# Design Documentation

Old links from Phase 1: [Figma Prototyping link](#)

## Design Evolution

The design process started with some basic wireframes that laid out the overall structure of the site—starting from the homepage and branching into four key pages: Hours & Fare, Getting There, About, and More. Early on, the goal was to keep everything simple and easy to navigate. Once development began, those pages kept most of the ideas of the necessary content and themes I was aiming for in the wireframes. I built the About page first, since I wanted to lay out the most complicated page of the entire website and work backwards from there. I then created the rest of the content pages with ease - because I was able to replicate the formatting through css styling. I made the Home page last. Then, I began to build some frameworks with more user interactions, such as hover functions, buttons, and mailing forms. As I tested the site with real users, I made several changes based on their feedback—like making student fare info more visible, moving the FAQ section higher on the page so users didn't have to scroll as much, and adding the mailing list section to more than one spot. I also cleaned up the spacing and layout to make sure everything looked good on both desktop and mobile. In the end, the final site kept the nostalgic feel I was going for, while also becoming much more user-friendly as a result of the iteration process.

## Site Map
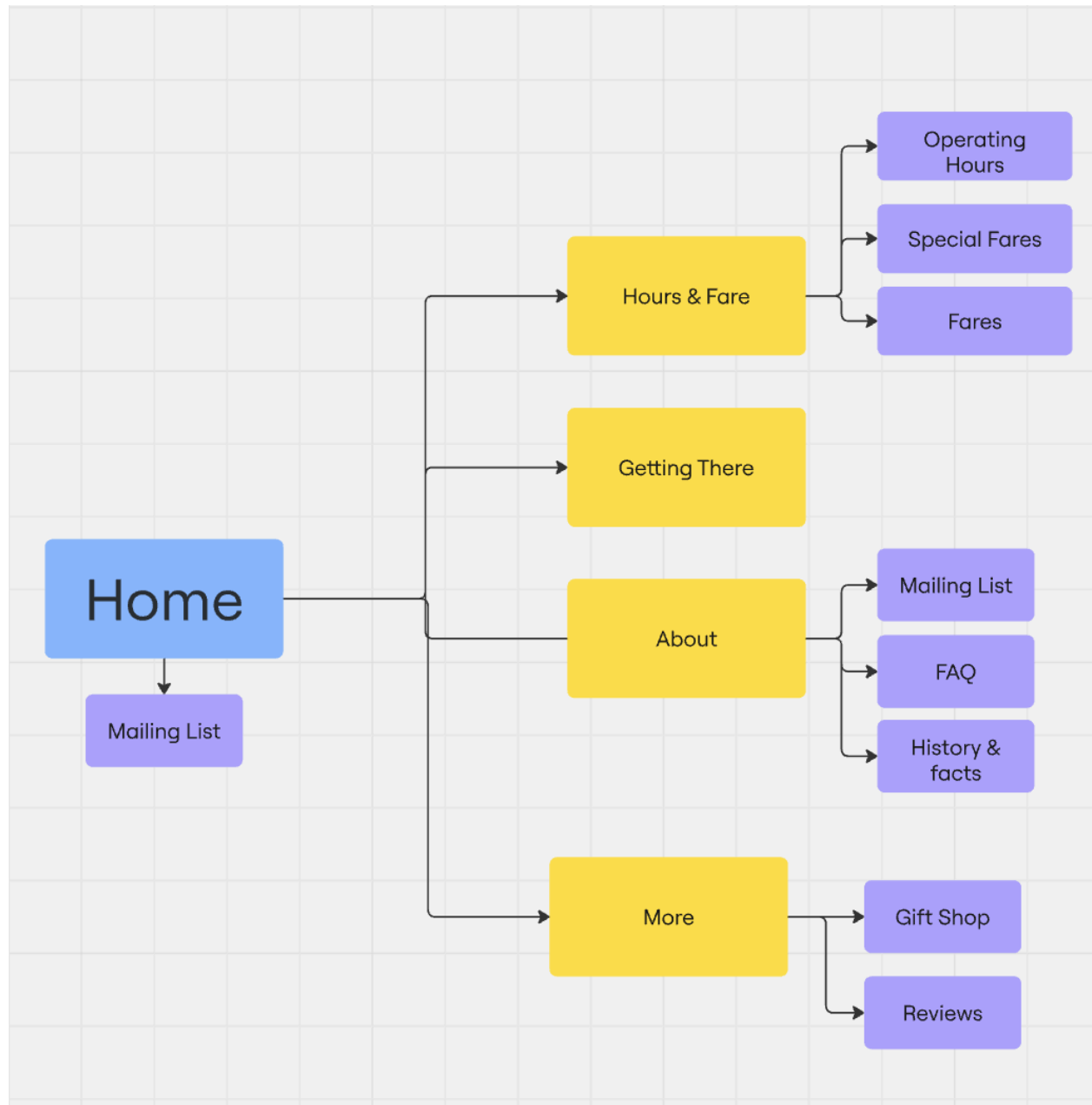
## Information Architecture & Navigation

The homepage acts as a central hub that connects directly to four key subpages: *Hours & Fare*, *Getting There*, *About*, and *More*. This simple, flat structure minimizes the number of clicks needed to access important information, which improves usability and navigation clarity for users. It also ensures that content remains easily discoverable, helping both new and returning visitors quickly find what they need. Information architecture for the Duquesne Incline site was driven by user expectations and logical content grouping. The site employs a flat hierarchy with minimal nesting to prioritize ease of access. Pages are titled clearly based on user intent—such

as "Getting There" and "Hours & Fare"—which aligns with common search behaviors. Content within each page is grouped using collapsible sections to reduce scrolling fatigue and allow users to focus only on the topics they're interested in. The consistent use of serif fonts, vintage colors, and a simple navigational bar helps maintain a unified, readable experience throughout the site.

