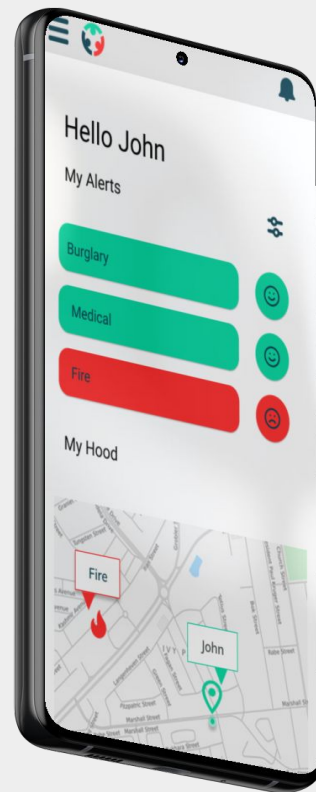
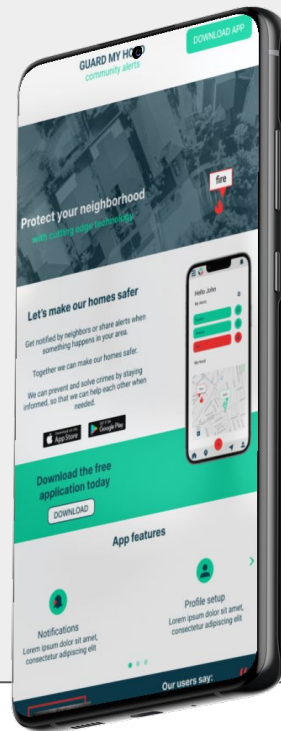


Guard My Hood

Mobile app and responsive website

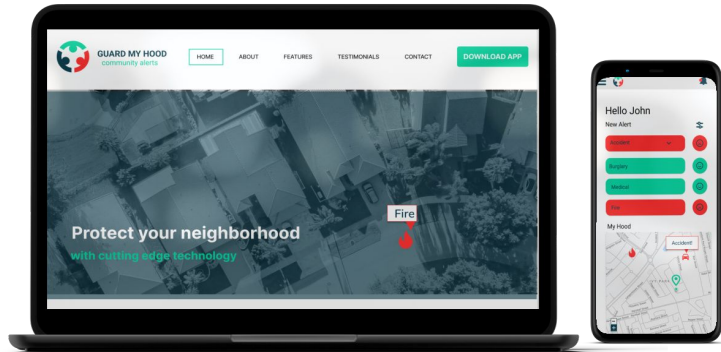
By Edina Gardos



UX DESIGN CASE STUDY

May 2022

Project Overview



The Product

South Africa has the **3rd highest crime rate** in the world with burglary at residential property being the most committed crime.

The Guard My Hood mobile app empowers people to **increase safety** in their neighbourhood. Based on GPS location data, neighbours can **share safety and security concerns** without sharing their phone numbers and other personal details.



Project Duration

April 2022 - May 2022

Project Overview



The Problem

Due to the **high crime rate** in South Africa it's crucial to stay informed about issues in the community but It's difficult to **quickly share safety and security concerns** without joining a neighbourhood Whatsapp chat group.



The Goal

The goal was to design **a mobile app** that lets users quickly **share and receive safety alerts** about urgent concerns in their community **without sharing** their phone numbers and personal details.

Project Overview



My Role

User Experience Designer responsible for the Guard my Hood mobile app and the responsive website design from concept to delivery.



My Responsibilities

- User Research
- Wireframing
- Prototyping
- Usability testing
- Visual design
- Iteration
- High-fidelity prototyping

Design Process

Stage 1

Understanding the User

- Research Summary
- Pain Points identification
- User Persona
- User Journey Map

Stage 2

Starting the design

- Paper Wireframes
- Digital Wireframes
- Low-Fidelity Prototype
- Usability Studies

Stage 3

Refining the design

- Mockups
- High-Fidelity Prototype
- Usability Studies 2nd round
- **Accessibility Considerations**
- Responsive web design

Stage 4

Going forward

- Take Away
- Next Steps

User Research: Summary

1

I conducted **user interviews** and created **empathy maps** from the interviews to better understand the **needs, behaviours, and motivations** of the users I'm designing for. One primary user group I identified through my research was professionals with **young families** who want to **feel safe and secure** in their neighbourhood.

2

Due to time and budget constraints, I had a limited pool of participants to work with. So to further strengthen my research findings, I conducted secondary research (read reviews on existing solutions). This helped me discover some **privacy issues and unclear sign up processes** with existing platforms.

User Research: Pain points

1

Confusing Sign Up

The sign up flow on competitor's apps are quite long and it does not pick up GPS location data automatically.

2

Privacy issues

Most of our competitor's applications requires phone number, name, photo ID information on sign up.

