INNOVATION TEAM
LOS ANGELES

14 Weeks as a Designmatters Fellow

Summer 2016

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About

The Bloomberg innovation model

Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Los Angeles Innovation Team (i-team) is housed under the office of Mayor Eric Garcetti. The team follows the Bloomberg model for sustainable civic innovation which includes research, ideation, and delivery around a specific focus area—which, for the i-team is inclusive neighborhood revitalization. Through a portfolio of eight projects, the team of urban planners, designers, project managers, and data scientists aims to reduce residential and business displacement across the region in partnership with other city departments..

Goals

Hired as a multidisciplinary designer and researcher

The Los Angeles Innovation Team tasked me with using my design skillset to support their portfolio of projects, all of which work toward inclusive neighborhood revitalization. As the fellowship description said, that support "can range from traditional graphic design to innovative technologies." In particular, my experience with the design thinking process appealed to their needs around community engagement, entrepreneurial problem solving, and turning complex data into persuasive visual messaging.

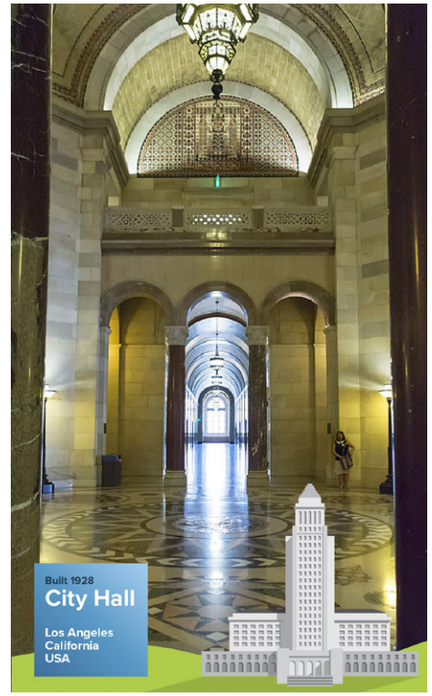
Responsibilities

Wide support and focused leadership

Over the course of the summer I provided both leadership on a project put in my own lap, as well as design support to projects being led by colleagues. This range of responsibility allowed me to get to know teammates in a variety of capacities and exercise a diversity of skills, while also being able to make high level decisions about strategy, engagement, and design.

