Montgomery County Parks

Engage Millennials in Parks

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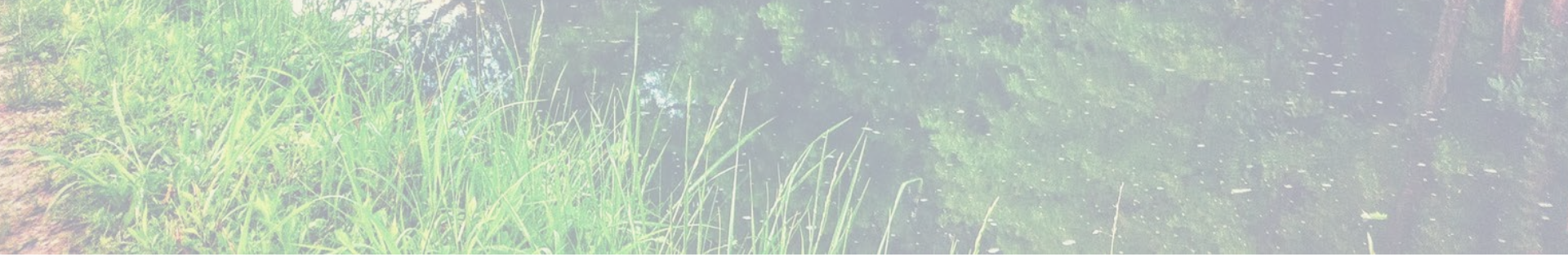

Course #: INST 775
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PALS - Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability
An initiative of the National Center for Smart Growth

Gerrit Knaap, NCSG Executive Director
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Project Focus

How do we

- get millenials to go to the park?
- increase use of park programs and facilities?
- increase awareness about parks?
- increase technological engagement in the parks?

Interview Focus

- Find out what attracts or prevents people from visiting/enjoying the parks?
- How do the users decide which parks they would like to visit?
- What park facilities or features do the users usually interact with?
- What is the awareness about parks and various park activities amongst people?
- What technology do people use in the parks?

Our Process

- Background Research
- Field Research
  - Field Interviews
  - Experience Models
  - Affinity Diagram
- Wall walk
- Ideation
  - Visioning
  - Plus and minus
- Product Concepts

Background Research

Background Research - Literature Review

- Majority of Millenials value parks highly.
  - Value feelings of solitude.
  - Value being part of nature and ability to relax in nature
  - People under 50 years old, visit parks much more often.
- Millenials have differing opinions on leisure time.
  - Some believe it is about tranquility
  - Some believe it is about excitement and new-ness
- Girls are less likely to go to parks than boys.
  - Among kids, teenagers and youth, teenage girls visit parks the least.
  - Few girls were seen participating in sports or playing in pick-up games, like basketball.
- Ease of walk to parks is important.
  - It is important that the park is close
  - It is important that walking there is safe
- Going to parks as kids leads to going as adults.

Field Research

Findings and issues

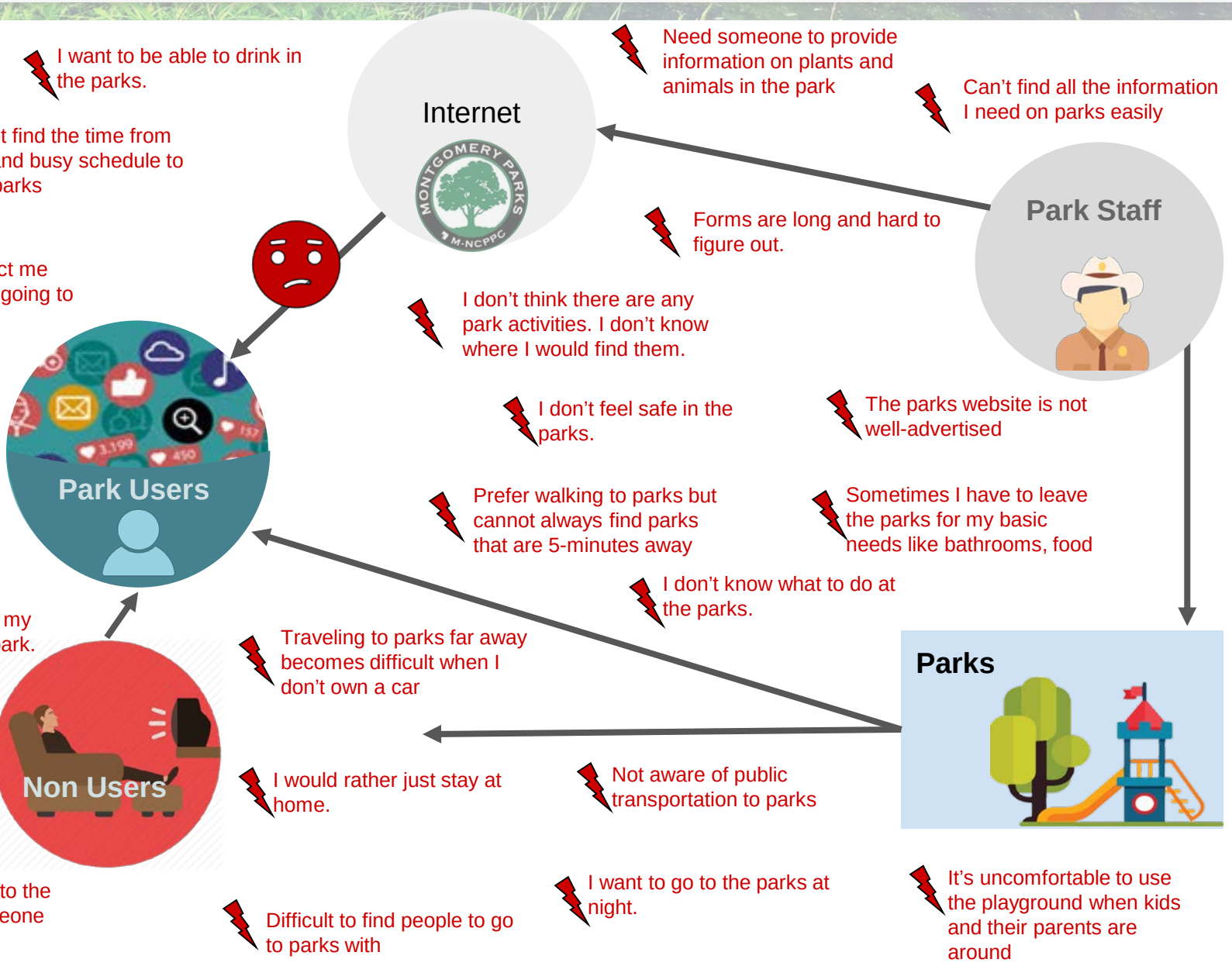
Our Interviewees

Participants

- 4 men, 8 women
- 21 – 35 years of age
- Range of occupations and income levels : Student, nanny, artist, Government agent,TA, unemployed, Pizza delivery
- Range of frequency and interest in parks

	Goes Frequently	Goes Infrequently	Doesn't Go
Likes Parks	2 users	2 users	5 users
Doesn't Like Parks	2 users	0 users	1 user

Big Picture


I want to be able to drink in the parks.
Need someone to provide information on plants and animals in the park
Can't find all the information I need on parks easily
Internet
Cannot find the time from work and busy schedule to go to parks
Forms are long and hard to figure out.
Park Staff
Other things distract me and keep me from going to parks
I don't think there are any park activities. I don't know where I would find them.
I don't feel safe in the parks.
The parks website is not well-advertised
Not aware of parks nearby
Park Users
Prefer walking to parks but cannot always find parks that are 5-minutes away
Sometimes I have to leave the parks for my basic needs like bathrooms, food
I don't know what to do at the parks.
I need ways to get my friends out to the park.
Traveling to parks far away becomes difficult when I don't own a car
Parks
Non Users
I would rather just stay at home.
Not aware of public transportation to parks
I don't want to go to the parks unless someone invites me.
Difficult to find people to go to parks with
I want to go to the parks at night.
It's uncomfortable to use the playground when kids and their parents are around

Challenges and high- level findings

I mostly go with my friends

- Many park activities are just excuses for social gatherings.
- Most park goers go because someone else gets them to go.

