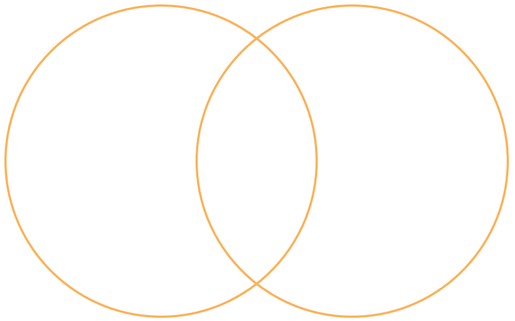
Ableaccess Accessibility app

Mobile App Case Study



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The Problem

Finding accessible places isn't just inconvenient—it's unreliable. Existing platforms often provide incomplete, outdated, or misleading accessibility information.

The Opportunity

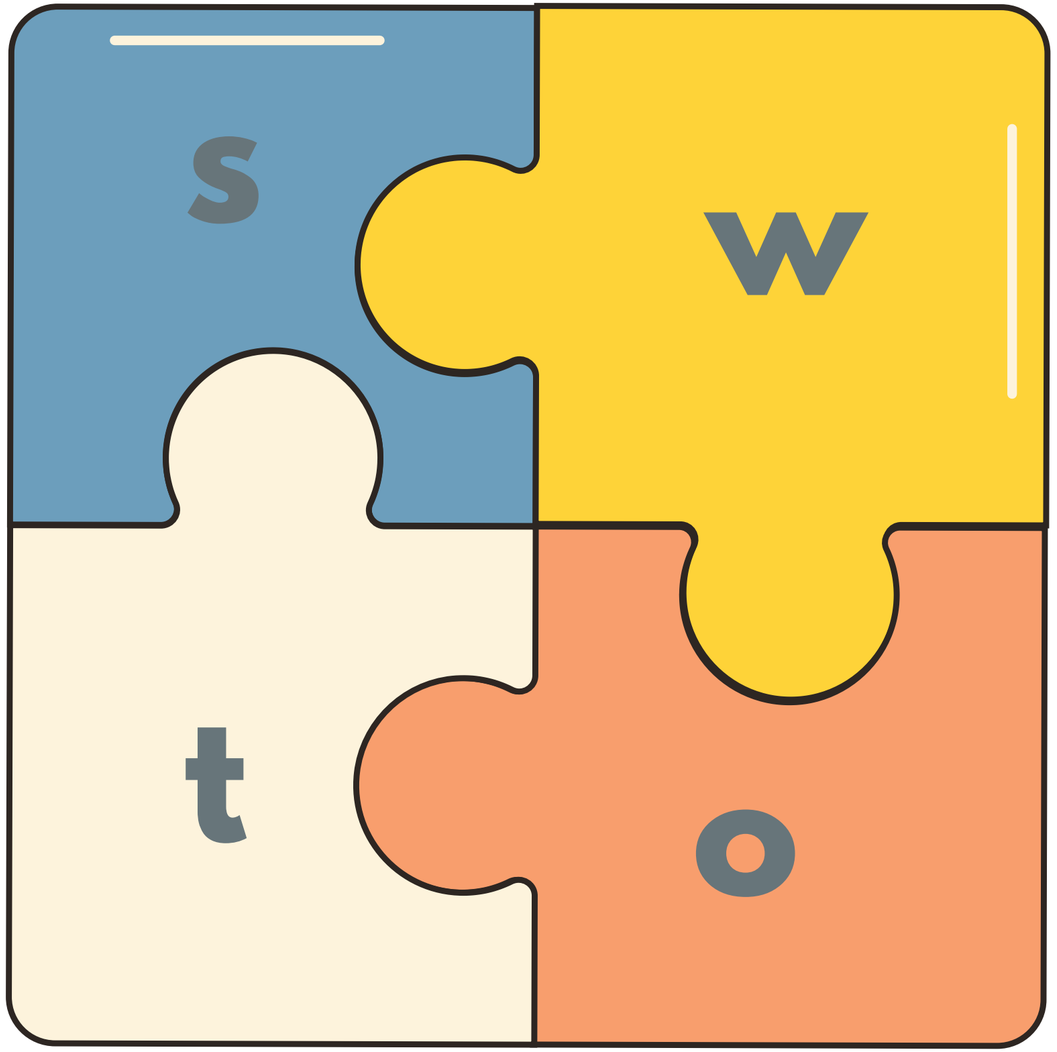
Create a mobile app that allows users to discover, verify, and share accessibility information about public spaces.

