



# 2020 COVID-19 RECOVERY CAMPAIGN

CATEGORY: RECOVERY STRATEGIES

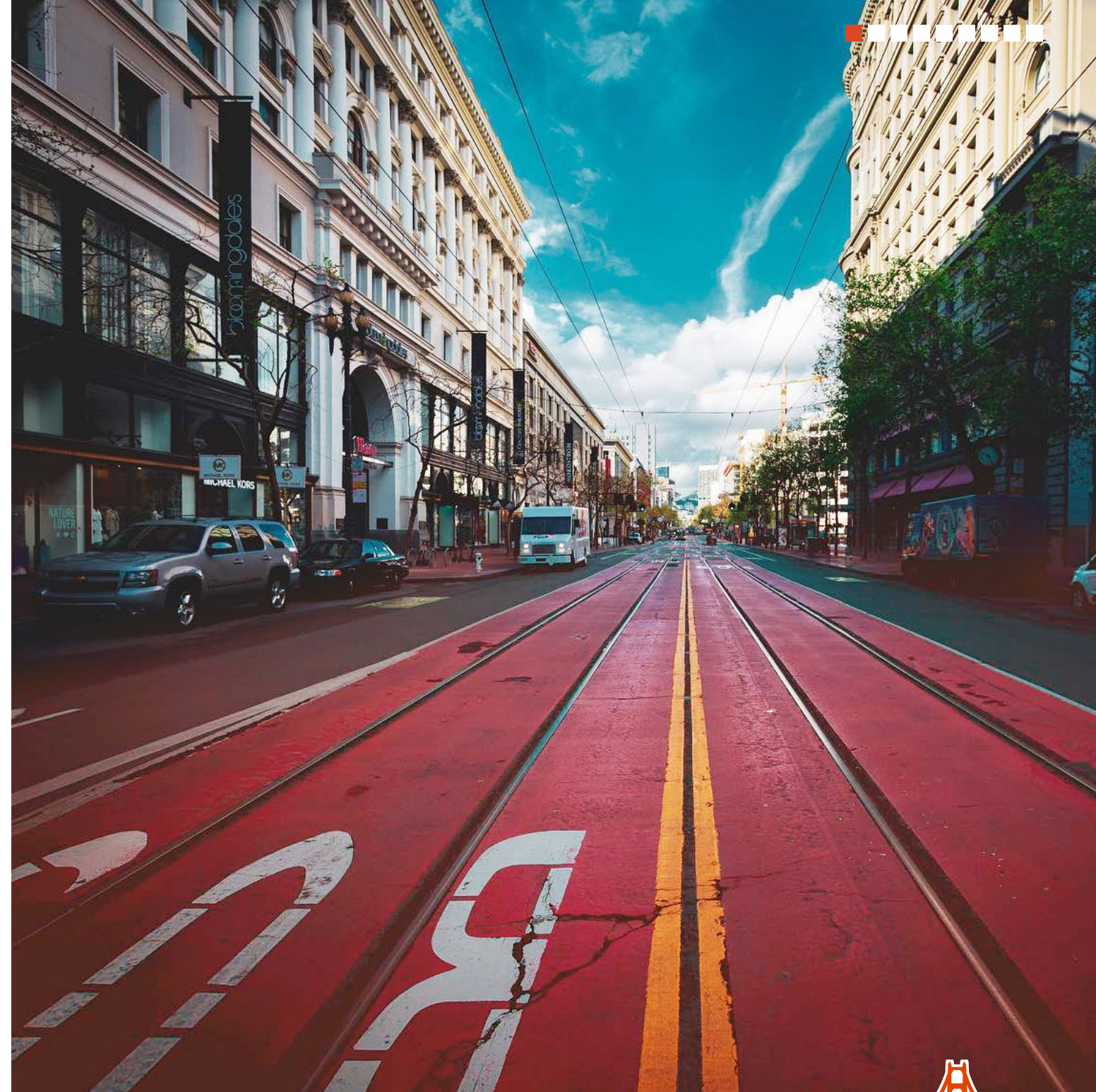
# SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

**San Francisco Travel Association rang in 2020 celebrating our 10th consecutive record-breaking year for the city's tourism industry in 2019.** Virtually every YoY metric was up, including total visitors (26.2 million, up 1.4%) spending by visitors (\$10.2 billion, up 1.4%) and hotel occupancy (82.9 percent for 2019, up 0.8%).

