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Homing

Find Your New Home Today

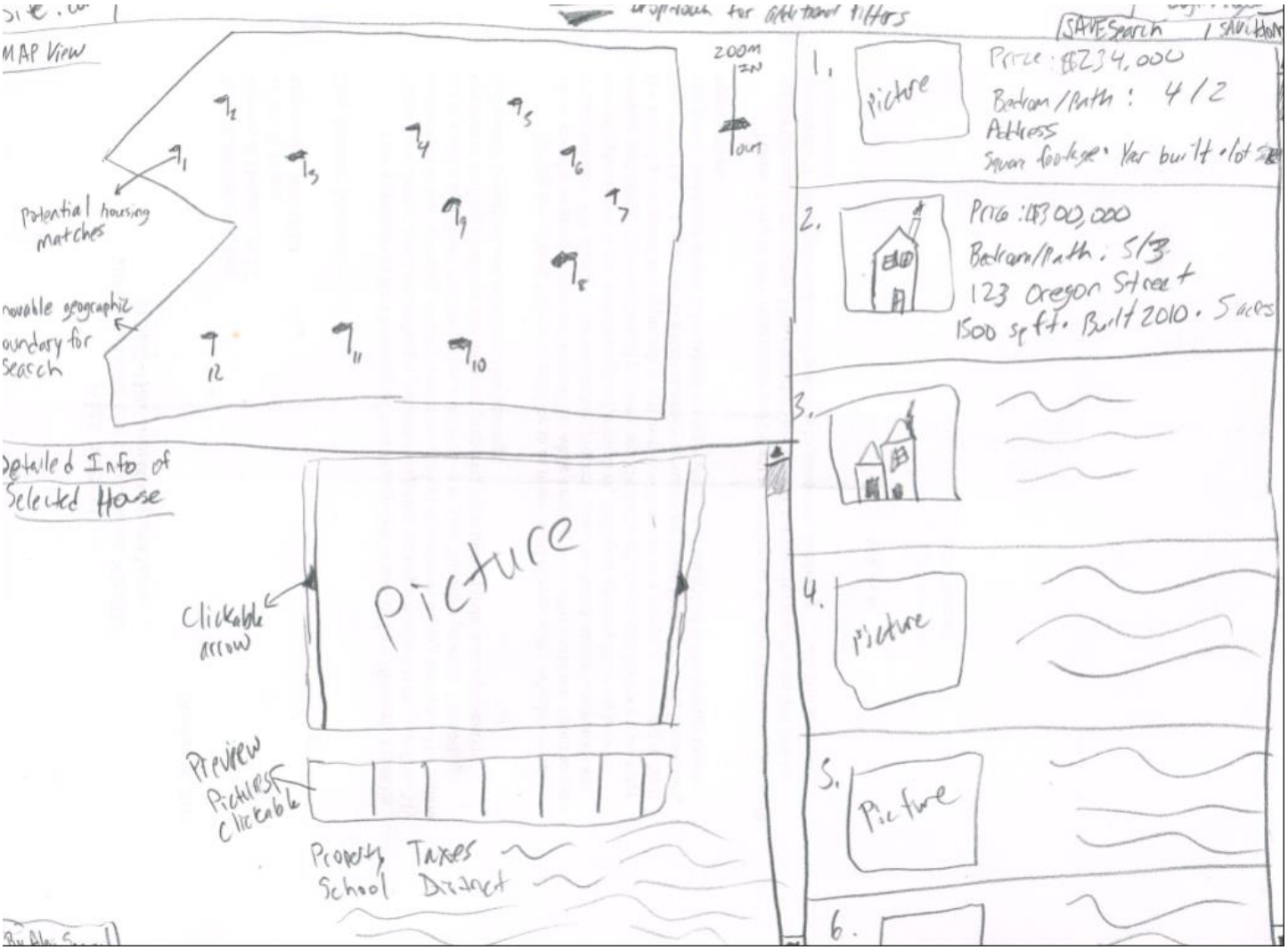
Problem Summary

Users have a difficult time searching for houses online. Relevant housing information appears in separate, disparate places. Our solution aggregates all available information and presents the data to the user in an easy to understand and navigable format. We are targeting prospective home buyers as well as real estate agents.