Many users don't know about the parks near them

- Those who don't normally go to parks don't know about them.
- Users want to get park info from other users not from websites.

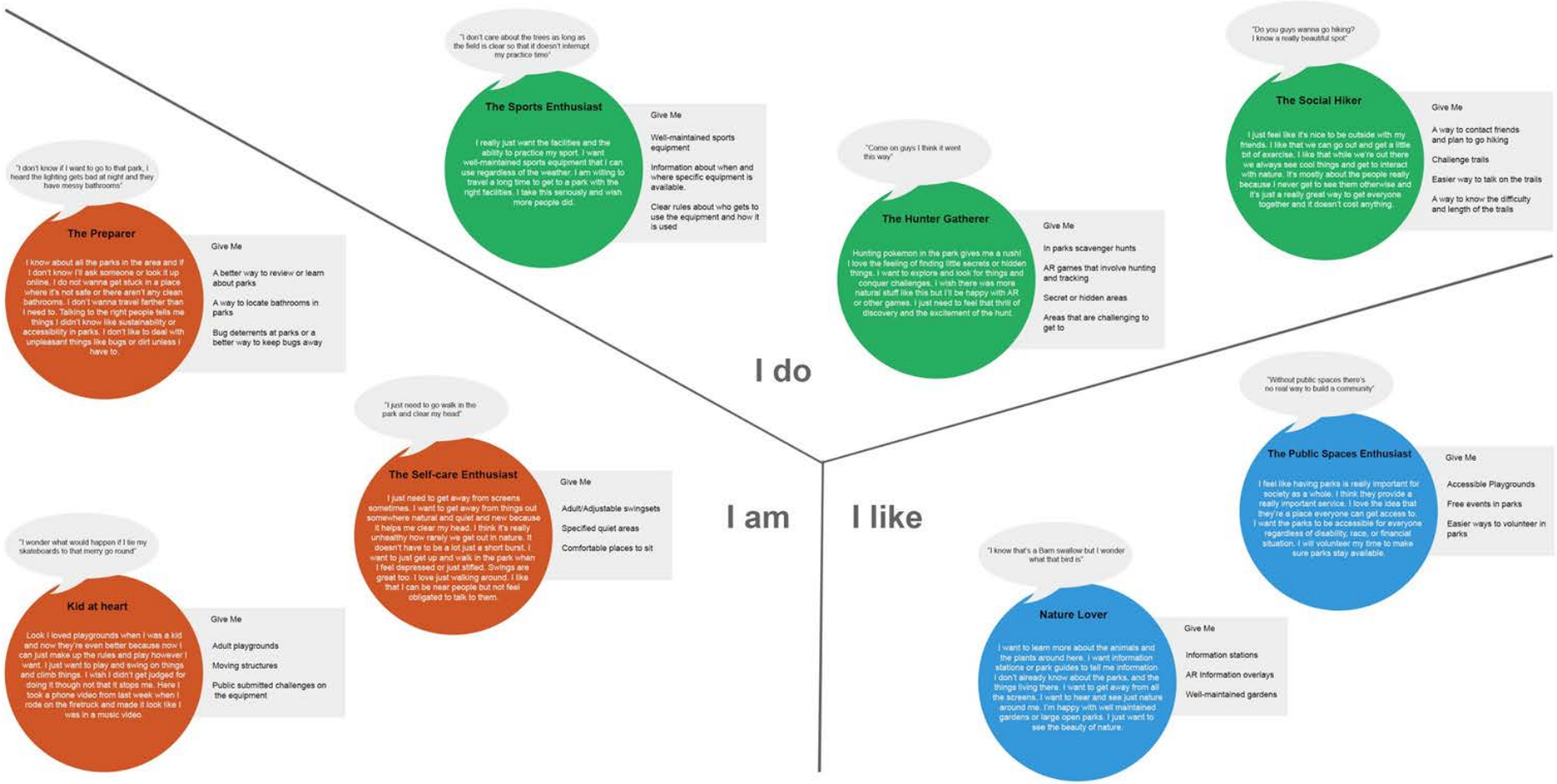
I don't want to do tech things in park

- Users are resilient to the idea of screens in the park.
- Users don't usually bring anything other than their phone.

Millennials want to be able to "Just Go" to the park on a whim

- 10 minute rule I don't want to walk or drive more than 10 minutes
- I want to be able to fill my needs (bathroom, food, water) at the park.

Identity Model



Identity Elements 01

Kid at Heart	Self-care Enthusiast	The Preparer
I loved playgrounds when I was a kid and it's better now as I make my my own games and rules. I wish that I didn't get judged for it though that wouldn't stop me.	I just need to get away from screens sometimes to go somewhere natural and quiet. It helps me clear my head. I like that I can be around people but not obligated to talk.	I want to know all about the parks in my area before I go. If don't know then I'll ask someone or look it up online. I also make sure I have everything I need for my trip.
Give Me: Adult Playgrounds Moving structures Challenges submitted by people in the park	Give Me: Adult/adjustable swing sets Specified quiet areas Comfortable places to sit	Give Me: Better way to learn about parks Locating bathrooms Bug deterrents

Identity Elements 02

Sports Enthusiast

I really just want the facilities and the abilities to practise my sport regardless of the weather. I take this seriously and I am willing to travel. I wish more people did it too.

Give Me:

Well maintained sports equipment

Clear rules of engagement and availability info for park equipment

Hunter Gatherer

I want to explore and look for things and conquer challenges. Hunting Pokemons gives me a rush. I just need to feel the thrill of discovery and excitement of the hunt.

Give Me:

Park scavenger hunts

AR games for hunting and tracking

Hidden/secret areas and challenges to get there

Social Hiker

I feel like it's nice to be outside with my friends. I like that we can go outside and get some exercise. It’s a great way to get everyone together and it doesn't cost anything.

Give Me:

Plan and contact friends for a hike

Challenge trails

Know the difficulty, length of trails

Identity Elements 03

Public Space Enthusiast

I feel like having parks is really important for societies as a whole. I love the idea that they're a place everyone can get access to.

Give Me:

Accessible playground

Free events in parks

Ways to volunteer for parks

Nature Lover

I want to learn more about the animals and the plants in the park.I want to get away from screens. i want to just hear and see nature.

