



# Let's Visit Harford County



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INST 710, Fall 2018

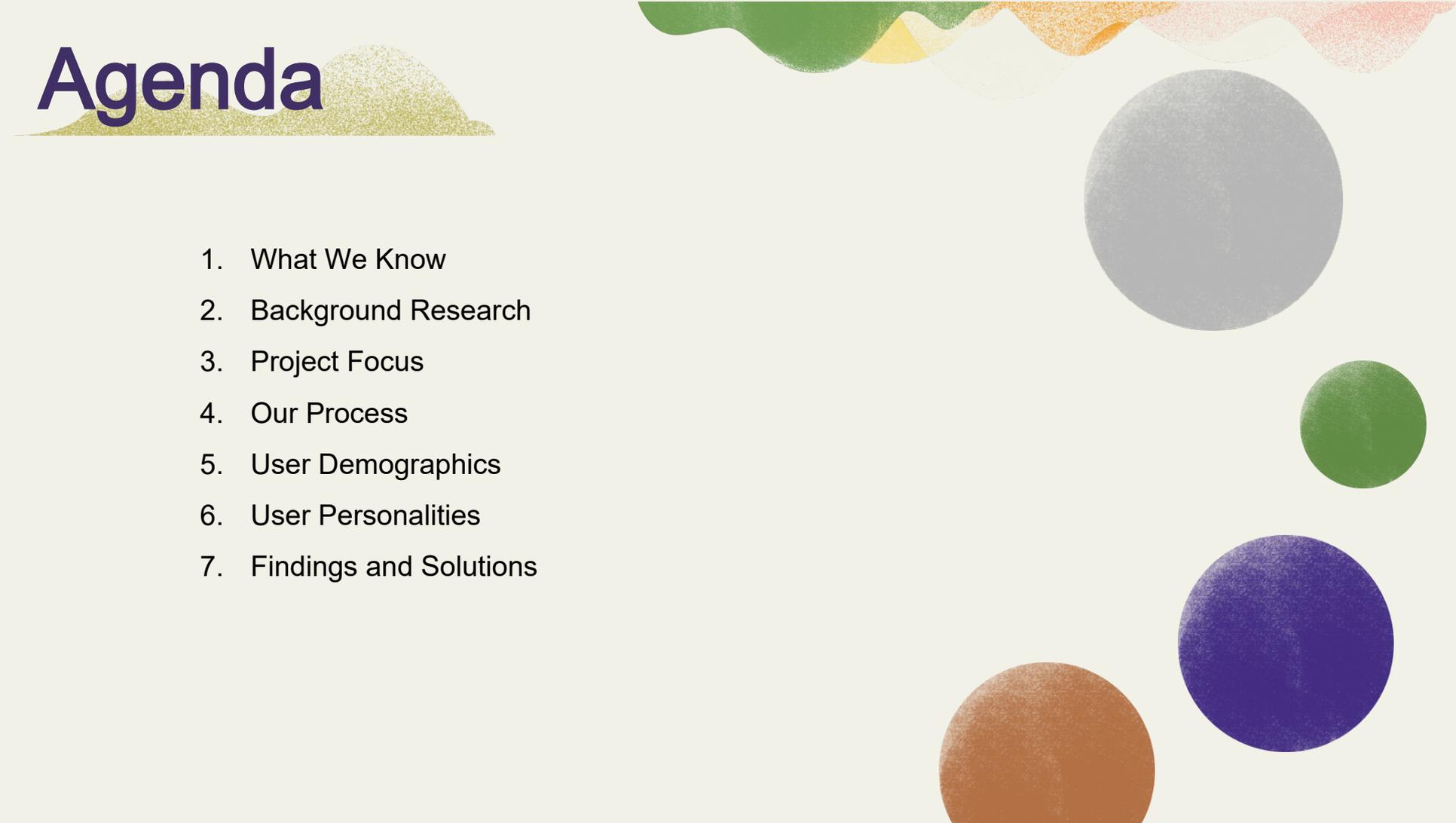
This project supervised by Bill Kules,  
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Sustainability  
An Initiative of the National Center for Smart Growth