CIVIC YOUTH

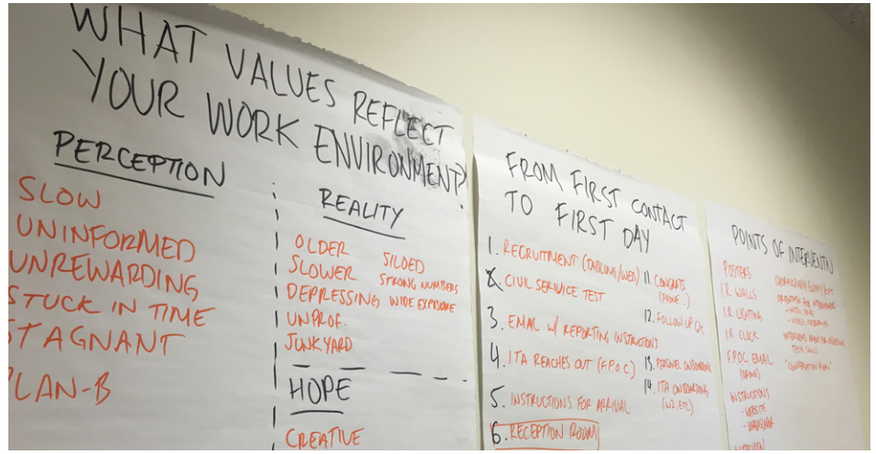
LOS ANGELES | SUMMER 2016

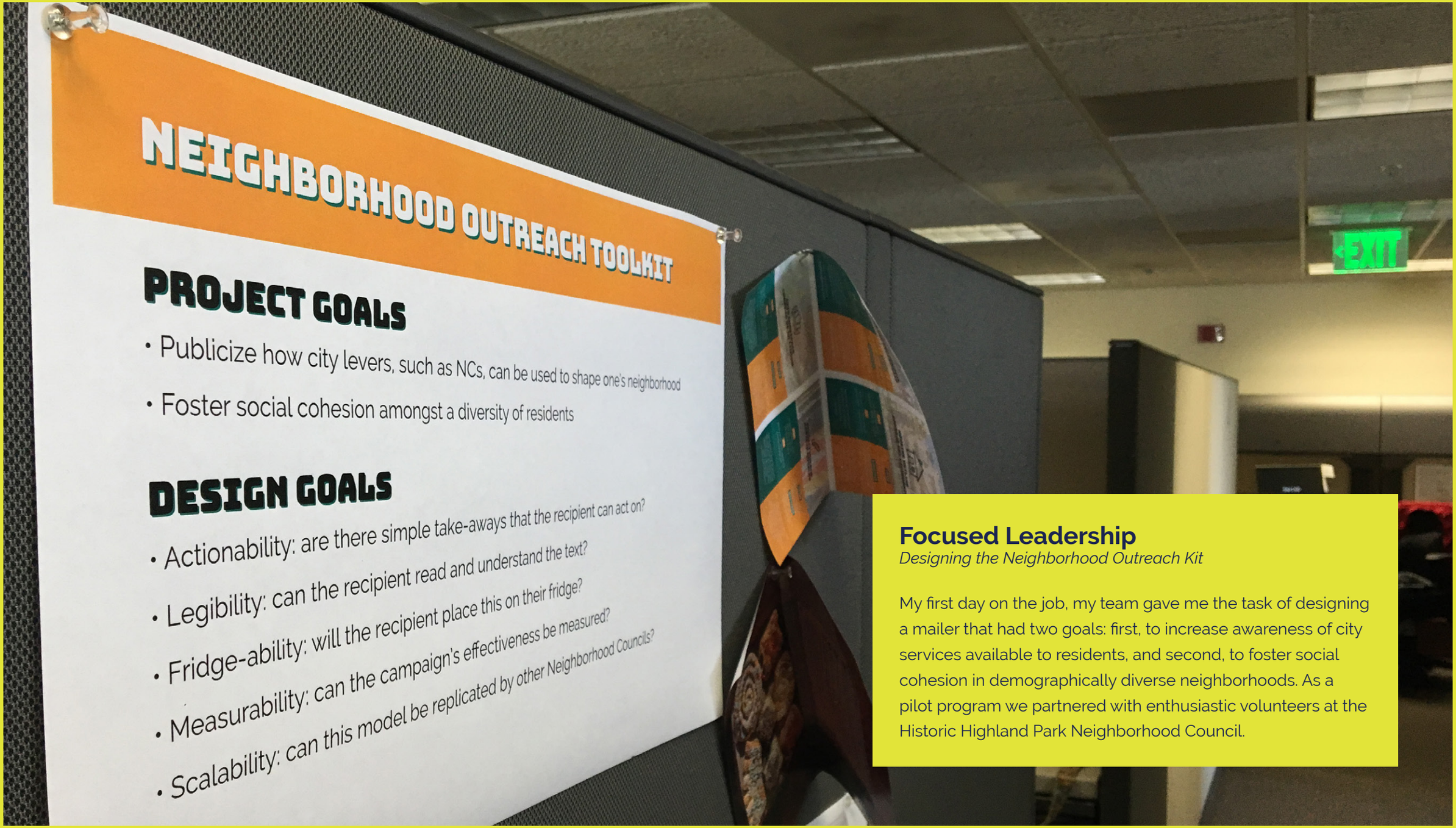


Wide Support

Supporting a portfolio of projects

Throughout my summer I worked on a short-term basis on a variety of small i-team projects that ranged from branding, website design, design thinking consulting, photography, print collateral, presentation design, and even a Snapchat Geofilter. These one-off projects connected me with a variety of city workers and taught me how city hall systems work.