Just as we announced these exciting results at San Francisco Travel's Marketing Conference in late February, the threat of COVID-19 had begun to accelerate toward a crescendo. Within days, a state of emergency was declared in California, and San Francisco had declared one of the country's first shelter-in-place orders for all residents. Businesses that had been thriving just two weeks before were suddenly shuttered; San Francisco's always-bustling streets were suddenly quiet.

The effect on the city's tourism and hospitality industry was swift and devastating. Hotel occupancy across the city plummeted to the single digits by mid-March, event cancellations piled up and many businesses were forced to close permanently.

Amid loss, fear and isolation, our community needed hope and connection to begin forging a path toward recovery. We got to work.





# GOALS

With our sight set on helping San Francisco navigate the crisis, San Francisco Travel Association quickly developed a three-phase communication plan, each phase with distinct messaging and goals. We followed the lead of local government and health officials for the launch of each phase, making sure our messaging and timing aligned to help keep the city safe.

## Phase 1 Focus: Safety & Utility

- Goals: Support city government and health officials by amplifying the importance of staying home and flattening the curve. Empathize with audience staying home.

## Phase 2 Focus: Inspiration & Relevance

- Goals: Stay top-of-mind for potential visitors through inspiration. Highlight safe activities and local businesses and encourage dreaming about future visits.

## Phase 3 Focus: Our Gate is Open

- Goals: Help restart the economy by communicating new safety measures, collaborating with key partners and welcoming visitors back safely.



# STRATEGY

Throughout all phases of the campaign, these three elements were critical to achieving our goals.

## Connection

COVID-19 lockdowns meant that our audience was isolated at home and facing an overwhelming onslaught of bad news. We saw the opportunity to use our owned channels not only to communicate important information, but also to foster hope, connection and a sense of local pride.

## Flexibility

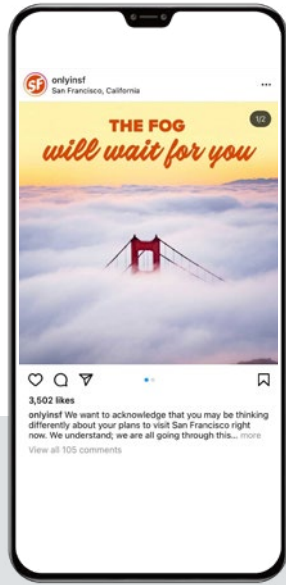
With travel restrictions and the public health situation constantly evolving, we recognized the need to be creative and flexible in terms of timing, execution and KPIs. Not only did we devise new forms of content, we needed to adopt new ways of producing content.

## Collaboration

To expand our reach and leverage, we recognized the need to collaborate with key partners. These partners include local businesses, city government, high-profile San Franciscans, neighboring DMOs and tourism-industry companies.

# EXECUTION

## PHASE 1 - SAFETY & UTILITY



### SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

Paired iconic San Francisco sights with compassionate safety messaging.



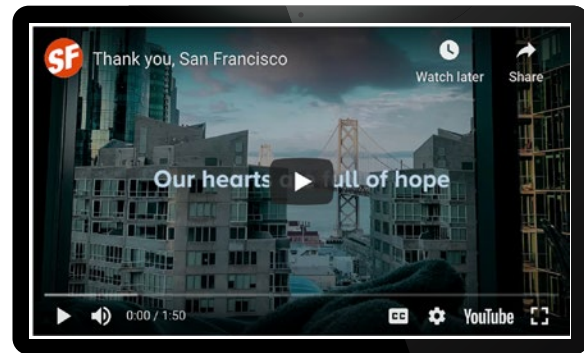
### DIGITAL PUZZLES

Provided fun and uniquely San Francisco activity for stay-at-home audiences.



