



# BUY LOCAL WITH CONFIDENCE

---

A Main Street BIA/BID Pandemic Toolkit

For more information about the toolkit,  
please contact Laura, Lucia or Iana at:  
laura.burnham@live.ca  
lucia.huang726@gmail.com  
iana.lanceta@gmail.com

**CREATED BY:**

Laura Burnham, Sebastian Contin, Lucia (Ming-Hsuan) Huang, Iana Lanceta, Lilian Phillip, Simran Sandhu & Frank Venditti

**DESIGNED BY:**

Laura Burnham

“

The Canadian Urban Institute has stepped up to support cities during this crisis because we know how important cities are if we want to see people, communities, and our nation thrive.

”

Source: COVID Signpost 100 Days Report, 2020



Canadian  
Urban  
Institute

Institut  
Urbain du  
Canada

# ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

## WHO IT IS FOR?

This Buy Local With Confidence Toolkit has been created to support local Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and other main street or downtown local economic development organizations that wish to promote their business area during a pandemic.

## HOW TO USE IT

While this toolkit accompanies a report, it can also act as a standalone document. Its content will help you to develop your own Buy Local campaign concept. Several project plan templates are included to use as a framework or to further adapt to your specific community's needs.

## COVID-19

The pandemic has necessitated an expeditious and collective effort of all stakeholders to support main street businesses in downtown areas. As we move forward in uncertain times, these businesses will continue to require support that is both innovative and pragmatic, and communities will need to create new successes for promoting Buy Local.

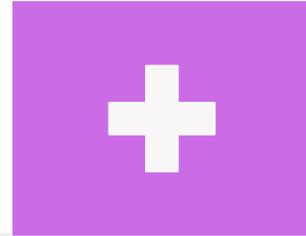


# WHAT'S INSIDE



## GETTING STARTED

- Why This Matters
- Our Process



## WHAT TO KNOW

- Key Consumer Trends
- Increasing Local Sales
- Creating a SWOT Analysis



## MAKE A CAMPAIGN

- Campaign Checklist
- 6 Success Factors
- 6 Project Plan Templates



## SHARE YOUR STORY

- Cityshare
- More Information



# GETTING STARTED

---

An Introduction to the Buy Local Toolkit



# WHY THIS MATTERS

Reasons why it is crucial to support Buy Local and inspire consumer confidence

## THE ECONOMY

---

During the government mandated shutdown of non-essential businesses between March and April 2020, Canada saw the biggest GDP drop ever recorded in Canadian history. Since then, the economy has moved into a recession.

## RECOVERY

---

Supporting main street businesses is critical to a successful recovery period for all of Canada. BIAs/BIDs can be supported to continue to undertake local marketing initiatives and improve consumer confidence.

## MAIN STREETS

Main streets are key economic, social, art and cultural hubs that shape the character and vitality of downtown areas of Canadian cities from coast to coast to coast.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Downtown areas play a key role in a community's continuity. While COVID-19 has threatened this, it also created new opportunities to maintain or enhance their preservation along with history, culture, diversity and inclusiveness.





# OUR PROCESS



## PRELIMINARY

- A scan was conducted to assess potential areas of research, case studies and research criteria.
- Six success factors were determined.



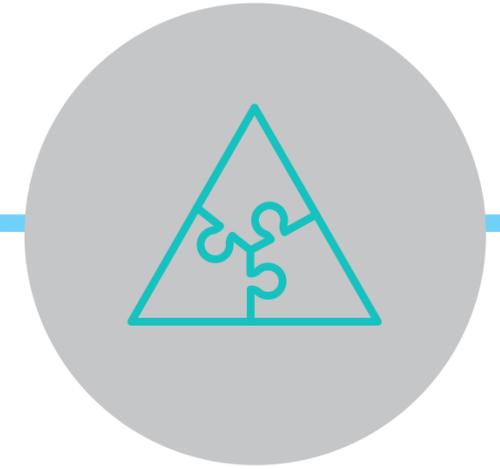
## RESEARCH

- An examination of:
- Economic impacts and challenges for main street businesses.
  - Government response to the needs of local businesses.
  - Key consumer trends and changes in Buy Local confidence.



## CASE STUDIES

- Domestically: Toronto (Chinatown BIA) and Vancouver (Downtown Vancouver BIA).
- Internationally: Singapore (Kampong Glam BID), and Auckland, New Zealand (Heart of the City BID).



## DEVELOPMENT

- A Canadian SWOT analysis was completed.
- The Buy Local With Confidence Toolkit was developed by analyzing the research and case studies conducted.



