



# 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, November 29, 2022  
**Subject:** **Smart Cities Office – November 2022 update**

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### **Background:**

Update on programmes within the Our Food Future project.

### **Experimental Acres**

Applications for the second year of the Experimental Acres Pilot in regenerative agriculture are now open. This pilot is designed to encourage a shift towards new practices which are focused on regenerating the soil health and biodiversity of their farm; it is also aligned with the targets of our Climate Change Mitigation Plan. Because these shifts in practice may take time to show the benefits, the pilot provides financial and social supports to help backstop the risk to the farmer.

For the 2023 growing season, both Dufferin and Grey Counties will participate with us. They will provide the financial support for any farmers located in their regions, and we will coordinate the programme while providing the social support and lab testing.

Applications will be open until the first week of January, and the online form can be found at [www.wellington.ca/ExperimentalAcres](http://www.wellington.ca/ExperimentalAcres).

### **Community Agriculture Grants**

Our Community Agriculture Challenge opened applications this summer and by mid-fall we received an excellent selection of applications, including several County-based projects. The review committee is currently deliberating, and the successful applicants will be offered support for the 2023 growing season.

### **COIL Activate**

A new cohort of businesses was accepted into the Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL) Activate programme last month. This programme is designed to help companies grow and scale in circular ways. COIL received a record number of applications, with a successful reach across Southern Ontario. There are currently thirty-six participating businesses, representing sectors from food to fashion to manufacturing. A quarter of these participants are local to Guelph-Wellington, and were considered extremely high quality applications; they will receive funding and financing, as well as mentorship, training and networking opportunities.

You can find out more information about COIL programmes at [coil.eco](http://coil.eco).

## Project Profile

It is the intent of the original funding that Smart Cities projects share what they learn, with the aim that lessons can be reproduced and scaled up across new regions. To that end, the team has had a busy fall with appearances around the world.

- Last month the Our Food Future project was recognized with a Special Mention award at the Milan Urban Food Pact Global Forum in Rio. This is an international accolade for the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional Food Rescue and Waste Diversion pilot which has been running in the County and City for the last year.
- In November, our outgoing Executive Director Barb Swartzentruber was asked to speak on a Canadian panel at the COP27 UN Climate Change Conference in Egypt. This panel also included Evan Fraser, Director of the Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph, and Jo-Anne St. Godard, Executive Director of the Circular Innovation Council.
- Members of Our Food Future were also invited to speak at the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona. As well as joining the delegation at the Canada Pavilion and meeting with city governments from around the world, we presented at two stage events.
- In December we will be presenting at an upcoming University of Guelph Arrell Food Institute event honouring their Highly Qualified Personal Scholarship Program.

## Annual Report

Our Food Future will be presenting an annual report to both the County and City councils in February. Previous annual reports remain available at our website: [www.foodfuture.ca](http://www.foodfuture.ca).

Recommendation:

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

Respectfully submitted,



Justine Dainard  
Smart Cities Project Manager