



# MERCANTILE

Wheatland County Food Initiative

#infinitewc #wcmercantile





## Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan

The Wheatland County Economic Development Strategy, adopted in November of 2018 and was followed up with an implementation plan in the following year. With both of these completed, the economic development division designed and completed the WC brand for the entire Community and Development Services department. The brand tells the story of the process of responsible development within Wheatland County. In economic development, the deployment of its process has a design within six channels.

The channels are developed in the order of brand, sector focus, investment readiness, business retention & expansion (BR&E), investment readiness and visitation. The sections are grouped into three groupings of brand, fundamentals and marketing. The brand is brand and a necessary first step. The second step, which is the fundamental group, contains sector focus, investment readiness and BR&E. Marketing is investment attraction and visitation, which is done once the other two sections are developed out.

Initiative development, such as the WC Mercantile, would have a similar flow where applicable in its design with brand, then fundamentals and followed by marketing.



## Project Design of the WC Mercantile

### The “why”

**Currently, Wheatland County does not have a comprehensive database of agriculture producers and processors in the region, nor does it have a database of the regional market of Calgary for the other side of the agriculture value chain. The concept of the WC Mercantile initiative is to compile this complete value chain database and work on supporting the entire chain as a regional economic development initiative.**

**With this knowledge base, we can then work at enhancing the industry sector to encourage agriculture market development and investment in Wheatland County. Wheatland County’s most prominent industry is agriculture. Ensuring its vitality through economic development support is the primary reason the WC Mercantile initiative was developed as the first tertiary brand within the Economic Development division under the WC department brand in Wheatland County.**

### The Design

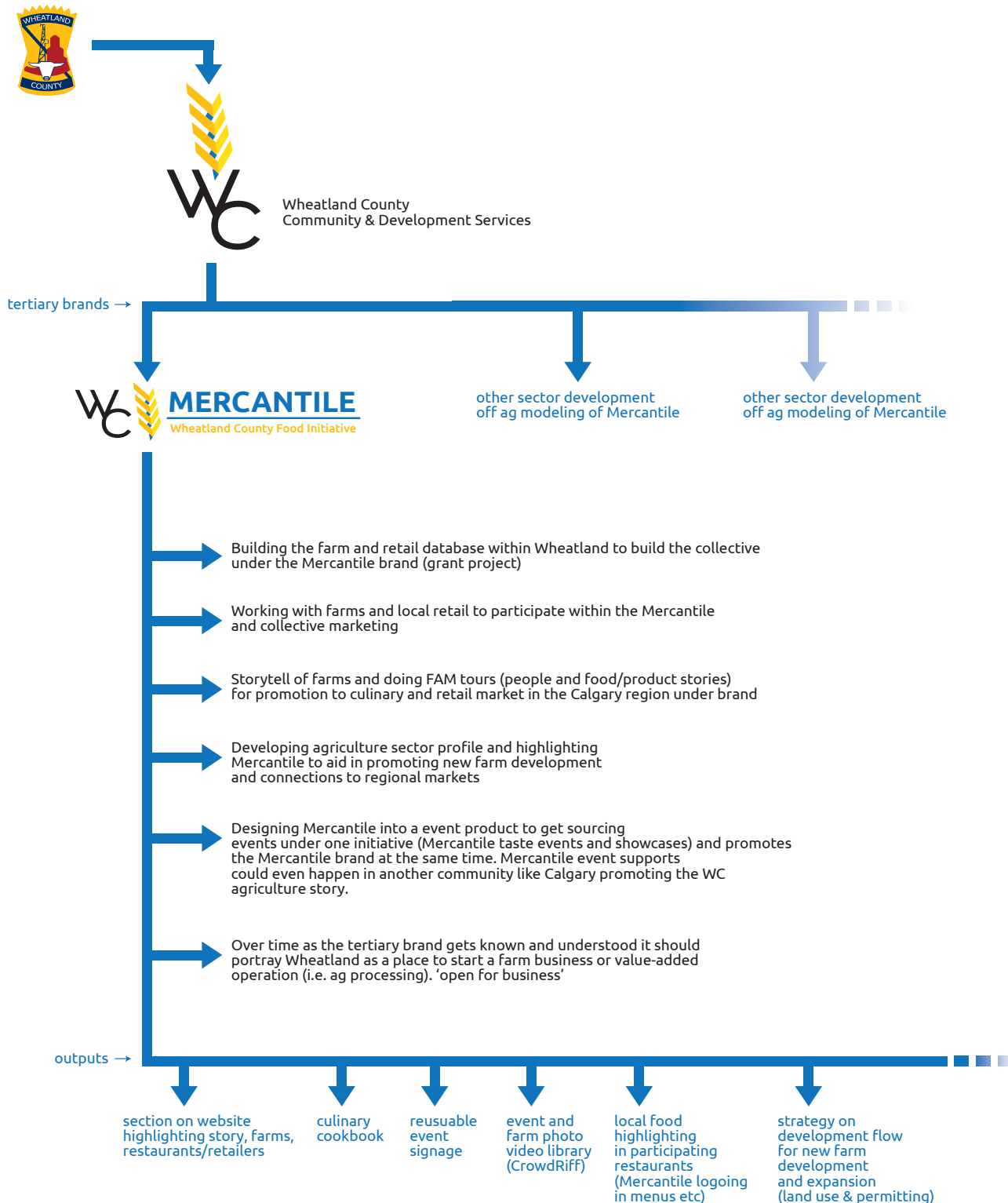
The project design of the WC Mercantile is to assist the agricultural sector in Wheatland County in support of connecting into the Calgary region initially, and beyond once the initiative matures. On the flip side, the WC Mercantile will also highlight Wheatland County as a rich agricultural region to invest in a startup or expand an agriculture operation. The WC Mercantile provides promotion and an integrated value chain network to market and/or process the products an operation wishes to produce.

