

Baltimorean App Usability Testing



SOLA AWOJODU

Project Overview

ABOUT THE APP

Baltimorean is a companion app, created to accompany the City of Baltimore website. This app would focus on the services and resources offered by the city. The goal of the app is to keep users in the loop, providing them with easy access to the city's latest news and upcoming events. The app would also allow residents to access the city's directory, submit and review service requests, and make online payments conveniently.

ABOUT THE USABILITY TEST

The Baltimorean app was brought to life using the Prototype on Paper app and web platform. This user test was designed to observe how users interact with Baltimorean. Two user testing sessions were completed with two participants. During the test, users completed three different tasks while explaining their thought processes out loud. Results of each session highlighted app features that were effective as well as problem areas within the app and gave insight into each user's overall experience.

[View Usability Test Session 1](#)

[View Usability Test Session 2](#)



Usability Test Script

Hi, _____. My name is Sola, and I'm going to walk you through this session today.

Before we begin, I have some information for you, and I'm going to read it to make sure that I cover everything.

You are probably aware that I am asking people to try using an app I have been working on, called Baltimorean. As a designer, I am asking people to try using the app to see whether it works as intended. The session should take no longer than 35 minutes, however, you are free to take as much time as you need to complete your tasks.

The first thing I want to make clear right away is that we're testing the app, not you. You can't do anything wrong here. In fact, this is probably the one place today where you don't have to worry about making mistakes.

As you use the app, I ask that you try to think out loud as much as possible. Try to say what you're looking at, what you're trying to do, and what you're thinking. This will help me and my process tremendously.

I would like to see how you would go about completing the tasks on your own, so if you have any questions, I would be happy to try and answer after we complete the tasks. However, if you get stuck at any point, feel free to stop and ask for help. And if you need to take a break at any point, just let me know.

Also, please don't worry that you're going to hurt my feelings. I'm doing this to make improvements to the app, so I need to hear your honest reactions.

With your permission to use the recording feature within zoom for this session, I will record what happens on the screen and our conversation during testing. The recording will be used to help me to improve the app. Also, this information will be shared with my professor, and my fellow students enrolled in my UX course at Quinnipiac University.

Could you kindly accept these conditions?

Wait for tester's audible response.

Begin recording upon approval.

Do you have any questions so far? OK.

Before we look at the site, I would like to ask you a few quick questions.

- *First, what's your occupation? What do you do all day?*
- *Now, roughly how many hours a week (or day) altogether—just a ballpark estimate— would you say you spend using the Internet, including web browsing and email, at work and at home?*
- *What kind of mobile devices do you utilize regularly to access the internet, such as a smartphone or tablet? What are the brands of these devices?*
- *Do you think you use mobile devices more than your desktop or laptop or vice versa? Or is your use of mobile devices equal to your use of your desktop?*
- *What mobile apps do you think you utilize the most? This could include apps you have downloaded or apps native to your device?*
- *Do you have any favorite apps?*

OK, great. Thank you! We're done with the questions, and we can start doing things.

Send link to Baltimorean prototype using zoom chat feature.

In the chat, I'll send you a link to the app I mentioned earlier. When you get this, open up the link and feel free to close any other tabs, browsers, or programs. When you're ready, please share your screen.

Ask the following for splash and home screens.

Feel free to look at this screen and give me your first impressions. Feel free to express anything and everything that may come to mind.

- *How does it make you feel? What are you thinking the app is for? Who may use it? What do you think you can do with the app?*

Usability Test Script

Awesome, thank you! I'm now going to give you specific tasks to complete within the app. I will read aloud what you should do. If you need me to repeat the task prompt again, don't hesitate to ask. Remember to think and process your task and steps out loud so that I can take note of your observations and experience.

Read Task Prompt 1.

Alright, we can move onto the second task. You can feel free to return to the home page or jump right into the next task.

Read Task Prompt 2.

Thank you. We can now move onto the final task.

Read Task Prompt 3.

Great! You have completed all tasks. That was very helpful. Thank you.

Before I let you go, do you have any questions or comments? You can speak on your experience, any specific features, things you find helpful, things that may not work well, areas where you may have been confused, general questions about the app, and so on.

What worked well for you? What do you think could be improved?

Before we finish up here, any last thoughts or questions?

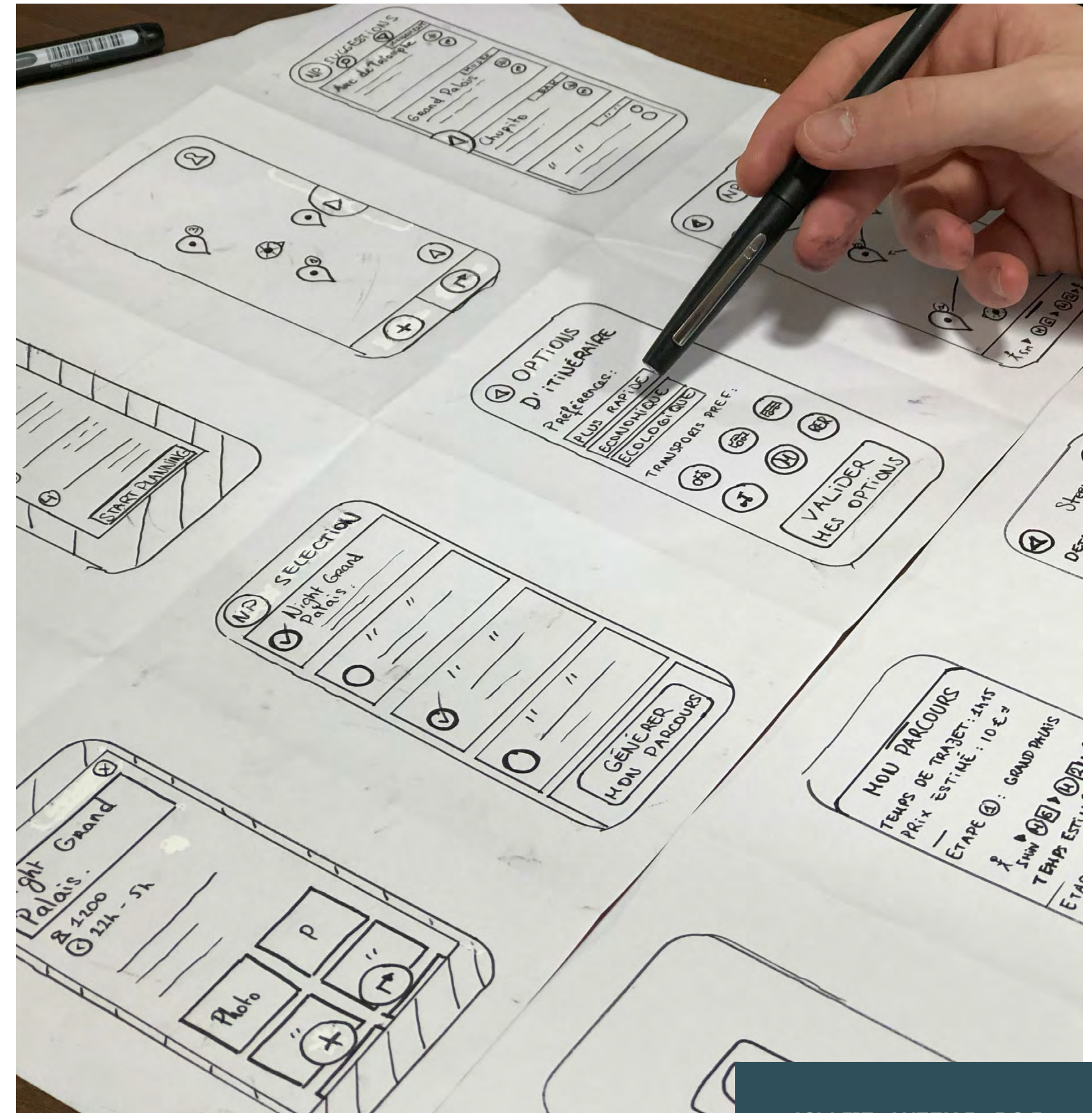
Okay, thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this session. I really appreciate your feedback and input and I hope you enjoy the rest of your day!