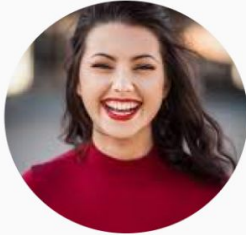
3

No Alerts

Although chat apps like Whatsapp or Telegram allows quick sharing of information, they don't have a specific alert creation flow.

User Persona 1

Kim Jenett



AGE	31
EDUCATION	High School
FAMILY	Engaged
OCCUPATION	Entrepreneur
LOCATION	Cape Town, SA

Personality

Extrovert Friendly Organized



“ I want to feel safe and secure in my home and I want to be informed about urgent issues in my neighbourhood. ”

Biography

Kim is an entrepreneur, specializing in digital marketing and advertising. She lives in a small house with her fiancé and looking to get married and start her family soon. She often works from home and she is alone in the house during the day. She runs the neighbourhood WhatsApp group but it's taking up a lot of her time. She is tech savvy with a bubbly personality but sometimes she gets tired of the group admin responsibilities and the unnecessary chat on the neighbourhood group.

Goals

- She wants to feel safe in her house while working alone during the day.
- She wants to be informed about suspicious activities in her area instantly
- She wants to save time

Frustrations

- She is tired of the unnecessary conversations on the neighbourhood group.
- She feels lonely and cut off from information while she is working from home alone.
- She is frustrated with the current group chat platform.

Motivations

Kim wants to be informed and also share information about urgent issues in her neighbourhood to feel safe and secure in her home.

User Persona 2

Ruan Botha



AGE	38
EDUCATION	B.Tech
STATUS	Married with 2 kids
OCCUPATION	Computer Engiener
LOCATION	Cape Town, SA

Personality

Introvert

Thinker

Analytical

“ I want to stay informed about my community and share safety and security concerns but I don't want to waste my time on Whatsapp group chats. ”

Biography

Ruan is a busy computer engineer living in a quiet suburb in Cape Town with his wife and two small children. He works long hours and often travels for business. He is concerned about the safety and security of his family while he is away on business trips and would like to be instantly informed about potential dangers in his neighbourhood.

Goals

- Wants to stay informed and share safety concerns
- Wants to prevent crimes in his neighbourhood
- Wants notifications and alerts without sharing his phone number.

Frustrations

- Doesn't want to share his personal details
- Doesn't want to waste time on Whatsapp groups
- Irritated by off topic conversations on the neighbourhood chat group.

Motivations

Ruan wants to stay informed and share safety concerns in his neighbourhood without sharing his personal details. He want to make sure that his family is safe and secure while his in not with them.

Competitive Audit

I identified 3 key improvement opportunities:

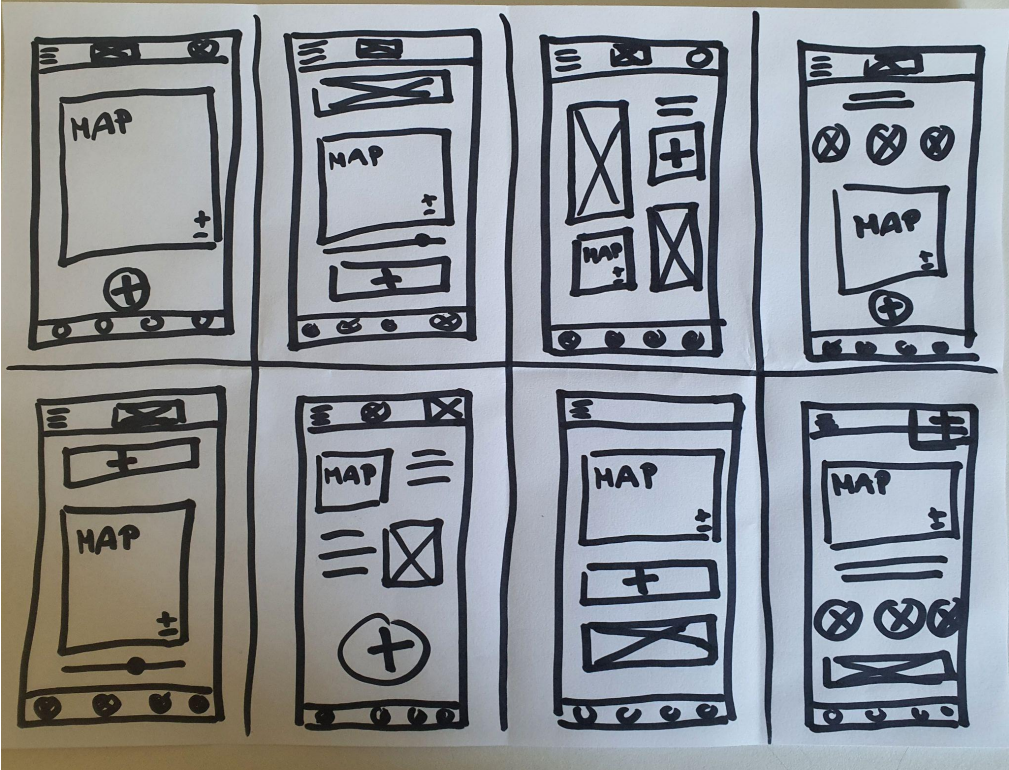
1. **Simple sign up** process by GPS data
2. Add **Quick Report** Button
3. **Hide phone number** and other personal data.