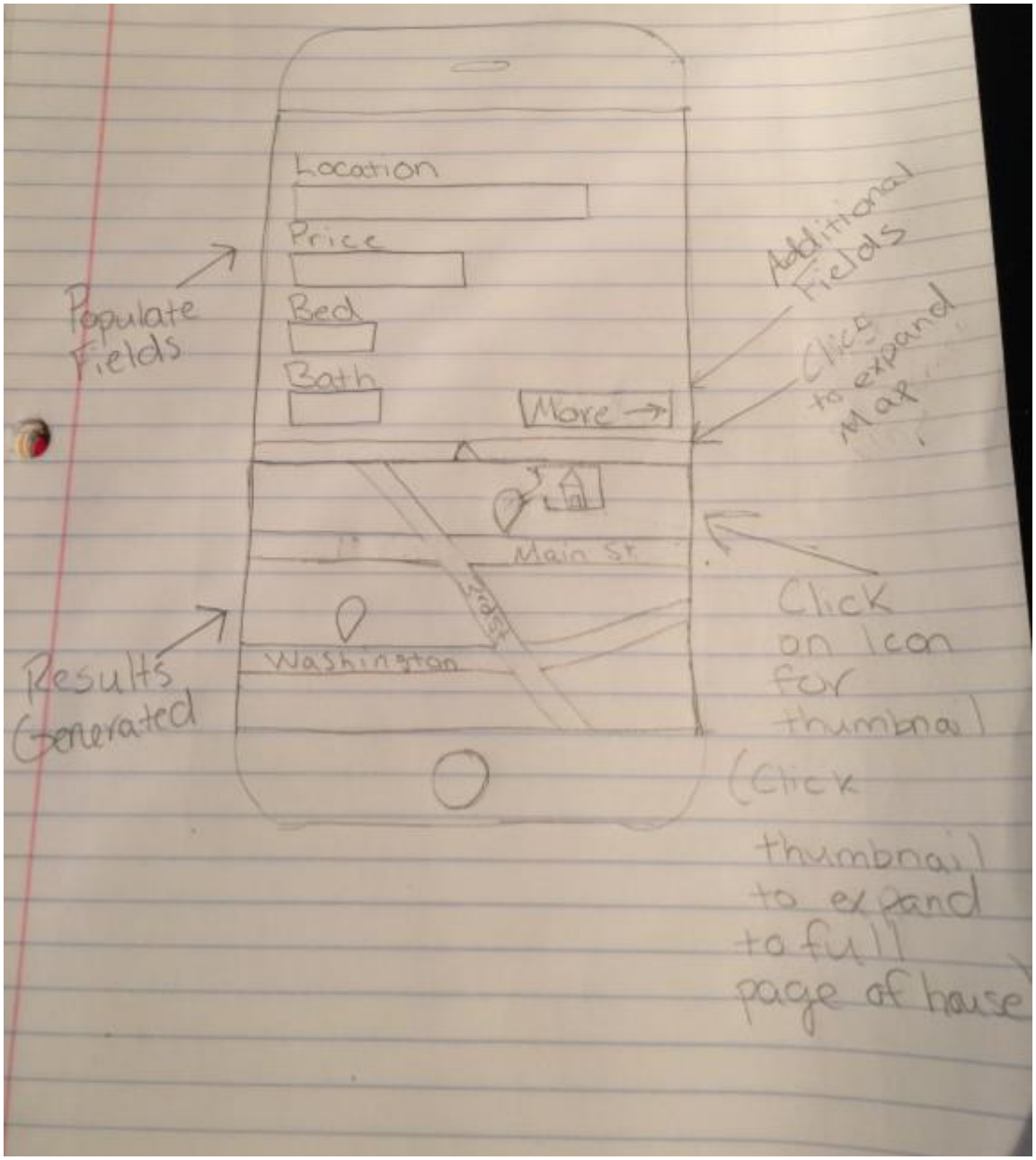
Concepts

Mobile Design

Desktop Design



Another Mobile Design



When house is clicked on

Slide to see more pictures

$ xxx,xxx

Beds xx Baths xx

City xxxx

Sq. ft. xxxx

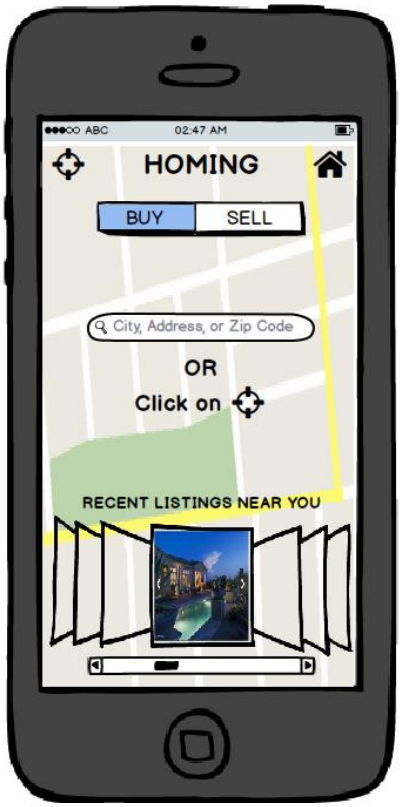
Email my Agent

Schedule Showing

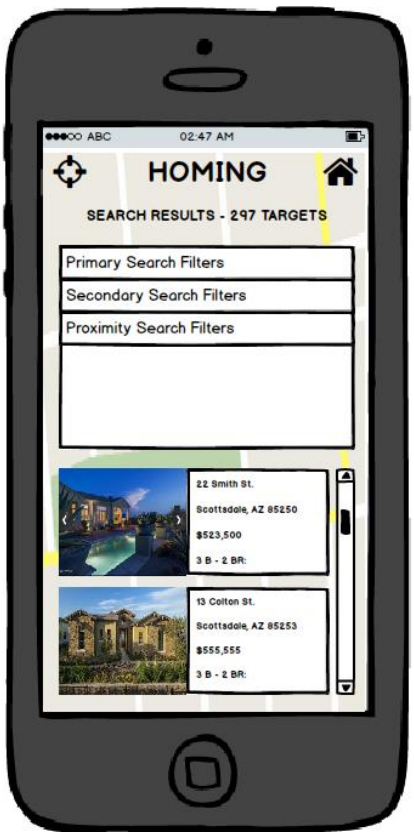