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# Agenda



1. What We Know
2. Background Research
3. Project Focus
4. Our Process
5. User Demographics
6. User Personalities
7. Findings and Solutions

# What We Know

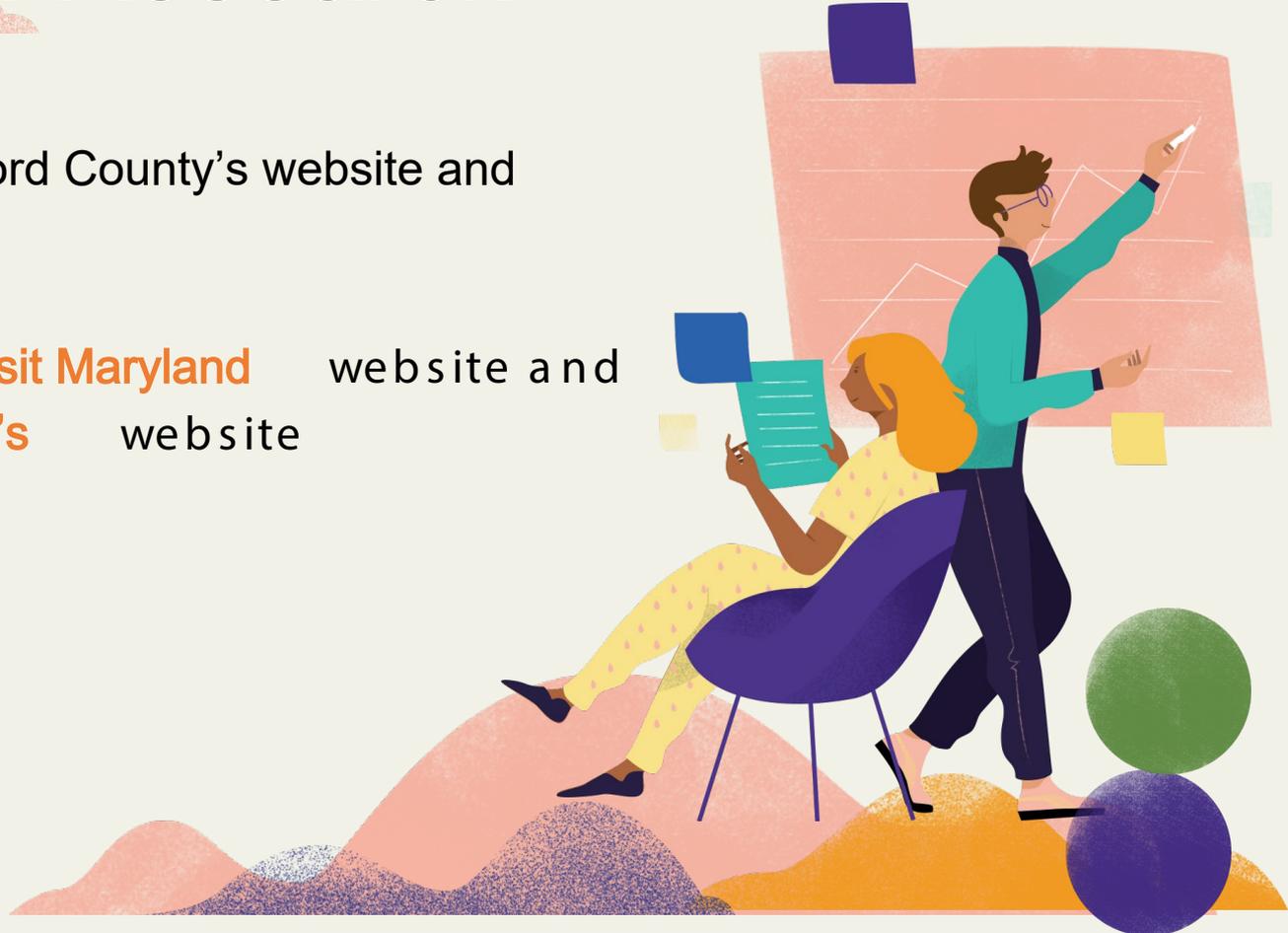
- Tourism generates **significant revenue** for the county
- The county partnered with 30+ not-for-profit companies to enhance the tourism ecosystem by funding **\$6 million over 4 years**
- Harford County has a **low crime rate**, bolstering tourism environment
- Online communities rate Harford County as an **average place to visit**. The consensus of online communities is that Harford county is a good place to start a family