Competitive audit										
Goal: Compare the ease of reporting and navigation flow										
General information								First Imp		
Competitor type <small>(direct or indirect)</small>	Location(s)	Product offering	Price <small>(\$ - \$\$\$\$)</small>	Website <small>(URL)</small>	Business size <small>(small, medium, large)</small>	Target audience	Unique value proposition	Desktop website experience		
WEALERT	Direct	London, England	Neighbourhood crime alerts	\$\$	www.wealart.io	small	safety conscious individuals	"Securing our Homes Together"	GOOD + Clean design, easy to use. Website also explains how to use the mobile app - Visually unappealing design. Not too organized	
NABER	Direct	San Jose, CA	Neighbourhood crime alerts	\$\$\$	www.naber.io	medium	safety conscious individuals	"Get Naber. Stay Safer"	GOOD + Visually appealing interface, order from automatic location pickup - No chatbot.	
WHATSAPP	Indirect	CA, USA	chat platform	FREE	www.whatsapp.com	large	Everyone	"Simple. Secure. Reliable messaging"	OKAY + Header animation and original website icons + easy to navigate between sections - No chatbot, no "sticky" navigation bar	
TELEGRAM	Indirect	Dubai, UAE	chat platform	FREE	www.telegram.org	large	Everyone	"A new era of messaging."	OKAY + Visually appealing, original design with good layout - No chatbot and navigation is complicated	

Competitive audit					
UX <small>(rated: needs work, okay, good, or outstanding)</small>					
User flow		Visual design		Content	
User flow	Navigation	Brand identity	Tone	Descriptiveness	
WEALERT	OUTSTANDING + Straightforward user flow, easy to use app + Fantastic onboarding experience - No automatic location data	OUTSTANDING + Easy reporting feature + CTA buttons stand out - Back button doesn't work. - No search functionality provided.	GOOD + Clean design, reflects safety and security - Design is a bit simple	Formal but informative. Little bit on the boring side.	GOOD + short, to the point. Extra safety info - Too formal, could be more original
NABER	GOOD + Great report flow. don't need to share number - Too many annoying push notifications distracting user	GOOD + Very easy filtering and searching - Panic button	OUTSTANDING + Great, clean layout with generous white space around visual elements. + Good use of complimentary colours + Original icon design	Formal, could be a bit more original	GOOD + Information relevant to target audience. - Too short, not enough detail
WHATSAPP	GOOD + many features and great onboarding - Chat feature	GOOD + Very simple navigation and clear CTA. + Search option - Have to create Chat group and share personal info	OKAY + Animated header design on website - Bad choice of typeface for mobile app.	Casual	NEEDS WORK + short and relevant descriptions - no extra information
TELEGRAM	GOOD + Intuitive design, very easy to use - Chat groups	GOOD + Creative use of colours and icons - no bottom navigation bar. Some buttons and icons are hard to understand - no filter option, no grid view	OUTSTANDING + Clear brand identity, including colors, font, style, and imagery	Friendly.	OUTSTANDING + Info relevant to target audience. - Wordy, descriptions