CS 352: Group 2 - “Homing” Use Case Storyboard Using myBalsamiq

1. User opens application and is brought to splash loading screen

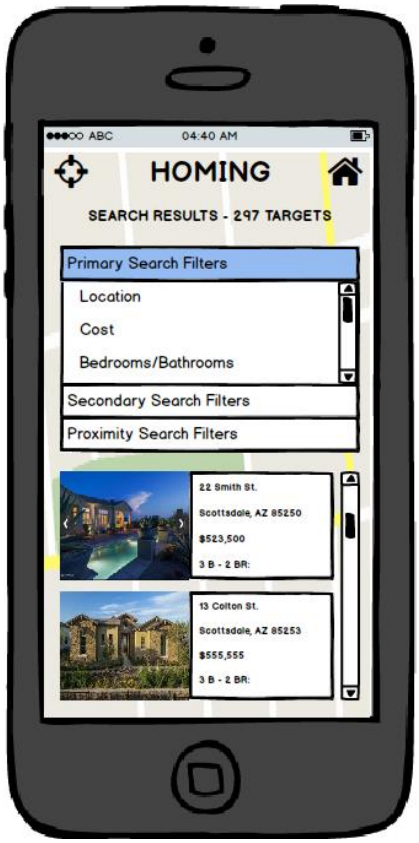
2. User is directed to general search landing screen (selects buy and enters address)



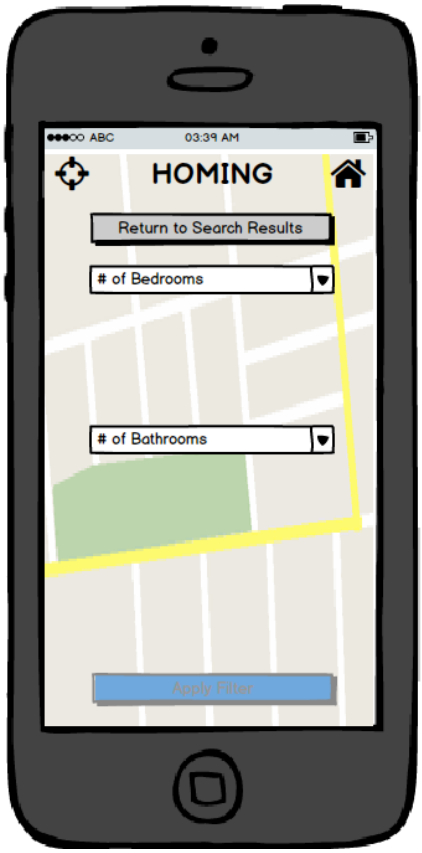
3. User is directed to search results page (297 targets)