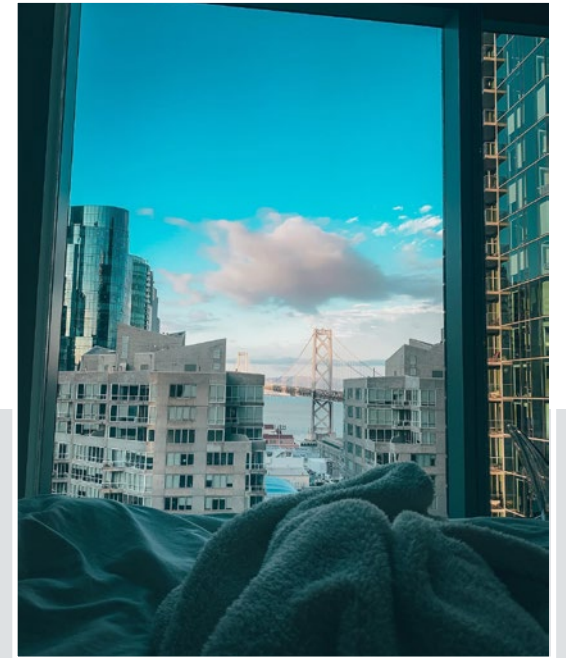
### GOOD NEWS FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Recurring website series sharing good news from San Francisco and around the world to give a respite and spread hope.



### THANK YOU, SAN FRANCISCO VIDEO

Hospitality and tourism organizations thanking first responders and reiterating the need to stay home.



### THROUGH MY WINDOW

Partnership with NYC & Co and Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board encouraging residents to share the views through their windows on social media.

# EXECUTION

## PHASE 2 - INSPIRATION & RELEVANCE



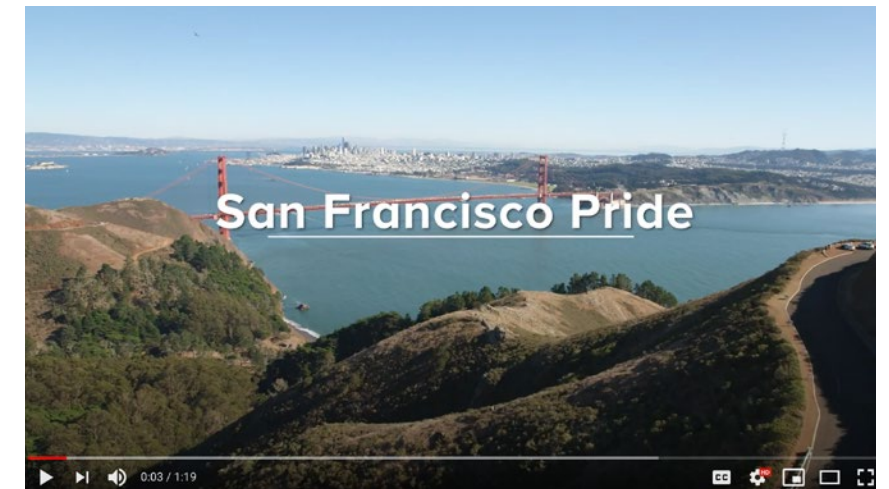
### PURPLE LIGHTS

To honor hospitality workers, the lifeblood of the tourism industry, major San Francisco landmarks illuminated themselves in purple. San Francisco Travel Association created a video and landing page showcasing the effort.



### ONE DAY SOON VIDEO

While some parts of the country were able to open in late spring, San Francisco was still unable to welcome visitors. We created an inspirational video to remind our audience that the time will come one day soon.



### PRIDE IS A STATE OF MIND VIDEO

Pride is one of San Francisco's premier events. When it was converted to a virtual event in June, we created a video to remind our audience that Pride is more than a parade—it's a state of mind.

