

MOUNT  VERNON
Website Redesign Case Study

- 01 Overview
- 02 Research
- 03 Ideation
- 04 Concept Evolution
- 05 Outcome

THE BRIEF

Redesign my hometown—Mount Vernon, Washington’s—current website to enhance its tourism and overall web presence. The goal was to promote local events, activities and attractions, with a focus on usability, content flow and information architecture, through interactive desktop and mobile Sketch prototypes.

THE CLIENT

Mount Vernon is a beautiful Pacific Northwest city that was established from agriculture and developed into a busy little town. It is a great place to raise a family, start a small business or simply visit to explore its beautiful scenery. Mount Vernon’s main tourist attraction is the annual Tulip Festival that draws in over a million visitors.

THE PROBLEM

The city of Mount Vernon's current website is very government-focused, text heavy and poorly structured. The tourism information takes the user to an external website. The initial problem was how to integrate the two websites in a way that will attract tourists as well as easily provide information to Mount Vernon's citizens.

THE SOLUTION

Restructure the site content to help users easily find what they are looking for, while implementing a tourism section. Acquire shorter body copy, fewer links and an overall clean, simple and structured layout. Use large vibrant images and promote the tulip festival to draw tourists to Mount Vernon.

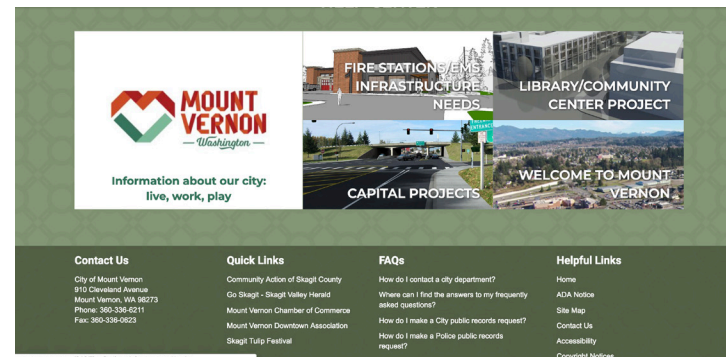
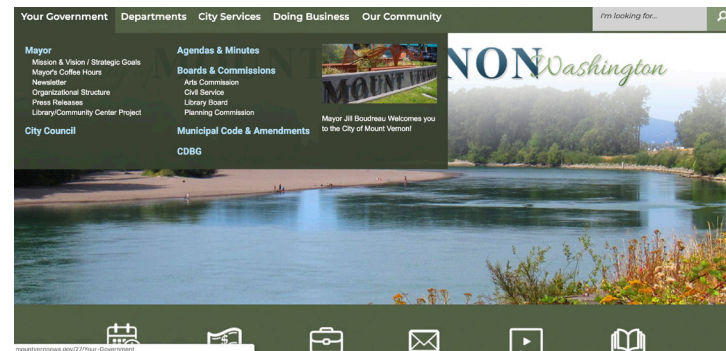
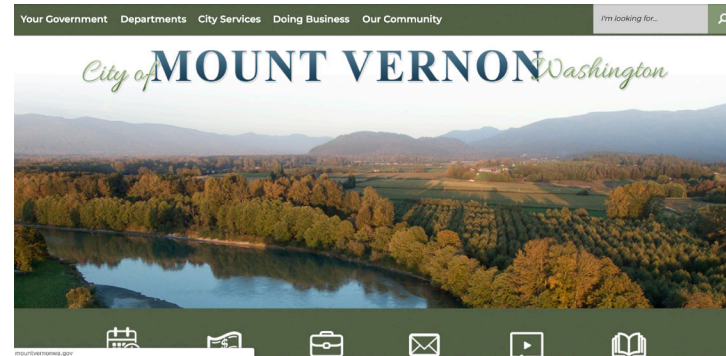
Questions to address

- 01 How can such a large amount of content be organized in an easily accessible manner?
- 02 How can the site attract tourists while providing usability to citizens?

CURRENT WEBSITE

I began my research by navigating through Mount Vernon's site myself. I noticed some design flaws and organizational challenges. The drop down navigation is a big problem area. There are too many links and it is inconsistent under each main heading, with different font sizing for titles. There is also an image on each of the drop down windows that is purely decorative and does not link to anything. The brief for this project is to highlight the tourism attractions. It initially took a few minutes to be able to locate the tourism section, which was a link at the bottom of the home page that navigated me to a different website.

Link to Mount Vernon's tourism section found only at the bottom of the home page. >



02

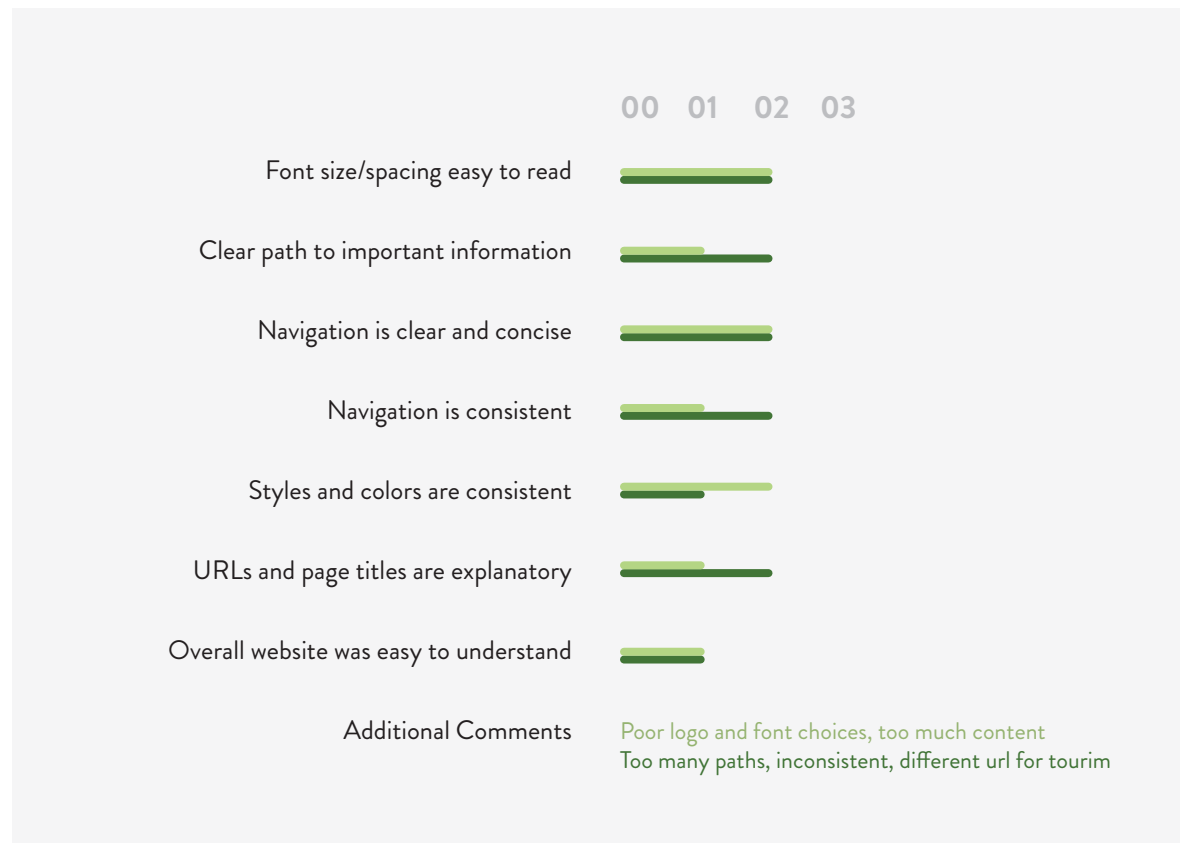
Research

USABILITY RESEARCH

I challenged users to navigate throughout the site and perform three simple tasks (one being, find tourism information) followed by a questionnaire. While I observed, I noticed that it took them much longer than it should have to follow the tasks and they became frustrated. Along with the overall information architecture issues, I learned that the link back to the home page button wasn't as obvious as it should be.

