

# EYLA — SYSTEM-FIRST DESIGN & PRODUCT SPEC

**Version:** v3.1 (Consolidated)

**Status:** Canonical Design Document

**Scope:** MVP + Foundation for Scaling

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## 1. What EYLA Is (And Is Not)

EYLA is **not**:

- A task manager
- A kanban board
- A productivity dashboard
- A to-do list replacement

EYLA is a **cognitive orientation system**.

Its purpose is not to optimize execution speed, but to:

- Reduce mental friction
- Preserve continuity over time
- Clarify what matters *now*
- Protect the user from cognitive overload

Every design decision must answer one question:

**Does this reduce cognitive load — or merely redistribute it?**

If it only redistributes load, **it does not belong in EYLA.**

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## 2. Core Design Philosophy: SYSTEM FIRST

EYLA follows a **system-first** philosophy.

- The system protects the user
- The system guides attention
- The system limits choice
- The system favors long-term calm over short-term stimulation

Aesthetic decisions are **subordinate** to system integrity.

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### **3. Mental Design Tokens (Non-Negotiable)**

These are **mental design tokens**.

They are not UI components, colors, or layouts.

They are **immutable rules**.

#### **TOKEN 1 — AXIS = ONE**

The entire EYLA experience lives on **one primary vertical axis**.

EYLA is not:

- A canvas
- A board
- A map

#### **Consequences**

- One dominant vertical flow
  - No competing horizontal structures
  - No floating elements breaking alignment
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#### **TOKEN 2 — FOCUS = ONE\_AT\_A\_TIME**

The user can only be mentally focused on **one step at a time**.

#### **Consequences**

- One active step is visually dominant
  - All other steps degrade in emphasis
  - Focus is never duplicated elsewhere
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## **TOKEN 3 — PAST = CALM**

The past does not shout.  
It accompanies.

### **Consequences**

- Completed steps remain visible
  - Lower contrast
  - Reduced animation
  - Never crossed out
  - Never visually “disabled”
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## **TOKEN 4 — FUTURE = SILENT**

The future reassures; it does not compete.

### **Consequences**

- Future steps are visible but passive
  - No strong CTAs
  - No dominant hover states
  - No invitation to act prematurely
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## **TOKEN 5 — FORM = STABLE**

Form does not communicate state.

**State communicates state.**

### **Consequences**

- Cards retain constant geometry
  - No resizing, morphing, or shape changes
  - Emphasis changes via tone, contrast, depth
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## **TOKEN 6 — PATH = PERCEIVED, NOT DRAWN**

The path is not literally drawn.

The path is **felt**.

### **Consequences**

- No long guiding lines
- No zig-zag connectors
- No explicit trajectories

Progress is conveyed through:

- Vertical rhythm
  - Spacing
  - Hierarchy
  - Repetition
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## **TOKEN 7 — CTA = HIERARCHICAL**

There is never more than **one primary action**.

### **Consequences**

- One dominant CTA per screen

- Secondary actions are discreet
  - Destructive actions are always subdued
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## TOKEN 8 — COPY = GUIDANCE

Text does not decorate.

Text **orients**.

### Consequences

- Every screen answers: “*What should I do now?*”
  - Calm, human microcopy
  - No poetic copy without function
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## TOKEN 9 — EMOTION = CALM\_CLARITY

EYLA reduces anxiety.

It does not manage it.

### Consequences

- Gentle motion
  - Slow transitions
  - No urgency
  - No dopamine loops
  - No pressure
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## TOKEN 10 — SYSTEM\_FIRST

The system has priority over expression.

### Consequences

- Fewer arbitrary aesthetic decisions
  - Strong long-term coherence
  - The system protects the user from themselves
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## 4. Main Workspace Model

The **main axis** is the primary workspace.

It contains:

- The roadmap
- The current phase
- The active step
- Perceived progress

It is:

- Vertical
- Centered
- Calm
- Predictable

No secondary panels compete with it.

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## 5. Sidebar Model — Peripheral Memory

The sidebar is **not a second workspace**.