Strengths

This app is differentiated by its multi-dimensional approach to accessibility, addressing not only physical needs but also sensory, cognitive, and communication considerations. This broader lens reflects how people actually experience spaces in real life, particularly caregivers and families who require more detailed, reliable information.

Threats

Large-scale platforms such as Google Maps present a significant competitive threat due to their established user base and ability to expand accessibility features. Existing niche platforms like AccessNow and Wheelmap may also evolve to incorporate broader accessibility metrics.



Weaknesses

As a new platform, the app will initially face challenges related to limited user-generated data and brand awareness, which are critical for adoption in location-based services. Reliance on community contributions may also impact the consistency and accuracy of information in the early stages.

Opportunities

There is a clear market opportunity to address the gap between basic accessibility information and the holistic needs of users navigating public spaces. The app can position itself as a trusted resource for individuals and families seeking confidence and predictability when making decisions about where to go.

01

Google Maps

General navigation & broad place discovery

(+)Massive scale, and global coverage.

(-)Accessibility info is often secondary, inconsistent, and buried; relies on general, subjective user reviews.

02

Wheelmap

Mobility (wheelchair) accessibility

(+)Simple, color-coded tagging system ("yes/no/ partial") makes data entry very fast

(-)Lacks depth for other disabilities.

03

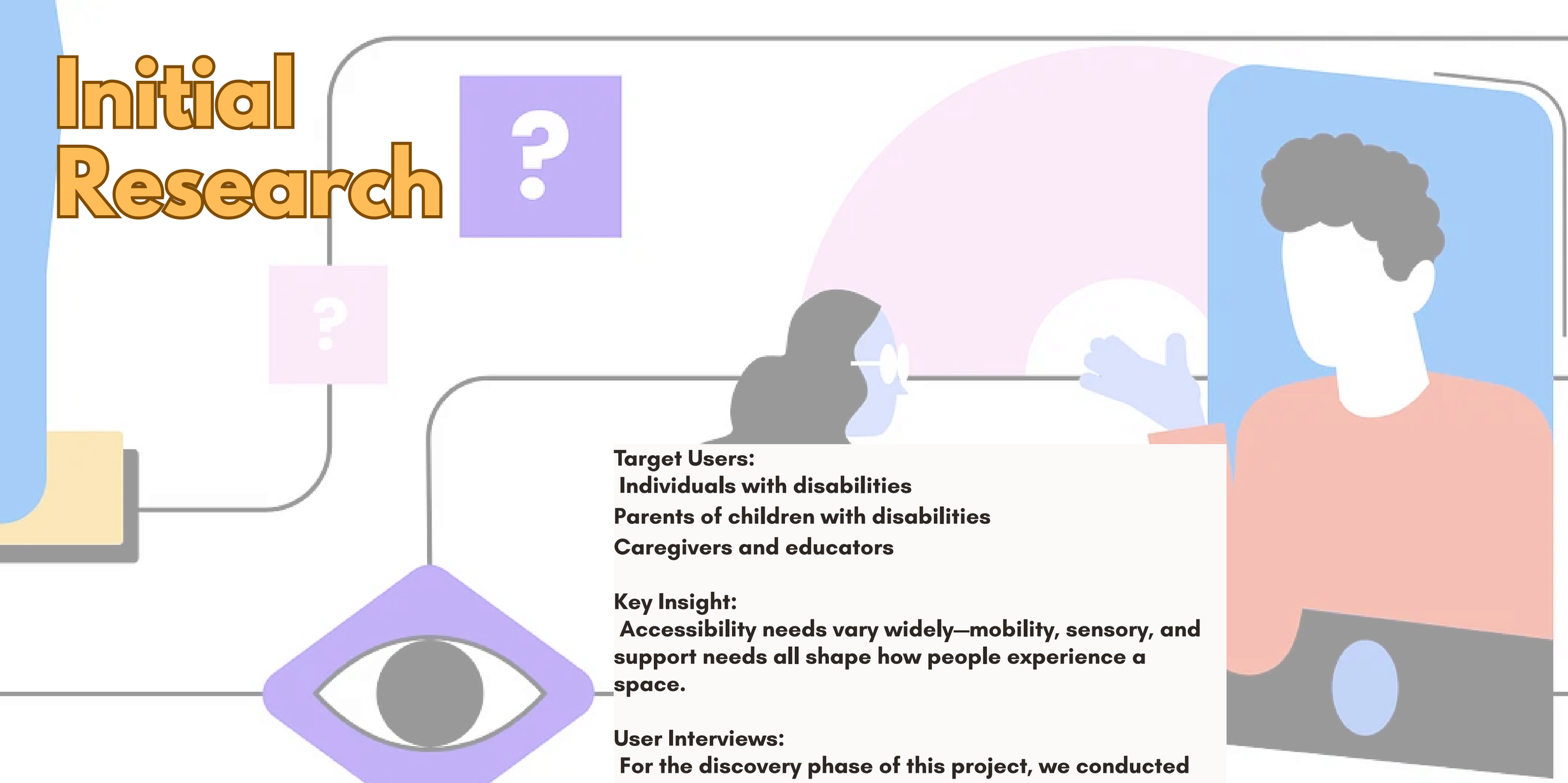
AccessNow

Broad accessibility mapping

(+)Excellent UI/UX; focuses on inclusive, descriptive tagging rather than just "yes/no."

(-)Like all crowdsourced platforms, it faces a slow start problem in less populated areas.

Initial Research



Target Users:
Individuals with disabilities
Parents of children with disabilities
Caregivers and educators

Key Insight:
Accessibility needs vary widely—mobility, sensory, and support needs all shape how people experience a space.

User Interviews:
For the discovery phase of this project, we conducted four user interviews in order to get a better understanding of the problem.

Key Findings:

1. Information is unreliable
"Photos don't match reality. I don't trust what I see online."

2. Lack of detailed accessibility info.
Users need specifics:

- Door widths
- Noise levels
- Lighting
- Bathroom access

3. Extra effort is required