# WHAT TO KNOW

---

Research and Data Analysis for a Successful Buy  
Local Campaign

# INCREASING SALES

To generate a successful Buy Local marketing campaign during a pandemic, you must communicate to shoppers what the local businesses are offering and that their shopping experience will be safe and enjoyable. Instilling consumer confidence should be a key consideration in your communications.





# KEY CONSUMER TRENDS

1. **Generation Z consumers** are gaining purchasing power and generally tend to do more online shopping. Providing additional experiences or services will help encourage them to make in person shopping trips to main streets.
2. The **work-from-home** consumer trend is one of the newer trends seen at the start of the pandemic, where more consumers focused on online shopping since they no longer had to leave their homes for work. This offers a unique opportunity for BIAs/BIDs to offer services or products that satisfy a need for social connectivity or offer work-from-home conveniences.
3. An increase in consumer consciousness and **purchasing of sustainable and locally-sourced products** has been seen. This provides opportunities for Buy Local promotion as many small businesses may offer relevant specialty products or services.





# CREATING A SWOT ANALYSIS: WHY?

A Canadian SWOT analysis is available in the final report for your reference.

**S**

**W**

As part of the preparation for the development of your Buy Local main street marketing campaign, developing a new SWOT analysis or updating your current one will help you to formulate a more successful initiative that is customized to the particular needs of your BIA/BID community.

**O**

**T**

An updated SWOT analysis is a very helpful document to support the presentation of your project plan to your BIA/BID Board.



# CREATING A SWOT: TIPS

Working through a selection of these points may help you to come up with new ideas and facilitate a critical shift in thinking.

## BIA/BID STRENGTHS

Internal factors that will help your BIA/BID have a successful marketing campaign:

- Marketing that has been successful for your BIA/BID pre-COVID and during COVID
- Networks and methods of communication to consumers already in place
- Public spaces with distancing already in place
- Technologies in use for marketing
- Data you may have about local consumers
- Skilled, knowledgeable staff
- Forward thinking Board Members who are open to effecting new campaign strategies
- A strong network of supportive stakeholders

## BIA/BID WEAKNESSES

What internal factors are a weakness that need to be evaluated to increase success:

- Inconsistent BIA/BID branding and messaging
- Low visibility of branding or community voice
- Low resources to develop, start and maintain a new program
- Lack of market and consumer data
- Lacking of a COVID-19 Plan B for the BIAs/BIDs marketing
- Low member engagement in past projects
- Communication methods ineffective or out-of-date
- Reasons that past marketing initiatives been ineffective



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR BIA/BID

What external opportunities are there to capitalize on to make your Buy Local campaign successful:

- Pandemic safety measures already in place
- What members are doing well in terms of inspiring consumer confidence
- Features that set your area apart
- Existing infrastructure or programs
- Experiences your community can offer
- Social interactions you can facilitate
- Resources, local experts or key collaborators
- Demographics and population density of residents within a 10 minute walk
- Needs your BIA/BID/members could fulfill i.e. curbside pick-up, delivery, phone ordering...
- Businesses that offer unique or Canadian made products or services

## THREATS TO YOUR BIA/BID

What external threats to your BIA/BID are there that can be addressed or factored into your campaign:

- Infrastructure in your community that makes it more difficult for consumers observe pandemic protocols
- Cancelled or reduced event programming
- Businesses or sectors that are highly impacted
- Businesses with poor communication about their pandemic protocols
- Businesses that are still struggling to sell or move components of their business online
- Businesses with limited time or staff to participate in BIA/BID programs
- Poor parking or space for curbside pickup
- Does the area feel less welcoming due to COVID-19 measures and vacancies



# CREATING A SWOT: 1/2

You can use this section to build your BIAs/BIDs SWOT analysis or to update your existing one with Buy Local and consumer confidence in mind.

## BIA/BID STRENGTHS

## BIA/BID WEAKNESSES

# CREATING A SWOT: 2/2

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR BIA/BID**

**THREATS TO YOUR BIA/BID SUCCESS**



# MAKE A CAMPAIGN

---

Project Plan Templates For BIAs/BIDs





# SIX SUCCESS FACTORS

These six factors are key methodologies for your BIA/BID to refer to while developing a successful marketing campaign.



## HEALTH & SAFETY

Are measures in place?  
Have they been communicated clearly and in detail to the public?



## DIGITAL MEASURES

What digital component can you include to enhance connectivity or service to the public? Do you have any infrastructure in place that can be adapted?



