

Project Gay

Volunteer-powered third spaces for the LGBTQ+ community

A lightweight app concept that helps organizations post volunteer events and helps community members discover, RSVP, and show up - repeatedly - until strangers become familiar faces.

Important note about mascot visuals

This document treats the otter mascot as **concept-only**. Mascot images and storyboards will be inserted after this doc is approved. Placeholder frames are included to indicate where each image belongs.

Current state (baseline)

The current web presence is a Framer landing page with navigation (Events, Pricing, Contact) and links to organization sign-up forms. This doc defines the product experience behind that landing page.

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Product thesis

Project Gay turns volunteering into a repeatable social ritual. It reduces friction for organizers (posting, scheduling, communication) and for volunteers (discovery, RSVP, calendar, reminders) so that volunteering can reliably create third spaces.

Third places are informal public gathering places that balance home and work and support civic life. [1]

North-star outcomes

For volunteers: feel welcomed, show up, meet people, build belonging.

For organizers: fill roles, reduce no-shows, communicate clearly, measure impact.

For the community: more third-space moments per month, across more neighborhoods.

1. Purpose and product thesis

Project Gay is a volunteer coordination app built to strengthen LGBTQ+ community life by creating repeatable, welcoming third-space moments. Instead of treating volunteering as one-off labor, the app treats it as a social loop: discover an event, RSVP quickly, show up with clarity, and leave feeling connected.

Why now: many communities have fewer easy, informal gathering places. When the default social options shrink, loneliness and disconnection expand. Third places are one proven way to counter that trend by giving people a low-pressure setting to return to, regularly. [1]

Design principles

Low friction: if it takes more than a minute to RSVP, you lose people.

Consent-forward: collect the minimum info needed, and be explicit about what organizers will see.

Safety visible: accessibility notes, pronouns, and expectations belong on the event page, not in fine print.

Community first: avoid a gig-market vibe; focus on belonging and continuity.

What the app is (and is not)

- **Is:** a lightweight event posting + volunteer sign-up + calendar + reminder system that encourages repeat participation.
- **Is:** a simple organizer console that replaces spreadsheets and email chains.
- **Is not:** a full nonprofit CRM or donation platform (that comes later, if ever).
- **Is not:** a social media feed; community happens through events and follow-through.

2. Users and jobs-to-be-done

The app has two primary user types: volunteers and organizers. The product succeeds when it makes each group feel supported, not managed.

Volunteer: New in town

- Wants to meet people without awkward bar-only socializing
- Needs clarity: where to go, what to bring, what happens when they arrive
- Values identity-safe spaces and visible expectations

Volunteer: Busy helper

- Wants to contribute, but has limited planning bandwidth
- Needs RSVP to be fast, calendar to be automatic, reminders to be gentle
- Likes seeing impact (hours, causes, streaks) to stay motivated

Organizer: Community org lead

- Needs volunteers for events with specific roles and headcounts
- Wants fewer no-shows and fewer last-minute cancellations
- Needs a clean roster and simple post-event reporting

Organizer: Mutual aid host

- Often runs ad-hoc needs (pickup, distribution, hotlines)
- Needs fast posting and quick volunteer matching
- Wants minimal data collection and simple communication

3. Core experience (flows)

A good volunteer platform is basically two loops that interlock: a volunteer loop (discover to repeat) and an organizer loop (plan to learn). The UI should make the next step obvious at every moment.

Volunteer journey	Organizer journey
1. Discover an opportunity near you (map, list, or calendar view).	1. Create an event with date, location, roles, headcount caps, and expectations.
2. Open the event page and quickly understand the vibe, requirements, and accessibility.	2. Publish and share a link (the app handles sign-ups and rosters).
3. RSVP in under 60 seconds (with minimal required info).	3. Monitor sign-ups, waitlists, and role coverage.
4. Add to your calendar automatically (one tap).	4. Send updates/reminders (scheduled and manual). [2]
5. Receive gentle reminders and last-minute updates. [2]	5. Day-of: check in volunteers and handle changes.
6. Arrive, check in, and know what to do.	6. After: record attendance and generate an impact summary.
7. Leave with a quick thank-you, optional reflection, and a nudge toward the next event.	7. Repeat with better templates and better prediction of staffing needs.