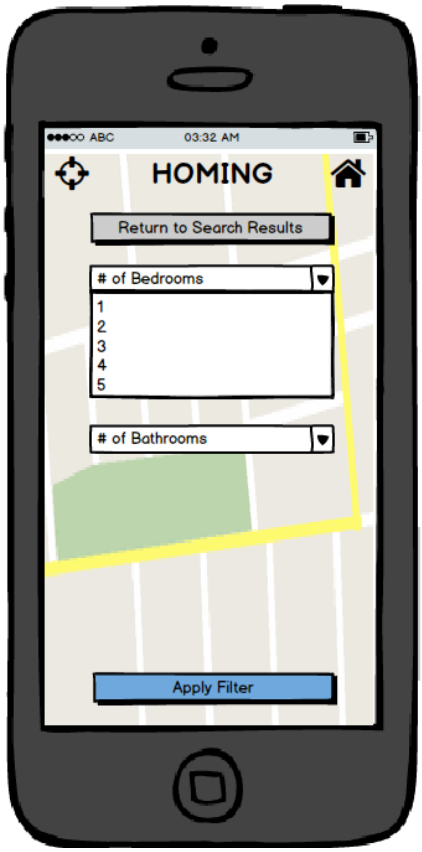
4. User clicks on primary search filter options (views results and selects B/BR filter)



