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CS 447

31 March, 2022

Individual Assignment 3

Project Topic: Our project focuses on the challenges of moving to a new place and having limited resources to meet people and become familiar with an area. We also want to learn what information people would like to have access to and what features would be useful to them if we were to design a product to address these issues.

I. Investigate the Solution Space

A. *Craigslist* - Online application

1. This solution targets a wide range of problems but can be used specifically to find roommates and housing situations with the right filters applied. It can be used by anyone looking for a roommate and is not limited to a specific group or age range.
2. Craigslist is an online space where people can post listings for roommates as well as look at listings in a given area to find potential living situations. This application allows you to filter by several ranges such as your location, a more general filter of what you are looking for and then a more specific filter with options that fall under the larger category. There is a search bar that allows the user to search for specific listings. In a left aligned navigation pane, there are even more filter options to allow the

user to find the perfect option. There are filters about pets, parking, whether smoking is ok, if AC is available, etc.

3. Since Craigslist is open to everyone, there are a lot of listings available even when filters are applied so it would be time consuming to look through all the postings and most would probably lead to a dead end. Our application is going to be targeted to new college grads probably from the ages of 21-25 to keep the listings more manageable and meaningful for our targeted demographic. It is also very easy to make an account on Craigslist which forces anyone looking for roommates to be extremely cautious when talking to or meeting up with anyone they meet through the online platform. Especially for women looking for a roommate, it can be stressful using an online application so we want to implement a way to verify the users to make our product a safe and reliable resource.

B. ***Alumni Networking*** - Face-to-face organization event

1. Alumni networking events can be held for specific things such as moving for the first time and these people might know someone moving to the same place as you and can get you in contact with the right people to find a housing situation. This solution targets people within a specific organization and allows college kids to engage with older individuals who have similar interests as they are members of the same group.
2. Alumni Networking is an event held by a specific organization to allow current members and alumni members to connect about post college life such as finding a roommate in a new place. These events can either take

place in-person or online through an application such as zoom and are typically casual. People can chat about their plans and it allows alumni to give current members feedback and insight about their experiences. It also allows current members to connect with other members that they may not otherwise interact with and help them form relationships with people who might be moving to the same place they are.

3. Although an event like this offers face to face interaction which can be more assuring than talking to people over the internet, networking events aren't a guaranteed way to find potential roommates. There is definitely a chance to find someone who is moving to the same place or to find someone who knows someone but going to events without the guarantee of finding someone can be time consuming. It also isn't a great resource if you need someone as soon as you could have to move right after graduation.

C. **Bumble BFF** - Mobile application

1. This solution targets finding a roommate through a mobile application similar to a dating app except it is designed to meet new friends and roommates in a new place rather than dating prospects. The application can be used by anyone who is looking for new people to connect with and is not only for college kids and recent graduates.
2. Bumble BFF allows the user to create a profile with their demographic information, interests, etc that will be displayed to other users who have similar information. The user can make it known that they are looking for

a roommate and “swipe” through others’ profiles to find potential matches. If someone seems like a good fit, the user can connect with them and message them to learn more about them and potentially meet them in person if both people agree. This creates a causal environment to meet friends in a new city as well as roommates on a platform that is familiar to people as it is similar to social media and dating apps.

3. Any online or mobile application opens the possibility for people to create fake profiles which makes it important to be safe when discussing personal information and meeting in person. It also can be used to meet friends as well as roommates so not everyone’s intentions are the same which may make it time consuming to find someone also looking for a roommate. We are considering including a feature where you can connect with people as friends instead of roommates as well but we want to make sure that there is a clear divide in people looking for friends vs. roommates to save our users time while still giving them options. It makes me think we should have ‘modes’ that a user can switch between to make the process easier.

D. ***Community Sublease Boards*** - Open advertisement space

1. Sublease boards focus on the problem of finding a roommate when one of the people already has an apartment or house and is looking to lease a room or space within their place to another individual usually to reduce the cost.

2. A sublease board is a physical bulletin board where people can pin up fliers and announcements about available subleases in a given area. Anyone can easily create an announcement and attach it to the board for others to come by and look at. The fliers typically show the address of the place, photos of the space, and the phone number of the owner. It is a very simple concept but can be an easy way to see what is available in an area and the owners are typically looking for someone immediately so you can find a living situation quickly.
3. A limitation with this solution is that you are focused on living in a specific area or housing situation since someone has already acquired the property. Some people prefer to look for apartments after they have a roommate so they can find a space that works for both people's needs. It might be difficult to commit to a sublease unless it meets each roommate's needs such as location, size, budget, etc. We want our solution to encompass different needs and allow users to filter based on their needs and whether they want a sublease vs. to find a new place all together.

E. ***RoomieMatch*** - Online matching service

1. This solution specifically targets the problem of finding roommates with similar habits and personality traits as the user. Anyone can use this service to be matched with others looking for roommates in the same area.
2. This service works by letting the user fill out an online profile about their personality and habits which is then used by real people to match the user with other profiles that are compatible and in theory, would make good

roommates. Once matched with potential fits, the user can look through their matches and message any of them to further get to know them. While messaging your matches, you can easily chat about things you have in common as denoted on both of your profiles.