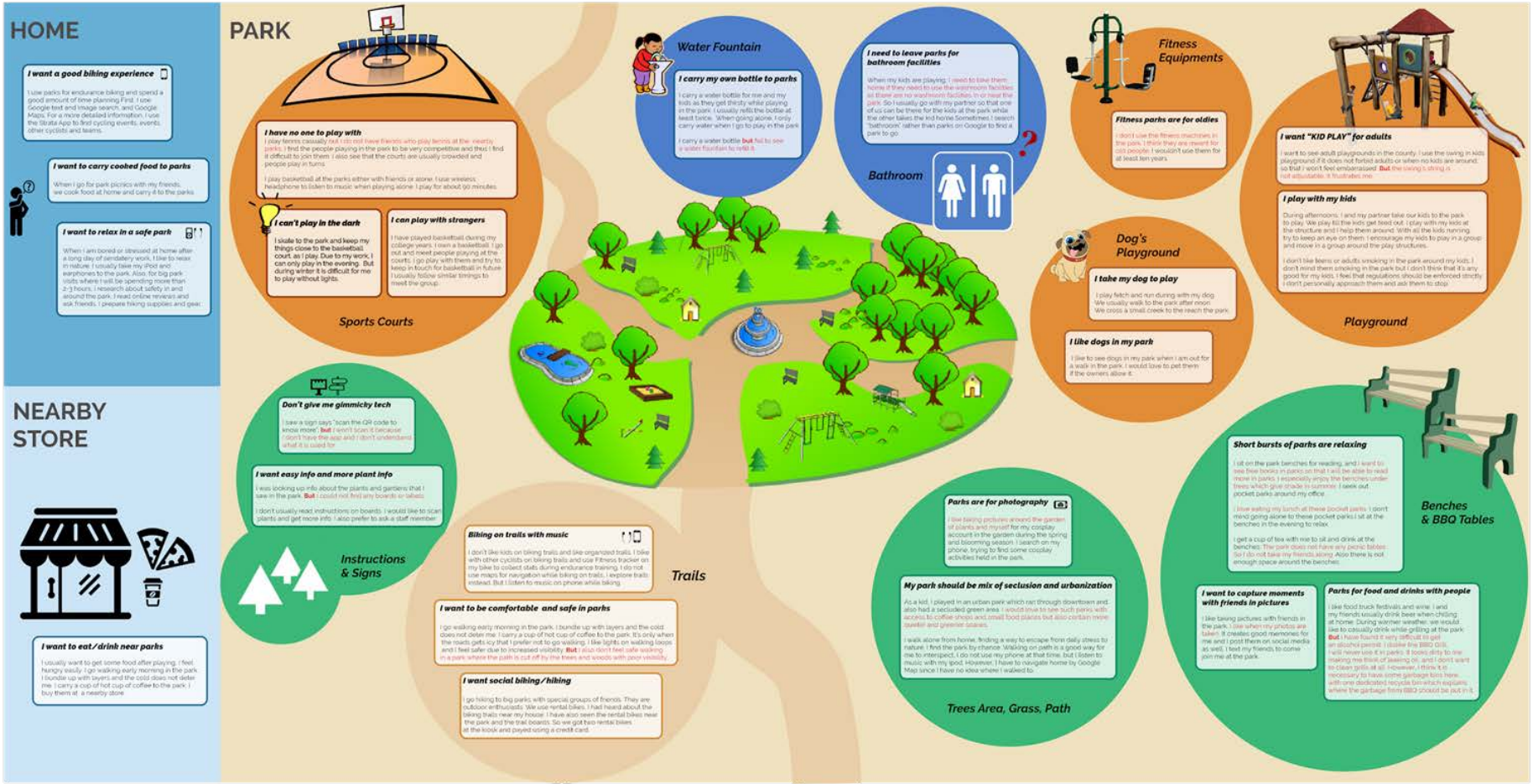
Give Me:

Information stations

AR information

Well maintained gardens

Park's Physical Model



Physical Model Elements

- I spend a lot of time searching for information online
  - I Google images showing different activities in parks
  - I read online reviews by other park users
  - I want to know about the safety in parks

- I have to prepare for various activities at the park
  - I need to carry my bike till the park
  - I take my basketball and water bottle to the parks.

Physical Model Elements

- I want to eat food in the parks
  - I sit on the bench and sip tea in evenings
  - I prepare food at home to take it and eat in parks
  - I find pocket parks to have lunch
  - I get a cup coffee from the store when talking a walk especially in colder weather

Physical Model Elements

- I have no one to play with
  - It's difficult to find friends who play in nearby parks
  - I don’t like to bring my equipment to the park.

- I want to be able to play on the playgrounds but they’re just for kids.
- As an I want to be able to use swing sets and playgrounds

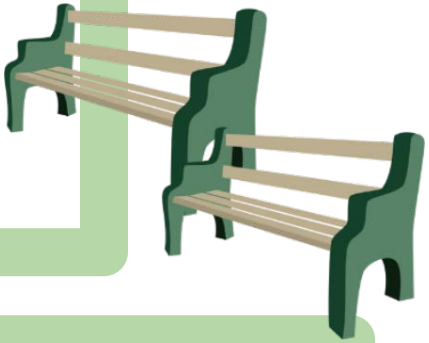
Physical Model Elements

- I want to water fountains that are easily visible or findable in the parks
- I need washrooms closeby to parks for myself and my kids

- I want to know more about different plants of the parks. Don’t make me scan codes
- Finding new and cool things in park excite me
- I like to take pictures in the park

Physical Model Elements

- I like to eat in parks, and some parks do not have picnic tables so I cannot go along with my friends
- I would like to parks with access to coffee shops and small food places but also contain more quiet and secluded places



- I like reading in parks under shade. I would like to see some free books available in parks.
- I want to capture pictures with friends in parks

Overview of Findings

Understanding the challenges

How I grew up with Parks determines how I use them…

- **I grew up going to parks so it’s a habit**
  - My interest in outdoor play and games was developed at parks
  - I liked playground as a kid
  - I like this Park because it has a wide range of activities for people of all ages and I don't feel like I've outgrown it
- **I am bonded to “my” park**
  - I like a particular park because of nostalgia
  - I grew up with a specific type of park, doing specific activities in parks
  - I visit the park with my siblings or family to relive old memories
- **I learn about other parks by going to parks**
  - I don’t know about parks unless I go to them. There is a park 5 minutes but I only discovered it when I went there
  - When in parks, I find out activities at various parks
  - I find out about the parks while exploring the trails

I want to go more but other things distract me...

- **I don’t really feel relaxed until I am home**
  - I like the feeling of comfort when I know “I am home” at the end of the day

- **My work schedule makes it hard to go to parks**
  - I haven’t been to the park in a month because of my busy work schedule
  - I sometimes have to work on the weekends which prevents me from visiting parks

- **I prefer to socialize somewhere I can drink**
  - I am not comfortable drinking in parks as I am unaware of the park policy and feel it’s a hassle to get permission to drink

I research the parks I go to...

- **I search online mostly about specific issues regarding the parks.**
  - I google the parks I want to visit and check the images as well as street-level views to ensure they are good for biking and training
  - I check if the bathrooms are available on the map and open before visiting a park
- **I don't usually go to the parks website for info.**
  - I usually just google parks
  - I prefer getting my information from people who share my values and opinions about parks
- **I search for activities I want to do in parks rather than the parks themselves.**
  - I like to go for hiking in parks and select them based on the variety of trails
  - I only go to the parks for playing basketball and do not mind traveling far to a park that has good courts and playing equipment
- **Which park I go to depends on who I'm going with and what I want to do.**
  - I prefer visiting Sligo Creek Park rather than the local park near my house, as I get to meet my friends there and spend time with them
  - I usually go to the neighborhood parks with playgrounds with my kids

Travelling to Parks should be easy...