## TARGETTING AUDIENCES

Who is the intended audience?  
Is it local tourists, Gen-Z, seniors, local residents, workers, students, etc.?

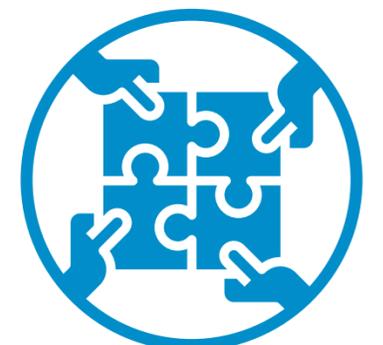
## PLACEMAKING

How can you be inclusive?  
How can you bring visitors to the area while physically distancing?



## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Which partners have overlapping goals for your campaign? Or which could help you generate a new campaign concept?  
What can you offer for a win-win?



## SHOP LOCAL MESSAGES

What is the voice of your community and what messaging will resonate the most? What are your marketing goals?



# SIX SUCCESS FACTORS



## HEALTH & SAFETY

Are measures in place?  
Have they been communicated clearly  
and in detail to the public?



## DIGITAL MEASURES

What digital component can you include  
to enhance connectivity or service to the  
public? Do you have any infrastructure  
in place that can be adapted?



## TARGETTING AUDIENCES

Who is the intended audience?  
Is it local tourists, Gen-Z, seniors, local  
residents, workers, students, etc.?

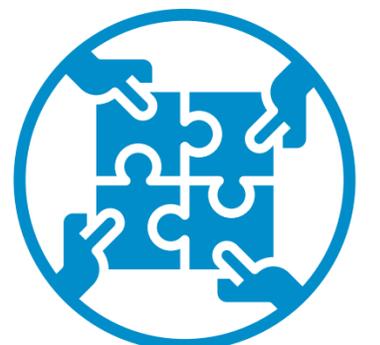
## PLACEMAKING

How can you be inclusive?  
How can you bring visitors to the area  
while physically distancing?



## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Which partners have overlapping goals  
for your campaign? Or which could help  
you generate a new campaign concept?  
What can you offer for a win-win?



## SHOP LOCAL MESSAGES

What is the voice of your community  
and what messaging will resonate the  
most? What are your marketing goals?



# ★ AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

## WHAT IS THE IDEA?

A big poster created by the BIA, that the businesses can use to share a list of their key precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the COVID, which can be placed on the front of each main street business. The listed items could be sourced from government recommendations and created in consultation with members. Alternatively, space could be left open for businesses to fill in their own content. This could also be promoted through social media for a Buy Local, Shop Safely campaign.

## SUCCESS FACTORS



## WHY IS IT GOOD?

Promoting safety infrastructure that is in place creates consistent messaging to help mitigate impacts of reduced consumer confidence in returning to main street stores. It builds awareness as many small businesses do not explain all the protocols they have in place. It would also be a useful initiative to have should an additional wave of the virus occur. This can also help market the BIA/BID as a “caring community” where serving the community well is a priority.

## SEASON



## BUDGET

Low





# AWARENESS CAMPAIGN PLANNING

## KEY EXPENSES

- Design (if not done in-house)
- Printing
- Advertising
- Staff Time
- Volunteer Time

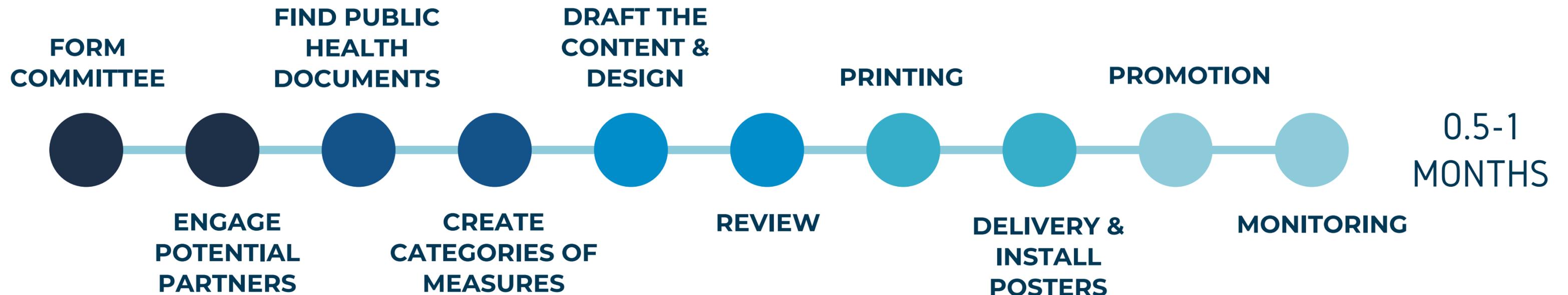
## KEY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City Council
- Local Workplace Safety Organizations
- Local Public Health Authority
- BIA/BID Members

