

# Rapid Placemaking to Bring Back Main Street

A Pandemic Recovery Toolkit for Local Communities

Volume 01 - August 2020



**BRING BACK** **MAIN STREET**



Canadian Urban Institute  
Institut Urbain du Canada

 Happy City

## About this Toolkit

Rapid Placemaking to Bring Back Main Street is part of the Bring Back Main Street project, a nationally-coordinated research and advocacy campaign committed to finding the best solutions to ensure our main streets recover from COVID-19 and emerge from the crisis more resilient than ever. Bring Back Main Street was developed in the public interest by the [Canadian Urban Institute](#), with the support of BIAs/BIDs, city-makers and researchers from across the country.

This toolkit is intended to support the connection between main street and community by advancing an equitable design process, highlighting programming opportunities and offering design ideas that together bring back main street.

## Introduction

**COVID-19 has radically altered the way humans gather, interact and even walk down the street. Globally, the heightened fear and awareness of this virus – and the vital physical distancing measures that followed – has touched nearly every aspect of people’s lives. In March, main streets across Canada transformed from bustling centres to vacant spaces in mere days.**

In recent months, people have found creative ways to use the main streets around them. Canadians are using streets that typically prioritize cars to: access essential jobs and services by foot and bike, to meet friends and neighbours, and share messages of hope and gratitude. And as reopenings occur, businesses and cities are expanding patios and public spaces into main streets across the country. Importantly, people are taking up main street space to grieve and protest the racist treatment of Black and Indigenous peoples within communities and by police.

Reallocating and reprogramming main street space—from parking or traffic to people and local businesses—is an essential part of a holistic pandemic recovery. Research indicates that the risk of COVID-19 transmission is significantly higher in indoor shared spaces than outdoors. This shift in how main streets are used can support the triple bottom line for health, local business and community.

While it may be less obvious, engaging communities in the process of reshaping and reimagining main streets in towns and cities across Canada is also vital to a holistic pandemic recovery. Research indicates that during lockdown, the most resilient Canadian main streets were those with strong community connections. During this same period, societal inequalities were laid bare, as vulnerable and marginalized communities faced the greatest impacts of COVID-19. As such, equitable engagement can support a just recovery, local business and community. Fundamentally, the success of main streets and communities is intertwined.

This toolkit was produced by Happy City (Mitchell Reardon, Emmay Clayton Jones, Harry Olson, Cheri Hessami, and Charles Montgomery) with input from many city-builders from across Canada. For more information, please contact Happy City at [info@thehappy.com](mailto:info@thehappy.com).



## An evolving response to COVID-19

The content for this toolkit is based on public health direction, research, stakeholder input, expert insight and emerging best practices in June and July 2020. We remain in the midst of a global pandemic. Accordingly, main street pandemic responses remain fluid.

The ideas presented in this toolkit have been developed with a focus on [the broad array of main streets](#) that are found across Canada. Recognizing that ongoing effects of COVID-19 can vary by region, local application of these ideas should be tailored to the direction of relevant public health authorities.

## Who should use this toolkit?

**Anyone who wants to see their main streets thrive in the short and long term as safe and inclusive places to connect, access services, shop and live.**

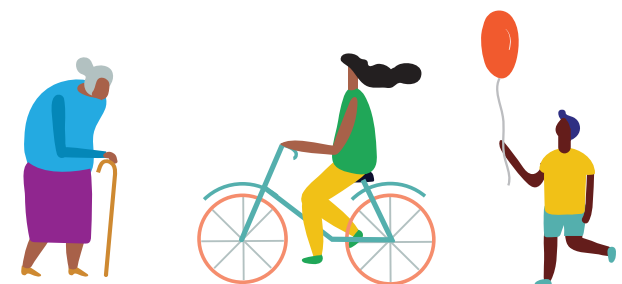
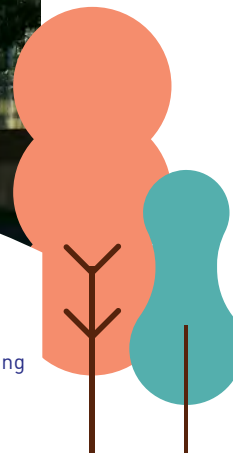
The Bring Back Main Street Rapid Placemaking Toolkit is intended for Business Improvement Areas/Districts and City staff tasked with retail and public realm recovery work, as well as interested community groups and residents.

## How should it be used?

Whether you're working on main street in a major city centre, a suburban plaza or small town, the activities and ideas here can support your local businesses and community. A just recovery is fundamental to creating a better normal. That's why activities, tips and questions to help you establish an inclusive process are spread throughout this toolkit. You know your main street best. With this in mind, the toolkit includes an array of programming ideas and design interventions for you to pick and choose what's right for you. As you scroll through, you'll all see space for you to write out your process and test your ideas. Feel free to download and markup the PDF, or print it out and write on it, in real life. There are more ideas to bring back main street than pages in this toolkit. We invite you to send in your ideas, and any enhancements you've made to ours.



Thank you Cheryll Case and Harry Olson for advancing this idea during the BBMS Studio



**BRING BACK MAIN STREET**

# WHAT'S INSIDE

## Why this Matters

Four reasons a rapid placemaking response is vital for main streets and communities.

## Definitions

Key terms to ensure that we are all on the same page.

## Guiding Principles

A rapid placemaking anchor for evolving circumstances.

## Our Process

The right steps lead to a successful path. These are the steps we took for this toolkit.

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## Reallocating Street Space

Five effective approaches to reallocate space for people.

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# WHY THIS MATTERS

Four reasons a rapid placemaking response is vital for main streets and communities.

## Public Health

Public health officials continue to emphasize that physical distancing is a key measure to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19. Main streets that offer adequate space for people to be, move and shop can provide safe access to shops and services. Importantly, open, slow main streets also provide essential workers with the space they require to move with ease.

## Local Economy

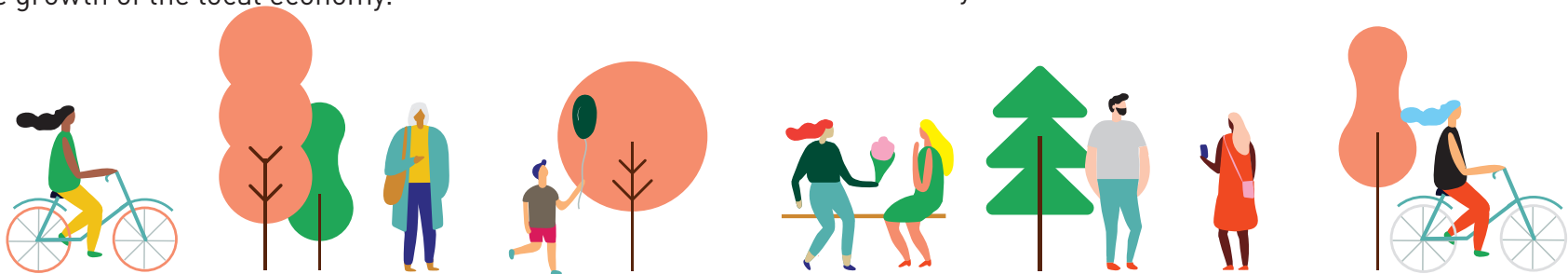
The local economy has been turned inside out. Many restaurants, bars and cafes are relying on outdoor seating and delivery to stay in business, while service and retail shops require room for queuing. By providing spaces for people to connect or simply exist in the same setting, main streets can serve as welcoming, inclusive and social spaces. Importantly, social trust has been shown to be a driver of economic performance. Connected communities are more likely to feel a sense of attachment and contribute to the growth of the local economy.

## Just Recovery

A just recovery from COVID-19 requires putting human needs first, every time. It means recognizing the harm main streets have caused to some. It requires recognizing workers' rights and compensating them accordingly.

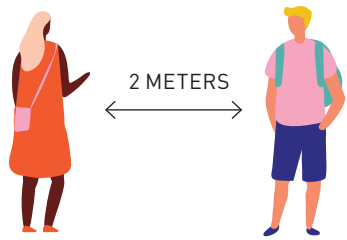
## Social Connection

Social trust and social connections are the strongest predictor of the happiness of individuals and communities. Main streets offer a central gathering space within the heart of a town or community for residents to connect. Evidence shows that informal encounters with strangers boost people's happiness as much as contact with friends or family. As natural converging points within a community, main streets can provide an ideal space for both formal and informal social encounters. Not only do main streets provide access to goods and services, they also bring people together and provide space for members of the community to interact with each other.





## DEFINITIONS



### Physical Distancing

Physical distancing measures are the approaches we use to minimize physical contact with people around us, in order to limit the spread of COVID-19. Measures differ from place to place, and change over time, but can include: avoiding crowded places or non-essential travel or maintaining a two-metre separation from others outside your household or bubble.



### Social Inclusion

The process of making all groups of people in society feel valued and accepted for who they are. Social inclusion is an important determinant of health: people who can actively participate in society make more meaningful social connections and are both healthier and happier.



### Placemaking

Placemaking uses arts and culture as tools to animate public and private spaces, and to rejuvenate structures and streetscapes. It brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire and be inspired. The approach leverages a place's existing creative potential and connects arts and culture to larger community revitalization or development initiatives. Creative placemaking advances a shared community vision that honors community distinctiveness through interdisciplinary and cross-sector activities that engage an array of people who call the place home.



### Community

A community can be formed around shared location, cultural identity, interest, or any other quality.



### Public Engagement

Engagement is how you interact with the publics you aim to serve. It can take many forms -- including outreach, consultation, deliberation, dialogue, or activation -- but it's always a two-way street.



### Human-Centred Design

Human-centred design -- or design thinking-- strategies are ways to put real people at the centre of the creation of new ideas, projects and policies. Empathy is core to the design thinking process: it revolves around getting to know the needs, desires and questions of the people our work aims to serve. Human-centred design requires carefully defining a question or problem, quickly ideating and prototyping based on user input, and testing and iterating until arriving at a solution.

# Guiding Principles

A coordinated approach can be challenging anytime an array of actors are working together. Short timelines, emerging ideas and changing situations can further complicate coordination. These evidence-based wellbeing principles come together in a framework that can be used to inform processes, programming and interventions to bring back main streets. We used them to formulate the ideas below.

**You can use them to develop your own ideas, too!**



# Our Process

## Onsite Assessment

The day after Phase 2 of British Columbia's restart took place, Happy City was out assessing public space along main streets, while maintaining physical distancing.

## Field Research

As public spaces and patios expanded in step with pandemic recovery guidelines, Happy City visited, documented and assessed efforts near our bases in Metro Vancouver and Toronto.



### BIA+ BID Focus Group

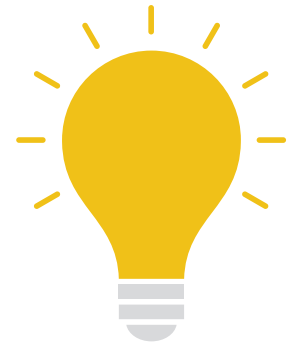
CUI convened representatives from BIAs and BIDs in Halifax, Moncton, Ottawa, Regina and Surrey to learn more about what was happening, who was involved, and what was still needed.

### Studio

A diverse group of tactical urbanists, city planners, urban designers and community builders from across Canada and beyond came together for a process and design studio to strengthen this toolkit.

## Speaking to Cities

As recovery efforts scaled up, we talked with cities across Metro Vancouver about interventions, engagement, programming and measures of success for rapid placemaking in the public realm.



## Desk Research

Our team relentlessly sought out emerging research and design solutions that could help bring back main streets.

## Engaging People

We spoke with people at different patio and public space interventions to find out what they liked and what could be better. We also made note of who wasn't using these spaces.



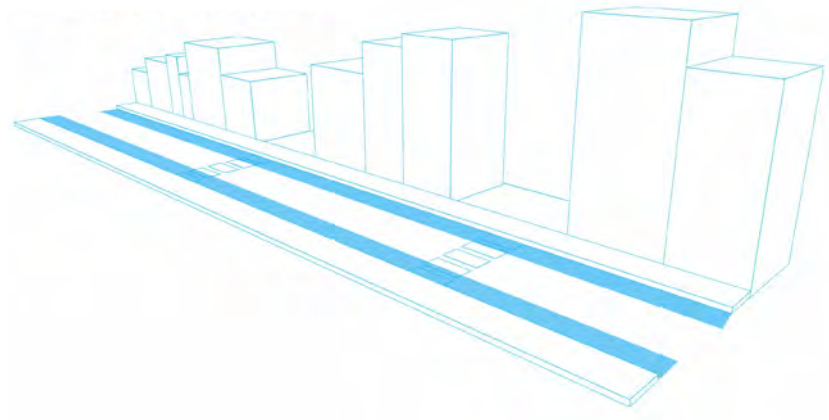
# REALLOCATING STREET SPACE

There are a number of different ways to reallocate space for community and business on main streets. Five of the most common and effective approaches are detailed on the following pages. These street allocation approaches provide different opportunities for placemaking.



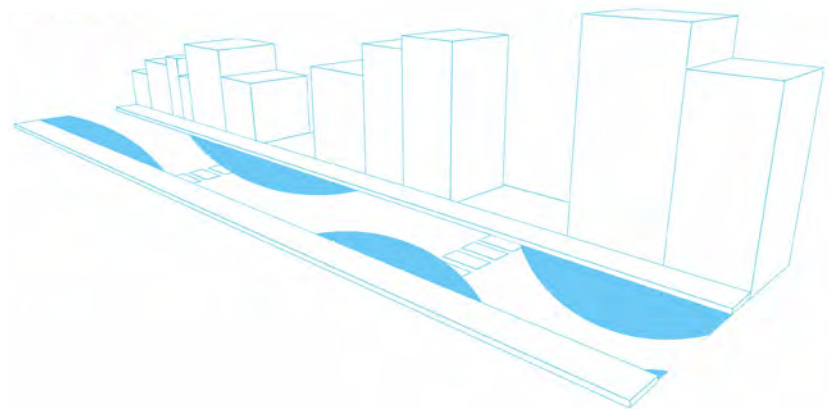
## Extended sidewalks

Space adjacent to sidewalks is reallocated from cars to active transportation or space to linger. Active transportation includes walking, rolling or cycling, while space to linger includes public space as well as private patio or commercial space. Depending on the layout of the street and needs of those who use it, street space can be reclaimed from parking or travel lanes. Ensure that accessible parking spaces are maintained, with adequate space for a person in a wheelchair to enter or exit their vehicle from the side.



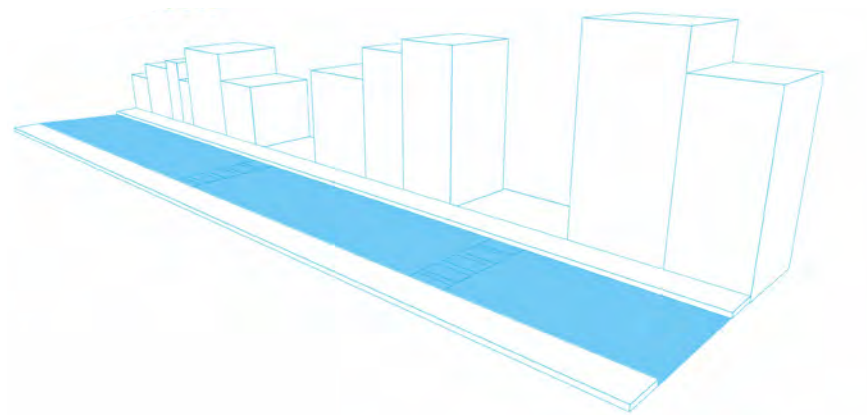
## Chicane

Space to linger is added on both sides of the street. Cars are still permitted, but their speed is reduced through design that uses space to linger to add curves to the street.



