



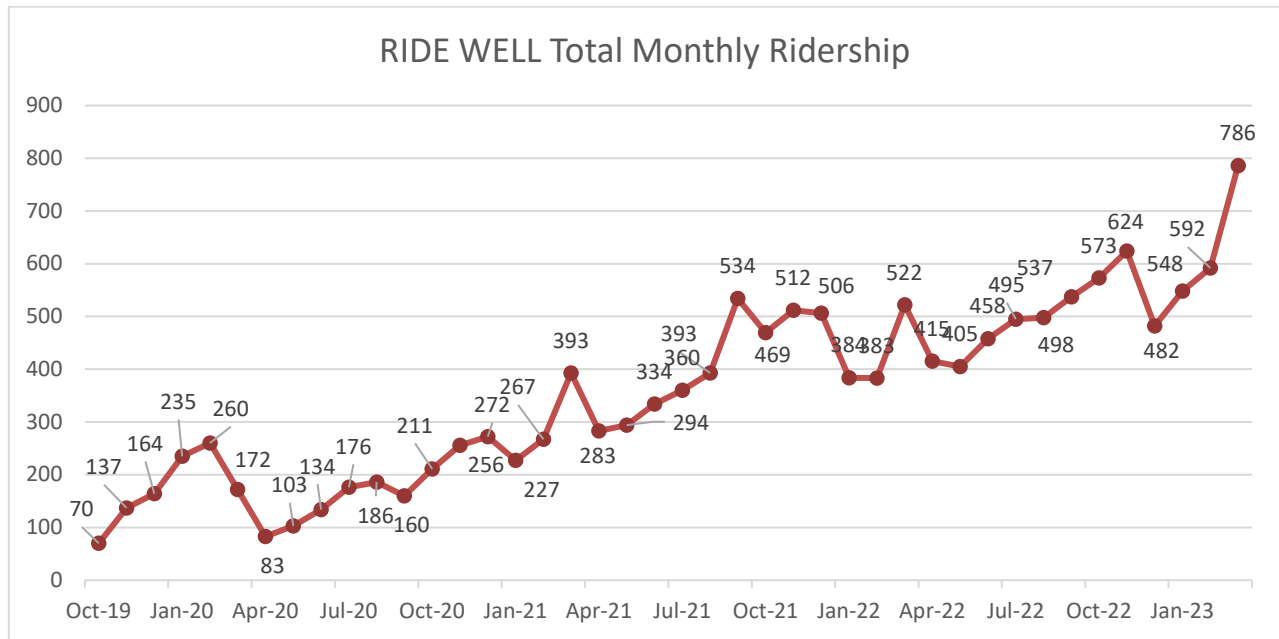
COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee
From: Christina Mann, Manager of Economic Development
Date: Tuesday, April 25, 2023
Subject: Economic Development Report

Ride Well

In March, Ride Well reached a milestone by completing 786 rides, surpassing the previous monthly record of 624 rides in November 2022. The service witnessed a month-to-month increase of 194 more rides, marking the highest increase to date. The chart below illustrates the monthly total ridership since inception:



More individuals used the service in March compared to the previous month, with 120 individual users accessing the service, up from 106. Additionally, the average number of rides per user increased from 5.6 to 6.6. While there were 20 new users in March, this was a decrease from the 29 new users in February. See the table below for a summary of the quarterly performance:

Month	Rides/Bookings	Passengers/Seats	Unique users	New users	Average rides per user	Average Rides Per Day	New accounts registered
January 2023	548	567	89	16	6.2	25	62
February 2023	592	614	106	29	5.6	31	45
March 2023	786	821	120	20	6.6	34	69

An updated list of the top locations visited by individual users in the previous month is in the following chart:

Locations	Pickup	Drop-off
Walmart Supercentre (Fergus)	12	10
Guelph Central Station (Transit)	4	5
Tim Hortons	3	3
FreshCo	3	2
Groves Memorial Community Hospital	1	4
Stone Road Mall	1	4

The chart above indicates that customers are still relying on the service for essential trips like grocery shopping or commuting to work. However, a rise in travel to the Guelph Central Station can be observed, which suggests that customers may be transferring to GO Transit or Guelph Transit. The data also shows an increase in trips to medical centers and physician offices during Q1 2023, which could be linked to a rise in seniors utilizing our service. In March, we provided rides to 180 seniors, which is 60 more than the previous month.

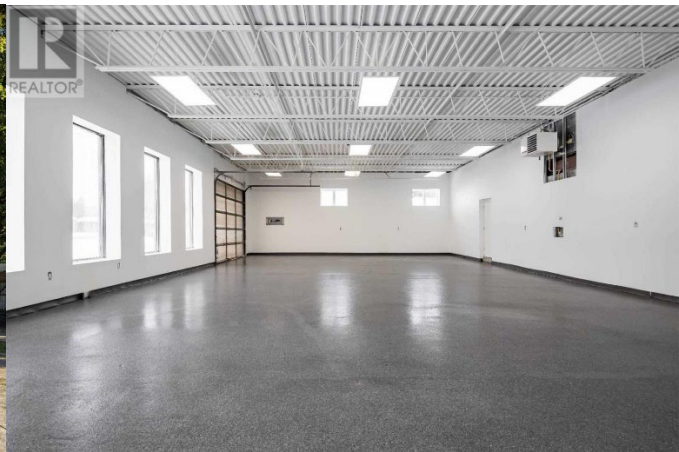
Community Improvement Programme

Congratulations to Excel Fine Cars in Erin for successfully completing their Invest MORE CIP project. Excel Fine Cars was approved for \$7,500 to reconstruct their roof and renovate the interior of the business.