## KEY PANDEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Checking with your local public health authority
- Public health guidance documents for businesses from all levels of government. Also, the key categories of pandemic health and safety measures.
- The profile of your BIA/BID members and key industries. For example, a service provider vs a shop.
- A process for an urgent temporary or permanent removal of the signage from businesses if needed. For example, if public health requirements change and necessate a change.

## DURATION: ONGOING





# MOBILE STORE

## WHAT IS THE IDEA?

A BIA/BID mobile store is a delivery service from the community to take care of people who wish not to/cannot visit the physical stores yet want to support local businesses. Customers will order and pay for their products from the local stores; the BIA/BID decides the stops and the schedule for the Mobile Store, individuals will choose the location/date/time to pick up their orders.

## WHY IS IT GOOD?

It reduces the delivery cost for small and medium-sized main street businesses and brings their products directly to the community in an outdoor format. It will also support individuals at higher risk due to COVID-19 such as seniors by reducing potential exposures.

## SUCCESS FACTORS



## IDEAL SEASONS



## BUDGET

Medium to High



“FairPrice introduces ‘store on wheels’”, 2020



# MOBILE STORE PLANNING

## KEY EXPENSES

- Mobile Operations Equipment
- Driver
- PPE
- Advertising
- BIA/BID Staff Time
- Volunteer Time

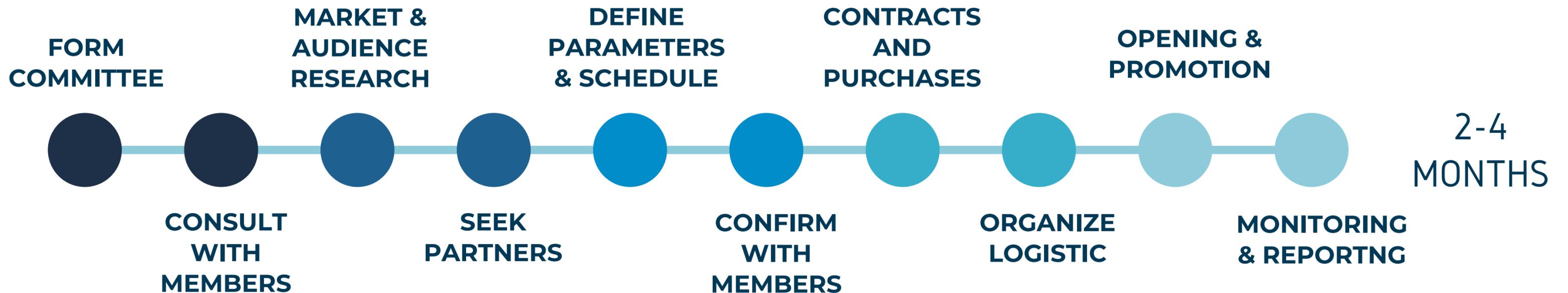
## KEY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- A Local Delivery Company
- Businesses, organizations or residents with space to host the mobile store on its route.
- BIA/BID Members

## KEY PANDEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Permit requirements (if applicable)
- Appropriate precautionary measures aligned with public health requirements should be in place while picking up items from stores and during delivery
- Contactless payment should be made directly to each store online or through the BIA's/BID's online marketplace if applicable
- A plan for an urgent temporary or permanent closure of the mobile store if needed

DURATION: ONGOING



# ★ INTERACTIVE GAMES

## WHAT IS THE IDEA?

A fun outdoor self-guided game could be tailored to each BIA/BID with shop local, safety or key community messaging. The Space Maze Project at Auckland Live in New Zealand is an example of interactive games including a "kindness wordfind" with 27 hidden words of kindness including aboriginal ones; a "colourful racing" with a hexagon maze colour-coded maze; and a "maze of arrows" with four mazes of arrows. Create an interactive activity that resonates with the community.