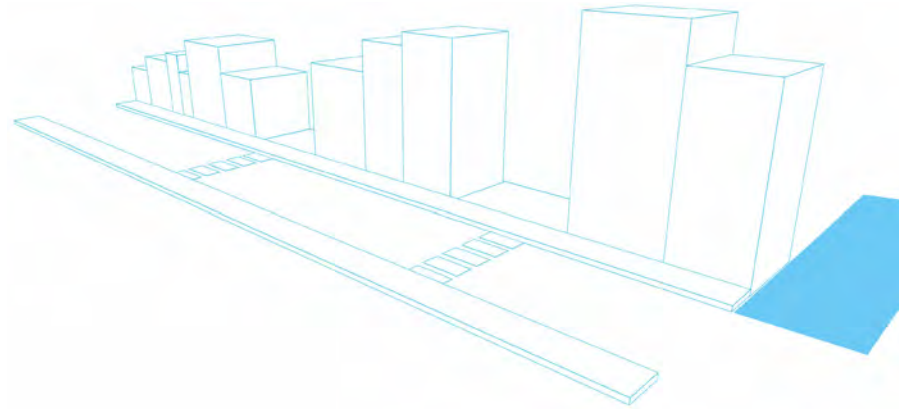
## Open street

The street is opened to people and closed to cars. Additional space for active transportation and lingering can extend across the width of the street. Even without cars, conflict between active transportation users and people lingering may occur. Consider dedicated space for cycling, marked with ground treatment.



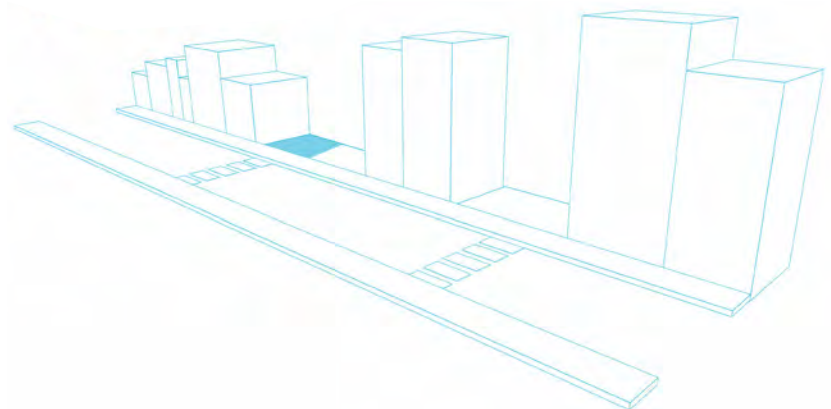
## Side street plaza

This approach focuses on lower traffic side streets that connect to main streets. These streets are opened to people as public spaces, plazas and patios, without altering existing main street layouts. This approach reduces adjacency between people and cars, which can create a more people-friendly environment. This approach may benefit from being located next to a restaurant, cafe or bar that can help to activate the space.



## Parking lot plaza

Small retail plazas also serve as main streets. In many cases, the street is dominated by fast-moving car traffic. Interventions on these streets could put people at risk. Here, excess parking lot space is well-suited for people friendly activations.



# PROCESS

In most cities, car-dominated streets take up nearly 30% of total land. This use of the public realm far exceeds what is allocated for parks and public spaces. Recognizing this disparity, and in dire need of more outdoor space for people to move and linger while maintaining physical distancing, cities are rapidly adjusting policies and practices to create more main street space for people.

A timely response is critical, but this does not mean that processes for implementation should be overlooked in favour of outcomes. Evidence is emerging from a number of cities that a rush to implement has resulted in more amenities in wealthier, whiter neighbourhoods, despite the fact that these areas tend to have greater access to open space. Conversely, neighbourhoods with lower household incomes, often home to higher shares of Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) people, and with less access to open space, are seeing fewer interventions. This risks reinforcing existing inequalities, and deepening urbanism's complicity in systemic racism and deprivation. At the same time, societies with high levels of inequality report lower levels of happiness than more equal ones. To support a just pandemic recovery, create a better normal for those who need it most, and boost society-wide wellbeing, it is critical that a fixation on design outcomes be replaced with a focus on effective processes.



# Engaging People in Rapid Placemaking

Rapidly reallocating main street space – from parking or traffic to people and local businesses – is an essential part of holistic pandemic recovery. Tactical urbanism is often hailed as a way to test ideas and adjust based on feedback; however, in a time where outcomes are prioritized and municipal budgets are tight, community input risks falling to the wayside.

Without engagement and the opportunity to make adjustments, interventions actually risk diminishing wellbeing. A sense of agency directly contributes to people’s feelings of meaning and belonging in the public realm. It also indirectly influences sociability, ease and resilience.



## Case Study: Oakland

Oakland, California’s “Slow Streets” project was focused on process, and it allowed for an outcome that was new and inclusive.



When the initiative first rolled out, it seemed like Oakland’s communities of colour were skeptical. But the City’s engagement team conducted another round of dialogue with groups that had been underrepresented the first time. The team realized that these residents wanted to ensure the mobility strategy prioritized safe access to essential services, rather than just prioritizing leisure. Oakland responded by rolling out the [Essential Places](#) program, which slows down streets that improve access to grocery stores, food distribution sites and COVID-19 testing sites.

By moving through the process of equitable engagement with genuine curiosity and openness to pivoting, Oakland’s transportation department was able to create something new and inclusive.

Image: City of Oakland

# Equitable Process

Working rapidly does not mean that corners must be cut. When framed as prototypes, rapid interventions can be understood as tools for continued community engagement. Once in place, you'll need to take an idea, shape it and reshape it by looking through the lenses of diverse experiences of place, equity and reconciliation. You can't do this alone.

Placemaking projects that benefit community are most often shaped by community: Not just at the beginning or end, but in dialogue throughout. Viewing rapid interventions as part of a process, rather than an outcome, is especially valuable for bringing back main street. Reclaiming street space with rapidly implemented people-friendly solutions is vital for local recovery in the near-term. But imagine if these public spaces, patios and plazas were transformed into enduring fixtures embraced by main street communities across the country.

Equitable placemaking isn't actually about a physical output. It's about what you create while working through a process. This is more important now than ever. As people take up main street space to grieve and protest the racist treatment of Black and Indigenous peoples within communities and by police, urban planning and street design has been asked to grapple with inequitable foundations and systemic racism. Communities who've traditionally been excluded from decision-making processes frequently have less trust in decision-makers. This may not strike you surprising, and yet, marginalized communities continue to face limited engagement in 2020. Equitable placemaking, with space for real community input, is an important part of a just pandemic recovery.



Thank you Cheryll Case and Ajeev Bhatia for emphasizing these ideas during the BBMS Studio





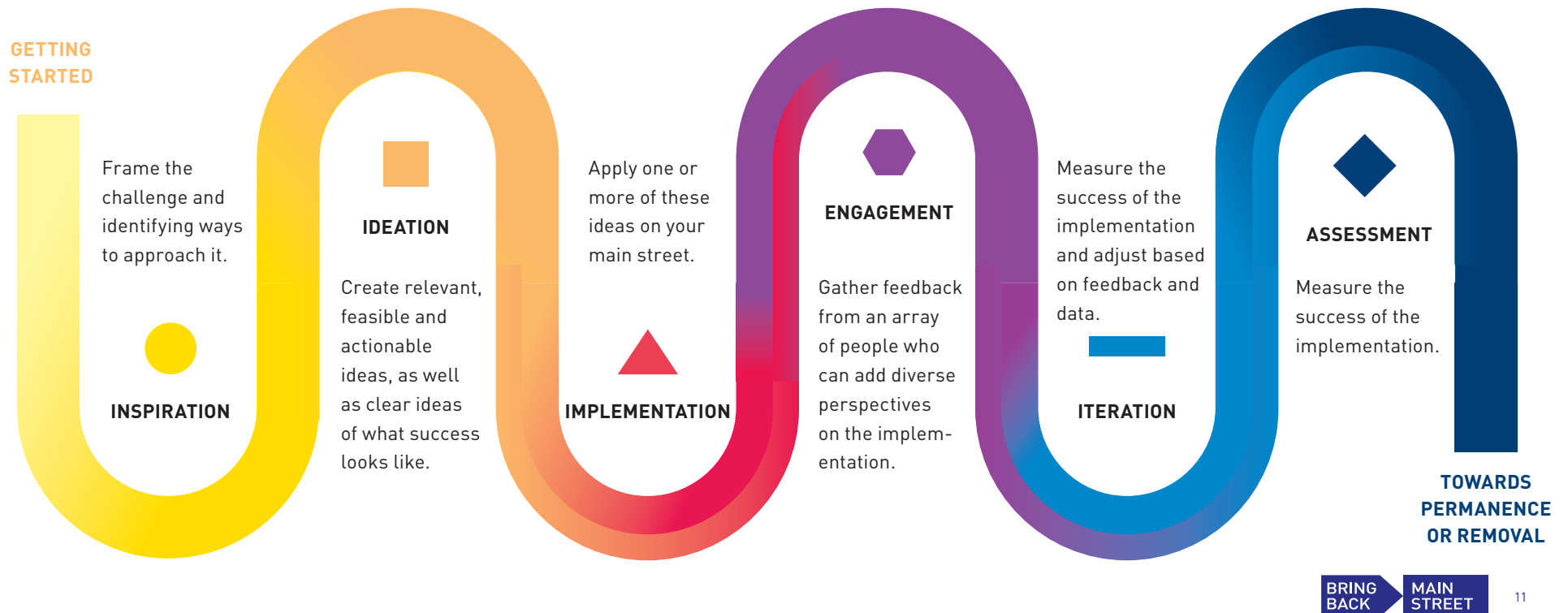
# RAPID PLACEMAKING PROCESS

The rapid placemaking process is best framed as a series of overlapping stages, rather than a linear sequence of activities. We have identified five stages for this work: Inspiration, Implementation, Engagement, Iteration, and Assessment.

It is important to underline that getting things done quickly doesn't mean steps need to (or should) be skipped.

Engagement can happen in parallel with ideation, implementation or iteration, while assessment could begin as early as the implementation stage, to inform the iteration, and subsequently be re-assessed, or simply occur after iteration.

Once you've got an idea, try pulling it apart into steps (which may overlap) using the double loop below.



## WHOSE LAND ARE YOU ON?

If you haven't already, take the time to learn which Indigenous group(s)' land your project takes place on. [Native-land.ca](http://Native-land.ca) is a good place to start.

In Vancouver, for example, we are situated unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, which includes the Skwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwítlh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations. When we say these lands are [unceded](#), we mean they were never signed or given away. They were stolen.

The events you host should begin with an Indigenous land acknowledgement. But this is just a starting place. Each city and town across Canada has been shaped by colonialism and systemic violence against and exclusion of Indigenous people. This violence continues today. We must take responsibility for the exclusionary ways in which decisions about cities are made. This applies to even the smallest pieces of land, as we practice placemaking and tactical urbanism.

Decolonizing your tactical work must go beyond merely including Indigenous groups in consultation. It is an ongoing process to reconciling relationships, which involves questioning the narratives and hierarchies that inform your beliefs about who and what make a space useful, utilized, beautiful, and safe. It also involves actions including:

- Returning land control to Indigenous communities
- Moving beyond consultation with Indigenous people, toward redistributing real decision-making power to those who have been excluded for too long
- Creating spaces for Indigenous people to share work, stories, and experiences
- Creating space for Indigenous gatherings
- Renaming spaces that have names connected to colonial legacies
- Paying Indigenous consultants and collaborators to direct design and programming

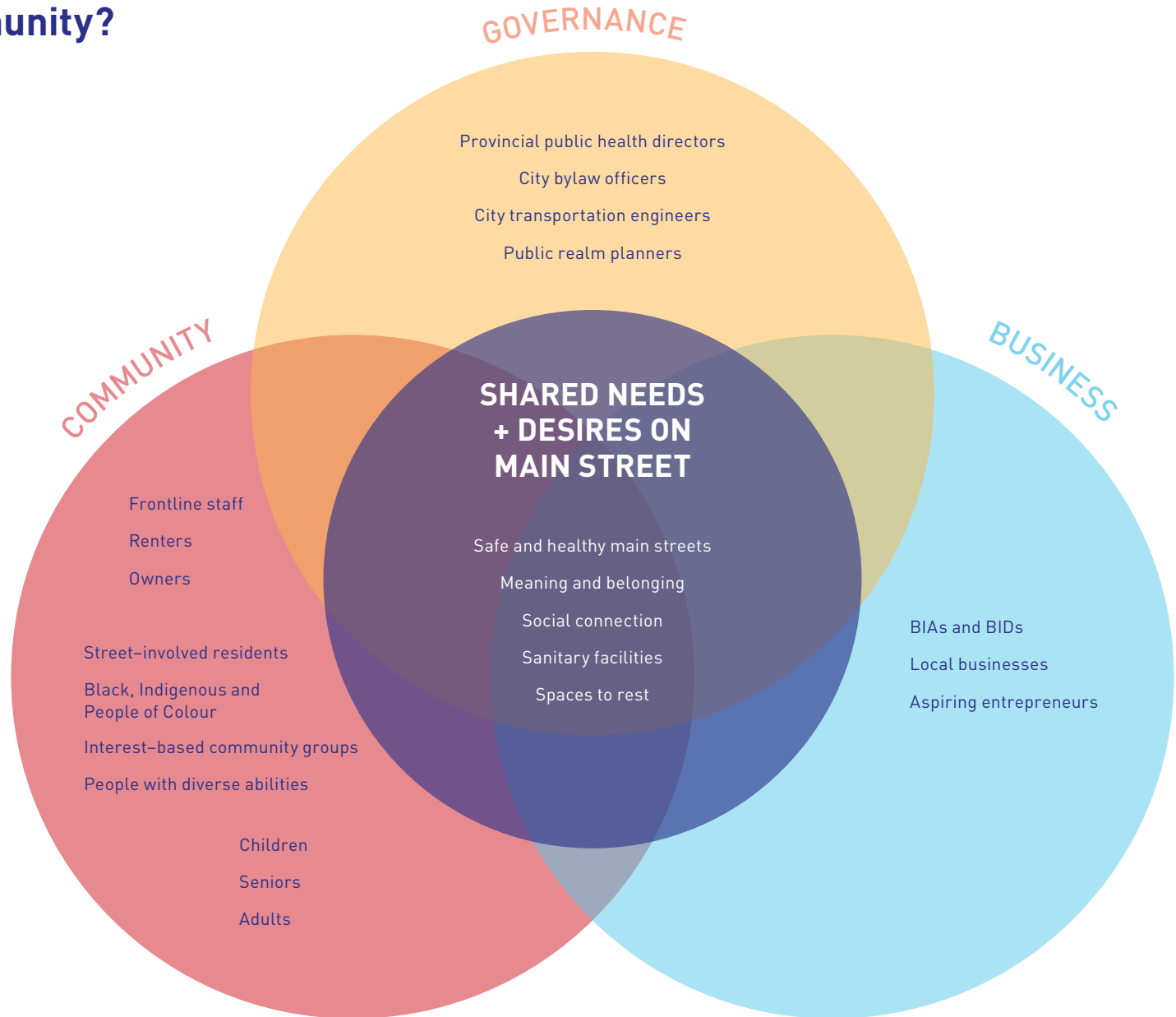
Thank you Sierra Tasi Baker for sharing some of these idea during the BBMS Studio



