

# Neighborhood Explorer

A mobile app for engaging with small  
businesses in your area.

# ← CASE STUDY OVERVIEW →

## THE PROBLEM

Sheridan, MN has had an influx of new residents but yet many local businesses have had to close their doors in recent years as they struggle to stand out from larger competition.

In general, folks new to an area can also be unsure where to start exploring their community.

## TOOLS USED

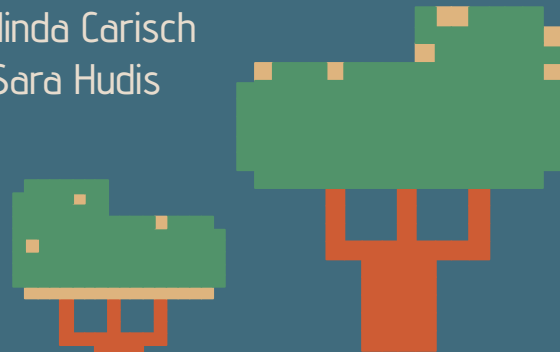
Figma  
Miro  
Github  
VS Code

## THE SOLUTION

An app that provides users with a list of small local business in Sheridan in a gamified format which makes each store visit an adventure.

## CREATED BY

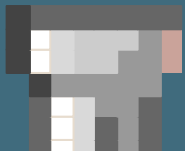
Elise Mary Lanigan  
Malinda Carisch  
Sara Hudis





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# USER RESEARCH



# PROTO PERSONA



**Name:** Maya Nichols  
**Age:** 23  
**Relationship:** Single  
**Occupation:** Student Success Advisor

*"I'm excited to get to know the area and become part of the community"*

## Behaviors & Habits

- Social extrovert anxious to make new friends in the neighborhood
- Likes visiting local coffee shops and stores
- Uses TikTok and Instagram to find new places and connect with friends
- Wants to be smart with her finances since she's saving up

## Paint Points & Frustrations

- Moving to a new area and struggling to find new friends
- Feeling unsure where to go and cooped up inside
- Yelp and similar sites not providing more local places to visit
- Seeing nearby local businesses have to close for lack of community support

## Needs & Goals

- Wants to find unique shops and restaurants in the area
- Wants to feel connected to her community and support local businesses over corporations
- Wants an easily accessible way to get a feel for the neighborhood

We envisioned our proto-persona as a gen-z adult, new to the Sheridan neighborhood and eager to get to know the area.





# COMPETITOR ANALYSIS



	Large Scope of Locations Included	Neighborhood Based	Gamify / Story Elements	Map Location Feature	Showcases Small Businesses	Character Customization	Filtering by Service Type	Strong Visual Design of Environment
In Your Neighborhood		★	★	★	★	★		★
Living Social	★				★		★	
Yelp	★	★		★	★		★	★
Buncha		★						
Nextdoor	★	★		★			★	
Finch	★		★			★		★

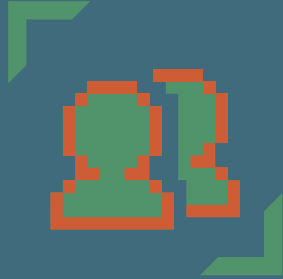
We completed research on two direct and three indirect competitors.

While we didn't have as large of scope as other apps, we did end up incorporating filtering into our final design from this exercise.





## USER INTERVIEWS



### SHERIDAN RESIDENTS

We interviewed two current residents of Sheridan to gauge their interest and learn about their neighborhood.



### LOCAL BUSINESSES

We interviewed the owner of Eat My Words Books and learned that the best app type might be one that required little updating and cost for the business.



### NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

We interviewed three people who have experience getting used to a new neighborhood and finding local businesses.