Before:



After:



Taste Real



Fourteen farm and food locations have signed up to participate in the **Spring Rural Romp** held on Saturday, May 27, from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. The one-day farm and food tour showcases local foods available in Mapleton, Minto and Wellington North and educate consumers about local agriculture. The Rural Romp is a popular event with locals and attracts tourists to Northern Wellington County for the day.

The **Taste Real Farmers' Market Trail** is making a comeback this season, with an updated 'passport' available at markets from mid-May onwards. Market goers and tourists are encouraged to experience the various farmers' markets in Wellington County and Guelph and collect stamps for a chance to win a market prize pack. The Trail aims to promote visiting multiple communities in Wellington County throughout the summer, while encouraging visitors to explore local attractions and downtowns along the way.



The quarterly Taste Real feature in Toque Magazine's March edition highlights Silverfox Distillery in Arthur and Top Ten Late Winter Adventures, including visits to Maple Syrup farms, hiking and indoor experiences in Wellington County.

Experience Wellington

Based on the Economic Development 3 Year Action Plan and the Experience Wellington Tourism Strategy, staff have prioritized the following initiatives for this year:

- Updating the Experience Wellington website by adding more tourism businesses.
- Supporting product development opportunities.
- Partnering with relevant organizations to provide workshops and learning opportunities for tourism operators.
- Developing a tourism business mailing list to communicate relevant opportunities.
- Continuing with seasonal experience marketing, and festival and events promotion.
- Redeveloping the Wellington County Visitor Map.

Skilled Trades

Staff actively support the Centre Wellington Community Lions in organizing the Trade Tracks skilled trades event. The event will be held at the Centre Wellington Community Sportsplex on May 5 and 6. To promote this event, a series of radio ads and a social media campaign is currently underway through County channels. Economic Development staff will provide onsite support during the event and the County Roads Division is planning a significant on-site display to showcase trades opportunities available at the County.

International Students

The Talent Attraction Coordinator led a Tabletop Discussion at the Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce Business Breakfast about the potential of hiring international students. The discussion included a diverse group of local businesses and revealed challenges, including a lack of knowledge about where to start with hiring, concerns about overqualification, and confusion about legal regulations. The findings will inform future efforts in bridging international students with local employers in collaboration with local post-secondary institutions.



Newcomer Support

The intake process for the Immigrant/Newcomer Success Stories campaign has commenced, and staff have received confirmation of participation from 15 individuals across the County thus far. To ensure that participants feel comfortable sharing their personal stories, interview protocols have been developed.

Healthcare Talent Attraction

Staff participate in the Groves Memorial Hospital (GMH) healthcare attraction committee, along with representatives from the Township of Centre Wellington. The committee aims to support physician attraction by providing accommodation and office space for locums, create incentive packages, and create a recruitment marketing campaign.

Other Activities:

- Christina participated in the Elora Fergus Tourism Steering Committee meeting on March 27 and the Product Development Subcommittee Meeting on April 6.
- Staff participated in the Centre Wellington Strategic Planning Sessions on March 30.
- The Wellington Economic Development Group meeting was held on April 4. See minutes attached herein.
- Councillor Bulmer, Councillor Seeley, Economic Development and Planning Staff met with Royal City Science on April 13 to discuss a proposal for a Southwestern Ontario Science Centre location in Puslinch.
- Jasmine Nanda started as the new Economic Development Officer at the Wellington Waterloo Community Futures Development Corporation on April 1.
- Gabby Andres started as the new Economic Development Assistant on April 12.
- Staff consulted with the Hillsburgh Library Branch regarding potential summer events.
- Staff provided a letter of Support for the Guelph Wellington Seniors Association to conduct a needs assessment in both the City of Guelph and Wellington County to work towards an Age-Friendly Community.
- Staff provided marketing materials and gift baskets for the following events:
 - o Transition Guelph's Resilience Festival and Seedy Saturday
 - o National Home Show in Toronto
 - o Erin Mayor's Breakfast
- The Municipal World April edition featured an article by Jessie McGibbon about the County's Taste Real programme.
- Christina was featured as one of eight changemakers in Toque Magazine's March edition.
- In Business News e-newsletter sent March 22.
- 59 enquiries received from March 14 to April 18, including: Ride Well (9), Brochures (8), Taste Real Partnerships/Events (7), Smart Cities (5), General (5), Business Directory (5), Business Support (4), Event Support/Information (4), CIP (3), Newsletters (2), BR+E (2), Signage (1), Cycling (1), Housing (1), Job Board (1), Volunteer Opportunities (1).

Recommendation:

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

Respectfully submitted,



Christina Mann
Manager of Economic Development