**TOKEN — SIDEBAR = MEMORY**

The sidebar remembers.

It does not decide.

## **Rules**

- No critical actions originate here
  - It never duplicates focus
  - It never competes with the main axis
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## **Sidebar Functions**

### **1. Projects**

- Project list
  - One active project
  - States: active / paused / archived
  - Switching projects = switching mental context
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### **2. Soft Timeline (Anticipation)**

#### **TOKEN — TIMELINE = ANTICIPATION**

The timeline is **not**:

- A calendar
- A task list
- An agenda

It exists to preserve continuity.

#### **Structure**

- TODAY
- NEXT
- LATER

## **Rules**

- Derived from the roadmap
  - Read-only
  - Passive
  - Never changes focus
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### **3. Idea Capture**

#### **TOKEN — CAPTURE = ZERO\_FRICTION**

Idea capture exists to avoid losing thoughts — not to organize them.

## **Rules**

- Always accessible
- Free text
- No categorization
- No required destination

Later (optional):

- Send to project
  - Turn into step
  - Delete
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### **4. Archive**

- Completed projects
- Read-only
- Memory, not action

Implicit message:

*Nothing is lost. Everything remains.*

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## 6. Reminders — System-Assisted Core Feature

### TOKEN — REMINDER = INTENT, NOT TASK

A reminder represents an **intention**, not an obligation.

The user does **not** manage reminders.

The system executes them.

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### Valid Origins of a Reminder

A reminder may only originate from:

- Conscious interruption (“not now”)
- Incomplete closure
- Future intention
- Detected friction

Never from:

- Standalone tasks
  - Settings
  - Generic to-do lists
  - Calendars
  - Artificial deadlines
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### Creation

- Free text
  - Natural language
  - No mandatory dates
  - Minimal confirmation (“I’ll remind you.”)
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## Execution

### **TOKEN — NOTIFICATION = INVITATION**

Notifications are:

- Calm
- Human
- Contextual

Examples:

- “You wanted to revisit this.”
- “This project has been waiting.”

Never:

- Alarms
  - Urgency
  - Guilt
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## Allowed Actions

- Continue
- Later (intelligent snooze)

- Dismiss

## TOKEN — DISMISS = FORGIVEN

Ignoring a reminder has **no penalty**.

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## Automatic Closure

If the user:

- Resumes the project
- Advances
- Completes the step

The reminder closes automatically.

The system observes.

It does not interrogate.

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## 7. Micro-Interaction Rules

- **MOTION = RESPONSE\_ONLY**  
Nothing moves without explicit user action
  - **FEEDBACK = WHISPER**  
No celebrations, no confetti
  - **INTERACTION = OPTIONAL**  
Sidebar interactions are always opt-in
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## 8. Intended Emotional Outcome

Using EYLA should feel like:

- Clarity

- Calm
- Continuity
- Accompaniment

Never:

- Urgency
  - Pressure
  - Multitasking
  - Noise
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## 9. Technical Acceptance Checklist (MVP)

The MVP is acceptable **only if all items below are true.**

### Orientation & Focus

- Only one step is visually dominant
- The user understands what to do now without documentation

### Layout & Structure

- Single vertical axis governs all primary content
- No UI element breaks axis alignment
- Layout does not shift unpredictably

### Sidebar

- Sidebar never competes with main content
- No critical action exists only in the sidebar
- Sidebar is contextual, not operational

## Timeline

- Timeline items are read-only
- Timeline never changes focus
- Timeline conveys anticipation, not obligation

## Reminders

- Can be created without dates
- Notifications are invitations
- Ignoring has no penalty
- Auto-close on progress

## Idea Capture

- No categorization required
- Faster to capture than to decide

## Emotional Integrity

- One dominant CTA per screen
- No animation without user action
- Interface feels calm, not demanding

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## 10. Closing Statement

This document defines the **design and product contract** of EYLA.

If something:

- Violates a token
- Duplicates focus

- Introduces anxiety
- Requires unnecessary management

👉 **It does not belong in EYLA**, regardless of visual appeal.

EYLA does not impress.

**EYLA sustains.**