

# ChaRo Parcel Tracker - Project Report

**Project Name:** ChaRo Parcel Tracker

**Platform:** Flutter (Cross-platform: Android, iOS, Web, Windows, macOS, Linux)

**Backend:** Supabase (PostgreSQL Database, Edge Functions, Storage)

**AI Integration:** Google Gemini 2.5 Flash

**Date:** 2025

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## 1. App Overview

### 1.1 Purpose

ChaRo Parcel Tracker is a comprehensive parcel tracking application designed for the Kenyan market. The application enables users to track their parcels in real-time, view delivery routes on an interactive map, and interact with an AI-powered assistant for parcel-related queries. Administrators can manage all parcels, update their status and locations, and maintain detailed tracking history.

### 1.2 Key Features

#### User Features:

- User Authentication:** Secure sign-up and sign-in with email and password (SHA-256 hashed)
- Parcel Tracking:** Track parcels by ID with detailed status information
- Interactive Map:** Visualize parcel routes on a live map with color-coded polylines
- Tracking Timeline:** Horizontal timeline showing all status changes and location updates
- AI Chat Assistant:** Natural language chatbot powered by Google Gemini for parcel queries
- Profile Management:** Upload and manage profile photos stored in Supabase Storage
- Parcel History:** View all parcels associated with the user account

#### Admin Features:

- Admin Dashboard:** Dedicated admin tab with access to all parcels across all users
- Parcel Management:** Search, filter, and update parcel status and locations
- Status Updates:** Change parcel status (Pending, In Transit, Out for Delivery, Delivered)
- Location Management:** Update current location from 47 Kenyan counties
- Admin Notes:** Add notes to tracking history for each status change
- Bulk Operations:** View and manage multiple parcels simultaneously

## 1.3 Technology Stack

### Frontend:

- Flutter 3.9.2 (Dart)
- Material Design 3
- flutter\_map for map visualization
- Image Picker for profile photos

### Backend:

- Supabase (PostgreSQL database)
- Supabase Edge Functions (Deno runtime)
- Supabase Storage (profile photos)

### AI/ML:

- Google Gemini 2.5 Flash API
- Natural Language Processing for chat queries

### Key Dependencies:

- `supabase_flutter: ^2.8.4` - Backend integration
- `flutter_map: ^7.0.2` - Map visualization
- `latlong2: ^0.9.1` - Geographic coordinates
- `image_picker: ^1.1.2` - Image selection
- `crypto: ^3.0.3` - Password hashing
- `http: ^1.1.0` - HTTP requests

