



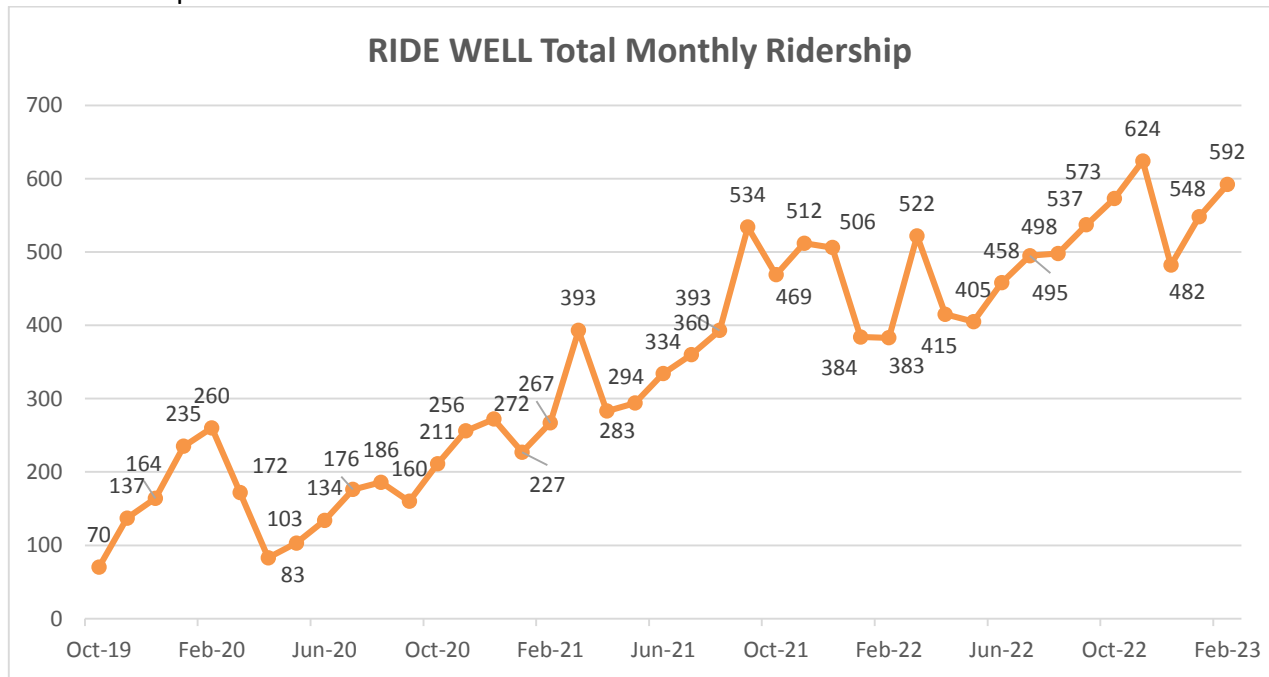
# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**To:** Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee  
**From:** Christina Mann, Manager of Economic Development  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023  
**Subject:** Economic Development Report

### Ride Well

Ride Well continues to grow and provide community-wide transportation. There were 592 rides in February, an increase of 44 rides over January. With only 19 operating days in February, this is a strong increase from January which had 22 operating days. The following graph outlines monthly total ridership of the service since launch:



Increased ridership in February resulted from more users accessing the service. The total number of users increased from 89 in January to 106 in February. There were also 29 new users in February, which is the highest monthly total of new riders since November 2019. Lastly, there was notable growth in the average rides per day from 25 in January to 31 in February. The following table provides a summary of performance.

Month	Rides/ Bookings	Passengers /Seats	Unique users	New users	Average rides per user	Average Rides Per Day	New accounts registered
December 2022	482	513	106	17	4.5	23	47
January 2023	548	567	89	16	6.2	25	62
February 2023	592	614	106	29	5.6	31	45

Two new part-time casual drivers were added to the Ride Well driver pool at the start of March. These drivers will fill in for the service when full-time drivers have unforeseen absences (i.e. illness, family matters) and planned absences (i.e. vacations, appointments). This will help maintain driver supply and reliability for customers moving forward.

