

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2025, the Economic Development team delivered programmes and initiatives to support local businesses and promote Wellington County as a great place to live, work, and invest. These efforts align with the strategic priorities of the 2023 to 2025 Three-Year Economic Development Action Plan.

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E)

A core focus of economic development, BR+E supports local businesses by helping them grow, create jobs, and remain in Wellington County. Our team provides direct support through meetings, communication, and networking to understand challenges and connect businesses with available resources.

2025 Highlights: Created a Tariff and Trade Resource for businesses, hosted regular tariff meetings, enhanced business events calendar, presented at business breakfasts, sent business e-newsletters, and supported two BR+E projects led by member municipalities.

125
BR+E interviews



supported BR+E projects in
Minto and Wellington North

\$175,000

Municipal BR+E Implementation Funds

distributed to 7 member municipalities, leveraging a total investment
of **\$326,372** in municipal economic development initiatives



Community Improvement Programme (CIP)

In partnership with member municipalities, CIP grants support business projects that enhance the community. Eligible projects include facade improvements, business renovations, housing or rental unit development, tourism-related enhancements, on-farm diversification, manufacturing, and pre-development studies.

2025 Highlights: County CIP contributions increased by 44% year-over-year.



9

**Community
Improvement
Projects**

approved for a total value of
\$92,500

leveraging private investment of
\$644,000

Workforce Development

Attracting, retaining, and developing a skilled workforce is essential to business success. The Economic Development team collaborates with newcomer organizations, workforce agencies, and educational institutions to connect individuals with learning, skill-building, and networking opportunities.

2025 Highlights: Engaged with the Workforce Planning Board's employer engagement initiatives and the Career Education Council's job fairs, supported youth employment/entrepreneurship programmes, attended newcomer receptions, hosted the annual Multicultural Festival, ran a Welcoming Week campaign, developed employer and job seeker brochures, and facilitated the creation of workforce videos.



900 Attendees
for the third annual Wellington
County Multicultural Festival



2,500 Attendees
participated in the Trade Tracks
Skilled Trade Showcase



750 Participants
at the North Wellington
Works Job Fair



61 Youth
supported through
Student Start Up
Entrepreneurial Programming

Rural Transportation

Evolving rural transportation options across Wellington County remains a focus for the Economic Development team. The Ride Well Programme provides a door-to-door ride-sharing service across Wellington County and to/from the City of Guelph. The project graduated from a pilot phase to a permanent programme, with steady increase in ridership.

2025 Highlights: Increase vehicle availability and launch of accessible van, including priority booking option for passengers with mobility aids. Participation in the Centre Wellington's transit study and the multi-County transit study with Grey, Dufferin, and Bruce Counties to evaluate the feasibility of a unified transit network across the entire region.



11,326
rides



11,925
passengers

Serviced by Ride Well

27% of all rides
were shared

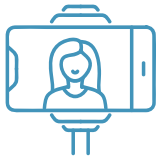


Tourism and Taste Real (Shop Local)

Encouraging shopping local and positioning Wellington County as a visitor destination to drive economic activity and community pride.



2025 Highlights: Launched Thrift Store Trail, created seasonal marketing campaigns including the "Top Things To Do in Wellington County This Week" initiative promoting the event calendar, refreshed the Taste Real Local Food Map, published the Farmers' Market Trail passport, facilitated the Wellington Farmers' Market group, hosted two Rural Romp events, and led collaborative projects with the GRCA.



7 Influencer
Videos Produced



105,305
Views Generated



68 Participants attended
the Tourism Media
Networking Workshop



204
Taste Real Partners



36 Farm and Food
businesses
participated in the Rural Romp



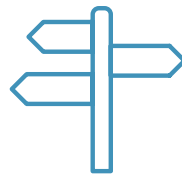
453
Farmers' Market
Boxes distributed



\$32,475
generated in revenue
for local businesses



10 Online
Campaigns
promoting seasonal experiences
and shopping local



27 Businesses
participating
in the Wellington County
Tourism Signage Programme

Tourism and Taste Real (Shop Local) continued



1 **New Tourism Trail**
developed: Thrift Store

2 **Downtown FAM**
Tours hosted



8 **Tourism Information Panels**
displayed at Grand River
Conservation Areas

Smart Cities Office

Born from the Our Food Future project, this office continues to focus on supporting agriculture, internet expansion, food access, and a circular economy. Connecting knowledge, skills and community support systems for businesses and residents, the circular economy approach creates new ways for everyone to thrive.

2025 Highlights: Increased participation in the Experimental Acres programme, created a circular economy tourism initiative, mapped food access partnerships, launched a Farm Succession Planning project, including online toolkits, printed hand book, and workshop series.



25 **Attendees**
Farm Succession
Planning Workshop



12 **Experimental**
Acres farms



1 **EDCO Award of**
Excellence
for the Experimental Acres project



75 **Succession**
Planning
Handbooks distributed

Communications and Outreach

The Economic Development Division connects businesses, stakeholders, and the public with resources, programmes, and information while promoting Wellington County's economic and community assets. The team responds to daily enquiries about County programmes, investment opportunities, and tourism and actively engages in events and meetings to share information.

2025 Highlights: Actively promoted Wellington County and its businesses and assets through social media, brochures, radio, print, and online advertising and e-newsletters. New website and effective marketing activities increased web traffic to EcDev pages by 78% and business directory views by 174%.



6 different print brochures and marketing materials developed



52,250

printed for ongoing distribution



30 e-newsletters sent



7,564 e-newsletter subscribers



360,015 visits to Economic Development website pages



4,273 Businesses listed in Business Directory



175,113 Directory views



21 Community events attended or provided materials for display



1,258 Enquires from the public



8 Speaking engagements