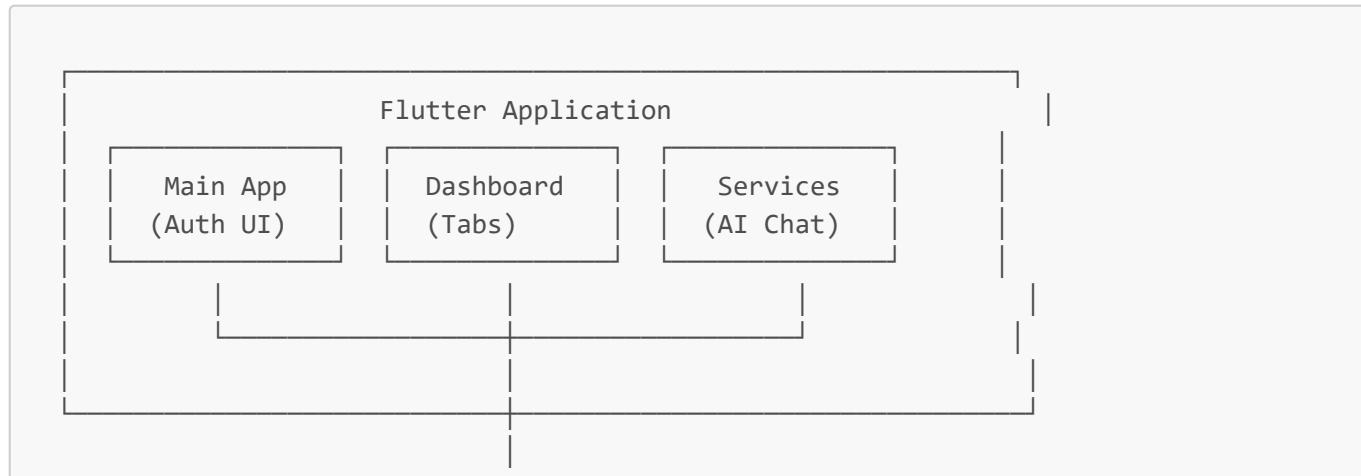
## 1.4 Target Users

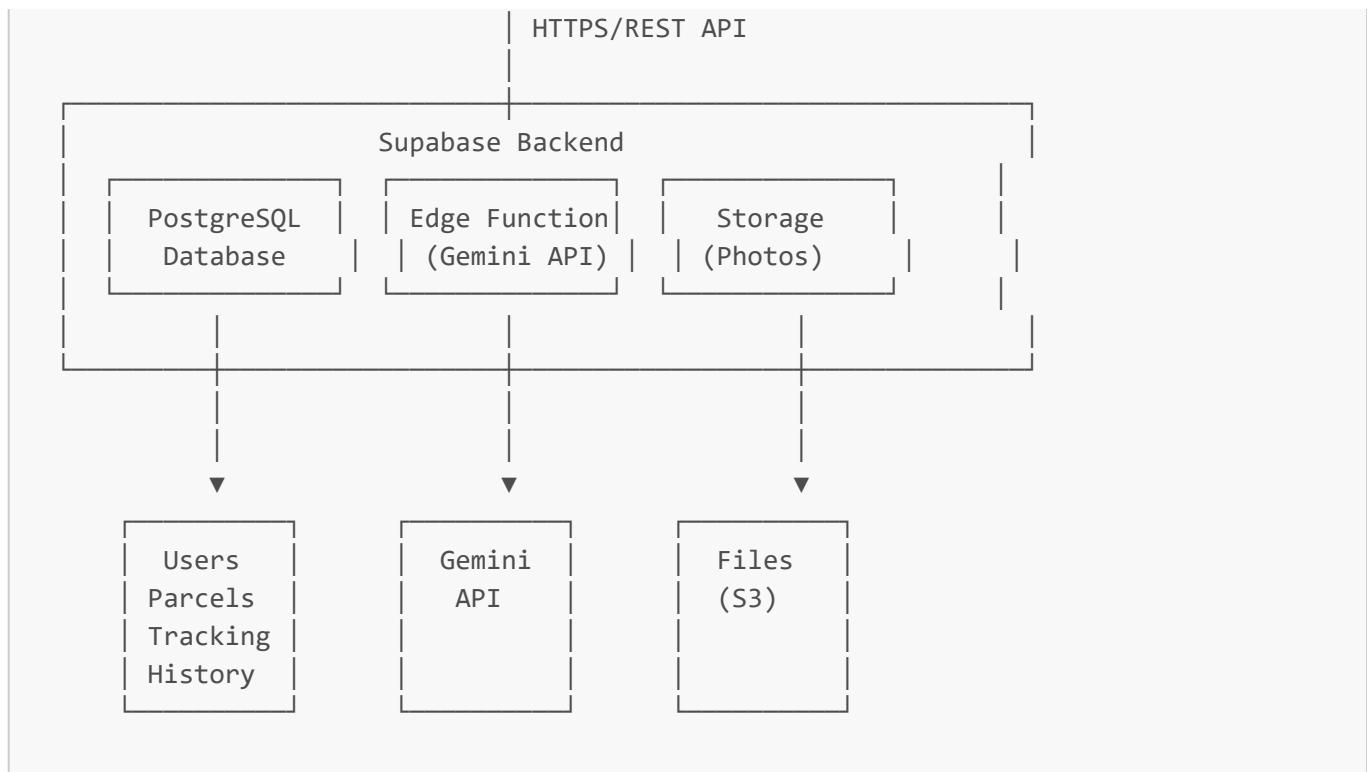
- **End Users:** Kenyan residents tracking their parcels
- **Administrators:** Logistics staff managing parcel deliveries
- **Courier Services:** Companies using the platform for delivery tracking

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## 2. Architecture & Flow Diagrams

### 2.1 System Architecture





## 2.2 Database Schema

### **Users Table:**

- **`id`** (UUID, Primary Key)
- **`email`** (TEXT, Unique)
- **`full_name`** (TEXT)
- **`password_hash`** (TEXT)
- **`profile_photo_path`** (TEXT, nullable)
- **`is_admin`** (BOOLEAN, default: false)
- **`created_at`** (TIMESTAMP)
- **`updated_at`** (TIMESTAMP)

### **Parcels Table:**

- **`id`** (UUID, Primary Key)
- **`parcel_id`** (TEXT, Unique)
- **`user_id`** (UUID, Foreign Key → users.id)
- **`from_county`** (TEXT)
- **`to_county`** (TEXT)
- **`current_location`** (TEXT, nullable)
- **`status`** (TEXT: Pending, In Transit, Out for Delivery, Delivered)
- **`courier_service`** (TEXT)
- **`recipient_name`** (TEXT)
- **`description`** (TEXT)
- **`created_at`** (TIMESTAMP)
- **`updated_at`** (TIMESTAMP)