Crazy Eights

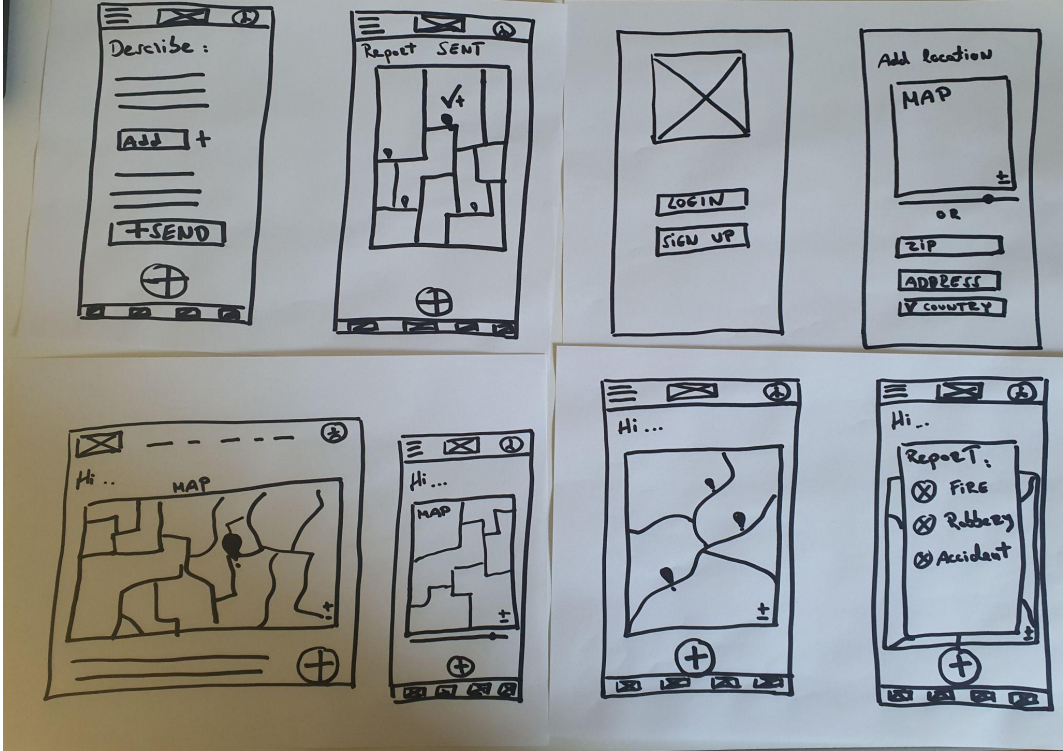
I did a quick ideation exercise to come up with possible design solutions for how to address gaps identified in the competitive Audit report. I mainly focused on the Home screen design including **embedded Google Map**, push notifications and **alert Messaging** display.



Paper wireframes

I sketched out the initial wireframes by hand to encourage rapid iteration:

- I prioritized an easy to follow **alert creation flow with** clearly marked CTA and back buttons to help users navigate the flow.
- I used appropriate information hierarchy for **compatibility with assistive technology.**



Digital wireframes

My digital wireframes reflected user research:

1 →

Sign up screen quick and simple sign up with automatic GPS location data.

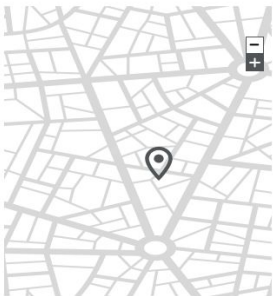
Please add your location

Select
Country

Select
ZIP code

Select
Address

Or choose on the map



Submit



Welcome to your hood

- Burglary
- Accident
- Fire



2 ↙

Alerts Creation
Large button for creating alerts and reports.

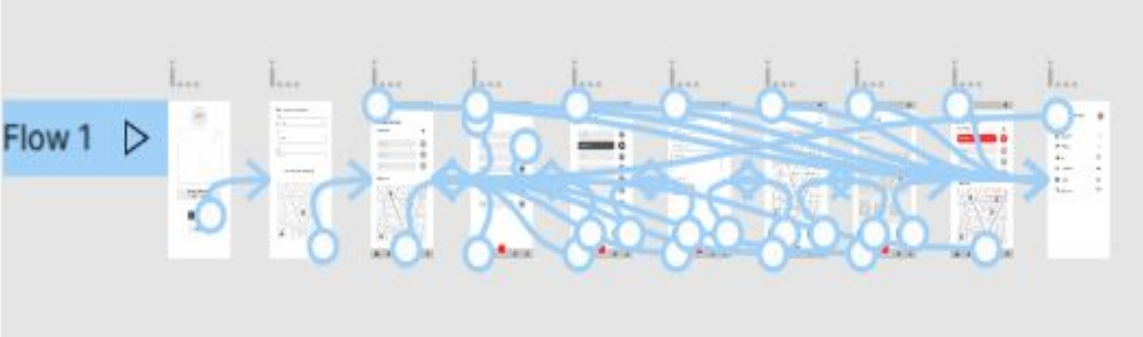


Low fidelity prototype

I connected the digital wireframes to create a low-fidelity prototype.

Features:

- A flow that is **intuitive** to the users
- Simple & consistent navigation to help users flow through the app **seamlessly**
- **Accessible** transitions.



****View low-fi prototype [HERE](#)**

Usability Study : Parameters



Study type:

Unmoderated usability study



Location:

South Africa, remote



Participants:

6 participants



Length:

30-40 minutes

Usability Study : Findings

These were the main findings uncovered by the usability study:

1

Sign up via Zip code

Most users wanted a quicker way to sign up.