3. The limitation I mainly noticed with this solution is that you can only view profiles you were matched with. Although the idea of matching people based on personalities and habits is a good idea to find similar people, sometimes being too similar is just as bad as being too different. Good roommates can also be found in people who are very different from each other. In our product, we would want to use some personality and habit matching but also allow the user to look through other candidates that may be different but may be the perfect match.

II. Individual Brainstorming

Filter Ability

What are you looking for:

[Roommates]

[Friends]

[Places to Eat]

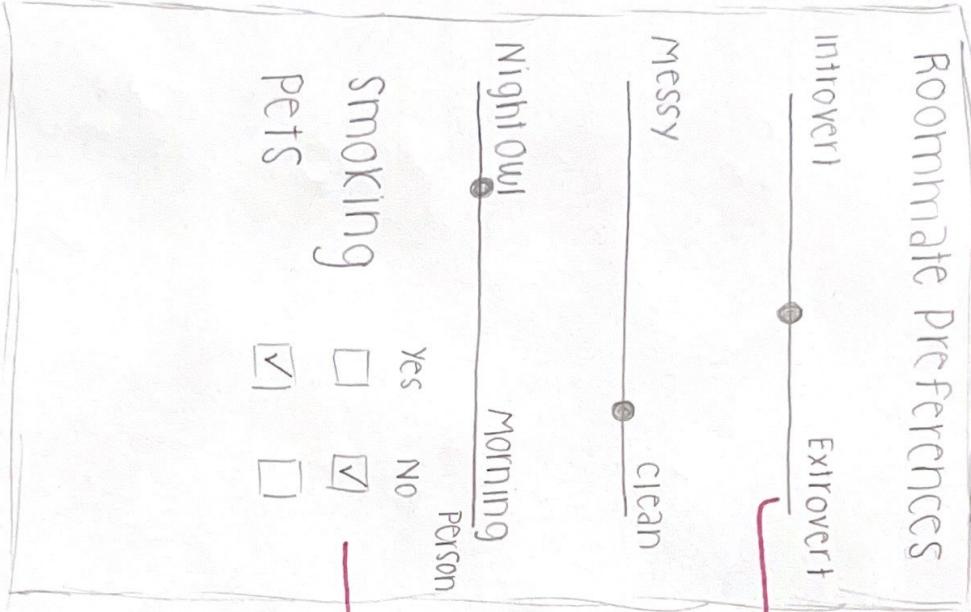
[Activities]

each
will be a
button to link
to a designated
page

We could implement our design to allow users to filter their searches. Our application would include information about finding roommates, friends places to eat and things to do in the location. The buttons will redirect the user to a new page where all the information pertains to the given button to make searching easier. The source of inspiration was Facebook Groups since by selecting 1 group, you only see related information.

Preferences

2



→ sliders to indicate what the user wants in a roommate

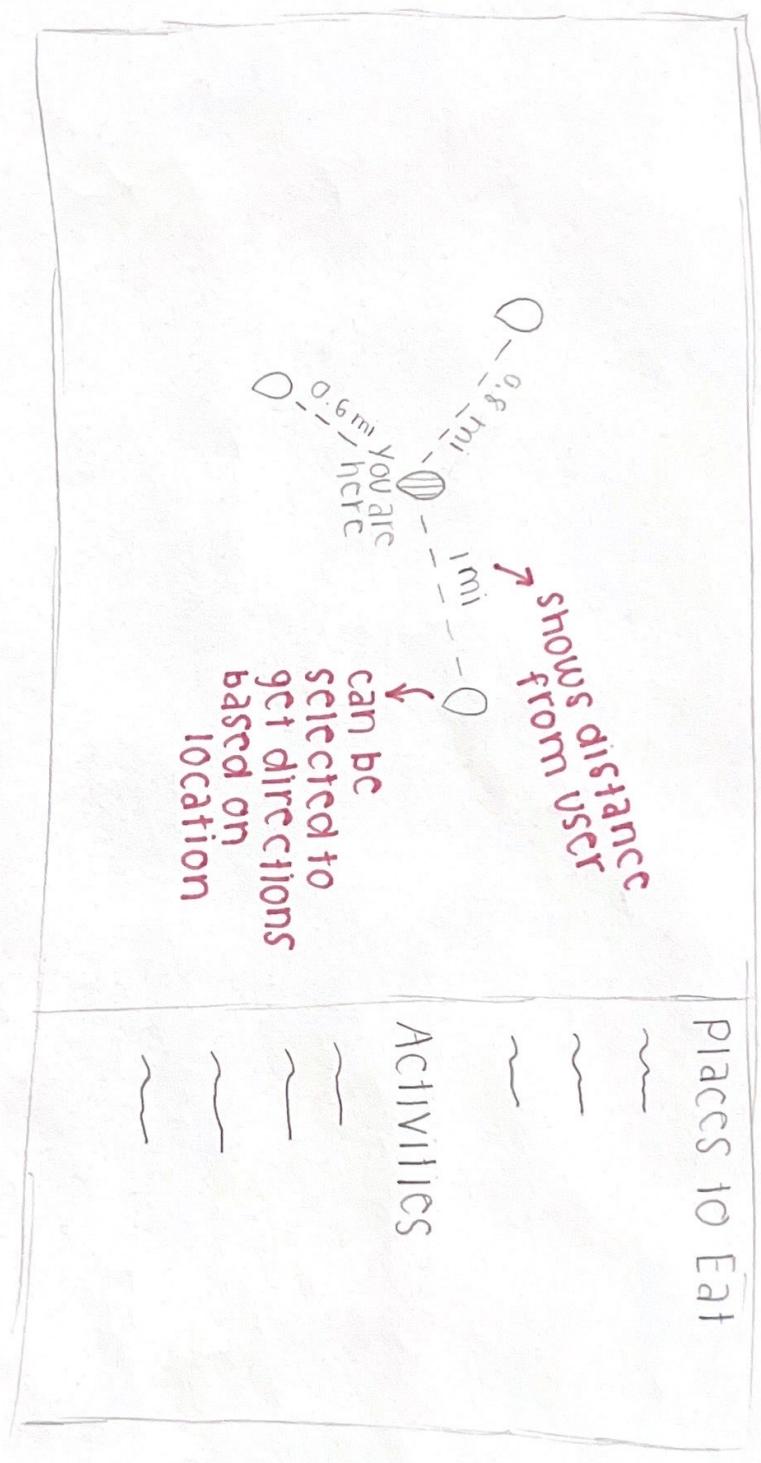
This implementation could be used by anyone looking for a roommate through our product. Each person could use this to determine the qualities one wants in a roommate and filter the search based on these answers.