End recording.



Task Prompts

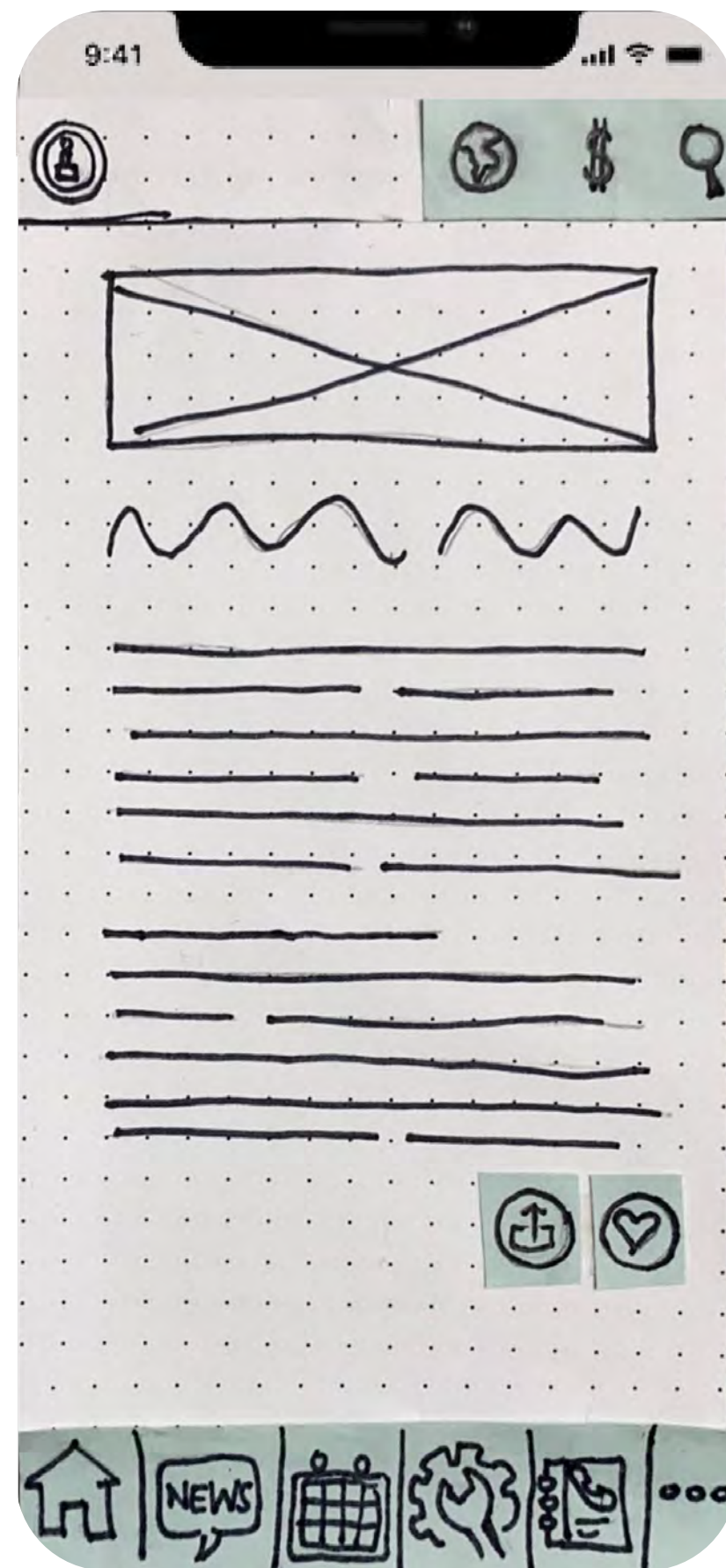
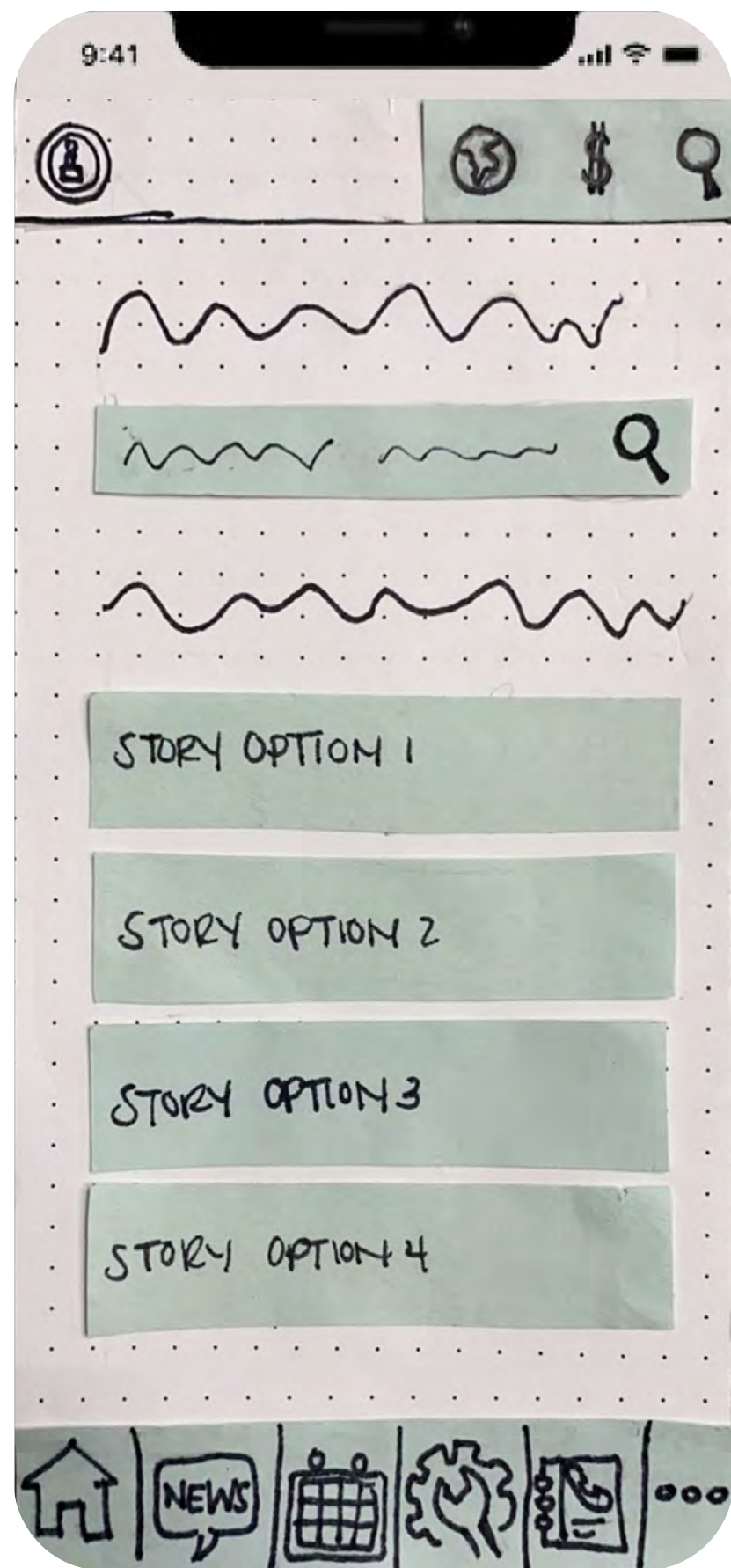
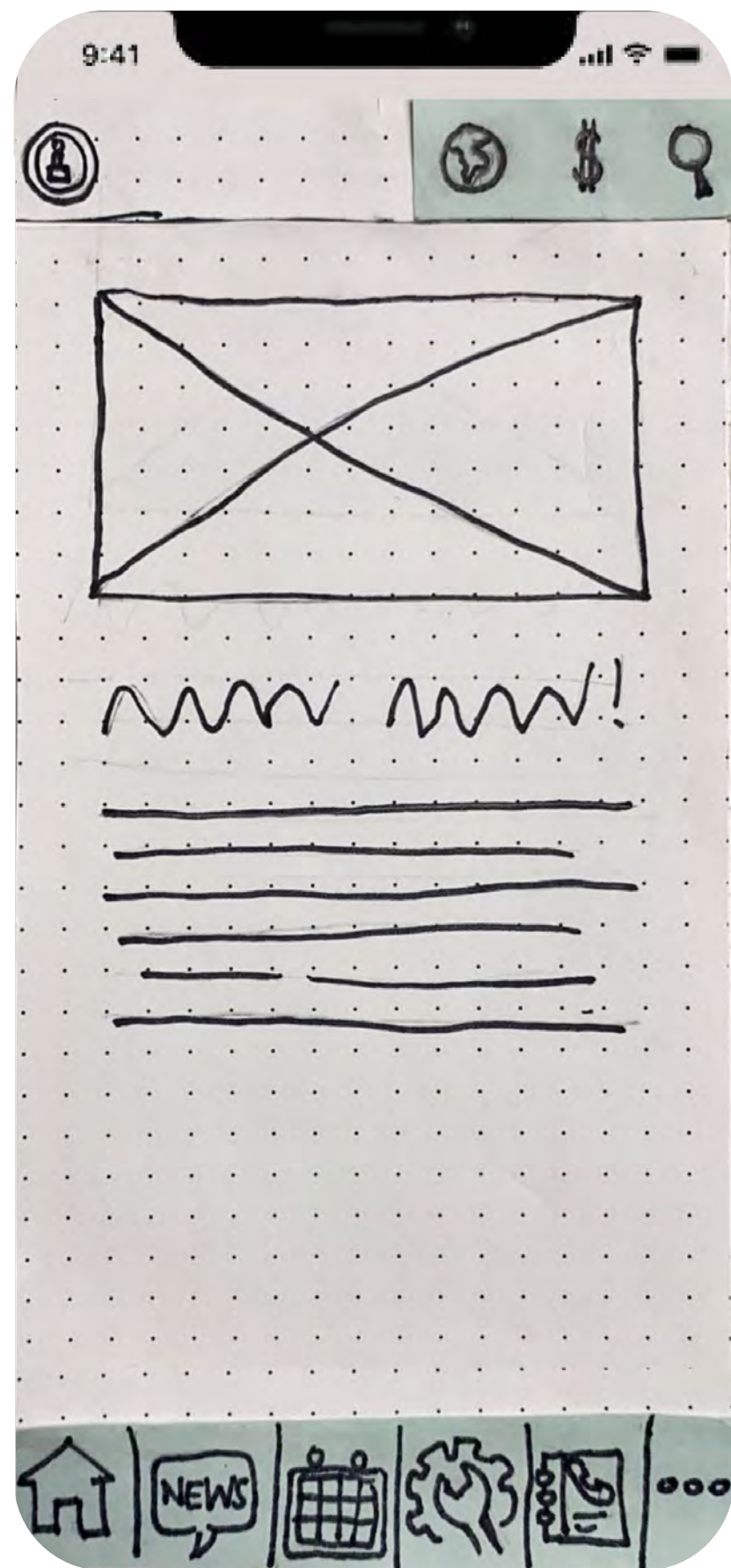
- » **Task 1:** You would like to read one of the most recent news articles published by the City of Baltimore. After reading the story, favorite or save it for later reference.
- » **Task 2:** You have noticed a pothole developing on a road you frequently use. You would like to view all services and notify the city by submitting a service request.
- » **Task 3:** You would like to view upcoming events within a specific event category. Once you find an event you are interested in, add it to your calendar.



Prototype Screens: Task 1

The full version of the Baltimorean prototype can be found [here](#).