# Background Research

We analyzed the Harford County's website and mobile application

We looked at the **Visit Maryland** website and **Prince George County's** website



# Project Focus

Understand tourist **expectations** and **behavior**

Understand how to help people use **Harford County's digital services**

**Attract tourists** to Harford County

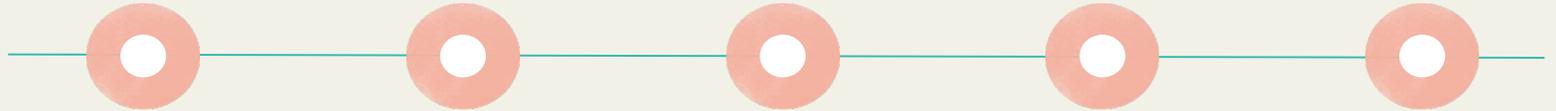


# Our Process

Background Research

Make sense of findings

Product concepts



Contextual inquiry

Visioning



# User Demographic



9 Contextual Inquiries and 1 phone interview

# of respondents	status	age	gender
1	Single	20-30	Female
2	Married/In relationship	20-30	Male
1	With children	40-50	Female
1	With children	60-70	Male
1	Without children	30-40	Female
2	Single	30-40	Female
2	With kids	30-40	Female and Male

# User Personalities



1. Family Traveler
2. Adventurous Traveler
3. Business Traveler
4. Event Chaser
5. Cultural Sponge
6. Nature Lover
7. Review Seeker
8. Economic Planner
9. Tech Savvy



# Family Traveler

*“ I enjoy spending quality time with my family and making sure that everyone is having fun ”*

*“ I make sure that the kids also have fun by choosing a place that is kid -friendly”*

## Give me

Safe and kid -appropriate places for a joyful and enriching experience with my children

An option to share desired events with my family members

A planning tool so that my family is involved in the planning process

## What influences me

- ✓ Family consensus
- ✓ Budget-friendly
- ✓ Family-friendly places
- ✗ Bad reviews
- ✗ More than \$100 per night

# Adventurous Traveler

*“I’m an adventurous solo traveler seeking the adrenaline rush”*

*“I am a regular hiker and enjoy exploring new trails”*



## Give me

New and exciting hiking trails for me to explore with my hiking buddies

Sporting events suggestions on social media so that I can view and share it with my hiking troupe

places of attraction like baseball stadiums and golf courses in the website

## What influences me

- ✓ Recommended trips
- ✓ Online guide
- ✗ No reviews

# Business Traveler

*“ I travel predominantly for business purposes; I don’t always get time to visit tourist attractions”*

*“ If I happen to have some free time, I explore the local places”*

*“ My company books hotels and lodging for overnight stay”*

## Give me

Nearby tourist attractions to explore in a short period of time

suggestions that keep distance in mind

## What influences me

- ✓ Nearby attractions
- ✓ Ratings
- ✓ Personalized planner
- ✗ Bad reviews



# Event Chaser

*“ I always keep an eye out for events on social media.”*

*“ I look for specific events based on my interests .”*

## Give me

Better advertising of events on social media and option to share events with friends

Better filters so that I can easily find events based on my preferences

## What influences me

- ✓ Social media advertisements
- ✗ Bad reviews
- ✗ Boring images
- ✗ Less information



# Cultural Sponge

*“ I love exploring historical places and museums while I’m on vacation, since it gives me the old -world charm”*

*“ I like to discover the night life of a place”*

*“ I want to soak in the culture of a place by interacting with locals and visiting places that have a story to tell”*

## Give me

A curated list of historical places and museums that I’d be interested in visiting

Restaurant suggestions that serve local cuisine and promote local culture

A list of ‘happening’ night life places and nearby lodging options to stay the night

