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Problem Solving & Software Design

Professor Zhi Li

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Assignment 4 Reflection

The purpose of assignment #4 was to build a web application that would allow for a user to input their current location and be alerted to the nearest MBTA station. We needed to build the backend functions for the web application in python while also using flask to display the web pages for the user to interact with and provide input through. The pages for our site are nestled in a folder named “templates” – all of which are HTML. Flask is used to render page templates/designs and assign them to a specific url. When the url is entered, a function is executed to tell the browser what to display.

From a reflection standpoint, some portions of the project were much easier to complete than others. Hunter’s skills lay primarily in front-end web development - so he contributed greatly to setting up flask and developing the web page templates. All three of us worked together to create the back-end functions for the application. Learning how to do everything took time and we were glad we started this project earlier rather than later. We had to read a lot about how Flask works, how to work with the Google/MBTA API’s, and how to utilize JSON formatting. The real struggle our team faced was being able to actually link the back-end with the front-end. We were not sure how to tell our web application to portray the results once a location was submitted through the form. After speaking with Professor Li in his office hours, we worked to make edits to our flask URLconf. We had to create a new html “results” template to be rendered if the form request method was a post. Upon linking the front-end with the back-end, we had successfully completed our first web-application!