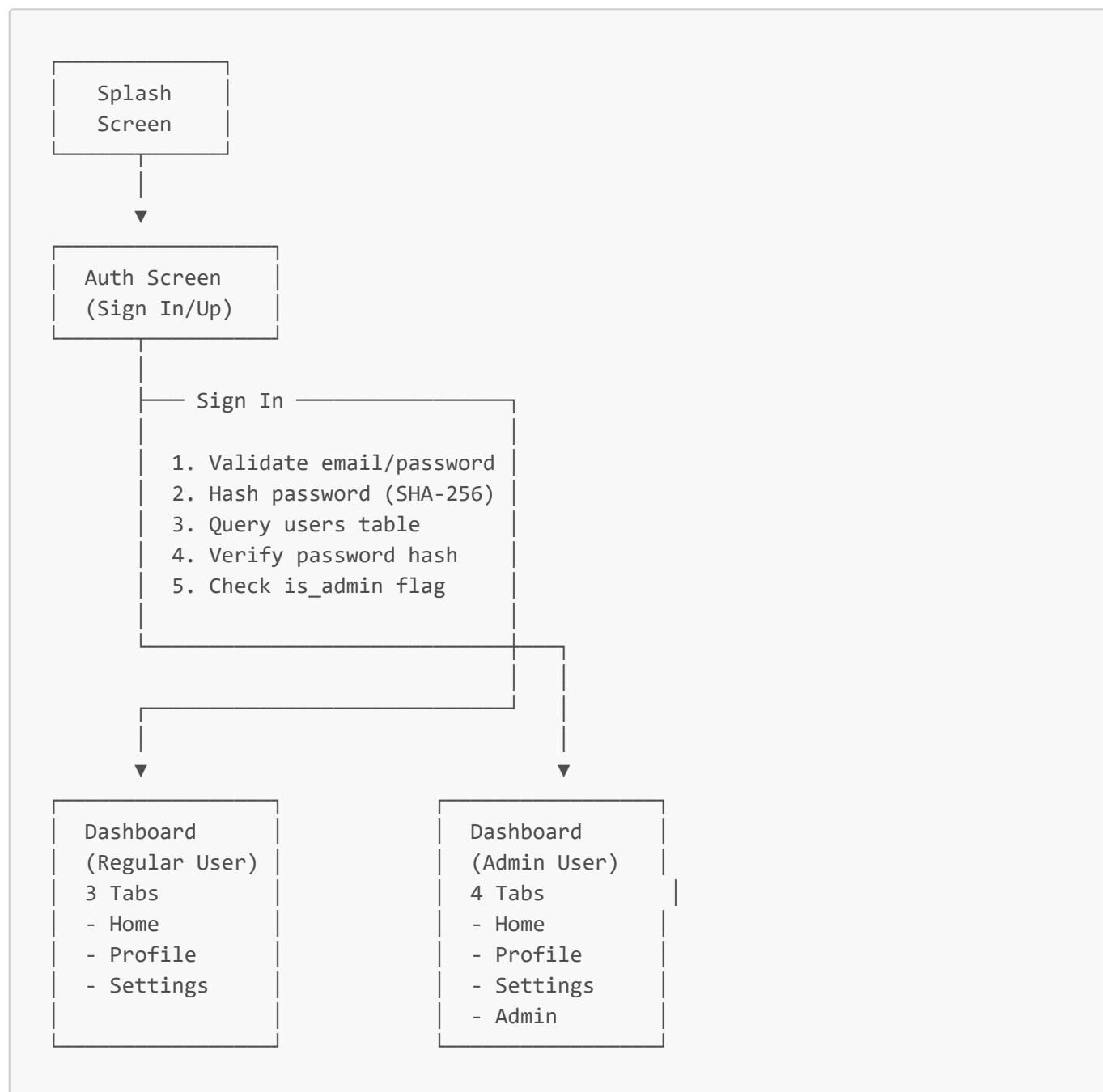
### **Tracking History Table:**

- `id` (UUID, Primary Key)
- `parcel_id` (TEXT, Foreign Key → parcels.parcel\_id)
- `status` (TEXT)
- `location` (TEXT, nullable)
- `notes` (TEXT, nullable)
- `updated_by` (TEXT, nullable - Admin user ID)
- `updated_at` (TIMESTAMP)
- `created_at` (TIMESTAMP)