## What influences me

- ✓ Local cuisine
- ✓ Social media advertisements
- ✓ Recommended trips



## Nature Lover

*“I am an avid hiker and love to explore new trails.”*

*“I often go to the woods because nature intrigues me.”*

Give me

An in -depth list of ‘nature-y’ places to visit

What influences me

- ✓ Online guide
- ✓ Recommended trips
- ✗ Bad ratings

# Review seeker



*“I always rely on reviews and recommendations of a place or an eatery while I’m planning.”*

*“ I trust reviews from friends and family more than anything else.”*

*“ I also plan my trips and visits to restaurants based on ratings given by other users who have previously visited the place, on social media and travel websites.”*

## Give me

Reviews from travelers and travel websites like Expedia and Tripadvisor to help me make a choice

Priority to the reviews of my friends and family

Reviews of restaurants within the website itself for convenience

## What influences me

- ✓ Recommended trips
- ✓ Online recommendations
- ✓ Reviews from friends
- ✗ Bad reviews
- ✗ No ratings

# Economic Planner



*“ I prefer budget -friendly places over expensive places.”*

*“ At the same time, I do not want to sacrifice comfort for money.”*

*“ I’m willing to compromise on things like complementary breakfast if I can get accommodation for a lower price.”*

## Give me

The best deals you can offer!

Good deals that excite me and are an incentive for return to the place

Additional promotional offers and deals on the app, especially if I’m expected to download it

## What influences me

- ✓ Deals on social media
- ✓ Free Wifi, breakfast at hotels
- ✓ Budget-friendly suggestions
- ✓ Coupons
- ✗ Extravagant prices



## Tech Savvy

*“ I trust Google maps for navigation.”*

*“ I check out hotels and restaurants on Expedia, Hot Wire and Kayak to compare prices and find good deals.”*

*“ I rely on different online platforms to communicate while planning a trip.”*

## Give me

Yelp reviews of restaurants in the website

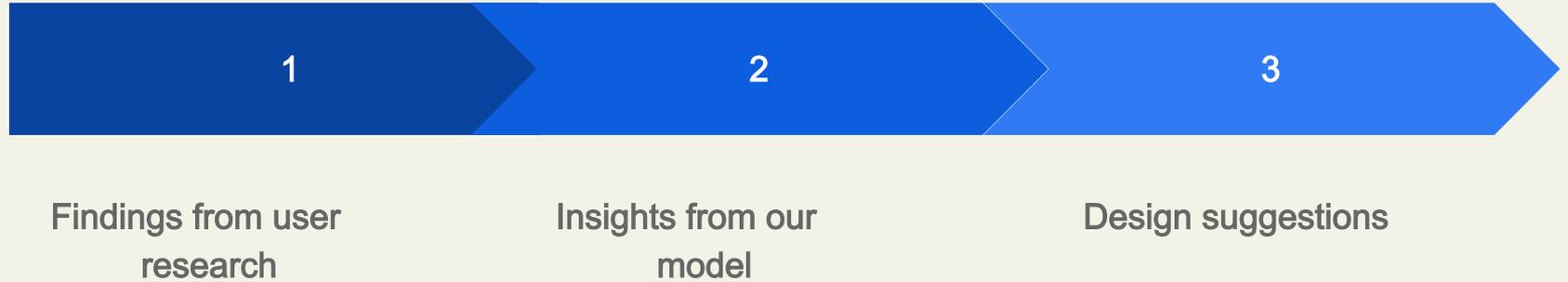
Google Maps in the website and app

The ability to make personalized lists and track places to visit when I discover places and events

## What influences me

- ✓ Online recommendations
- ✓ Social media advertisements
- ✓ Personalized event tracker
- ✗ Dead links
- ✗ Drill downs
- ✗ Hidden information

# Findings and Solutions



Exclusive deals to  
incentivize mobile app  
usage

1

Sharing and  
planning events  
together with  
friends/family

6

Customized trip  
planner

2

# Product Concepts

Conversational  
user experience -  
chatbot

5

Suggest most  
traveled tourist  
attractions, such  
as trail routes

3

4

Display reviews  
of places and  
restaurants

*4 out of 10 people didn't want to use up space in their phone on an app for one time use*

-  I don't want to download the app
-  He wouldn't really download the app if he didn't live in Harford County