# AFFINITY DIAGRAM



## Demographic Info



## Sheridan Info



## Reward Programs



## In App Currency



## Behavioral Info



## Interactions with small businesses



## Business Behaviors



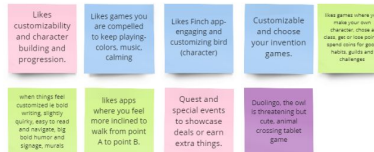
## Likes



## Opinion Towards Games



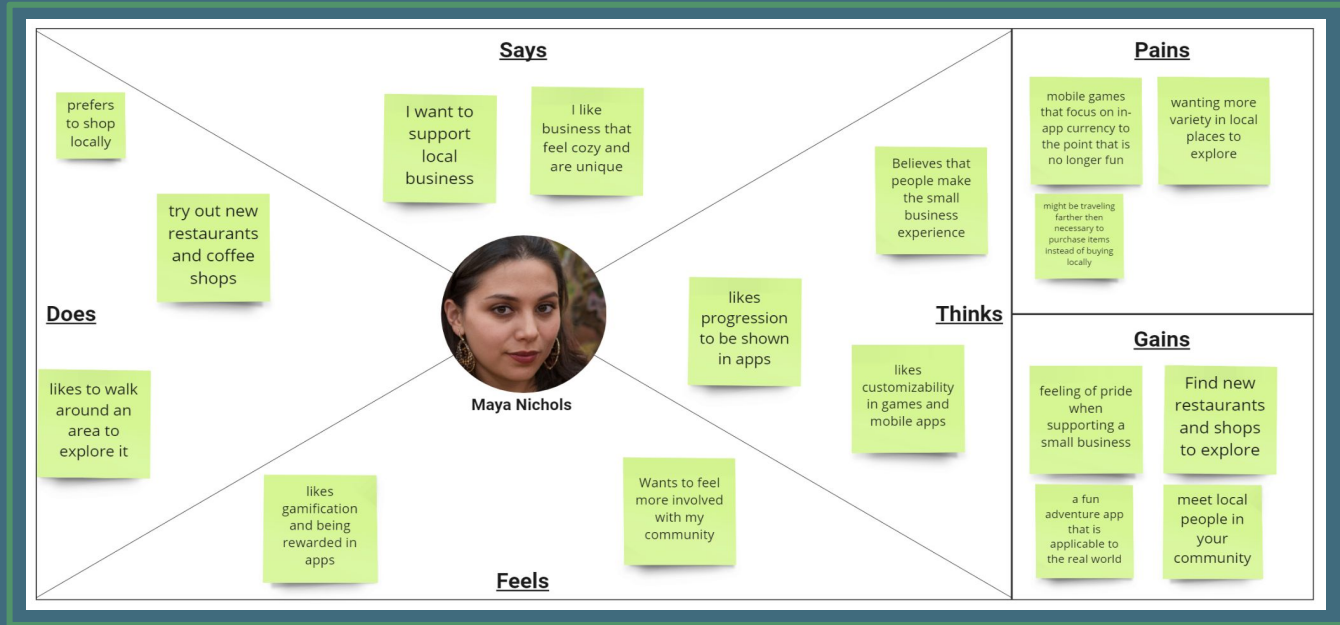
## Aspects of Games they Like



From our user interviews, we learned our users are **hesitant about in-app currency** and our business owner stakeholder was **concerned about the added workload** involved in promotions or upkeep of the app. As a result, we aimed to steer away from these concepts in our final design.



# EMPATHY MAP



We instead aimed to focus on **raising awareness** of local businesses, further **incentivizing residents to explore** their neighborhood, and **creating a fun experience** for the user that feels authentic in its mission of supporting local business.



# USER PERSONA

## MAYA NICHOLS



### ABOUT

Maya wants to learn more about and explore the community of Sheridan but she isn't sure where to start. She wants to visit and see all of the unique shops in the area but is a little overwhelmed, especially because she is nervous about getting lost and exploring on her own.

### PERSONALITY

- Social extrovert who enjoys connecting with new people.
- Adventurous and likes trying new things.
- Loves the coziness and sometime quirkiness of small local business.

### GOALS

- Wants to find unique shops and restaurants in her local area to visit and support,
- Wants an easy and fun way to get to know her neighborhood.
- Wants to feel connected to the people in her community.

### OTHER HABITS

- Enjoys exploring small businesses in her area and connecting with people.
- Likes spending time at local coffee shops to meet with friends or read a good book.
- Goes on social media to find new places and connect with friends.

### FRUSTRATIONS

- Recently moved to a new area and is struggling to make new friends.
- Feels cooped up inside and want to be out in her local area.
- Yelp and other sites don't have much to offer about local business.

### FAVORITE GAMES

- Animal Crossing
- Pokemon Go
- Legend of Zelda
- Duolingo
- Stardew Valley

AGE 24  
EDUCATION Bachelors  
JOB Student Success Advisor  
STATUS Single  
LOCATION Minneapolis, MN

Our final user persona included a passion for similar “cozy” games, such as Animal Crossing.

