

Whatcom Therapy Dogs

case study | Mia Ruger

Background

Client

Whatcom Therapy Dogs is an organization where certified therapy dogs go visit school and colleges to help relieve stress in students. They visit colleges where many people are able to visit with the dogs. They also visit children's literacy programs and listen to children practice reading. Whatcom Therapy Dogs services are free. They have a variety of dogs in sizes and breeds to help a variety of students.

Problem

The main issue with the website of WTD is that their website looks extremely old and outdated, this makes viewers think maybe this organization isn't still available. The website also has poor readability and distracting backgrounds. They lack hierarchy and need more navigation links. They also do not have a footer which would be useful to have. WTD has a logo that is outdated and is not repeated with in the website.

Solution

The current design of WTD is very crazy and distracts the viewer from important information. There is a lot going on visually in the current website that can be simplified to accomplish viewer goals more efficiently. My solution to redesigning WTD website was to make a simplified more visually appealing design. I wanted to use colors that would make the user feel calmed. I also wanted the user to have an easy time using the website and accomplishing a task since the user is probably in a stressed state. Users also don't have much time so they need to be able to accomplish a task quickly and easily. I wanted the redesign to be simplified and straight to the point. I also wanted a footer and redesigned main navigation bar for the website to feel more complete. I changed the logo to make it look less dated.

Process

Current Website

user flow: scheduling visit

The current website has a highlight behind the text that is distracting and distasteful. They also have a background wood texture that is does not relate to the website. They also do not have a footer. The logo is a little outdated.



Positive interaction with dogs can lower anxiety, stress, and help reduce blood pressure. This can also stimulate release of endorphins. Being around dogs makes one smile and improves human health and well-being.

Populations and Sites benefiting from our service:

- Hospital and Medical Facilities, Adult and Youth Programs, Behavioral and Mental Health Programs, Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facilities, Children's Reading, College Finals.

A photograph showing a person in a blue long-sleeved shirt petting a yellow Labrador Retriever. The dog is sitting on a carpeted floor next to a brown plush toy.



Meet Our Dogs!

This page has photos of all the current therapy dogs and their names below. The use a highlight behind the text again here which is distracting. There is no footer again.



This is the contact us page. They have a good embedded “send up an E-mail” option. The organization could be cleaned up a little bit and also could include the socials of the company better.

HOME ABOUT VISITS OUR DOGS OVER THE RAINBOW BECOME A TEAM CONTACT US

Thank you for visiting our website...
How can we help?

Check out our Facebook page [f](#)

Send us an E-mail

Name * Email *

Subject

Message

Send

Whatcom Therapy Dogs is set up to visit in group settings. Examples are visits at colleges where multiple people have contact with our dogs. Another group visit example is a children's literacy program where the dogs listen to students practicing their reading skills. We are not set up to have one on one visits with individuals, such as visiting one student at a school classroom. A variety of dogs work thru WTD. Please feel free to contact us using our Whatcom Therapy Dog e-mail and one of the directors will get right back with you.

 **Chris Monroe**

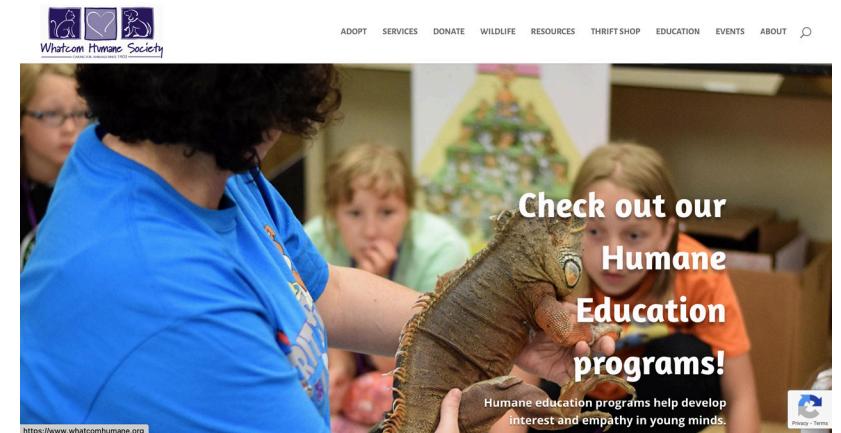
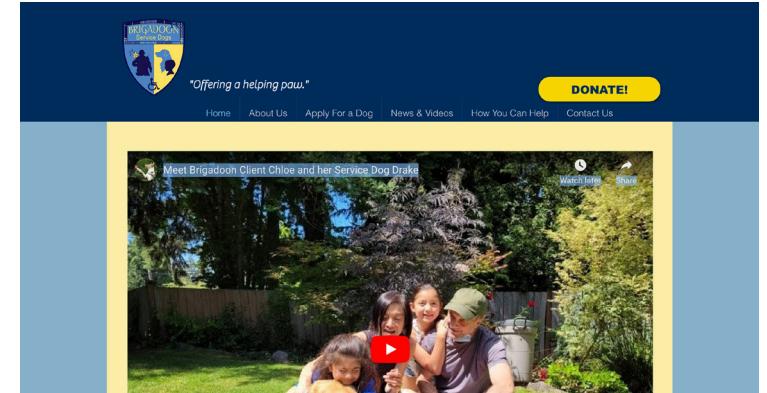
 **Kathleen Laughlin**

Competition

Whatcom therapy dogs don't have much competition because they are such a unique group. These dogs are only for visits and not up for adoption. Other dog websites have dogs up for adoption and they are not therapy dogs. Whatcom Therapy Dogs is local and has an established reputation in Bellingham.