*Hook users with 'App only' deals to promote usage*



*Provide hybrid app, which doesn't consume much space in the user's phone*

*Not everyone is interested in everything. Provide them with **interactive filters**. Almost all users wanted better filters.*

 I want to find information easily and quickly

 I want intuitive and interactive filters to get better results



***Provide better filters to enable users to obtain results***



***Provide an interactive chatbot that helps users find information easily***



Events

Plan

Stay

Dine

### Christmas Parade 25th December 2018

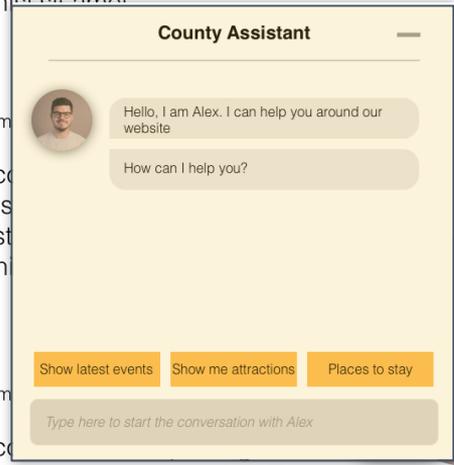
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# Hi-fi screens

A chatbot is an easy "way in" to help users find what they want

*People google everything. Have Visit Harford County on top of the search results. 7 out of 10 users said they use Google for all their searches*

■ I depend on Google to look for information about places



*The webpage has to be Search Engine Optimized (SEO)*



*When people search popular County events, the 'Visit Harford' link should be displayed at the top*

*Reviews make or break; so, no reviews is a deal breaker.*

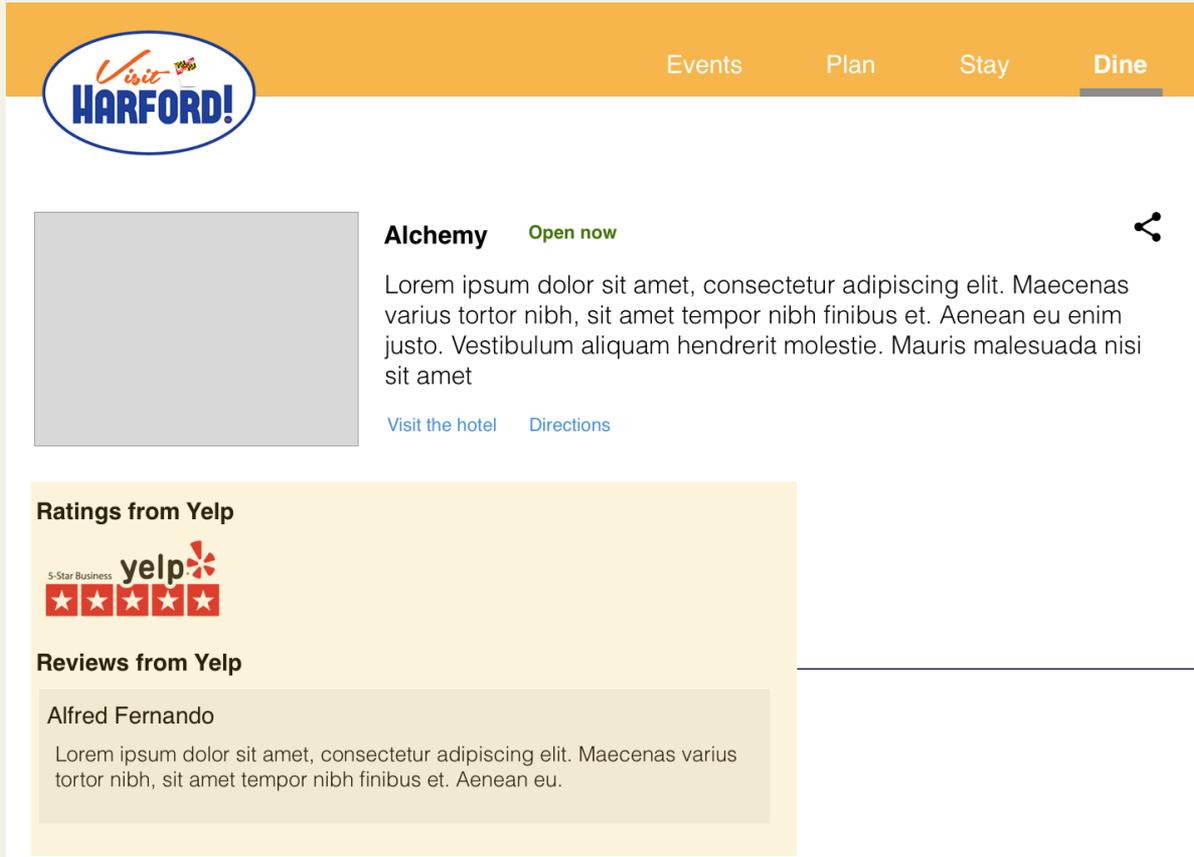
-  I rely on recommendations while looking for accommodation
-  I trust reviews of a place from a person I know
-  I check both online and offline platforms for reviews