# ACTIVITY 01

## Who is in your community?

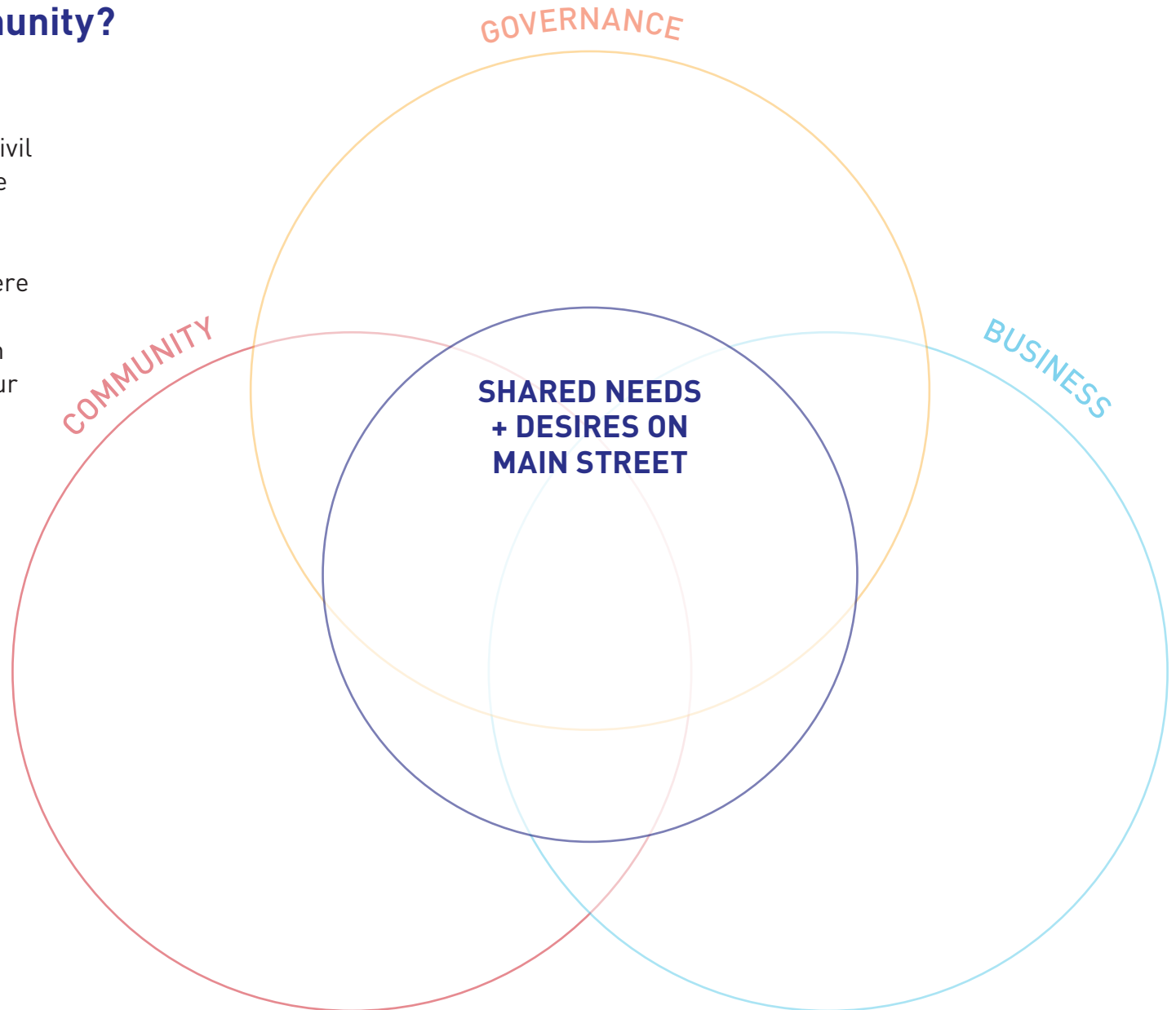
No matter how long you've lived, worked, or hung out in a neighbourhood, you've only seen it from your own perspective. That's why it's essential to start every project by mapping out the people and organizations that exist in your community. This process will help you identify the right people to speak with to ensure your work is inclusive and in line with community priorities.



## ACTIVITY 01

### Who is in your community?

Use this template to identify communities, businesses and civil administration that have a stake on your main street. Ask yourself: Where do their needs, desires and goals overlap? Where do they diverge? Many people have identities that overlap with multiple descriptions used in our non-exhaustive list below. Consider the way these intertwined elements may influence the way they feel on main street.



## ACTIVITY 02

### Clarifying your goals

Rarely is an urban planning decision good for all: access to main street space has always been contested. At any given time, most streets host an ecosystem of stakeholders and uses. An activation likely won't serve everyone in your community. Instead of making something that aims to serve everyone, identify a specific problem, experienced by a specific group or groups.

For this exercise, we asked, "How could this idea connect seniors and children while maintaining social distancing?"



## ACTIVITY 02

### Clarifying your goals

Use this template to define your goal, the communities your project will serve, the wants that your audiences have, and the principles that guide your work or organization.

Start by proposing your problem as a question.

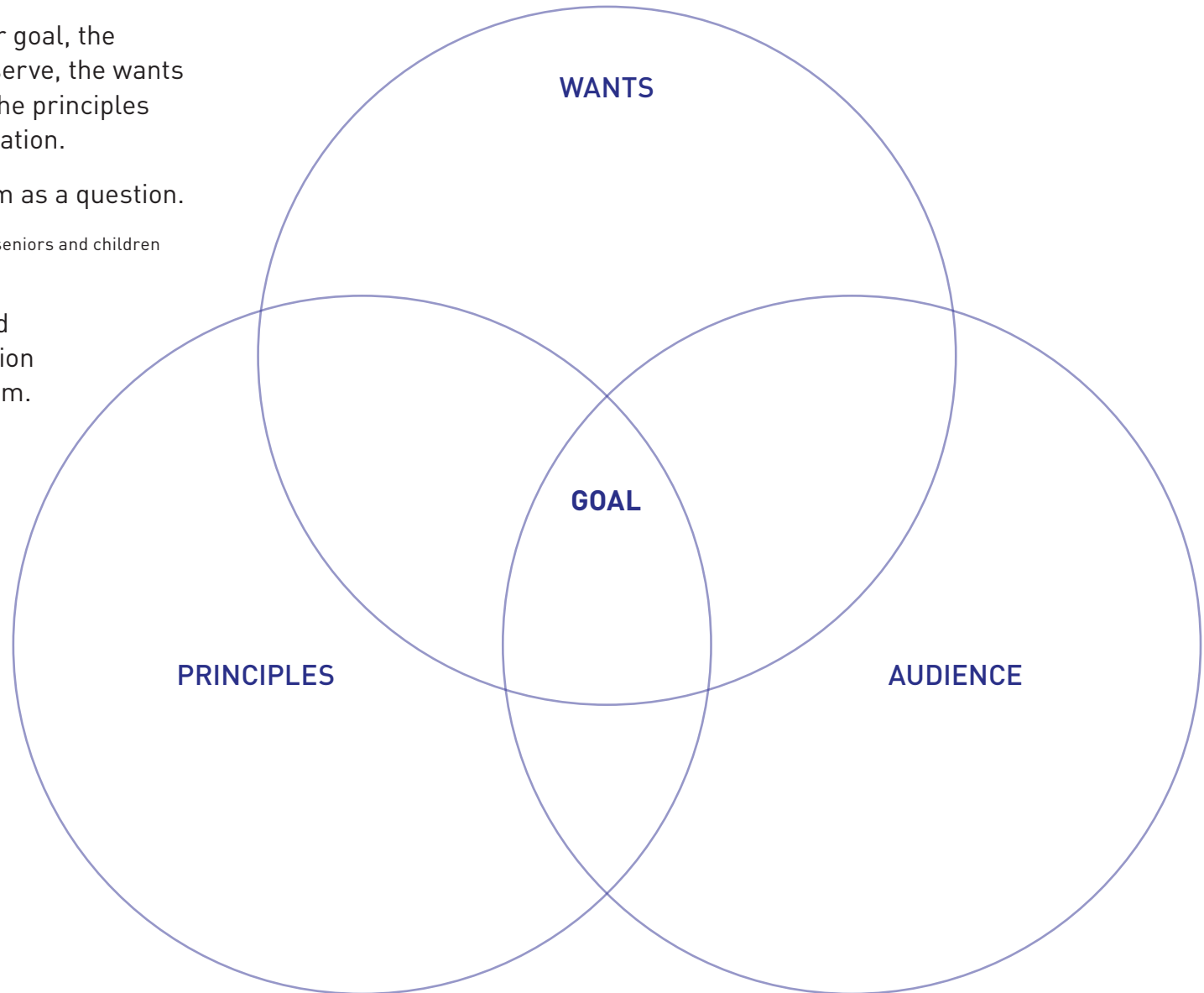
- For example: "How could this idea connect seniors and children while maintaining social distancing?"

Next, troubleshoot the idea, and strengthen your problem question by filling in the following diagram.

Ask yourself:

- Who is the community I'm aiming to serve?
- Do I understand the needs and desires of the communities I'm hoping to serve?
- What principles should underline the work? (for example, will your project support public health, local economy, and social inclusion?)

Finally, use the information you've developed by answering these questions to define a clear goal for your project.



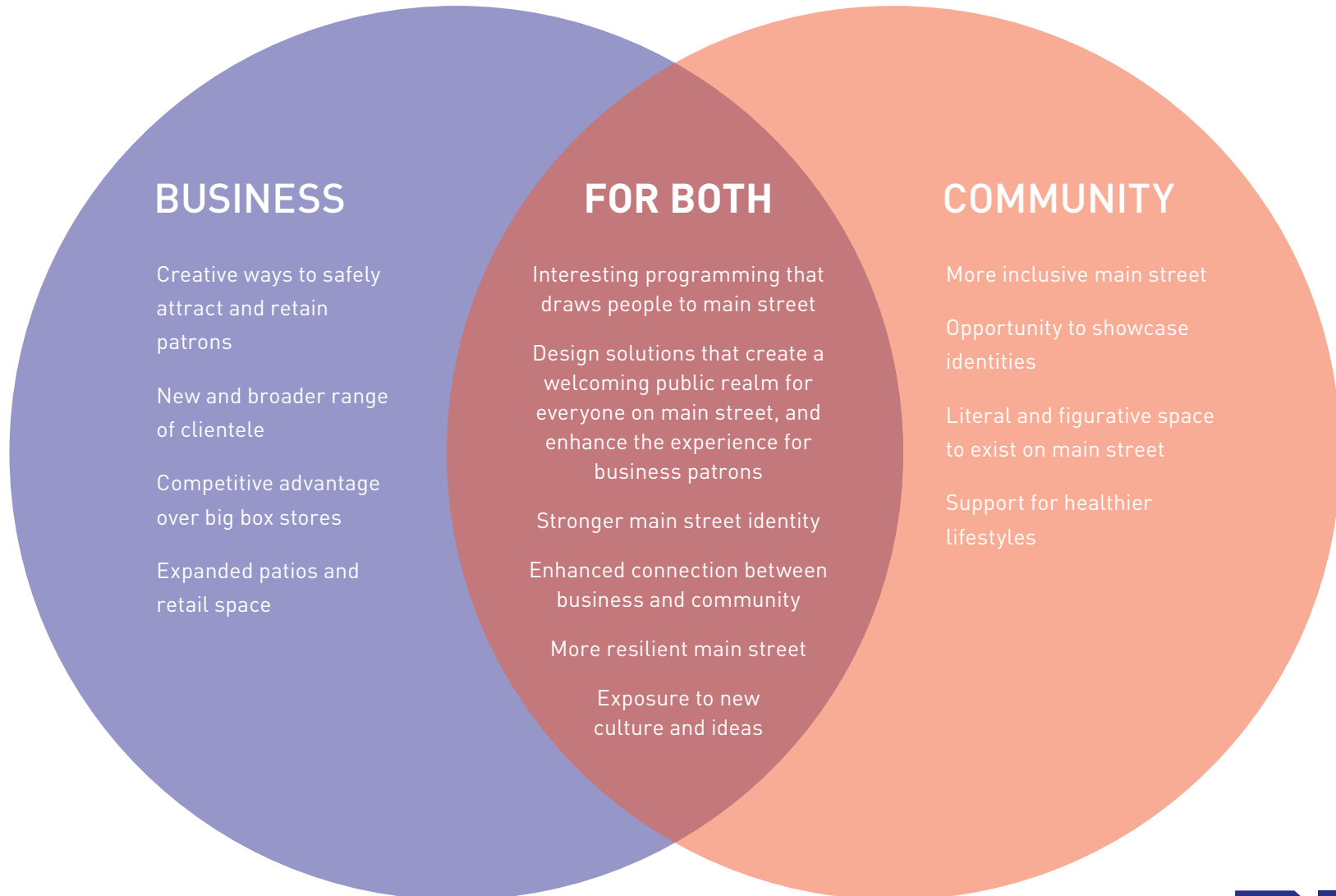


## ACTIVITY 03

### Connecting business and community to bring back main street

This toolkit is intended to help bring back main streets hit hard by the pandemic. To do so, solutions that support business and community are important, but solutions that do both are fundamental. The most resilient main streets are the ones where both communities and businesses feel a

connection. The following activity is intended to help you identify how an idea works for businesses, how it works for communities, and most importantly, how it can work to support both. We looked at the toolkit, and potential beneficiaries, for this sample activity.

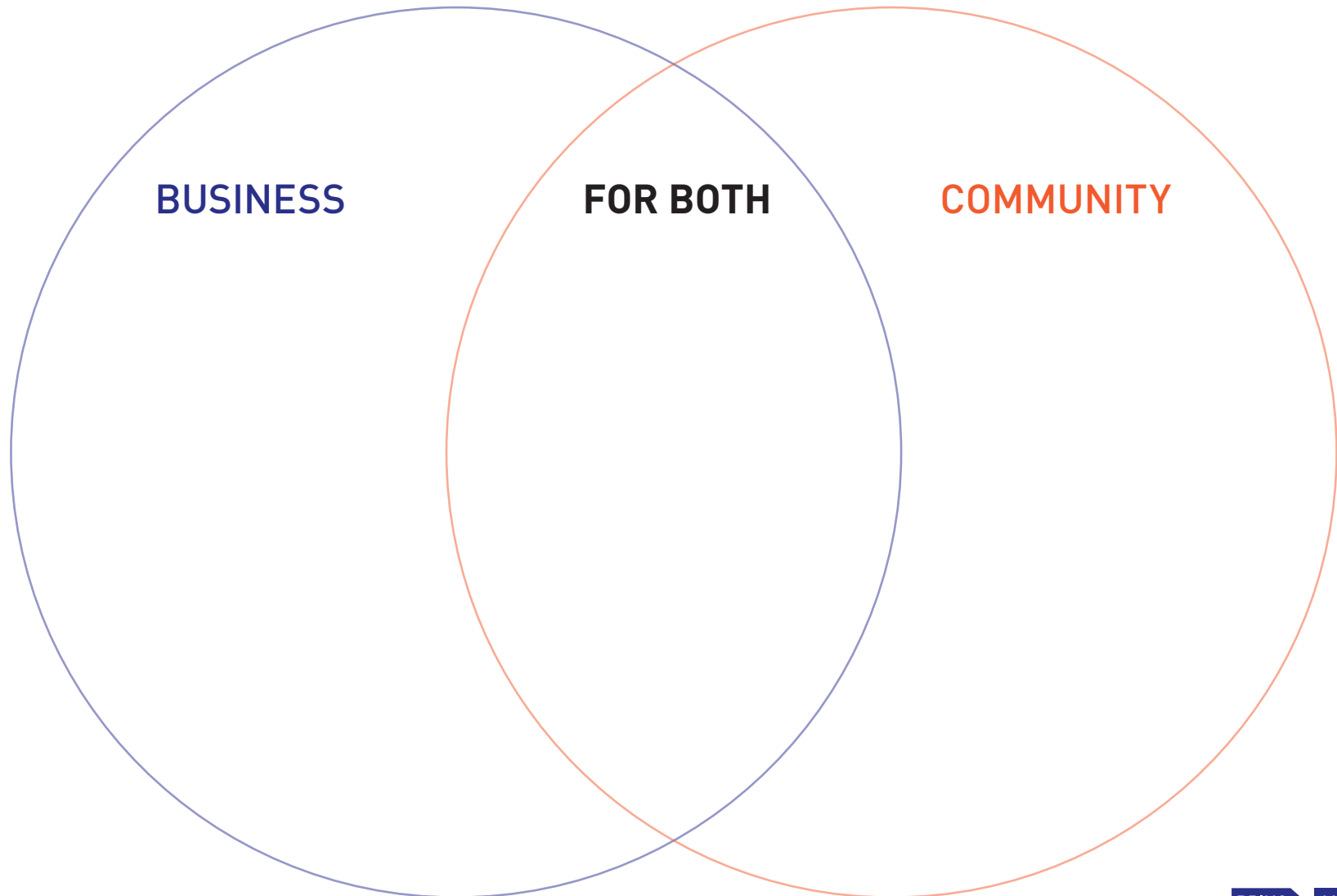


## ACTIVITY 03

### Connecting business and community to bring back main street

For our example, we look at how this toolkit benefits businesses, community and both. First, we consider how the toolkit benefits businesses and

communities. In doing so, we identify aspects that benefit both. These are defined in the space where the two circles overlap.



# ASSESSING THE OUTCOMES

Your programming and interventions are in place! Now what? It's important to assess the outcomes of these interventions to ensure they are working well for the community. Each neighbourhood will have different priorities and desired outcomes. To measure what matters for your main street, define what success looks like, then determine ways to measure it, and set a timeline for reviewing the outcomes.