2

Create Alert button

Some users couldn't find a way to adjust the map on the Home screen

3

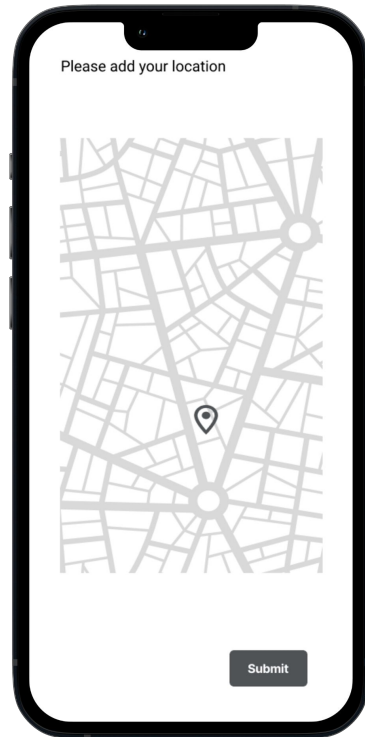
Media attachment

Users were looking for an option to attach media to the alert form

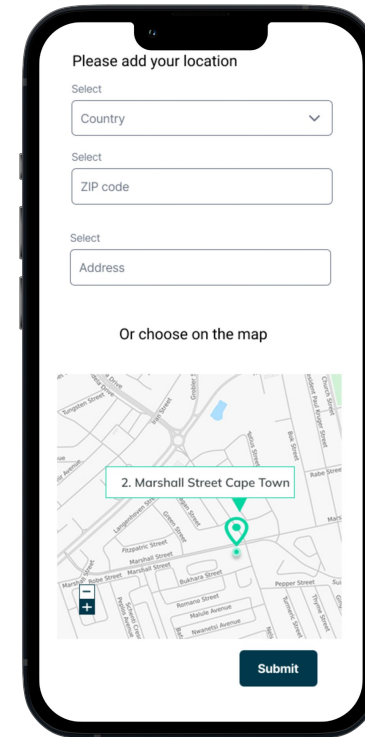
Mockups

I made some changes on the Sign up form to correct the usability issues identified:

Before Usability Studies



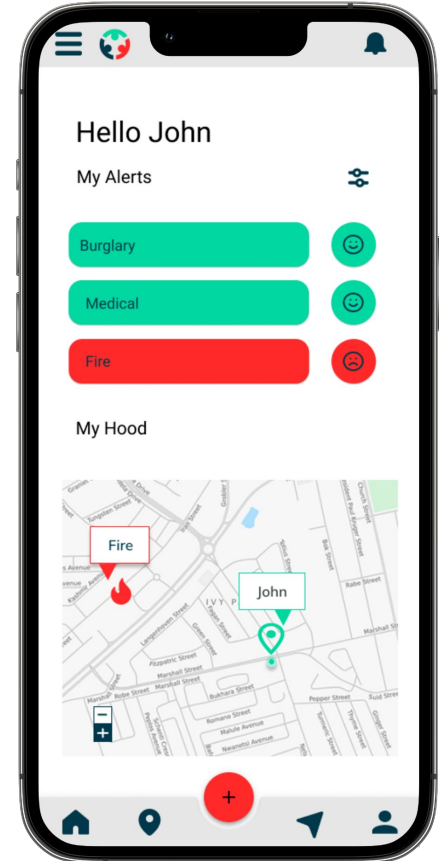
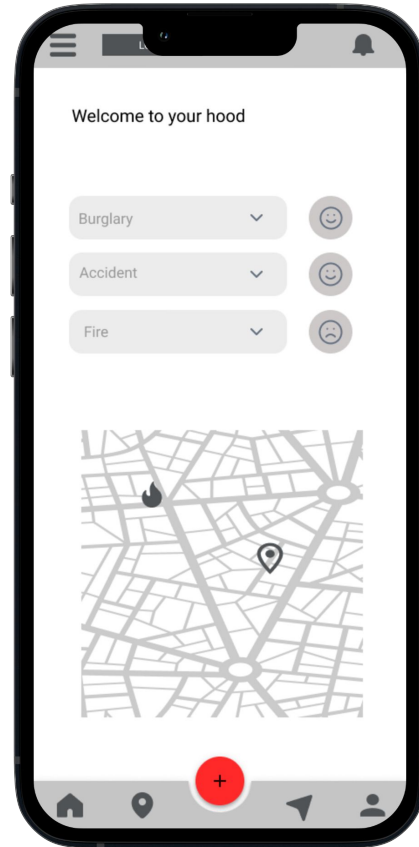
After Usability Studies