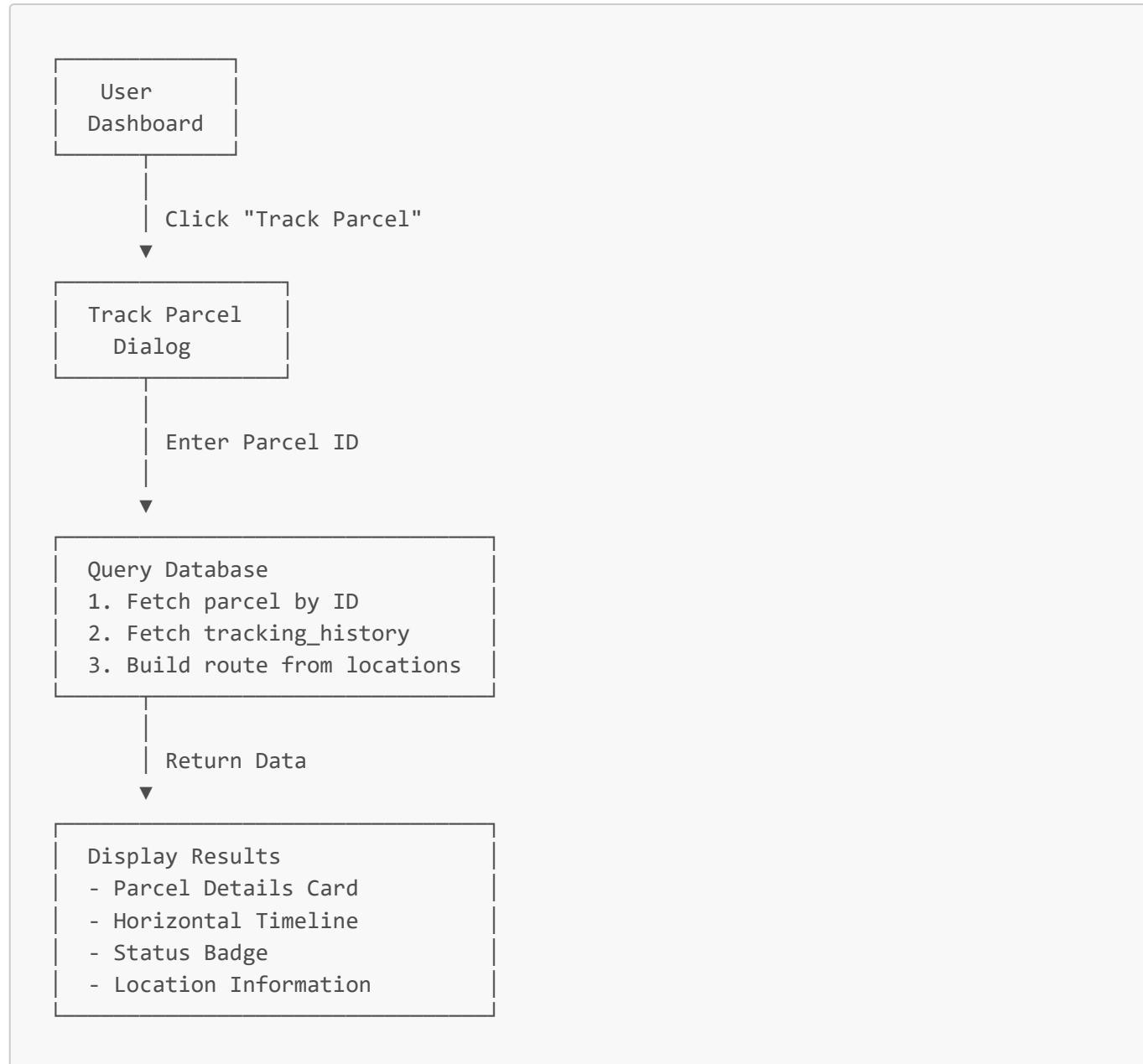
**Indexes:**

- `idx_tracking_history_parcel_id` on `tracking_history(parcel_id)`
- `idx_tracking_history_updated_at` on `tracking_history(updated_at DESC)`