When defining success, consider both qualitative and quantitative measures. Metrics, or measures for success, can vary widely depending on the type of programming or intervention being undertaken. A number of potential measures are detailed in the Program Guide and Intervention Guide, later in this toolkit. These can include:

**People's Feedback:** Community and business feedback is the foundation on which the success of programming and interventions can be determined.

## Services and Material Sourcing

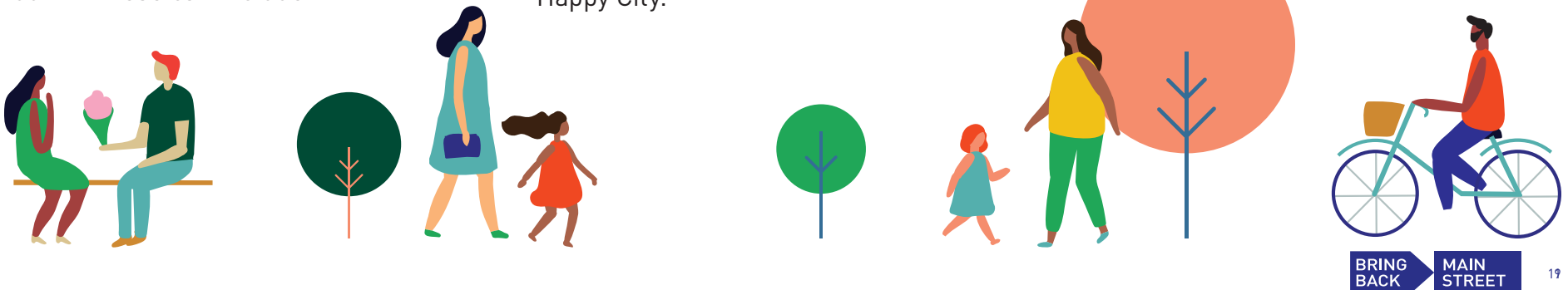
**Methods:** Have your procurement policies contributed to a just pandemic recovery? Have you considered procurement from local sources or marginalized groups?

**Public life studies:** Consider [wellbeing intercepts](#) and behavioural observations to gain a better understanding of how people are feeling and acting at your interventions. For more details and resources on conducting public life studies, consider reaching out to Happy City.

**Extent of engagement:** Determine who you have reached, and who you have not reached.

**Business outcomes:** Are local businesses benefiting from your efforts? Privacy concerns can limit quantifiable analysis, as can pre-determined views about re-allocating parking, but conversations with business owners can provide a deeper understanding of how the changes are influencing your main street economy.

**Safety:** Are your interventions aligned with local public health directives? Are people able to participate safely and in comfort?



# ASSESSING THE OUTCOMES

## Wellbeing Intercepts

Multiple studies show a strong relationship between the emotions of residents and long-term success of streets and cities. Here, you can ask people a series of questions about how they feel in the moment. Multiple choice questions can be tailored to gain an understanding of perceptions of welcomeness, safety, social interaction, trust and more. This will allow you to understand the influences that interventions and programming have on the people who are on main street. To ensure an effective response rate, design your intercepts to be completed in 3 minutes or less.

“If you were to lose your wallet in this spot today, how likely do you think it would be for a stranger to return it to you?”

- Sample subjective wellbeing question to assess trust

## Behavioural Observation

To understand the behavioural effects of main street interventions, observation can be a helpful approach to determine who is using each space and what they are doing while there. While observing space users and activities is insightful, it's also important to determine who is not using the space and what is not taking place there. People may notice that someone is observing, and shift from natural behaviour to performing, or altered behaviour. Accordingly, consider conducting observation from locations where people watching may be perceived as natural, such as patios, or more discrete public spaces. Depending on the nature of your programming or intervention, consider gathering data on activities that people lingering at the site are engaged in, as well as data on mode and frequency of people moving through. Bring Back Main Street has developed a [Pedestrian Counting Tool](#) to facilitate these efforts.

There are a number of ways to determine if the programming or interventions you've conducted are working for the communities and businesses on your main street. The vital steps are to a) determine if it is working b) determine who it is working for and c) understand how you can better meet the needs of people who aren't feeling welcome on main street, yet.



# PROGRAMMING GUIDE

The way a space is programmed plays an important role in determining how it will be used, who will participate and how the benefits of placemaking are distributed. When programming is done well, it can support social wellbeing, public health and the economy.

Once you've clarified who is in your community, and which community members your project aims to serve, you'll need to create a process for engaging that key community to ensure you get it right.



# Community Chalk Festival

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



JOY



MEANING



BELONGING



SOCIABILITY

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## LENGTH

Days Weeks Months

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

It can be. Similar logistics apply to hosting a community snow sculpture event.

## MATERIALS

Chalk  
Hairspray

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Convene a day-long or weekend-long event for artists and the public to create temporary chalk installations on a sidewalk or street. Some pavement spaces can be reserved for local artist installations, while other spaces can be used for games and activities involving chalk, and others can be open for creative expression.

Chalk is a simple tool to creatively transform street space. Hosting a festival is a way to bring people together to have fun, cooperate and create a sense of agency over shared space.



Thank you Ariana Holt for sharing this idea during the BBMS Studio



# Community Chalk Festival

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

While artists and kids might be the primary audiences of a chalk festival, everyone can have fun drawing and writing messages in chalk. As long as the event is accessible to individuals with diverse abilities, this event can serve many people.

**Will people with diverse abilities be able to participate?**

Yes, if you ensure the event takes place in a space that can be physically accessible to those with mobility barriers. Allow chalk art to happen on walls and other vertical surfaces, for those in wheelchairs or who use mobility devices who might not be able to draw on the sidewalk. Many people with diverse cognitive abilities enjoy arts, and chalk art could be appealing.

**How can you collaborate with people in your community who are already doing the kind of work you'd like to do?**

If you're working with artists, can you select those who reflect the diversity of the community you're aiming to serve?

**Are there businesses that might be interested in actively supporting or participating in this program?**

Businesses might want to use chalk to increase activity around their shops, and increase awareness about their goods and services.

**Are there any COVID-related considerations that need to be accounted for?**

Note that in order to keep this event COVID-19 appropriate, you'll need to get lots of chalk so that each visitor can use their own piece, and take it home when they're finished.

**How would you measure success?**

Number of people who participate, amount of time that people linger, range of community voices elevated, diversity of people who participate, number of posts on social media.

# Community Mapping

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



JOY



MEANING



BELONGING



SOCIABILITY

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## LENGTH

Days Weeks Months

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Yes. It could be indoors, or hosted under an awning or tent.

## MATERIALS

- Map or other base layer.
- Markers, pins or other art materials.

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Community mapping is a way to work with a residents to identify assets in the community, paint a picture of what it's like for residents of diverse experiences to live there, and what opportunities and challenges exist in the neighbourhood. Assets might be strong existing neighbourhood relationships, physical spaces like parks, neighbourhood public art, or social and community services.



Thank you Ajeev Bhatia for sharing this idea during the BBMS Studio

# Community Mapping

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Community mapping is a research method that can help you capture information about your community. It will help you make sure your activation is inclusive, context-sensitive, and collaborative. If done right, this activation can also be fun and engaging for participants.

**Will people with diverse abilities be able to participate?**

If participants will be asked to write or add to a map, ensure it can be reached at different levels. Also, ensure someone is available to write or attach pins to a map for those who might need support.

**How can you collaborate with people in your community who are already doing the kind of work you'd like to do?**

This activity will help you identify possible collaborators and communities to engage with in the future. Community mapping can take place through an activation in an outdoor space, where residents mark their favourite places and experiences onto a printed map. It can help to highlight community champions and groups whose great work is un-recognized by main street decision-makers.

**Are there businesses that might be interested in actively supporting or participating in this program?**

This activity will also help you identify possible businesses to engage with in the future.

**Are there any COVID-related considerations that need to be accounted for?**

If you will be asking people to stand or sit in close proximity to a map, ensure you designate socially-distant gathering spaces and spaces for participants to line up while waiting. If possible, use materials that will not be reused. If you do need to share materials, like pens, sanitize them in between each use.

**How would you measure success?**

Quality of relationships established, number of people who participate, number of people and organizations identified.



## Case Study: Vancouver

Vancouver Mural Festival partnered with Indigenous groups to support artistic capacity among youth and increase the presence of indigenous art in the city.



Thank you Sierra Tasi Baker for highlighting this idea during the BBMS workshop

Vancouver Mural Festival partnered with a number of Indigenous-led groups to lead [Kulus \(Young Thunderbird\) workshops](#) for and by Indigenous youth. Working with [Lu'ma Native Youth Mentorship Program](#), [Collingwood C.R.E.W.](#), [Raycam Community Centre](#) and [UNYA's OCM Program](#), the goal of the program is to help add capacity to ongoing community work, and to support wellbeing and cultural connections for Indigenous youth. One recent Kulus initiative, called the "Hides Painting" program, supported youth to choose their own designs, transpose them onto "hides" and display them across Vancouver at summer festivals.

Image: Paul Windsor Art, Vancouver Mural Fest photo

# Community Hub (indoor/outdoor)

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



JOY



MEANING



BELONGING



SOCIABILITY



RESILIENCE

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## LENGTH

Weeks Months Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Yes. An indoor community hub can run year round.

## MATERIALS

- Removable seating
- Tents or umbrellas
- Signage
- A community hub could also be indoors, occupying a vacant storefront

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

A community hub is a public space where multiple organizations and groups can co-locate. We often envision community hubs to exist inside under the same roof, but hubs could also spring up on the sidewalk or in the park.

Community hubs can support people to access essential goods and services, while also gathering socially. For example, an outdoor community hub might host a reading space facilitated by the public library and a seed or plant sharing stand. They are often perceived as more approachable than large institutions that offer similar services.



Thank you Cheryll Case, Ajeev Bhatia and Rob Leblanc for advancing this idea during the BBMS Studio

## Community Hub (indoor/outdoor)

**Who benefits from these activities?  
Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a  
specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Community hubs can be designed to support any kind of group, program, or initiative. The hubs can support the same groups semi-permanently or provide space for a rotation of groups.

**Will people with diverse abilities  
be able to participate?**

Make sure the hub is located in a space that is physically accessible. Further, make sure services and groups that co-locate in the hub serve equity-seeking residents with diverse abilities.

**How can you collaborate with people in  
your community who are already doing  
the kind of work you'd like to do?**

The community hub is a great way to provide space for local community initiatives. It can be staffed by people who live in the neighborhood.

**Are there businesses that might be  
interested in actively supporting or  
participating in this program?**

The community hub is focused on grassroots and not-for-profit groups that serve the public.

**Are there any COVID-related  
considerations that need to be  
accounted for?**

Make sure each group that co-locates in the hub agrees to the same physical distancing terms. Ensure visitors wear masks and follow physical distancing protocols. You may need signage to make the protocols clear.

**How would you measure success?**

Range of services fulfilled, feedback from community, range of people who participate, number of people served, number of repeat patrons.



# Live Music

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Yes. By adding (physically distanced) heaters and wind shelters, as well as by hosting short music sets, this can be made winter friendly.

## LENGTH

**Weeks** Months Years

## MATERIALS

Musicians aren't materials, but they - and their instruments - are vital. Beyond that, materials can increase in line with the ambitions for the performance. A space to mark out physical distancing, speakers, a power source, a stage, lighting and more can be progressively added as desired.

---

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Live Music. Music brings main street to life. It sparks joy and enables connections. It can expose people to new ideas and cultures. A variety of local musicians can be hired with the aim of appealing to an array of audiences.





# Live Music

## Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?

People of many ages and backgrounds benefit. Local musicians benefit. Businesses who strengthen their offerings through experience benefit. An array of communities can be represented through live music. When equity and inclusion are considered goals, Live Music can serve a very broad range of people, from parents and caretakers with kids, to youth, to adults and seniors, of all backgrounds. Neighbours living on main street may not appreciate noise later at night. People with hearing impairments may struggle to hear acquaintances speak. However, the music experience can be made more inclusive in locations where music is regularly performed by integrating [hearing loops](#) into the space. Consider how locations impact people who live on the street.

## Will people with diverse abilities be able to participate?

Yes, but it is important to locate musicians in spaces where they, and anyone who gathers to watch, don't impede movement for people. People with diverse abilities people who enjoy music may like to attend, and calm nearby space could make this more appealing.

## Are there any COVID-related considerations that need to be accounted for?

Ensure that a space is marked out to ensure physical distancing between performers and the audience. Consider ground markings or a street mural that makes it easy for people to measure 2 metres of physical distancing from others.

## Are there businesses that might be interested in actively supporting or participating in this program?

Restaurants, cafes and bars, and others whose customer experiences are enhanced through music.

## How can you collaborate with people in your community who are already doing the kind of work you'd like to do?

By involving local musicians from an array of cultures that are present on your main street. By highlighting diverse performers with an array of identities. By considering how music can benefit children and seniors, as well as the opportunities it presents to connect people across cultures. By harnessing music's potential to foster inclusion. Coordinate programming with local businesses and community groups.

## How would you measure success?

Feedback on the events, number of people who view them, length of time people linger, number musicians hired, range of cultures celebrated, number of posts on social media

# Distanced Fitness Class

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



HEALTH



JOY



SOCIABILITY



BELONGING

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## LENGTH

**Weeks** Months Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Unlikely. Could be conducted with heaters, but may not attract many people.

## MATERIALS

- Instructors
- Speakers
- Signage
- Promotional material

---

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Outdoor, distanced movement classes led by local instructors. Opportunities for safe, distanced physical activity allows community members to keep moving and stay healthy. Group fitness classes also provide an additional wellbeing benefit by allowing participants to learn new skills, engage with different cultures, interact socially and connect over shared experiences, which can contribute to building a sense of community.



# Distanced Fitness Class

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Classes can be tailored to be accessible to a variety of community groups, including different ages and abilities. For example, a seniors-focused yoga class or kids dance class can be programmed specifically for these demographics. Also, classes can include specialized forms of dance or physical activity that represent the different cultural groups in the community, like Tai Chi or Bhangra. Importantly, if these programs are free or low-cost, they can further benefit those who would otherwise not have access to programmed physical activity.

**Are there businesses that might be interested in actively supporting or participating in this program?**

Local gyms, fitness centres or yoga and dance studios. Any physical activity-focused business who is facing challenges due to limitations on class sizes and physical distancing requirements.

**Will people with diverse abilities be able to participate?**

It is possible to program specific fitness classes designed for people in wheelchairs or other mobility devices. This would require a trainer with specific training and specialization in this field.

**Are there any COVID-related considerations that need to be accounted for?**

Class participants must stand 2 metres apart from each other at all times during the session. This will require markings on the ground (or use of existing ground murals) that demarcate where each participant must stand. High-intensity or more vigorous classes may also require increased spacing between participants.

**How can you collaborate with people in your community who are already doing the kind of work you'd like to do?**

Hire local fitness instructors, dancers or other physical artists who can share their knowledge with the community. Find local fitness hubs that may have closed their doors or may be struggling with decreased class sizes and invite them to bring their programming outdoors. Consider how classes can be programmed to benefit an array of physical abilities and skill sets.

**How would you measure success?**

Number of classes, number of participants in total, number of different classes offered, age range of people who participate, cultural approaches highlighted



# Market Day

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



RESILIENCE



SOCIABILITY



EASE

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## LENGTH

Weeks Months Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Yes

## MATERIALS

- Signage / tents
- Tables / chairs
- Power sources
- Queue management system
- Human resources

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

A day (or series of days) when streets are closed to vehicle traffic and local businesses expand their stores onto the streets and sidewalks, creating a pedestrian mall along one or several blocks of a main street. This allows businesses to reach more customers, by increasing the number of visitors that can access their goods or services at one time. Market days can also encourage residents to walk or take active mobility options to reach the main street. Market streets bring an energetic, social energy to the area.



Thank you Will Dunn for highlighting this idea during the BBMS Studio

# Market Day

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Market days benefit local shops and businesses by increasing access to more clientele. They also benefit all members of the community by providing more space for shopping and interacting with each other at a safe distance. Car-free streets can, however, provide accessibility challenges for those who require vehicles for transportation, or who are unable to walk with ease.