matching other's bios / profiles. The inspiration for this is from personal experience that certain qualities must align to have a good living situation.

Distance / Directions Map

3

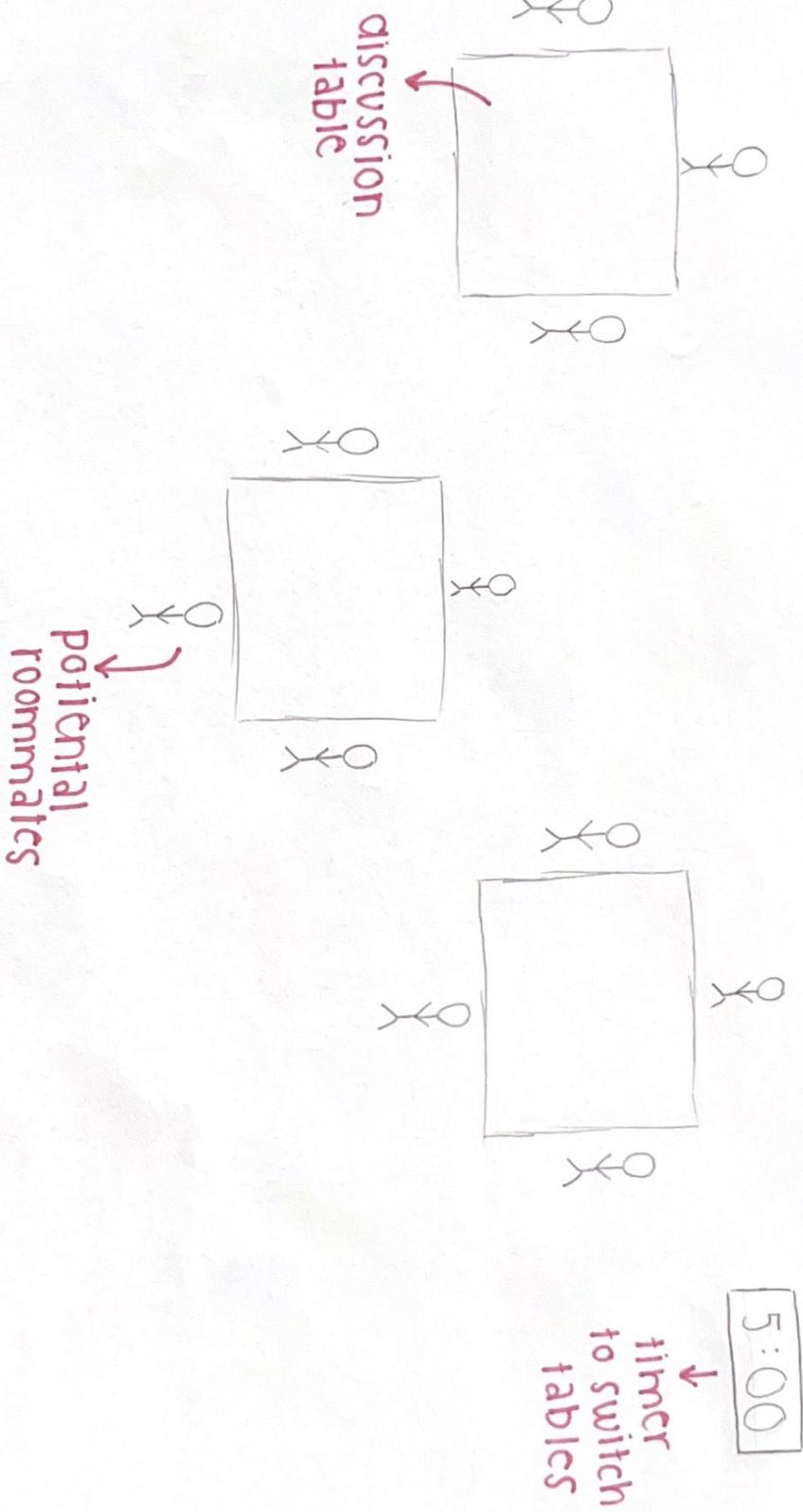
We could incorporate a map that showed restaurants and activities based on user preferences from their bio. We would list the places as well as have a map to show distance and directions. This addresses the persona's goal of finding their way in a new place and getting involved in the community. The inspiration for this was Google Maps but made personalized with user information.