Maya's goals however stayed mostly the same:

- ☐ supporting local business
- ☐ feeling connected to the community
- ☐ enjoying the mobile game experience.



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# DEFINITION AND IDEATION





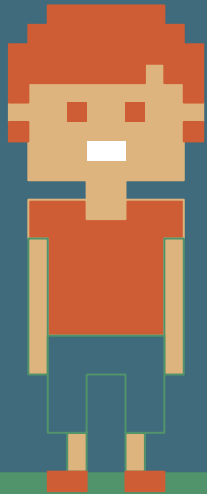
## VALUE PROPOSITION



Neighborhood Explorer provides users with a list of small local business in their area in a gamified format. Our purpose is to increase regional awareness of the non-chain stores that make a locality unique and encourage users to support small businesses.



## ➤ USER INSIGHT STATEMENT ➤



People moving to a new area want to support local business and find cool new spots to frequent, but are hesitant to download apps with in-app currency as they seem a bit predatory in their monetization methods.

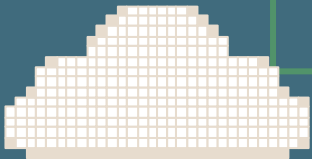
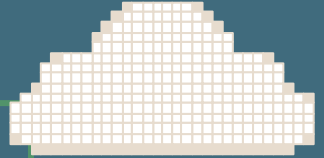


## PROBLEM STATEMENT



Sometimes local business struggle to find new client bases within their community because it can be difficult to stand out from larger competition. New residents and even sometimes longtime locals can be unsure where to start when it comes to exploring their community.

How can we ensure that our users will be able to find and support local business in a fun, engaging way?





## UX HYPOTHESIS



We believe that by showcasing local businesses with an engaging user interface we will increase user awareness among locals so they will be more likely to visit and purchase items locally.

We also believe that the app will encourage users to become more involved with their community as they become more familiar with the town, businesses, and people they meet by engaging with the app and visiting local stores.



# FEATURE PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

- ❑ Cartoon map with local businesses highlighted
- ❑ Character customization
- ❑ Scavenger hunt to unlock stores
- ❑ Mini games for different businesses with virtual prizes
- ❑ Progress bar for visiting new stores and completing the map





Maya is new to Sheridan and excited to find new places to frequent in her community.



Maya isn't sure where to find unique places, but her landlord suggests downloading "Neighborhood Explorer".



After having a hard time finding places to visit on online, she decides to download "Neighborhood Explorer".



After going through the onboarding, Maya is delighted to find this app is much more than a community directory and is excited to fill out her map of Sheridan and customize her character.



The next weekend Maya goes with her roommate to four destinations in Sheridan and makes a day of visiting shops and unlocking different minigames and in-app clothing items.

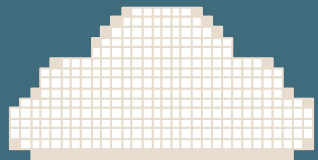


Maya eventually fills out her map of Sheridan and has now established favorites around town. She wishes each neighborhood had something similar!

## STORYBOARD

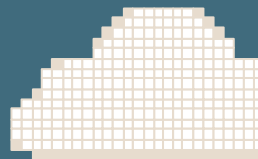
- ❑ Maya just moved to Sheridan and someone recommended she download the "Neighborhood Explorer" app
- ❑ Maya finds local businesses within the app to visit
- ❑ She is excited to explore the neighborhood while unlocking mini games and prizes!
- ❑ Maya now has a bunch of favorite local spots in Sheridan