## 2.3 User Authentication Flow

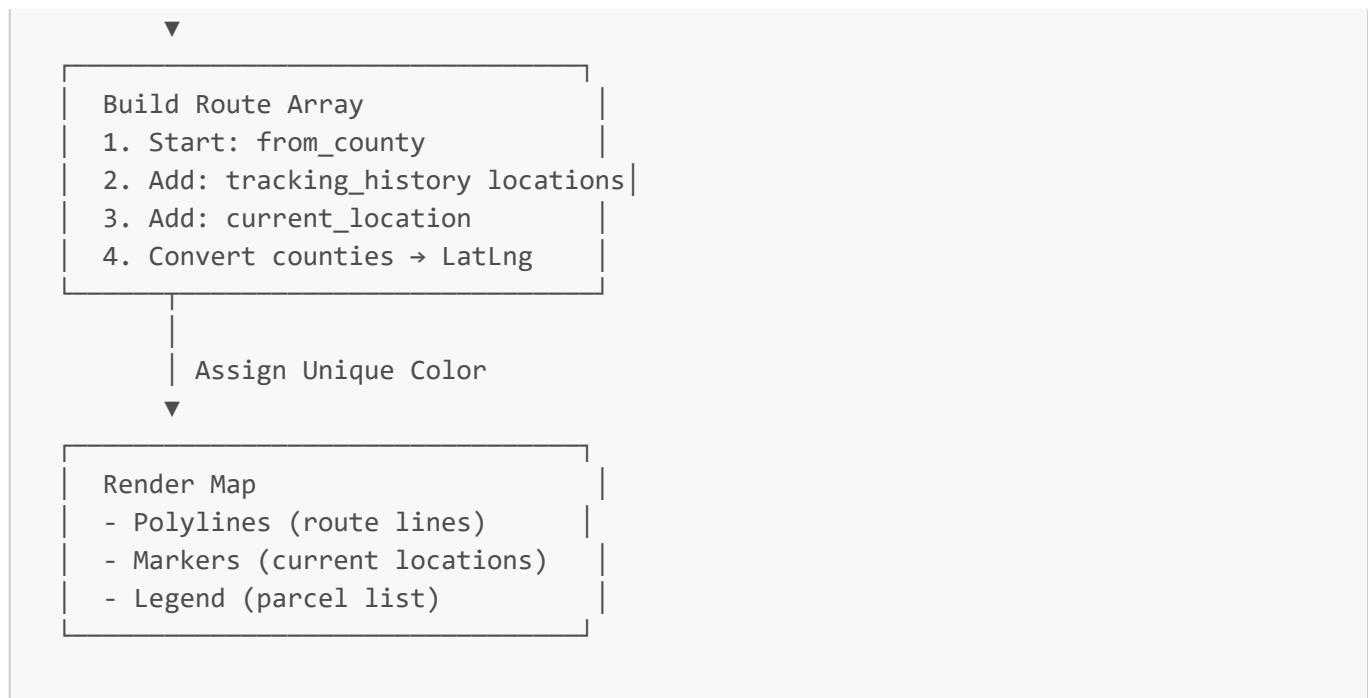


## 2.4 Parcel Tracking Flow

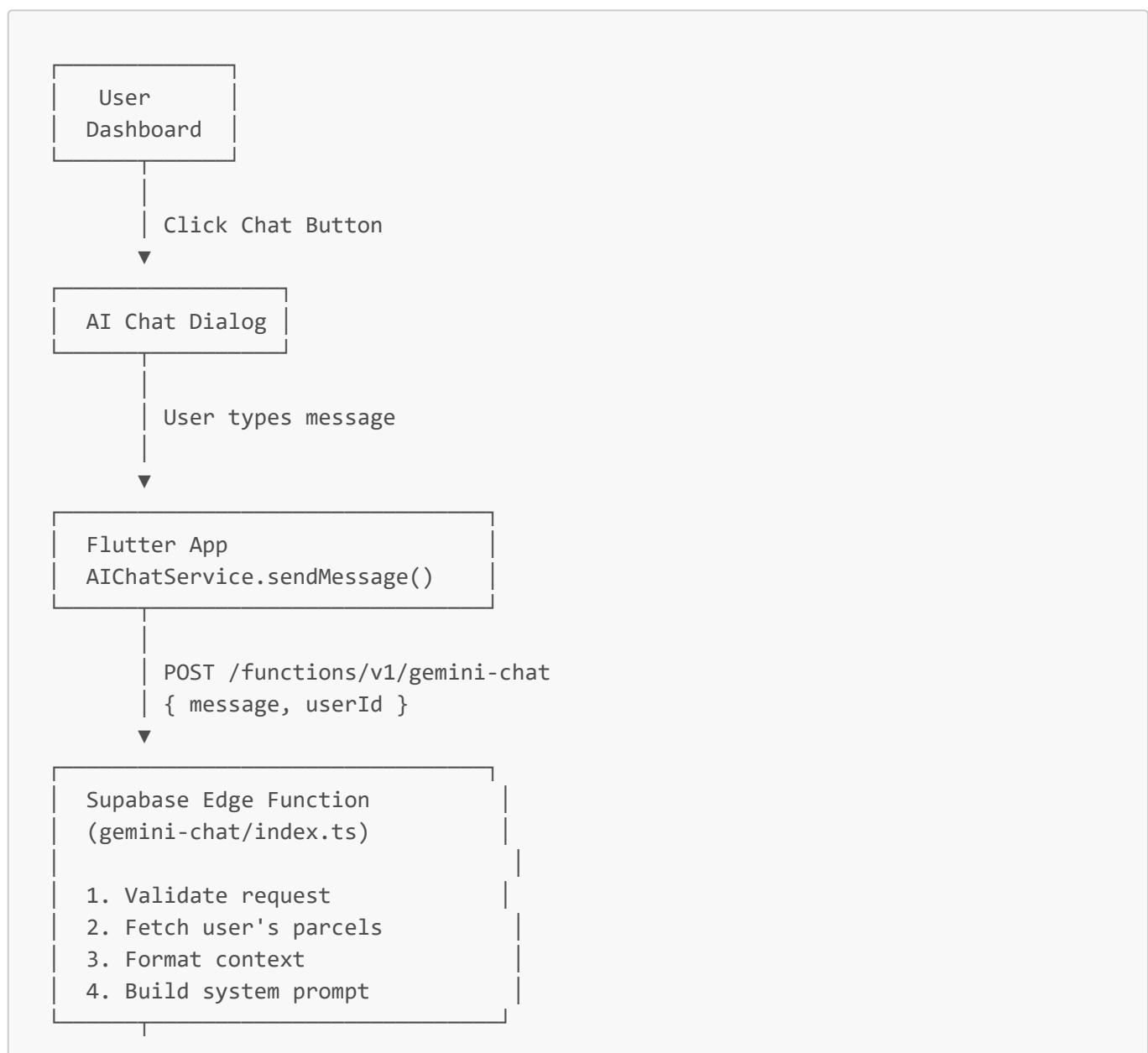


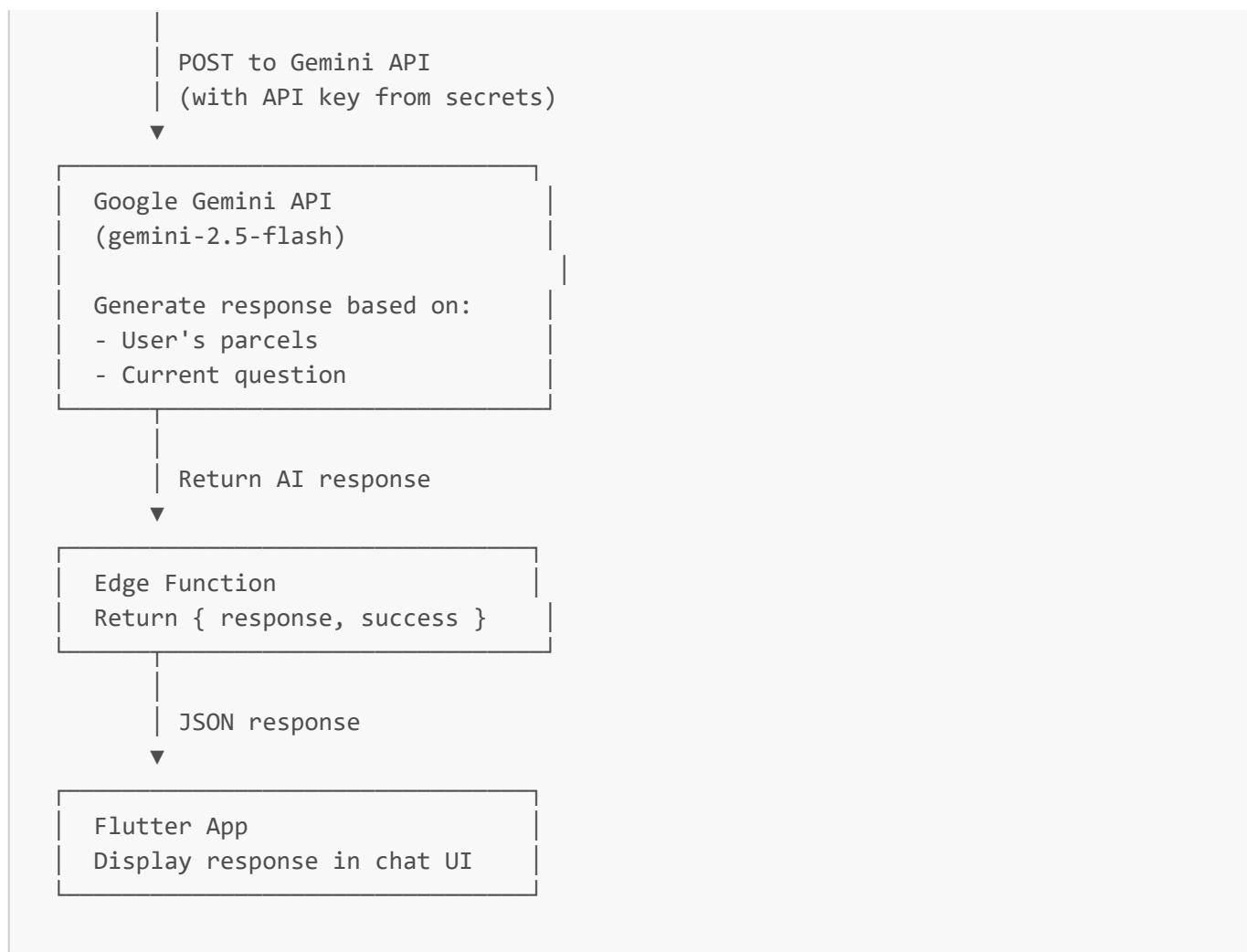
## 2.5 Live Map Flow





## 2.6 AI Chat Flow





## 2.7 Admin Update Parcel Flow



```
2. Insert tracking_history:
  - status
  - location
  - notes
  - updated_by (admin ID)
```