- **Distance determines how and when I go to parks.**
  - I prefer driving to parks like Wheaton that are more than 2 miles away and take me more than 10 minutes to walk there.
  - I prefer walking to neighborhood parks if it takes me less than 10 minutes to get there
- **I have trouble bringing my own stuff to the park.**
  - I occasionally bike to the park but find it a hassle to carry my bike all the way there
- **I need a vehicle to get to the park.**
  - Not having my own car makes it difficult for me to visit the parks often
  - If there were a shuttle to the park I would definitely go paddling
- **I use apps to navigate to parks.**
  - I use Waze to find directions and travel to the park
  - I use an app for the shuttle to the park and find it quite useful

I want to be able to “Just Go” to the parks...

- **I want to be able to have short bursts of outside.**
  - I like to eat lunch at pocket parks near my workplace

- **I like casual low effort park activities.**
  - I did rock climbing and hiking only for a couple of years as I felt it was expensive and required a lot of planning.

- **I don’t want to have to plan my park visits.**
  - I like visiting local parks as I can go there spontaneously without any planning
  - I like parks that are closer to my neighborhood which makes it easy to go for a walk in the spur of the moment

- **I go to the parks because I am bored and it’s easy.**
  - I usually visit the local playgrounds whenever I’m bored

It's really about what people are in the park

- **I want to see diverse people in parks.**
  - I mostly find caucasians in the park even though there is a lot of diversity in my apartment complex
  - I feel uncomfortable when there's nobody in the park that looks like me.

- **I want activity based park communities.**
  - It would be nice to have Montgomery county parks encourage bike events and help build a bike community
  - I would visit local parks more if there were clubs that conducted cycling or skateboarding events

- **Events help me find my people in the park.**
  - I like to attend events conducted by bike shops as I know I can find people who bike and train at the same level I want to

- **I like that parks are free and non-profit.**
  - I'm willing to work and take responsibility for parks being free because I believe in community spaces.

I want to plan a social parks experience

- **I use going to the park as an excuse to hang out with friends.**
  - I usually go hiking as it gives me a chance to talk and catch up with friends while being in nature
  - I prefer going to the park farther away than the one near my home as most of my friends live there and it gives me a chance to hang out with them
- **I actively want to get more people to go to the parks.**
  - I liked Pokemon go as I could get many of my friends, who were otherwise unwilling, to go to parks
  - I would like to see more businesses organize events in parks
- **I find it hard to find people to go to parks with me**
  - It has become increasingly difficult to find time with friends to go to the parks due to our respective work schedules
- **I use social media to find people to go to parks with**
  - I use meetup to find people interested in basketball or other similar activities and get information on various events
  - I would like to see the county website working in combination with meetup service to find new people that share similar interests in park activities

I create or play games in the park

- **I want adult play structures**
  - I want adult or adjustable swing sets in the playground
  - I want to play on the play equipment but feel like I'm not allowed to when kids are around. It would be nice to have separate playgrounds for kids and adults
- **I like to create my own games with park equipment.**
  - It's more fun when I use the kids playing equipment in parks to create competitive and challenging games
  - Sometimes my sister and I sit on the rocking horses in the playground and pretend to be in a race to keep things fun and interesting
- **I like to find or hide things**
  - I really like the secret scavenger hunt of statues in the park.
  - I like geocaching in parks because it is fun to hide things and find what other people have left behind
- **I like the feeling of hunting things**
  - I went to the parks with more people because of Pokemon go as I really liked the idea of tracking and catching pokemons with friends
  - I really like the hunting and tracking feature in Pokemon go and was upset when they removed it

I play mobile games in the park

- **Geolocation mobile games drive me to parks.**
  - Pokemon go made me stay in parks longer as there were so many pokemon and I roamed around to catch them all !
  - I played Pokemon go in parks because there were several pokestops and charging stations available

- **I like that mobile games provide an excuse to go out with friends.**
  - I liked Pokemon go not for the nostalgic value but because it allowed me to get many of my friends to parks and hang out with them
  - Pokemon go lets me have spontaneous outings with my friends in parks and I do not have to choose between going out and being social

I want to be immersed in park

- **I go to parks to achieve a sense of tranquility.**
  - I don’t want to be disturbed while in the park
  - Screens disrupt my immersion in parks

- **Reading or listening to something is fine in the park.**
  - I know people who like to read research papers in parks as they feel it helps them retain information better
  - I usually carry my headphones and use Spotify to listen to music while enjoying the nature in the parks

- **I want to be able to sit in the shade.**
  - I would like there to be more benches which are under trees for shade during the summer

- **My phone is the only tech I really bring to the park.**
  - I bring only my phone to the park so that I can talk to my family/friends while walking

I don't want to have to leave parks for my basic needs

- **I want well maintained bathrooms that are open 24/7.**
  - I really like that Patapsco park has a lot of bathrooms closeby with things clearly labelled and maps everywhere
  - It is really annoying that I have to sometimes walk a lot or even leave the park to find bathrooms

- **I want food trucks, and access to nearby restaurants.**
  - I wish that the park had more "active events" like food truck festivals and live music events
  - My ideal park would be near restaurants and coffee shops but in a secluded region with a more natural aura

- **I want to be able to drink in the parks.**
  - I really enjoyed park picnics but they eventually died out as we weren't allowed to get alcohol
  - I really enjoy the wine festivals in the parks and wish there were more such events

I want safety in the parks

- **I want kids in the park to be safe.**
  - I watch over my kids and help them use the play structures in the playground
  - I am worried about my kids safety whenever we go to the lake and wish there was a lifeguard around
- **I feel unsafe when it's too dark.**
  - I am scared to walk in parks at night when some areas do not have enough light
  - I was particularly afraid to visit this lake while growing up as it was not connected to the sidewalk and was not well-lighted
- **Feeling safe in the park is a lot about the surrounding area.**
  - I feel safer walking in parks like Gaithersburg as it is more suburban than Silver Spring
  - I feel safe at this park as it is closer to my house
- **Well defined and followed rules make me feel safe.**
  - It's important for me to know whether the park is well organized for biking as I am concerned about others safety on the trails
  - I am not comfortable drinking in parks as I am unaware of the park policy and feel it's a hassle to get permission to drink

I go to the parks for intense physical activity

- **I wish there were more challenging trails in the parks.**
  - I like to visit big parks where there are usually a larger variety of challenging trails
  - My favorite part of hiking the last time we went was a fallen tree over the river, as it made it more challenging and fun for us to walk across.

- **I use the parks to tire out my kids or dogs.**
  - Whenever I’m babysitting, I take the kids to the playground as it provides good exercise and tires them out

- **I visit the parks for one specific type of training.**
  - I spend about four hours to do endurance training on my bike and 1-2 Hrs to do mountain biking in the parks.

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Wall Walk

Take a break!

Product Design

Overview of Product Concepts

PARK MAP APP

1. gives information;
2. improves safety;
3. shows you things to do;
4. has pocket mode for immersion.

6 identities concerned

8 findings concerned

PARK SHARE SYSTEM

1. lets users just go to the parks;
2. provides equipment for all users;
3. lets users create their own park experience;
4. avoids extra preparation before going to parks.

6 identities concerned

7 findings concerned

Complete New Park System Addresses All Issues And Appeals to All Users

PHYSICAL REDESIGN

1. draws adults into the parks;
2. creates a time for adults to use the playground;
3. creates new selfie spots;
4. enables people to get food in parks.

