Final Report

IA Design: Sharon Public Library (SPL)

Official proposal to improve the SPL site information architecture and design

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Project Overview

The current SPL website suffers from a lack of organization, confusing navigation, a rigid, unresponsive layout, and a dated visual design. This report is the culmination of many hours of extensive research to “improve user access to information” as well as the layout and visual design on the SPL website as requested by SPL Director, Lee Ann Amend. The proposals within provide improvements to the site organization and design using a combination of user experience (UX) practices which include user research, label/taxonomy activities, content analysis, personas, wireframes, and navigation exploration.

User Research (Summary)

In order to ensure we worked from the most objective data possible from which to make informed design decisions, **we interviewed two public librarians** that served as knowledgeable stakeholders. It would have been preferable to perform the interviews in person in the context of a library but due to the current pandemic situation we used a laptop and a meeting conference tool. This allowed us to understand patron needs, goals, and desires. We also conducted literature research written by experts to provide deeper understanding of library website users.

After the interviews, we extracted the top findings from the research which directly informed our personas and prioritized tasks.

Personas

From our research, we created 2 primary personas which provided clarification on SPL’s primary users and established their goals and objectives.

See the personas included in the Appendixes.

Task Prioritization (By Persona)

Following the user research and creation of the personas, the data was used to build a variety of tasks that were prioritized based on the needs and goals of the personas. This ensures that the proposed changes are based on real user needs/goals and are improvements worth investing in.

	Valerie the Veteran	Stan the Stay-at-home dad
High priority tasks		
Provide catalog, events, and site search in site header	x	x
Reorganize (declutter) home page	x	x
Improve main nav organization	x	x
Medium priority tasks		
Easy mobile access (Improve responsive layout)		x
Utilize footer for less important content	x	x
Quickly find library hours	x	x
Quickly find latest Covid-19 info	x	
Low priority tasks		
Improve sub-page layout	x	x
Add veteran virtual meeting info	x	
Improve access to account		x

Sitemap

Once the content audit was complete and the most relevant classification scheme(s) were chosen, we created a site map that details the new labels and taxonomy of the primary and secondary levels (navigation). It also provides details on the content of the homepage, global header, and global footer.

See the sitemap included in the Appendixes.

Navigation structure

The navigation structure did not change drastically. The main navigation continues to use a horizontal layout with mouse hover triggered dropdowns for the sub nav on desktop/laptop and a vertical treatment for mobile devices. This is a well proven pattern for sites that use hierarchical categories and subject/topic classification schemes such as SPL. But many of the primary categories have been moved, relabled, both, or removed. Also, the footer has been significantly expanded to house less important content and categories that don't belong in the main navigation.

Search has been given a much more prominent placement in the global header with additional focus on eMedia, hours/location, and My Account. Databases were moved under Library Services and given an improved A-Z filtering feature.

Wireframes

We started with hand-drawn wireframes that allowed us to quickly test layout ideas. After gathering feedback, we created digital wireframes of the home page and search feature for desktop/laptop as well as a mobile version of the home page and main nav panel (opened via the hamburger icon). Workflows of the top priority tasks were also created and critiqued by the team.

See the wireframes and workflows included in the Appendixes.

Valerie

The Veteran (Primary)

Background

Age: 88
Gender: Female
Location: Sharon, MA
Education: High School plus some community college
Occupation: Retired Naval nurse

Goals & Tasks

1. Find the latest Covid-19 info on the library site and be able to read it easily (trouble reading small print/fonts).

2. Add virtual meeting information to the library site for weekly veteran meetings.

3. Easily read the the latest news and information on the home page (including navigation).

4. Find and use geneology and family research resources .

Narrative

Valerie is proud to be a elder veteran. She likes to participate in military parades and is a leader in the veterans group that meets weekly at Sharon Public Library. Due to Covid-19, she would like to start meeting virtually and get that information on the library site. She also likes to do geneology research with her son.

She uses a desktop computer with a 27 inch monitor and has trouble reading fonts set lower than 14 pixels.