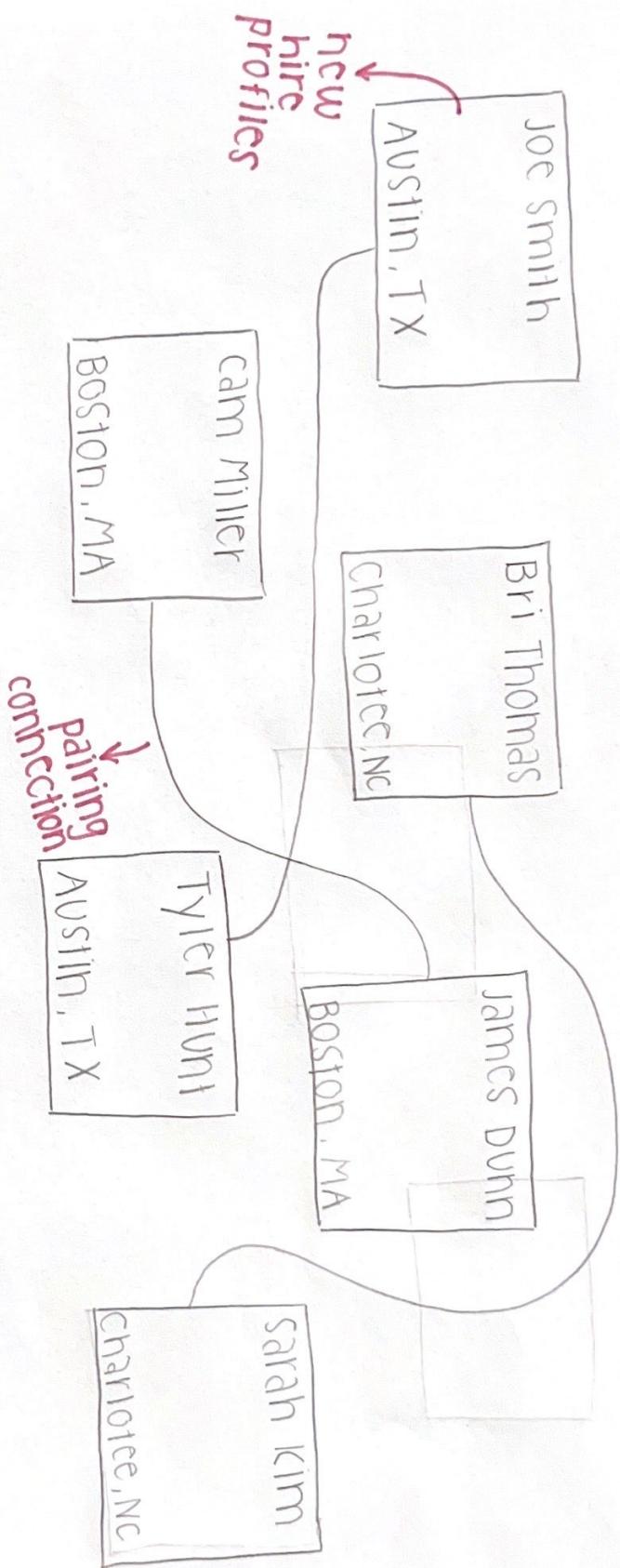
Roommate Speed Dating

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Another way we could implement our design would be to organize a speed dating environment for anyone looking for roommates in a given place. This addresses the goal of meeting a potential roommate in person in a safe way. The inspiration for this is networking event or speed dating event.