- Calling locations
- Visiting in advance
- Asking others

4. Planning is stressful
Accessibility uncertainty creates anxiety before leaving home.

Problem Statement

Users with disabilities and mobility limitations are often struggling on finding reliable, detailed and trustworthy information for a public location. Including restaurants, parks, museums, entertainment venues as well in public community spaces. Users must rely on phone calls, website information, and personal recommendations. It causes a problem because calling in and doing research online is time consuming and could lead to users not attending these locations and events.

User Stories Examples

- As a user with accessibility needs, I want to see locations that are verified as accessible so that I can trust the information provided.
- As a parent of a child with a disability, I want to find venues that offer certified sensory-friendly experiences so that I know the environment is designed to be inclusive.
- As a user of the app, I want to see community ratings for accessibility so that I can choose places that other users recommend.

User Personas

“Accessibility isn’t just about getting through the door.It’s about whether my child can actually enjoy being there”

Core Profile

Name: Catherine Williams

Age and gender: 45, Female

Job: Elementary School Administration

Family: Married with two children, including a 12-year-old son with autism and sensory sensitivities

Your paragraph text

Background

Bio:
Catherine is a working parent who balances her job, household responsibilities, and advocating for her son’s needs. Her son, Mateo, has autism and sensory processing challenges. While he is mobile, crowded spaces, loud noises, and bright lights can quickly overwhelm him.

Lifestyle and values:
Catherine wants her family to participate in everyday activities—restaurants, parks, museums, and community events—but planning outings often requires extensive research to make sure the environment will work for Mateo.

Audience Insights

Goals:

- **Find accurate accessibility informations about places before visiting.**
- **Plan family outings that are safe and comfortable for her child.**
- **Avoid stressful situations that could trigger sensory overload**
  -

Pain Points:

- **Most websites only list wheelchair accessibility, not sensory details**
- **Having to call venues to ask basic accessibility questions**
- **Inconsistent or outdated information online**

User Personas

Catherine Rivers

A single mother of 2; working for the disabled while having a disability.