5. User views specified Primary Filter Options

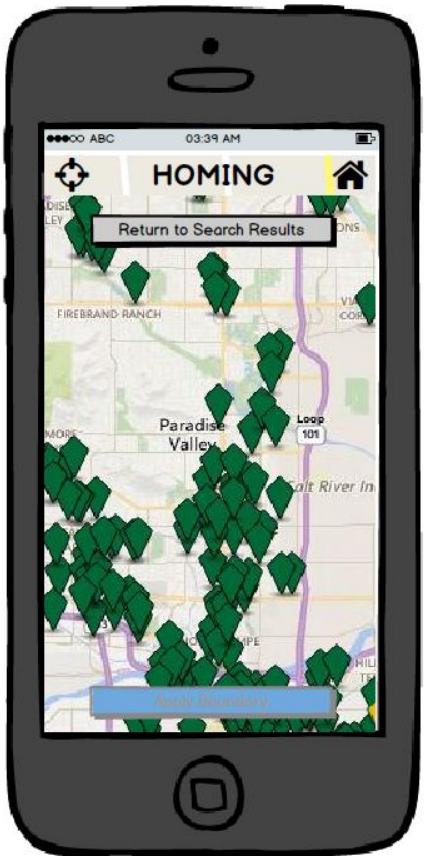


6. User clicks on dropdown menu to reveal options (selects # and applies filter)

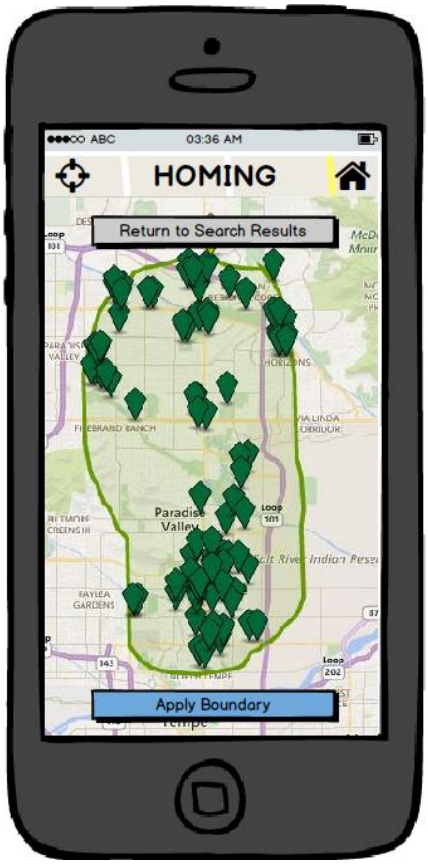


7. User views updated/narrowed search results (102 targets); clicks crosshair to launch boundary tool

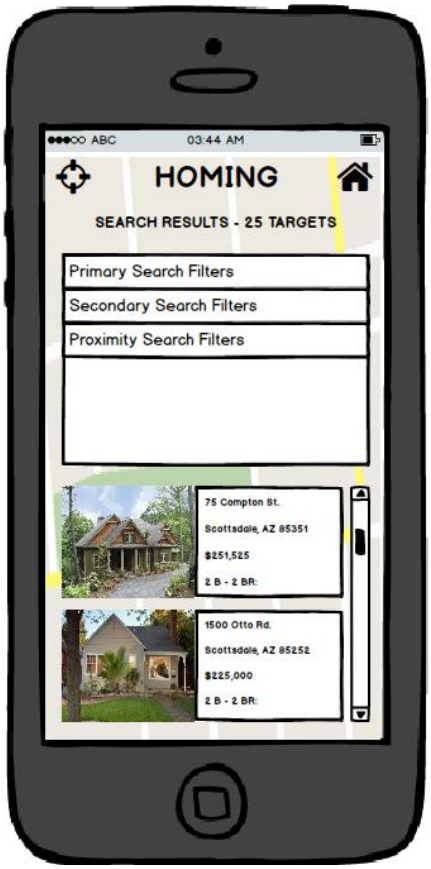
8. User is brought to geographic boundary tool showing hits



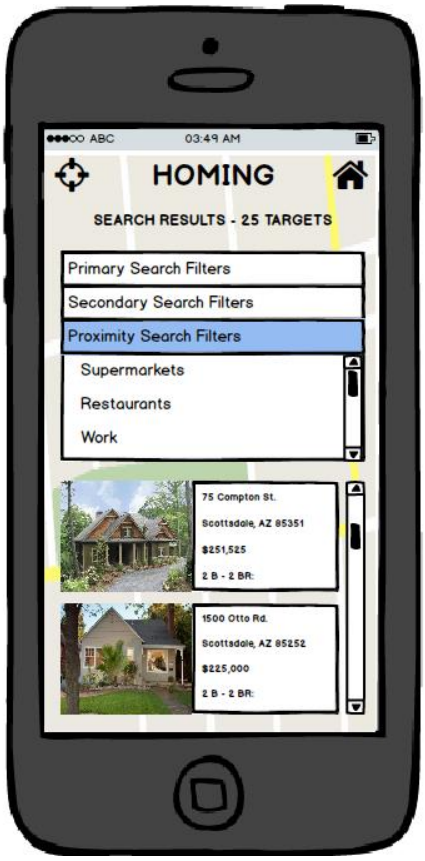
9. User draws boundary and chooses to apply boundary



10. User views updated search results post boundary filter (25 targets)

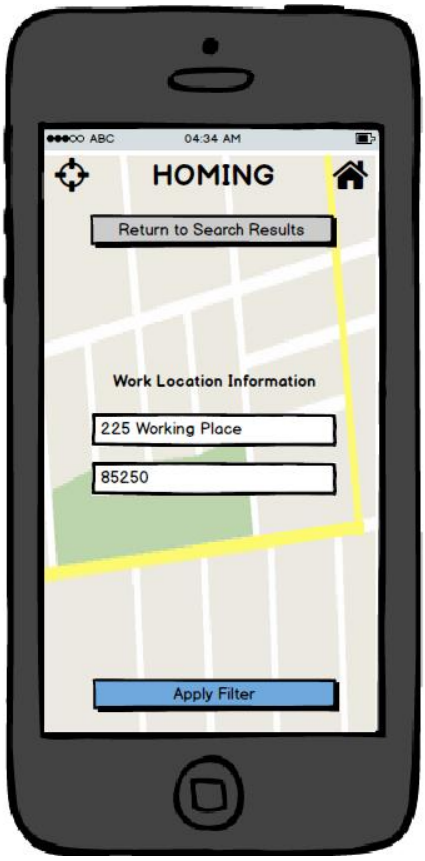


11. User selects proximity filter and is presented with options (chooses work)



12. User is brought to page that requires entry of work address/zip code

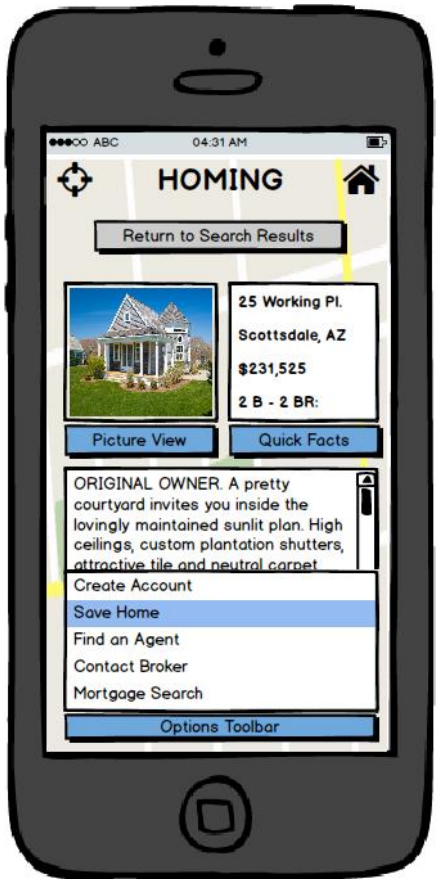
13. User enters work address and zip code and chooses to apply filter



