Project 2:
A Persuasive Landing Page

Emma Murdock
Visual Design and Rhetoric

Overview of Cause

This landing page promotes GAMRU (Grimsby Auxiliary Marine Rescue Unit), an organization that patrols southern Lake Ontario "dedicated to saving lives and protecting property on the water". GAMRU helps people who are out on Lake Ontario, whether that be on a boat, yacht, or jetski, or simply someone who swam too far out.

GAMRU is proven worthwile simply by the statistics of rescue missions they conduct each year. In 2022 alone they conducted 43 rescue missions, even saving a record of 8 people in one mission.

Due to GAMRU being a not-for-profit organization, they receive no federal, provincial, or municipal funding, leabing them to rely almost exlcusively on donations. Because of this, the ladning pages call to acrtion will be to "Donate".

Design Statement

This is a landing page for GAMRU, an organization that focuses on rescuing people having emergencies on southern Lake Ontario. This landing page uses metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and wordplay in order to persuade the viewer to complete the call to action of "Donate". It successfully persuades the viewer because the metaphor, synecdoche, and metonymy demonstrate the direct connection between the work that GAMRU does and lives being saved, while the word play makes the page seem more friendly to viewers.

Process – Deciding and Brainstorming

I began by researching organizations and charities in the area, but found that I felt disconnected, as I had no personal experience with them. So then I began thinking of charities and organizations I do have experience with, and thought of GAMRU, who I interacted with on a daily basis at a previous job.

I found their website, saw that it had enough general information to make an informed design, and then set to work.

I started brainstorming and researching boat and water related word play simply because I am a fan of puns. Then I went through the list of rhetorical tropes, and brainstormed quick ideas for each one.

- Float /sink
  → "stay afloat"?
  → sink or swim
- live saving rings
- Finding sea legs
- dip your toes in / get your feet wet
- drowning for failing
- "when my ship comes in"
- "motor on over"
- "put some wind in our sails"
- "dead in the water"
- "Rock the boat"   ← word play
- "All hands on deck"
- Ship shape
- "Run a tight ship"
- "Ships passing in the night"

Mannequin Fundraiser :
→ "don't be a dummy"

Boat Culture Symbols:
- Life ring for life
- waves for trouble
- boat for safety
- motor/gas for energy
- life jacket for safety
- SOS
-

Irony:
- a rescue boat sinking

Hyperbole:
- "Faster than you can say SOS"

Process – In Class Activity 1

Next I did In-Class activity 1, in which I specified the specifics of who GAMRU is, what their goal is, and what exactly the landing page will promote.

This helped me find my target audience and made me begin to comile information on why GAMRU is worthwhile, instead of just trying to design a general page with general information.

Sheridan

VDES25892 Visual Design Rhetoric
Project 2 / In-Class Exercise 1: 'Cause' Selection & Audience

Student Name: Emma Murdock

What is your personal goal for this project?

My goal for this project is to spread awareness of GAMRU and create a landing page which effectively and efficiently informs people of what they do, why it is important to help them, and how to help them, using both information from the current website and a variety of visual tropes.

What is the 'cause' your landing page supports?

The landing page will support GAMRU (Grimsby Auxiliary Marine Rescue Unit) who works to act as rescue and help to people having emergencies on Lake Ontario.

Who or what does your cause help?

People who have emergencies (stranded, medical, lost, etc.) in Lake Ontario.

What change(s) is this cause trying to make?