Age: 49
Occupation: DSP
Location: New York

Bio

Working as a Direct Support Professional Catherine is dedicated to caring for others, she brings both professional expertise and personal lived experience to her role. Because she has chronic arthritis in her left knee, she uses a cane to stay mobile and independent.
To get around efficiently, she's a user of accessibility rating apps, making any destination—whether for work or leisure—is truly barrier-free.

Frustrations:

- **Time-Consuming-** If the app requires too many steps to submit a review users may feel discouraged from contributing
- **Outdated information-** Accessibility features at locations can change. If reviews aren't updated often, users may arrive somewhere expecting accessibility that isn't actually available.
- **Lack of Details-** Some apps only provide general ratings without details about particular needs such as bathroom accessibility doorway width, parking, or elevator access.

Goals:

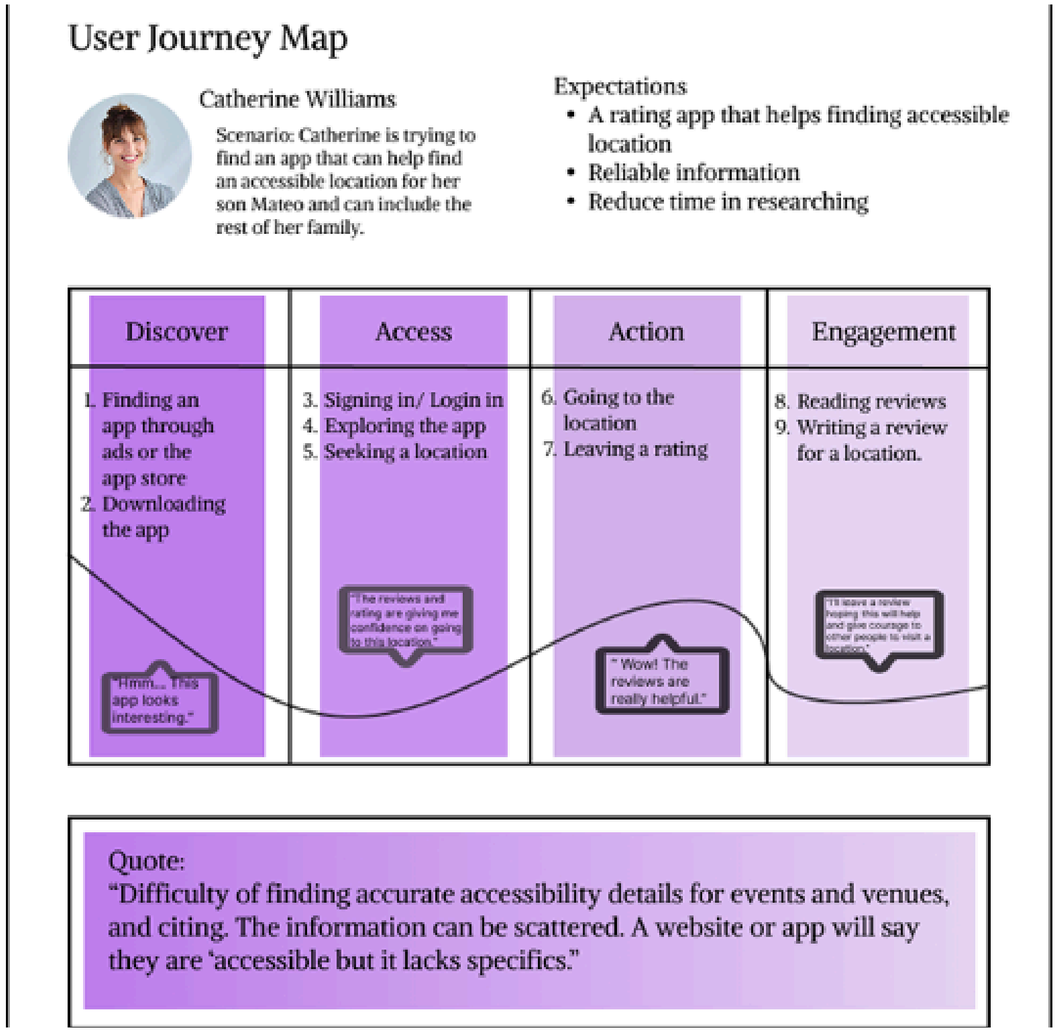
- Ensure users can easily find accurate details about accessibility features such as ramps, elevators, accessible bathrooms, and parking.