Flow rule of thumb

If the event page does not answer **Where do I go? What do I do? Who is this for?** and **What should I bring?** in the first screenful, the app will leak attendance.

4. Feature deep dive

Below is a deeper look at the major capabilities, described in terms of user value and system behavior (not implementation).

Event posting (organizers)

What it is: A structured event form with roles, headcount, and expectations.

Why it matters: Clear expectations reduce anxiety and increase attendance.

MVP: Create event: title, date/time, location, description, accessibility notes, role slots, RSVP cap, contact method.

Next: Recurring events, templates, multi-shift roles, approvals/workflows, team accounts.

Discovery (volunteers)

What it is: A feed and map/calendar views for finding opportunities.

Why it matters: If discovery is hard, nothing else matters.

MVP: Browse events with filters: distance, date, cause tags, accessibility, vibe.

Next: Personalized suggestions, saved searches, 'bring-a-friend' prompts, micro-volunteering options. [3]

Event details page

What it is: A single page that answers the 'am I comfortable showing up?' questions.

Why it matters: This is where trust and clarity are won or lost.

MVP: First-screen essentials: where/when, what you'll do, what to bring, accessibility, organizer contact, role availability.

Next: Co-hosts, safety notes, photo policy, age range, check-in instructions, post-event hang suggestion.

4. Feature deep dive (continued)

RSVP and roster

What it is: A fast RSVP flow and a roster view for organizers.

Why it matters: Frictionless sign-up increases participation; rosters reduce organizer chaos.

MVP: RSVP in <60 seconds. Minimal required fields. Organizer sees roster and role coverage.

Next: Waitlists, self-service cancel/swap, group RSVPs, conditional questions per role.

Calendar and reminders

What it is: A personal schedule for volunteers plus calendar export/sync, plus reminders.

Why it matters: Many volunteer platforms emphasize reminders to reduce no-shows and improve engagement. [2]

MVP: My Calendar view. Add-to-calendar link (ICS). Basic reminders (email or push).

Next: Two-way texting, dynamic updates, smart reminder timing, travel-time nudges.

Impact tracking

What it is: Lightweight tracking of attendance, hours, and causes supported.

Why it matters: Visibility of impact helps retention and helps org reporting.

MVP: Volunteer profile shows hours and events attended. Organizer export for reporting.

Next: Badges, streaks, team volunteering, community impact dashboards, gratitude campaigns.

Safety, privacy, accessibility

What it is: Consent-forward profiles, reporting tools, and accessibility-first event fields.

Why it matters: This is an LGBTQ+ community product: trust is core infrastructure.

MVP: Pronouns optional. Minimal personal data. Report/block flows. Accessibility fields baked into event creation.

Next: Verified organizers, moderation queues, private events, enhanced safety controls for vulnerable groups.

MVP trust & safety checklist

- **Default privacy:** keep profiles minimal; avoid public-by-default volunteer lists.
- **Data minimization:** collect only what's needed to coordinate the shift.
- **Clear visibility:** show volunteers exactly what organizers can see before they RSVP.
- **Reporting:** simple report/block flow; clear response expectations.
- **Accessibility:** accessibility fields are part of event creation, not an afterthought.

Data visibility matrix (recommended defaults)

Data field	Organizer sees?	Optional?	Purpose
Display name	Yes	No	Roster + greetings
Pronouns	Yes	Yes	Respectful communication
Email	Yes	No	Reminders + updates
Phone	Only if required by event	Yes	Day-of coordination
Accessibility needs	Only if volunteered	Yes	Accommodations
Emergency contact	No (stored securely)	Yes	Safety backstop
Age confirmation	Only boolean	Yes	Age-restricted events
Profile photo	Yes	Yes	Recognition (avoid as requirement)

5. MVP scope for a 10-hour timebox

You mentioned a strict 10-hour limit. In that constraint, the right move is a thin vertical slice: end-to-end flow that proves the concept, not a feature-complete platform.

MVP goal

Demonstrate the full loop for one organizer and one volunteer: post an event -> discover it -> RSVP -> see it on a calendar -> organizer views roster.

