

Dog Days

How our team developed a novel application for people to explore new dog parks while feeling, connected, informed, and adventurous.



Overview

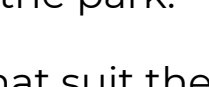
The Covid-19 Pandemic led to a dramatic increase in dog adoption rates. People had a need for safe outdoor activities and safe socialization. The [Washington Post](#) reported that 2020 saw rates doubling across the country and some local shelters' adoption rates increase up to 40%.



This phenomenon was paired with a significant increase of public and private spending being put toward funding new dog park development. These trends led the team to decide on building a novel application that answers the question:

how might we improve the dog park experience by enabling owners to feel connected, informed, and adventurous?

Solution



An exciting new application for people to explore new dog parks with their pups, where they can provide feedback and live updates on the conditions of the park.

Users will be able to discover new adventures that suit their specific needs and contribute to their local community.

AR capabilities encourage connection with other dog lovers through games and interaction, all while earning points to keep the good times rolling!

My Role

Within this project, my primary responsibilities consisted of:

- Market / Current Environment research
- Interactive and visual design for initial onboarding
- Usability testing

Research

The team conducted a series of interviews and surveys with potential users to better understand how people feel toward dog parks and how to help brainstorm potential solutions.



Interview Quotes

“Benefit from a type of service or specific location to help socialize anxious dogs specifically”

“Beneficial to know where I can or can’t bring my own dog. Some places allow only service dogs, others allow any and all.”

“I’d love to start going to dog parks, I just don’t know how to find ones close to me”



Interview Insights

Dog parks are great in theory, but not in practice

People believe that more bad than good has come from their dog park experiences

Sanitization, unpredictable dogs, and lazy owners lead to less than ideal experiences



Surveys

39% of individuals feel that parks allow their dogs to socialize with other dogs

60% of people believe parks give dogs a safe space to exercise

60% of people believe dog parks give owners a chance to be physically active with their pet.



User Stories

“As a pet owner, I want to easily post reviews of dog-friendly restaurants so that I can share with other users.”

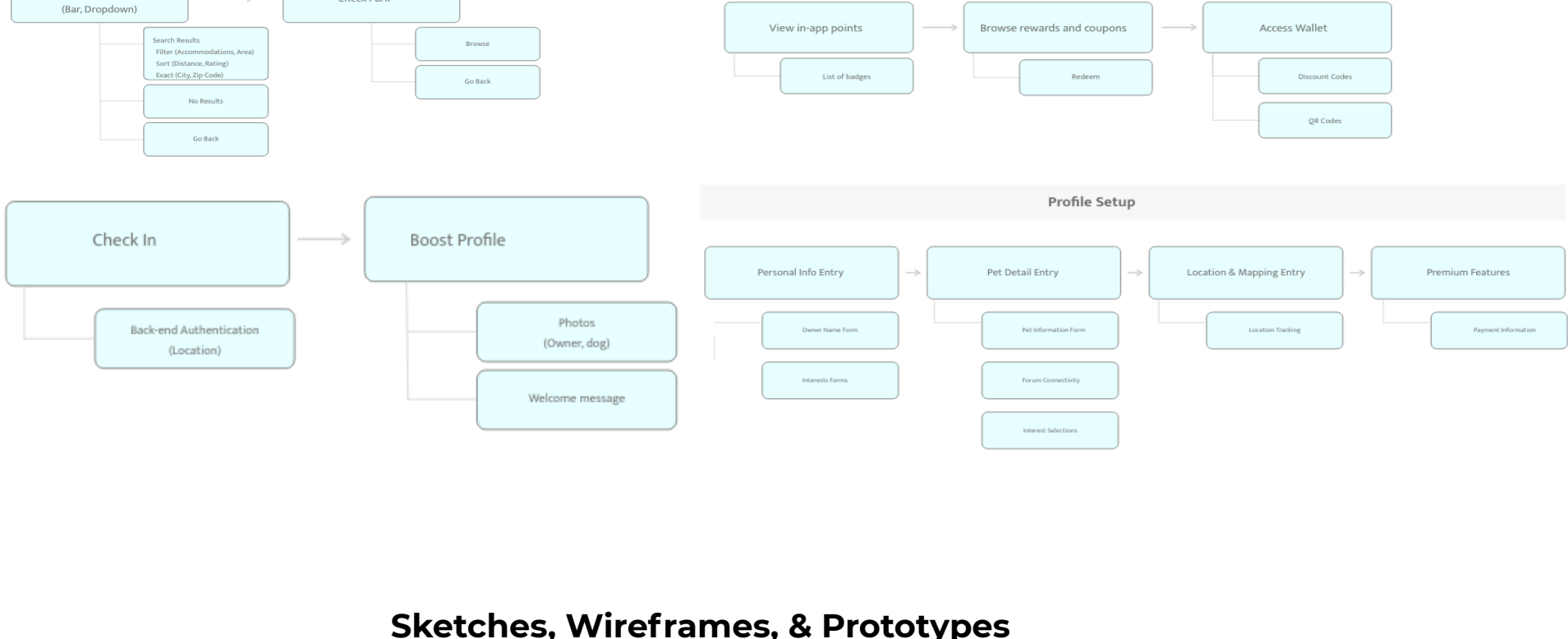
“As someone new to a city I want to be able to filter local dog parks by distance, so that I can explore with my dog.”