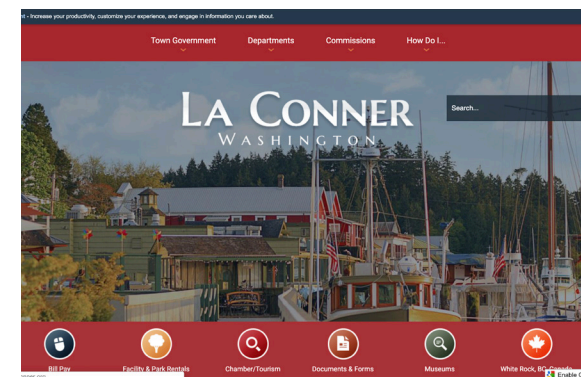
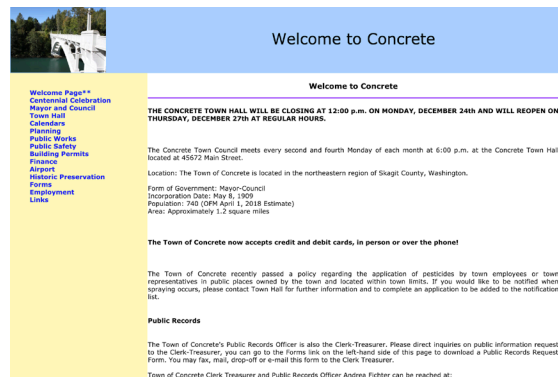
Problems to address

- 01 Tourism information is difficult to find.
- 02 Link to home page is not obvious.



COMPETITIVE RESEARCH

Most of Mount Vernon’s neighboring city websites had similar structural and organizational issues. Some definitely better than others, but overall they were similarly government-focused. Each of the websites have a lot of information and links. It is unclear to the user where go to find the information they need. My goal was to differentiate Mount Vernon from its neighboring cities with a clear and simple navigation and layout, attractive colors, and vibrant images in a grid structure.



Goal

01 Differentiate Mount Vernon from its neighboring cities.

TARGET PERSONAS

**DEBRA**

42 years old

OCCUPATION

Human Resources

INCOME

Middle-Class

FAMILY

Married, 3 kids

GOALS

To plan a weekend trip with a busy family lifestyle.

Debra is taking time to spend with her husband and kids away from her busy job and go to a fun new place. Debra and her family want to come to Mount Vernon to primarily visit the tulip fields. As a busy mother, Debra doesn't have time to waste especially when it comes to planning a trip.

**BILL**

70 years old

OCCUPATION

Retired

INCOME

Middle-Class

FAMILY

Married, 2 kids,
3 grandkids

GOALS

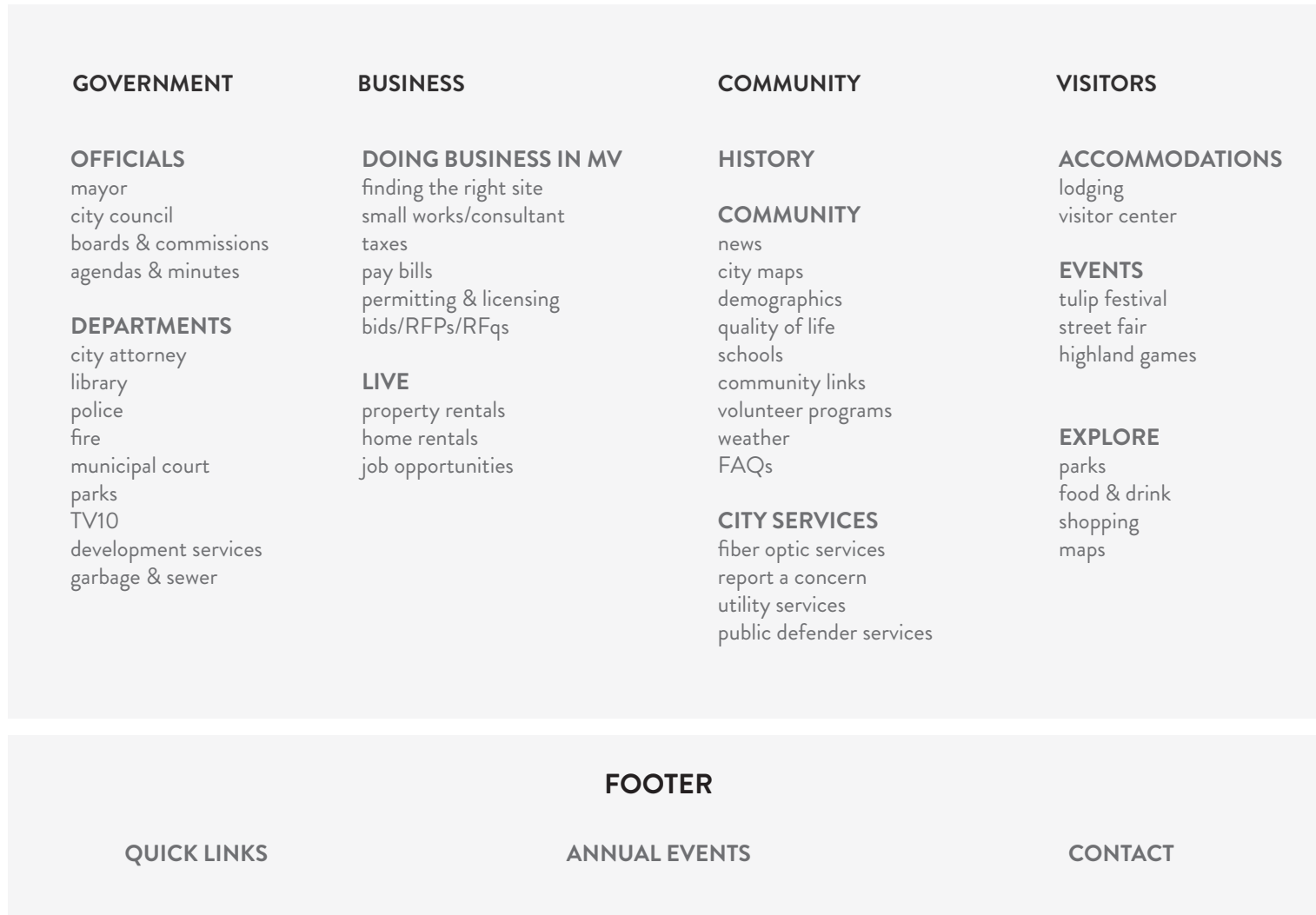
To pay bills and keep updated on city events.

Bill was raised in Mount Vernon, worked in various locations across the US and has come back to Mount Vernon to retire and spend his days with loved ones. His kids and grandkids live close by and he enjoys being involved with his community.