Trying to lessen the amount of injuries, deaths, and property damage on Lake Ontario.
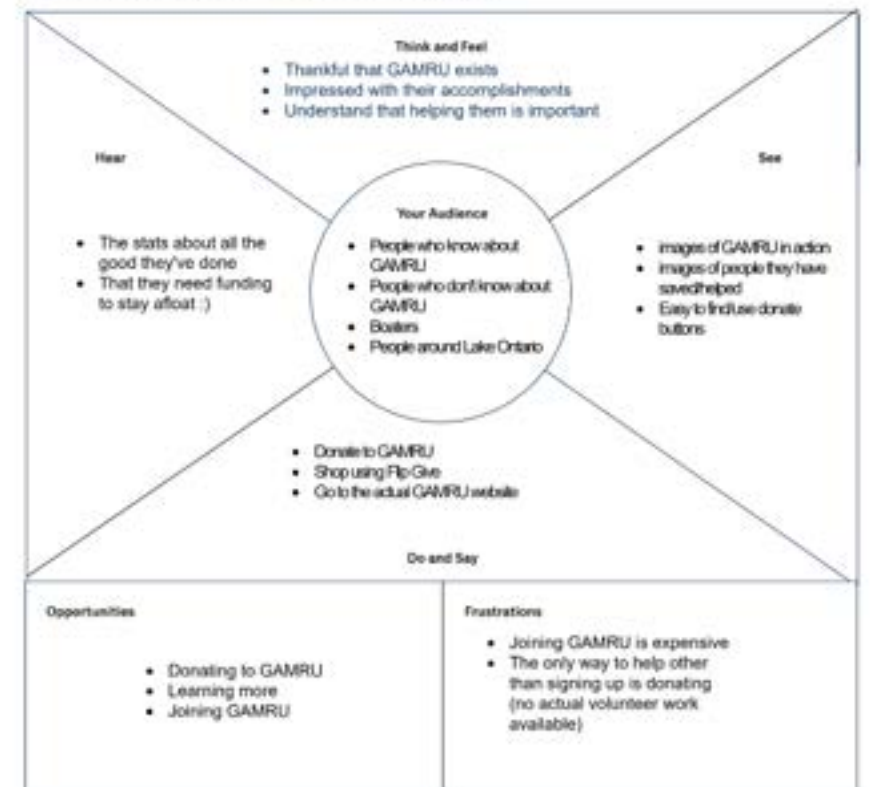
What evidence do you have that this cause is 'worthwhile'?

GAMRU did 38 rescue missions in 2018 alone (more data needed for current years). Data from Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary reports that work by GAMRU "saved 13 lives, aided 44 individuals and recovered $135,000 in property in 2018."
https://www.gamru.ca/

What appeal (call to action) are you making to your viewer?

From most to least important:
- Donate to GAMRU
- Shop on Flip Give to help GAMRU
- Join GAMRU

Describe the audience you will persuade using an empathy map.

Think and Feel
- Thankful that GAMRU exists
- Impressed with their accomplishments
- Understand that helping them is important

Hear
- The stats about all the good they've done
- That they need funding to stay afloat :)

Your Audience
- People who know about GAMRU
- People who don't know about GAMRU
- Boaters
- People around Lake Ontario

See
- images of GAMRU in action
- images of people they have saved/helped
- Easy to find/use donate buttons

Do and Say
- Donate to GAMRU
- Shop using Flip Give
- Go to the actual GAMRU website

Opportunities
- Donating to GAMRU
- Learning more
- Joining GAMRU

Frustrations
- Joining GAMRU is expensive
- The only way to help other than signing up is donating (no actual volunteer work available)

Process – In Class Activity 2

Then I did In-Class Activity 2. Using my quick ideas I was able to decide which ideas I liked best and explain them further, exploring why they worked or might not work.

Sheridan

VDES25892 Visual Design & Rhetoric
Project 2 / In-Class Exercise 2: Rhetorical Tropes

Student Name: Emma Hutton

Sketch/describe a possible persuasive metaphor you could use:

The metaphor of 'drowning' for failing. I can describe the success of GAMRU as swimming versus drowning, and in a more real sense relating to the actual work GAMRU does, if Gamru 'drowns' then real people actually drown.

Sketch/describe a possible metonymy you could use:

'Sailing' to represent the ongoing work of GAMRU, as sailing means the boat is functioning as it should.

Sketch/describe a possible synecdoche you could use:

A 'life ring' in representation of the donations to GAMRU, as life rings are a literal part that GAMRU uses.

Sketch/describe a possible personification you could use:

Personification of GAMRU's boat as the entity GAMRU or its volunteers. The boat needs to stay in top shape and well taken care of and funded to keep working.