*Show people what visitors feel about Harford county. Highlight reviews from friends and family*

*Include Yelp reviews while displaying restaurants*

# Hi-fi screens



Based on research, we found people rely on ratings and reviews. Including them under each restaurant helps users make informed decisions.

*Show them what's happening in the County. **Promoting events** is as important as organizing events*

 I feel Harford County has good events, but they should be promoted well

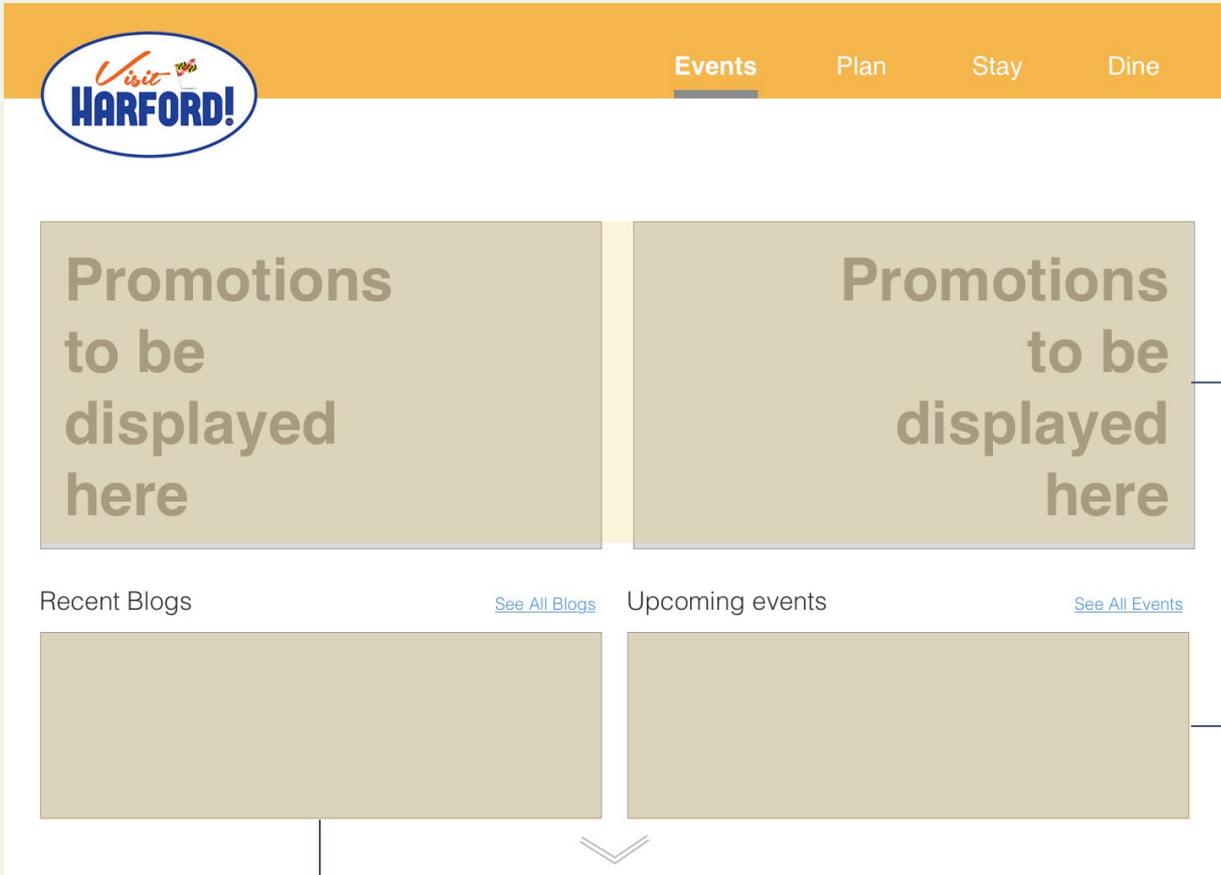


***Landing page can be better used for promotions***



***Promote events using both online and offline platforms***

# Hi-fi screens



Use the landing page to promote the activities here

Upcoming events will help users to plan their trips ahead of time.

Promote the County through blogs