Goal

01 Appeal to the right demographic.

CONTENT REORGANIZATION



STRATEGY STATEMENT

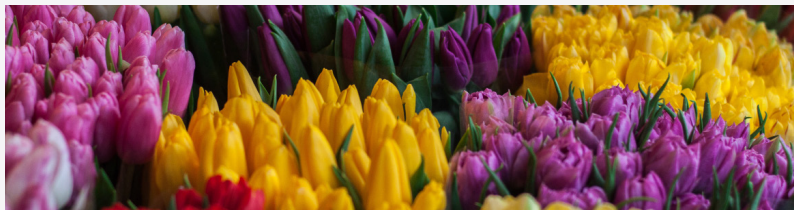
The redesign of Mount Vernon's website will honor the city's home-y, agricultural and strong community qualities. The website will maintain the majority of the information about government, city services and business, but in a more organized fashion. There will be an entirely new section in the navigation for visitors. The website will be more interactive, user friendly, clear and concise.

The brand will be welcoming and provide a sense of Mount Vernon's land. The website will draw visitors in with clear large-scale images of the scenic places around Mount Vernon such as Little Mountain Lookout and the famous Tulip Festival. The re-brand will highlight the beauty of the Mount Vernon



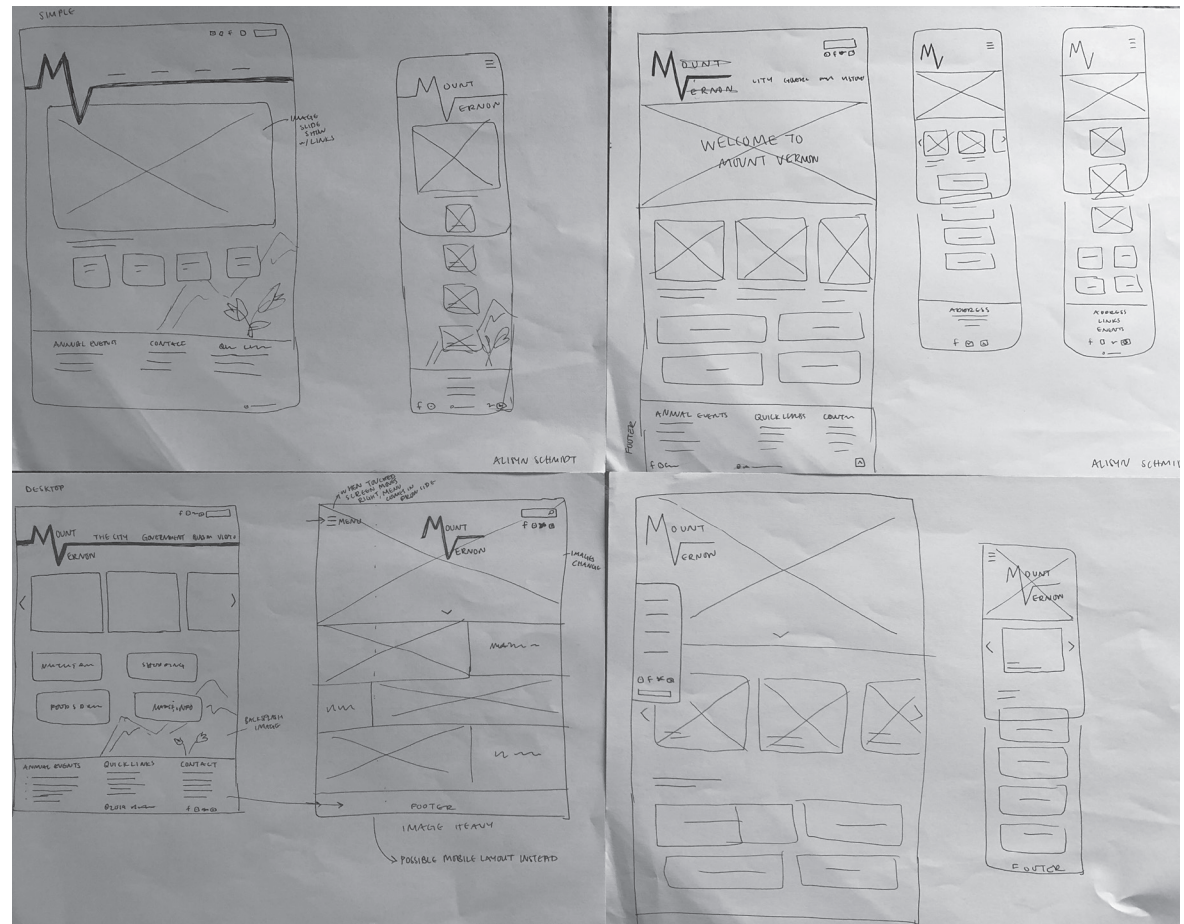
HEADER 1
HEADER 2

Body copy. Seditin consent
faccaborrum nem aut fuga.

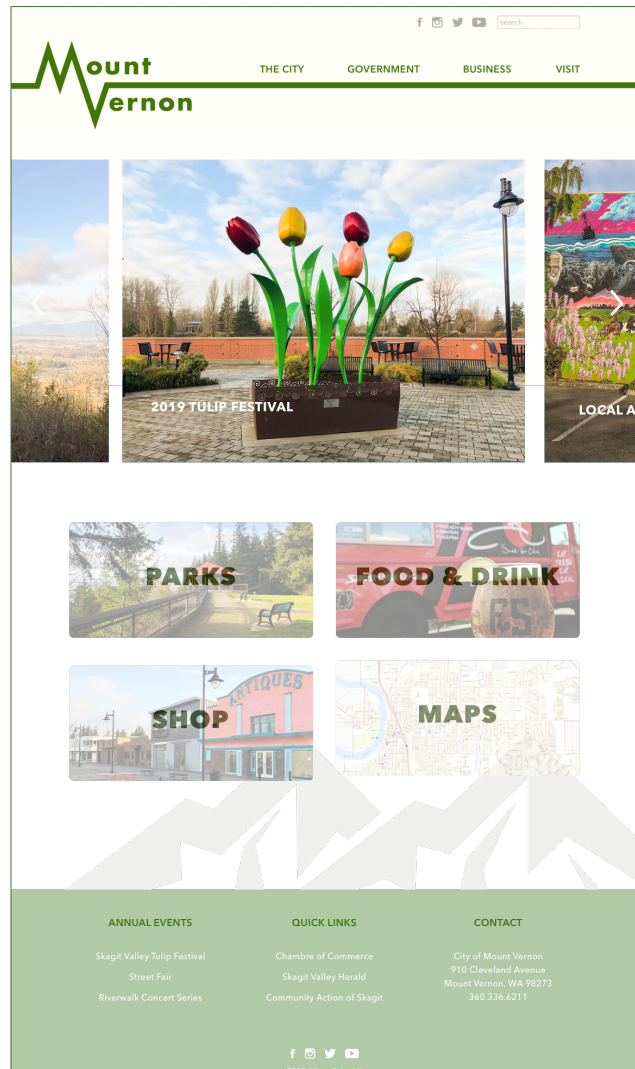


WIRE FRAMES

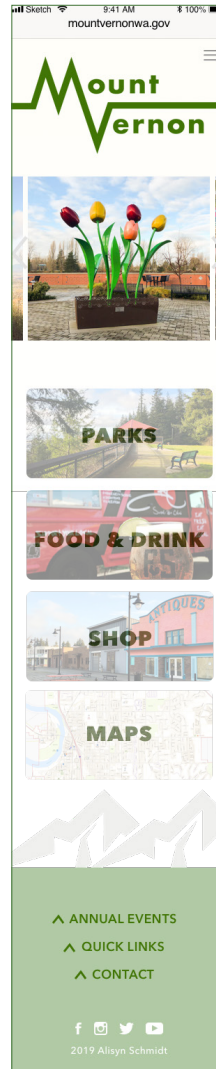
I explored multiple iterations of various wire frame sketches to determine the type of compositions that would best organize the information I had. I wanted to clearly and prominently place the logo, have large vibrant images fill the page, and have an overall clean and simple layout.