Petpartners.org is an organization that allows you to search for therapy dogs in your area. Their website is a little bit easier to navigate and has better readability. They have less distractions in their website than Whatcom Therapy Dogs. There's not too many other competitors with Whatcom Therapy Dogs. An indirect competitor could be the Whatcom Humane society. They have a much better formatted website. They have dogs for adoption but aren't therapy dogs.

Brigadon Service Dogs is also another dog organization that specializes in service animals. They are not direct competition but have a similar tone as Whatcom therapy dogs. Their navigation is set up well and they have better hierarchy.



A screenshot of the Pet Partners website. The header features the organization's logo and a navigation menu with links to About, Act, Learn, Volunteer, Donate, and Log In. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a section for "Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals" with a "LEARN MORE" button. Below this is a large image of a child interacting with a dog. At the bottom of the page are three calls-to-action: "Volunteer with Pet Partners", "Advocate with Pet Partners", and "Donate to Pet Partners". The footer includes a "https://petpartners.org" link.

Personas

Sarah / 20

Job:

Student at WWU
Works part time in the library on campus

Hobbies:

Hanging out with friends
Going out to eat
Hiking

Family:

Mom, Dad, 17 year old sister
They live two hours away

Values:

Family and Friends
School
Nature

Site Goals:

Get good grades in college
Spend quality time with family and friends
Make good connections at college



Sarah is a Sophomore in college studying computer science. She spends a lot of time studying and doing homework. She occasionally gets overwhelmed with all of the classes she's taking and tries to do yoga to help with her stress. In her free time she enjoys hiking and hanging out with friends. She is always looking for new ways to help with stress and loves animals.

Personas

Jacob / 23

Job:

Student at BTC
Works full time at Woods

Hobbies:

Video games
Sleeping
Hanging out with friends

Family:

Mom, Dad, 3 younger siblings

Values:

Sleeping
Paying rent
Finishing classes

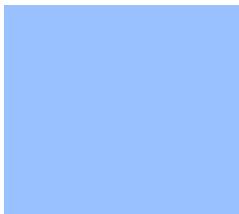
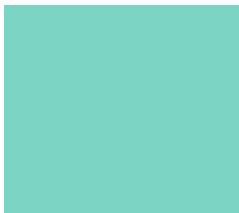
Site Goals:

Finishing classes
Making enough money



Jacob is taking a few classes at BTC and works full time at Woods. He is always stressed out about managing his time between work and between school. He is always tired and feels like he doesn't have enough time to do everything. His goal is to finish taking classes so he can find a different job and have more free time.

Moodboard



Anek Bangla (headings)

Livvic Bold

Livvic Regular (body copy)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo . Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non v, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est