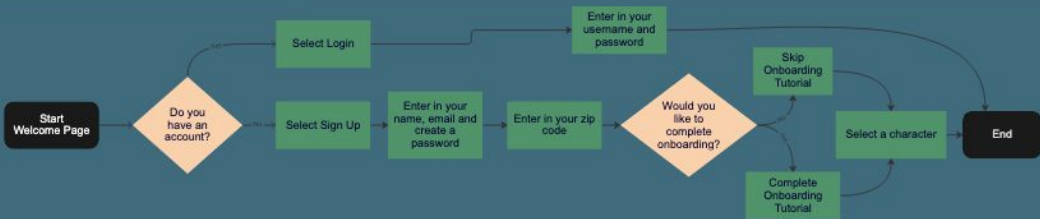
03

# UI PROTOTYPING

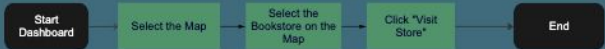


# USER FLOW

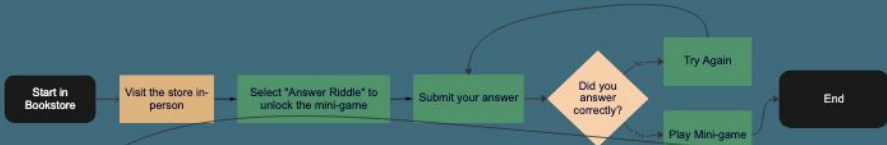
Task 1: Onboarding



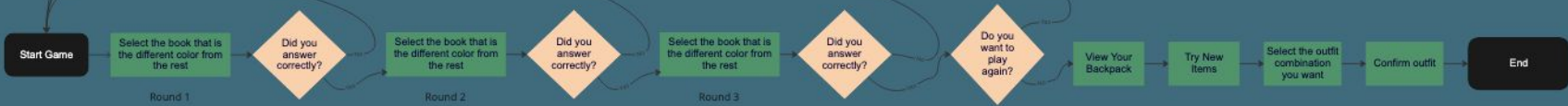
Task 2: Viewing the Map and Entering the Store



Task 3: Unlocking the Bookstore Minigame



Task 4: Complete the Bookstore Minigame

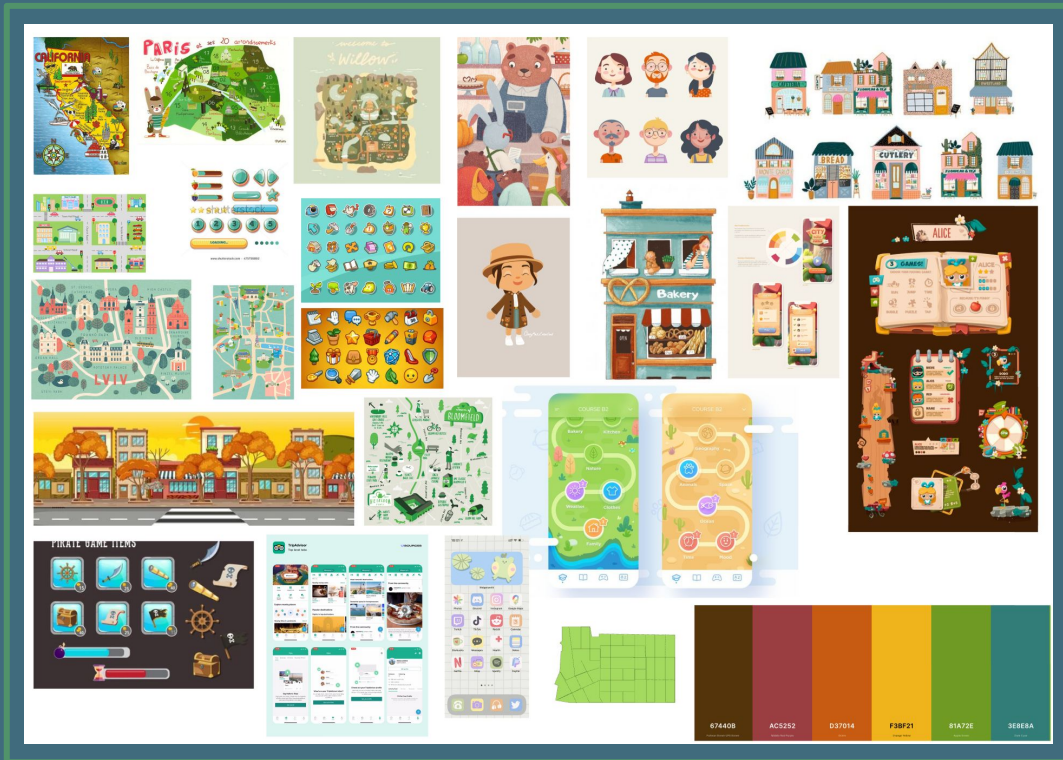


Task 5: Navigate to the Adventure Journal



We completed multiple iterations of our user flow, as we added a filtered journal and backpack of items for our users to utilize.

We also adjusted how the mini-game unlocking and prizes functioned so it was clear to our users how to progress.