Quotes:

"Accessible is often used as a catch-all term"

"The information can be scattered. A website or app will say they are "accessible," but it lacks specifics—does that mean a ramp, an elevator, or just a ground floor?"

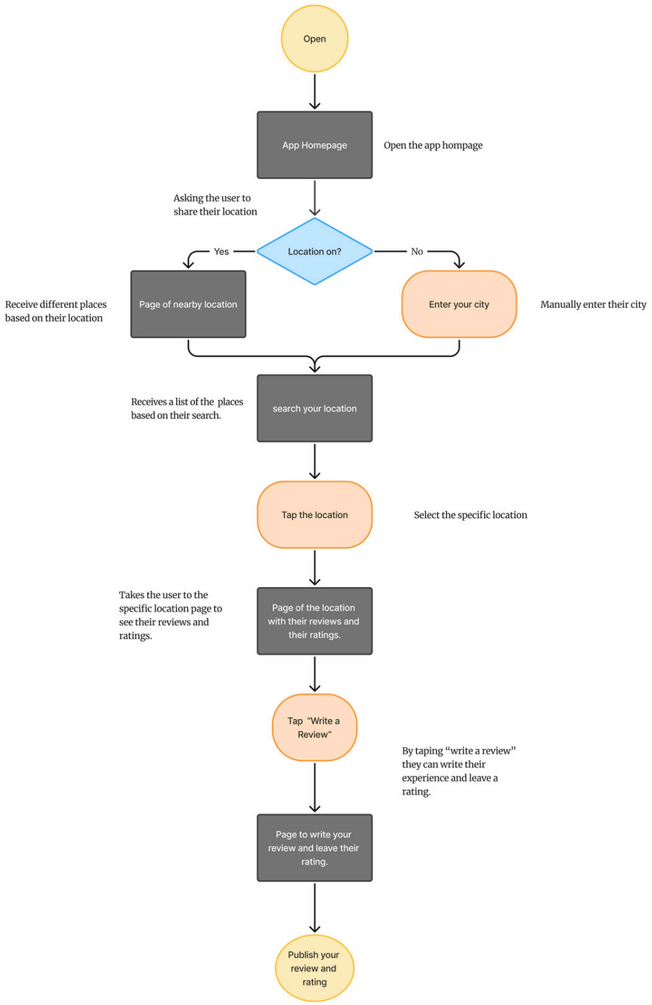
User Journey Map



The user Journey is a visual representation on how a user takes to accomplish their goal.

In this example , Catherine Williams process is firstly in discovering and downloading the app. After signing in, she can start to explore the app and can start searching for a location. Followed by her visiting the location. After visiting, she engages by writing and leaving a review of her experience at the location.