Stan

Stay-at-home Dad (Primary)

Background

Age: 45
Gender: Male
Location: Sharon, MA
Education: B.A. English Literature
Occupation: Tech Writer

Goals & Tasks

1. Search online catalog for educational books, videos for his daughter.

2. Find early literacy reading programs for his daughter.

3. Easily check library account status to see if anything is due and recheck out resources.

4. Needs a responsive UI that he can use from anywhere on his iPhone.

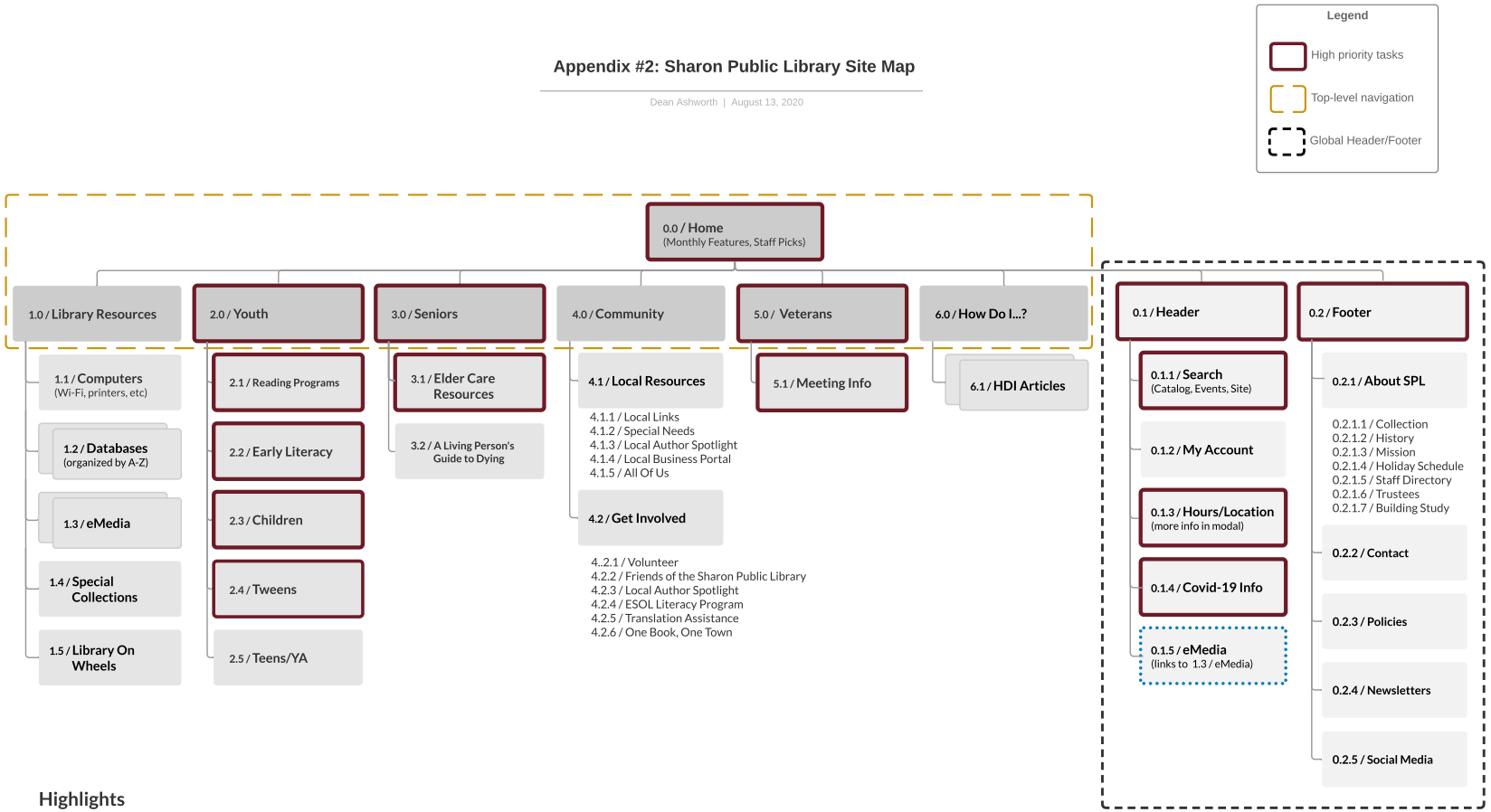
Narrative

Stan is the primary caretaker of his 4 year old daughter. His wife works a full-time job as a marketing executive. He enjoys exploring local parks and taking his daughter to the library to read, check out books, and participate in kids programs.

He depends on his mobile phone and uses it for most online tasks especially when outside of the house. He needs to be able to get information quickly with no friction.