**Are there businesses that might be interested in actively supporting or participating in this program?**

Yes - this programming initiative specifically engages local businesses.

**Will people with diverse abilities be able to participate?**

Yes, open, car-free streets will be accessible to people with mobility barriers if locations with accessibility features are selected. To compensate for inaccessible existing infrastructure, ramps can be added. Some people with brain-based differences may be hesitant to visit if the market is busy, or require a nearby space to relax.

**Are there any COVID-related considerations that need to be accounted for?**

Market streets may require specific entry and exit points to manage traffic and control the number of people using the space at once.

**How can you collaborate with people in your community who are already doing the kind of work you'd like to do?**

By engaging businesses and gauging interest for this type of programming. By providing materials necessary to reduce barriers to participation. By engaging and inviting a broader range of local businesses to participate, even if they don't have main street retail space. By inviting small businesses that don't have brick and mortar locations to establish a physical presence in the community. By connecting with local farmer's markets and engaging existing local vendor networks.

**How would you measure success?**

Number of businesses who participate, number of people who visit, total revenue generated, number of early-stage entrepreneurs who participate

# Main Street Scavenger Hunt

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



HEALTH



JOY



SOCIABILITY



MEANING

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## LENGTH

**Weeks** Months Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Yes

## MATERIALS

Items to be found through the scavenger hunt. They can take many forms.

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## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Main Street Scavenger Hunt. It encourages people to get to know their main streets. It offers light physical activity, aligns with physical distancing requirements, can include educational components and can involve community groups and businesses. There are many ways to approach this activity, including family-oriented hunts, photo scavenger hunts, or local business passport stamping.





# Main Street Scavenger Hunt

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Parents and children are likely groups to benefit from this, as well as summer camps and organizers of activities for kids. Teenagers and adults may be less interested in this activity. Black, Indigenous, and people of colour looking in hard-to-reach places risk being perceived as causing mischief or worse. Ensure the activity is well-publicized and that law enforcement are aware of it.

**Will people with diverse abilities be able to participate?**

If this is organized without considering accessibility, people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices may be excluded. Planned with an eye on inclusion, this activity can be enjoyed by people with an array of abilities.

**How can you collaborate with people in your community who are already doing the kind of work you'd like to do?**

Community groups can use this activity to engage others in their areas of interest, while businesses could participate, and draw in potential customers. Artists or craftspeople could be hired to make the items that people search for.

**Are there businesses that might be interested in actively supporting or participating in this program?**

Businesses whose customers include parents and children may be interested, as could arts supply stores.

**Are there any COVID-related considerations that need to be accounted for?**

Observe public health directives and physical distancing.

**How would you measure success?**

Number of people who participate, feedback from participants and businesses, number of posts on social media



# Main Street in a Box

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



HEALTH



MEANING



BELONGING



RESILIENCE



SOCIABILITY



JOY

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## LENGTH

Weeks Months Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Yes

## MATERIALS

A shipping container to store everything, whatever items you'd like to include, from arts supplies to sports equipment, children's toys to street furniture



## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Main Street in a Box. Main Street in a Box involves both programming and intervention. It can include all of the things that a community needs to activate a main street. It can be tailored to specific communities in the area. To succeed, it requires a steward who conducts on-site programming.

Thank you TJ Maguire for sharing this idea during the BBMS Studio

# Main Street in a Box

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

It depends on what is included in the box, but the free use of items will benefit many people with limited incomes. Youth are an obvious group, as are parents with lower incomes, but it can be tailored to meet the needs of many groups. With this in mind, it is important to consider how your selection will invite or exclude people. Careful with the location of the box. A location that is seemingly unused or out of the way could be a street-involved person's sleeping place.

**Are there businesses that might be interested in actively supporting or participating in this program?**

Businesses could organize programming that corresponds with items included in the box.

**Will people with diverse abilities be able to participate?**

In principle, yes. But this is an important point to consider when selecting what items will be placed in the box. Some people with brain-based differences will require nearby calm space, if an area becomes busy. An inclusive atmosphere can be supported by ensuring diversity among the people conducting programming.

**Are there any COVID-related considerations that need to be accounted for?**

Items will need to be sanitized before and after use. Keeping hand sanitizer on site for everyone using items will also be important.

**How can you collaborate with people in your community who are already doing the kind of work you'd like to do?**

Crowdsource (and then sanitize) items that are included in the box. Ask people what they would like to have on main street. Reach out to people and groups who may typically be excluded from decision-making, including Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) youth and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

**How would you measure success?**

Community feedback, total participants, diversity of people who participate, number of repeat visitors

**Program Name:**

CREATE A VISUAL OF YOUR PROGRAM

WELL BEING PRINCIPLES



COST

\$\$\$\$\$

LENGTH

Days Weeks Months Years

WINTER FRIENDLY?

MATERIALS

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**What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?**

## Program Name:

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

**What maintenance does this intervention require?**

**How would you measure success?**

# INTERVENTION GUIDE

Altering the design, makeup and use of main streets can help to fulfill public health directives, support local business, and make space for people to linger or meet in comfort. These interventions can communicate a powerful message about your commitment to pandemic recovery and the communities you serve.

Once you've clarified the goals of your intervention(s), and which businesses and communities will be served, you'll need to create a process to move from idea to inclusive action.



# Creative Barrier Hacks

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



EASE



BELONGING



JOY

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## LENGTH

Days Weeks Months

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

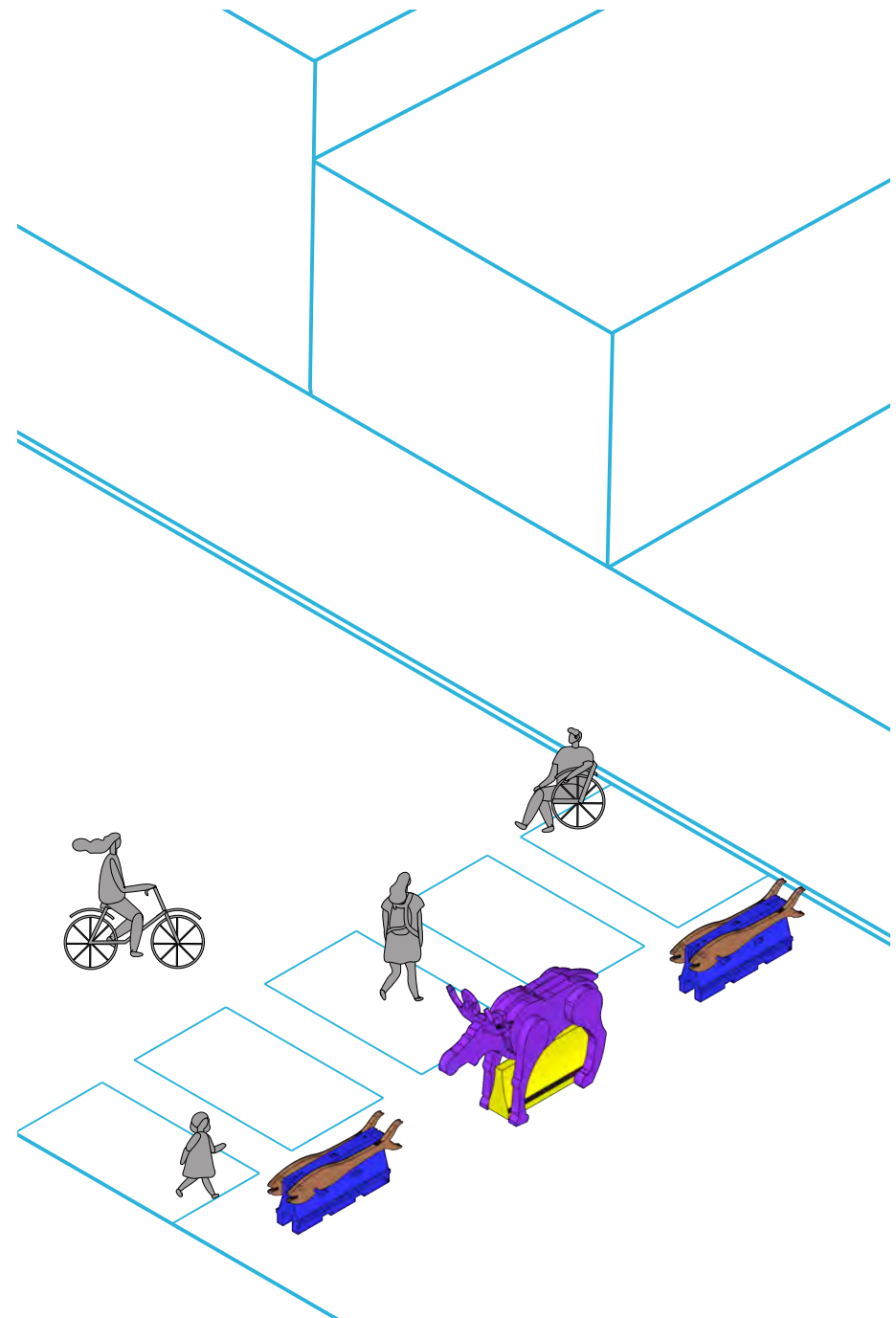
Yes. Winter barriers can be made of snow and ice, which can be carved into distinct and context-sensitive shapes.

## MATERIALS

- Standard barricade
- Paint, wood, or vinyl covers

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Creative Barrier Hacks. Creative barricade hacks enable main streets to safely expand space for people, without looking like a construction zone. The aesthetic upgrades provide an opportunity for co-creation with those around main street, and can enhance the sense of place by celebrating local stories and icons.



# Creative Barrier Hacks

## Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?

People moving and lingering on main streets, restaurants, cafes, bars, communities who are showcased on the barriers, and people engaged to create the barriers will benefit. Drivers and businesses who do not attract customers on foot are unlikely to benefit.

## Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?

It is important to ensure that the barricades provide enough space for people using mobility aids to move around them without being obstructed by a curb. Depending on the length of street that is barricaded, consider parking spaces for people with disabilities, as well as wheelchair-friendly pick up and drop off locations.

## Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?

Yes, it could. When locating the barricades, ensure that they do not encroach on the sidewalk or bike lanes. If placed in public space, ensure they do not impede the flow of people with wheelchairs, strollers or other rolling devices.

## Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?

Potentially. This can be reduced by maintaining the street-facing aspect of the barricade as a standard traffic item, while creatively hacking the people-facing side of the barricade.

## What maintenance does this intervention require?

Minimal. Cleaning and repainting are optional.

## Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?

Artists, craftspeople, youth groups and summer camps, interested community members and businesses, historical societies.

## Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?

Yes, if the street reallocation became permanent, the creative barriers could also be upgraded for long-term use.

## How would you measure success?

Number of creative barriers deployed, number of people engaged in process, number of communities represented, community feedback.





# Movable Seating

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

People of all ages who are looking to sit and rest or socialize. However, when public space is reallocated to private patios, people who can't afford to buy things are excluded. BIPOC and street-involved people are also more likely to face scrutiny while using public space, whether it is sitting on movable seating, walking down the street, or nearly any other activity.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Careful, if the seating encroaches on sidewalks or other pedestrian thoroughfares, it can create a new barrier.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Yes. Considering the location, and ensuring that businesses don't encroach on these important right of ways is important.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

Only if combined with other interventions, such as transforming a parking space into a parklet.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Craftspeople could build the seating, artists, kids groups or others could decorate them, seniors and other people with mobility issues can provide insight on designs that make it easier to sit and get up.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

The seating would need to be maintained and eventually replaced, but placing movable seating in the public realm could endure. Storage or ways to secure the seating may need to be considered.

**How would you measure success?**

Amount of seating deployed, public life study of usage.

# Ground Murals for Physical Distancing

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



HEALTH



JOY



BELONGING

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Days **Weeks** Months

## MAINTENANCE

None

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

Weeks **Months** Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Yes, but may be covered by snow and ice.

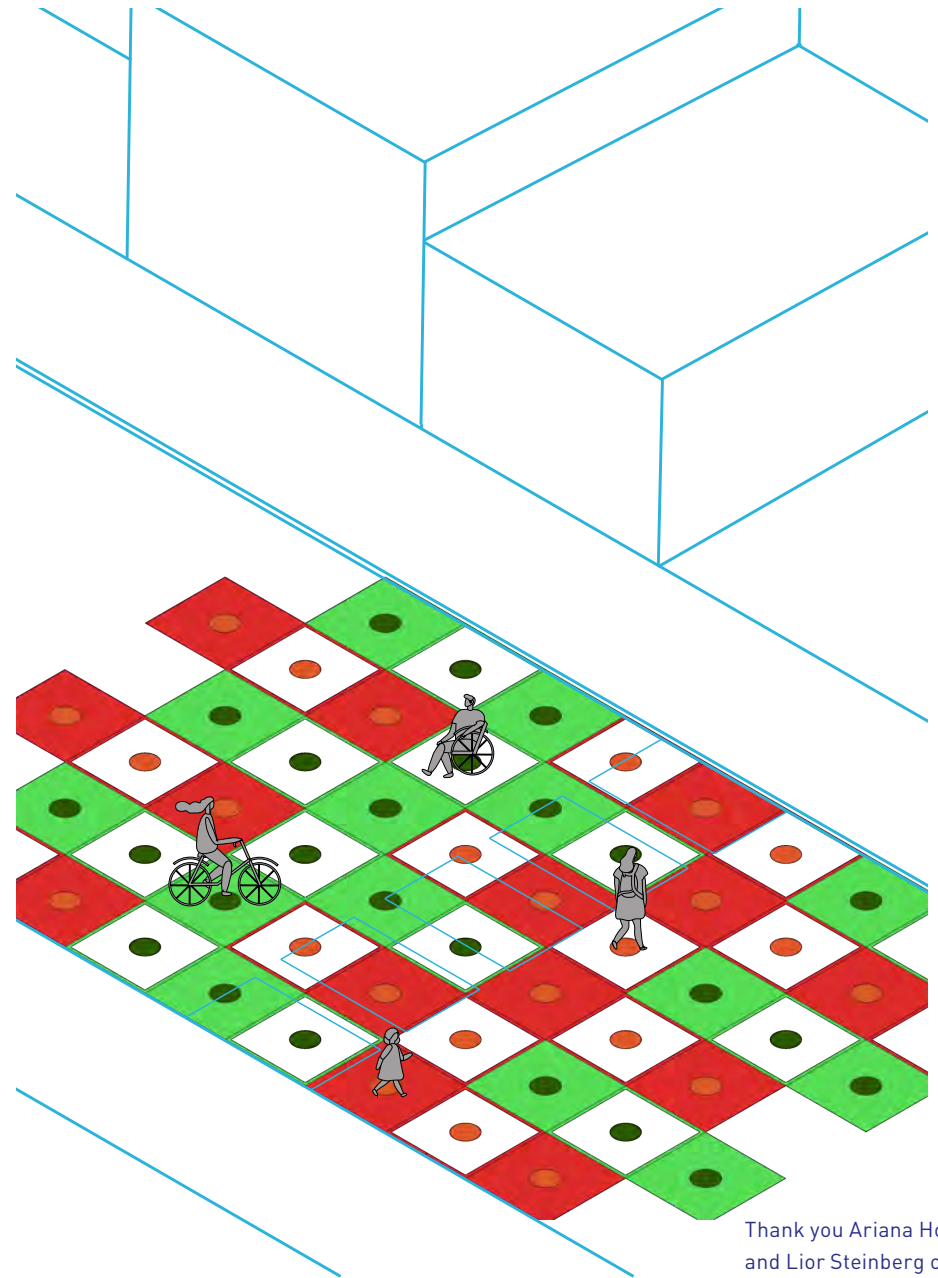
## MATERIALS

- Paint

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Physical distancing doesn't have to be boring. With some careful planning and paint, markers that help people stand apart from one another can be turned into a beautiful ground mural.

Since pandemic recovery is a long-term project, working with local artists to demarcate sidewalk space ensures we can maintain public health standards while increasing joy in city space.