## SUCCESS FACTORS



## WHY IS IT GOOD?

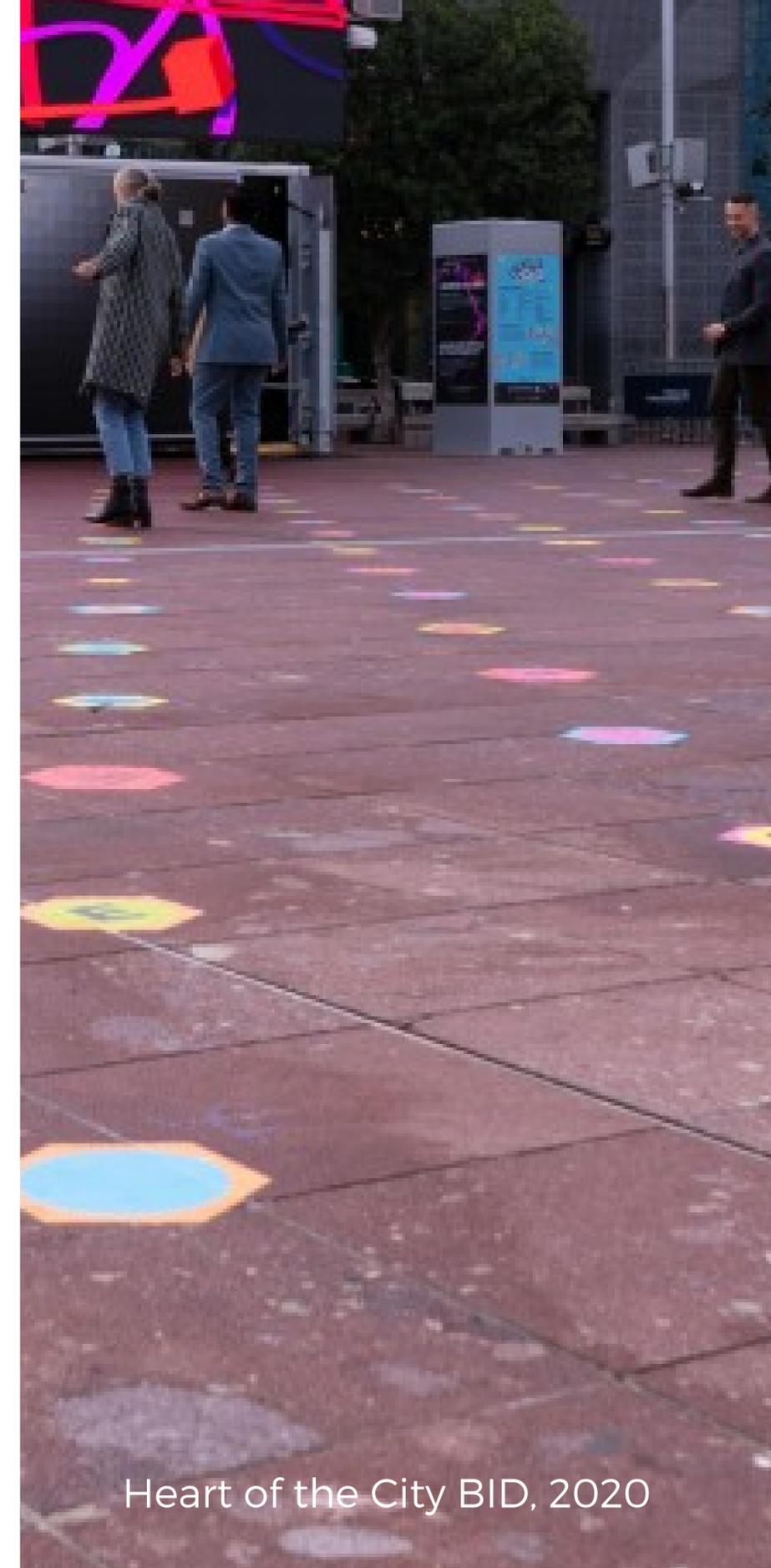
Offering fun and interactive experiences is a way that BIAs could attract visitors to the area. Physical distancing could be built into the game designs. This is something that an online competitor would have difficulty replicating. Activities could be developed specifically for youth and other demographic groups that would respond well to local experiential marketing. This could also be created as a low-key series enticement to nearby residents or as a part of an event when permitted.