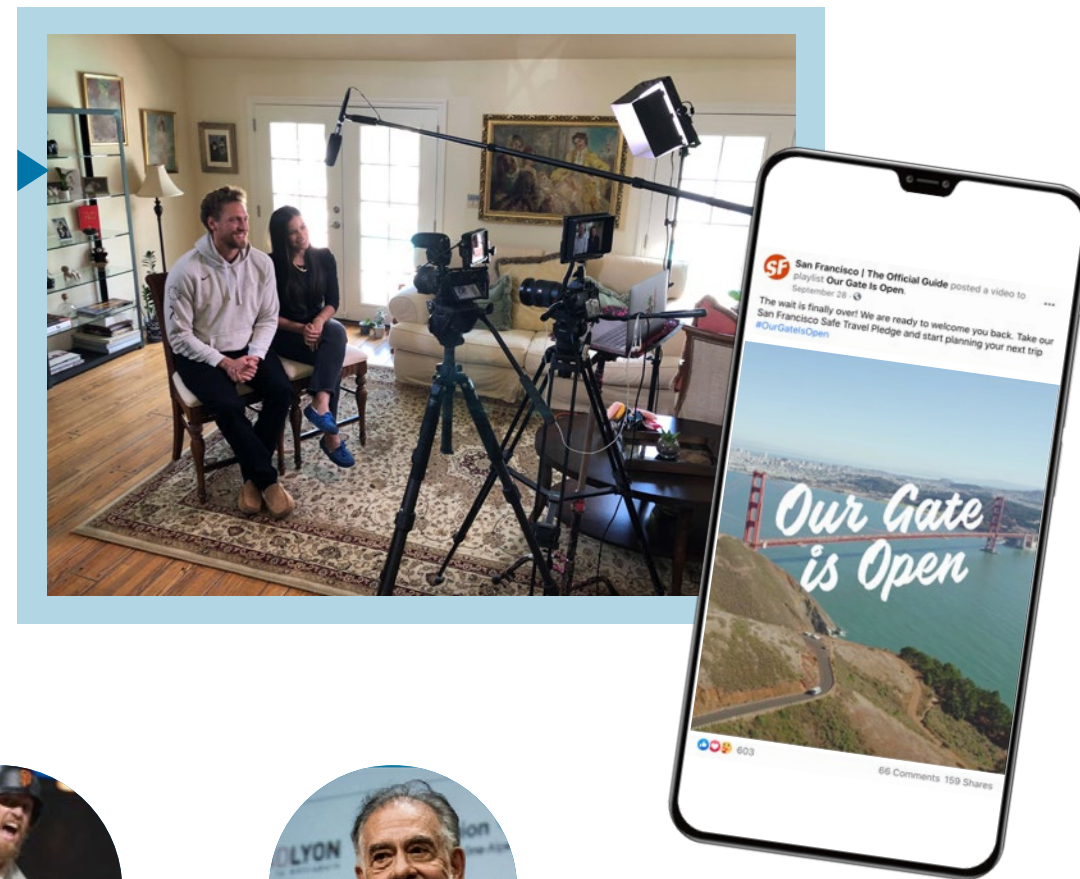
# EXECUTION

## PHASE 3 - OUR GATE IS OPEN

When San Francisco opened back up to leisure travel in September, we launched the “Our Gate is Open” campaign to safely and officially invite visitors back. At the heart of the campaign is a series of videos featuring San Francisco celebrities telling us why they love San Francisco and what makes it such a special place. The participants included celebrities Warriors Coach Steve Kerr, former Giant Hunter Pence, YouTube personality Lexi Pence, legendary director Francis Ford Coppola and Mayor London Breed.

**These videos required deep COVID-19-era ingenuity to produce.** Not only did we utilize user-directed video footage from San Francisco locals (obtained through the platform Cinebody), we also performed and filmed all of the celebrity interviews remotely. To avoid in-person contact, we instead utilized Zoom and a mobile camera kit to produce the series, which included a central hero video and an individual vignette of each celebrity.

We have shared the videos across all owned media and have encouraged local partners to share the hero video on their channels as well. We were also able to leverage this content to create a *spot* that was broadcast during the 2020 PGA Championship that took place in TPC Harding Park in August. This video is the foundation of the messaging and a pivotal driver of inspiration for travelers to plan and book travel to San Francisco.