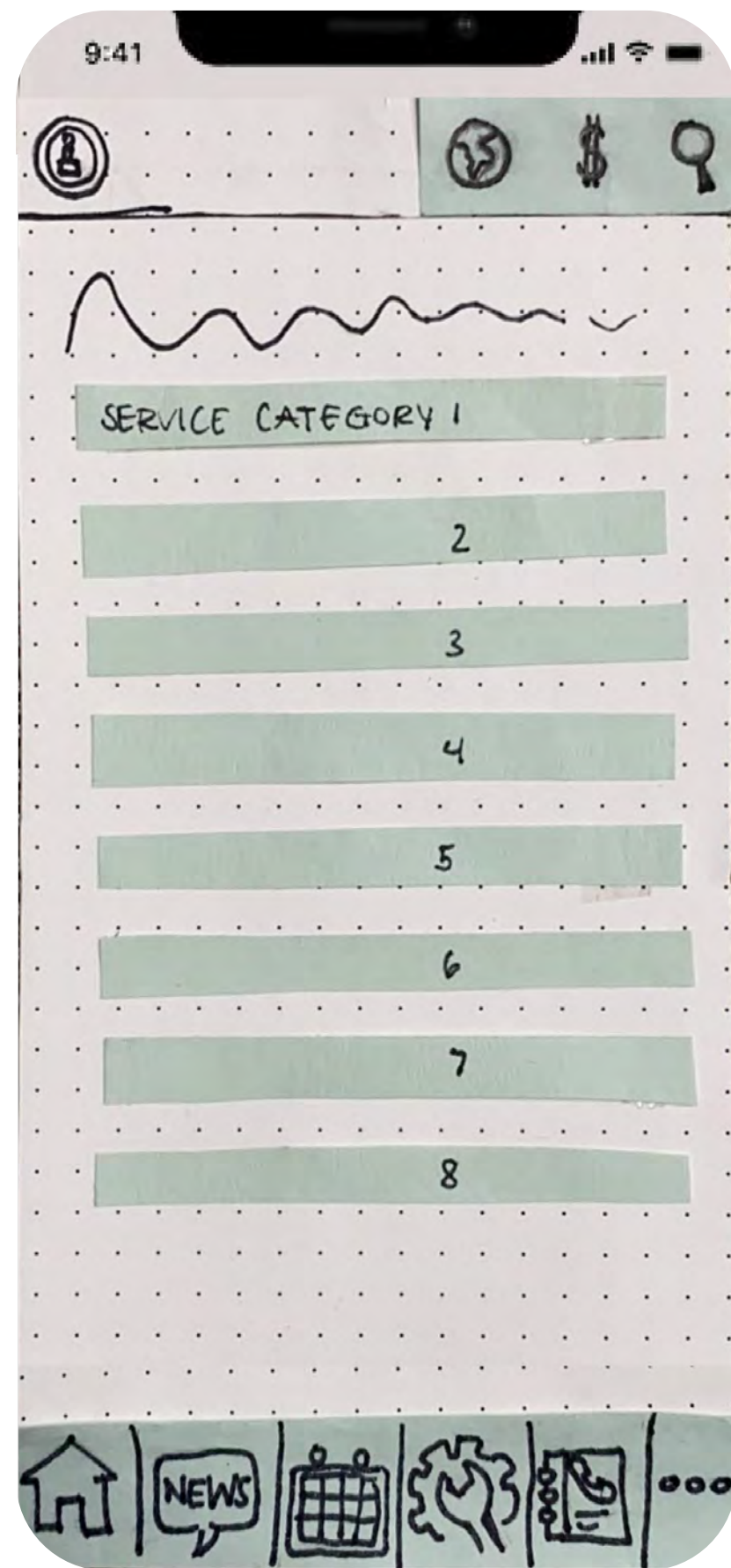
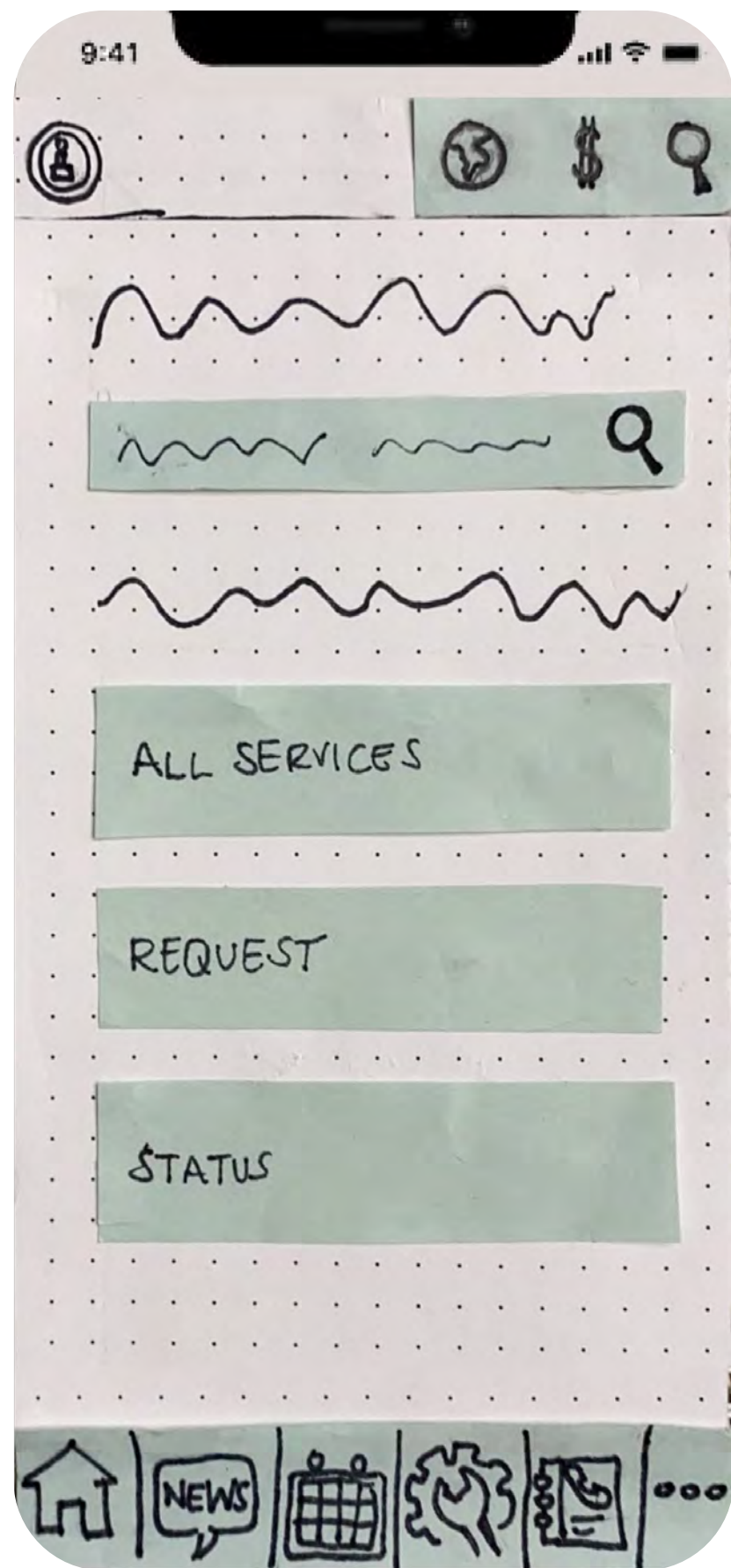
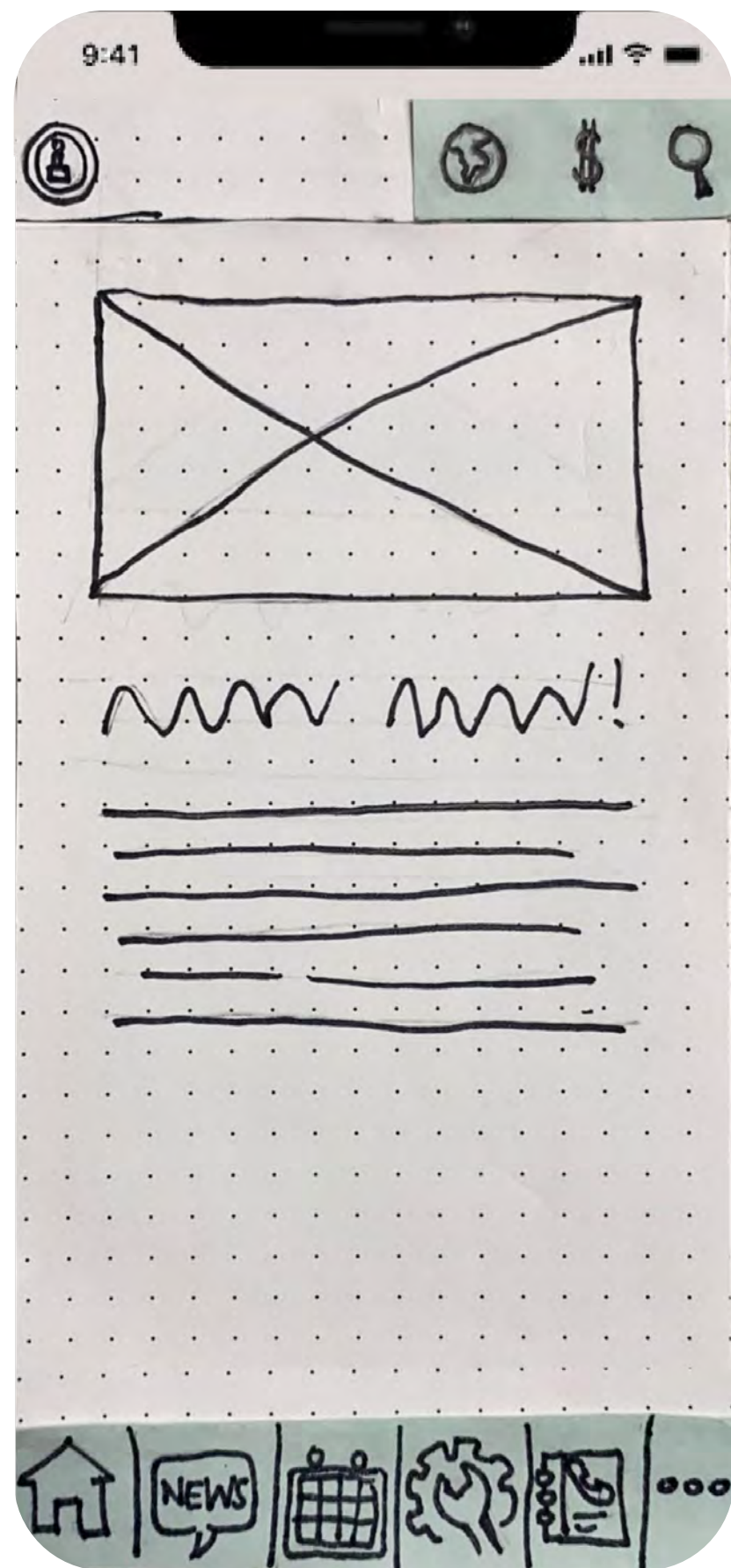
- » **Task 1:** You would like to read one of the most recent news articles published by the City of Baltimore. After reading the story, favorite or save it for later reference.