Focused Leadership

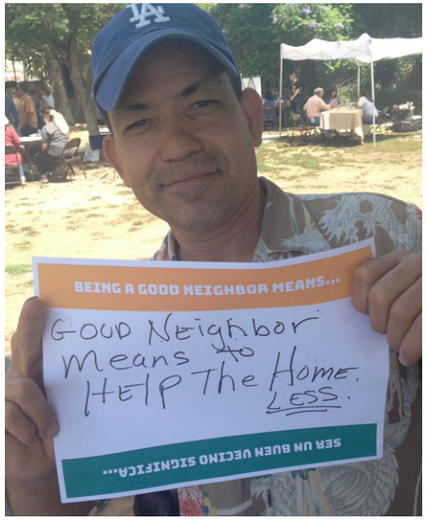
Designing the Neighborhood Outreach Kit

My first day on the job, my team gave me the task of designing a mailer that had two goals: first, to increase awareness of city services available to residents, and second, to foster social cohesion in demographically diverse neighborhoods. As a pilot program we partnered with enthusiastic volunteers at the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council.

Participatory Content Gathering

Promoting city services on a postcard

The outreach liaisons of the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council suggested that residents should decide which city services are most relevant to them rather than having the city decide on services to advertise. Armed with these jars to facilitate voting, the Neighborhood Council representatives went to local events gathering input on whether, for example, it was more important for residents to know about graffiti removal services or youth programming at the recreation center. The results of the voting will be disseminated to 10,000 Highland Park residents via a bilingual direct mail postcard.



Neighbor Testimonials

Fostering social cohesion and conversations

In an effort to create common ground amongst the diverse residents of Highland Park, this photo project used prompts such as, "Being a good neighbor means..." and "I wish my neighbors knew..." to offer locals the chance to express the kind of neighborly community they would like. This social media campaign not only created photo testimonials, but it offered a valuable public relations experience for neighborhood council members by enabling conversations with people of all types.

Distribution

Into the hands of 10,000 residents

Though I wasn't able to see the project through to print production by the time my fellowship ended, I was able to produce final mock-ups, get printing quotes, and decide on mailing areas with the neighborhood council liaisons. In October 2016, Innovation Team members will carry the project to completion.

Design Thinking with Youth

From research to prototyping in one morning

As a capstone to my summer, I facilitated a design thinking workshop with ArtCenter Professor, Sherry Hoffman for 30 high school and college aged youth from all parts of Los Angeles. This workshop was one in a series of sessions designed to prepare youth for a life in civic leadership. To demonstrate the numerous methods of design thinking, participants tackled the question, "How might we increase voter participation amongst Los Angeles youth?"

Outcomes

Civic work as mission-driven

The quantifiable outcomes of my work will be measured in the months to come as metrics for each project I worked on are collected. However, the less tangible outcomes are apparent now and are equally important. I am walking away from this summer realizing that government work is a uniquely positioned leverage point for doing socially impactful work unlike any other non-profit or social enterprise. This summer opened my eyes to the possibility of working in the civic sector. Now, I'll just need to get lucky enough to find a team with such admirable work values and ethics.

Thank You

There are many people to thank for making my summer so professionally and personally fruitful. From the **Innovation Team**: Amanda Daflos, Julienne Chen, Jason Hernandez, Vikram Jadhav, Jason Neville, Tanya Pineda, Alex Pudlin, Kimberly Rodriguez, Bora Shin, and everyone else from the Mayor's Office of Budget and Innovation. From **Designmatters**: Dr. Marianna Amatullo, Susannah Ramshaw, Jennifer May, and the rest of the ArtCenter team. My Designmatters **Mentor**: Sarah Lidgus.