“As a social dog owner, I want notifications of where other dog owners are in my area, so I can expand my social network of dog-owners.”

Design Process

Workflows

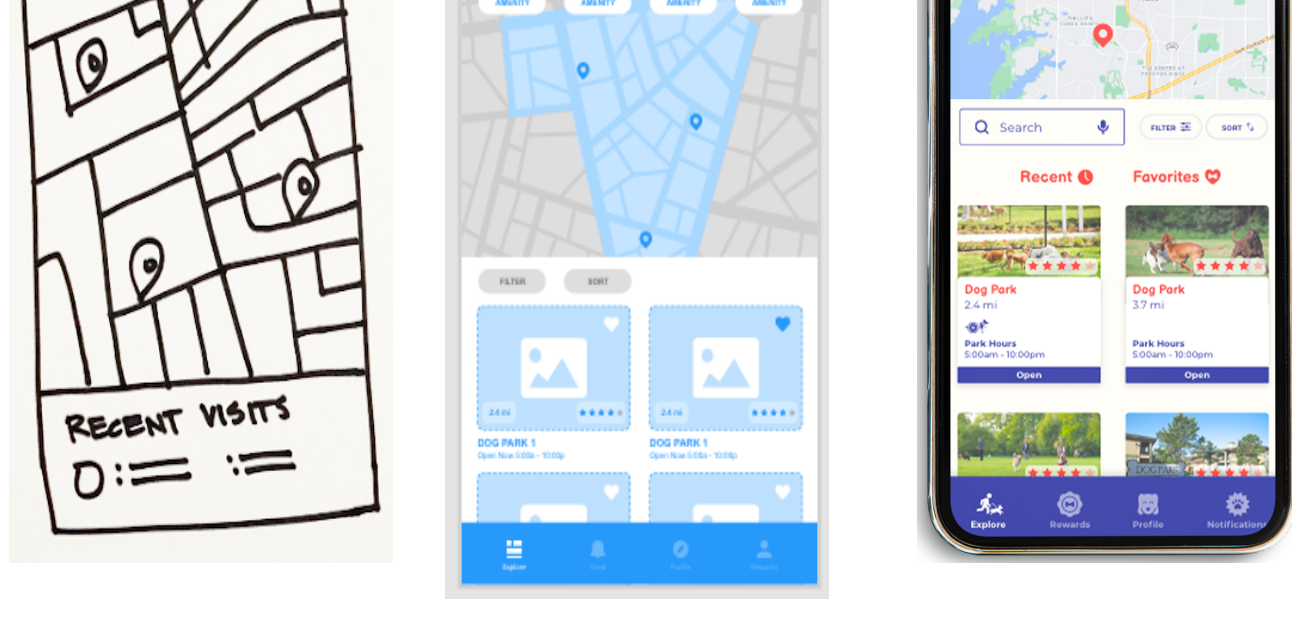
After our research, we were ready to begin development on workflows to start shaping-out our product.