Life Jacket to represent a life. A single life jacket floating in the middle of the water is personified as a person, who would then be imagined stranded floating alone.

Sketch/describe a possible hyperbole you could use:

The speed of GAMRU is an important part of what they do. The speed could be exaggerated to emphasize the helpfulness of GAMRU, that they can get to an emergency quickly. "Faster than you can say GAMRU"

Sketch/describe a possible visual pun you could use:

A fundraiser for a new mannequin with the theme of "don't be a dummy... donate!"

Process – Further Exploration

Next I made a list of the key aspects of GAMRU I wanted to get across to the viewer and a list of boat related things so I could combine them using rhetorical tropes.

I liked the idea of using nautical flags in the landing page as the target audience, boaters, are the only people who would recognize the flags, making the page seem more inviting and personalized to them. First I did research into what each flag represented, and learned that each flag has two meanings: one displaying the status of the ship, and the other a letter.

I collected some flags that had ship status meanings that could apply to GAMRU, such as "medical emergency" or "man overboard", but thought that the meanings may be too niche to incorporate smoothly into my design.
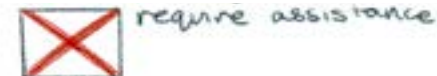
I then experimented with the other meaning of the flags, the letters, and tried different ways of spelling "GAMRU" using the flags.

Things to convey:
- life
- bravery
- safety
- donations/money
- Canada
- speed
- Reliability

Boat Things:
- docks
- deck
- gas
- paddle
- motor
- wind
- sails
- Nautical Flags

represents medical emergency

require assistance

man overboard

Process – Information Research

Next I looked at GAMRU's website, and extracted only the necessary information, as the current site is almost completely text. Then I did research into news articles about GAMRU.

I compiled all this information so I would have a list of all the next that was going to be on my page.

After in-class feedback, I decided to reduce the list almost completely, advised that too much information may look busy, and simplicity is better.

- "Formed in 1988, GAMRU South Shore Search And Rescue is a community-based volunteer organization dedicated to saving lives and protecting property on the water through timely, disciplined and effective search and rescue (SAR) services."
- GAMRU has sailed Lake ontario for more than 25 years saving and protecting people's lives and property
- Gamru is comprised of dedicated volunteers
- Gamru relies almost exclusively on donations for operate
- Since 2016 Gamru has been called out over 129 times
- In 2019 they did 29 rescue missions
- "GAMRU South Shore Search And Rescue is the *only* dedicated marine search- and-rescue organization on the south shore of Lake Ontario between Hamilton and Port Weller."
- In case of an emergency, dial 1-800-267-7270 or *16 on your cell phone.
- The volunteers of South Shore Search And Rescue were called out 43 times in the 2022 boating season
- The 2022 tally included another record — eight victims saved in a single mission
- The average response time for the rescuers was 11 minutes. The crews logged more than 50 hours on rescue missions.
- no funding from municipal, provincial or federal governments

In case of an emergency, dial 1-800-267-7270 or *16 on your cell phone.

INTRODUCING GAMRU SOUTH SHORE SEARCH AND RESCUE

For more than 25 years, local volunteers from GAMRU South Shore Search And Rescue have sailed into Lake Ontario in every kind of weather to help save their neighbours' lives and protect property.

In that time, many skilled and determined volunteers - some with little prior boating experience - have become the pillars of an unlikely system that works uncommonly well. They have earned the respect of their community and their peers in the marine search and rescue community.

With 38 rescue missions, the 2018 boating season established a record for a single season for our organization and brings the total for the past three years to 100 rescue missions. The average response time was just over 11 minutes, up from the previous year. According to data collected by the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, our work on the water saved 13 lives, aided 44 individuals and recovered $135,000 in property in 2018.

Top: My list of information; Bottom: A page from the current GAMRU website.