Logo current vs new

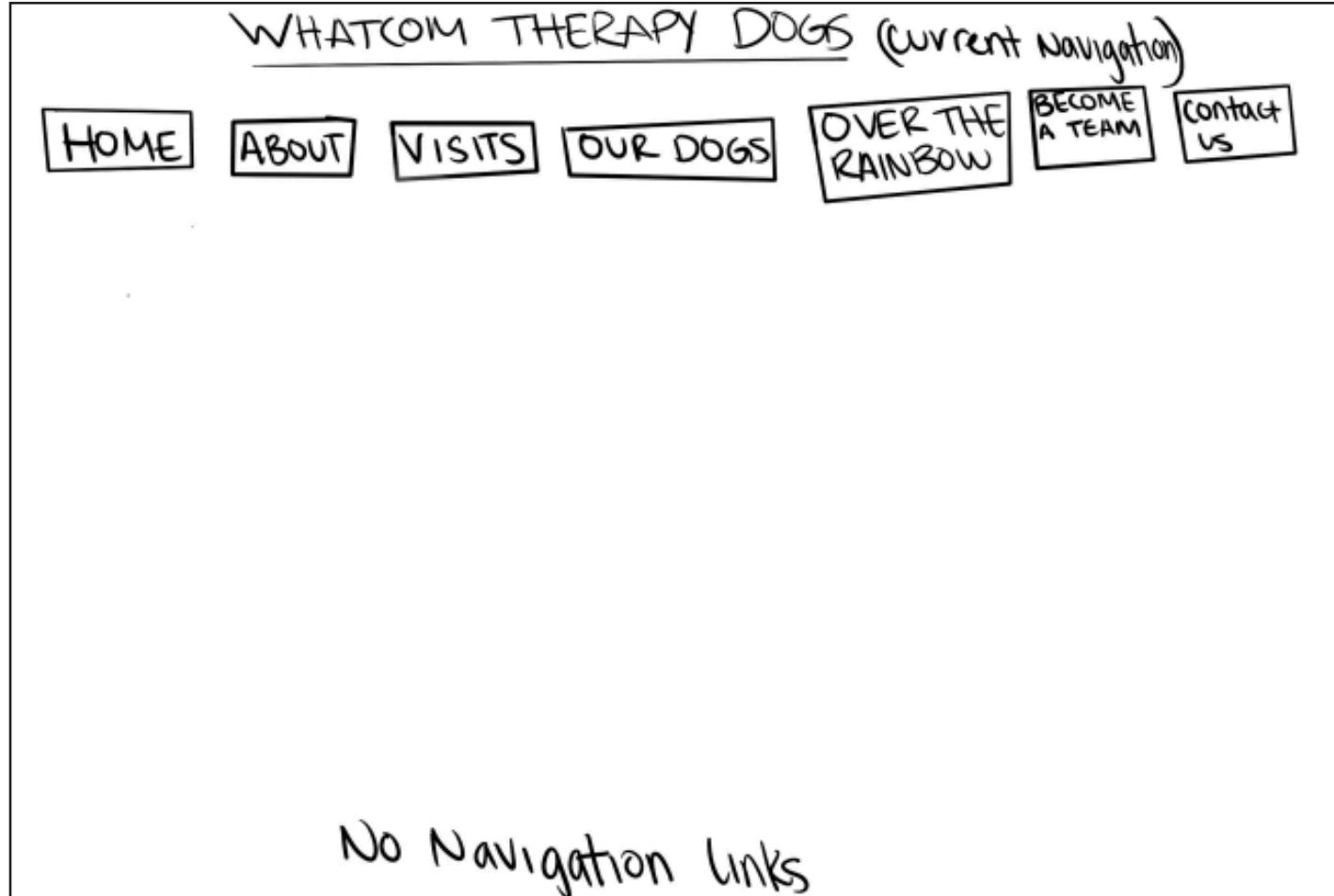


This is the current logo. There is a lot of different things going on in the logo that do not flow well together. The glow effect is distasteful. The typeface does not mesh with the logo design and has a poor stroke on it.

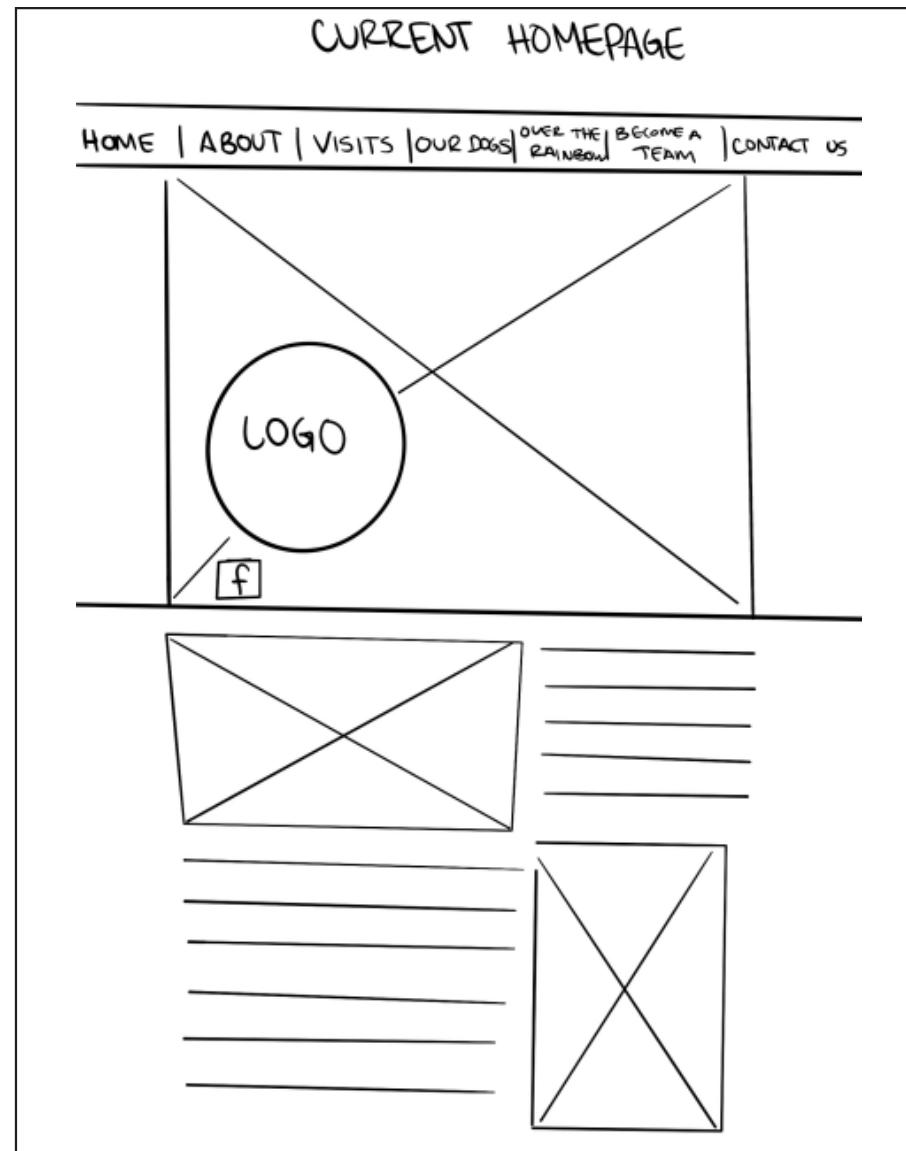


This is the new logo I created. I kept the dog paw shape that they have in the original logo. I simplified their logo and made it more appealing towards their audience. I chose a calming color that is subtle in the website redesign and a typeface that goes with the logo as well.