FIRST ITERATIONS



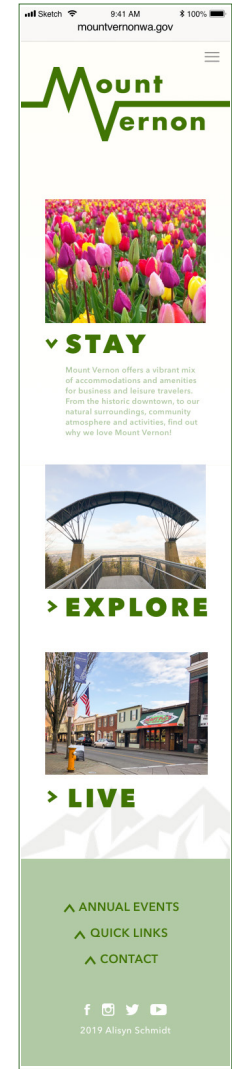
Home Page - Desktop



Mobile

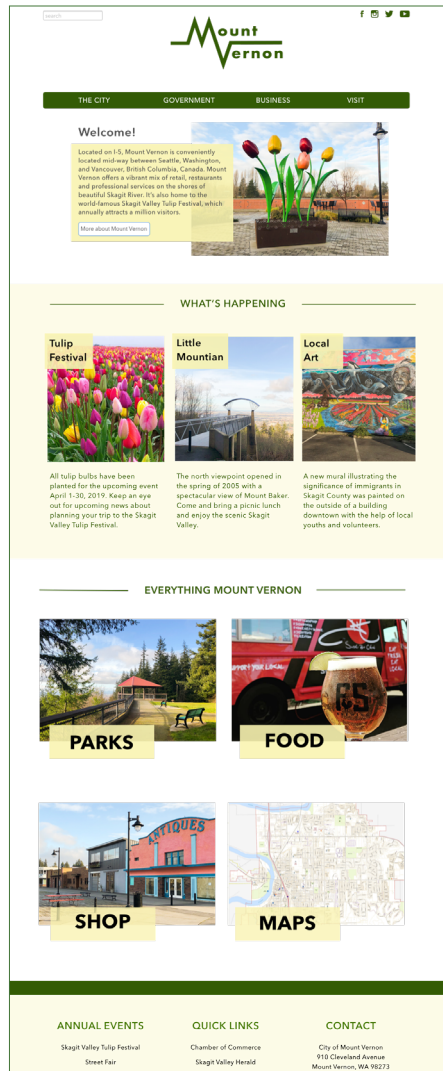


Tourism Page - Desktop

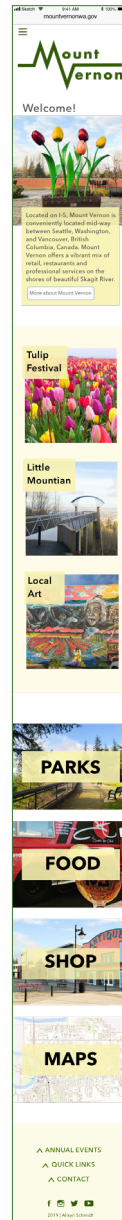


Mobile

FIRST ITERATIONS



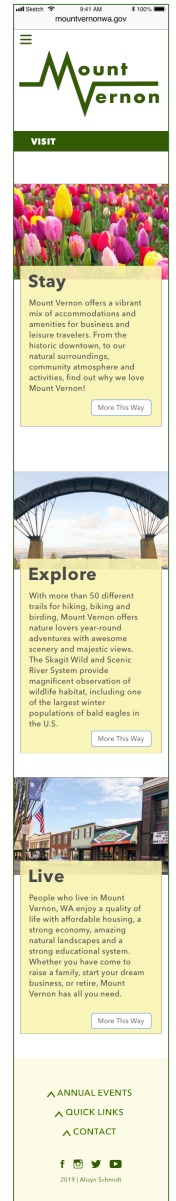
Home Page - Desktop



Mobile

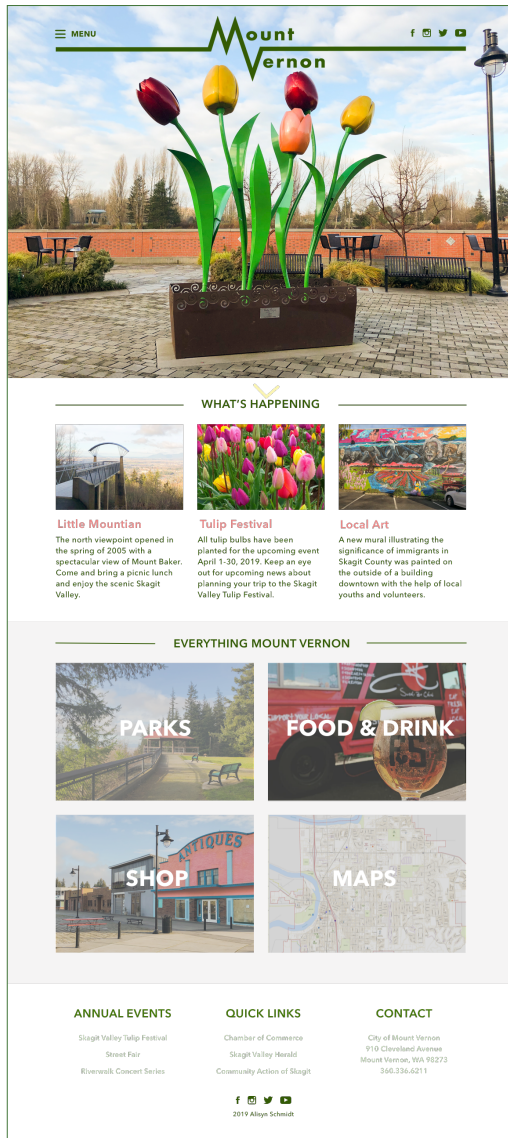


Tourism Page - Desktop

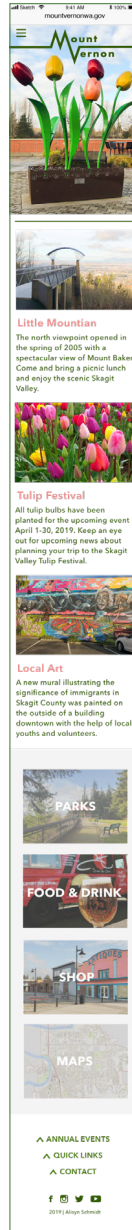


Mobile

FIRST ITERATIONS



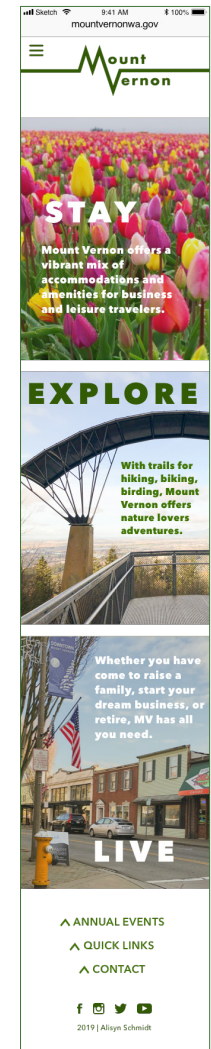
Home Page - Desktop



Mobile



Tourism Page - Desktop



Mobile

REFINEMENTS

After I established three initial ideas, I sought out critique from my classmates. They highlighted what was working and what wasn't on each of the designs and stated which one had the most potential. The crowd favorite was Set Three (the one on the right in the picture). The large scale vibrant images with clean headings was the most attractive. This website design made people want to come to Mount Vernon.