Process – Wireframe Sketches

The first wireframe I sketched was focused on the idea of a marine radio, something that every boater would recognize. As these radios are used only for important messages, it would make the message the landing page was promoting more important.
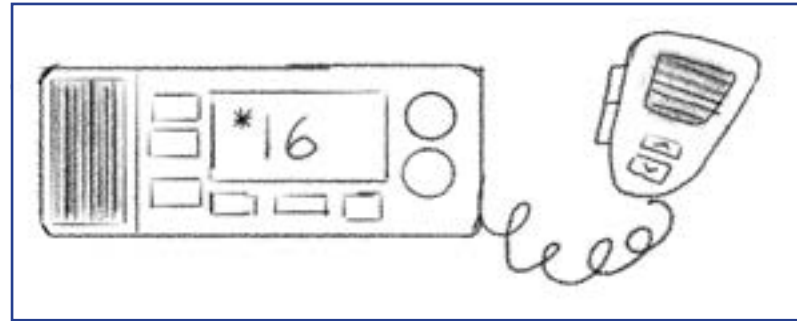
The next wireframe was the one I based my final design on. It used the statistics from my research as icons to inform the viewers, and disstressing imagery in order to convey the consequences of GAMRU not being around.
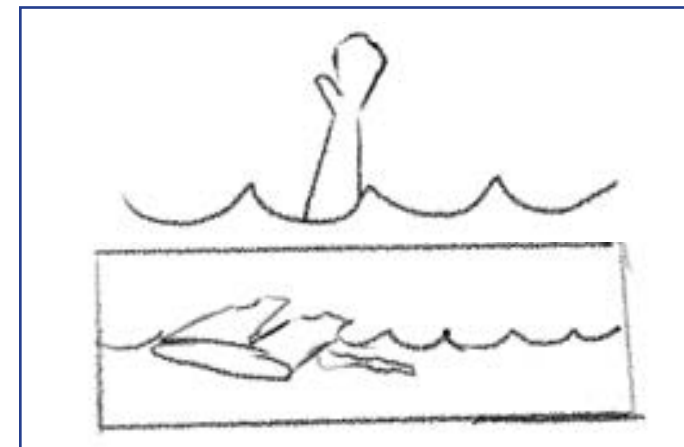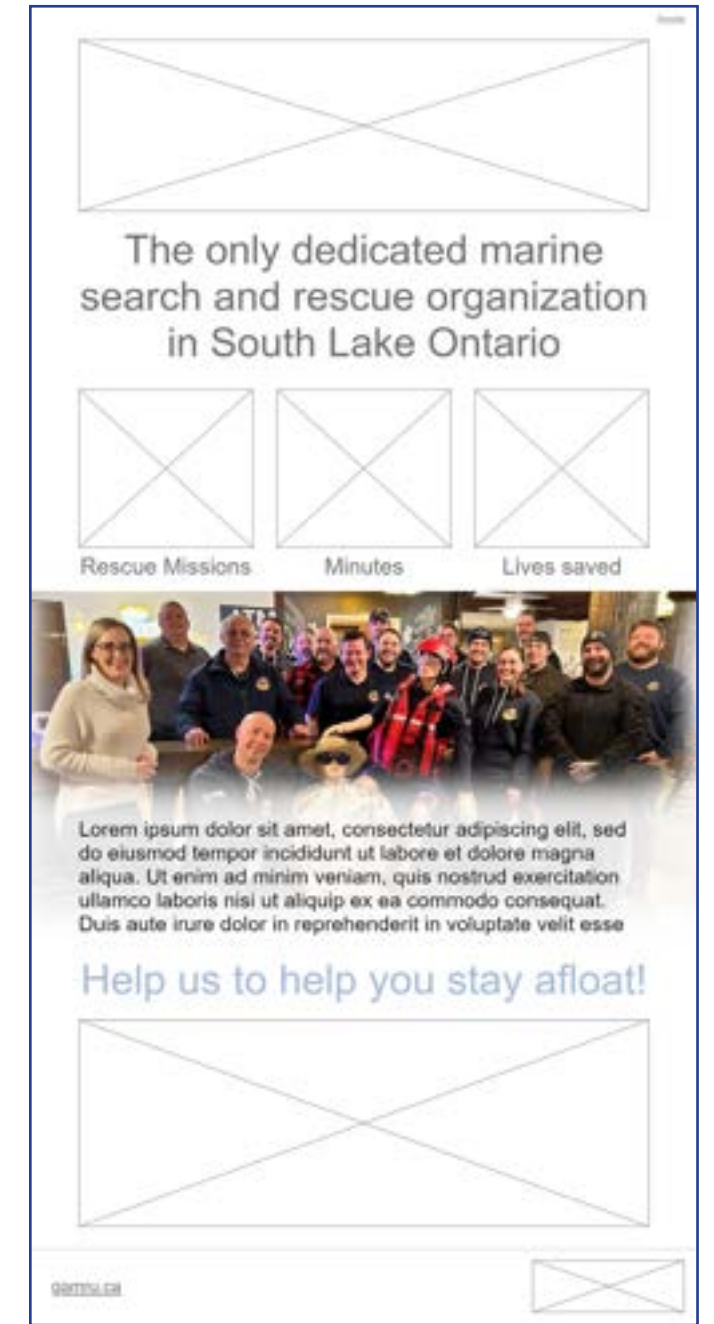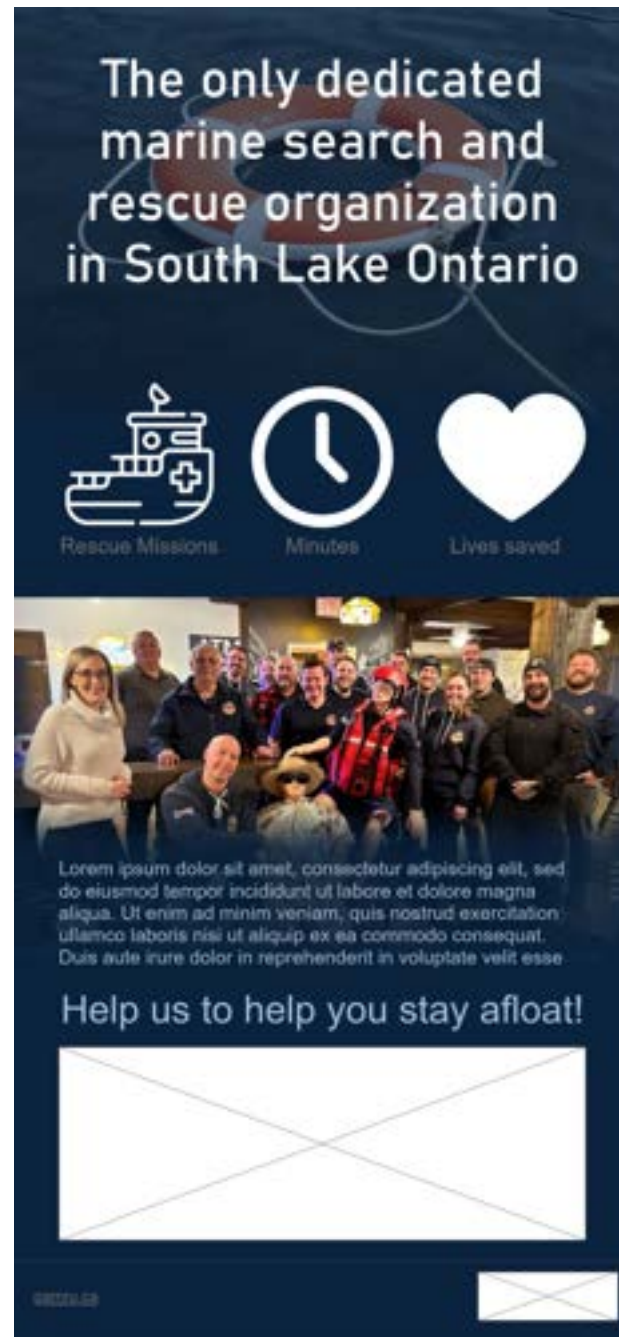
Process – Low Fidelity Wireframes