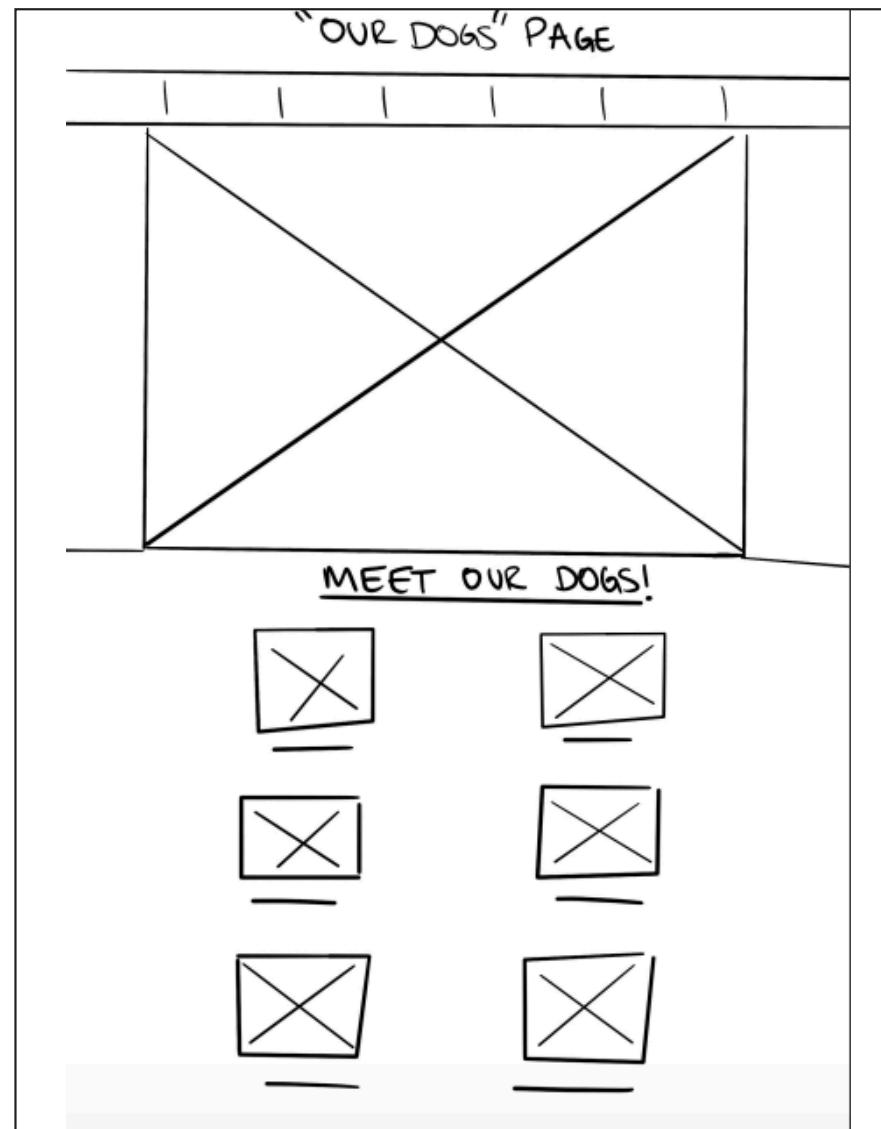
current website/navigation



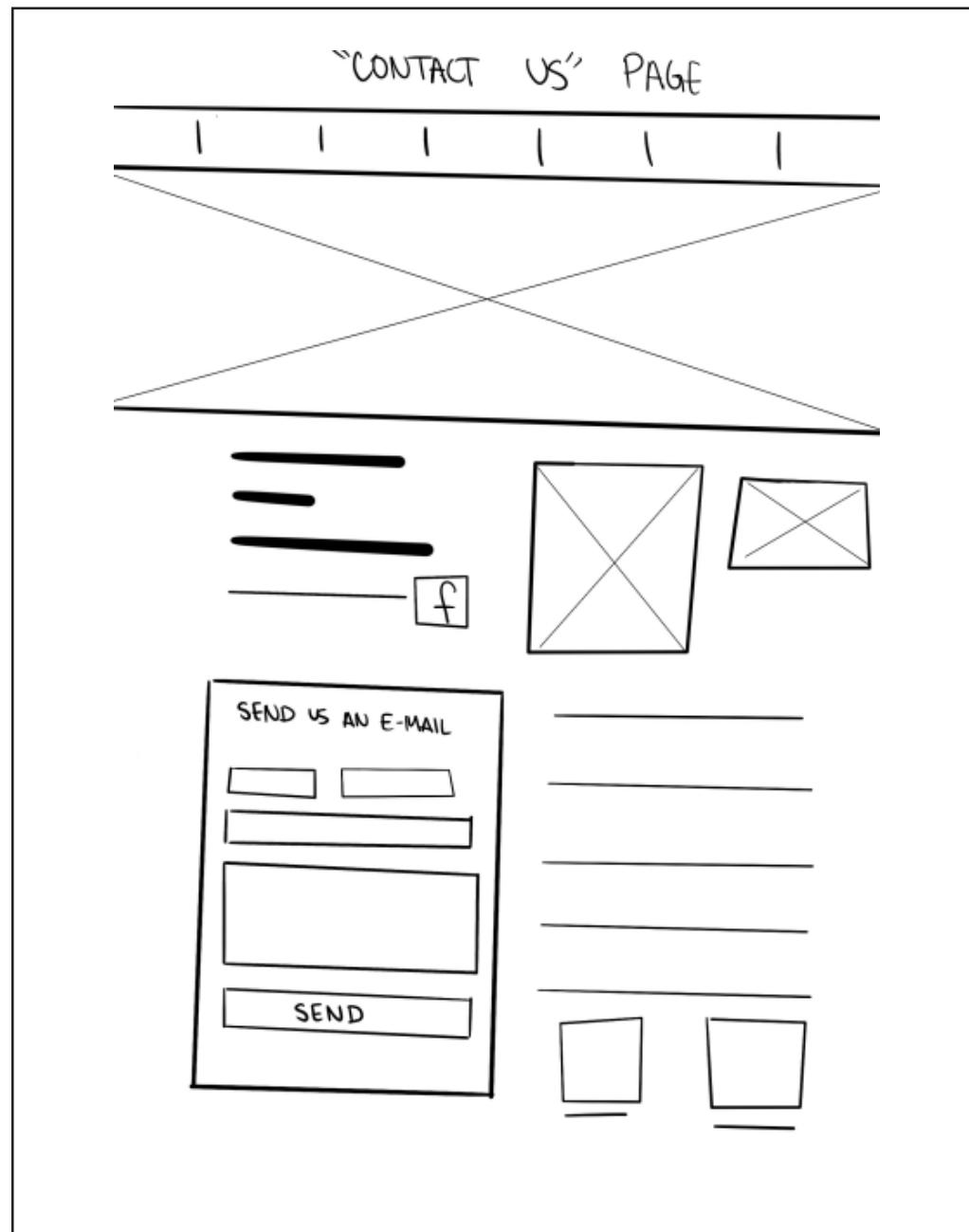
current website/home page



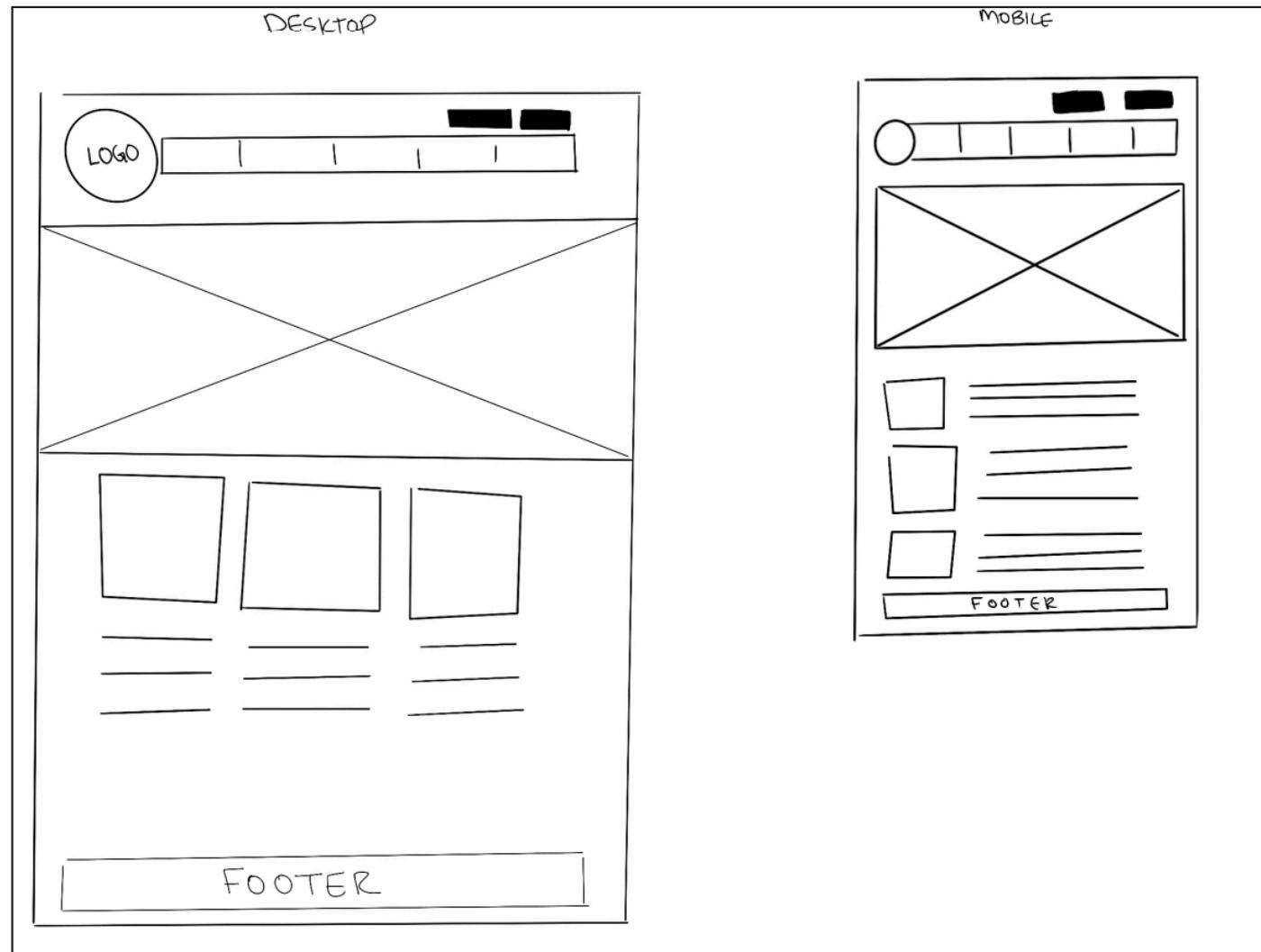
Our dogs page



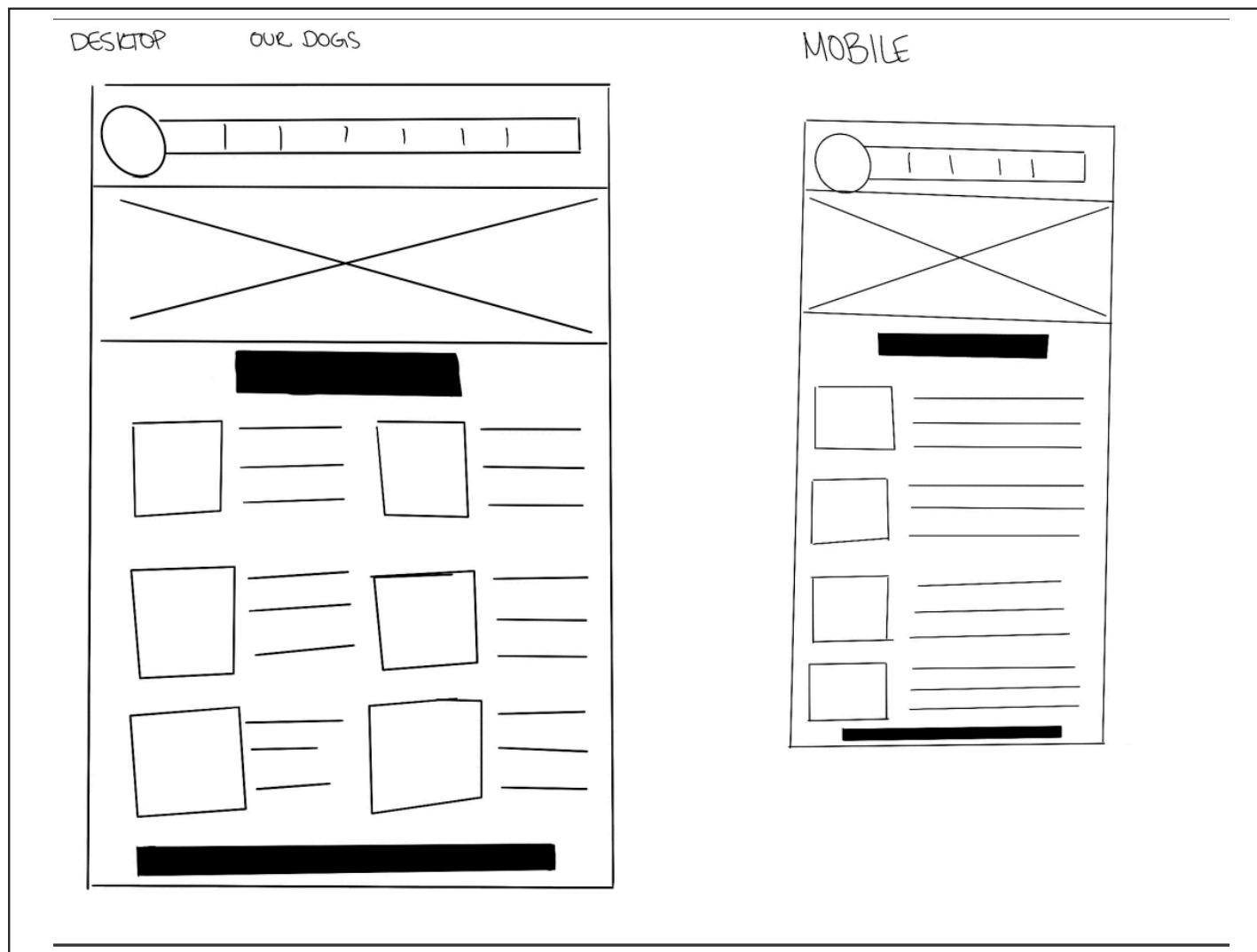
Contact us page



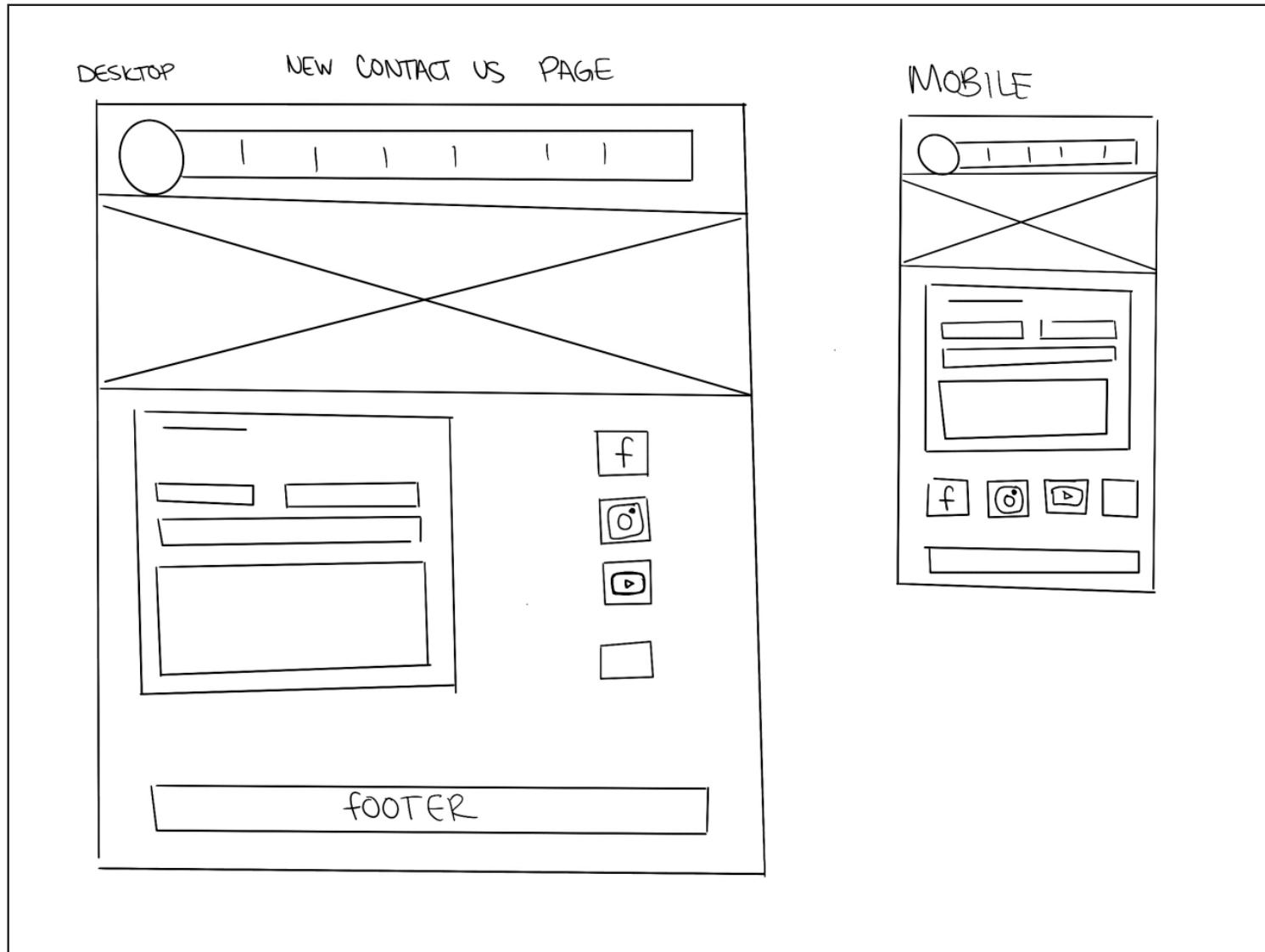
new website/home page



our dogs page



schedule a visit page



New Website

user flow: scheduling visit

This is the new “HOME” page. The website redesign has calming colors and higher quality pictures. It also contains a simplified less distractive logo. It is simpler and easier for users to accomplish tasks. I also have two options through out each page for users to navigate back to the home page. They can either click the logo or they can click “home” to get back to the home page. Having multiple options helps users have less confusion

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Whatcom Therapy Dogs website. At the top right is a blue button labeled "sign up for our newsletter". Below it is a navigation bar with links: HOME (highlighted