



# 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, April 25, 2023  
**Subject:** Smart Cities Office – April 2023 update

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**Background:** Update on programmes within the Our Food Future project.

### Circular Cities and Regions Initiative

The County of Wellington and City of Guelph are partner participants in the current cohort of [Circular Cities and Regions](https://canadiancircularcities.ca) (canadiancircularcities.ca). This initiative is a cross-Canada circular accelerator for local governments. Staff have been offered webinars and resources since the launch in September 2022, and last month attended an in-person workshop. The workshop was led by Circle Economy Consulting team from the Netherlands, who will synthesize our feedback into a customized Opportunity Roadmap for our consideration.

### Recognition of Expertise

The Smart Cities Our Food Future project has created a network of partners which is now looked to for its expertise in Circular Economy practices. Staff are being invited to contribute to teaching and speaking opportunities both locally and around the world. Some of these opportunities include:

#### Canadian Circular Economy Summit

Organized by Circular Economy Leadership Canada (CELC), the 2023 Canadian Circular Economy Summit will be held in Toronto June 19-20. This Summit will bring together leaders and champions across multiple sectors. Our Food Future staff have been asked to contribute to the design and presentation of the **Advancing Regenerative, Net-Zero Agri-food Sector** session of the Summit, thanks to our experience in creating supports for regenerative agriculture. Registration and information will be available at [circulareconomyleaders.ca/2023-canadian-circular-economy-summit](https://circulareconomyleaders.ca/2023-canadian-circular-economy-summit).

#### GreenBiz Circularity 23 Event

Taking place in Seattle WA June 5-7, this annual event regularly brings together over 1200 leaders and practitioners across industry sectors. Our Food Future staff have been asked to speak on the **Building a Regional, Circular Food System** panel alongside the Cities of Vancouver and Seattle. Information about this event can be found at [www.greenbiz.com/events/circularity/2023](https://www.greenbiz.com/events/circularity/2023).

#### World Circular Economy Forum 2023

The World Circular Economy Forum is an annual global event which this year will take place from May 30 to June 2 in Helsinki, Finland. Our Food Future has been asked to join the speakers of the **Regenerating Nature with the Circular Economy** plenary chaired by the Ellen MacArthur

Foundation. Viewers around the world can register for free online participation here: <https://wcef2023.com>.

### **University of Guelph SMART Summer School**

As last year, Our Food Future staff have been asked to join the expert panel at the SMART Training Platform Summer School at the University of Guelph. This week-long event brings graduate students from across Canada together to hone interdisciplinary approaches to complex real-world challenges. For more information, see <https://smart-training.ca/summer-school>.

### **Arrell Food Institute - Loblaw Net-Zero Food Systems Challenge**

A new initiative at the University of Guelph, this programme will bring together graduate students from across Canada to examine challenges in the food value chain. Our Food Future staff have been asked to present during a workshop as well as continue to offer mentorship throughout the course of study. More information can be found at <https://arrellfoodinstitute.ca/net-zero-challenge>.

These speaking engagements are recognition that our region has become a leader in the kind of preparation and support the agri-food system requires to build the business models of the future.

### **ICI Organic Waste Pilot**

The Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional organic waste pilot which has been running the green bin pickup at business locations in Guelph and Wellington is moving into a new phase. Over the next few months, we will see a report on the success of the pilot to date, as well as active recruitment of additional participants along existing routes. Businesses between Guelph and Arthur which produce significant food waste – such as grocery stores or care homes – are encouraged to contact the Smart Cities Office.

We are pleased to announce that this pilot has been nominated for a Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce Award of Excellence, in the category of Environmental Excellence. Having local recognition of the impact of this work is an important measure of success for the Smart Cities Office.

This pilot has also seen success on a wider scale, with the City of Calgary hosting the next iteration of this food waste pilot (<https://circularinnovation.ca/foodwastepilots/>). Working with local partners in Alberta, the pilot will build on what we learned in our region and bring the benefits of waste reduction and food rescue to an even larger region, proving the success of this model for making change.

### **Rural Broadband**

The Broadband Speed Test Campaign ([www.wellington.ca/Internet](http://www.wellington.ca/Internet)) has seen early success in encouraging residents to test the speed of their connectivity or to report problems in accessing connectivity. Since the campaign began in March over 1,400 tests have been run in the County – a huge increase in engagement (Figure 1).