I brought my sketch into XD and created a low fidelity wireframe.

I found I didn't like that my sketch had two sections of text next to eachother, so I experimented with gradients to incorporate a text paragraph into an image.

I didn't end up using either of these ideas, but the gradient inspired the use of gradient in my final design in order to not break the flow of the page.

Process – Mid Fidelity Wireframes

In the mid fidelity wireframes I experimented with different images as headers, both photoshopped and from GAMRU.

I also tested different ways to display the statistics, deciding if using imagery, icons, or both would be stronger.

Feedback told me that the solid icons worked best, and that turning each icon into its own section would benefit the design, as I still had too much information.

Process – Sections

With the feedback in mind, I refined what 3 icons/categories/statistics were most important to persuade viewers to follow the call to action.

1998 – History – GAMRU was founded by a group of boaters after a boating tradgedy. This tells the viewers that GAMRU is built on caring for people, making them more likely to be sympathetic.

24 hours a day – About – GAMRU operates 24 hours a day for most of the year, giving them an image of reliability and dedication to the viewers.

30 – Volunteers – GAMRU is operated completely by over 30 volunteers, letting the viewers know that this organization is run from kindness, and also receives no government funding, persuading them to donate.

Process – Location

An additonal element I thought was important to persuade the viewers was that GAMRU is local, focused solely on their home area.

I tried different ways of displaying this, including making the words "South Lake Ontario" red, and including a map of the area in differet ways. I liked the imagery of the map, but thought that it disrupted the flow of the design too much if it was just placed there next to some text.

Then I realized that water was the most important aspect of this map, given that GAMRU is marine based, and that I already had an image of water in the area I wanted the map to be. From there I just needed to add in the shoreline and location text to make the map identifiable to the area.
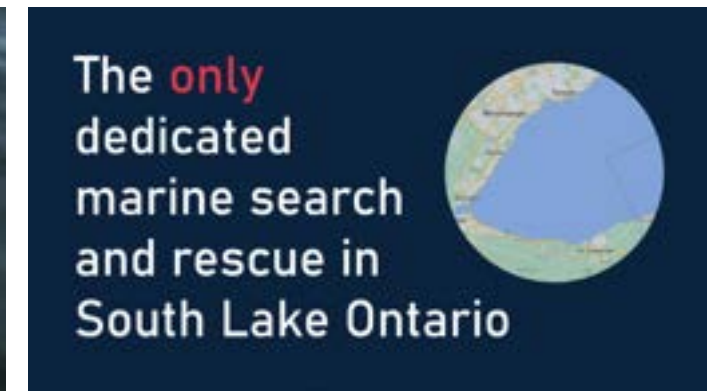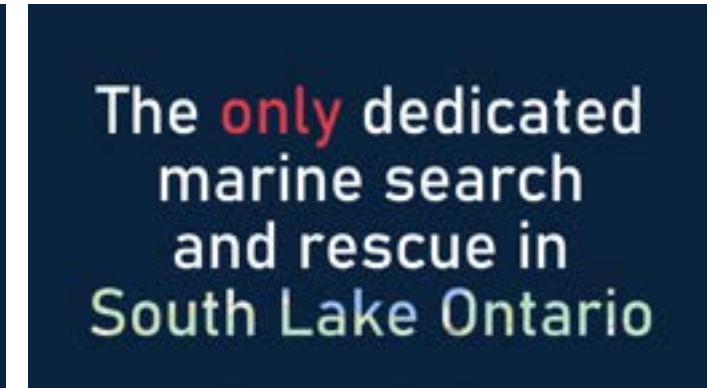
Process – Map Making

In order to make the map not too distracting from the rest of the page I wanted the land to be the same color as the background of my page, with only roadways visible in order to make it clear that it is a map.