Appendix #2: Sharon Public Library Site Map

Dean Ashworth | August 13, 2020



Highlights

1. The new design significantly simplifies the main navigation.
2. The header includes a search feature for the catalog, events, and site as well as hours/location, My Account, Covid-19 info, and eMedia.
3. The footer is an important part of the site and the new design contains much more content.
4. The high priority tasks are directly created from the user research findings and content analysis.
5. The main content area of the Home page will focus on monthly features, staff picks, and latest news.

Covid-19 / Urgent Info

LOGO

Search

eMedia

Hours / Location

Today: 10 am to 6 pm

My Account

Header with main navigation

Library Services | Youth | Seniors | Community | Veterans | How Do I?...

Monthly Features

Latest News

Upcoming Events

7

10

18

24

Staff Picks

About SPL

Collections
History
Holiday Schedule
Trustees
Building Study
Policies

Contact Us

11 N. Main St.
Sharon, MA 02067
(781) 784-1578

Staff Directory

Stay Informed

Newsletters

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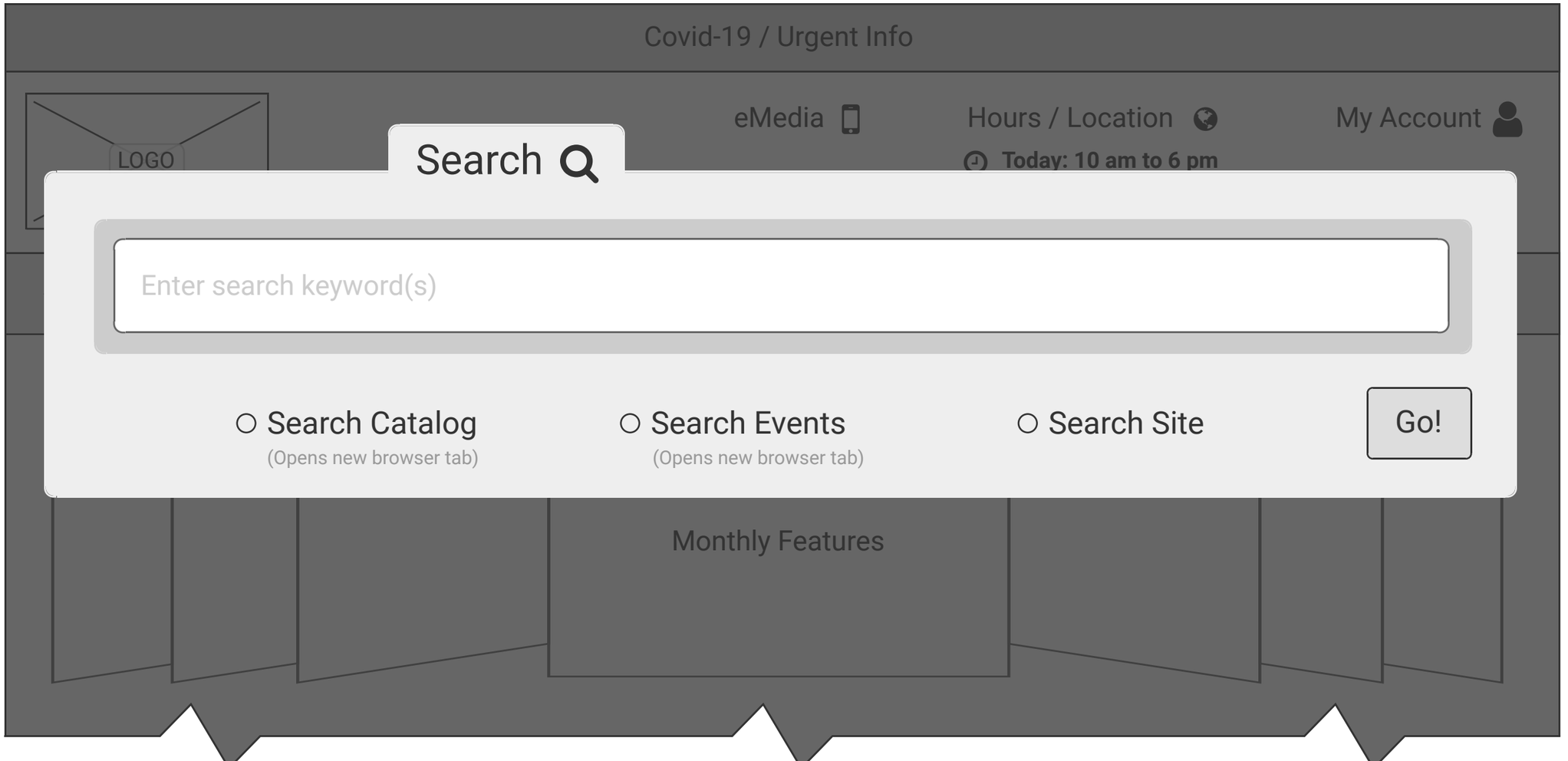