14. User views updated search results (5 targets); selects a particular house

15. User is directed to home details for a specific house (views information)

16. User is presented with further options via the bottom toolbar



Justifications

Why we chose mobile and iOS

We decided to focus on mobile app development in general, and iOS in particular, for several reasons. We decided to focus on mobile for two main reasons. We wanted the limitation of the smaller screen to force us to focus the design and ensure it is even more usable and intuitive. A full desktop website has a lot of room to throw many options and buttons for users to find. On mobile those options cannot all exist on screen, but they still need to be easily discoverable to the user. The second reason that we chose mobile was that for our particular program of discovering and learning information about homes fits well in the mobile world. If people know the neighborhood they want to move, they can go look around for For Sale signs, or they can have the app find local listings that fit their ideal home. People also want to be able to find information about homes while they are touring them. Having that information available at your fingertips on the go is very valuable.

As for iOS, we chose to focus on it because more people in our group are familiar with it than Android. A few people had only used iOS, while others have used both. Only one has only used Android. Because of this, we chose to focus our design towards iOS, since each platform has separate design guidelines and good apps on one do not look identical to apps on the other.

How we chose filters

Our justification for choosing the filters we did, was based on our user survey. Users ranked a list of 20 filter options (cost, bedrooms, schools, crime rate, etc.) indicating how important they were when searching for a house. Using this data we could easily determine the filters that would be most useful to our potential users. These in turn were incorporated into our app. They are listed in descending order, from most to least important. This should provide a high level of usability. Users will be able to select multiple filters to help narrow their search to a limited number of houses. Overall the filters were chosen to give the users the ability to quickly find houses that meet their most important criteria.

Simplified landing screen

The decision to have a simple landing screen was made so users can immediately use the app. It is very intuitive with only a search field and crosshairs. These allow the user to enter a location or search nearby houses. Without knowing anything else about the filters or other options, a user can still make use of the app. It gets the user started using the app in quick manner with little to no learnability. For some this might be all they need or want. While others want more filters to help narrow their search. We felt it was best to start simple, and let the user determine how detailed and refined to ultimately make the search. A simple and intuitive start to the app was a primary goal in choosing our landing screen.

Map View & Boundary Search Tool

We decided to include a map view of search results because it is the easiest way for users to understand proximity of potential homes to other important locations such as work, entertainment venues, and transportation resources (bus stops, highways, etc…). Our user research indicates that prospective homebuyers are interested in information about the neighborhood and community in addition to the typical information regarding a particular property. The map view conveys that proximity information as well as provides an easy interface for users to see the relative locations of multiple properties at once. The boundary draw tool enables users to filter results by drawing a geographic boundary on the map indicating the area within which they want to see available housing options. We decided to implement this tool because users will have an easier time creating a boundary for an area by hand rather than entering street names or addresses which they might not know, which is especially likely if they are unfamiliar with the area. The map view will also enable users to visibly see how various filters affect the number and relative locations of available housing

options. This will reduce the Gulf of Evaluation since users will be able to immediately see useful feedback in response to inputs (the selection of particular filters) and the relationships between actions and results. Finally, we decided to implement this feature via the user pressing the “crosshairs” icon because a crosshair conveys the ability to “zoom in” which is an ability that is almost universally found in various mapping tools. The choice of this particular icon should help reduce the Gulf of Execution since it makes the user interface more consistent with the underlying workings and it conveys to the user what actions are possible.

Call Broker and Send to Agent Buttons

During the course of our interviews with real estate agents, we were able to gather a few insights about the process that buyers go through in order to identify homes they are interested in. When the buyer initially contacts the agent, he/she brings the home to the agent. After initial contact with the agent is made, the agent starts bringing homes to the buyer. The buyer expects the realtor to do the hard work of vetting houses and setting up showings for the client. The “Call Broker” button allows agents to call the selling agent directly from the listing of the house within the app. The “Send to Agent” button allows the buyer to find a house and send it directly to the broker from the app so the broker can arrange a showing and vet the home based on the buyer’s preferences.