Sketches, Wireframes, & Prototypes

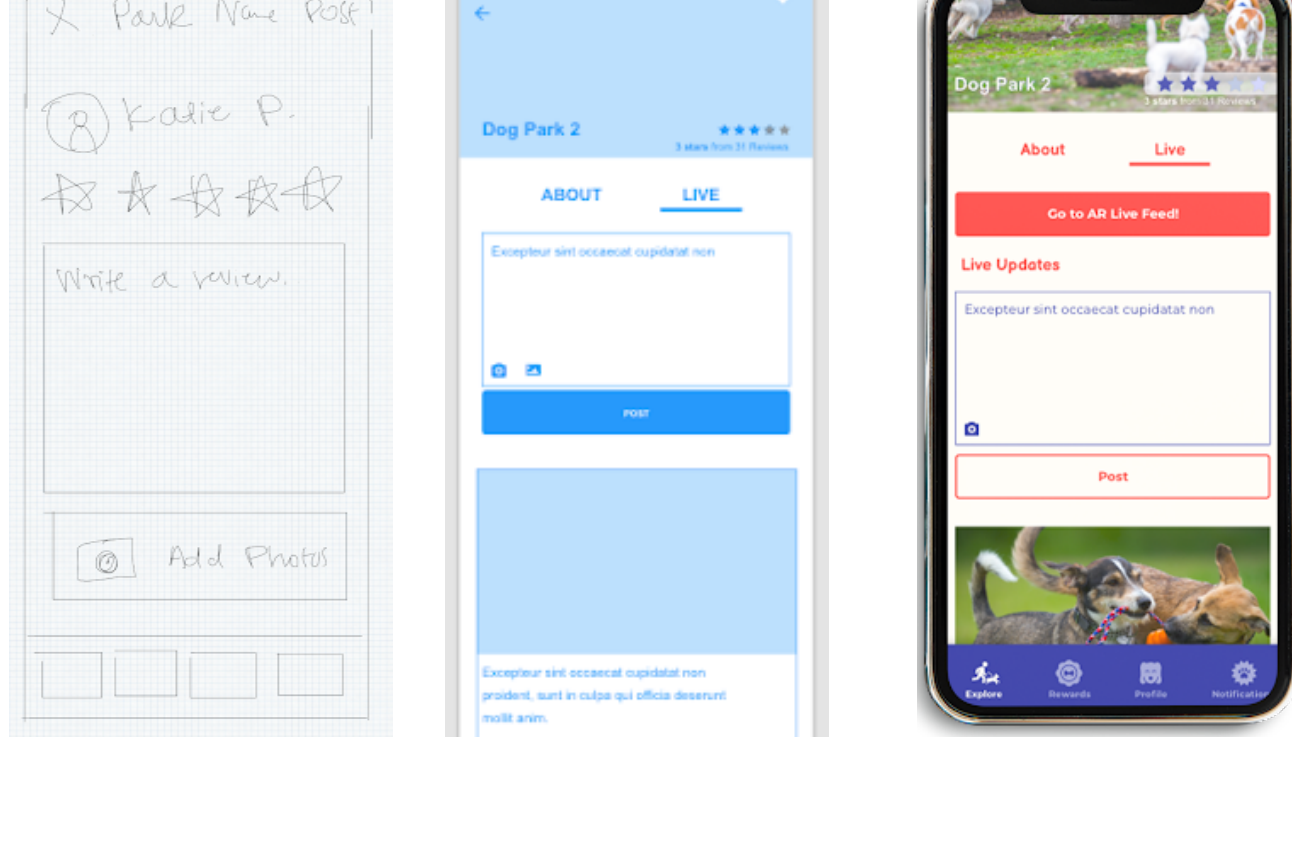
Viewing the Map

While designing the layout for the map, the focus was to keep the feel similar to other map apps and guide the user to discover new spots.

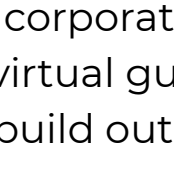


Leaving Reviews

One of the most important factors with our application was the ability to write and read reviews to provide users with unbiased information about new parks