## MOODBOARD

We took inspiration from apps like Animal Crossing and children's picture books for our app.

We wanted to achieve a “cozy” feel, with colors reminiscent of nature..

# STYLE TILE

## UI STYLE TILE: Neighborhood Explorer

DATE: NOV 26, 2022

### UI STYLE DIRECTION

The Neighborhood Explorer is a fun interactive app that intends to gamify exploring a neighborhood to find new small business gems. As a result, the UI direction is playful, happy, and adventurous.

### UI Style Adjectives

Adventurous

Relaxing Fun Interesting

Enticing Happy

### TYPOGRAPHY

Our type needs to be legible and fun, while reminding users of old retro gaming aspects. Users need to be able to quickly skim our text but still understand how to navigate the app.

### H1 - Headline

(Press Start P3 Regular)

### H2 - Subhead

(Space Grotesk Bold)

Body - Body Text

(Space Grotesk Regular, 14)

### TYPOGRAPHY BODY COPY

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(Space Grotesk Regular, 14)

### BRAND LOGO

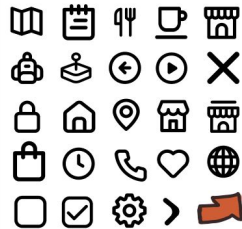
- LOGO ON WHITE

Neighborhood Explorer

- LOGO ON DARK

Neighborhood Explorer

### ICONOGRAPHY



### BUTTON STATES



### COLOR PALETTE

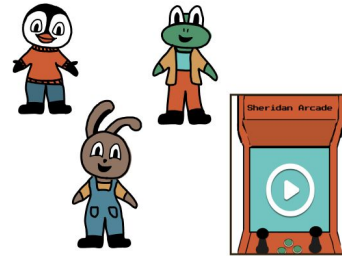
- BRAND COLORS



### GRAPHIC IMAGES/INSPO



### ARTWORK SAMPLES



### BUTTON STYLES



- PRIMARY INTERACTION COLOR



#51936A

- SECONDARY INTERACTION COLOR



#71C4BF

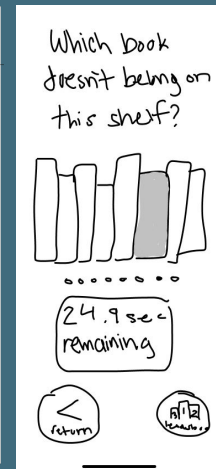
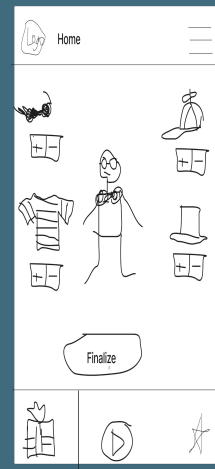
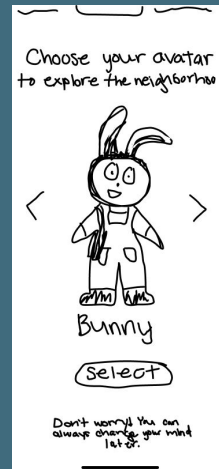
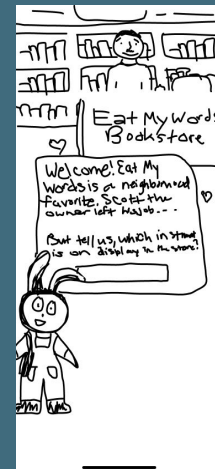
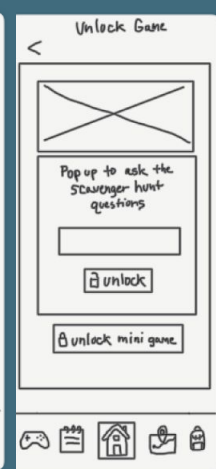
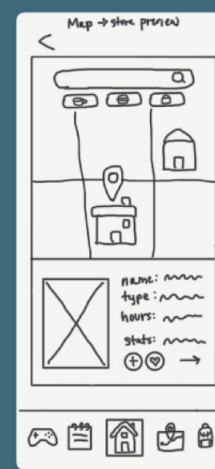
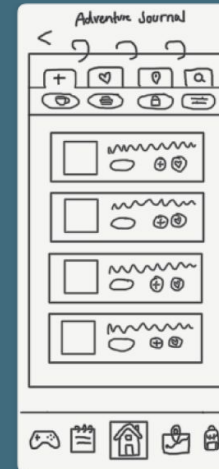
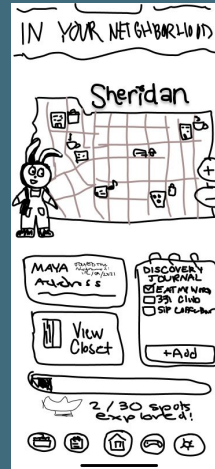
Our style tile incorporates a similar color scheme from our moodboard, through we shied away from darker browns for a brighter look.