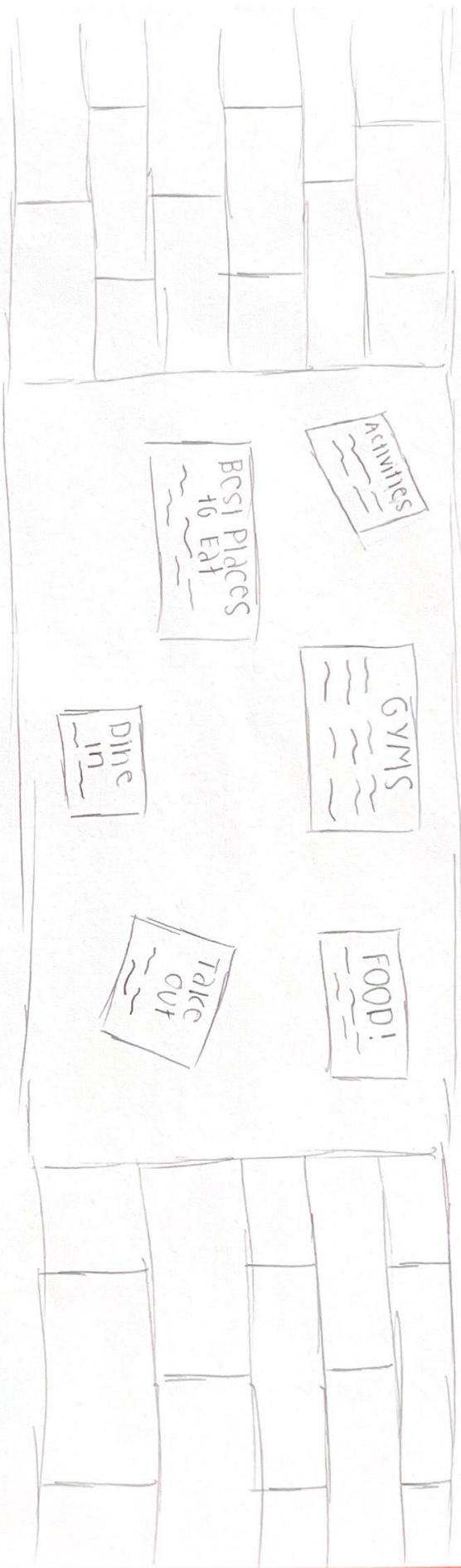
Same company match



This method would be used by the company to match new hires with others that they will be working with in the same branch. This would allow the new hires to easily find a roommate with some similarities since they work at the same place. The inspiration for this is a roommate matching software but this is specific for a given company.