## IDEAL SEASONS



## BUDGET

Low to  
Medium





# INTERACTIVE GAME PLANNING

## KEY EXPENSES

- Artist's Fees
- Material Fees
- Printing
- Signage
- Promotion
- Staff Time
- Volunteer Time

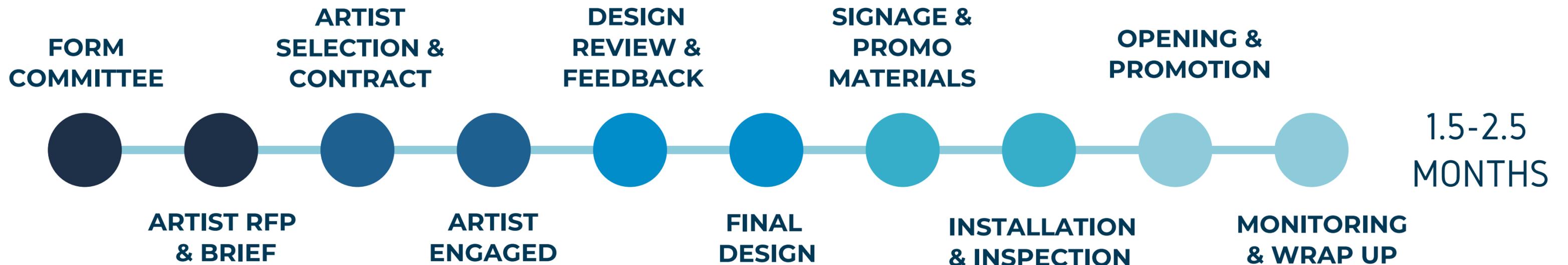
## KEY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City Council
- Arts Organizations
- Local Artists
- Cultural Organizations
- Local Tourism Organizations
- Local Youth Groups
- BIA/BID Members

## KEY PANDEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Permit requirements & availability
- Gathering limits, capacity & attendance
- Checking with your local public health authority
- Providing the artist with public health guidance from all levels of government to build into the design
- Signage and public reminders about distancing requirements while playing & a contactless design
- A process for an urgent temporary or permanent closure of the activation

## DURATION: ONE TIME OR SERIES



# ★ INTERACTIVE STREETS

## WHAT IS THE IDEA?

Use technology to promote COVID-19 precautionary measures using street art and technology. For example, when two people stand 2 metres apart from each other on the designated spots, the art will light up. Another example could be to calculate how many people have been supporting BIA/BID member businesses by monitoring pedestrian counts and using an art installation to present the numbers publicly in an interesting and visually attractive way.

## SUCCESS FACTORS



## WHY IS IT GOOD?

Adding new and exciting elements into the community creates an everyday attraction as well as an entertaining draw for new consumers. It not only encourages and educates people about precautionary measures and buying local, but also provides fun experiences. Engaging local artists would further strengthen the project's connection to the community while beautifying the street at the same time as inspiring consumer confidence.

## IDEAL SEASONS



## BUDGET

High





# INTERACTIVE STREETS PLANNING

## KEY EXPENSES

- Artist(s) Fees
- Material & Technical Support
- Maintenance
- Advertising
- Staff Time
- Volunteer Time

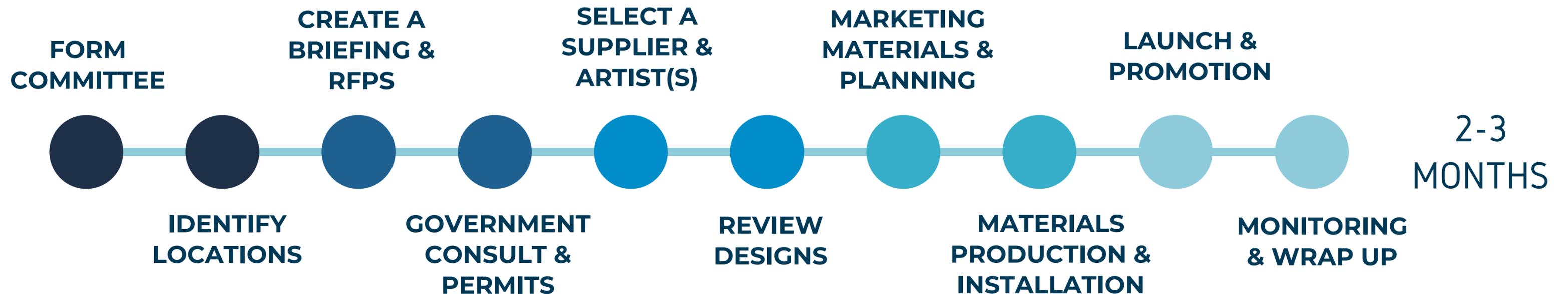
## KEY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City Council
- Local Artist(s)
- Local Arts Organizations
- BIA/BID Members