Must ship (vertical slice)	Nice if time remains	Later / Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic auth (magic link or OAuth)• Create event (single role + RSVP cap)• Event list + event detail• RSVP + cancel RSVP• Organizer roster view• Add-to-calendar (ICS)• Basic email reminder	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Role slots / multiple roles• Simple search + tags• Volunteer profile (name/pronouns optional)• Lightweight admin view	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waitlists + auto-promote• Recurring events + templates• Messaging (SMS/push)• Check-in / attendance capture• Impact dashboards + badges• Organizer verification + moderation tools

Risk to watch

Overbuilding the organizer console is the classic trap. Keep organizers happy by nailing three basics: **posting**, **rosters**, and **communication**. Everything else can iterate.

6. UI/UX language and design system

The UI should feel welcoming, calm, and practical - like a community bulletin board that got upgraded by someone who cares about accessibility.

UI tone

Warm neutrals, simple geometry, generous whitespace, and a tiny hint of handmade texture. Pride accents show up as highlights, not as a constant rainbow blast (which can feel loud and reduce readability).

Color system (proposed)

Primary actions use Coral Rose. Calendar and scheduling cues use Sky Teal. Tags and 'soft delight' moments can use Lavender Mist. Cream is the default canvas; Soft Charcoal is the default text.

UI color system

Warm neutrals with quiet Pride accents. Use accents sparingly for trust and readability.



Otter Brown (Primary)
#6B4E3D



Cream Canvas (Background)
#FAF7F3



Soft Charcoal (Text)
#2F2A26



Coral Rose (Primary CTA)
#E66A5C



Golden Honey (Success)
#F2B84B



Sky Teal (Calendar)
#4FB6B2



Lavender Mist (Tags)
#B9A7D0



Soft Gray (Borders)
#E8E2DC

Primary

Secondary

Info

Success

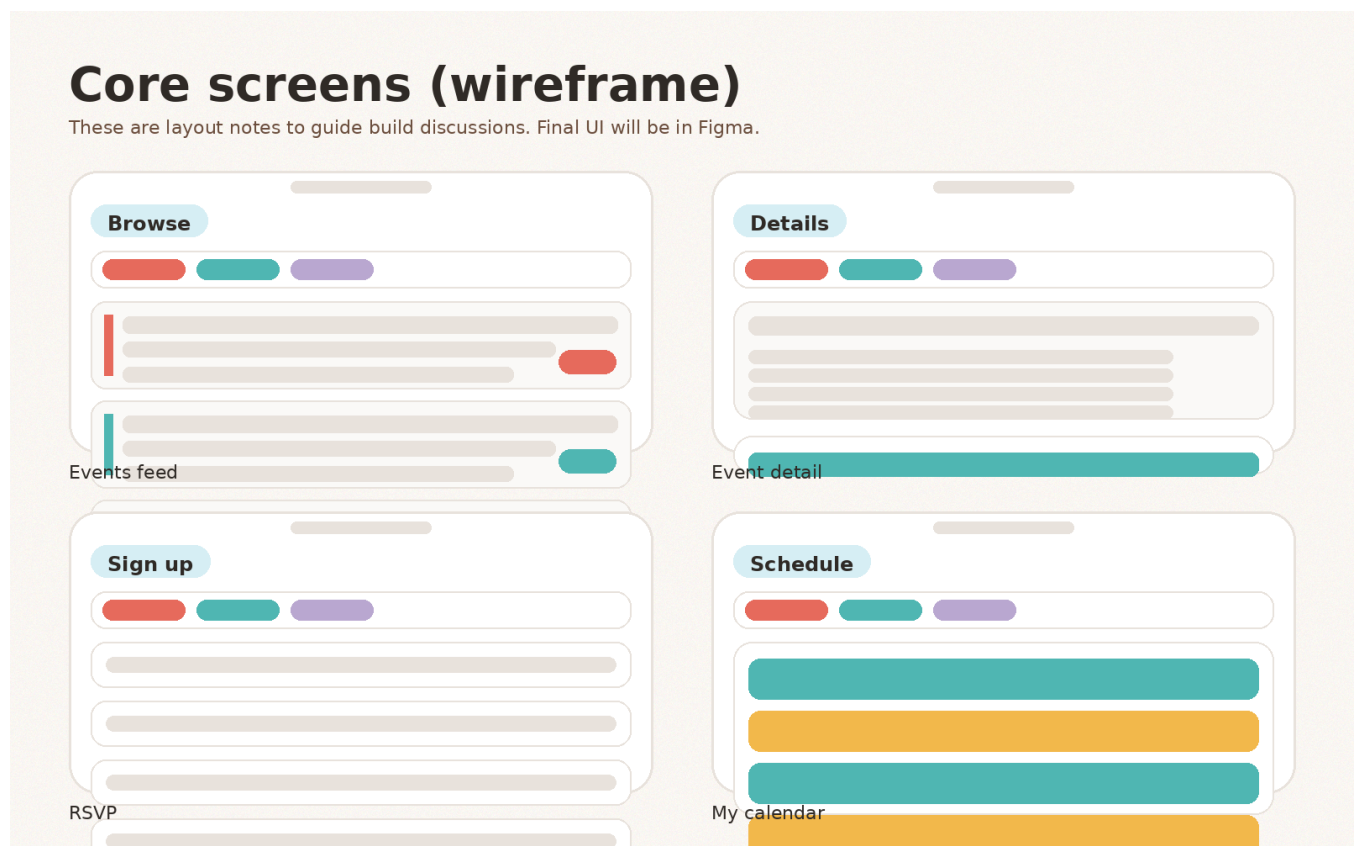
Accessibility note: run contrast checks on every text+background pairing, especially when placing text on Coral Rose or Sky Teal. Use off-white text only when contrast passes.