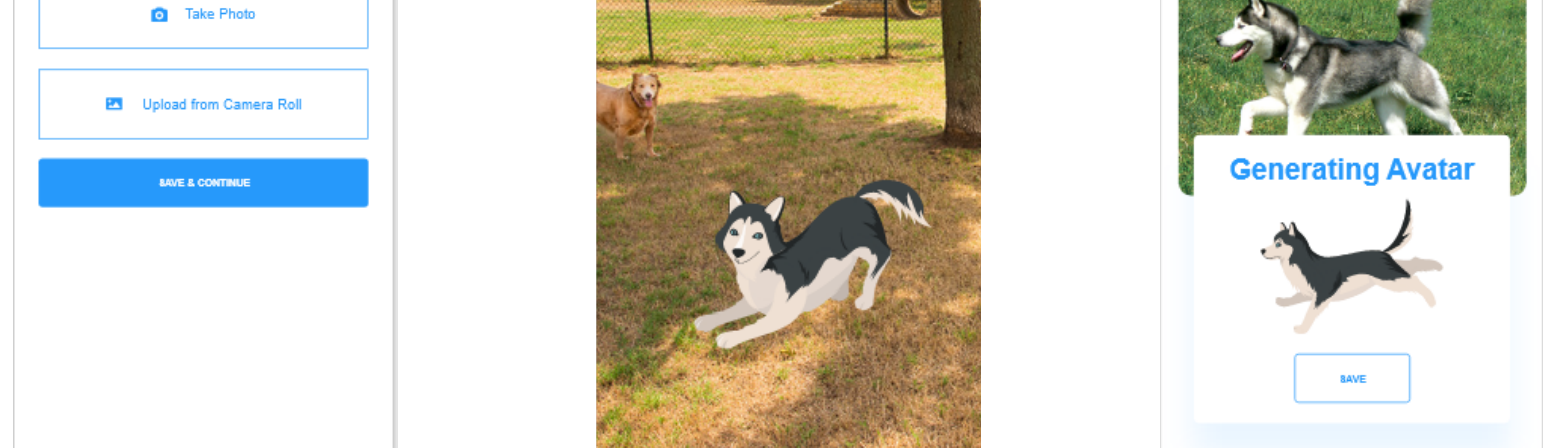


Augmented Reality



Part of the app that the team was tasked with incorporating was an AR component. For this, we came up with implementing an AR avatar dog as well as virtual guided tours of dog parks to know what to expect before the user visited. While the group did not build out the AR component for the final prototype, it is a feature that we aimed to implement in the future.

The AR avatar would exist when the user enabled their camera to view the park through the app, seeing both their own pet's avatar and any other Lassie users in the area. The aim behind this was to build social interaction virtually or in person, if the user is comfortable.



Usability Testing

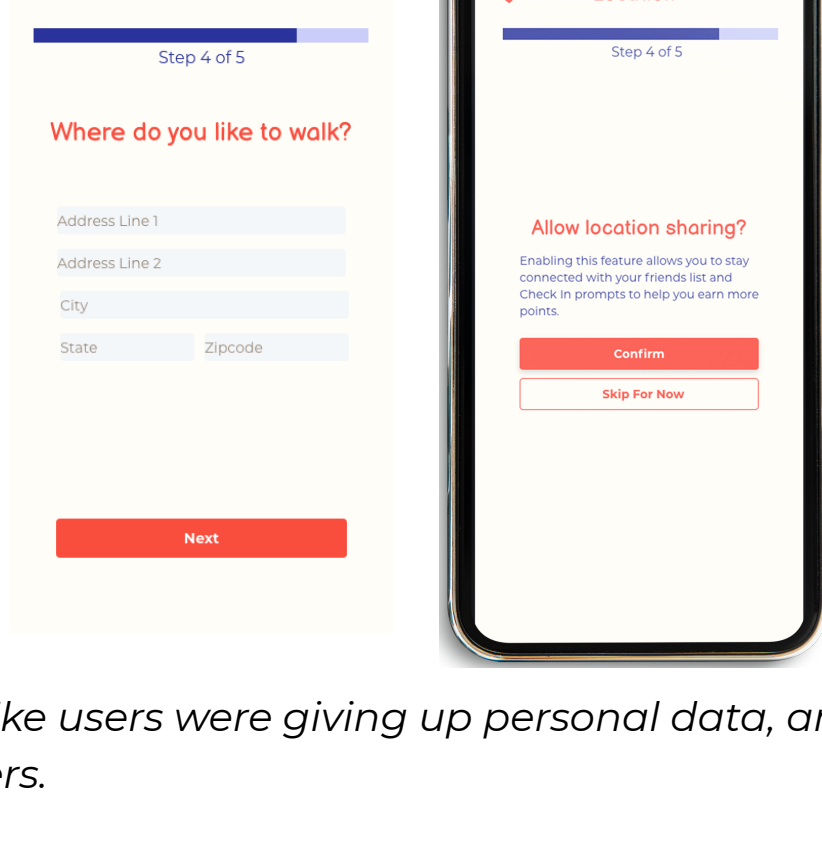


The team and I conducted several user tests with our first prototype to discover and address any usability issues when performing tasks in the app. The tests were conducted primarily over zoom with a handful being conducted face to face, if the user was comfortable. Below are a few of our key findings.

Onboarding and Privacy concerns

When asked if users would like to share their location, the phrasing of the task was ambiguous and made some users “uncomfortable” which was a problem that needed to be remedied.