in blue), ABOUT, VISITS, OUR DOGS, VOLUNTEER, and CONTACT US. To the left of the navigation is the organization's logo, which is a circular badge with a black paw print in the center. The word "Whatcom Therapy Dogs" is written in an arc above the paw, and "Bellingham WA" is at the bottom. The main feature is a large, close-up photograph of a brown dog's face, looking directly at the camera. Below this are three smaller, square photographs: one showing a person in a red hoodie reading a book to a black dog; another showing two golden retrievers being petted by a person in a white shirt; and a third showing a yellow lab being petted by a person in a dark shirt.

Positive interaction with dogs can lower anxiety, stress, and help reduce blood pressure. This can also stimulate release of endorphins. Being around dogs makes one smile and improves human health and well-being.

Populations and Sites benefiting from our service:
Hospital and Medical Facilities, Adult and Youth Programs, Behavioral and Mental Health Programs, Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facilities, Children's Reading, College Finals.

We represent volunteer Therapy dogs and their handlers. The teams are insured through their registered organizations. We help connect them with settings that could use a friendly canine visit for play or just hugs. WTD services are free, but dog biscuits are welcome!

Whatcom Therapy Dogs whatcomdogs@gmail.com 360.123.4560

[HOME](#)[ABOUT](#)[VISITS](#)[OUR DOGS](#)[VOLUNTEER](#)[CONTACT US](#)[Our Dogs](#)[Mason](#)

This is Mason, he is 3 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 8 months. He attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find him in the library Fridays at 1:30.

[Honey](#)

This is Honey, she is 1 year old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 3 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the library Fridays at 1:30.

[Maple](#)

This is Maple, she is 2 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 5 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the library Fridays at 1:30.

[Daisy](#)

This is Daisy, she is 5 months old and is currently training with Whatcom Therapy Dogs. She will be certified in 4 months. Then she will be able to join on visits to WWU's campus. We can't wait for you to meet her!

[Ocean](#)

This is Ocean, he is 1.5 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 4 months. He attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find him in the library Fridays at 1:30.

[Sophie](#)

This is Sophie, she is 2 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 7 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the library Fridays at 1:30.

This is the new “OUR DOGS” page. There are consistent, high quality pictures of the dogs. They also have a description paragraph to go with the dog that the original website did not have. There is also two ways to navigate to the end goal of scheduling a visit. I wanted users to have an easy way to schedule a visit so having multiple buttons where they can do that helps them accomplish the goal with ease. It is straight forward and easy to navigate for users.