The WC Mercantile fundamentally is a network of the agriculture value chain in Wheatland County from production, processing to final sale with a system of marketing product along the entire value chain from farm, through processing to final sale.

Activities throughout the life of the WC Mercantile are building the network, marketing the source Wheatland farms & processors to each other in the network and then to the retailers, restaurants and consumers that would purchase the final products.

Several implementation actions to make the initiative work will be identifying and connecting industry within the value chain, building a database and then connecting them. Through connectivity, work at getting industry within the value chain to find synergies to refine agricultural products and a market to sell to in the first phase region, the Calgary region.

The WC Mercantile brand will aid in marketing this effort to the retailer and consumer for purchase. As the brand builds awareness through marketing, the value chain can leverage the brand for their own needs of self-promotion and partner with other producers, processors, restaurants and retailers. They can also showcase their products through events such as farm tours, processor tours, culinary experiences etc. to their stakeholders.



## The WC Mercantile Brand within the WC Brand

Sometimes there are initiatives with a hyper-focus. These initiatives require a little more detail within the core brand. Similar to a particular product brand under a large corporation, tertiary brands (sub-brands) would exist under this brand. The WC Mercantile would fit in this design.

The elements and activities of the WC Mercantile is a primary one with a large amount of marketing, which has a slightly different tone to engage the stakeholders we attempting to make a call of action and engagement we desire.

Over time, other new initiatives will develop other tertiary brands within the core WC brand and designed to speak to those initiative targets in different economic sectors or stakeholder groups.

Visually the WC Mercantile identity will look very similar to the visual identity of the WC. Its flavour of imagery and tone used will tie to the message of the WC Mercantile and stay within the WC overall tone.

The ultimate goals of the WC Mercantile are to network and showcase the agriculture value-chain within Wheatland County. With this collective concept, market all of it to the end of the value chain to retailers and consumers. Working together with stakeholders in the value chain, we can better communicate with the industry in the region to promote efficiencies, export readiness through the collective chain and market more efficiently as a sector group to markets.

The enhanced value for support of the WC Mercantile by the value chain would be gathering industry experts to aid in educating farms and processors in Wheatland County. These experts would specialize in market development, business optimization, succession planning, investment for expansion through planned workshops. This knowledge and expertise would also be collected and available through the WC Mercantile for the initiative's partners. The complete value chain database would also be accessible to producers, processors, retailers, restaurants, experts and buyers. It will highlight the agriculture operations with available product and investment opportunities to support the value chain.