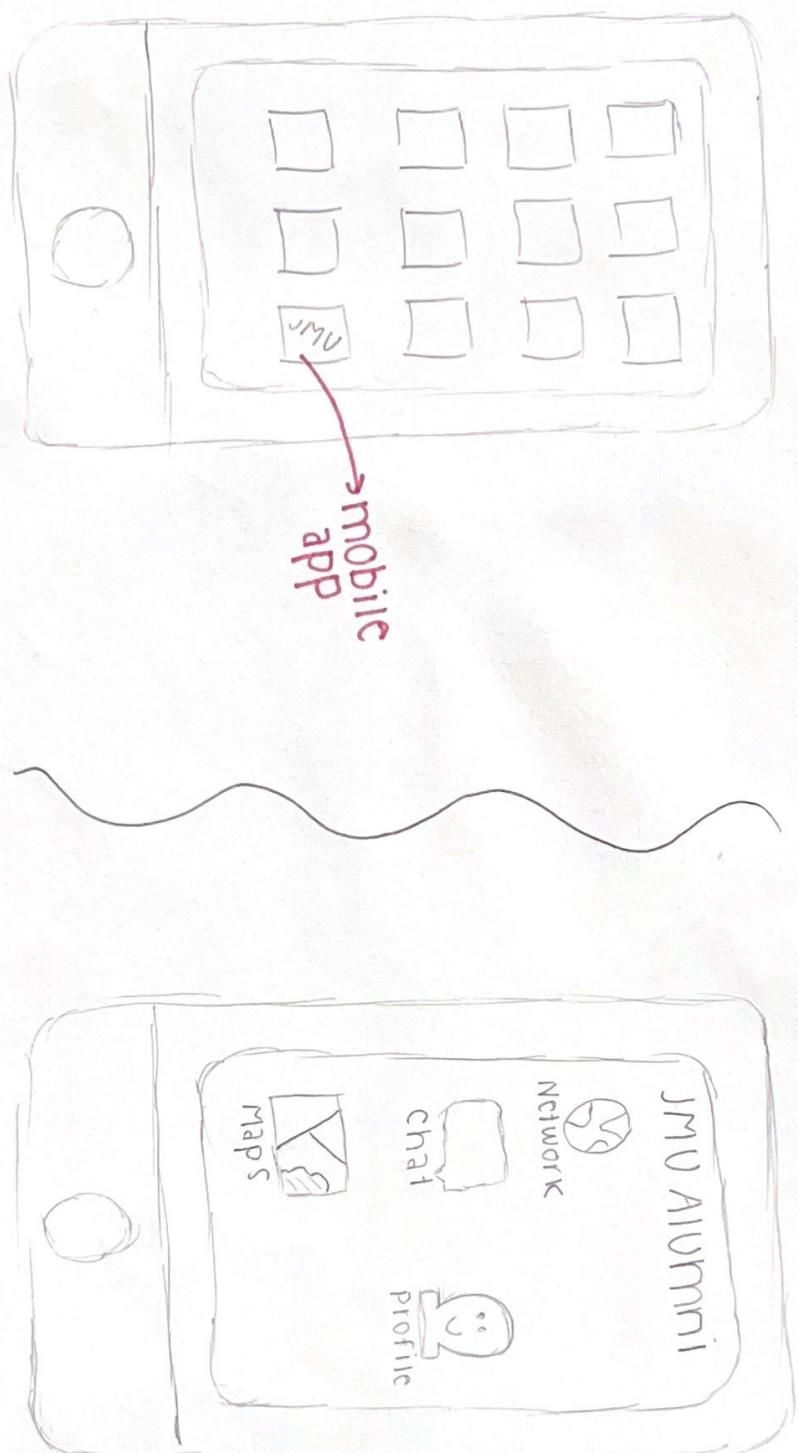
Recommendation Board

6



In order to get locals recommendations on places to eat and activities, we could implement a bulletin board for anyone to write on or add flyers to with their favorite restaurants, bars, activities, etc. This would address how many people learn about new things / places for others and by word of mouth. This is inspired by a community posting board to inform the community about events.

Alumni App

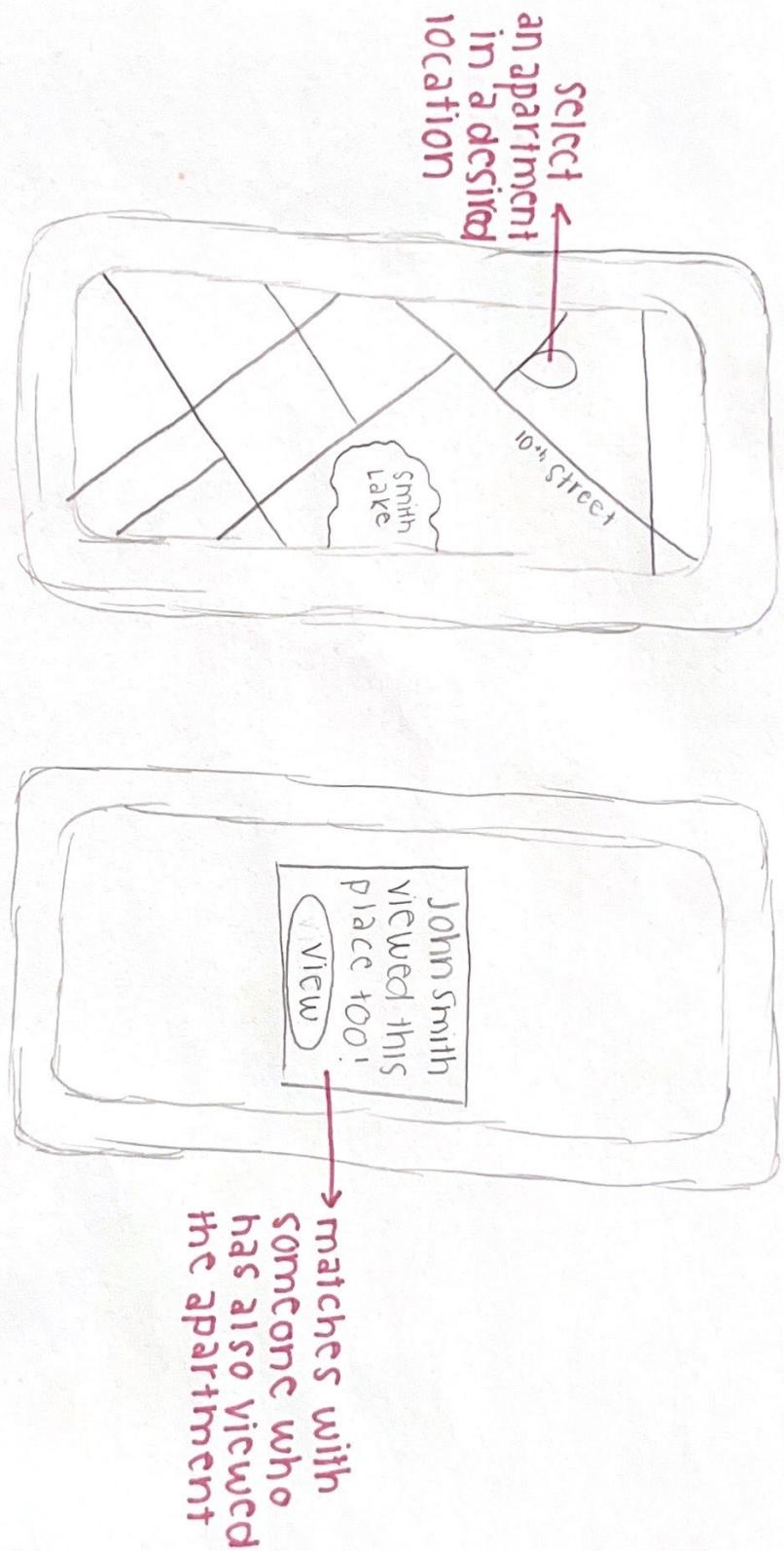


main page within the app

We could implement our idea by creating an alumni app to connect and find roommates through other college alumni from the same school. It would address the persona's goal of finding a roommate through a reliable source. The inspiration comes from an alumni networking but through a mobile app.