### Community Improvement Programme

Before:



After:



Congratulations to Greystone Housing Inc for completing their Invest MORE project in downtown Rockwood. This project converted a previously vacant retirement home into a new mixed-use development with a physiotherapy business on the bottom floor and 4 new 2-bedroom rental units above.

### Taste Real

Taste Real collaborated with Our Food Future and the Guelph Box to create a 'Guelph Wellington Circular Box' highlighting local food and products from 9 different vendors who employ circular or sustainable practices in their operations. A total of 51 boxes were distributed on February 28, generating \$3,162.00 in revenue for these local businesses.

For the month of March, Taste Real's marketing efforts are geared towards seasonal promotions such as Maple Syrup producers and experiences and encouraging people to sign up for Community Supported Agriculture Farm Share programmes to support local farmers.





## 2023 Taste Real Events:

### Spring Rural

May 27 – Northern Wellington County

### Fall Rural Romp

September 30 – Southern Wellington County

### Feast On The Farm

October 1, 2 – Thatcher Farms

## Experience Wellington

Our [Winter Adventures campaign](#), highlighting outdoor and indoor winter activities and unique experiences offered by local businesses, saw 4,397 website pageviews from January 28 to March 14. The Winter Adventures map, created in partnership with the Planning Department, produced 5,409 views.

In collaboration with the Communications division, staff is preparing a Spring Experience Campaign set to launch in April. This campaign will feature a range of activities, including visits to greenhouses and gardening destinations, indoor experiences, such as theatre and dining, as well as Mother's Day activities and spring events.

Staff applied for the RTO 4 (Regional Tourism Organization 4) Partnership Programme. If approved, the Partnership funding will support the development of cycle tourism itineraries for Wellington County. This initiative builds upon the Cycle Tourism Assessment completed by Ontario By Bike in the fall of 2022.

## Housing

To showcase additional alternative housing options, staff are collaborating with Letter M Marketing to create a series of public-facing stories for online and print media. Specifically, these stories will feature real-life examples of County residents who have added Additional Residential Units (ARUs) to their existing homes and new builds, such as basement or garage apartments, granny/garden suites, and more. Staff will be collecting local examples through a social media call-out and introductions through community partners. According to registered building permit IDs, there are 319 ARUs in Wellington County as of June 2022.



## **Downtown Development**

To further support Downtown Development activities outlined in the 3-Year Plan, staff applied to the Rural Economic Development (RED) fund in collaboration with the Wellington Waterloo Community Futures Corporation. If successful, funding will support a coordinated effort to develop and/or support community-specific downtown revitalization priorities and develop a Destination Downtown marketing campaign.

## **Skilled Trades**

Staff continue to provide support as part of the organizing committee for the Trade Tracks Skilled Trade Event, hosted by the Southern Wellington Lions Club on May 5 and 6 at the Centre Wellington Community Sportsplex. Skilled Trades support falls directly in line with priorities outlined in the Economic Development 3-Year Plan and as such, the County is dedicating \$5,000 for the specific implementation of this event.

## **Healthcare Workforce Attraction**

The Talent Attraction Coordinator met with the Township of Centre Wellington and the Centre Wellington Healthcare Alliance (Groves Memorial Hospital specifically) to discuss healthcare workforce needs as a committee. Research and outreach activities have been taking place to understand what neighbouring regions and counties are doing to address the workforce challenge. This has resulted in establishing relationships with the Guelph-Wellington Health Workforce, and Ontario Health Team, both of which are provincial health task forces set up to help rural healthcare providers and hospitals with current trends and information to support their recruitment efforts.

The Township of Centre Wellington has extended its support by offering office space at 205 Queen Street East, to be used as medical practices offices. Other recommendations include considering an old farmhouse on Gartshore Street, Fergus as potential accommodation for physicians and primary care doctors. The County will be working towards strategizing and taking action on initiatives to attract healthcare workforce by way of promoting practice opportunities in Wellington County. The working committee will reconvene at the end of this month to further discuss next steps and clarify our roles as municipalities.