It also includes a retro gaming-like font and original artwork to make our app stand out.

# WIREFRAME SKETCHES

Many of our sketches were similar, but ultimately we decided that we wanted to walk through:

1. Onboarding/Picking a Character
2. Accessing a Map/Going in Store
3. Playing a store specific game
4. Customizing Character
5. Filtering and Viewing Adventure Journal



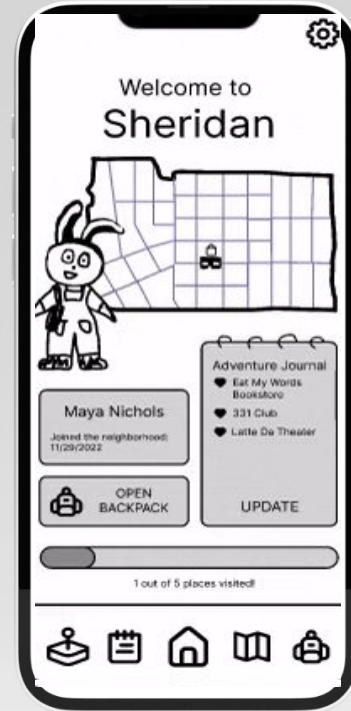
## LOW-FI PROTOTYPE

- ☐ Pick a Character
- ☐ Access Map
- ☐ Visit Store and Complete Scavenger Hunt
- ☐ Play Mini Game
- ☐ Customize Character
- ☐ Access and Filter Adventure Journal



## MID-FI PROTOTYPE

- Added detail and some animations/components
- Discussed and planned out further artwork and animations that would be necessary for a working prototype.





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# TESTING AND ITERATION







# TESTING PLAN



<b>GOAL/OBJECTIVE:</b>	How easy is it for a user navigate the Neighborhood Explorer App
<b>TASK 1:</b>	
Goal/Output:	User completes onboarding and picks a character
<b>TASK 2:</b>	
Goal/Output:	Using the map user navigates to Eat My Words bookstore
<b>TASK 3:</b>	
Goal/Output:	User unlocks mini game in store
<b>TASK 4:</b>	
Goal/Output:	User completes mini game and goes to your backpack to add accessories to character
<b>TASK 5:</b>	
Goal/Output:	User successfully views adventure journal

We decided to test our users' understanding of the app and navigation through our:

1. Onboarding process
2. Map interface
3. Store / minigame
4. Backpack
5. Adventure Journal

## TESTING RESULTS

From our user testing, we decided to:

- ❑ Add a zip code field
- ❑ Update the mini-game to be easier with higher color contrast and updated instructions
- ❑ Make the map more intuitive to select by adding a tooltip
- ❑ Condense the text on each screen to be more digestible
- ❑ Update the prototype linking to look cleaner

✓	Sara	add zip code to onboarding		
✓	Sara	Fix clothing selection component		
✓	Sara	need clarification to click into map "Explore!" button		
✓	Elise	journal in dashboard - only showing your favorites		
✓	Elise	remove titles from books		
✓	Elise	review of copy for typos		
✓	Elise	fixing bottom nav component to avoid "smart navigate"		
✓	Elise	add progress bar animation to unlocking minigame screen		
✓	Malinda	Uptade the cards in journal		
✓	Malinda	fix smart animate on journal		
✓	Malinda	add link from adventure journal to book store		
✓	Malinda	change icon to "all" in the tabs		
✓	Malinda	clicking on filter to remove		

# STYLE GUIDE

- We wanted our colors and font choices to convey an adventurous playfulness that is reminiscent of vintage arcade games.
- However, we still wanted to keep the key cartoon elements that were in our moodboard