Success

```
Refresh Parcel List
Show success message
Close dialog
```

### 3. Implementation Summary

#### 3.1 Project Structure

```
parcel_tracking_app/
├── lib/
│   ├── main.dart          # App entry, authentication UI
│   ├── dashboard.dart      # Main dashboard with tabs (3964 lines)
│   ├── services/
│   │   └── ai_chat_service.dart # AI chat service
│   └── widgets/
│       └── ai_chat_dialog.dart # Chat UI dialog
├── supabase/
│   ├── functions/
│   │   └── gemini-chat/
│   │       ├── index.ts      # Edge Function for Gemini API
│   │       └── deno.json     # Deno configuration
│   └── migrations/
│       ├── add_admin_support.sql
│       ├── add_current_location.sql
│       └── add_tracking_history.sql
└── android/                  # Android platform files
└── ios/                      # iOS platform files
└── web/                      # Web platform files
└── windows/                  # Windows platform files
└── macos/                    # macOS platform files
└── linux/                    # Linux platform files
└── pubspec.yaml              # Flutter dependencies
```

#### 3.2 Core Components

##### 3.2.1 Authentication System ([lib/main.dart](#))

###### Features:

- Animated splash screen with app branding
- Tab-based authentication UI (Sign In / Sign Up)
- Password hashing using SHA-256
- Email validation
- Error handling and user feedback
- Admin detection on login

### **Key Functions:**

- `_hashPassword()`: SHA-256 password hashing
- `_handleSignIn()`: User authentication
- `_handleSignUp()`: New user registration
- Admin flag detection and passing to dashboard

### **3.2.2 Dashboard Screen (`lib/dashboard.dart`)**

#### **Architecture:**

- Tab-based navigation (3 tabs for users, 4 for admins)
- State management using StatefulWidget
- Supabase client integration
- Image picker for profile photos

#### **Tabs:**

##### **1. Home Tab:**

- Parcel list with status cards
- "Track Parcel" dialog with timeline
- "Live Map" dialog with route visualization
- FloatingActionButton for AI chat
- Pull-to-refresh functionality

##### **2. Profile Tab:**

- User information display
- Profile photo upload (camera/gallery)
- Photo storage in Supabase Storage
- Cache-busting for image updates

##### **3. Settings Tab:**

- App settings and preferences
- Logout functionality

##### **4. Admin Tab (Admin Only):**

- Search and filter parcels
- List of all parcels from all users
- Update parcel dialog
- Status and location management

- Admin notes functionality

### Key Features:

- **Parcel Tracking Dialog:**
  - Parcel ID input
  - Database query for parcel details
  - Horizontal timeline visualization
  - Status badges with color coding
  - Location information display
- **Live Map Dialog:**
  - Interactive map using flutter\_map
  - Route polylines with unique colors
  - Location markers
  - County-to-coordinates conversion
  - Route legend panel
  - Filtering of delivered parcels
- **Update Parcel Dialog (Admin):**
  - Status dropdown (4 options)
  - Location dropdown (47 Kenyan counties)
  - Optional notes field
  - Database update with tracking history
  - Success/error feedback

### 3.2.3 AI Chat Service ([lib/services/ai\\_chat\\_service.dart](#))

#### Functionality:

- HTTP POST requests to Supabase Edge Function
- Error handling for network issues
- User ID passing for context
- Response parsing and error management

#### API Endpoint:

- [POST /functions/v1/gemini-chat](#)
- Headers: Authorization, Content-Type
- Body: { message, userId }

### 3.2.4 AI Chat Dialog ([lib/widgets/ai\\_chat\\_dialog.dart](#))

#### UI Components:

- Full-screen dialog with gradient header
- Message list with user/AI distinction
- Text input field with send button

- Loading indicators
- Auto-scrolling to latest messages
- Welcome message on initialization

### Message Display:

- User messages: Right-aligned, purple background
- AI messages: Left-aligned, grey background
- Avatar icons for visual distinction
- Timestamp support (stored but not displayed)

### 3.2.5 Supabase Edge Function ([supabase/functions/gemini-chat/index.ts](#))

#### Functionality:

- CORS handling for cross-origin requests
- Environment variable management (GEMINI\_API\_KEY)
- User parcel fetching from database
- Context formatting for AI
- Gemini API integration
- Error handling and response formatting

#### AI Integration:

- Model: [gemini-2.5-flash](#)
- System prompt includes user's parcels
- Natural language understanding
- Context-aware responses

## 3.3 Database Implementation

### 3.3.1 Migrations

#### Phase 1: Admin Support

- Added `is_admin` column to `users` table
- Default value: `false`
- Enables role-based access control

#### Phase 2: Current Location

- Added `current_location` column to `parcels` table
- Stores county name as TEXT
- Used for map visualization and tracking

#### Phase 3: Tracking History

- Created `tracking_history` table
- Stores all status changes and location updates
- Includes admin notes
- Indexed for performance