Thank you Ariana Holt and Lior Steinberg for advancing this idea during the BBMS Studio

# Ground Murals for Physical Distancing

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

This initiative is a great way to work in collaboration with local artists, to ensure everyone (including any city's most vulnerable residents) can stay safe from COVID-19. It can be used to highlight messages of inclusion and solidarity created by BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and other communities.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

It's important to ensure any art added to the street does not compromise the physical accessibility of the streets.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Any aesthetic additions to the street should support delineation of street space, so it becomes increasingly clear where people, bikes, and cars should go.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

Yes. You are likely to require permits from your City.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Collaborate with diverse local artists and/or local mural groups to create a ground mural that reflects your community.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

Yes. The ground mural can be maintained over the long-term.

**How would you measure success?**

Diversity of artists engaged, feedback from community and businesses, number of posts on social media, subjective wellbeing intercepts.

# Outdoor Reading Room

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



EASE



SOCIABILITY



RESILIENCE



BELONGING

## COST

\$\$\$\$

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Days Weeks Months

## MAINTENANCE

Requires regular clean-up and maintenance from staff, could be stewarded by the public.

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

Weeks Months Years

## MATERIALS

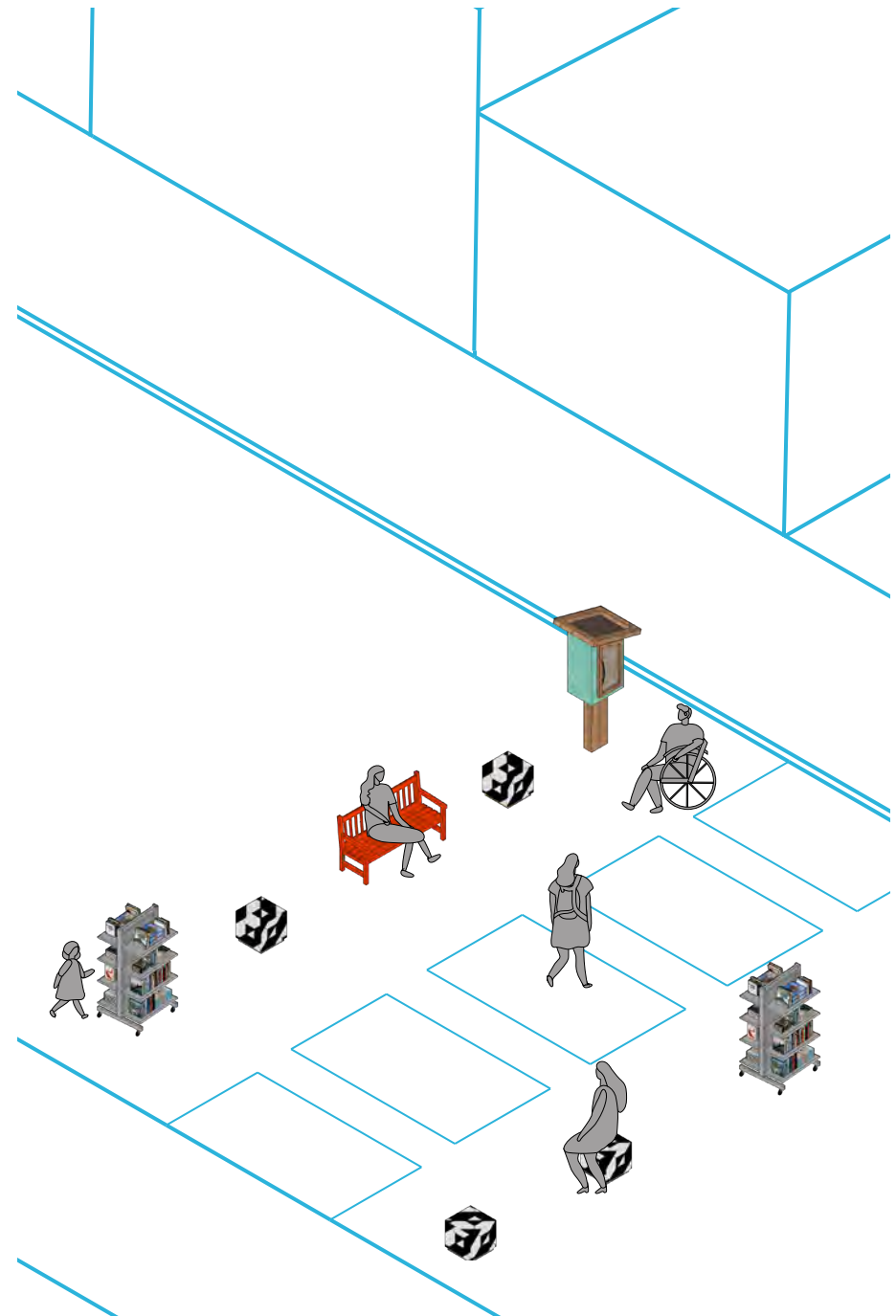
- Movable seating
- Signage
- Outdoor shelves or storage for books
- Umbrellas, tents or other sun and rain shelters

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

No

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

An outdoor reading room brings the library to the sidewalk. Reading together can still happen at a distance. By placing books (from the library or free) in protected, outdoor shelving or boxes, and providing the public with sheltered, movable seating, residents can have a quiet moment to read alone or in small groups.



# Outdoor Reading Room

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Anyone who enjoys reading, or who simply wants a quiet place to stop! Recognize that BIPOC communities and street-involved people are more likely to be scrutinized when using public space.

**Could this intervention risk creating new barriers for people with diverse mobility or other needs?**

Ensure that the space is physically accessible. Further, provide books of all levels and options that would appeal to residents with diverse interests. Quiet spaces in the public realm can be important for some people with brain-based differences.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Yes. An outdoor reading room will need to be planned in coordination with bike lanes and other public spaces.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

Yes. This intervention may require permitting from the City. Additionally, it could occur in collaboration with the public library system.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Public libraries and non-profit literacy organizations could be potential collaborators and also provide input on the best ways to organize this intervention.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

Yes! Even when social distancing is no longer recommended, outdoor reading spaces could be fun, effective ways to gather in the warmer seasons.

**How would you measure success?**

Number of people who access the space, books loaned out, community groups engaged.

# DIY Seating: Benchlets and Bollard Seating

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



## COST

\$\$\$\$

## MAINTENANCE

Basic upkeep

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Yes

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

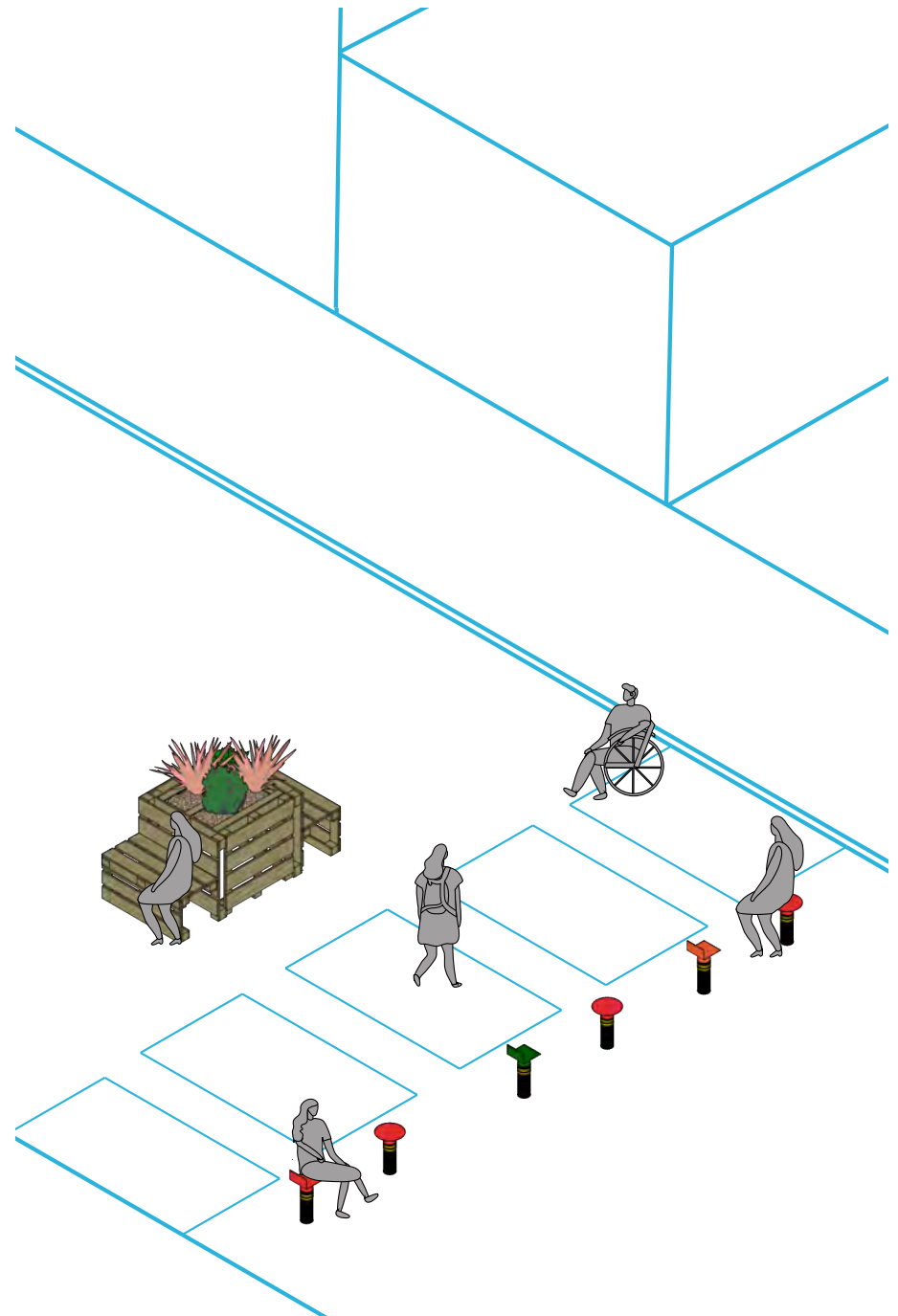
Days Weeks Months

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

Weeks Months Years

## MATERIALS

- Pallets or metal



## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

DIY seating. It is a fast, cost-effective and versatile way to add seating to many locations.



# DIY Seating: Benchlets and Bollard Seating

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

People of all ages who are looking to sit and rest or socialize. However, when public space is reallocated to private patios, people who can't afford to buy things are excluded. BIPOC and street-involved people are also more likely to face scrutiny while using public space, whether it is sitting on movable seating, walking down the street, or nearly any other activity.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

Depending on bylaws in place during the pandemic response, and if located on public land.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Yes, if improperly located on sidewalks or other spaces that people use for transportation. Careful with bollard seating, as it reduces the space between bollards, which could impede people in wheelchairs. Deep seating can be more difficult for seniors and people with mobility issues to get up from, while varying levels of seating can make a space more accommodating for all people.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Craftspeople who could build them and anyone interested in painting or decorating them.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Yes, if improperly located.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

Yes.

**How would you measure success?**

Number of people using the space, number of people sitting, public life study.

# Ping Pong

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Days **Weeks** Months

## MAINTENANCE

Ping pong tables may need to be maintained and moved with weather and land use changes.

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

**Weeks** Months Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

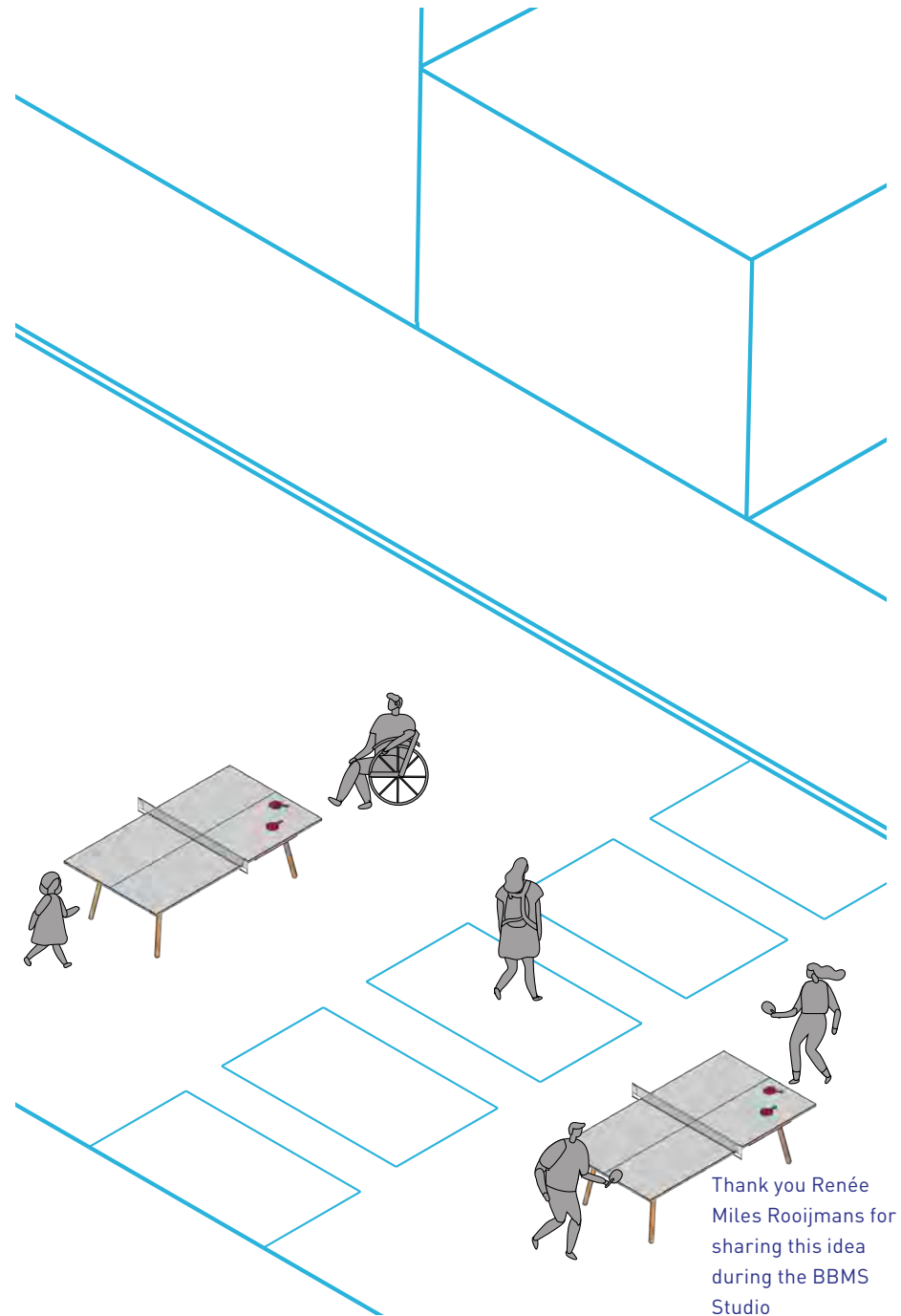
No

## MATERIALS

- Ping pong tables
- Ping pong racquets and balls

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Place ping pong tables and equipment in parks, parklets and other public spaces. Table tennis is an amazing way to make a public space fun for all ages. Ping pong tables are sturdy and can last for years, requiring minimal upkeep.



Thank you Renée Miles Rooijmans for sharing this idea during the BBMS Studio

# Ping Pong

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Folks of many ages and abilities can play ping pong. It is accessible for beginners and has a relatively low injury risk.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Ping pong may be inaccessible for people with some physical disabilities.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Yes. Outdoor ping pong will need to be coordinated in tandem with initiatives to allow pedestrians, bikes, and potentially cars to navigate the streets.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

This intervention may require permitting from the City.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Find out whether the City or local groups have already initiated ping pong or other outdoor games and activities. Could they be paid to build the tables or facilitate programming?

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

Yes! Ping pong tables provide a long-term investment that can be enjoyed for years.

**How would you measure success?**

Number of people engaged, age range of people engaged, subjective wellbeing intercepts

# Umbrellas

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Days **Weeks** Months

## MAINTENANCE

Umbrellas may need to be repaired or replaced over time.