MAYOR  
LONDON BREED



STEVE KERR



LEXI PENCE



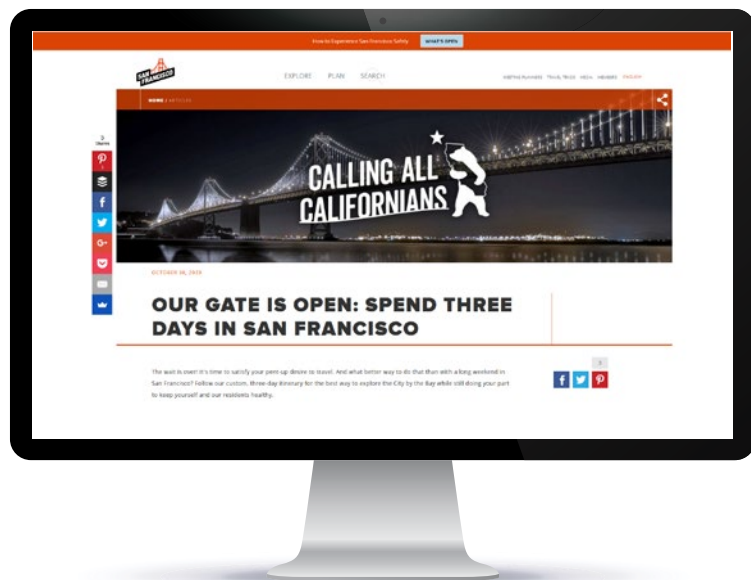
HUNTER PENCE



FRANCIS FORD  
COPPOLA

# EXECUTION

## PHASE 3 - OUR GATE IS OPEN

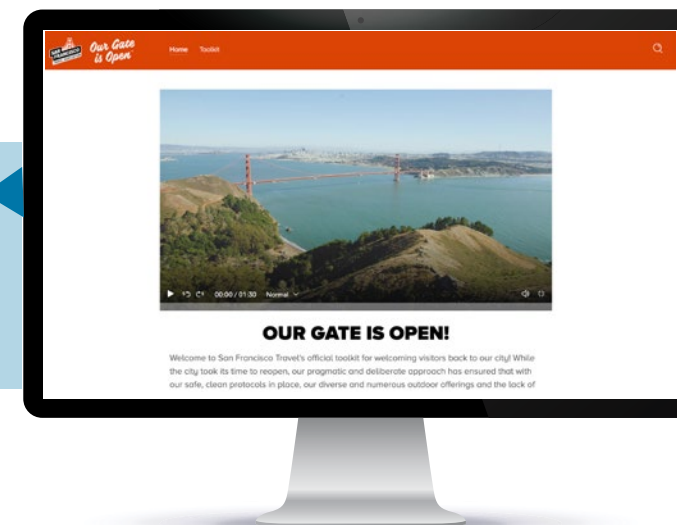


### CALLING ALL CALIFORNIANS CO-OP

We worked with Visit California to produce a media campaign targeted to CA residents, welcoming them back safely to San Francisco and the Bay Area. Visit Oakland, United and Mount Diablo Region partnered in the co-op.

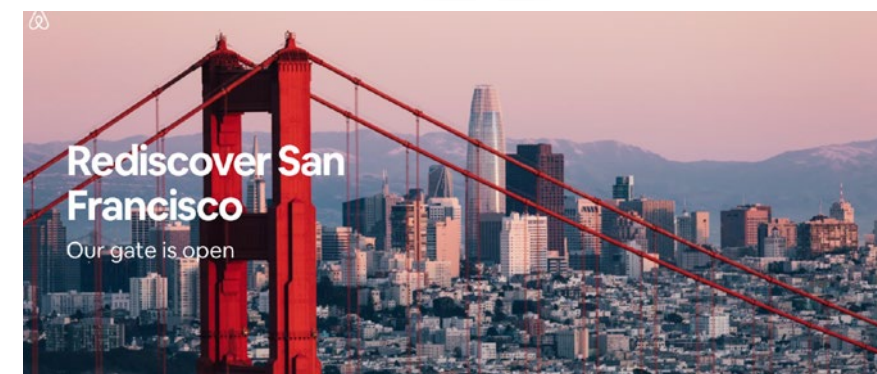
### OUR GATE IS OPEN TOOLKIT

We created an official Our Gate is Open toolkit, a full suite of digital assets available to local hotels, attractions, museums and restaurants to help extend the campaign messaging.



### GAYCITIES CAMPAIGN

For a media sponsorship on Gaycities, we created dedicated assets safely inviting this key audience back.



### REDISCOVER SAN FRANCISCO CAMPAIGN

We partnered with Airbnb to create a campaign encouraging locals to venture out again for only-in-San Francisco experiences, from celebrating the 150th birthday of Golden Gate Park to sharpening one's cooking skills.





# RESULTS

Our recovery effort is ongoing, but we have seen incredibly positive results through each phase of the campaign:

## PHASE 1

- **12,500 page views** of Digital Puzzles
- **Social media reach of 1.8MM** from Through My Window campaign