### 3.3.2 Data Flow

#### Parcel Creation:

1. User creates parcel via admin or API
2. Parcel inserted into `parcels` table
3. Initial status: "Pending"
4. `from_county` set as starting location

#### Parcel Updates:

1. Admin updates status/location
2. `parcels` table updated
3. New entry inserted into `tracking_history`
4. Route array rebuilt for map visualization

#### Tracking Query:

1. User enters parcel ID
2. Query `parcels` table by `parcel_id`
3. Query `tracking_history` by `parcel_id`
4. Build timeline from history entries
5. Display chronological events

## 3.4 Map Visualization

#### Implementation Details:

- Library: `flutter_map` with OpenStreetMap tiles
- Coordinate conversion: County names → LatLng coordinates
- Color assignment: 14-color palette, cycling for multiple parcels
- Polyline rendering: 3px width with white borders
- Marker placement: Current location for each active parcel
- Filtering: Excludes delivered parcels

#### Route Building Algorithm:

1. Start with `from_county` as first point
2. Fetch all `tracking_history` entries for parcel
3. Sort by `updated_at` chronologically
4. Extract unique locations
5. Add `current_location` if different from last point
6. Convert county names to coordinates
7. Draw polyline connecting all points

## 3.5 Security Implementation

#### Authentication:

- Password hashing: SHA-256 (one-way)
- No plaintext passwords stored

- Email validation on client and server
- Session management via Supabase

### **API Security:**

- Gemini API key stored in Supabase secrets (not in code)
- Edge Function validates user authentication
- Row-Level Security (RLS) policies on database
- CORS properly configured

### **Data Access:**

- Users can only access their own parcels
- Admins can access all parcels
- Tracking history linked to parcels
- Profile photos stored with user-specific paths

## 3.6 UI/UX Design

### **Design Principles:**

- Material Design 3 guidelines
- Deep purple/indigo color scheme
- Gradient backgrounds for visual appeal
- Smooth animations and transitions
- Responsive layout for different screen sizes

### **Key UI Elements:**

- Animated splash screen
- Tab-based navigation with custom indicators
- Card-based parcel displays
- Status badges with color coding
- Horizontal timeline for tracking
- Interactive map with markers and routes
- Modern chat interface

### **User Feedback:**

- Loading indicators during async operations
- Success/error snackbars
- Pull-to-refresh on lists
- Empty state messages
- Error handling with user-friendly messages

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## 4. Challenges & Improvements

### 4.1 Challenges Encountered

#### **4.1.1 Database Schema Evolution**

**Challenge:** The database schema evolved over time with multiple migrations (admin support, current location, tracking history). Managing these changes required careful coordination between code and database.

**Solution:** Created separate migration SQL files for each phase, allowing incremental updates. Documented each migration with clear instructions.

#### 4.1.2 Map Coordinate Conversion

**Challenge:** Converting Kenyan county names to geographic coordinates (LatLang) for map visualization. No built-in geocoding service integrated.

**Solution:** Implemented a hardcoded mapping of county names to approximate coordinates. This works for visualization but could be improved with a proper geocoding service.

#### 4.1.3 AI Chat Context Management

**Challenge:** Providing relevant context to the AI (user's parcels) while maintaining security and performance.

**Solution:** Edge Function fetches user's parcels server-side, formats context, and sends to Gemini API. This ensures security (API key not exposed) and provides accurate context.

#### 4.1.4 State Management Complexity

**Challenge:** Managing complex state in the dashboard (parcels, map data, chat messages, profile photos) within a single StatefulWidget.

**Solution:** Used StatefulWidget with proper state management, but the file grew large (3964 lines). Could benefit from state management solutions like Provider or Riverpod.

#### 4.1.5 Real-time Updates

**Challenge:** Parcel status changes by admins don't automatically reflect in user's view without manual refresh.

**Solution:** Implemented pull-to-refresh functionality. Could be improved with Supabase Realtime subscriptions for automatic updates.

#### 4.1.6 Image Upload and Caching

**Challenge:** Profile photos needed cache-busting to show updated images immediately after upload.

**Solution:** Implemented cache-busting by appending timestamp query parameter to image URLs.

### 4.2 Improvements & Future Enhancements

#### 4.2.1 Technical Improvements

##### 1. State Management Refactoring

- **Current:** Single large StatefulWidget (3964 lines)
- **Improvement:** Implement Provider or Riverpod for better state management
- **Benefit:** Cleaner code, easier testing, better performance

## 2. Real-time Updates

- **Current:** Manual refresh required
- **Improvement:** Implement Supabase Realtime subscriptions
- **Benefit:** Automatic updates when parcels change status

## 3. Geocoding Service Integration

- **Current:** Hardcoded county-to-coordinate mapping
- **Improvement:** Integrate Google Maps Geocoding API or similar
- **Benefit:** Accurate coordinates, support for addresses beyond counties

## 4. Offline Support

- **Current:** Requires internet connection
- **Improvement:** Implement local caching with Hive or SQLite
- **Benefit:** View cached parcels offline, sync when online

## 5. Push Notifications

- **Current:** No notifications
- **Improvement:** Integrate Firebase Cloud Messaging (FCM)
- **Benefit:** Notify users when parcel status changes

## 6. Image Optimization

- **Current:** Images uploaded as-is
- **Improvement:** Implement image compression and resizing
- **Benefit:** Faster uploads, reduced storage costs

### 4.2.2 Feature Enhancements

#### 1. Advanced Search and Filtering

- Filter parcels by status, date range, county
- Search by recipient name, courier service
- Sort by date, status, location