Prototype Screens: Task 2

The full version of the Baltimorean prototype can be found [here](#).

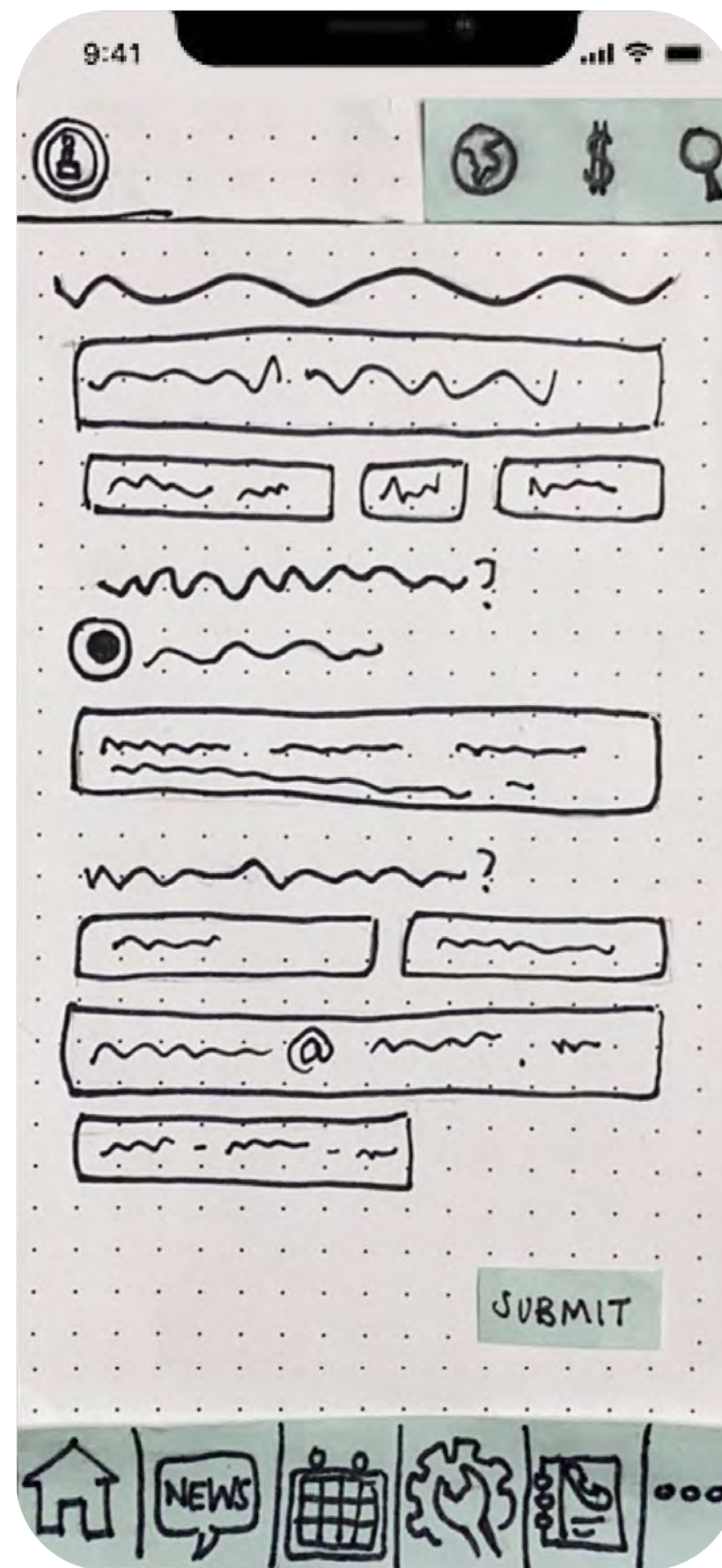
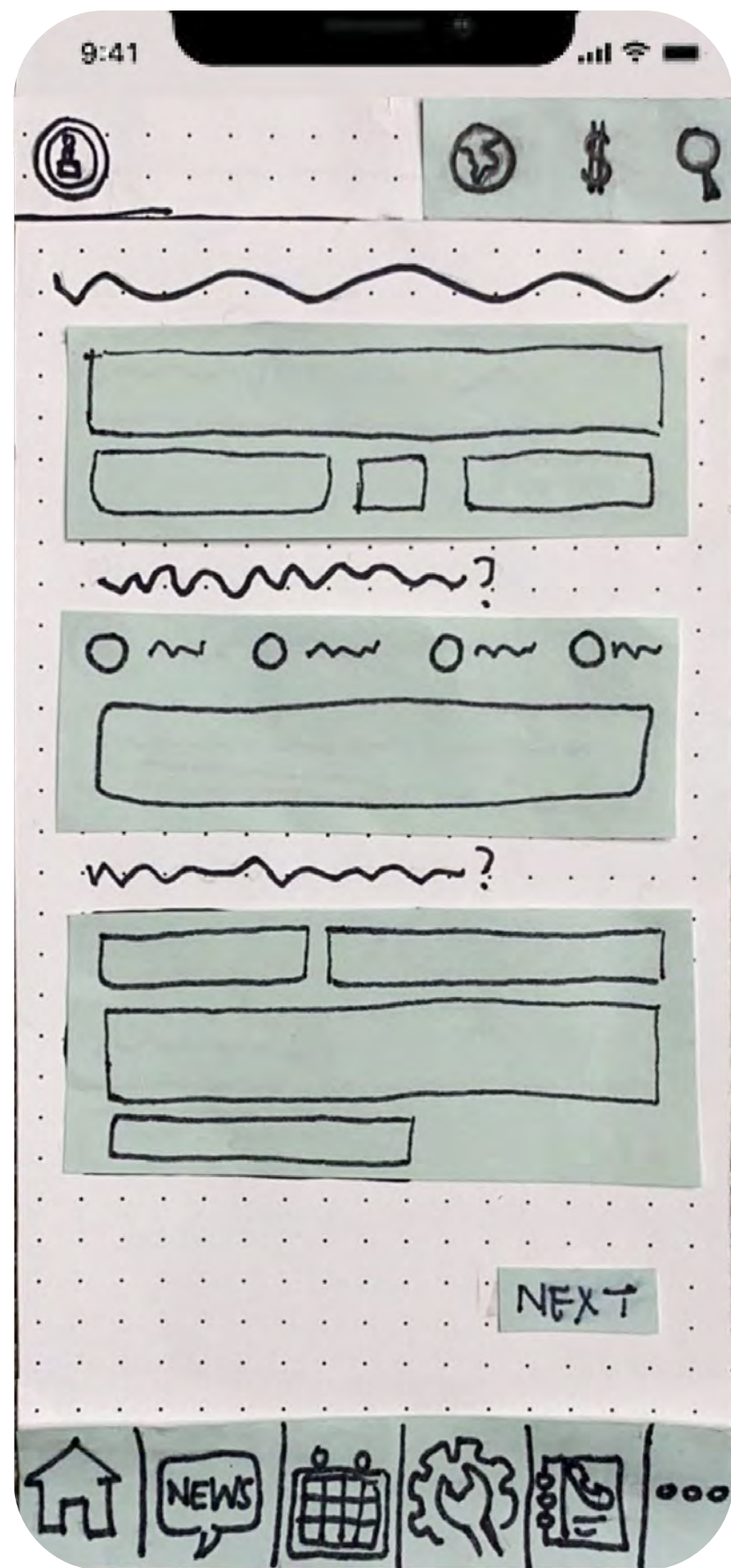
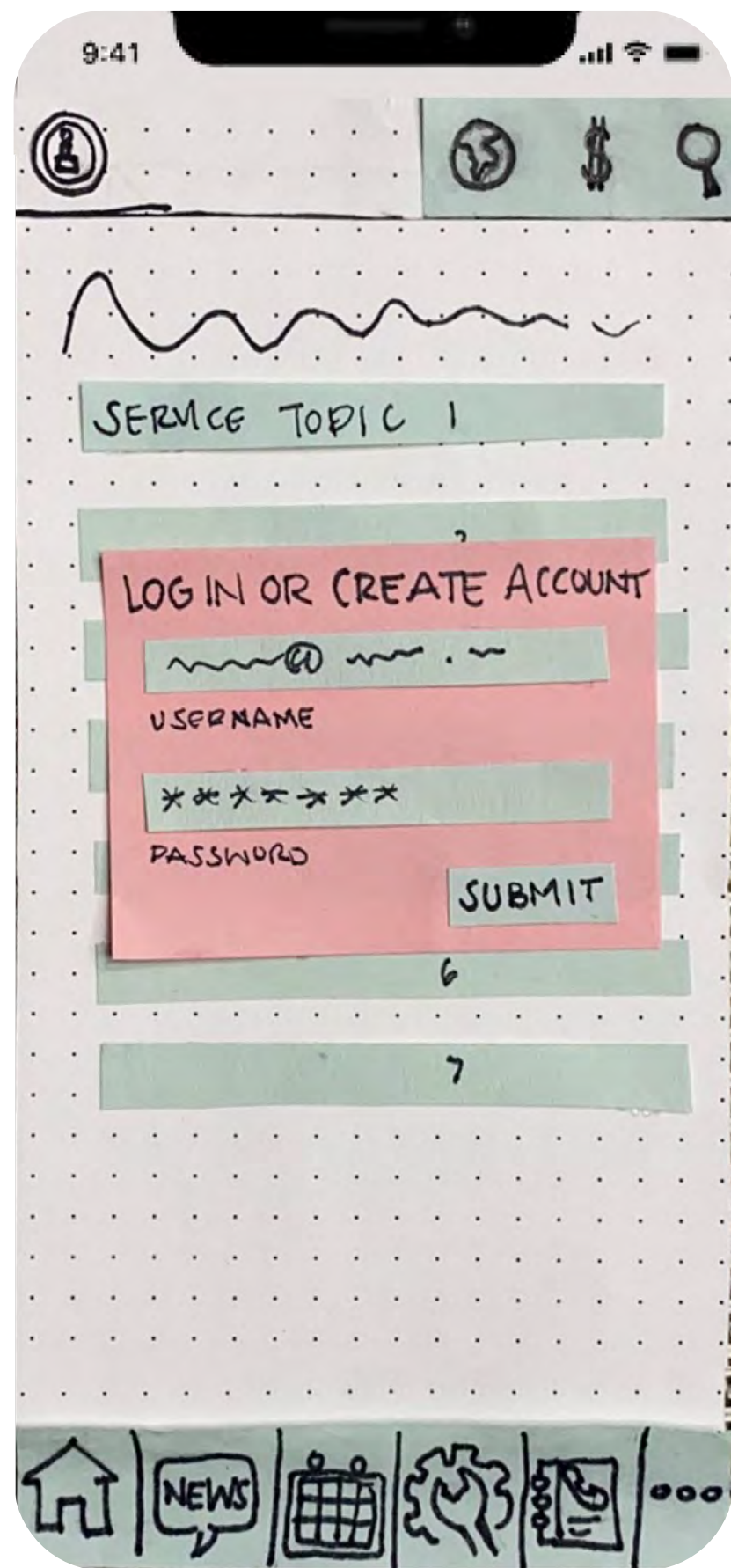
- » **Task 2:** You have noticed a pothole developing on a road you frequently use. You would like to view all services and notify the city by submitting a service request.



