in Northern Wellington County returns as an in-person event on Saturday, May 28 from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. 13 farms, bakeries, and greenhouses are lined up to welcome visitors on this self-guided farm and food tour. The event focuses on creating strong business–consumer connections, educating the public about local food and agriculture, and encouraging the public to explore Wellington’s rural communities. <https://www.wellington.ca/en/business/tr-springruralromp.aspx>. A copy of the Spring Rural Romp map is included at the end of this report.



Taste Real Business Highlight - Silver Fox Distillery in Arthur, Ontario was named the 2022 U.S. Open Spirits’ Grand National Champion by winning an amazing six medals in the Spirits categories including 3 Gold Medals. Silver Fox Distillery became the first Canadian company to win the Grand National Champion’s Plaque in the 14-year history of the U.S. Open Championships. The distillery has won 26 Awards in North America in its first two years of business.

Attainable Housing

The Attainable Housing Campaign has continued to release additional social media and print advertisement. Staff have heard from members of the community sharing their personal stories of housing unattainability and their thanks for raising the profile of this community issue. We have also seen spirited public discussion and engagement within the social media platforms, signaling that a conversation is beginning to occur. Project information about the need for attainable housing, how the lack of diverse housing options impacts our community, and provides an information flyer, animated video, as well as community and business stories, are all available at www.wellington.ca/livehere.



The Township of Wellington North hosted a Growth, Housing and Development public information session on April 13 in Arthur. Economic development participated with a presentation about the Attainable Housing Campaign. The event was positive, and it was decided that the township will repeat the event on May 26 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the Mount Forest and District Sports Complex with the same format.

As we move forward with the attainable housing work, economic development staff will be working with planning to meet with each member municipality to discuss attainable housing in their community. This information will be presented back to the Attainable Housing Taskforce, to help guide the direction for the project.

Talent Attraction

In collaboration with Settlement Services, staff prepared a report from the results of the English Language Training Needs Assessment Survey. The survey was conducted from April 1 to 10 with the proposal of providing background information and justification for a request to Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Upper Grand District School Board for English Language Training support in Wellington County. The survey found that a significant number of new immigrants who come to live in the County experience language barriers, and often leave for other communities where they can access English language training. Barriers to obtaining training include access to childcare, transportation, access a computer and comfort with technology.

Funding Announcements

On April 29, the Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario announced local funding for projects.

\$10 million in funding is being directed to Innovation Guelph from FedDev Ontario to lead the delivery of the **i.d.e.a. Fund** in southwestern Ontario. The fund will target companies with a focus on agri-innovation, cleantech and advanced manufacturing in urban and rural communities. Additional details related to the fund and the application process can be found at www.idea-fund.ca.

\$2.6 million in funding was announced for the **Community Revitalization Fund** and the **Tourism Relief Fund**. About \$1.15 million of that funding is dedicated to projects in Wellington County and included:

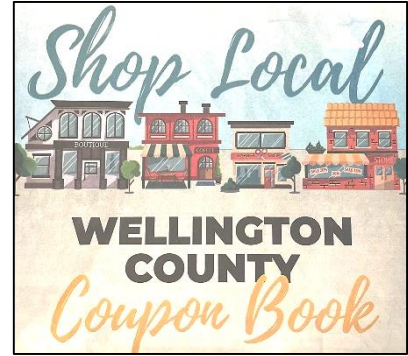
- \$65,335 for the Clifford Rotary Celebration Square, Town of Minto.
- \$750,000 for Rockmosa Park new outdoor pavilion and accessible washrooms in Guelph/Eramosa.
- 39,750 for Erin Agricultural Society, electrical infrastructure upgrades at the Erin Fairgrounds. As well as \$82,350 to enhance and expand the 2022 Erin Fall Fair.
- \$208,600 for new public washrooms at Hoffer Park, Elora in the Township of Centre Wellington.

Guelph projects include \$709,576 for the Guelph Farmers' Market, \$750,000 for Riverside Park, and \$15,000 for Guelph Hiking Rail Club downtown section of the Trans Canada Trail.

As part of Minister Jaczek's local visit a "Roundtable with Leaders from Guelph's Innovation" was held at the Guelph Chamber of Commerce with MP Lloyd Longfield, and staff from the County of Wellington, City of Guelph, University of Guelph, Wellington Waterloo Community Futures, Innovation Guelph, Bioenterprise and the Our Food Future office were in attendance. Discussion focused on the strengths, challenges, needs and opportunities facing the community and sectors as we come out of the pandemic and look ahead to recovery and growth.

Shop Local Campaign

The Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce lead a Shop Local Wellington County campaign in 2021 and into 2022. This campaign was support by Economic Development. We would like to share some highlights of the campaign from the Chamber and congratulate them on a successful project:



- Over 250,000 consumers reached through the various campaigns.
- 525 actively participating businesses.
- 172 resources developed – largely social media toolkit pieces.
- 100+ businesses participated in the coupon book and video profiles.
- 100+ submissions for our Put Your Money Where Your Heart Is, shop local campaign, with 20+ businesses donating prizes.
- \$90,000 spent locally on the marketing campaign.

Other Activities

- 41 enquires received from April 7 to May 6. Ride Well (17), Tourism (7), Taste Real (7), Business Directory (3), Business/General (2), Internet (2), Housing (1), CIP (1), Property Enquiry (1).
- Business e-Newsletter sent April 21.
- Taste Real e-Newsletter sent May 6.
- Tourism Directional Signage, 2022 signage will be installed in May.
- Economic Development division is working with the Communications team to activate the Crowdriff photo platform to retain and collect photo content of Wellington County.
- The team is in the process of applying for the Tourism Relief Fund (\$100,000) for an 'Experience Wellington' Tourism Strategy and exploring Cycle Tourism opportunities.
- Staff participated in RTO4 Workforce Development project.
- Christina is assisting the Town of Minto to attract beverage producers for Raleway Festival on June 25.
- Summer student Hailey Root joined the team on May 9.

Recommendation:

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal Ellis', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Crystal Ellis
Director of Economic Development