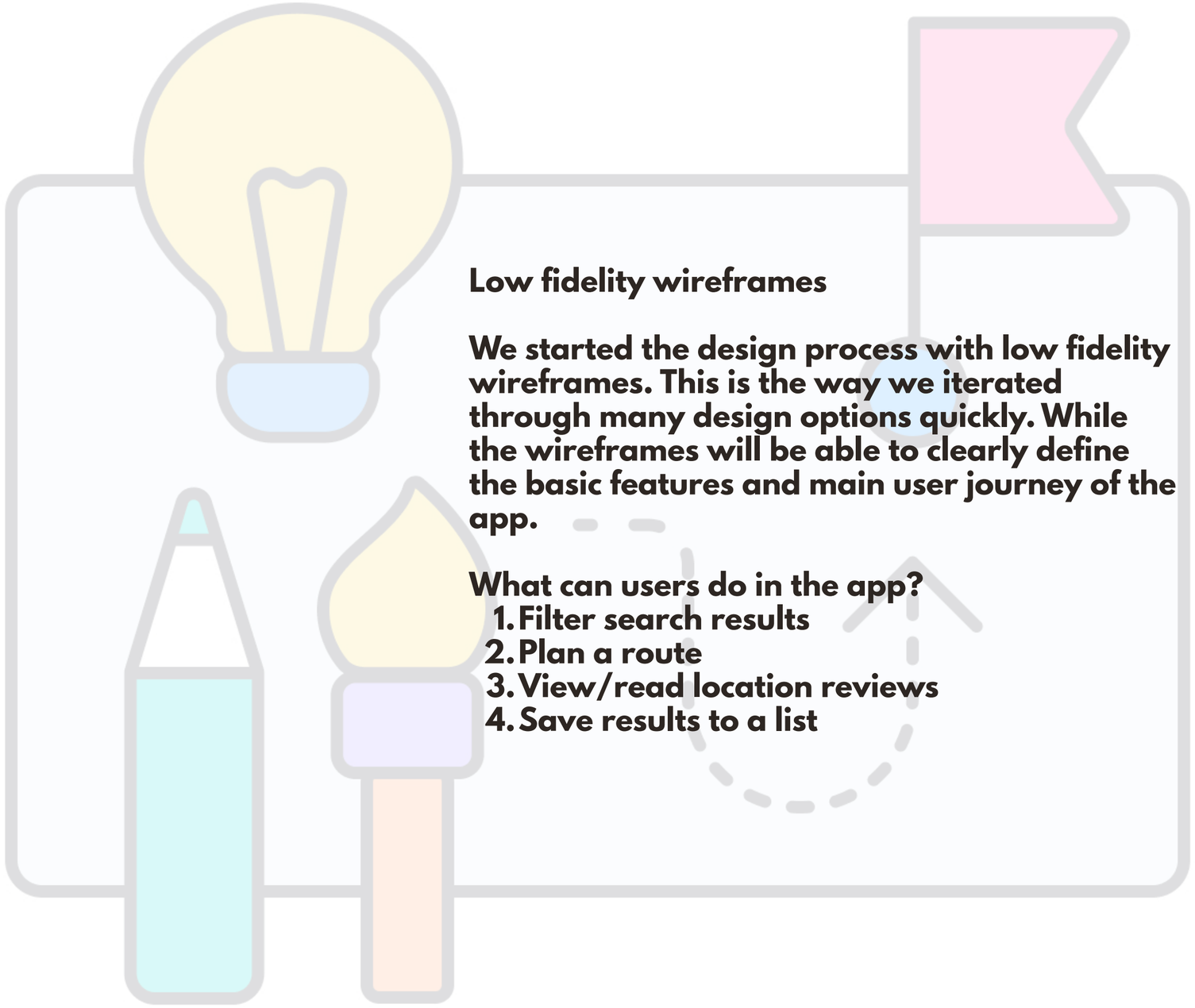
User Flow



User flow is the mapping on what users can take through the app.

When opening the app, it directed to the dashboard. Where it can be asked for their specific location. Having the option of accessing their location or manually input their city name. After exploring the app, they can search a location. By clicking the specific loaction, they now have acces to thier reviews and ratings. By tapping the review, they can leave a rating and their review and can be published.

Design Phase



Low fidelity wireframes

We started the design process with low fidelity wireframes. This is the way we iterated through many design options quickly. While the wireframes will be able to clearly define the basic features and main user journey of the app.