6 identities concerned

5 findings concerned

PARK ARTS SYSTEM

1. encourages artists;
2. makes creating and finding events easy.

3 identities concerned

4 findings concerned

Park Map App- - Overview

Provides an interactive map of the park

Allows users to rate and review the parks

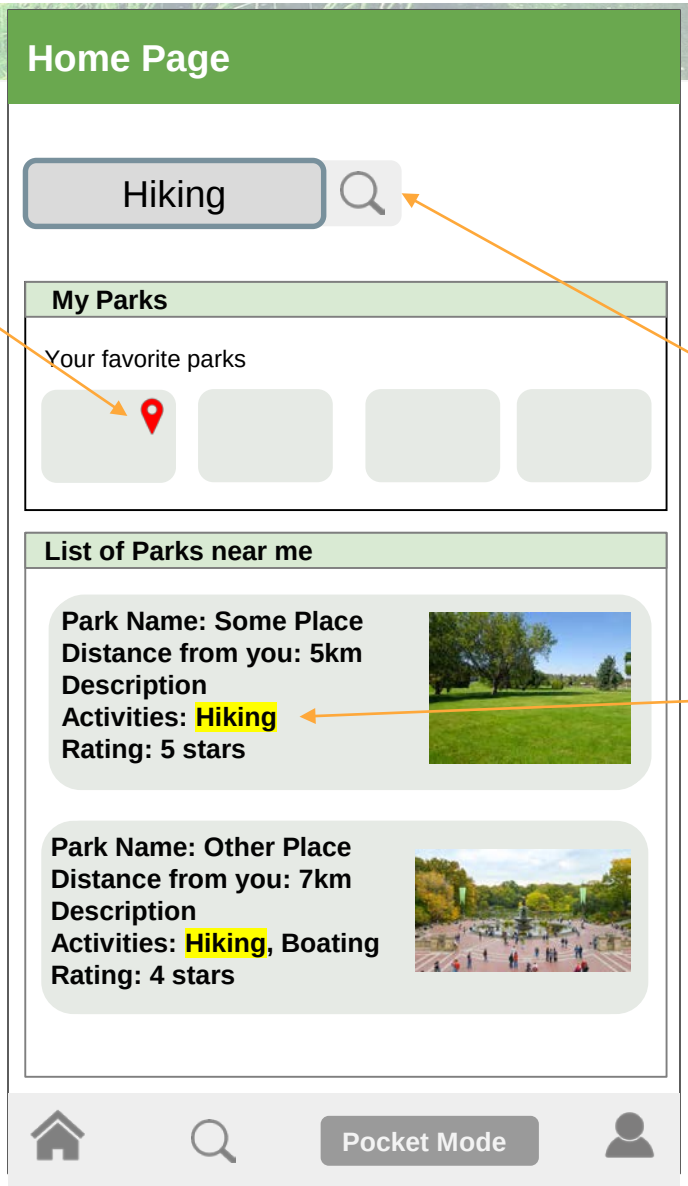
Provides a pocket guide for the users while hiking

An easy way to find and get information on nearby parks

Helps users to notify others in case of an emergency

Park Map App

Updates
Alerts let you see when there's something new in one of your favorite parks. Just tap to find out more.



Search
Search based on activities, proximity, or name.

Search
Parks are displayed based on their proximity and rating for the specific activity.

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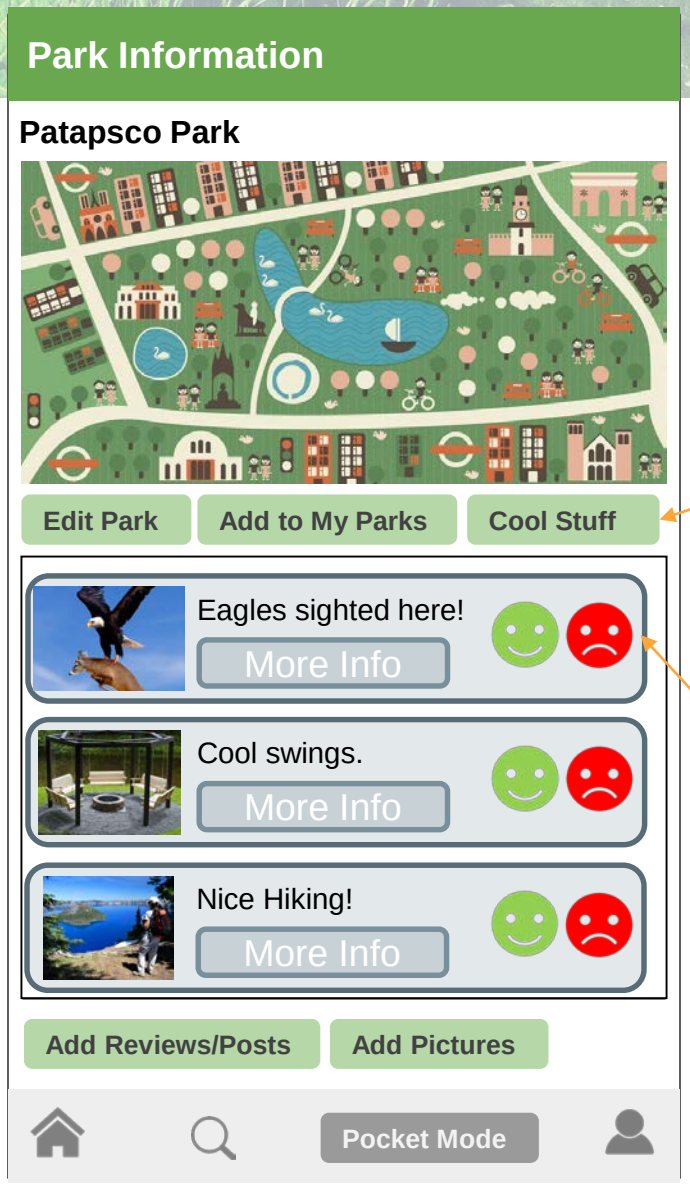
Park Map App



Cool Stuff
Showcases the hottest items and coolest things about the park as submitted and chosen by users.

Voting
Users decide what shows up first by upvoting or downvoting the stories.

Park Map App

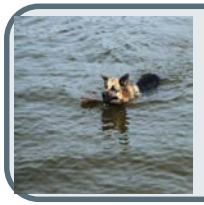
LCD Display

Patapsco Park

Description about the park

Recent Activities / Events

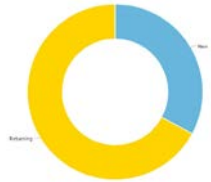
Eagles sighted here! It was really Cool and it.

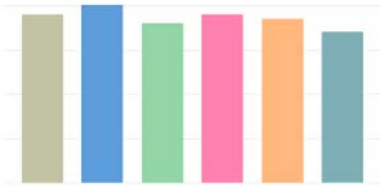


Beautiful lake for swimming!.

Party in the park this Friday at 9am.

Stats





Rank

#1

Download our Smart Park Map app

Park Map App

Drag & Drop icons on map to tag places

Edit Park

SOS

Challenges

Search

Pocket Mode

Safety Concern

Someone reported a safety concern here. Do you agree ?

YES NO

Do you agree with the suggested improvement ?

YES NO

You receive 5 points

Animal Sighting

What kind of animal ?

Ducks

Upload a Picture?