## First-Time vs. Returning Visitors

For first-time visitors, intuitive page titles, a straightforward header navigation, and welcoming homepage content ensure that the user enters the website with little distractions. Visual consistency and predictable page structure guide users naturally from one section to the next. For returning visitors, quick access to practical sections—such as fare info, parking, and hours - can be quickly found at the top of each page via the navigation bar in the header. Design elements like collapsible FAQ sections, clearly labeled links, and minimized clutter enhance usability for repeat visits, ensuring users can jump directly to the content they need without distraction.

## Interactive functionalities

- JavaScript Features: slideshow for images on about and more info page
- API Integration: accuweather api integration (more info page)
- jQuery: Uses jquery to manipulate collapse and see more function
- Mailing list form: with form validation, the submit button takes the user to a mailto popup

# Usability Testing

## Interview Protocol

- Introduction script
  - Hi, thanks for taking the time to help test this website. This is a casual session to help us understand how real users interact with the site. I'll ask you to complete a few tasks that simulate real goals someone might have while visiting the Duquesne Incline website.
  - Please think out loud as you go—describe what you're looking at, what you expect to happen, and anything that confuses you.
- Use the use case tasks in the tables below and record any behaviors / moments of uncertainty
- Ask the user about their overall experience and anything they would like to see changed in the website

# User Testing

User 1 - Anna - link to recording here

| Task | notes | changes |
|------|-------|---------|
| I am a college student from CMU and I want to find fare information for me and my friends | Mistook adult fare for college student fare - could not see the info | Revise the fares page to make college student perks more visible |
| I want to subscribe to the mailing list | Easy to find - navigated to about page first | add the "join our mailing list" section into the about page in addition to the home page |
| I want to check where to park my car since I am travelling with my family | Easy to find | |
| I want to see if there is a restroom at the incline | Easy to find - about page | |
| I want to see some photos of other visitors | Navigated to the about page first before going to the more information page | Move the interactive slideshow to the about page |

Anna successfully completed all five user tasks, but her experience revealed a few areas for improvement. As a college student from CMU, she initially mistook the adult fare information as applicable to students, indicating that the fares page should more clearly highlight any college student perks. While she easily found the option to join the mailing list, she instinctively looked for it on the About page, suggesting it would be helpful to include the mailing list section there as well, in addition to the homepage. When asked to find parking information and restroom availability, she located both easily. However, when looking for visitor photos, Anna first checked the About page before realizing they were on the More Information page. This behavior suggests that the interactive slideshow could be more intuitively placed on the About page. As such, three design changes were made: improving visibility of college fare info, adding the mailing list to the About page, and relocating the image carousel.

User 2 - Shreya - link to recording here

| Task | notes | changes |
|------|-------|---------|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I am a college student from CMU and I want to find fare information for me and my friends | Easy to find | |
| I want to subscribe to the mailing list | Easy to find | |
| I want to check where to park my car since I am travelling with my family | Wasn't paying attention to the getting there page and ignored the parking info | Revise the font size |
| I want to see if there is a restroom at the incline | Had to scroll down to the bottom of the about page | move the frequently asked questions page to the top |
| I want to see some photos of other visitors | Easy to find - bonus points for finding the instagram posts | |

During Shreya's usability interview, she completed all five tasks with relative ease, offering insights into how minor design adjustments could improve user clarity. As a CMU student, she found the fare information and mailing list section easily. However, when asked to locate parking information, she overlooked it on the "Getting There" page, indicating that the visual hierarchy could be improved to increase visibility. For restroom availability, she found the information at the bottom of the About page, but she had to scroll further than she anticipated; this suggests that the Frequently Asked Questions section could be more effective if it were placed higher on the page. Finally, Shreya located visitor photos and even found the embedded Instagram post. This shows that the carousel and social media content were both discoverable and engaging. Based on her feedback, two design updates were made: increasing the font size for parking information and repositioning the FAQ section to the top of the About page. With additional time, additional features like anchor links or jump buttons would improve content accessibility.

## What I would do if I had more time

I would most likely conduct more user testing to see how I would be able to optimize the layout of the website, playing around with the elements until users were able to find the information they need at the first or second try. I would also definitely incorporate more animations and hover interactions to make the experience more enjoyable. If I had more funding, I would also hire a professional photographer to take photos of the gift shop offering in order to put better quality images on the website.

# Work Cited

*My website used images from the following sources*

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Stephen. (2022, November 12). *Riding the Duquesne incline in Pittsburgh, PA - No home just roam*. No Home Just Roam. https://nohomejustroam.com/riding-duquesne-incline-pittsburgh-pa/

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