

Northeastern University College Of Arts, Media, And Design

APPLICATION FOR HONORS IN THE DISCIPLINE: PART 2

PARTS 1 & 3 ON FRONT PAGE

Title: Captivating & Informative Design of Environmental Research Reports for Policymakers & the Public

Synopsis: This project stemmed from my idea of merging my two passions, Graphic Design and Environmental Science. Graphic Design can be very influential when applied to other disciplines. Service design, information design, and graphic simplification are used everywhere in daily life to help people understand information or material in an even more informative way.

Description: This project stemmed from my idea of merging my two passions, Graphic Design and Environmental Science. Graphic Design can be very influential when applied to other disciplines. Service design, information design, and graphic simplification are used everywhere in daily life to help people understand information or material in an even more informative way. Currently, our country (and our world) is undergoing a Climate Crisis. There is a vast amount of perplexing information revolving around these current events. The Environmental Movement is very complicated, but it is and will deeply affect life as we know it currently. Research and legislation (on the local and national level) will enact major changes for the current situation. However, research papers and legislation proposals are often difficult to read and their appearance is uninviting to the audience. Policymakers and the general public have a hard time interpreting the information because the layouts of these heavily scientific, fact-based reports are dense and incomprehensible.

In researching my original idea of transforming poorly printed legislation to help readers, I found a section labeled, "easy-to-read pdfs" on Boston's State Government website.¹ They are actually not easy to read nor are they inviting or appealing to any audience. The City of Salem, Massachusetts focuses

on making sure its citizens are well informed about new research and the corresponding legislation. However, their communication of a constant barrage of black-and-white emails doesn't get their messages across.² (I know this from personal experience). Thus, this shows there is a need for important research and legislation to be designed for the policymakers and the general public to easily identify and understand the information.

After identifying this need, I found an example of another country putting this very idea to practice. North Holland's government manual (on how the current infrastructure of their transportation system was going to be reused for better efficiency) was made by two New York City-based graphic designers. They created an easy to digest manual with their audience, the policymakers, in mind in regards to tone/design choices, as well as their creation of a simple information system.³

At this point I reached out to Dr. Faber of the NEU Sociology Department. He is also the director of the Northeastern Environmental Justice Research Collaborative (NEJRC). Having previously taken his Environment and Society class, I thought his insight on where I could go with my idea to present environmental legislation in an easy-to read form

would be useful. Dr. Faber is currently working on two research projects that will be distributed to local and state legislators and he found my idea to be useful for the final products of his reports.

My project will be designing the final layout of the report, "Eroding American Democracy and the Environment: The Growing Power of the Polluter-Industrial Complex". This research, completed by NEJRC, is to be distributed to hundreds of environmental organizations (with over a million members) through Coming Clean Inc. The second report, "Unequal Exposure to Ecological Hazards: Environmental Injustices in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts" will have its executive summary designed. The executive summary will be distributed through NEJRC to the Massachusetts legislature by non-profits around the state. In the past, Dr. Faber's research was instrumental in the state adoption of an environmental justice policy, as well as Governor Patrick's Executive Order on Environmental Justice. A similar report in 2005 made national news (CBS, PBS), and received extensive media coverage in the state, and prompted a Boston Globe editorial. Dr. Faber anticipates that this report will have a similar impact.

Creating the layout for the entirety of one report and the executive summary of the other will show the need for different types of legislation to have their own specific design. I will take the time to research how each report could be presented for readers to better comprehend the material. The information in "Eroding American Democracy and the Environment" needs to be in a captivating layout which brings the reader into the research. For example, having graphics which accurately portray the hundreds of millions of dollars that the oil and gas industry has spent on funding anti-environmental candidates in state-wide and federal elections will be quite illuminating.

The "Unequal Exposure" report and executive summary is centered around new data which demonstrates the ecologically hazardous waste

sites and polluting industrial facilities are disproportionately located in communities of color and low-income communities in Massachusetts. Again, it is important to present this data in an easily accessible manner for policy-makers and the general public, especially with graphics and comparisons. I will design the layout and overall appearance of these two research projects and thus create valuable reports that will receive wide attention.

¹ Appendix A

² Appendix B

³ Appendix C

Timeline: Spring Semester 2016

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| Weeks 1-3 | Receive drafts of each research report from Daniel Faber. Research information design, and how reports/ legislature have been presented in the past (good and bad design) |
| Weeks 4-6 | Create at least three different ideas for each report's design tone. Present options to Daniel Faber and Ann McDonald |
| Weeks 7-10 | Finalize direction of design, receive final copy of research reports and design the layout of the first report and the executive summary for the second research project. |
| Weeks 11-12 | Final edits, and then have the reports published and presented. |

Deliverables:

- "Eroding American Democracy and the Environment" designed, published and distributed
- "Unequal Exposure" designed, published and distributed
- There will also be an pdf version of each to be used online.