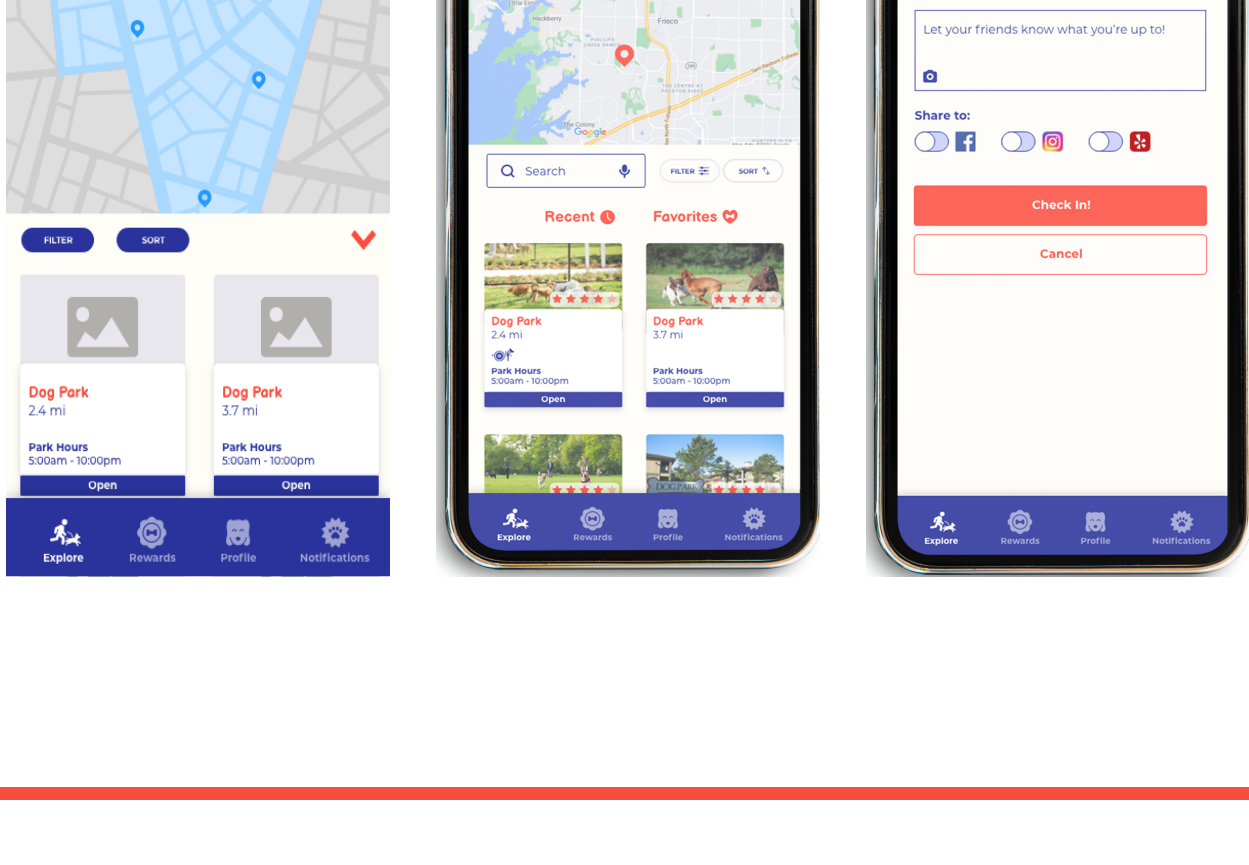
Our solution was to update the wording from “where do you like to walk” to “allow location services?” getting to the same end result, but changing the approach, allowed users to feel more comfortable and still utilize location services for local parks.



Edited page by doing away with the input form, to feel less like users were giving up personal data, and incorporated location services to appear more benign to users.

Primary Features

Our first run through asking users to find and view information about their local parks was met with some difficulty. The primary features on the homepage of the app did not appear prominent and led to some trouble navigating the page, mainly the features buttons below the search bar. The team opted for a drop-down option to make it easier for the user to select their preferences and find the best park for their needs.



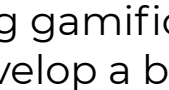
Next Steps

Monetize



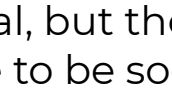
In order to grow Lassie and expand into any other iterations, we need to build revenue streams. Our two focuses were on building partnerships with pet stores and other relevant businesses as well as ad revenue through specified, curated ads that would be relevant to the user.

Badges



To increase interaction and involvement, the team planned on increasing gamification. We aimed to develop a badge system for rewards such as daily logins, walking goals, and socialization such as adding a certain number of new friends to your network.

Augmented Reality



The team could not fully implement the AR component to be functional, but the outline and idea is there to be soon implemented. As well as the AR avatar, we hope to include high-quality virtual park tours to enable users to “view” a park before deciding to visit.