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

Weeks Months **Years**

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

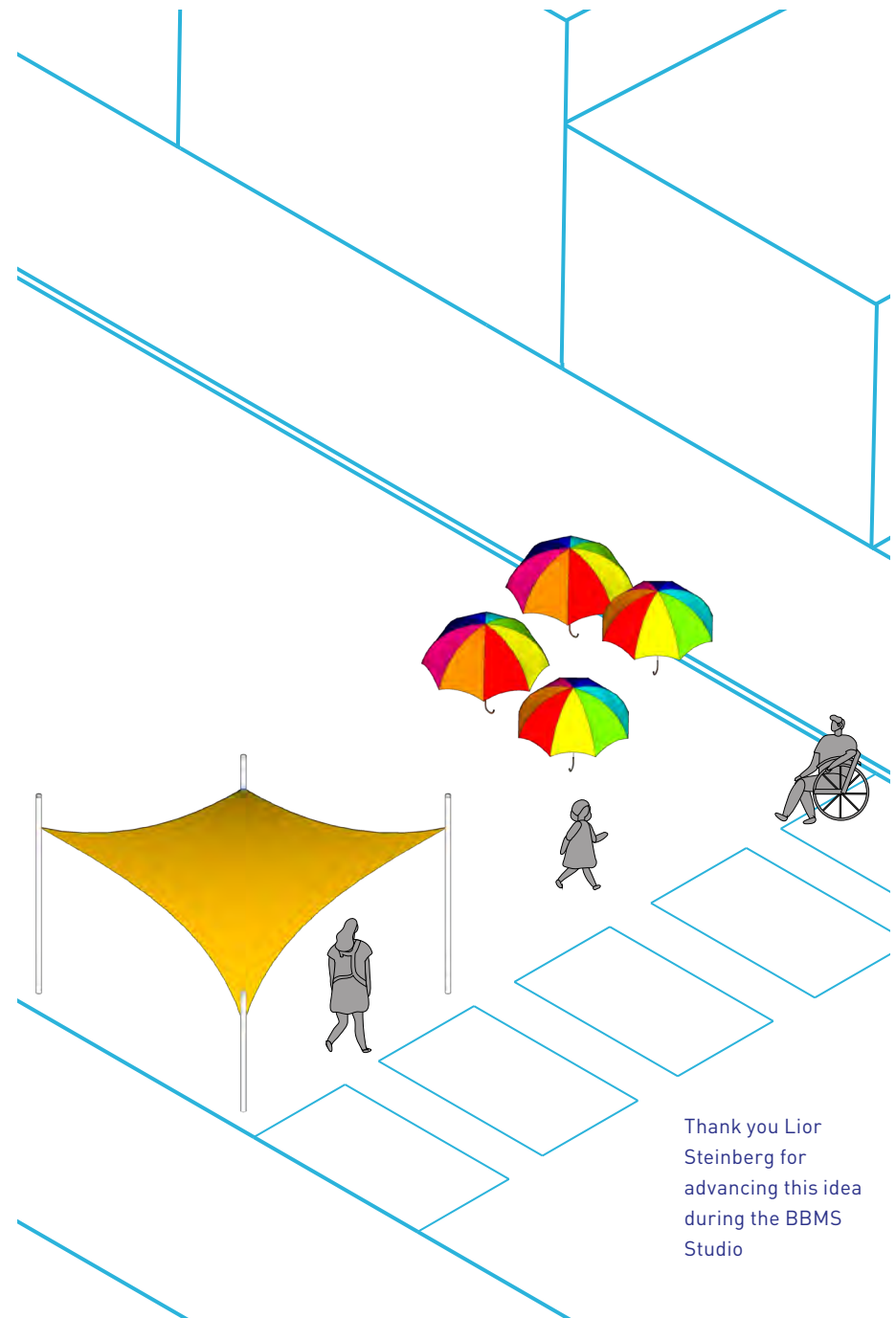
In some climates with low snowfall, umbrellas can provide cover from precipitation year-round.

## MATERIALS

- Umbrellas
- Stands (or tables that support umbrella use)

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Umbrellas in public seating areas that provide shade and cover from rain. Outdoor spaces become less usable with inclement weather. Outdoor shelter like umbrellas will allow people to access these spaces while remaining protected from precipitation (rain,



Thank you Lior Steinberg for advancing this idea during the BBMS Studio

# Umbrellas

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Umbrellas and other types of weather-protective shelter benefit people of all ages and abilities.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Special attention must be paid to the placement, design and locations of the umbrellas to ensure they are accessible by everyone, including those facing barriers to mobility. Umbrellas must also be large enough to provide cover for people with strollers or other larger mobility devices.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Possibly. Special attention must be paid to the implementation of umbrellas to address these concerns.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

Unlikely.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Umbrellas will either be ideally sourced from a local business, or designed uniquely for the desired space, if budgets allow. Local businesses who provide such design services can be engaged.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

Yes. With strategic design and an emphasis on durable materials, umbrellas can be used over time, across all seasons, if desired.

**How would you measure success?**

Shelter from rain and sun offered, number of people using them on a given day.



# Wheelchair Ramps

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



EASE



HEALTH



BELONGING

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Days **Weeks** Months

## MAINTENANCE

Depending on materials used, ramps may need to be replaced over time, snow clearance during the winter.

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

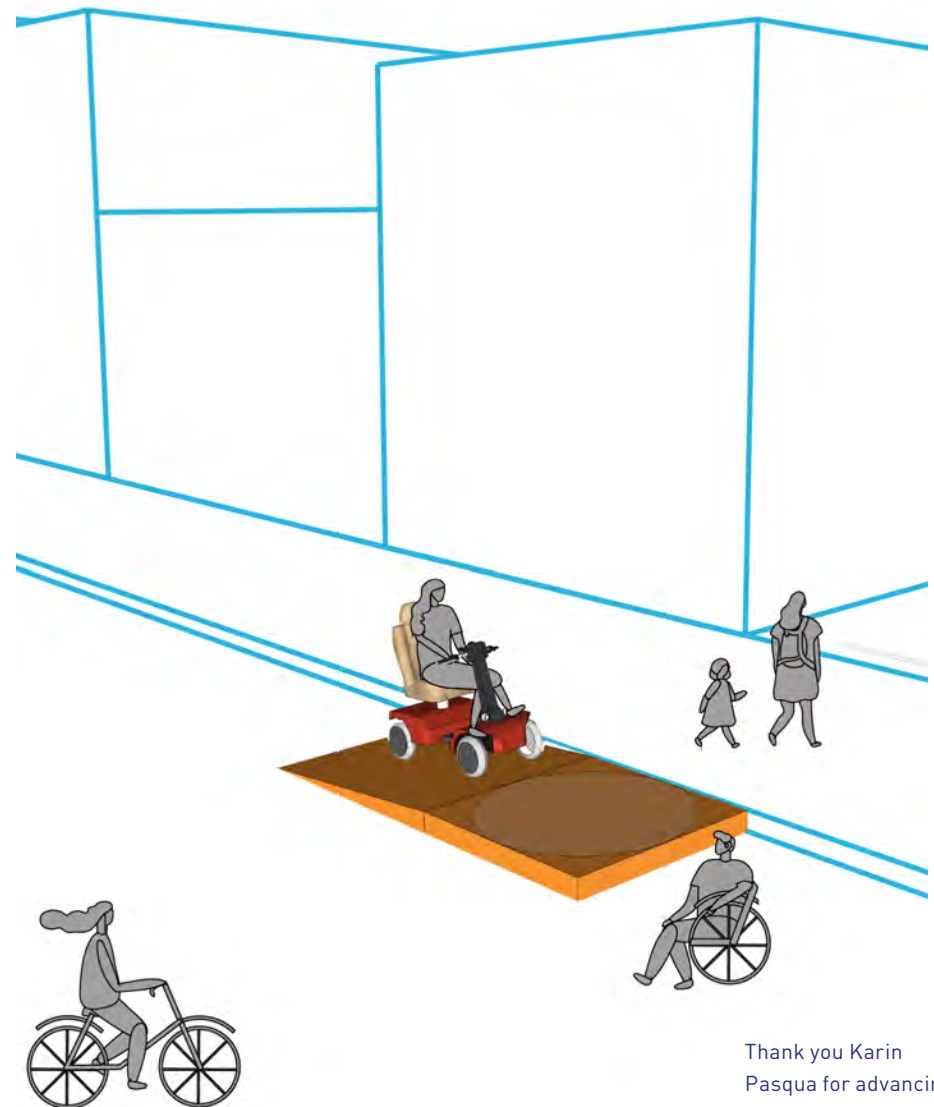
Weeks **Months** Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

Depending on the climate of the location (if heavy snowfall is not a concern), this intervention can benefit the community year-round.

## MATERIALS

- Plywood
- Rubber
- Anti-slip treatment



## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Installing wheelchair ramps where curb cuts do not exist. This emphasizes the existing lack of accessibility features (curb cuts, specifically) on main streets.

Thank you Karin Pasqua for advancing this idea during the BBMS Studio

# Wheelchair Ramps

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

This intervention specifically benefits those who used wheeled mobility devices like wheelchairs or scooters, regardless of age or cultural background.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Wheelchair ramps must be designed to existing standards to avoid creating accessibility barriers for people with visual impairments.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Yes, this intervention will take up public space, but if implemented properly, should not impact those spaces negatively.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

Yes - Streets and Engineering.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Accessibility consultants or experts should be consulted to ensure the designed solutions properly meet the needs of those who will be using them. Once in place, users can be consulted to ensure they are properly set up.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

Yes - an increase in wheelchair ramps will improve the accessibility features of the community and should be approached with long-term solutions in mind.

**How would you measure success?**

Feedback from people with disabilities.

# Here's How We're Open Stickers

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



EASE



RESILIENCE



HEALTH

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## MAINTENANCE

Replace when worn out and clean window.

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Weeks Months Years

## MATERIALS

- Sticker templates or adhesive dry erase boards that can be placed in a windowsill
- Sharpies or dry erase markers

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Window stickers help storefronts on a main street clearly convey how the public can interact with them. Restrictions and best practices change regularly during each phase of the pandemic. In order to keep businesses afloat while maintaining public health practices, it's important for the public to know that businesses are open, as well as how to safely engage with them.



## Here's How We're Open Stickers

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

This idea supports both local business and public health.

**Could this intervention risk creating new barriers for people with diverse mobility or other needs?**

Make text clear and large, using symbols or images over words where possible, so it can be read by people of many ages and abilities. Translate your window stickers into languages spoken in your neighbourhood. These stickers will not be accessible for some visually-impaired people.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

No.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

No.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Businesses can offer advice on usability. Feedback from patrons about where they are located and how useful they are in providing direction.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

No, hopefully that won't be necessary.

**How would you measure success?**

Uptake by businesses, feedback from public health officials.

# Table Partitions

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



EASE



RESILIENCE



HEALTH

## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Days Weeks Months

## MAINTENANCE

Depending on materials used for construction, dividers will need to be cleaned or refurbished after exposure to inclement weather

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

Weeks Months Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

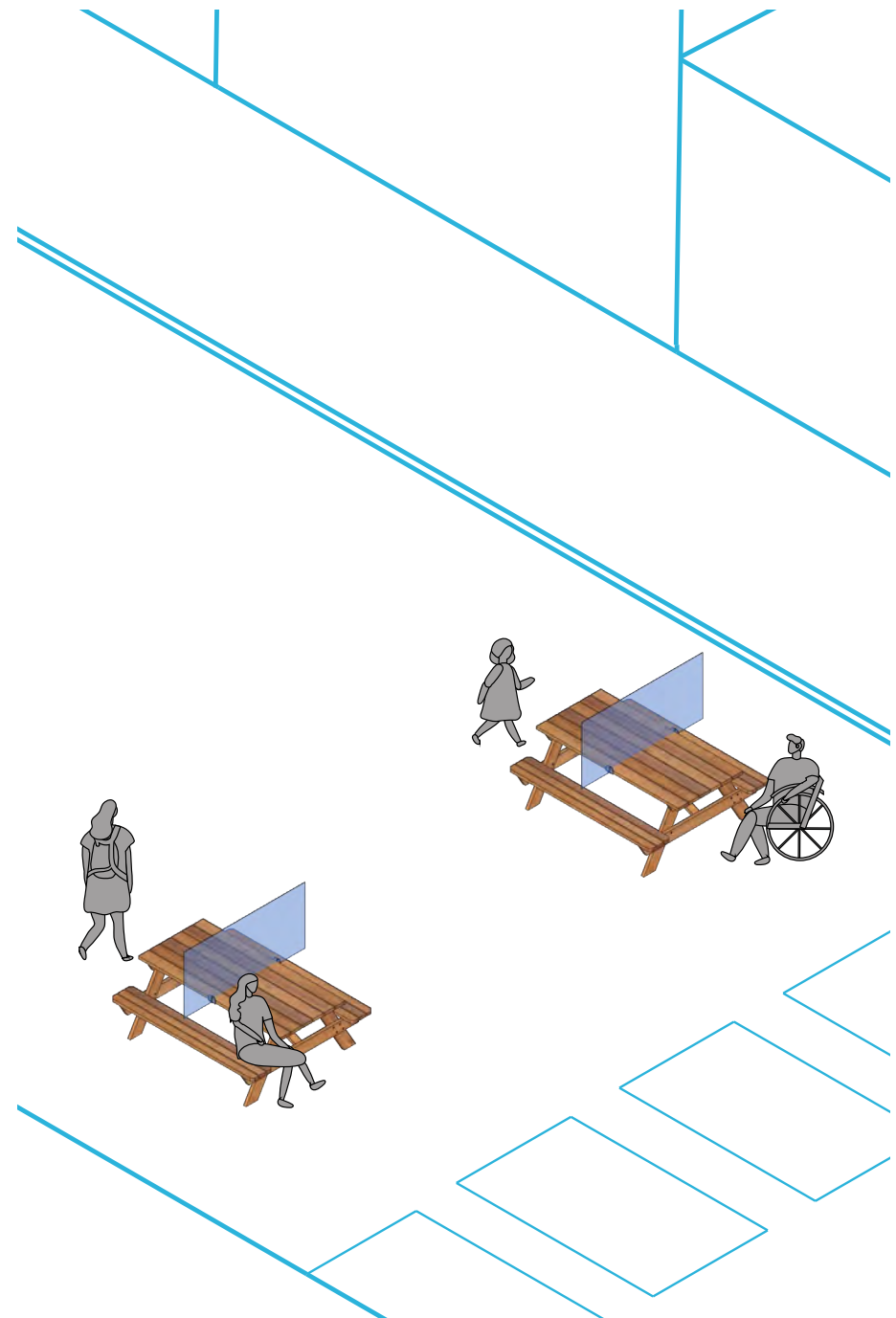
Yes

## MATERIALS

- Plywood
- Plexiglass
- Others

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Movable plexiglass (or other materials, such as art pieces) dividers, used as a partition between seats at a table to create barriers between social groups. This is a simple way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between groups when sitting in spaces where it is not possible to keep a 2 metre distance.





# Table Partitions

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Both customers and businesses benefit from this intervention. Businesses can serve more people at once and reduce queuing times, and customers can safely interact with their social groups without coming in close contact with others.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Restricted space on tables may create challenges for people who need more flexibility when seated. Some tables should remain open to address diverse seating needs.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

These partitions do create barriers between seats and tables, but if implemented properly, should not negatively impact existing spaces.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

No, as long as safety procedures and requirements are followed.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Local design firms or day labourers could be engaged and hired to build the partitions.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

Yes, if durable materials are used. Future dining tables can also be designed to come with matching partitions for longer-term use.

**How would you measure success?**

Uptake by businesses, feedback from public health officials.