[Schedule a Visit](#)

[HOME](#)[ABOUT](#)[VISITS](#)[OUR DOGS](#)[VOLUNTEER](#)[CONTACT US](#)[sign up for our newsletter](#)[Schedule a Visit](#)

NAME

EMAIL

SUBJECT

MESSAGE

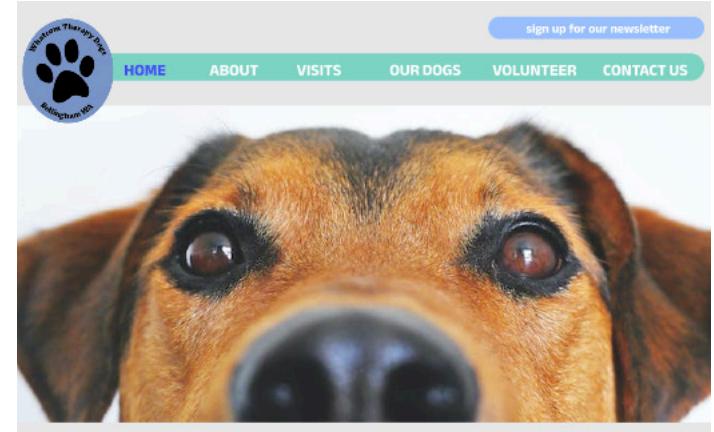
[SUBMIT](#)

This is the new “VISITS” page. Here viewers are able to submit an email about a visitation after they view all the dogs and see if there is a specific dog they want to have an appointment with. This is an embedded message that is super easy for viewers to use. It also has all the socials of the company that viewers can easily use.



Mobile Version

home



Positive interaction with dogs can lower anxiety, stress, and help reduce blood pressure. This can also stimulate release of endorphins. Being around dogs makes one smile and improves human health and well-being.



Populations and Sites benefiting from our service:
Hospital and Medical Facilities, Adult and Youth Programs, Behavioral and Mental Health Programs, Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facilities, Children's Reading, College Finals.



We represent volunteer Therapy dogs and their handlers. The teams are insured through their registered organizations. We help connect them with settings that could use a friendly canine visit for play or just hugs. WTD services are free, but dog biscuits are welcome!

our dogs



Our Dogs



This is Mason, he is 3 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 8 months. He attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find him in the Library Fridays at 1:30.



This is Maple, she is 2 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 5 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the Library Fridays at 1:30.



This is Ocean, he is 1.5 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 4 months. He attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find him in the Library Fridays at 1:30.



This is Honey, she is 1 year old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 3 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the Library Fridays at 1:30.



This is Bailey, she is 5 months old and is currently training with Whatcom Therapy Dogs. She will be certified in 4 months. Then she will be able to join on visits to WWU's campus. We can't wait for you to meet her!



This is Sophie, she is 2 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 7 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the Library Fridays at 1:30.

[Schedule a Visit](#)

whatcomtdogs@gmail.com 360.423.0560

schedule a visit



NAME

EMAIL

SUBJECT

MESSAGE

SUBMIT

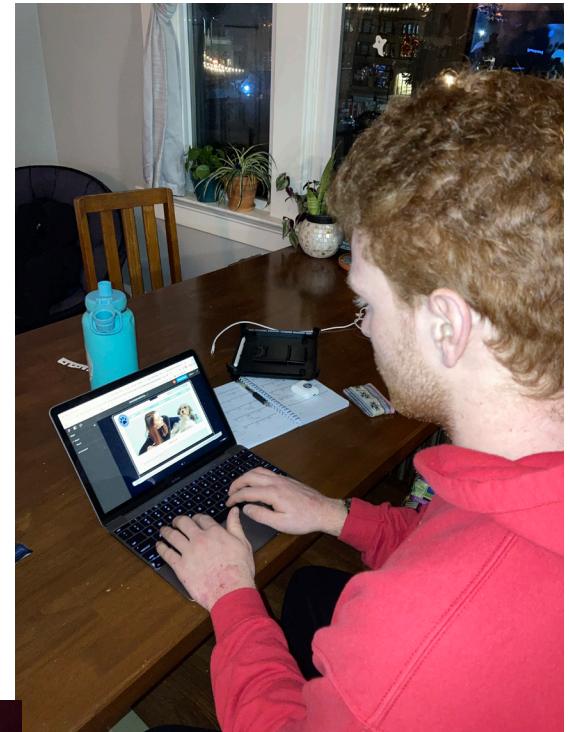


whatcomtdogs@gmail.com

360.123.4560

User testing

During user testing I was able to make small changes. At first the “OUR DOGS” page had a drop down menu including “over the rainbow dogs”. They also said that since there isn’t much information on the current website the drop downs are not necessary and keeping it simple would be easiest and best. These are dogs that have passed with the company. Users said that this page was unessesary and could potentially make viewers sad. They also said that having multiple areas where you can select to schedule a visit were helpful in directing the viewer.



Outcome Challenges

Some challenges I faced while creating the redesigned website were creating drop down menus in figma. This was a challenging part of the project for me, but I was able to figure it out after watching videos and practicing. I ended up not using the drop down menu I created, but it was still good practice.

Reflection

I learned that wireframes are super important. It is best to make detailed wireframes and map out specifically what you want your website to look like. This works great before starting to digitally make your website. Spending more time on the beginning stages really helps in the final stage.