## Neighborhood Explorer

Design System

### Colors

Primary and visible

**COLOR PALETTE**

BRAND COLORS

- #E6C344
- #D1B47C
- #18985A
- #4A697D
- #77C4BF

PRIMARY INTERACTION COLOR

- #18985A

SECONDARY INTERACTION COLOR

- #F7F7E9
- #F0E6D7
- #E0D8C9
- #F0C88F
- #000000
- #77C4BF

### Typography

Press Start 01 and Space Mono

## Neighborhood Explorer

Neighborhood Explorer

Neighborhood Explorer

Neighborhood Explorer

Neighborhood Explorer

Neighborhood Explorer

Neighborhood Explorer

### Buttons

Button Active

Button Active

Button

### Tabs

Default

Active

### Forms

Label: Placeholder

Form: Filled Input

Success

Error

Select: Dropdown

### Forms

Label: Placeholder

Form: Filled Input

Success

Error

Select: Dropdown

### Alerts

Error: Error Message

Success: Success Message

Notification: Notification Message

Click map to get started

### Icons

## FINAL PROTOTYPE

- ❑ Added color
- ❑ Created several animated features and components
- ❑ Made it possible to select multiple characters



# CODED LANDING PAGE

- ❑ We decided to code a separate webpage so that business owners in Sheridan would be able to learn about the app and how they can get involved.
- ❑ The page showcases the app, and the games and prizes available for their business.

Neighborhood Explorer

Games Prizes Get Involved

## Who We Are

Neighborhood Explorer is an app to connect users with local businesses in their town.

The app encourages users to buy local by showcasing small businesses within the app's interface, along with games that are customized for each business, and prizes that users win from each business for their in-app avatars.

Currently, this app is only available in Sheridan, Minnesota but there is the potential for this app to expand to additional neighborhoods.

## Game Types

**Odd Product Out**  
Users have to pick out the item that doesn't match the others.  
[See Example](#)

**Maze Eater**  
Users must eat all of the dirt/food in a maze while avoiding obstacles.  
[See Example](#)

**Tick-Tack-Toe**  
Users have to match three products in a row.  
[See Example](#)

## Prizes

**T-Shirts**  
Customize this item with your logo or branding.  
[See Example](#)

**Hats**  
Customize this item with your logo or branding.  
[See Example](#)

**Coffee Cups**  
Customize this item with your logo or branding.  
[See Example](#)

## Get Involved

Contact us to add your business to the adventure!

First Name  Last Name

Business Name  Email

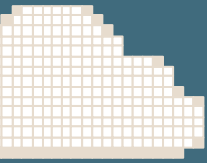
Address

Address 2

City  State  Zip Code

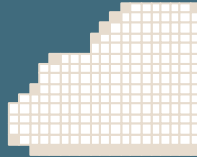
in YouTube Facebook

Neighborhood Explorer Copyright 2020

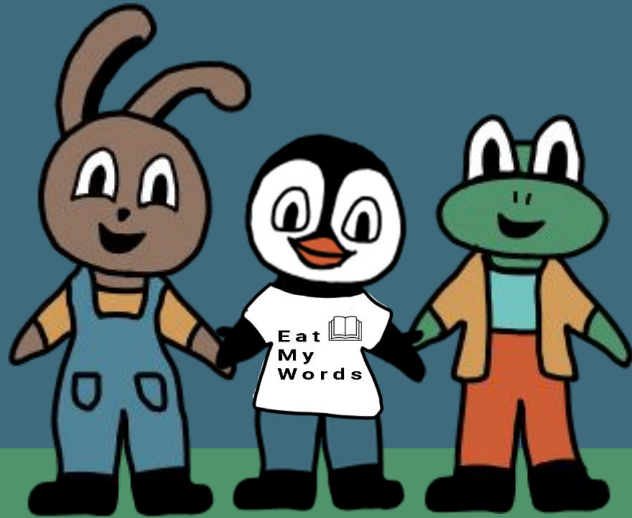
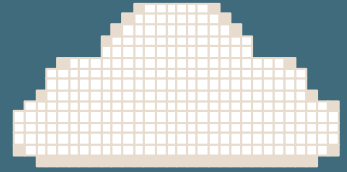


05

NEXT STEPS



# ADVENTURE CONTINUED!



## GOALS

- ❑ Connect with other small businesses in Sheridan to get their input and ideas for improvement.
- ❑ Continue iterations on visual and interaction design.
- ❑ Eventually expand the application out to other communities who could benefit from local business exposure