You receive 5 points

Description of issue

It's too dark here.

Suggest an improvement

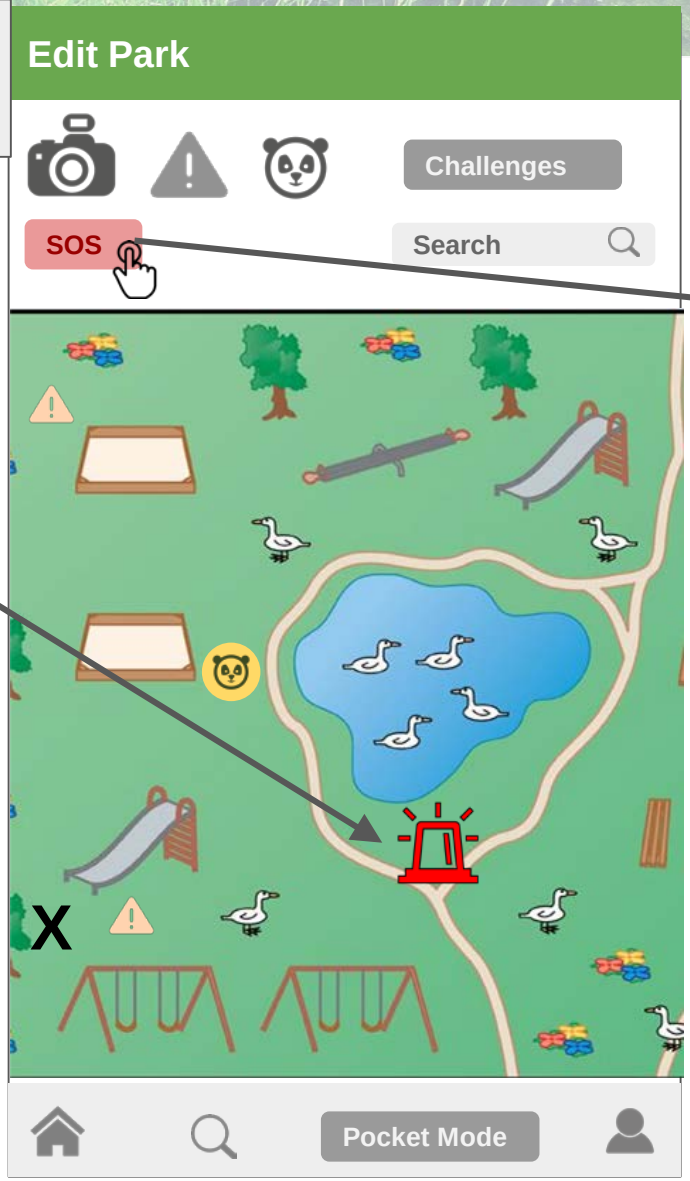
Lights

You receive 5 points

incontext

Park Map App

Drag & Drop icons on map to tag places



SOS
Creates a marker at your location that is displayed on all nearby maps. Also alerts park security.

SOS
Do you confirm there's an emergency?

YES NO

Your SOS has been sent. Would you like to describe the emergency ?

Would you like to call 911 ?

YES NO

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Park Map App

The phone vibrates when walking in a distance of a tagged place.

Notification: Animal Spot
Here is an interesting animal spot.
READ SKIP

Pocket Mode
Set at which proximity level you would like to receive notifications

Park Map App

The phone vibrates when walking in a distance of a tagged place.

Notification: Take A Challenge?
Here is a walking challenge spot, 20 people have taken the challenge.

GO SKIP

Park Arts

Makes creating and promoting events in parks easy.

Creates a reel of highlighted events for users

Allows users to become featured artists and promote their events in the parks

Park Arts

Home Page

Search

Check In

Host an Event

Become an Artist

My Upcoming Clubs/Events

Name Status

Time

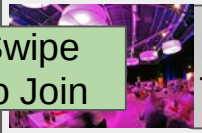
Name Status

Time

Scrolls

Events/Clubs Nearby

Description
Time



Description
Time

Description
Time

Swipe to Join

Scrolls

Your Event

Where:
When:
Alcohol:
Bounce House:
Private/Public
Loud Music:
Collecting Money:
Charity:
Organization:
Food:
Tags:

Description

Pictures

Submit

Cancel

Artist Profile

Parks:
Type:
Do you understand the sound rules:
Loud Music:
Collecting Money:
Charity:
Organization:
Food:
Tags:

Description

Samples

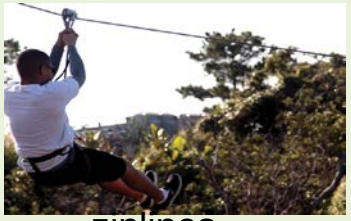
Submit

Cancel

Park Share System-- Overview

Provides an easy way to rent cool stuff to use in the park either through the mobile app or through Kiosks available at the park