Mockups

I added a Zoom toggle feature to the map

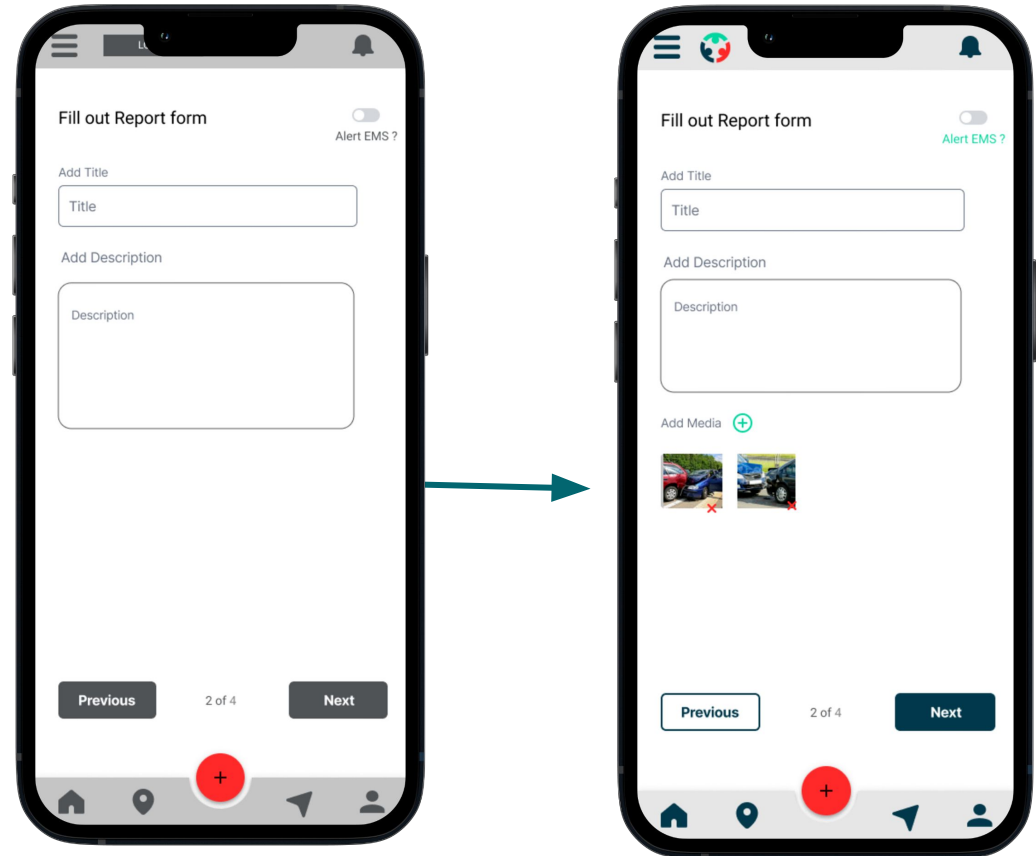
Result: Users can now easily adjust the map.