Appendix A

Source: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/newbostonians/publications.asp>



WELCOME TO BOSTON

Dear Friend,
Welcome to Boston!

I am pleased to present the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians' Guide to City Services 2014 Edition. As new Bostonians, each of you has a unique story to tell. And each of you faces unique challenges. I want our city to be known as a place that helps you overcome these challenges. This guide will help you find the city resources or services that you may need.

Throughout the history of our city, newcomers have contributed immeasurably to the growth and vibrancy of the City of Boston. Today, as in the past, our city is made richer by the presence of immigrants. In order for our city to reach its full potential, we need to make sure that all of our residents have access to city services and resources.

Whether you have recently arrived in Boston or you have established residency for years, I hope you will find Boston to be a city that welcomes and embraces you, and to which you will give your best in return.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Walsh
Mayor of Boston

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF NEW BOSTONIANS

Boston City Hall Room 833 617.635.2390
Alejandra Sa Guillen, Director
www.cityofboston.gov/newbostonians

The Office of New Bostonians is an initiative to strengthen the ability of residents from diverse cultural and linguistic communities to fully participate in the economic, civic, social and cultural life of the city of Boston. You can call the Office of New Bostonians:

- To find out about City and Boston's community services that serve immigrants and refugees.
- If you or someone you know needs assistance accessing city government services.
- To inquire about MODA's New Immigrant Integration Advice Program.
- To find an ESL or citizenship class.
- To share concerns and problems that face immigrants and refugees in Boston today.

This Guide is a project of the Office of New Bostonians to assist all new Bostonians to access important services provided by the city government. The services are grouped by topic, such as Homeownership, Business, or Education. Under each topic you will find a list of agencies, and the phone number of the city agency that provides these services. If you would like to visit an agency in person, the agency locations are listed at the back of the guide.

CITY SERVICES

APARTMENTS & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Renting Apartments
Boston Rental Housing Center 617.635.4299
If you rent an apartment, this center can help if:

- You are having a problem with your landlord or a tenant.
- You have any housing-related questions.
- You are seeking mediation of a rental housing-related matter.

rent@housing@cityofboston.gov

Safety Code Violations
Mayor's 24-Hour Consultant Services 617.635.4652
Landlords are required to meet standards of safety and cleanliness. If your apartment is not sanitary, report the problem to the Mayor's 24-Hour Consultant Services. They will contact a housing inspector to investigate the problem. Examples of sanitary code violations include:

- If there is no heat or hot water in your building.
- If there are rodents or insects in your apartment.
- If your water fixtures are leaky.

Affordable Housing
Boston Housing Authority 617.688.3462
This is a public agency which provides affordable housing to low and moderate income individuals and families. Contact them to find out if you are eligible to apply for this housing.
Fair Housing Commission 617.625.4643
This commission works to eliminate discrimination and increase access to housing in Boston. Call them if:

- You need information about affordable housing in the Boston metropolitan area.
- You believe you are a victim of housing discrimination.
- You own or manage housing and want to list

visit apartments for rent.
Emergency Assistance
Emergency Shelter Commission 617.534.2710 Fax: 617.534.2719
Part of the Boston Public Health Commission.
The Commission can help if:

- You are homeless and need a referral to services.
- You are in need of food.

HOMEOWNERSHIP
Boston Home Center 617.635.4662
The City's Home Center offers financial and technical assistance to people who would like to buy a home in Boston. Contact them if:

- You are looking for information on purchasing a home.
- You are a first-time homebuyer and would like to get subsidized or low-cost loans.
- You are a senior citizen who needs assistance in performing certain home repairs.
- You want information about holding a mortgage.

BUILDING & RENOVATION
Permits
Inspection Services Department 617.635.2390
If you are building or renovating your home or business, you will need a building, plumbing or electrical permit. Call

- You are in need of guidance or funding for home improvements.
- You would like consulting on how to avoid foreclosure of your home.

Historical Districts
Boston Landmarks Commission 617.635.3959
(Located in the Governmental Department)
If you live in a Boston Historical District, you need permission to make exterior renovations to your home or business. For more information, call the Boston Landmarks Commission.