## KEY PANDEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Permit requirements & availability if required
- Gathering limits, capacity & attendance
- All the installations should be contactless and leave space for physical distancing.
- The experiences should not be too long to prevent the gathering of crowds
- A process for an urgent temporary or permanent closure of the activations should be in place

## DURATION:



# ★ COMMUNITY AVATAR

## WHAT IS THE IDEA?

BIA/BID creates a virtual avatar influencer to talk about the community's stories from a different angle. The created avatar can be identified as a store owner's family member or an adult who grew up in the community. The social media platforms will present the days of the avatar's life in the community "based on true story". For example, every morning, the person visits a cafe in the community to get their favorite latte; the avatar talks to a new store owner and finds out they are selling something special.

## SUCCESS FACTORS



## WHY IS IT GOOD?

Different from the regular social media promotion, by creating a character, followers can connect with the community by viewing the stories. The "support local" emotion evoked could be linked throughout daily interactions with the community members. Subtle messaging about the health and safety measures the businesses are undertaking as well as the experience of businesses with shoppers participation in these measures can be shared as part of the content.

## IDEAL SEASONS



## BUDGET

Low to Medium





# COMMUNITY STORYTELLER PLANNING

## KEY EXPENSES

- Social Media Manager/Scheduler
- Content Creator (photography, videography & copywriting)
- Promotion
- Staff Time

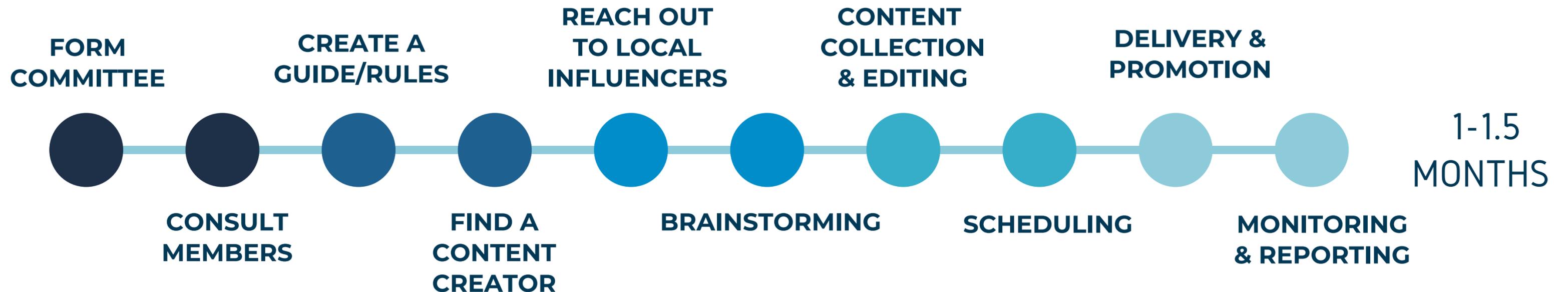
## KEY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- BIA/BID Members
- Community Stakeholders
- Local Influencers

## KEY PANDEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Shopping safely using precautions as well as showing the precautions businesses have in place can be communicated
- All required public health measures should be observed when collecting content including but not limited to wearing masks, physical distancing & hand washing between stores
- A plan B for content collection options in the event of a second wave of COVID-19

DURATION: ONGOING





# THE WORLD IN ONE STOP

## WHAT IS THE IDEA?

A world map pinned with local businesses who specialize in products from different countries and cultures to celebrate the diversity of Canadian main street businesses. This would provide shoppers with an alternative way to travel around the world without leaving the country. A passport or portfolio webpage can be created for this campaign; staycation packages could also be sold as part of this endeavour. This project can be collaborated on by a couple of small BIAs/BIDs.

## WHY IS IT GOOD?

It shows the uniqueness of local Canadian main street businesses and offers a local tourism experience to enthusiastic travelers who are no longer able to vacation internationally due to the pandemic. It encourages consumers to explore the community from a different viewpoint and video can be used to tell the story online. The project also creates a unique value proposition to centre the BIAs/BIDs Buy Local marketing messaging around.