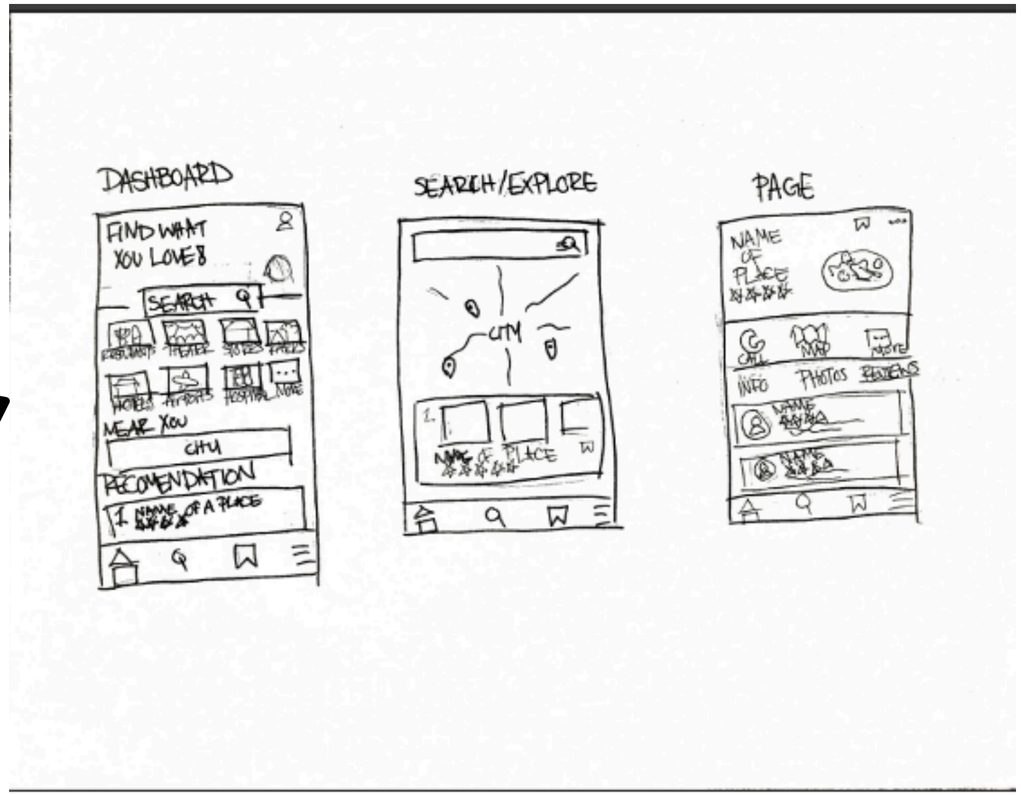
What can users do in the app?

1. Filter search results
2. Plan a route
3. View/read location reviews
4. Save results to a list

Crazy 8 sketch

A sketch of our dashboard ideas. We wanted to include some categories, and some recommendations of places to visit.

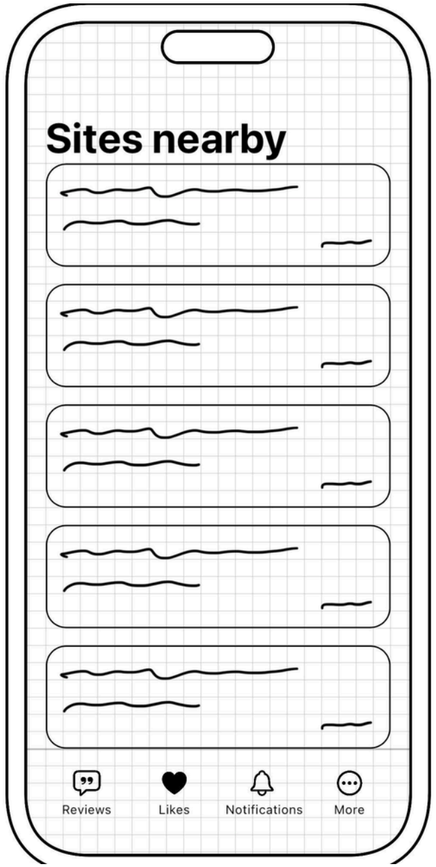
Solution Sketch



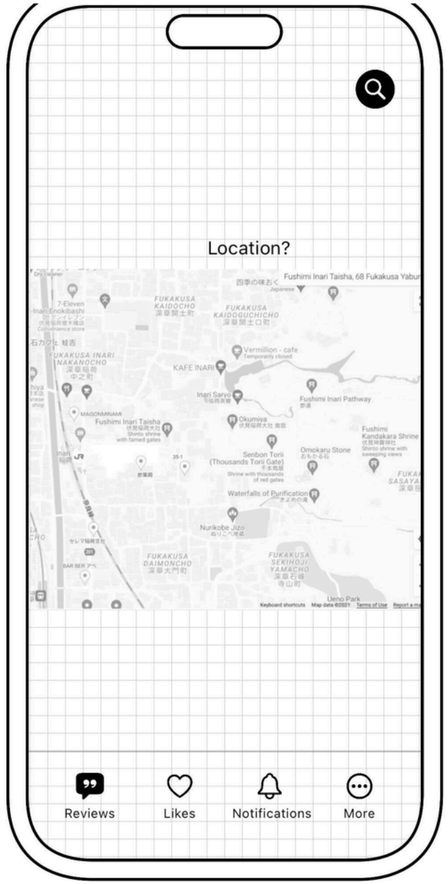
In our solution sketch, we wanted to include a page where they can search and explore new location. As well in including a sketch on our idea how the page of a location would look like with the reviews.