*5 of out 10 people said they  
want to visit the **Breweries  
and Vineyards***

 I want to visit Harford County for specific places

 Vineyards and breweries interest me



***Promote local breweries and  
wineries on a large scale***



*7 out of 10 users said they like hiking  
and indulging in water activities*

-  I like to engage in different activities on a vacation
-  I like to visit beaches
-  I like to visit places where I can hike
-  I am attracted toward events in the Bay area

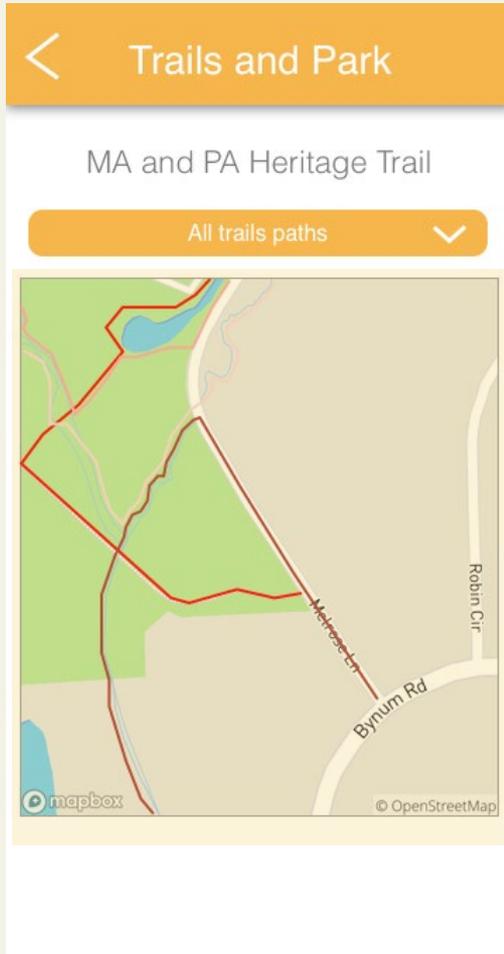


*Create and promote trekking events.*



*Make Harford County known for water -based activities and the Bay area*

# Hi-fi screens



Sorting trails by difficulty level on a mobile app will help users decide what trail they want to hike. The trail difficulty can be determined user feedback