TAXES & TAXPAYING ASSISTANCE
The Assessing Department's Taxpayer Referral & Assistance Center (TRAC) 617.635.4247
TRAC is a valuable resource for Boston taxpayers on property assessment matters. The TRAC office is located on the City Hall mezzanine in Room 945 and is open Monday through Friday from 9AM to 5PM. TRAC can also be reached by phone at (617) 635-4267. TRAC staff can assist taxpayers with the following:

- You have questions about your CURRENT tax year real estate or personal property tax bill and/or bill payment (for your year tax bill inquiries, contact the Collector's Office at 617.635.4531).
- You moved and need to change your tax bill mailing address (for personal property tax bill changes, contact the Personal Property Unit at 617.635.1162).
- You want to obtain a copy of your CURRENT fiscal year tax bill.
- You want to know if you qualify for a property tax exemption under the following circumstances you are elderly, blind, a surviving spouse, a minor child of a deceased parent, a disabled veteran, or a member of the National Guard or Military Reserve serving overseas during the tax year.
- You want to know if you qualify for a hardship exemption on a tax delinquent.
- You want information about filing an abatement because you feel your property is overvalued, incorrectly classified or exempt from taxation (by law, abatements can only be filed after the 30th quarter tax bill is issued and no later than February 1st of the tax year).

- You want to know more about the Residential Exemption, which reduces the tax bill for those taxpayers who own and occupy their home as their principal residence as of January 1 preceding the tax year.
- You have questions about CURRENT Motor Vehicle Excise tax bills (for delinquent motor vehicle excise bills, please call 948.462.3710).
- You own a boat that is registered in Boston and have questions about the Boat Excise tax.
Information online at: www.cityofboston.gov/boating or by email at assessing@cityofboston.gov

24 HOUR SERVICES
Mayor's 24 Hour Consultant Services 617.635.4650
The City tries to respond to your concerns. The Mayor's 24 Hour Consultant Services is available 24 hours a day to take calls on any City-related issue. For example, you can call them:

- If there is no heat or hot water in your building.
- If your apartment is unsanitary (for example, rodents, insects, leaky faucets and other sanitary code violations).
- If your trash or recycling was not picked up.
- To report trash violations or illegal dumping.
- To request public monkey waste removal (pooping, sitting), public railway cleaning and streetlight repair.
- To request abandoned horses (domestic, etc.).
- To have graffiti removed from either private or public property.
- To report an abandoned vehicle.

Appendix B

Source: <http://www.salem.com/home/news/salem-develop-annual-cdbg-action-plan>

From: **City of Salem MA** <vtstdmailer@vt-s.net>
Date: Thu, Jan 7, 2016 at 2:45 PM
Subject: Salem to Develop Annual CDBG Action Plan
To: [REDACTED]

Salem Mayor Kimberley Driscoll has announced that the City of Salem is developing its annual Action Plan that will outline priority activities for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds that the City of Salem anticipates receiving during fiscal year 2017.

This funding, provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, assists income-eligible households and low- to moderate-income neighborhoods through a variety of programs, services and improvements.

The FY17 Action Plan will outline Salem's housing, economic, and community development needs and funding priorities for the period of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. The plan will continue to put into action the goals and strategies established in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan, which was completed following an extensive public participation process in 2015.

"Last year, CDBG and HOME funds assisted 5 families to purchase their first home, renovated 4 housing units, helped 42 families with first/last rent and/or security deposits, funded 23 social service program that served over 8500 persons, issued 3 businesses loans, improved 2 business storefronts, and created 20 new jobs," said Mayor Driscoll. "The funds supported the Salem Main Streets Program, expanded the Teen Resource Center, assisted with the environmental clean-up of Splaine Park, helped develop 15 Ward Street into a neighborhood pocket park, planted 26 trees, replaced sidewalks in Rainbow Terrace and the Point Neighborhood, and provided matching funds for a Working Cities Challenge Project. We are fortunate to have these significant federal grants that assist persons, households, and neighborhoods most in need through the provision of community and economic development programs and neighborhood improvements."

Salem's residents and representatives of businesses, organizations, and agencies are invited to participate in the citizen participation process that will kick off on January 21, 2016 with a public hearing at 6:00 p.m. in the third floor conference room at 120 Washington Street.

The purpose of this hearing is to give interested persons the opportunity to comment on the housing, community, and economic development needs of Salem's low- to moderate-income residents and on the types of activities that could be undertaken to meet those needs. In the event of a meeting cancellation due to inclement weather, this meeting will be rescheduled to January 25, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. Interested parties may also provide written comment addressed to the City of Salem Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) by January 25th.

Following this hearing, the DPCD will prepare the draft Action Plan for FY17, which is expected to be available for public comment at the end of March. Copies of the draft plan will be available for viewing at the DPCD, the Salem Public Library, and the Salem Housing Authority and on www.salem.com.

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Read more: <http://www.salem.com/node/32531>

This is an automatic message from City of Salem MA

Appendix C

Source: <http://www.fastcodesign.com/3047547/why-cant-the-us-governments-graphic-design-be-this-beautiful#6>