Location Matching

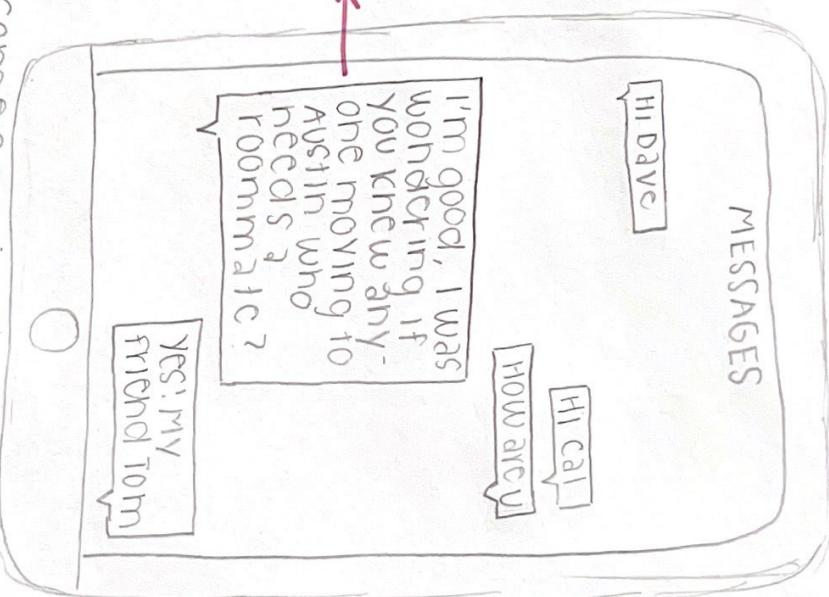
8



This implementation would allow people to view apartments in an area they like and match with others looking at apartments and for roommates in the same area. This would address the user's need to be in a given location while still finding a roommate. This is inspired by the website, PadMapper.