Park Share System -- Rental List


ziplines

metal detector

croquet sets

laser tag

bikes

basketballs

telescopes

zorbs

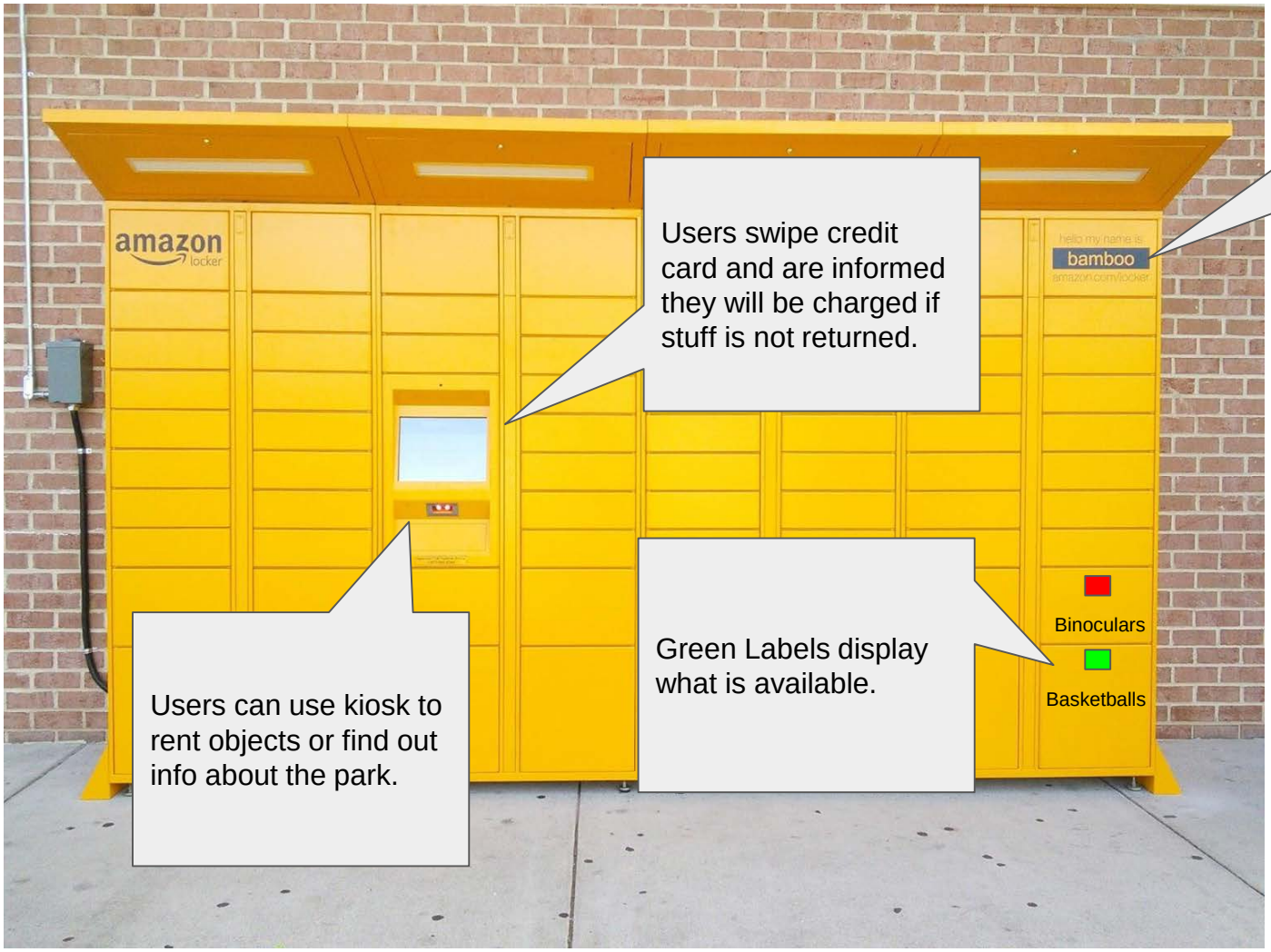
literature

binoculars

tennis rackets

umbrellas

Park Share System -- Kiosk System



Users swipe credit card and are informed they will be charged if stuff is not returned.

Camera system in lockers checks to make sure items have been returned.

Expensive Items equipped with GPS tags which will scream and alert authorities if removed from the park.

Users can use kiosk to rent objects or find out info about the park.

Green Labels display what is available.

Park Share System -- Kiosk System

Rental System Kiosk

Rent

Pick Up

Return

You can also use our app to do both reservation , rental and return.

Type in the **return code**, and the locker opens

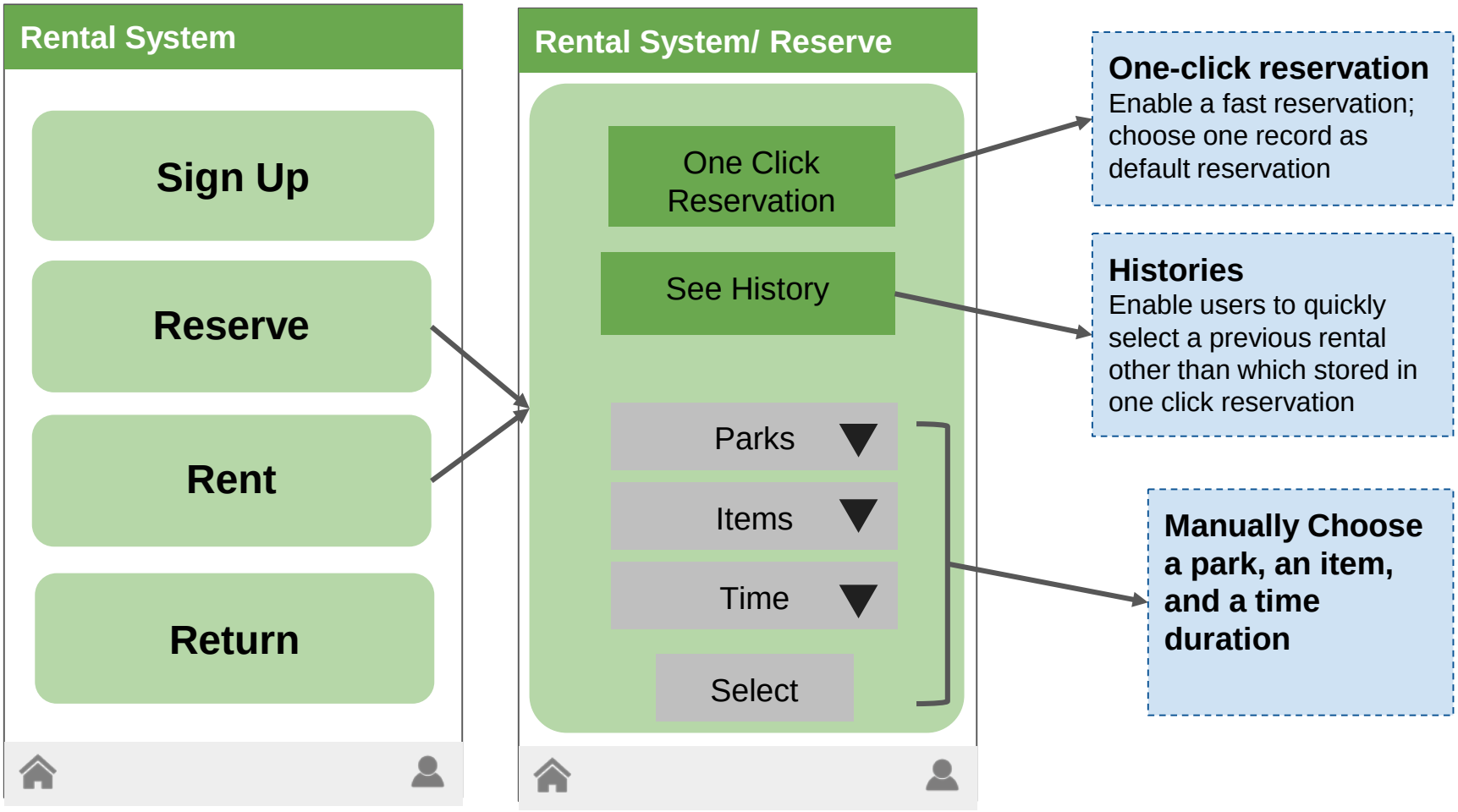
Choose an available locker:

Lockers			
A 1	A 2	A 3	A 4
B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4
C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4
D 1	D 2	D 3	D 4

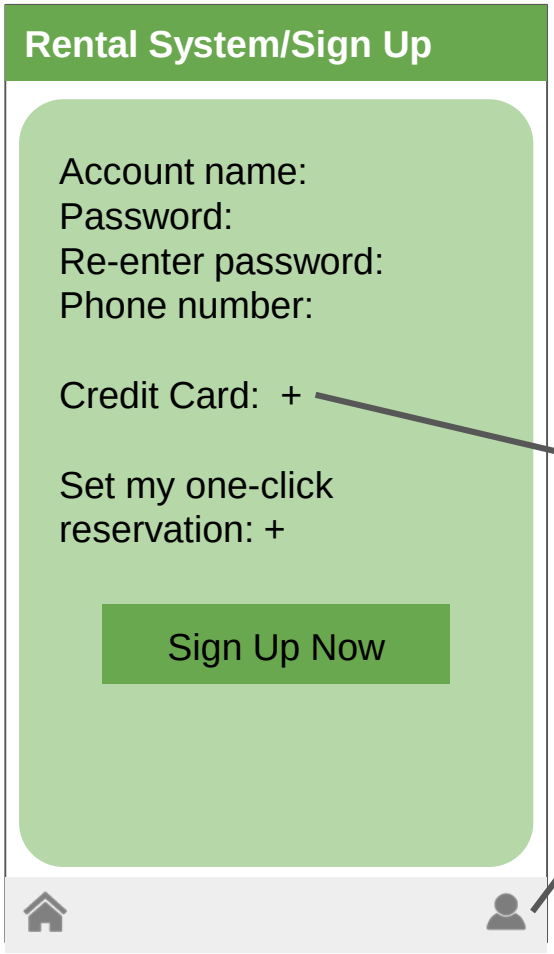
Get a **return code,** and the locker opens