Prototype Screens: Task 2

The full version of the Baltimorean prototype can be found [here](#).

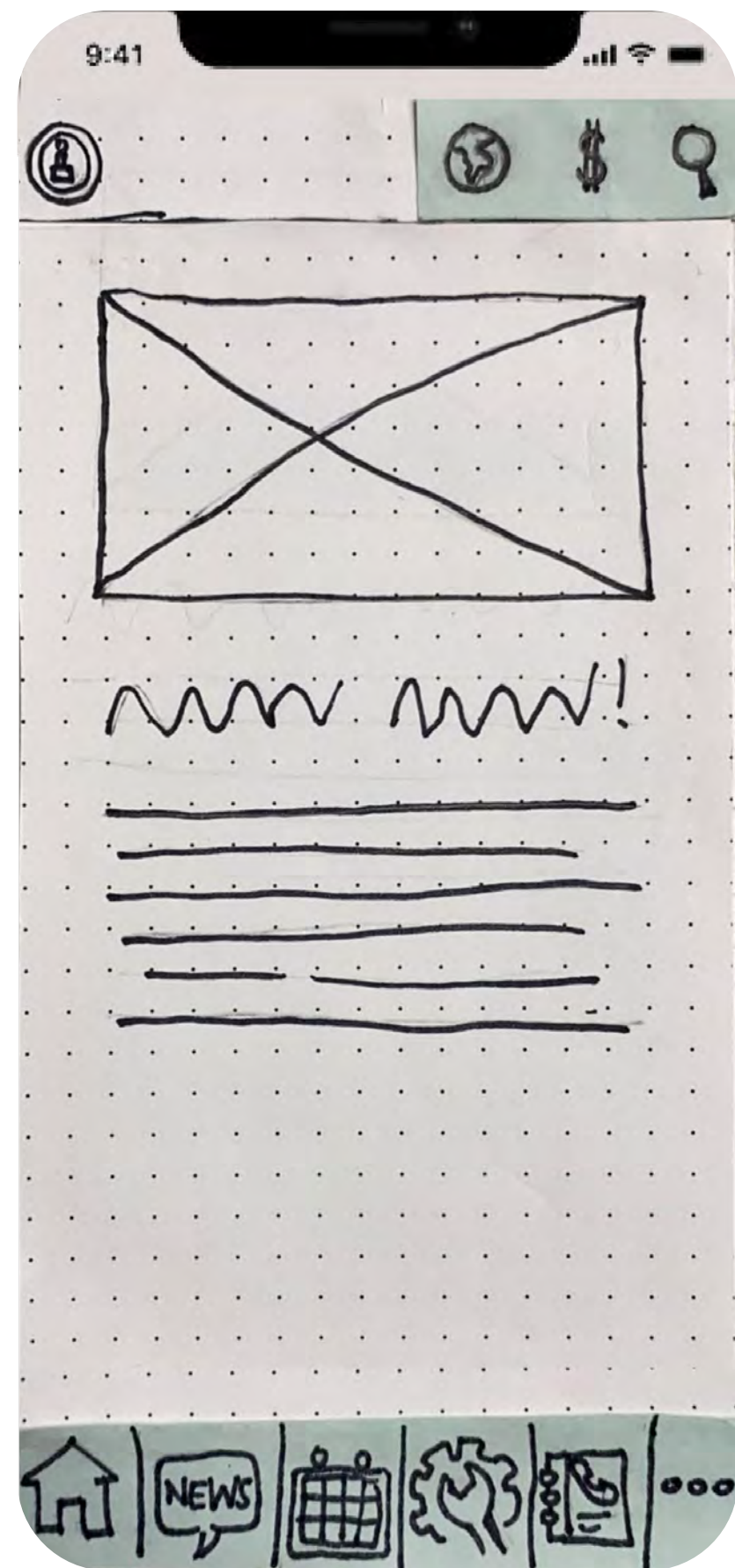
- » **Task 2:** You have noticed a pothole developing on a road you frequently use. You would like to view all services and notify the city by submitting a service request.



Prototype Screens: Task 3

The full version of the Baltimorean prototype can be found [here](#).