To improve this design, I needed to make some alterations to the logo. I got the comment from a couple people that it looked like a heart monitor and once you saw it you couldn't unsee it. It was also pointed out to me that the tourism page looked more like a home page with the use of the large scale images and headings.

Key Critiques

- 01 Make logo look less like a heart monitor.
- 02 Restructure home and tourism pages to make each clearly identifiable as such.



LOGO REDESIGN

City of **MOUNT VERNON** *Washington*

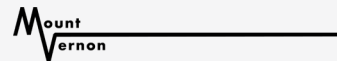
Original Logo.



First Concept. The idea was to connect the M and V to represent the valley that Mount Vernon is in with the surrounding mountains. The lines would stretch across the header to incorporate the navigation.



Refined Concept. After an initial critique, half of the audience enjoyed the new logo, while the other half believed it resembled a heart monitor. I went back to shorten the lines and square the corners to help eliminate the heart monitor aesthetic.

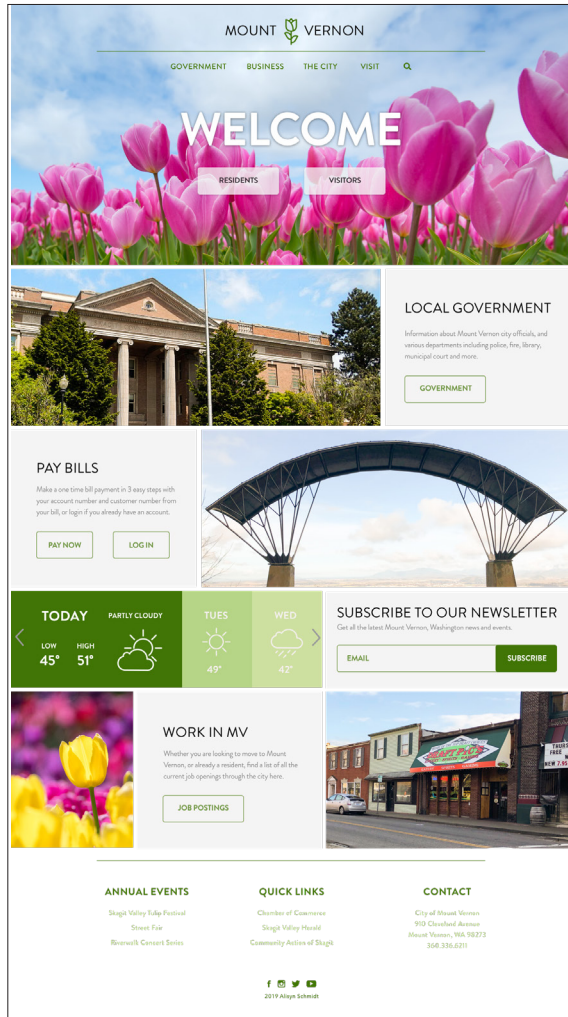


New Concept. I couldn't seem to escape the heart monitor aesthetic with my initial logo idea, so I went in a different direction. The tulip is the most iconic symbol to represent Mount Vernon, so I simply implemented it into the new logo.

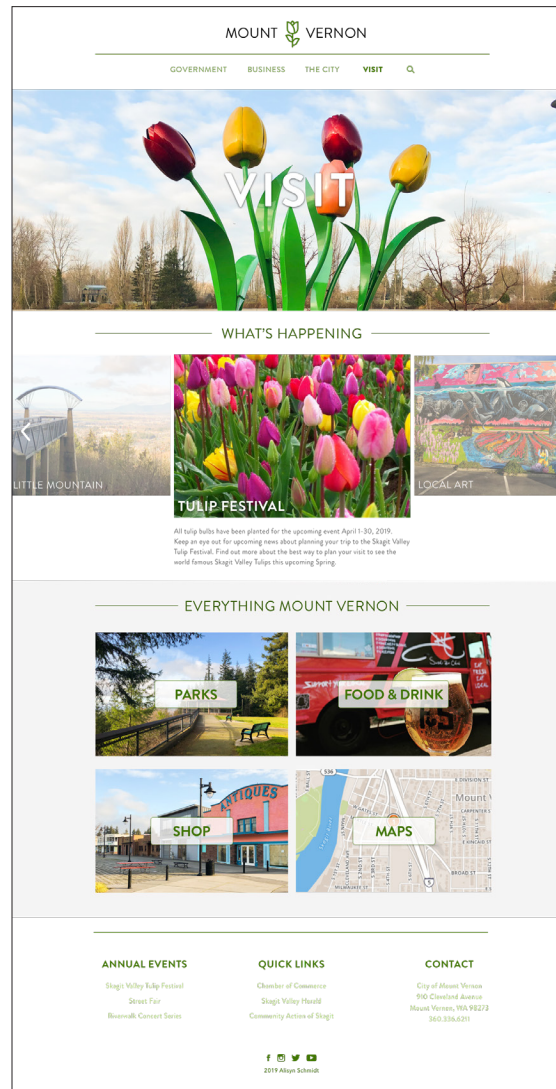
MOUNT  VERNON

Final Logo Redesign.