Type in phone number, and send the code

Park Share System -- App System



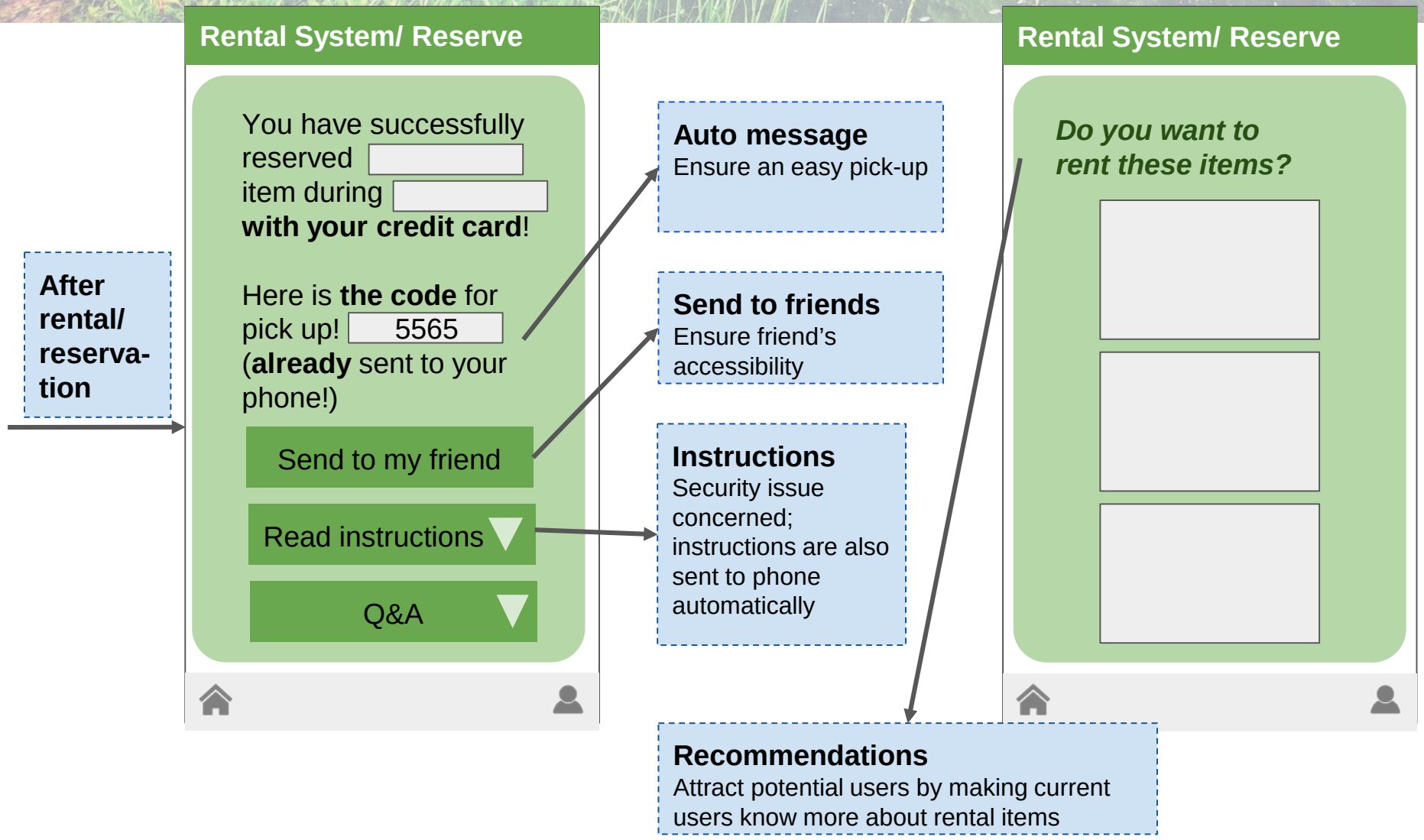
Park Share System -- App System



Credit Card
Need credit card for sign up; Use it when doing rental and reservation

Personal Panel
personal information like credit card and phone number are stored here

Park Share System -- App System



Physical Redesign

Playground equipment that lights up in the parks in the evening will create a cool buzz brand for the park and support activities in winter and evening when millenials want to go.

Playgrounds for all; swing sets that can be adjusted for height by adults and kids alike.

Warmup Campfire

Electric campfire to provide a cozy spots for millennials to sit down with friends.

Safety mechanism around the heated parts and automatic presence detection.

Physical Redesign

Selfie Spots

To create a social parks experience, selfie spots will photo booth style cameras will be placed.

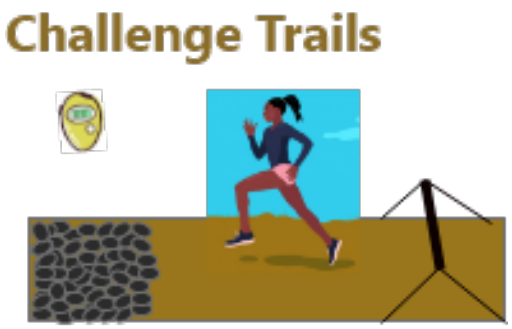
Individuals and groups of people like clicking pictures in the park near trees and flowers.

Tables numbered and organized in the parks for food delivery from nearby restaurants.

List of restaurants and their phone numbers will be at the table for park users to order food.

Food delivery tables

Physical Redesign



Challenge trails hosted in various parks for people to do intense physical activity without preparation.

Competing with self, others and scoreboard to keep trying the challenges multiple times.

Relax rooms provide a open view of the park along with the comfort of a home.

Millennials can sit back, read, charge their phones, listen to music even at parks.

Value proposition – many avenues to products

Social park experience for individuals and groups

- Food delivery tables, selfie spots and night lights around the park
- Allow artists to perform as well as display their art
- Electric fireplaces to combat the cold weather

Inclusive park play and amenities for all

- Adjustable swing sets and challenge trails for kids and adults
- Accessible bathroom facilities, rental lockers and equipments on demand

Challenge and fun activities as well as equipments available at the park

- Allow creation, submission and acceptance of challenge trails for users
- LCD screen showing the map and sighted events in the park.

Immersion in nature and creating eco-friendly awareness

- Relax shelters for a secluded and peaceful environment
- Trash can design to teach about biodegradable waste

Content driven parks app/website

- Park info including real time and upcoming events contributed by park users' and staff
- Online rental service, upcoming events, event registration from artist and event/activities stats happening in the park.

Next Steps

Scope the next phase based on the vision

- Identify which product concepts will be designed in detail

Define the details of the scoped design

- Storyboard to work out the details of the vision
- Create preliminary User Environment Design to structure the system
- Identify interaction design patterns for an initial user interface
- Create initial prototype in paper for customer testing

Validate concept, function and interaction design with paper prototype interviews with customers

- Iterate in 2-3 rounds of paper prototype testing
- Interpret user feedback from prototype interviews
- Make changes based on the interpretations

Create an online click-through prototype

- Test the interaction and visual design in online format
- Iterate the design with 2 rounds of users to ensure overall acceptance

Document the tested design for transition to development

Thank you!
Q&A