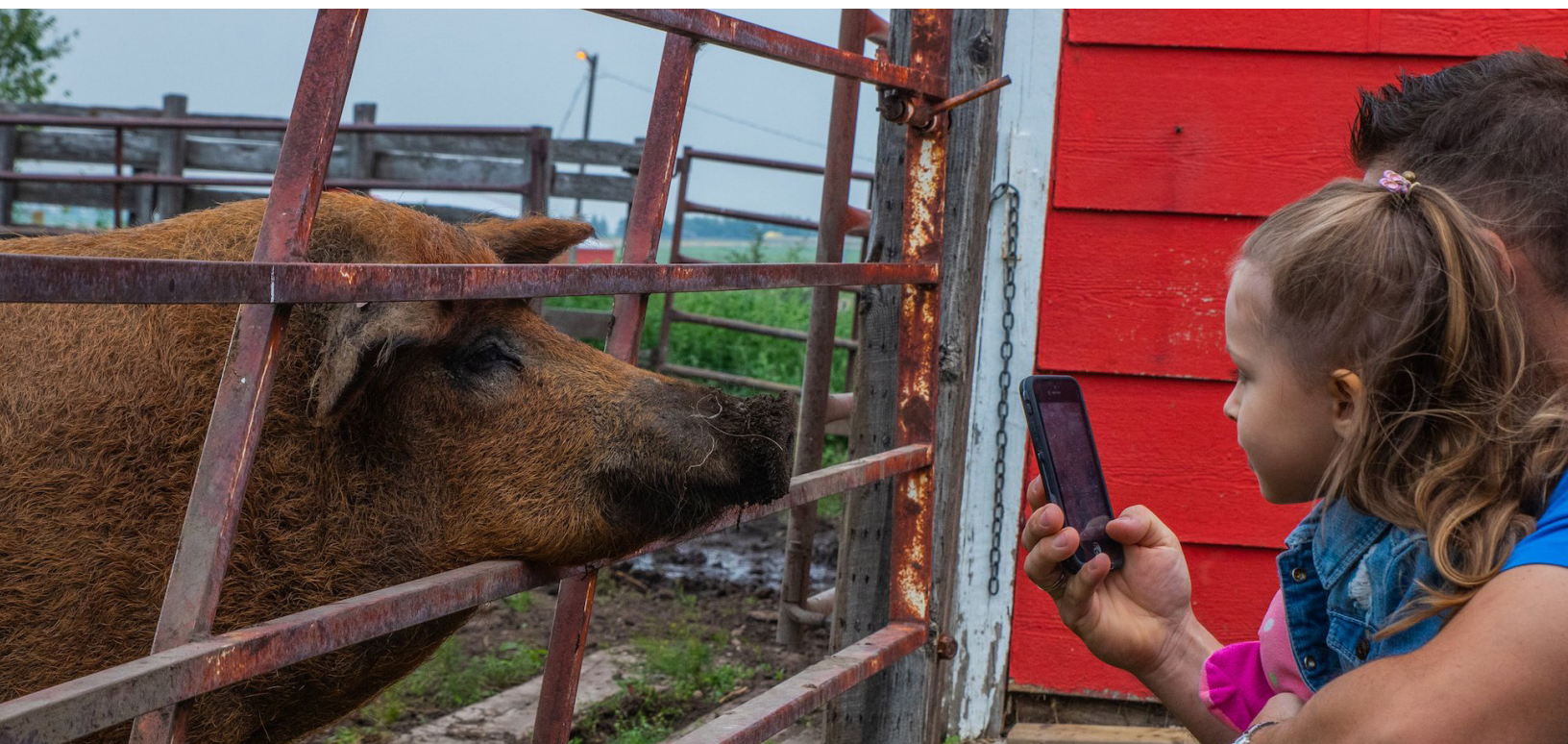
Upon the successful development of the WC Mercantile, the intent is to migrate this model to other industry sectors to aid in growing them as well; to improve the diversification of the economic activities in the Wheatland region.

## Implementation Plan

The WC Mercantile is currently having its deployment designed to roll out in the summer of 2020. The initiative is being laid-out into a grant proposal hosted through Community Futures Wild Rose and the Western Economic Diversification Rural Opportunity Fund to assist in the launch of the WC Mercantile. It will also help in network development into the culinary and retail market in Calgary through familiarization tours within Wheatland County. Within the grant, submission is a comprehensive two-year implementation plan.

If the grant is not possible, then connecting into the end part of the value-chain will take a little longer to do. The summer of 2020 will see the launch of the initiative regardless and development of workshops and build the farm and processor database within the Wheatland region. The WC Mercantile will be the sub-brand to highlight the activity and value-chain of agriculture to expand awareness for farms, processors and sales of product that all stakeholders in the Wheatland region can utilize. They can use the WC Mercantile as a support for marketing, networking and connecting to agriculture stakeholders outside of the region through the economic development division. Similar to how tourism operations can use CrowdRiff and the WC to promote their operations. CrowdRiff is also available to assist in the WC Mercantile stakeholders as well.

Regardless of the success of the grant application, the WC Mercantile will launch this summer and efforts into the database development will happen as well as an online directory and workshops to assist farms, processors and retailers and consumers. We will continue growing the initiative through working at sponsored promotional events and tours to build the WC brand and WC Mercantile.







**#infinitewc #wcmercantile**

Patrick Earl  
Economic Development Officer  
Wheatland County  
403-361-2163  
[patrick.earl@wheatlandcounty.ca](mailto:patrick.earl@wheatlandcounty.ca)  
[infinitewc.ca](http://infinitewc.ca)