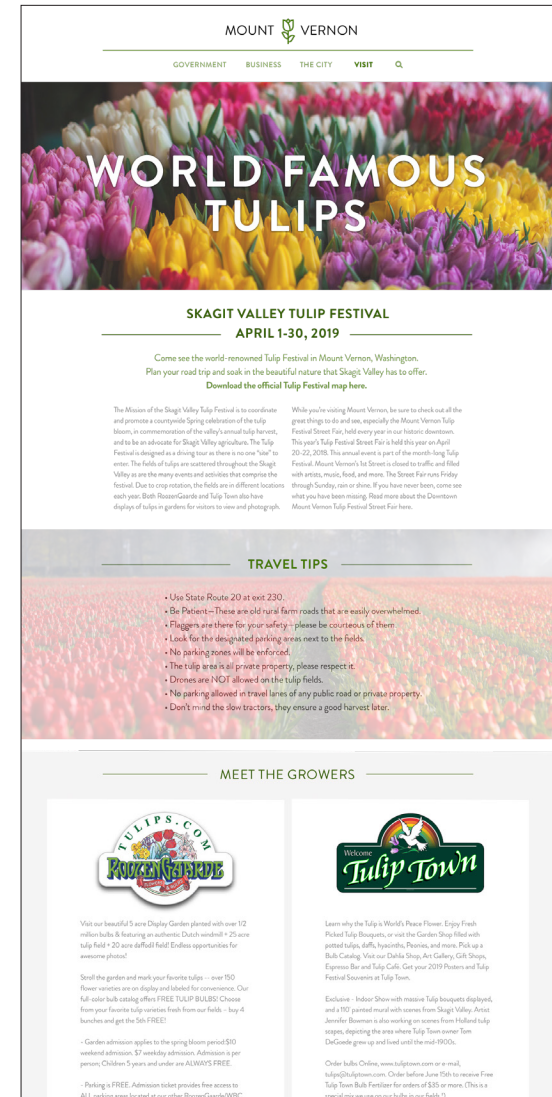
SECOND ITERATIONS WITH TERTIARY PAGE



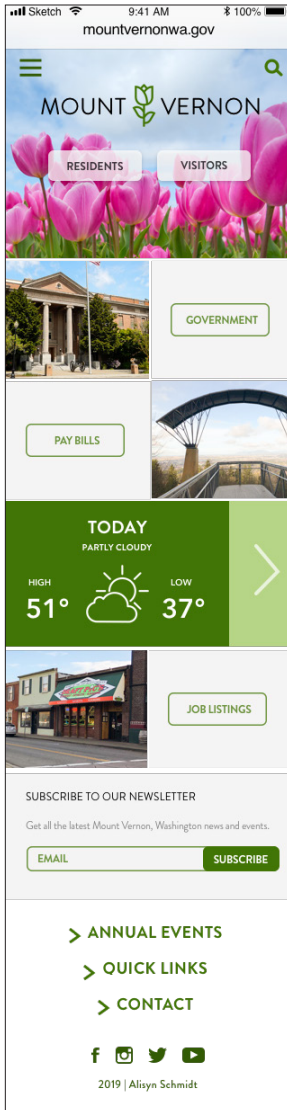
Home Page - Desktop



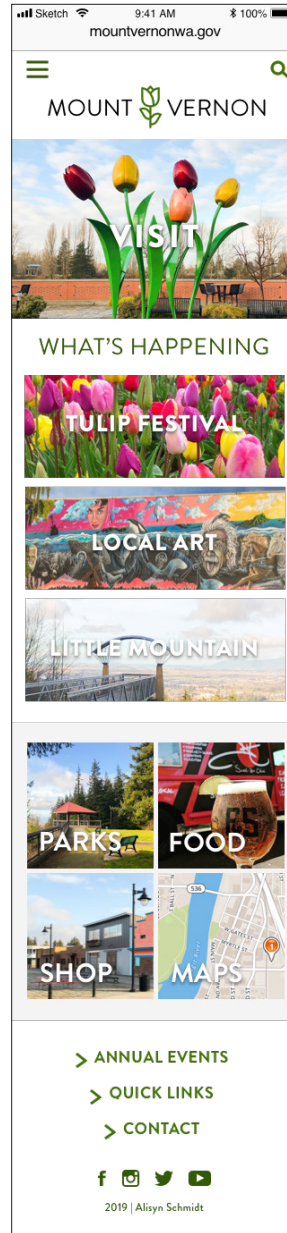
Tourism Page - Desktop



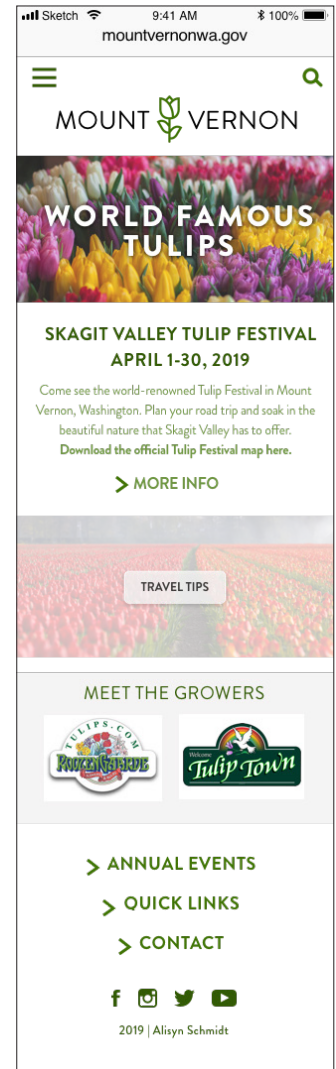
Tulip Festival Info Page - Desktop



Home Page - Mobile



Tourism Page - Mobile



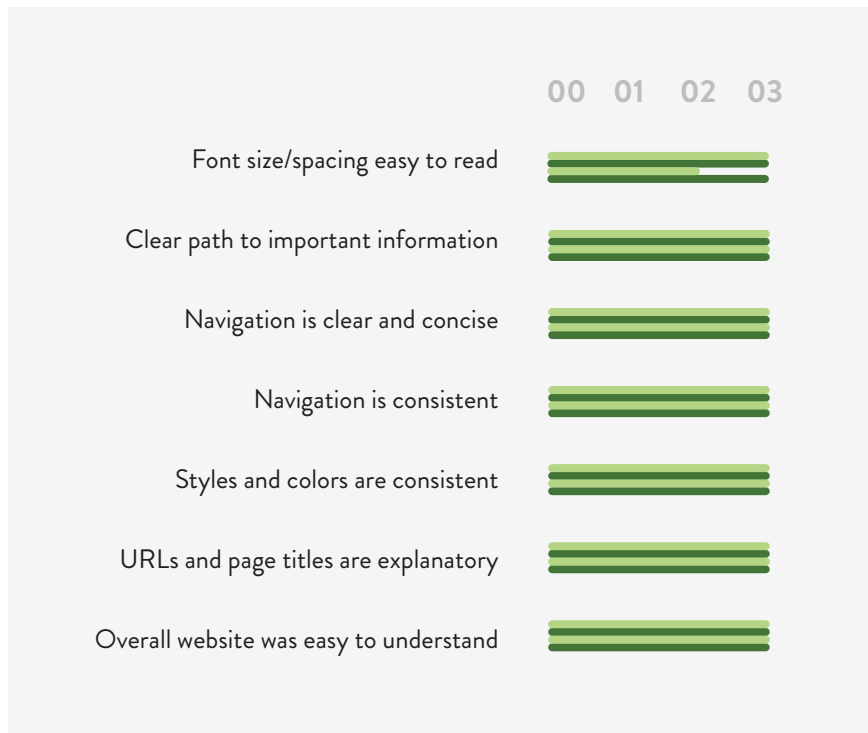
Tulip Festival - Mobile

USABILITY TESTING - ROUND 2

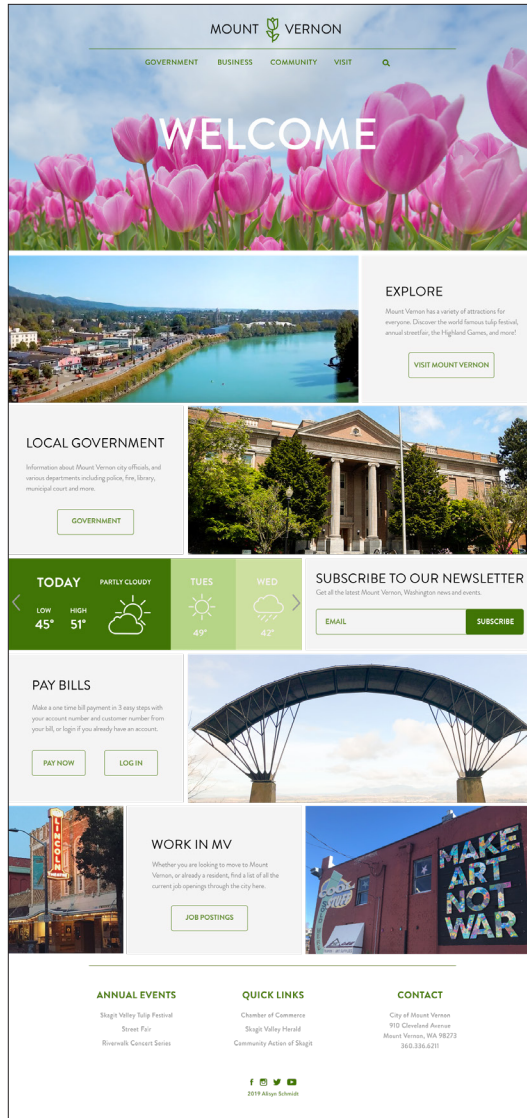
At this stage I conducted another round of usability testing. Overall, the design and usability had effectively improved. I challenged the users to follow the same simple tasks, and the time had drastically improved.