*5 out of 10 users said they like the  
'Recommended trips' option*

 I liked the recommended trips feature on the website



*Devise a 'Trip Recommender'  
feature based on user preferences*





Events

Plan

Stay

Dine

# Hi-fi screens

Personalize your trip

Your Interests

Trekking

Breweries

Walking tours

Vineyards

Water based Events

Dining

Parks and Trails

Beaches

Days of stay

Number of people

Mode of Transport

Accommodation

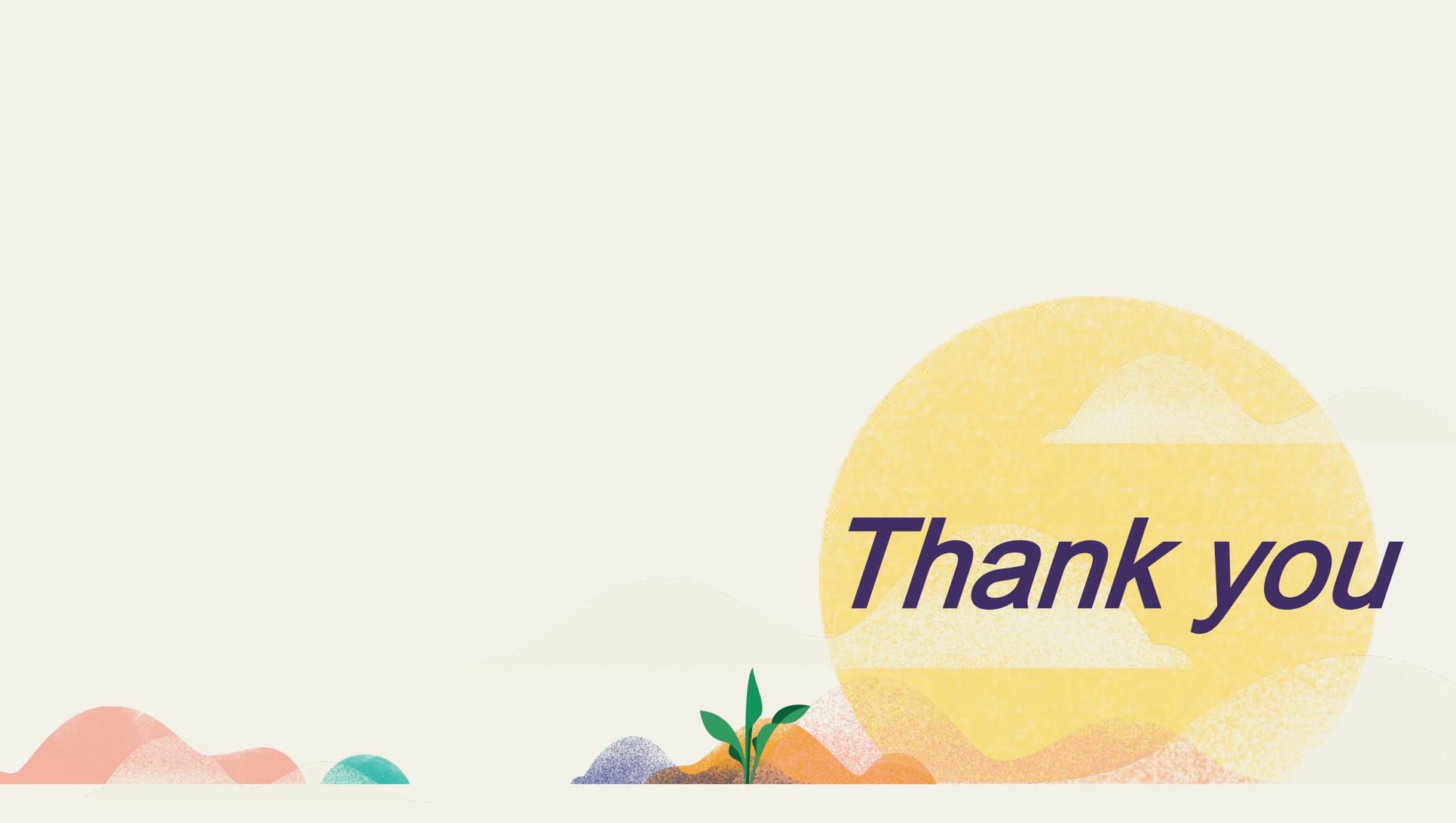
Generate trip

Ask users to fill out a questionnaire on their interests to devise personalized trips.

# To Summarize...



- Add a section for family -friendly trip ideas
- Have special offers for users who download the app
- Provide a customized trip recommender and the option to share it
- Partner with Expedia to promote places in Harford County
- Promote local traditions to engage with tourists
- Reorganize information to help users find it quickly and easily
- Enable sharing and planning events with friends and family
- Use a hybrid app instead a native app

A stylized landscape illustration. On the right, a large, textured yellow sun is partially obscured by a white, cloud-like shape. Below the sun, there are colorful, rounded hills in shades of orange, red, and purple. A small green plant with three leaves grows from the center of these hills. On the left side of the image, there are more colorful hills in shades of red and green. The background is a light, neutral color with faint, wavy lines suggesting a horizon or clouds.

***Thank you***