Low Fidelity Wireframes

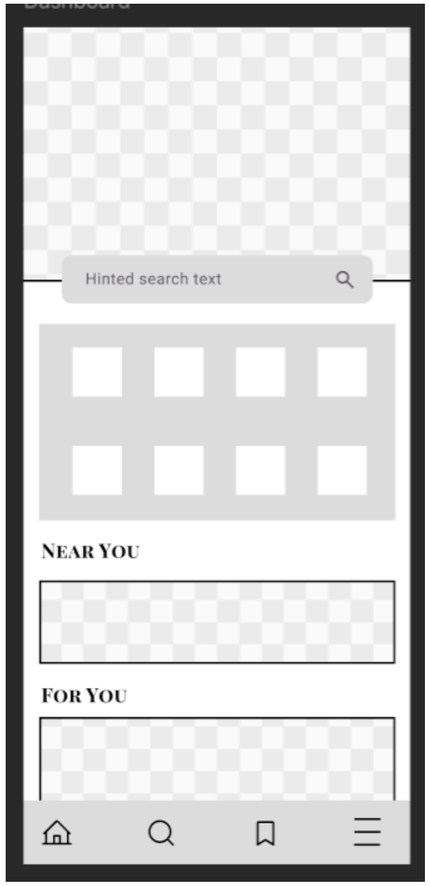
Nearby Location Page



Map Page

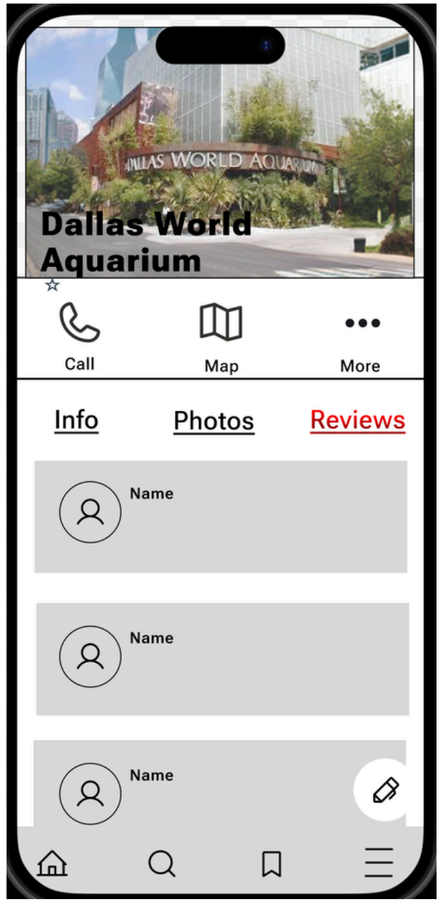


Dashboard

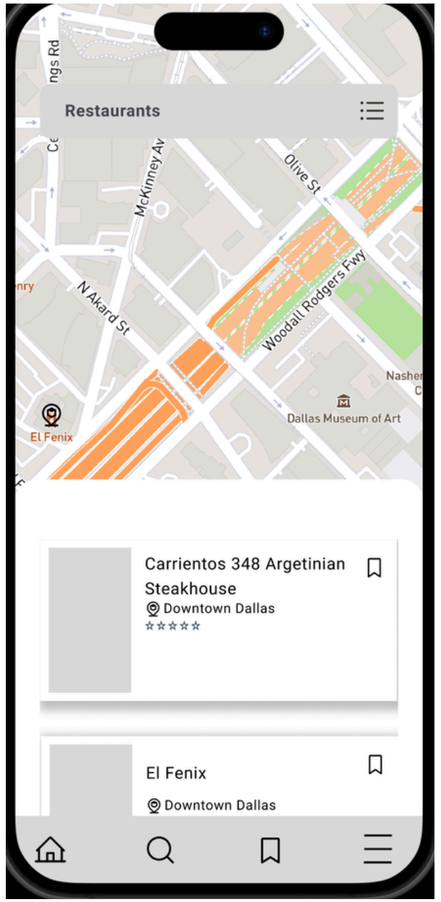


Mid Fidelity Wireframes

Location Page



Filtered Page



Search/Explore Page