A few critiques I received were:

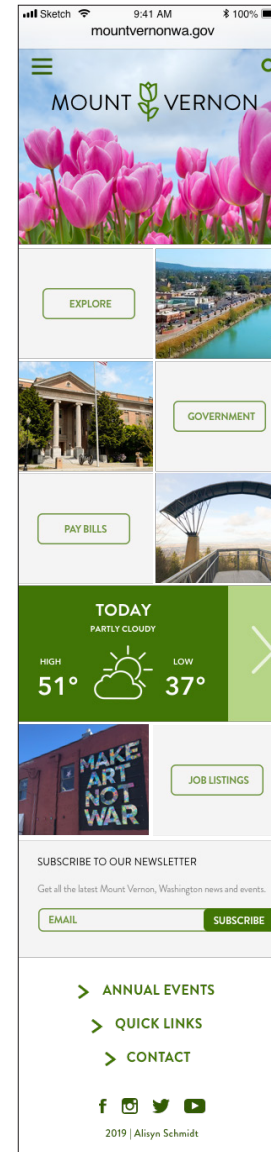
- Add additional relevant information to the tourism page
- The second “Visitor” button on home page is redundant
- The light green in the footer is difficult to read
- “The City” in nav is vague, replace with “community”
- Don’t use drop shadows on the type over the main images
- Too “tulip” focused.
- “Travel Tips” on tulip page is difficult to read
- Switch out the downtown image on home page (dive-y)