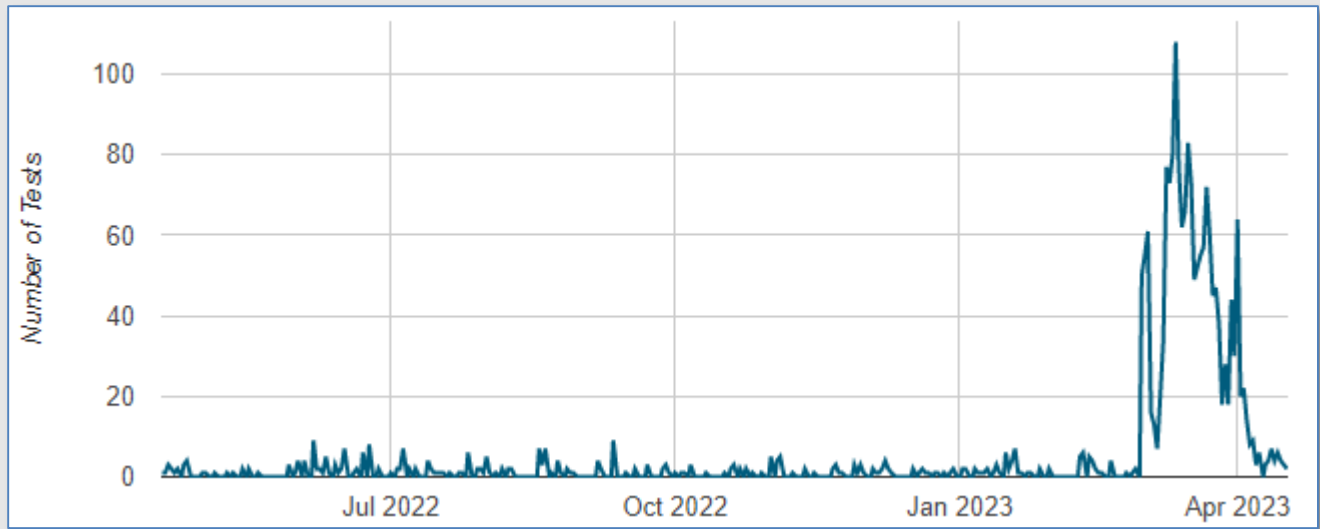


Figure 1: Number of speed tests in Wellington County over the past year (image: cira.ca)

Over the past five years, median download speeds recorded through these tests have increased on average from 3.83 megabits per second (Mbps) in 2018 to 24.91 Mbps in 2022; however, this is still only half of the CRTC’s national connectivity standard of 50 Mbps.

Gathering this data is an important tool for understanding where we still lack strong connectivity options. We will be continuing our Speed Test Campaign to support our advocacy for better internet.

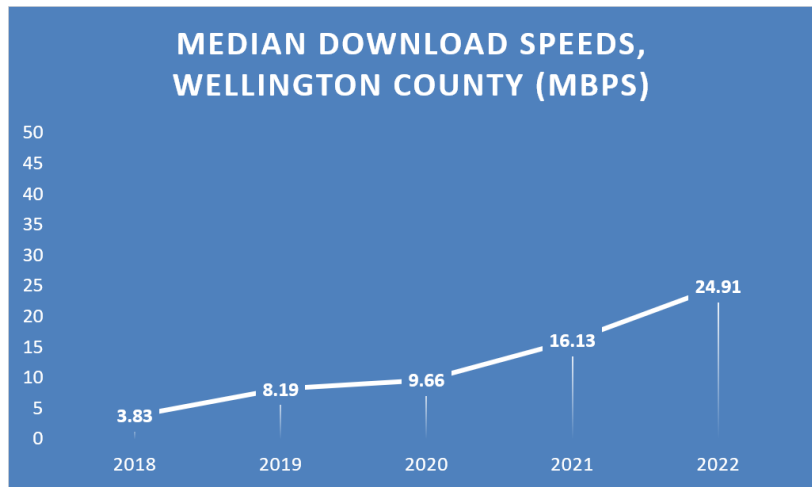


Figure 2: Five-year trend of median download speed

### Smart Cities Project Transition

The Our Food Future project is in its last year of funding under the Infrastructure Canada Smart Cities grant. County staff from Economic Development, Solid Waste Services, and Social Services have been meeting to review elements of success and to determine where continued action could benefit local businesses and residents and align with County services. Individual Councillors will also be contacted for input as a transition plan is formed.

### Recommendation:

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

Justine Dainard  
Smart Cities Project Manager