I used mapbox.com to customize a map of the area with only roadways and the colors I wanted, then took a screenshot and erased the lake in photoshop.
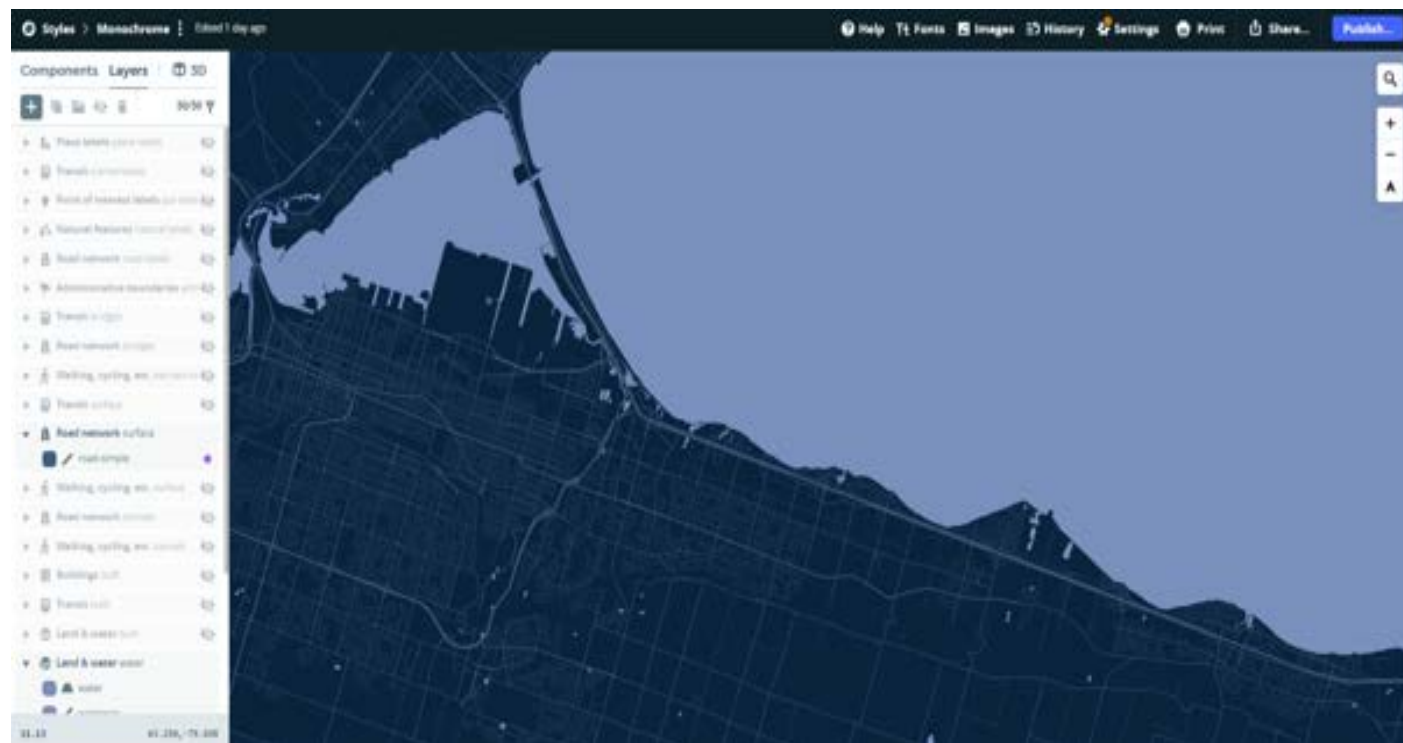
Process – Call to Action

I wanted some sort of imagery or visual to accompany the word play in the call to action section, but was not sure what visual I could use to represent money without coming off as too strong.

I decided that the visual didn't need to be related to money at all, and that the concept of money would be well understood through the word "Donate". So I used an image of a life jacket, as it is metonomy for saving lives, which itself is a metaphor for keeping GAMRU in business.

Help us help you stay afloat!

DONATE

gamru.ca

Simply because it would look good visually, I considered having more than one call to action (such as "Join"), as I thought more than one life jacket may look better, but remebered in-class feedback from the first week of this project in which I was told that keeping it to only one call to action is best. In order to visually balance the page I moved the word play down to be next to the life jacket instead of above it. I decided to put the section on an image background to add visual interest, and chose a wooden dock as they are common in marinas and harbours.

