

## MEDIA RELEASE

**CITY OF STRATFORD JOINS DIGITAL MAIN STREET'S SHOPHERE POWERED BY GOOGLE TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES****Stratford's Economic Recovery Task Force Partners with Google**

Stratford, ON – May 28, 2020 ... To help support more local small businesses, today the City of Stratford is joining the ShopHERE powered by Google program, with a goal of getting local businesses online this year.

ShopHERE powered by Google, which started in the City of Toronto, helps independent businesses and artists build a digital presence and minimize the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, [Google Canada announced](#) a one million dollar investment to expand the program to municipalities across the country. The City of Stratford is one of the first, outside of the GTA to participate.

Because the opportunities afforded by the digital economy are still limited if people don't have the right skills, Google's investment will also help more small businesses and artists receive the digital skills training needed to participate in the digital economy. The program is now available to small businesses in Stratford. Local businesses and artists can apply for the program at [www.digitalmainstreet.ca/shophere](http://www.digitalmainstreet.ca/shophere) to get their online store built at no-cost.

"When the Stratford-Perth Centre for Business launched the Digital Accelerator program to support businesses moving online we knew the need would exceed the available capacity," says **City of Stratford Mayor Dan Mathieson**. "We are so pleased that the partnership was offered by Google Canada and the City of Toronto so that many more Stratford businesses could realize their online potential. I appreciate the support and leadership of Mayor John Tory in making this program available to Businesses of our City and region."

"This an excellent opportunity for Stratford businesses," says **Joani Gerber, CEO, investStratford**. "Leveraging the national resources available from Google Canada is an exciting complement to the support available locally in Stratford. I'm pleased the Task Force adds another digital option to the growing list of initiatives aimed at helping our business community."

"Since Google began its business in Canada nearly twenty years ago, we've been focused on helping Canadian businesses of all sizes to unlock the prosperity of the internet," says **Sabrina Geremia, VP and Country Manager, Google Canada**. "We remain optimistic and more determined than ever that technology is the toolkit for a world of opportunities. Our one million dollar investment will go towards expanding the ShopHERE program nationally, so we can help small businesses across Canada navigate the challenges ahead."

"Main street businesses are facing unprecedented times due to COVID-19. They need to be able to sell online if they are going to survive and we are proud to expand the ShopHERE powered by Google program to help them achieve this. This program is critical in ensuring main streets can adapt and evolve during this crucial time" said **John Kiru, Executive Director, Toronto Association of BIAs**.

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**About Google Canada**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. As a global technology leader, Google's innovations in web search and advertising have made its website a top internet property and its brand one of the most recognized in the world. Google Canada has offices in Waterloo, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa with over 1,500 Canadian Google employees working on teams across Engineering, AI Research, Sales and Marketing.

**About Digital Main Street**

Digital Main Street is a program that helps main street businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, and our Digital Service Squad, a team of street-level team members who help main street businesses grow and manage their operations through technology.

**About ShopHERE powered by Google**

The ShopHERE program offers businesses and artists the opportunity to build a digital presence and minimize the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. ShopHERE is supported by a number of community and corporate partners, including Toronto Association of BIAs, Shopify, Google, Mastercard, Microsoft, Magnet, and The Schulich School of Business - York University

**About investStratford**

investStratford is committed to advancing the economic future of Stratford, Ontario, Canada through investment in arts, education and industry. Globally Connected | Community Driven [www.investStratford.com](http://www.investStratford.com)