## SUCCESS FACTORS



## IDEAL SEASONS



## BUDGET

Medium





# THE WORLD IN ONE STOP PLANNING

## KEY EXPENSES

- Content Creation
- Promotional Materials
- Advertising
- Staff Time
- Volunteer Time

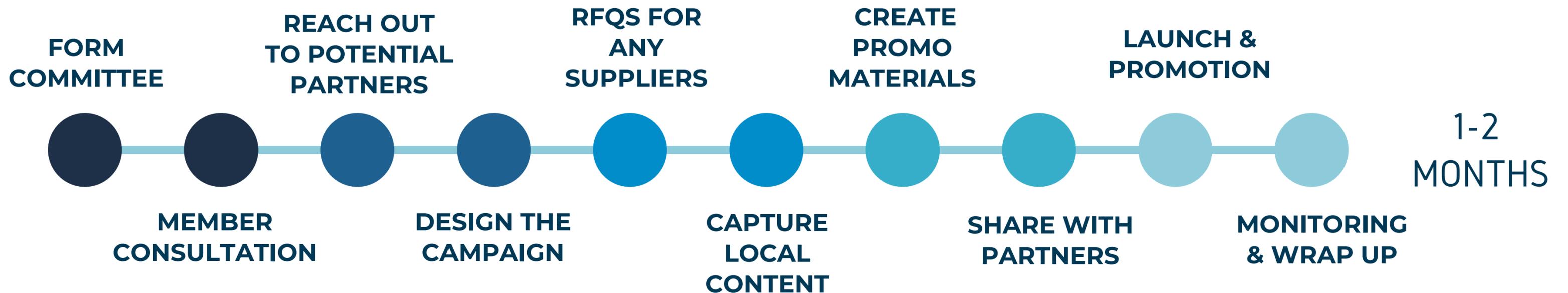
## KEY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City Council
- Local Tourism Board or Association
- Other BIAs/BIDs
- BIA/BID Members

## KEY PANDEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- All the participating businesses should affirm that they have all necessary COVID-19 public health precautionary measures in place.
- Providing public health guides and posters to participating businesses.
- Safe experience reminders such as wearing masks and physical distancing can be included in the guide.
- A process in place for an urgent pause or extension of the project.

DURATION: ONE TIME OR RECURRING





# CAMPAIGN:

You can fill in this template for your own campaign and circle the pillars and seasons that match.

WHAT IS THE IDEA?

WHY IS IT GOOD?

NOTES

PILLARS



SEASONS



BUDGET



# CAMPAIGN PROJECT PLANNING

KEY EXPENSES

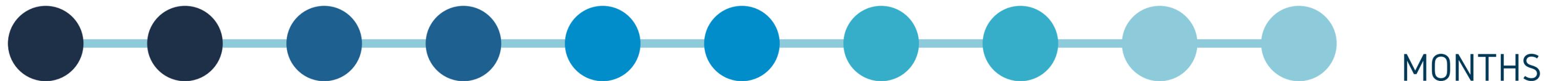
KEY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

KEY PANDEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

---

DURATION:

FORM  
COMMITTEE



MONITORING  
& WRAP UP



# SHARE YOUR STORY

---

Showcase your success. Be a contributor.



## SUBMIT YOUR INITIATIVES TO CITYSHARE, A GROWING DATABASE OF BEST PRACTICES

---

If approved, your shop local marketing campaign will be added.

[CITYSHARECANADA.CA/  
CONTRIBUTIONS](https://citysharecanada.ca/contributions)





# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## CITYSHARE

---

CityShare is a collection of crowd-sourced innovative, creative and resourceful solutions in communities across Canada in responding to COVID-19.

[CityShareCanada.ca](https://CityShareCanada.ca)

For more information, contact:

▶ Lisa Cavicchia (she/her), Program Director  
lcavicchia@canurb.org

## BRING BACK MAIN STREETS

---

A nationally-coordinated research and advocacy campaign about finding the best solutions to ensure our main streets recover from COVID-19 and emerge from the crisis more resilient than ever.

[BringBackMainStreet.ca](https://BringBackMainStreet.ca)



Heart of the City BID, 2020

# THANK YOU!

---

Thank you to the Canadian Urban Institute Team and Lisa Cavicchia, Program Director, for the opportunity to work on this Buy Local With confidence Toolkit initiative to support downtown main street businesses.

Thank you to our Professor, Karol Murillo, Ec.D., of the Ryerson Economic Development Certificate Program for your support on this capstone project.

Thank you to Gavin Duffus, Economic Development Manager at Downtown Vancouver BIA for making time to speak about your BIA's initiatives and share your insights.



For more information about the toolkit,  
please contact Laura, Lucia or Iana at:  
[laura.burnham@live.ca](mailto:laura.burnham@live.ca)  
[lucia.huang726@gmail.com](mailto:lucia.huang726@gmail.com)  
[iana.lanceta@gmail.com](mailto:iana.lanceta@gmail.com)