New search feature in global header allows users to search via catalog, events, and site. The rest of the site is blocked when the search feature is engaged.

Same functionality on mobile; just reduced in size a bit

Covid-19 / Urgent Info

LOGO

Search

eMedia

Hours / Location

Today: 10 am to 6 pm

My Account

Library Services | Youth | Seniors | Community | Veterans | How Do I?...

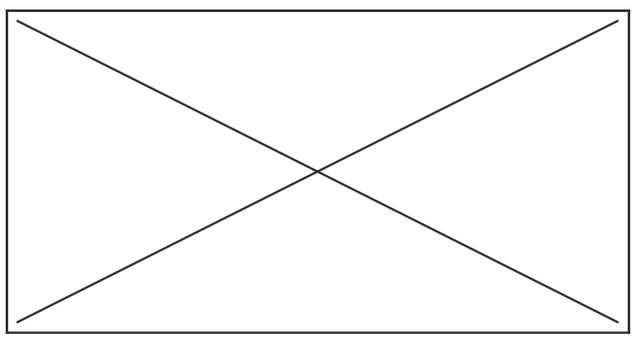
Highlight active section in main navigation

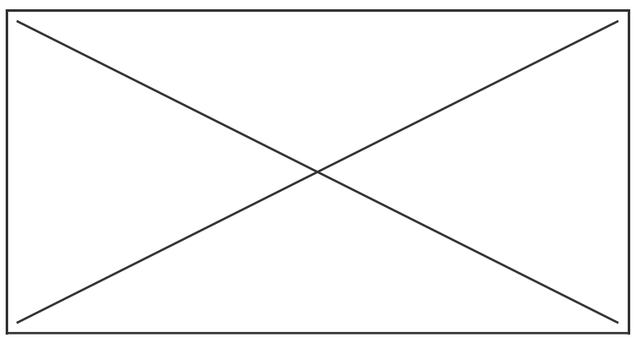
Breadcrumb > Breadcrumb > Page name

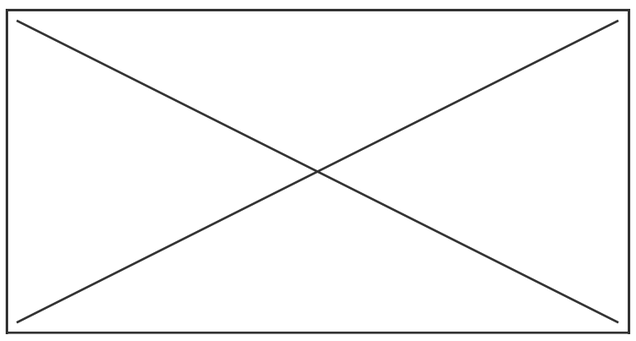
Page heading

Main body content

Sub-navigation (if necessary)







