



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

**To:** Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee  
**From:** Justine Dainard, Smart Cities Project Manager  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 20, 2022  
**Subject:** **Smart Cities Office – September 2022 update**

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### **Background:**

Update on programmes within the Our Food Future project. This project has four overarching goals as it builds the circular economy in our region, with many partners co-creating actions to reach these goals.

### **GOAL: INCREASED ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOODS**

#### **Spark Grants – funding announcements**

This spring, Our Food Future opened applications for Spark Grants. A fund of \$50k was available to support projects which increased food access in our region. We received thirty-two applications, half of which were shortlisted. Eleven projects were chosen to receive funding, including four projects located in the County:

- Growing Healthy Rural Communities, Wellington North. Bringing people together to share and grow culturally relevant foods.
- Grassroots Collaboration from Seeds to Plate, Erin. A community group maintaining a seed library and creating opportunities to share information, classes, and community fridge.
- Growing Potential, Centre Wellington. A Big Brothers Big Sisters programme working with kids to grow, harvest and cook.
- Sageing Garden, Mapleton. Working with seniors to grow food in accessible ways.

Financial support for County-based project totals \$11,500. We also intend to maintain connections with these projects to connect them with future opportunities.

#### **Community Agriculture Grants – open now**

On Food Day Canada, the Community Agriculture Grants opened. A total of \$20k is available to fund up to 10 projects whose aim is to increase the number of places where food is grown. Applications are welcome until October 17; more information is available at [harvestimpact.ca/communityagchallenge](https://harvestimpact.ca/communityagchallenge).

#### **Seed Library Programming**

In partnership with Wellington County Library, Our Food Future is supporting programming to help residents learn more about saving and using seeds for food growing. Four different programmes are being offered at eight branches across the County during September. For more information, please see [www.wellington.ca/seedlibrary](https://www.wellington.ca/seedlibrary).

## GOAL: INCREASED VALUE FROM WASTE

### ICI Pilot update

The Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) green bin pilot is transitioning into the next phase. Following nine months of free waste collection and data gathering, participants will start to pay a subsidized pick-up fee, and a route plan with a self-sustaining business case will be formed. Additional large generators are being sought in order to offer more frequent collections.

### ZWETL Civic Innovation Challenge – open now

The Zero Waste Economic Transformation Lab (ZWETL) has launched a Civic Innovation Challenge, seeking a new business model to support waste materials separation during construction, renovation and demolition projects. A winner will be awarded \$15k to pilot a new system which results in less waste going to landfill. Challenge closes October 5, details are available at [coil.eco/zwetl](http://coil.eco/zwetl).

## GOAL: MORE CIRCULAR BUSINESSES

### COIL (Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad) activities

With a territory which currently extends across Southern Ontario, COIL's many programmes are serving companies of all sizes, at different levels of readiness. An update on the direction and growth of COIL is attached.

- **Co-Lab Challenge – deadline extended** The Circulate Co-lab funds teams of companies proposing new collaborations which lead to circular innovation. Successful teams receive \$20k to prototype their idea, and have a chance to win support for a year-long \$100k demonstration pilot. The deadline for applying has been extended to September 23. Information is available at [coil.eco/colab](http://coil.eco/colab).
- **COIL Activate – open now** Companies with a food and environment focus can apply with a project idea for funding between \$5,000-\$20,000. Support also includes mentorship and training in circular economy principles. Intake is open until Oct 18, and the six-month program will begin Nov 1, 2022.
- **Circular Leadership Programme, with Ivey Business School – opens soon** Welcoming companies from any sector who are beginning to learn how to transition towards a Circular Economy model. This programme will run January-June, 2023 and include a chance to win COIL funding of \$20k. Please see [coil.eco](http://coil.eco) for more details.

## GOAL: SYSTEM SHIFT

The first three goals of the Circular Food Economy should be secured through a shift in best practices and the ability to scale and reproduce our actions elsewhere. To achieve this, we invite opportunities to work with partners, speak at public events, and co-create templates.

### Experimental Acres Pilot

The Experimental Acres regenerative agriculture pilot has enjoyed its first summer season. Designed to provide an on-ramp to climate friendly farming practices, fifteen participants in both Wellington and Dufferin Counties are being supported while they try new rotational grazing, cover crop variations, or silvopasture techniques. A new promotional video and overview materials are available at [www.wellington.ca/ExperimentalAcres](http://www.wellington.ca/ExperimentalAcres).

A report on the pilot's first year will be brought to the Economic Development Committee in November. Recruiting for Year 2 participants will begin in late fall, and our next growing season will include the municipality of Grey County.

### **Soil Health Events**

- Our Food Future was a sponsor of the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association's Soil Day event on July 21. Held at Grand River Raceway, this was an informative day where participants learned about assessing healthy soils.
- On November 10, Jordan Grigg will be at the Royal Winter Fair's Education Symposium, speaking on the Future of Food panel.
- In partnership with the Greenbelt Foundation and Erin group Common Ground, we will be hosting a Soil and Economics event on November 23 at the Erin Legion.

Details and information about future events can be found at [www.wellington.ca/ExperimentalAcres](http://www.wellington.ca/ExperimentalAcres).

### **Climate and Circularity Solutions Hub**

To directly link our region's circular economy strategies with climate action, COIL is launching a new Climate and Circularity Solutions Hub. The Hub is being co-created in collaboration with the University of Guelph, Ivey Business School and CSA Group (formerly Canadian Standards Association), thanks to founding support of \$250k from Desjardins Ontario Credit Union. In addition, Smart Cities has been awarded \$100k from Scotiabank's Net Zero Research Fund to support a signature Hub project in agriculture, centered in Wellington County.

For more details, please see the attached COIL Update document.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Economic Development Committee receive the Smart Cities Office report for information

Respectfully submitted,



Justine Dainard  
Smart Cities Project Manager