# Handwashing Station

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



## COST

\$\$\$\$

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Days **Weeks** Months

## MAINTENANCE

Water pipe maintenance, regular cleaning

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

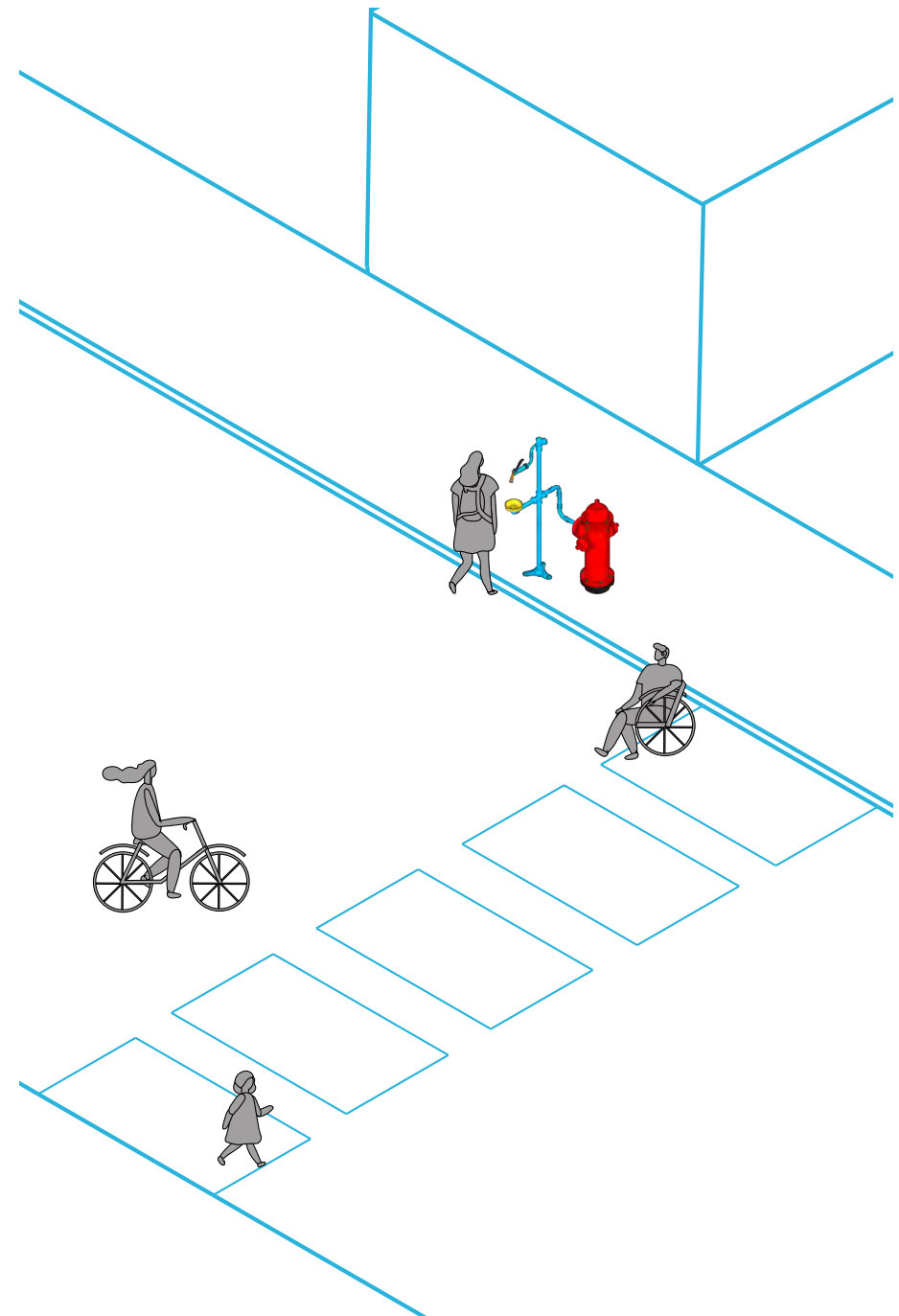
**Weeks** Months Years

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

No

## MATERIALS

- Pipe to connect handwashing station to fire hydrant, faucet
- Alternative: Hand sanitizer dispenser



## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Handwashing Station. A publicly accessible, cost-effective intervention that enables all people to regularly wash or sanitize their hands.

# Handwashing Station

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Everyone who has touched anything in public benefits.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

It needs to be placed at a height where people using wheelchairs can reach it.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

If it were improperly located on sidewalk, but unlikely.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

Yes.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Plumbers or craftspeople. Appealing signage or backslashes could be created by an artist or graphic designer.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

It is a summer intervention, but could be repeated annually if needed.

**How would you measure success?**

Number of people using it in a day, feedback from public health experts, input from community and businesses.

# Wheelable Rack

## WELLBEING PRINCIPLES



## COST

\$\$\$\$\$

## MAINTENANCE

Minimal

## WINTER FRIENDLY?

No

## TIME TO IMPLEMENT

Days **Weeks** Months

## ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACE

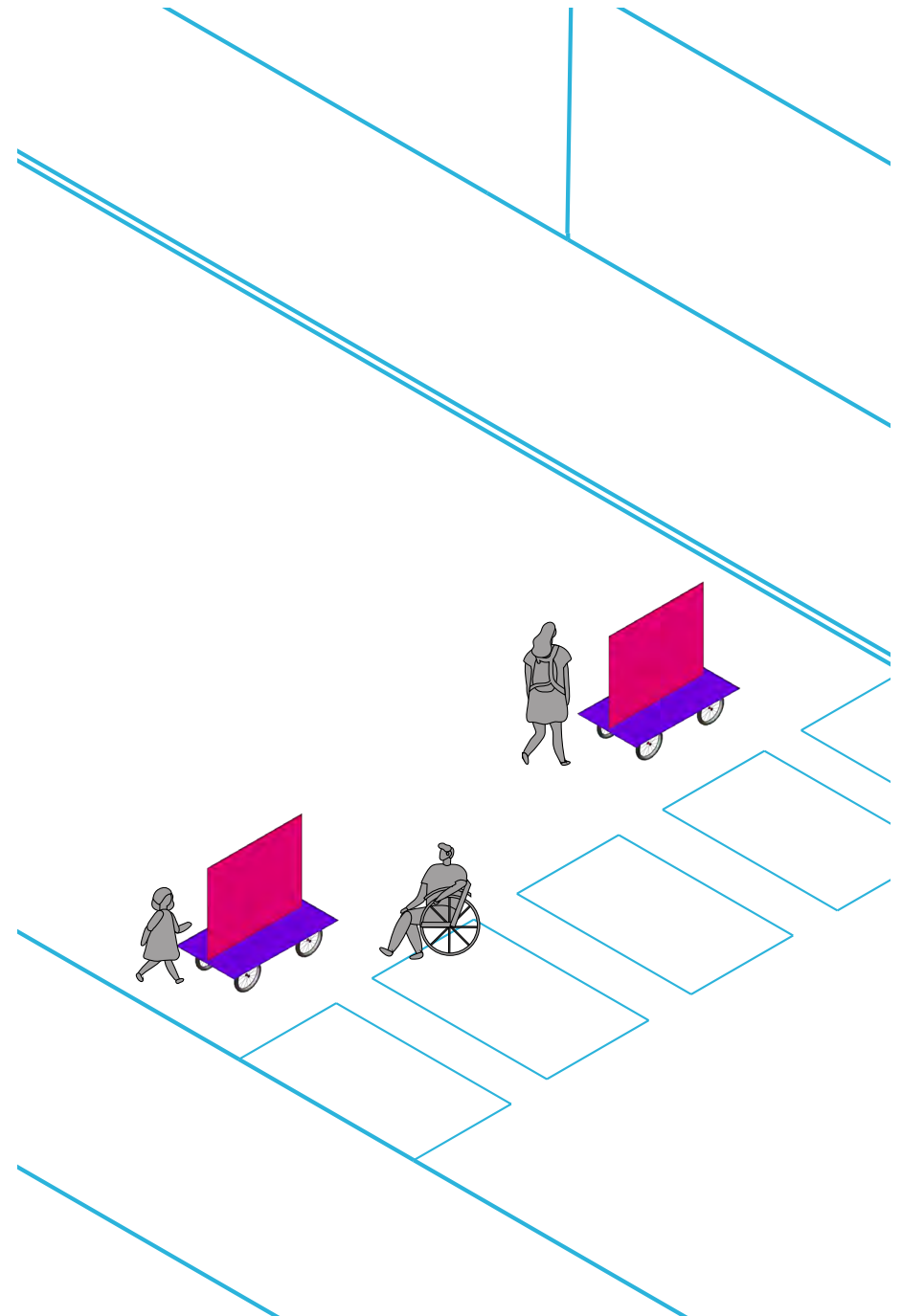
Weeks **Months** Years

## MATERIALS

- Wheels (cart or bike)
- Materials for the rack (wood, metal grid or more)

## What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?

Wheelable racks. These versatile racks can serve a multitude of roles, from guiding queues to holding books and other items, to serving as rolling gardens that can act as restaurant partitions. They can be produced using many different materials and be added or removed to suit spaces of all sizes.



# Wheelable Rack

**Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?**

Businesses could use them for queueing or retail purposes, restaurants could use them as partitions. They can also be used to activate the public realm. Their versatility means they work for many different people and uses.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Yes. If improperly located on sidewalks or other thoroughfares, they could be barriers to accessibility.

**Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?**

Yes, if improperly located.

**Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?**

No.

**Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice from or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?**

Craftspeople or maker spaces. People, groups or libraries who could use them for purposes that suit their needs.

**Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?**

Yes, with proper maintenance and care, they could be used for extended periods of time. On some main streets, they would need to be secured at night, so that they are not misused.

**How would you measure success?**

Uptake by businesses, range of uses, length of use



**Intervention Name:**

CREATE A VISUAL OF YOUR INTERVENTION



CREATE A VISUAL OF YOUR INTERVENTION

\$\$\$\$\$

Weeks Months Years

CREATE A VISUAL OF YOUR INTERVENTION

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**What is the idea? Why is this a good idea?**

CREATE A VISUAL OF YOUR INTERVENTION

## Intervention Name:

Who benefits from these activities? Who doesn't? Does this idea serve a specific age, gender or cultural group?

Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?

Could this intervention risk encroaching on existing sidewalks, bike lanes or public spaces?

Could this intervention require input or review by City officials?

Who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work you're hoping to do? Can you hire, get advice or otherwise engage them to bring this intervention to reality?

Could this become a long-term or permanent idea?

What maintenance does this intervention require?

How would you measure success?

# Bring Back Main Street Studio

A diverse group of tactical urbanists, city planners, urban designers and community builders from across Canada and beyond came together for a process and design studio to strengthen this toolkit.



# BBMS STUDIO – PARTICIPANT AND TEAM BIOS

## Ajeev Bhatia



Ajeev Bhatia is Manager of Policy/Community Connections at Centre for Connected Communities, a PLACES Fellow Alumni of The Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, and is currently a MSc.Pl. Candidate at the University of Toronto. C3's purpose is to help people, organizations and institutions effectively unlock the potential of community to find and implement creative, collective solutions to complex social issues.

## Ariana Holt



Ariana is a Senior Planner at Canadian Urban Institute and the Project Director for Bring Back Main Street. She is an urban planner with a diverse skill set that includes policy planning, research, community and stakeholder engagement, facilitation and communications.

## Cheri Hessami



Cheri applies public health knowledge, as well as her background in psychology and neuroscience, to Happy City's evidence-based design approaches. Cheri has a Master's of Public Health from the University of Waterloo. In her three years with Happy City, Cheri has supported, led and co-led projects focused on community engagement, public space, placemaking, and equity and inclusion in city planning.

## Cheryll Case



Cheryll Case practices a human rights approach to urban planning. Through her roles as Principal Urban Planner of her planning firm, CP Planning, and Urban Design Coordinator for the City of Brampton, she works repair relationships between people, institutions, and land.

## Elora Wilkinson



Elora Wilkinson is an urban planner with the Halifax Regional Municipality. She works on the Strategic Transportation Team, within the Planning Department, focused on transformative streetscaping projects and the creation of tactical urbanism programs. She has previously worked on large scale policy and engagement projects, including the Centre Plan.

## Harry Olson



Harry Olson is an experience designer and founder at HAO Creative, a multidisciplinary design studio with a focus in physical and digital experiences spanning brand, product, and environment. Harry is also the co-founder of Vancouver Design Week where he is passionate about convening community through creative work that advances social change and builds community in the public realm.

## Houssam Elokda



Houssam is an urban planner and operations manager at Happy City. He is also the co-founder of Transport for Cairo, an Egypt-based transportation firm specialized in informal mobility systems. Houssam has helped clients build happier, healthier places in Canada, USA and the Middle East. His work focuses on the intersection of mobility, community design and business systems.

## Karin Pasqua



Karin Pasqua is an Accessibility and Universal Design Specialist working with the City of Surrey. She truly believes that spaces can be beautiful and functional, providing meaningful access for all members of our community, regardless of their background, ability or disability. Karin brings with her over 15 years of working with the disability community along with her lived-experience and creative approach to inclusive spaces.

## Lior Steinberg



Lior Steinberg is an urban planner and co-founder of Humankind, a multidisciplinary collective accelerating the transition towards urban happiness for all. He helps cities to look beyond functionality and to plan urban spaces that make people smile. All the projects Lior participates in have one thing in common: they create people-oriented cities.

## Emma Clayton Jones



Emma is a planner with a background in journalism and community engagement. She has collaborated on participatory initiatives across the country, and has reported on equity issues for outlets including CANADALAND, the CBC, the Discourse and the Globe and Mail.

# BBMS STUDIO – PARTICIPANT AND TEAM BIOS

## Paty Ríos



Paty is a senior researcher and housing expert at Happy City. Her work focuses on exploring and enabling the housing industry to build social wellbeing through the design of multi-unit housing. She leads the Happy Homes program currently focused on impacting policy and ensuring vulnerable populations are part of the wellbeing in housing conversation.

## Renée Miles Rooijmans



My name is Renée Miles Rooijmans and as an urban anthropologist I explore and research human-nature relations through public space interventions, spatial education and healing, as well as by collectively transforming and taking care of underused or forgotten spaces. From a holistic point of view, I aim to connect people to all the layers of the city, from the soil underneath the concrete surface to rooftops and beyond.

## Sierra Tasi-Baker



Sierra Tasi Baker is the lead cultural and design consultant at Sky Spirit Consulting. Sierra is from the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, and is also xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Kwakwaka'wakw, LIngít and Hungarian. Her Kwak'wala name is Gesuqwaluck and was given to her by her late Grandmother, Chief Emily Nelson Baker, Tlakwagilá'ogwa, in the Pot Lach system in Alert Bay and North Vancouver, BC, Canada. Her research and body of work has focused on developing indigenous design methodologies, respectful indigenous consultation, sustainable community planning, and urban policy.

## TJ Maguire



TJ works with the team at Develop Nova Scotia to lead the sustainable development of high-potential property and infrastructure through a core focus on placemaking. TJ is also a co-organizer of the annual Art of City Building conference.

## Will Dunn



Will is a public space planner at the City of Vancouver where he's worked on numerous policy projects and plans including: the Transportation 2040 Plan, the West End Community Plan, the West End Parking Strategy, and the Cambie Corridor Plan. He currently leads the VIVA Vancouver Program – the City's public space innovation platform.

## Rob Leblanc



Rob is the President and Director of Planning at Fathom Studio. Trained as a planner and a landscape architect, his work focuses on projects that support human connections between people, and connections between people and their surroundings. He has over 25 years of experience in the design and planning industry in land development, urban planning, ecological design, mixed-use development and new urbanism. Rob is a member of the Bring Back Main Street team.

## Mitchell Reardon



Mitchell Reardon is a Senior Planner at Happy City. Mitchell has pioneered innovative public space wellbeing assessments, embedded engagement approaches and unique tactical urbanism interventions. He has helped create smiles from Vancouver to Vijayawada and Denver to Rotterdam.

# THANK YOU

Thank you to CUI for the opportunity to work on the Bring Back Main Street project, and our Bring Back Main Street Partners. Thank you to all of the BIAs, BIDs and other organizations whose generous support made this project possible.

Thank you to the BIA and BID representatives from Halifax, Moncton, Ottawa, Regina and Surrey who participated in our focus group. Your insight helped establish the direction for this toolkit. See their contributions in the appendix.

Thank you to our Bring Back Main Street Studio participants, Ajeev Bhatia, Ariana Holt, Cheryll Case, Elora Wilkinson, Harry Olson, Houssam Elokda, Karin Pasqua, Lior Steinberg, Paty Ríos, Renée Miles Rooijmans, Rob Leblanc, Sierra Tasi-Baker, TJ Maguire and Will Dunn. This session, full of thoughtful discussion, creative ideas and critical thinking guided our approach and generated excellent process, programming and design ideas. Learn more about these young and rising urban thinkers and doers, and check out their contributions, in the appendix.

TOOLKIT CREATED BY:



Mitchell Reardon, Emma Clayton Jones, Harry Olson,  
Cheri Hessami, Madeleine Hebert and Charles Montgomery

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY:







[bringbackmainstreet.ca](http://bringbackmainstreet.ca)