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- History
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- Trustees
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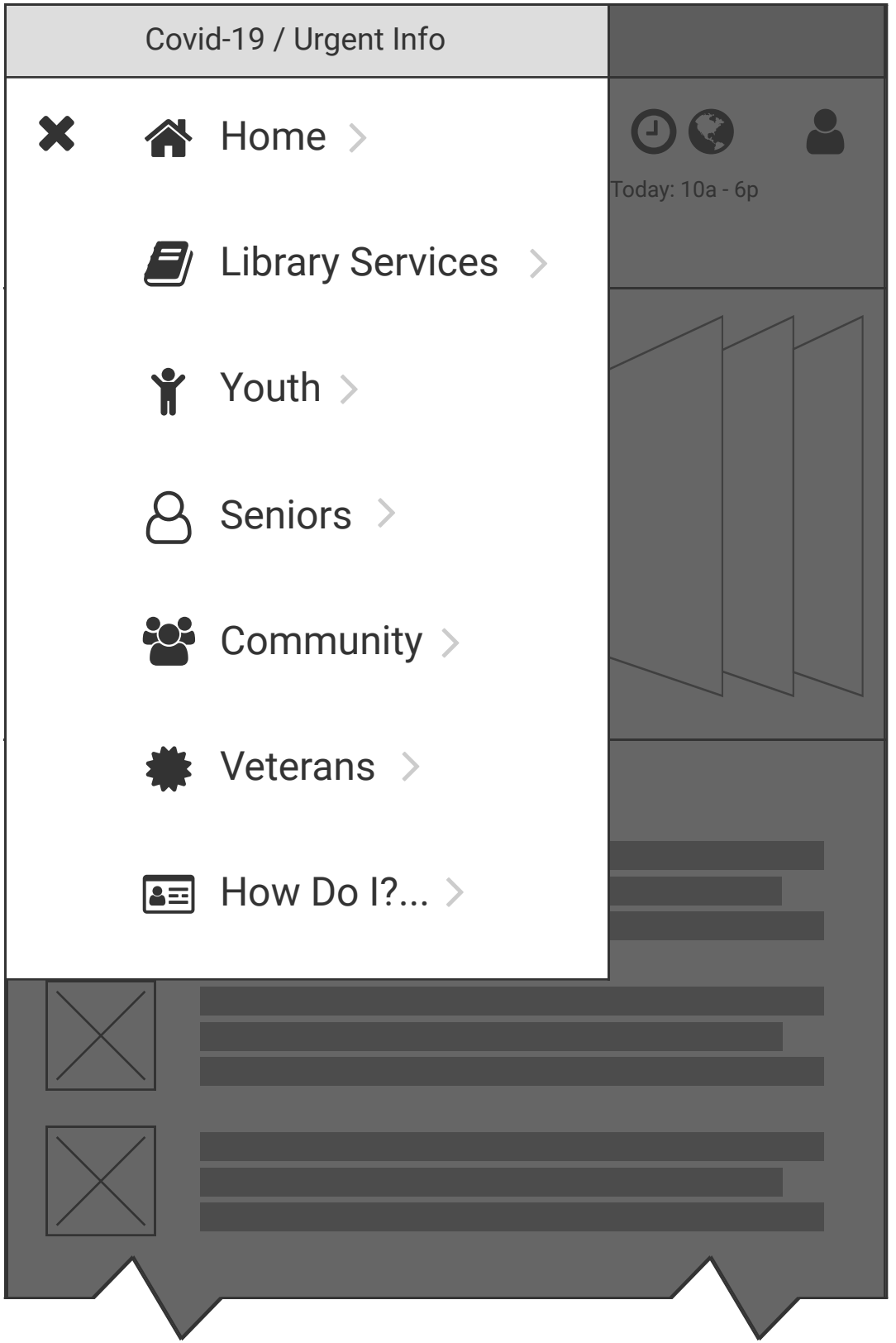
Mobile footer

Same content as other layouts. Just stacks differently depending on the device it’s viewed on.

In order to achieve this mobile layout, the new design must utilize Responsive Web Design (RWD) techniques. However, there is no need to make it “mobile first”. That would require rebuilding the site entirely.



Mobile nav menu

1. Opened via the hamburger icon
2. Doesn't scroll off screen when open
3. Sub-nav scrolls in from right edge of the menu

1. You're interested in reading more Dickens and want to see what the library has to offer.

SPL home page → Click/tap "Search" in global header → Search modal opens with one input field and option to search by catalog, events, or website.

→ Type keywords into search input field → Choose "Search Catalog" then click/tap the "Go!" Button ■

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2. Find the Summer Reading Challenge for your children.

SPL home page → Click/tap "Youth" in global navigation → In the sub-navigation, click/tap "Reading Programs". ■

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3. Find the next Veterans meeting details

SPL home page → Click/tap "Veterans" in global navigation → In the sub-navigation, click/tap "Monthly Meeting". ■

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4. Find out tomorrow's hours and look at directions for how to get to the library

SPL home page → Click/tap "Hours/Location" in global header → Hours/Location modal opens with hour schedule on the left; address and map on the right

→ Click the "Directions" button in the map and type in your address for accurate, step-by-step directions. ■

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5. Find daily food delivery services for your grandpa

SPL home page → Click/tap "Seniors" in global navigation → In the sub-navigation, click/tap "Elder Care Resources". ■