Reflection

The visuals guide a user's behavior by acting as the first source of information they see, even before text content. Icons are often used to represent the general theme of a section or paragraph as they are often easier to understand or better at describing the scope of the content than a text title/button, especially when using rhetorical tropes such as metaphors, metonymies, and synecdoches. For example, a user is more likely to have their attention focused on a section of text describing emergency procedures that has an accompanying image/icon of emergency vehicle lights or a red warning symbol, than simply a paragraph of text. By including a visual aspect the importance of the content is heightened, making the user more likely to interact with it. Depending on the size and color of these icons, users' eyes are drawn to certain icons over others, making them more likely to access the content that the designer decides to put under these larger icons. The same theory also goes for images, the larger/more prominent/brighter the image, the more likely a user's eyes are to be drawn to it.

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The only dedicated marine search and rescue in South Lake Ontario

Hamilton

Stoney Creek

Grimsby
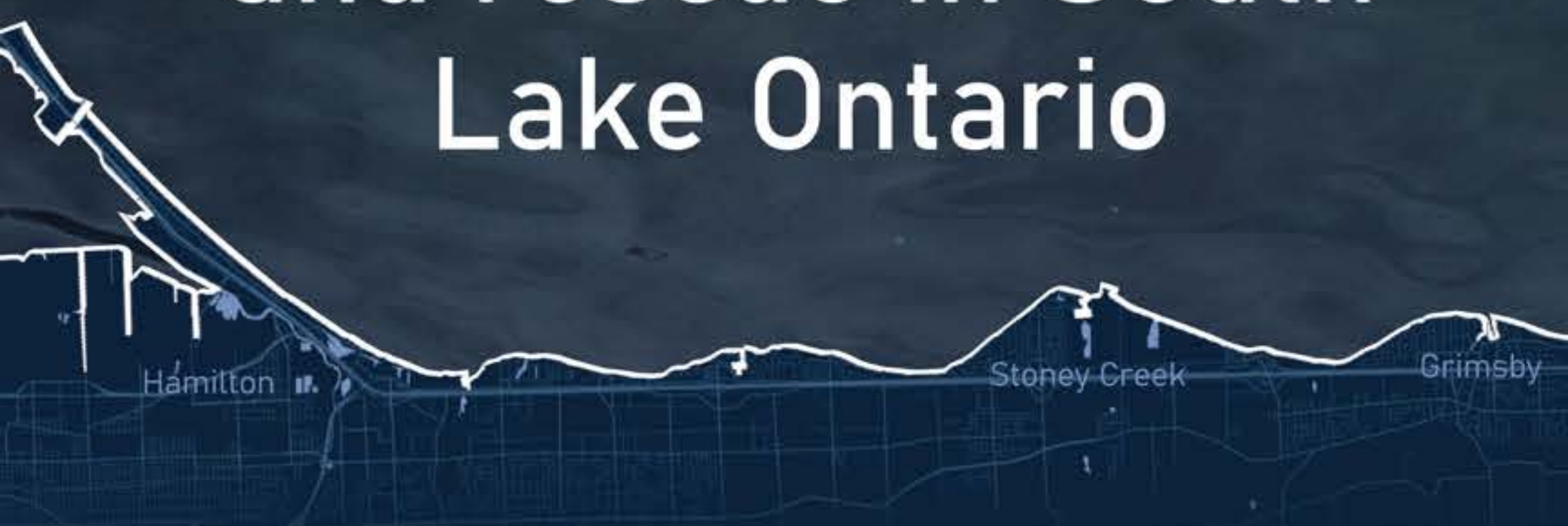
1988

Founded in 1988 by a group of boaters who joined together after a tradgedy on the Lake, working towards saving lives and protecting property on the water.

Always just a radio call away, GAMRU is out sailing the waters 24 hours a day every day from April to November each year, ensuring that no cry for help goes unanswered.

24

30

Operated and maintained completely by over 30 volunteers, GAMRU recieves no municipal, provincial, or federal funding, and almost exclusively relies on donations and fundraisers for all expenses.

Help us help you stay afloat!

DONATE