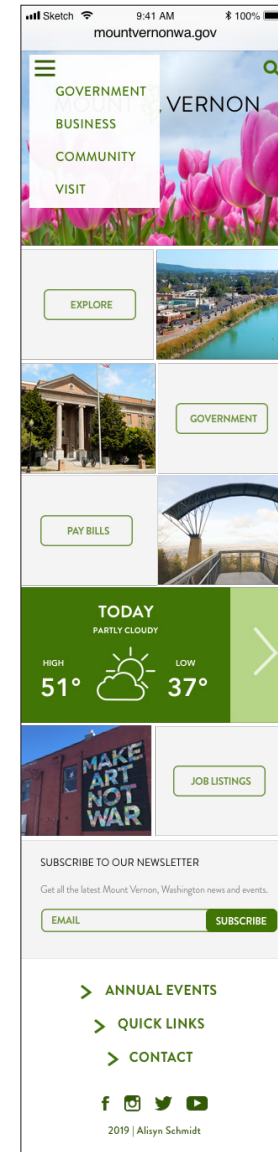
FINAL DESIGN



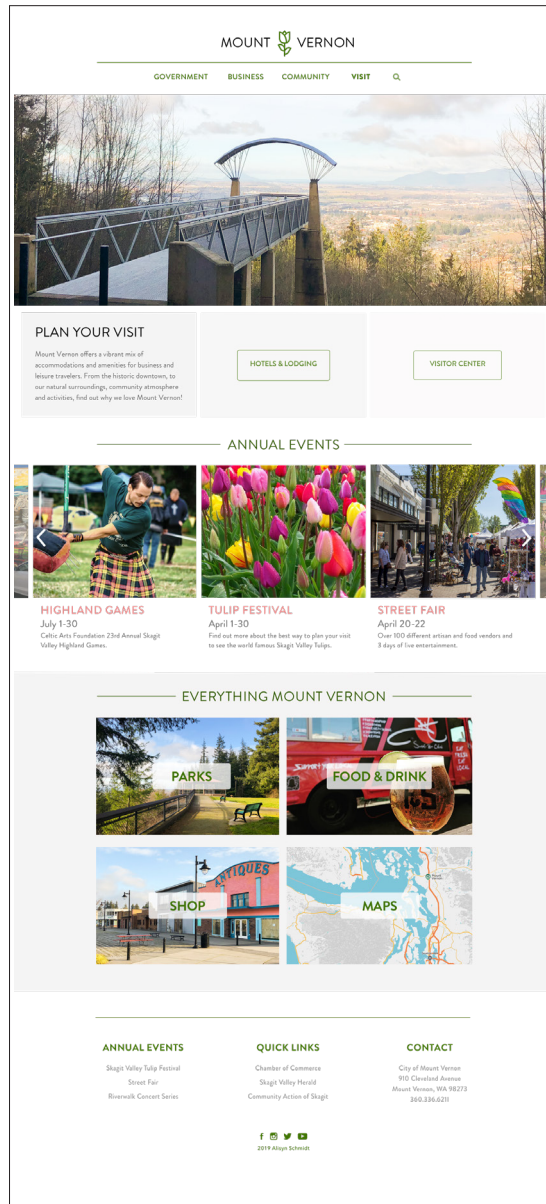
Home Page - Desktop



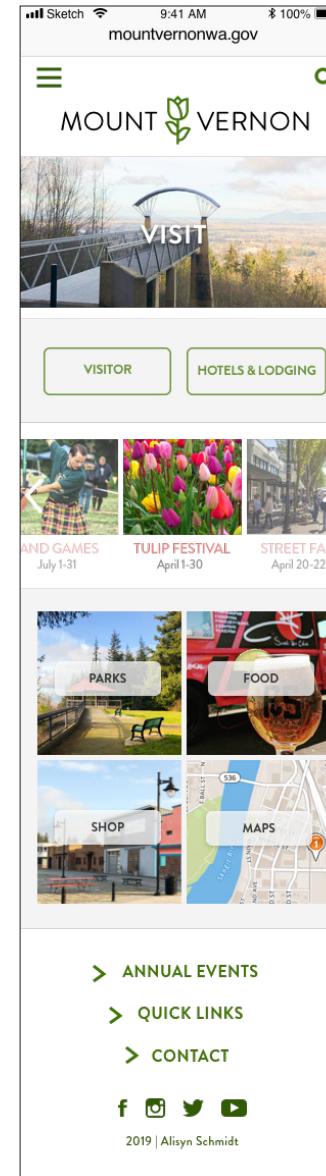
Home Page - Mobile



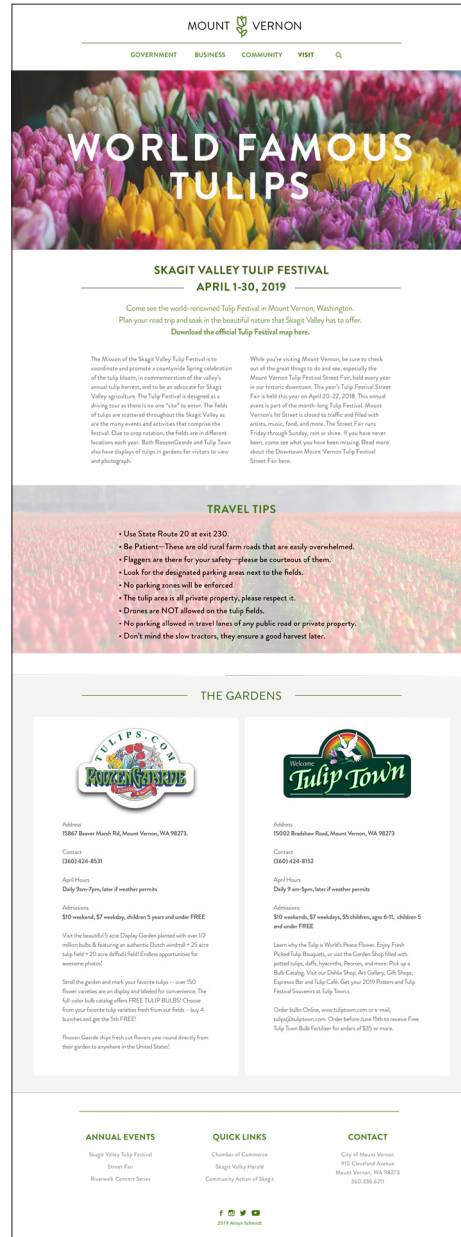
FINAL DESIGN



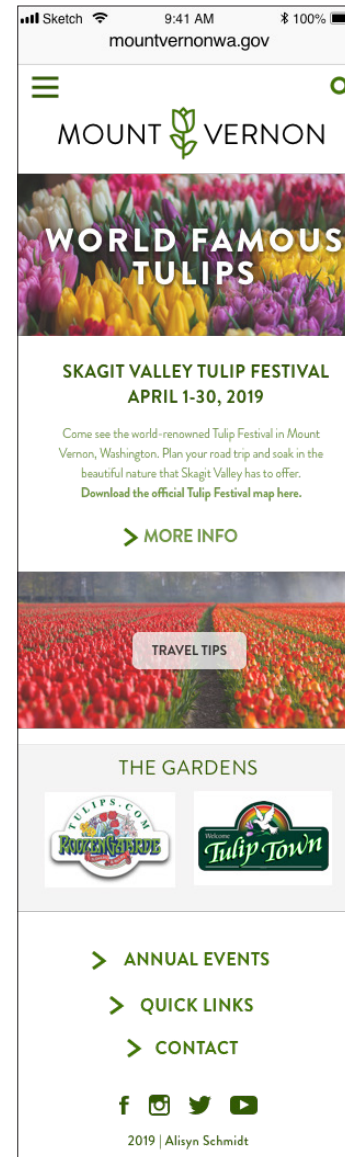
Tourism Page - Desktop



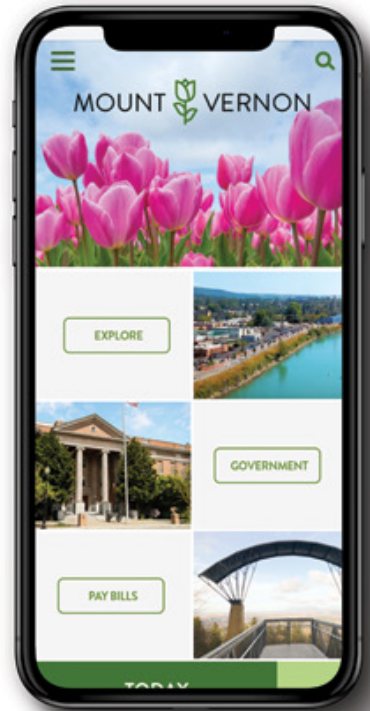
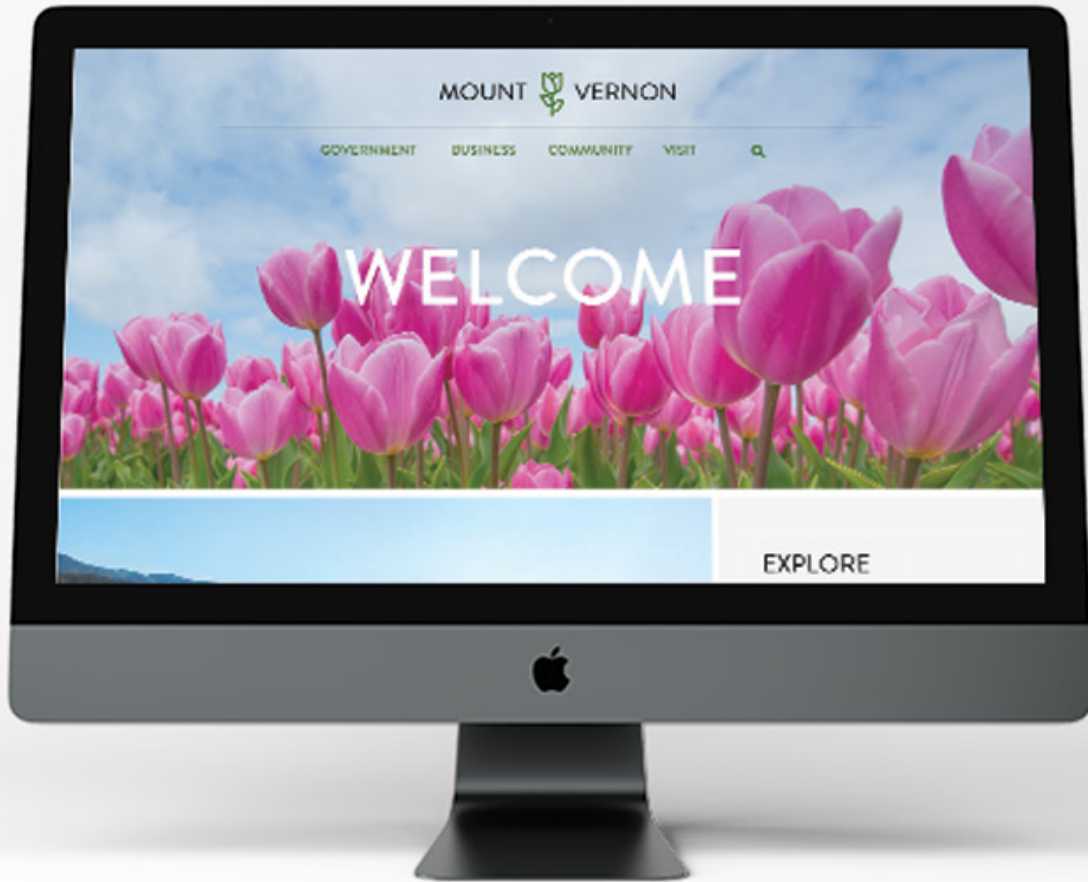
Tourism Page - Mobile



Tulip Festival Info Page - Desktop



Tulip Festival - Mobile



REFLECTION

I was excited to bring my design and user experience skills back to my hometown. Who better to design Mount Vernon's website than someone who spent their first 18 years living there. Although at times frustrating, I enjoyed seeing my project progress from sketches to an interactive prototype. The main challenge for me was redesigning the

logo. I got hung up on it for more time than I would have liked to, but the end design was simple, clean and representational of Mount Vernon. Another aspect of the project I found frustrating was designing the web pages without coding them. I would have liked to bring my prototypes to life if more time would have allowed. Overall, my skills

in Sketch improved drastically. By the final design, I was able to use Sketch much more efficiently. Based on the usability testing, my design is successful. It is easy to navigate, clear and descriptive and makes Mount Vernon look like a much brighter and exciting place to come visit.