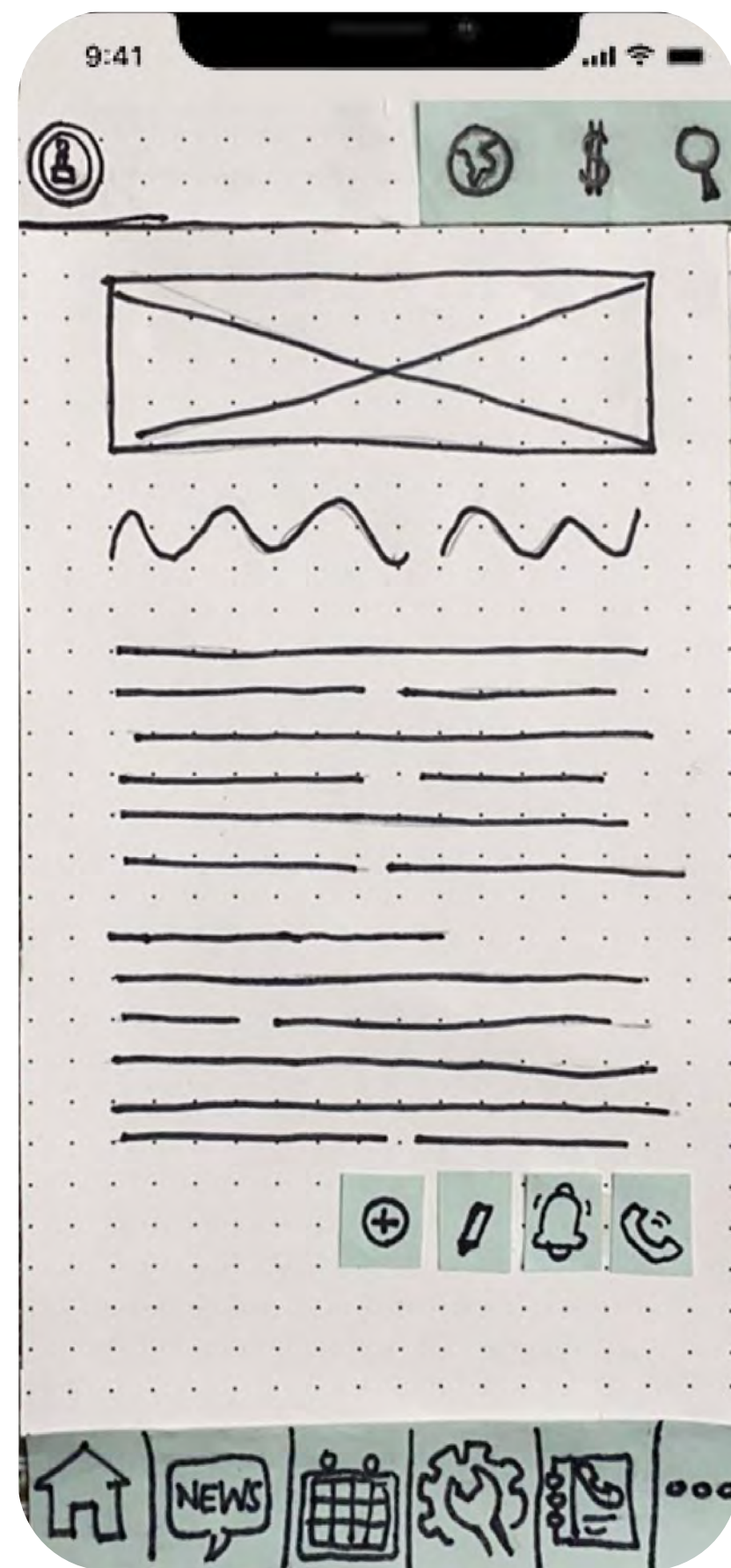
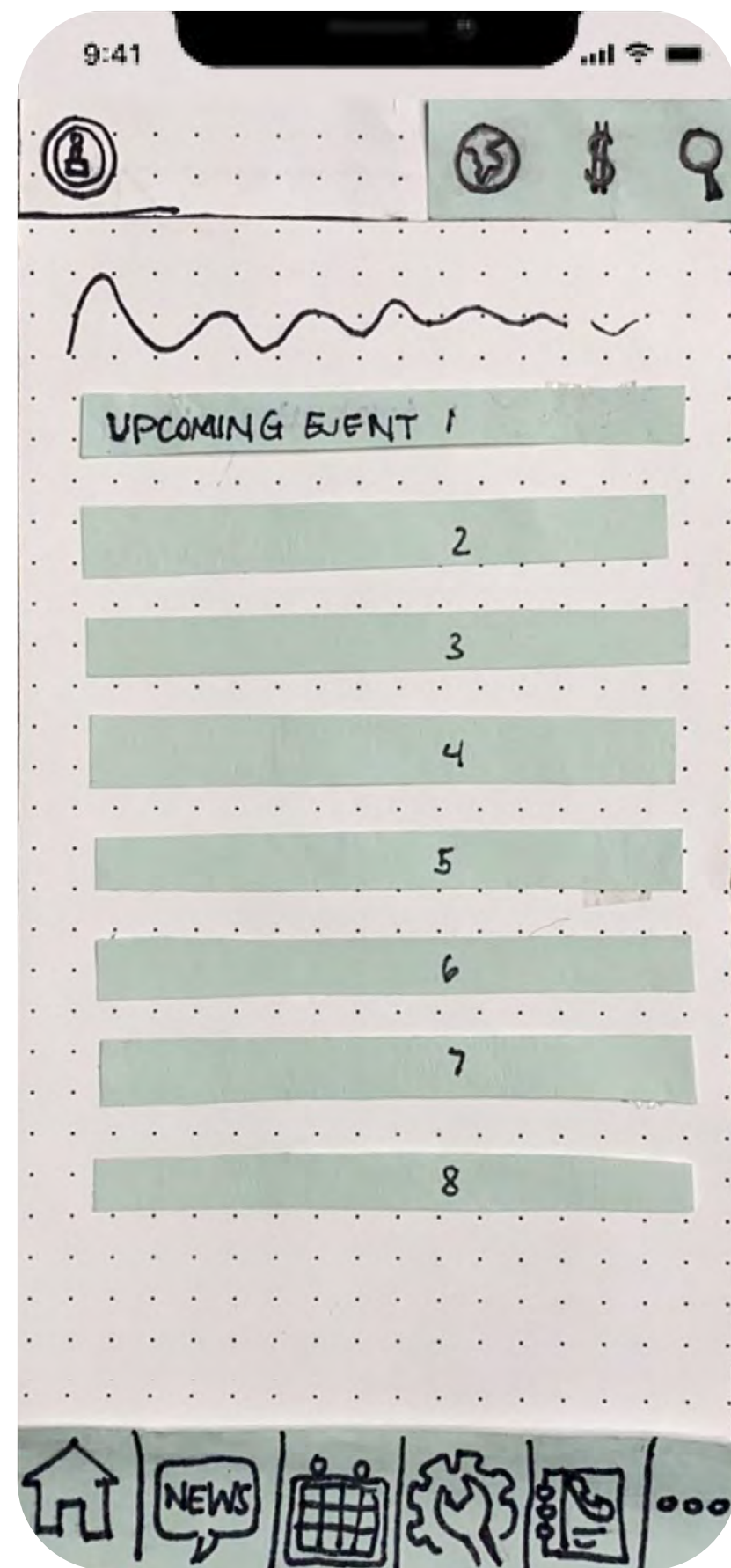
- » **Task 3:** You would like to view upcoming events within a specific event category. Once you find an event you are interested in, add it to your calendar.



Prototype Screens: Task 3

The full version of the Baltimorean prototype can be found [here](#).

- » **Task 3:** You would like to view upcoming events within a specific event category. Once you find an event you are interested in, add it to your calendar.



Summary of Findings

The usability test sessions gave great insight into what works well within the Baltimorean app and what needs revising. Both participants mentioned that the app was very straightforward and clear.

The following potential problem areas were highlighted during user testing sessions:

- The app needs a back button in case users want to return to a previous step within their journey.
- The icons on the event pages should be revisited to represent and communicate “add to calendar,” “register,” “turn on notifications,” and “contact event planner” more clearly.
- The language selector and online payment icons need to be substituted with other icons or text. Language selection can possibly take place on a screen before the app’s home screen.
- The “more” page may not be necessary because users can access more information on Baltimore city’s website. Additionally, the bottom icon navigation feels more solid and direct with five icons.
- On the “services” page, “all services” can be read as “view all services by category.” Options on the “services” page can be labeled with descriptions for clarity. Pages within “services” could also use description blurbs so users are aware of what they are viewing and what options they have.

Altogether, users were able to utilize the app and perform tasks seamlessly, finding what they were looking for quickly. They stated that the bottom icon navigation worked well and the app was easy to navigate.