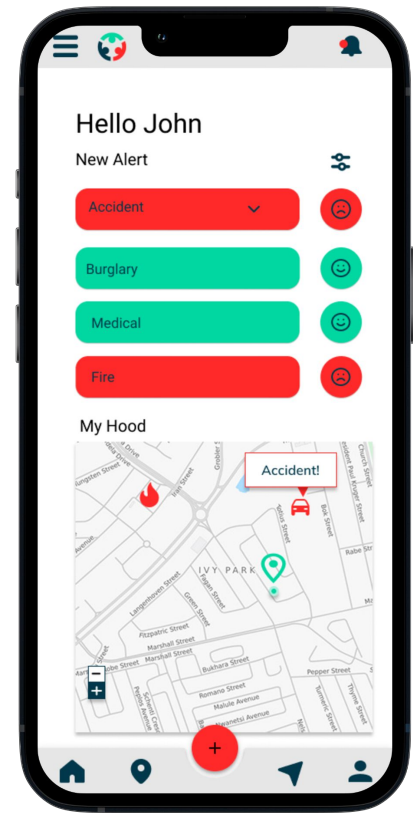
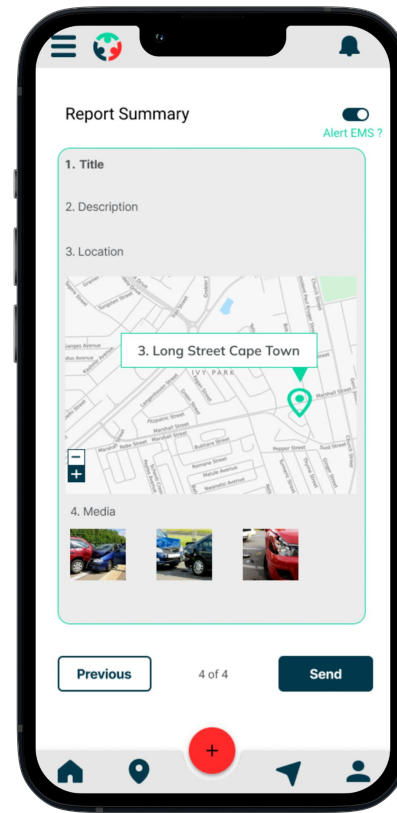
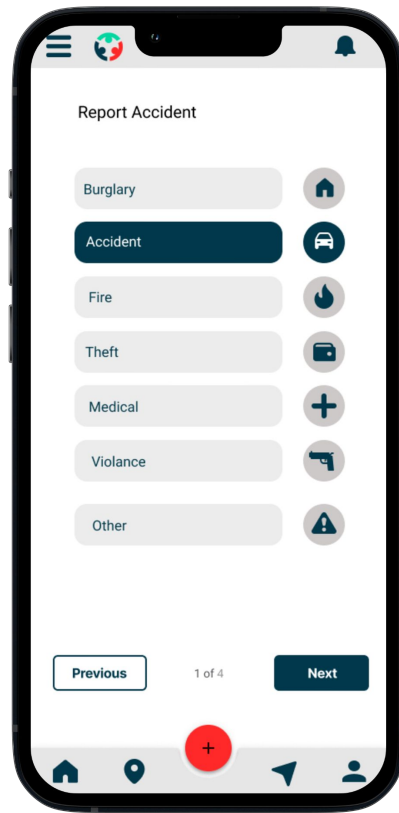
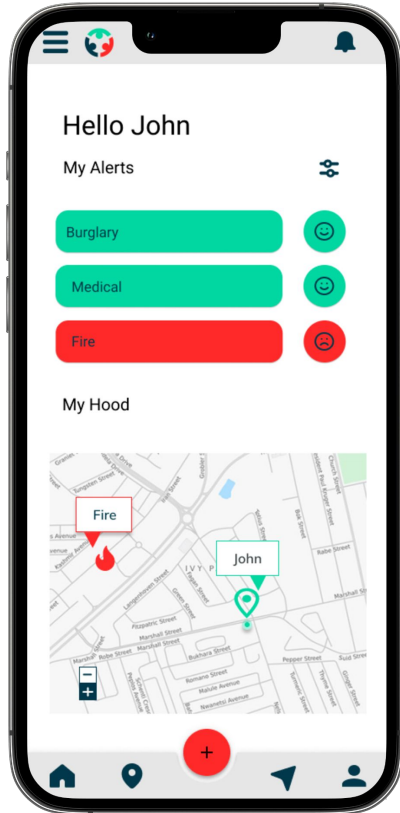
Mockups

I included an Add Media option on the Report form.

Result: Users can share pictures and videos alongside the alert

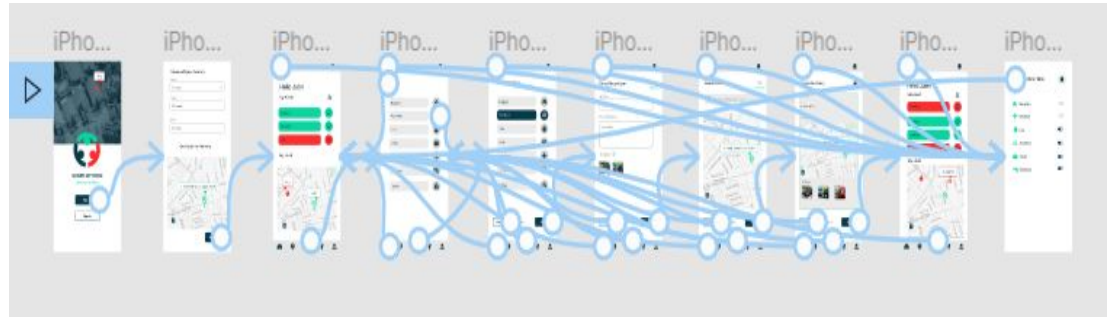


Mockups:



High-Fidelity Prototype

The final high fidelity prototype followed the same user flow as the low-fidelity prototype, including design changes made after the usability study.

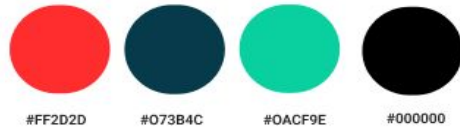


I connected all the screens using accessible transitions.