6. UI/UX language (continued)

Layout patterns

- **Cards over chaos:** events are cards with a consistent hierarchy: title -> when/where -> role(s) -> RSVP status.
- **Sticky primary action:** on event detail, keep the RSVP button visible (bottom bar on mobile).
- **Progressive disclosure:** show essentials first; tuck deeper logistics behind 'More details'.
- **Calendar is a first-class citizen:** the user's schedule is not an afterthought.

Wireframe sheet (layout reference)



Microcopy voice

Friendly, precise, not cutesy. Default to reassurance and clarity: **what happens next, what you committed to, and how to change plans** without shame.

7. Mascot concept (placeholders only)

The mascot is an otter: social, playful, community-minded. In this doc, the mascot is treated as a **guiding narrative device**, not a finalized asset pack.

Art direction (for later insertion)

Match the **reference otter image you provided** (same face shape, expression style, and overall vibe). For this planning phase, pencil/graphite-style drawings are totally fine. Keep details readable at small sizes (app empty states), with a simple silhouette and expressive posture.

Where the mascot appears

- Onboarding: quick reassurance + explains how to find your first event.
- Empty states: no events nearby, no upcoming RSVPs, no org events yet.
- Success states: RSVP confirmed, check-in complete, thank-you after event.
- Gentle nudges: 'bring a friend', 'set a reminder', 'try a new neighborhood'.

Storyboard set (6 scenes) - image slots

Scene 1 • Welcome / Onboarding

Image provided later

Scene 2 • Discover events

Image provided later

Scene 3 • RSVP confirmed

Image provided later

Scene 4 • Day-of reminder

Image provided later

Scene 5 • Check-in / arrival

Image provided later

Scene 6 • Thank-you + repeat

Image provided later

Storyboard scripts (what each scene communicates)

- **Scene 1:** 'You're not late. You're early to a new community.' Quick setup: choose interests + radius.
- **Scene 2:** Mascot points at an event card: date, role, accessibility notes are visible at a glance.
- **Scene 3:** High-five moment: RSVP success + 'Added to your calendar' confirmation.
- **Scene 4:** Calm reminder: what to bring + where to go + how to contact host if lost.
- **Scene 5:** Arrival: mascot gestures toward a check-in sign; reinforces 'you belong here'.
- **Scene 6:** Gratitude + next step: hours logged + 'Want to do this again next week?'

8. References

[1] Project for Public Spaces - Ray Oldenburg & Third Places

<https://www.pps.org/article/oldenburg>

[2] VolunteerLocal - Reminders (scheduled email/SMS; reduce no-shows)

<https://www.volunteerlocal.com/features/volunteer-communication/reminders/>

[3] Micro-volunteering (definition and background)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micro-volunteering>

[4] Third place (overview and characteristics)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_place

[5] Better Impact - Volunteer management software features

<https://www.betterimpact.com/features>

Addendum: inserting mascot images later

When you provide mascot art, replace the storyboard placeholders in Section 7. Keep each scene's final export in both **vector (SVG/PDF)** and **raster (PNG @2x)** so it stays crisp across devices.