#### 2. Bulk Operations (Admin)

- Bulk status updates
- Export parcel data to CSV/Excel
- Batch location updates

#### 3. Analytics Dashboard (Admin)

- Statistics: Total parcels, delivery times, status distribution
- Charts and graphs for insights
- Performance metrics

#### 4. Multi-language Support

- Support for Swahili and other Kenyan languages
- Localized UI text and messages

## 5. QR Code Integration

- Generate QR codes for parcels
- Scan QR codes to track parcels
- Faster parcel identification

## 6. Delivery Estimates

- Calculate estimated delivery time based on route
- Show expected delivery date
- Notify users of delays

## 7. Parcel Photos

- Allow users to upload photos of received parcels
- Admin can attach photos to tracking history
- Photo gallery in parcel details

## 8. SMS/Email Notifications

- Send SMS when parcel status changes
- Email updates with tracking links
- Delivery confirmation messages

## 9. Route Optimization (Admin)

- Suggest optimal delivery routes
- Group parcels by location
- Reduce delivery time and costs

## 10. User Reviews and Ratings

- Rate delivery experience
- Review courier services
- Feedback system

### 4.2.3 Performance Optimizations

#### 1. Database Query Optimization

- Add more indexes for frequently queried fields
- Implement pagination for large parcel lists
- Use database views for complex queries

#### 2. Image Loading

- Implement image caching with cached\_network\_image
- Lazy loading for parcel lists
- Progressive image loading

### 3. Map Performance

- Limit number of parcels shown on map simultaneously
- Cluster markers for better performance
- Lazy load map tiles

### 4. API Response Caching

- Cache AI chat responses for common queries
- Cache parcel data with TTL
- Reduce API calls

#### 4.2.4 Security Enhancements

##### 1. Enhanced Authentication

- Implement JWT token refresh
- Add two-factor authentication (2FA)
- Password strength requirements

##### 2. Data Encryption

- Encrypt sensitive data at rest
- Use HTTPS for all API calls (already implemented)
- Encrypt admin notes

##### 3. Rate Limiting

- Implement rate limiting for API calls
- Prevent abuse of AI chat
- Limit parcel creation per user

##### 4. Audit Logging

- Log all admin actions
- Track user activities
- Security event monitoring

#### 4.2.5 User Experience Improvements

##### 1. Onboarding Flow

- Welcome tutorial for new users
- Feature highlights
- Interactive guide

##### 2. Accessibility

- Screen reader support
- High contrast mode
- Font size adjustments

### 3. Dark Mode

- Implement dark theme
- System theme detection
- User preference toggle

### 4. Improved Error Messages

- More descriptive error messages
- Actionable error suggestions
- Help documentation links

### 5. Loading States

- Skeleton screens instead of spinners
- Progressive loading
- Better loading indicators

## 4.3 Scalability Considerations

### Current Limitations:

- Single Supabase project (may need scaling)
- No load balancing for Edge Functions
- Database may need optimization for large datasets

### Scalability Improvements:

#### 1. Database Scaling:

- Implement read replicas for queries
- Partition large tables
- Archive old tracking history

#### 2. Edge Function Scaling:

- Implement caching layer (Redis)
- Rate limiting per user
- Queue system for high traffic

#### 3. Storage Scaling:

- Implement CDN for image delivery
- Compress images automatically
- Archive old profile photos

#### 4. Monitoring and Logging:

- Implement application monitoring (Sentry, LogRocket)
- Performance metrics tracking
- Error tracking and alerting

## 4.4 Testing Improvements

**Current State:** Limited testing implemented

**Recommended Testing:**

**1. Unit Tests:**

- Test authentication logic
- Test password hashing
- Test coordinate conversion

**2. Widget Tests:**

- Test UI components
- Test dialog interactions
- Test form validation

**3. Integration Tests:**

- Test database operations
- Test API integrations
- Test end-to-end flows

**4. Performance Tests:**

- Load testing for Edge Functions
- Database query performance
- Map rendering performance

## 4.5 Documentation Improvements

**Current State:** Basic documentation in markdown files

**Recommended Documentation:**

**1. API Documentation:**

- OpenAPI/Swagger specification
- Endpoint documentation
- Request/response examples

**2. Code Documentation:**

- Inline code comments
- Function documentation
- Architecture diagrams

**3. User Documentation:**

- User guide with screenshots
- FAQ section
- Video tutorials

#### 4. Admin Documentation:

- Admin user guide
  - Troubleshooting guide
  - Deployment guide
- 

## Conclusion

The ChaRo Parcel Tracker application successfully implements a comprehensive parcel tracking system with user authentication, real-time tracking, interactive maps, and AI-powered assistance. The application leverages modern technologies (Flutter, Supabase, Google Gemini) to provide a seamless user experience.

#### Key Achievements:

- Cross-platform Flutter application
- Secure authentication system
- Real-time parcel tracking with timeline
- Interactive map with route visualization
- AI chatbot integration
- Admin dashboard for parcel management
- Profile management with photo uploads
- Comprehensive tracking history

#### Areas for Future Development:

- State management refactoring
- Real-time updates with Supabase Realtime
- Enhanced geocoding for accurate locations
- Push notifications for status updates
- Advanced analytics and reporting
- Multi-language support
- Offline functionality

The application provides a solid foundation for a production-ready parcel tracking system and can be extended with the improvements outlined above to meet growing user needs and scale requirements.

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**Report Generated:** 2025

**Project Status:** Functional - Ready for Testing and Deployment

**Total Lines of Code:** ~5,000+ (Flutter/Dart)

**Database Tables:** 3 (users, parcels, tracking\_history)

**Edge Functions:** 1 (gemini-chat)

**Platforms Supported:** Android, iOS, Web, Windows, macOS, Linux