****View the interactive prototype [HERE](#)****

Style Guide

Color palette



Icons



Map



Typography

Inter

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Roboto

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Buttons

DOWNLOAD

DOWNLOAD

DOWNLOAD

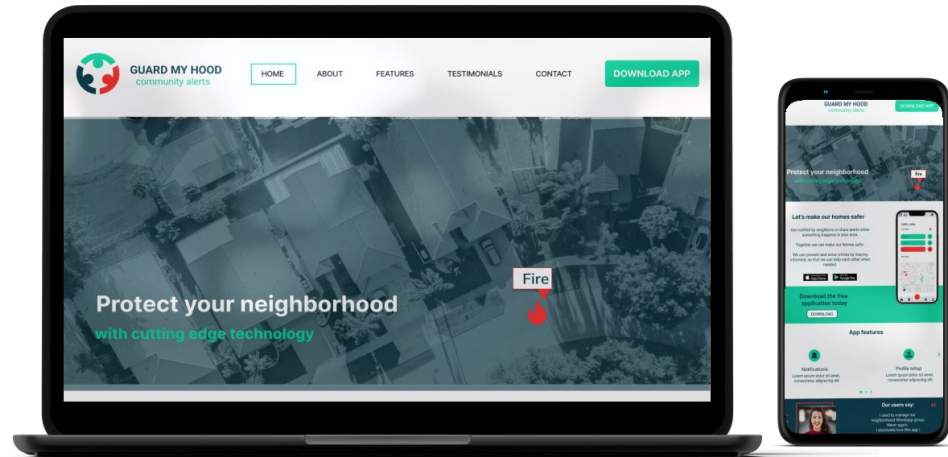
DOWNLOAD

Responsive Website

With the app designs completed, I started work on designing the responsive website.

The **main goal** for the website is to encourage users to **download the mobile app** and direct them to the App Store.

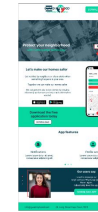
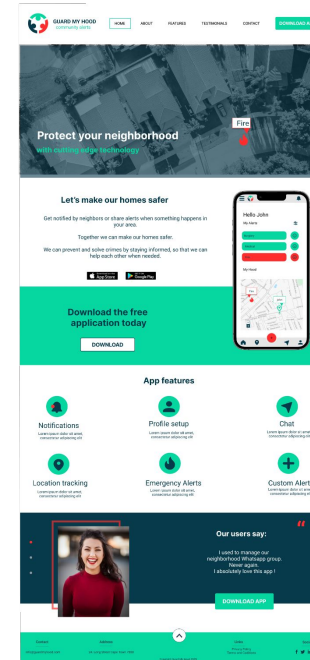
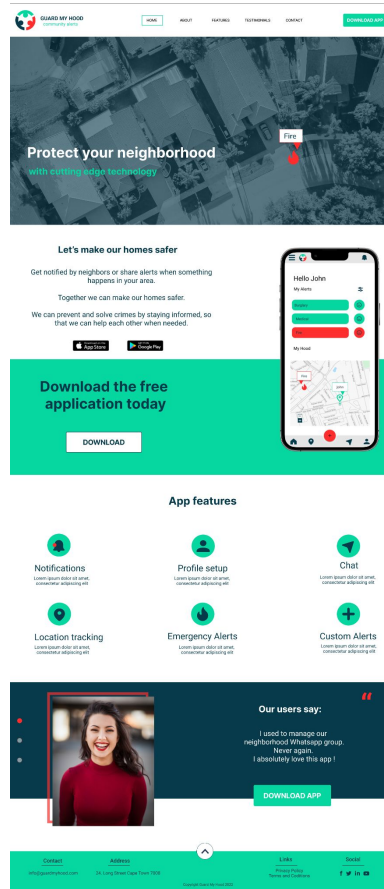
Therefore I designed a simple **one page website** with Parallax scrolling navigation and I added **highly visible CTA buttons** to each section.



Responsive Design: Screen size variation

To ensure a cohesive and **consistent experience** across devices, I designed and created mockups for the following **screen sizes** and devices:

1. MacBook Pro 16 laptop
2. iPad Pro 12.9 tablet
3. iPhone 13 Pro Max



Accessibility Considerations

1

High contrast ratio

Used sufficiently contrasting colours to ensure that the alerts are highly visible and can be read by **everyone.**

2

Compatible with Assistive Technology

Clear labels for alerts and messages that can be read by screen readers.

3

Recognizable icons

Used easily recognizable icons across the design to provide visual context.

Takeaways



Impact

Users share that the app made them feel more **safe and secure** in their homes and around their neighbourhood. One quote from peer feedback was: “ the Guard my hood app helps **connect communities** and **prevents crime** in my neighbourhood. It’s a **useful tool** and good addition to our neighbourhood crime watch.”



What I learned

One idea that this project drove home for me, was that conducting **user research** often and really **paying attention to user feedback** is vitally important in developing the main (most basic) features of the product when there is budgetary constraint or the product is in MVP phase.

Next Steps

I would suggest the following steps:

1

Conduct another round of usability studies to determine whether the current solution effectively addresses the users' pain points.

2

Create a dedicated mobile app for Android phones and tablets.

3

Test the responsiveness of the website on Windows OS

Get in touch!



Thank you so much for taking the time to review my work on the Guard My Hood app design!

I really enjoyed working on this project and I hope you enjoyed reviewing it.

If you would like to get in touch, you can reach me via:

E-mail: edina@justpointblank.com