## PHASE 2

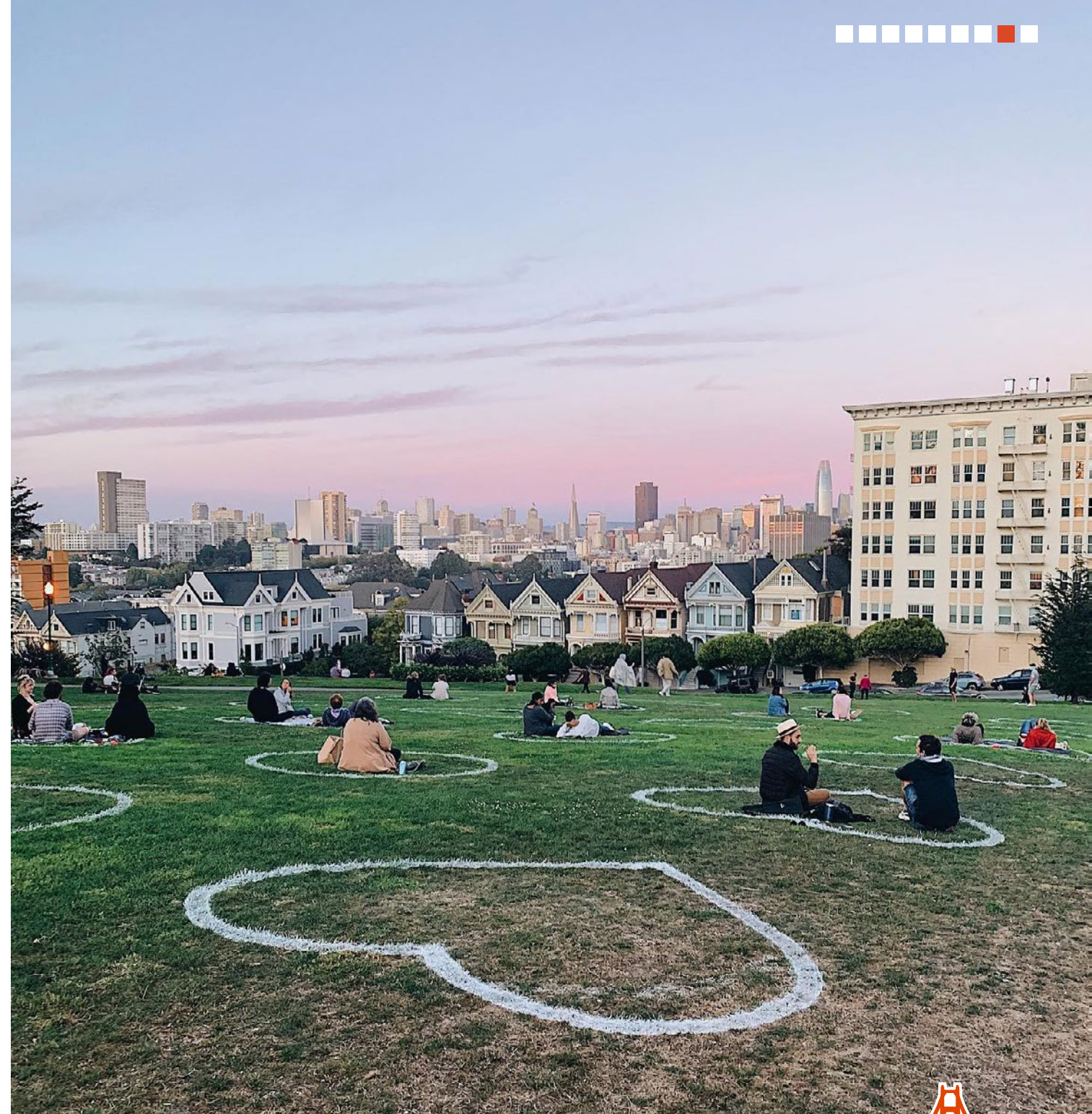
- **63,000 “One Day Soon” video views** with a **reach of 179,000**
- **278,000 views** of “Pride is a State of Mind” video

## PHASE 3

- **121,869 “Our Gate is Open” video views with a reach of 277,000**
- #OurGatelsOpen hashtag **mentioned 993 times** by local partners such as San Francisco International Airport, PIER 39, Hotel Council of San Francisco and many more
- Calling All Californians **generated 42,000 sessions** and **35,000 users**

## OVERALL CAMPAIGN

- **34,395 unique website users** equating to **\$755,579 in economic impact**
- **14,088 hotel room nights generated** through Expedia and Booking.com



# RESULTS

**For the first year in a decade, we won't be able to report record visitation to our city. But now and always, the people of San Francisco come first.**

It's widely recognized that San Francisco has had the lowest COVID-19 death rate among all major U.S. cities throughout most of the pandemic, thanks to the measured approach of our local leadership and the cooperation of our population. While we are excited to welcome visitors back, we stand united with our health officials, business community and residents as we continue to weather the storm.