Given the healthcare crisis is a nationwide crisis, non-traditional methods of meeting workforce needs are being tapped into, such as pre-arrival services, and healthcare connection programmes. These free-of-cost programmes (funded by IRCC) connect healthcare employers with immigrants seeking positions in non-regulated healthcare professions before they land in Canada. They also bridge immigrants seeking employment in healthcare with non-regulated professions while they are pursuing licensure. A relationship has been established with one such service provider, Access Employment.



Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada



Visit us online for more information:

[acesemployment.ca/healthcare-connections](https://acesemployment.ca/healthcare-connections)





## Healthcare Connections

Healthcare Connections supports internationally educated, healthcare professionals in securing non-licensed employment in the broader healthcare sector. Program participants will learn a range of job-seeking strategies, build the necessary skillsets to translate their healthcare experience into non-licensed roles and are regularly connected with sector-specific employers.

**Healthcare Connections has two streams:**



**Health Systems:** Receive guidance to transition into careers within pharmaceuticals, healthcare administration and clinical research.



**Community Health:** Take part in rigorous training from Centennial College, PSHSA and LAMP CHC to transition to careers that build healthy communities by pursuing employment in community health centres, public health, non-profit health organizations and other employers.



## International Students

In-depth meetings have taken place with the Economic Development team of Sarnia Lambton to understand the working model of how they have bridged international students with local jobs, and how this programme could be adapted for Wellington County. Conestoga College's Talent Development and Career Services is interested in partnering with the County to further explore the potential of international students as an untapped workforce locally.



Staff will lead a Table Topic Discussion about hiring international students at the Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce's business breakfast on March 29 to gather information and perspectives directly from local employers. All data collected will help to inform future funding proposals, as they become available.

## Multicultural Festival

Planning has started for the County's first Multicultural Festival, taking place on September 17 at the Wellington County Museum and Archives. The event will showcase a traditional outfits parade, and various cultural performances in allyship with newcomers, immigrants, and existing community members.

## Newcomer Success Stories

This talent attraction social media campaign features immigrant/newcomer success stories in Wellington County. The purpose of the campaign is to spotlight Wellington County as a place where individuals from different racialized backgrounds work or/and live and have successfully established themselves. Efforts are currently being directed toward recruiting businesses and individuals to participate in this campaign.

**Other Activities**

- Staff contributed content and data for the 2023 Budget Book
- Christina presented at the Guelph Tourism Workshop (open to County Businesses) about Tourism Product Development on February 15
- James delivered a Ride Well presentation at the Active Living and Retirement Show in Fergus on February 24
- Christina participated in a pan-regional tourism group meeting with representatives from Halton and Peel Region, and Dufferin County on February 28
- Staff have been supporting the Erin Open During Construction Group during the Big Dig
- OMAFRA hosted the Community Economic Development 101 training for councillors, community members, and staff from Wellington County and Member Municipalities at the WCMA on March 6
- Staff participated in Wellington County Agri-Food System Study Focus Groups on March 7
- Councillor Duncan and staff met with the local Fed Dev Ontario representative on March 9
- An all-staff meeting was held on March 10 to discuss departmental priorities for 2023
- Staff met with Over Here Community Arts Adventure group based in Hillsburgh on March 13
- In Business News e-newsletter sent January 17, February 17
- Taste Real e-newsletter sent February 13, with special Food Box bulletin sent February 21
- 62 enquiries received from January 11 to March 14, including: Smart Cities (15), Taste Real, Partnership and Events (8), Ride Well (8), Business/Financial Support (7), General Tourism (6), Business Directory (5), Brochures (4), Funding/Promotion/Connections (2), General Information (2), Housing/Internet (2), Land (2), and BR+E (1)

**Recommendation:**

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

Respectfully submitted,



Christina Mann  
Manager of Economic Development