connect with old Friends

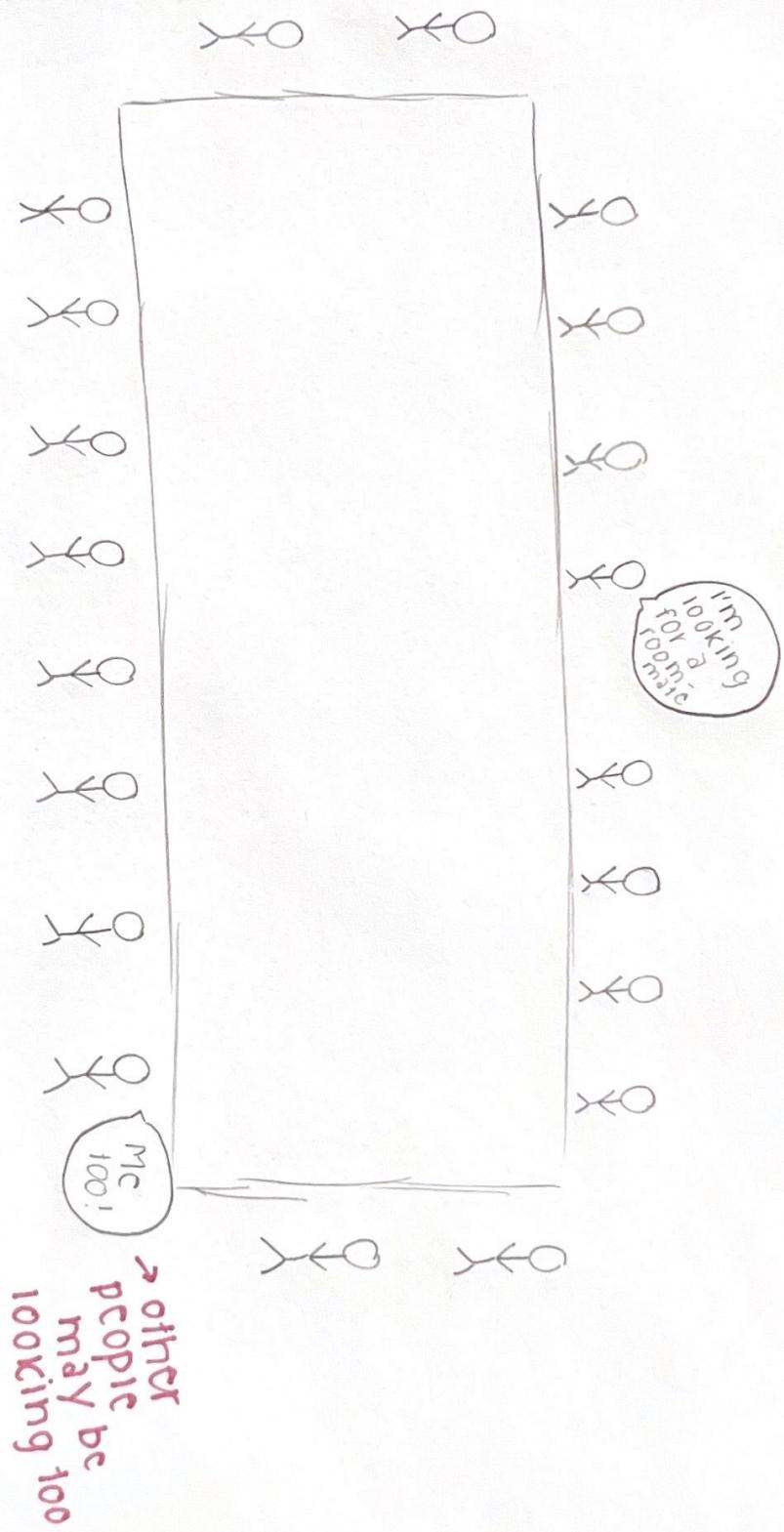
9



An easy way to find someone is to reach out to old friends and see if they know anyone moving to the same place. This gives the user the opportunity to find a roommate as well as a potential new friend. This is inspired by asking people for contacts and is a good way to find someone more reliable.

Make An Announcement at Work

10



Another solution would be to make an announcement at a work event such as a meeting. This way, the person could find a roommate with something in common to them (their job / company). This is inspired by posting in a group such as on Facebook where everyone is part of the same organization.

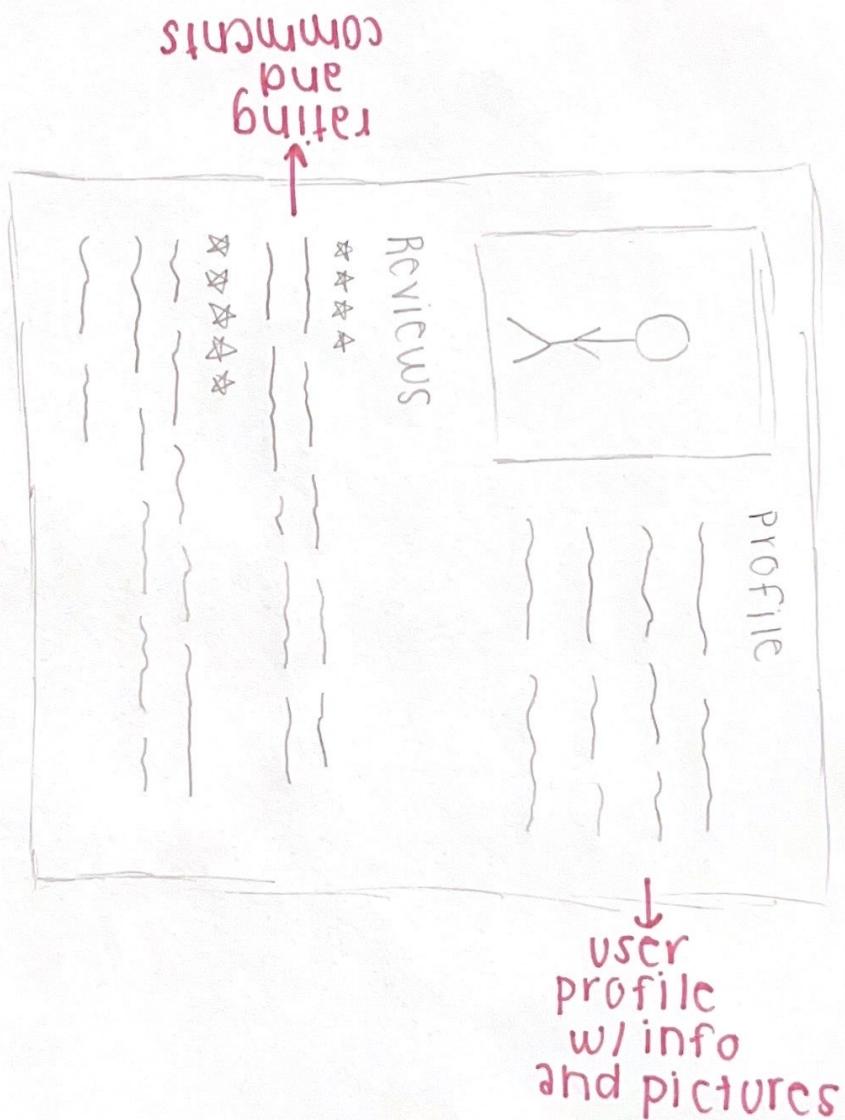
Virtual Tour



This solution would allow multiple people to virtually tour an apartment while getting to meet with potential roommates through video chat. It offers a safer way to meet roommates face-to-face while also looking for a place to live. Inspired by a website

Roommate Reviews

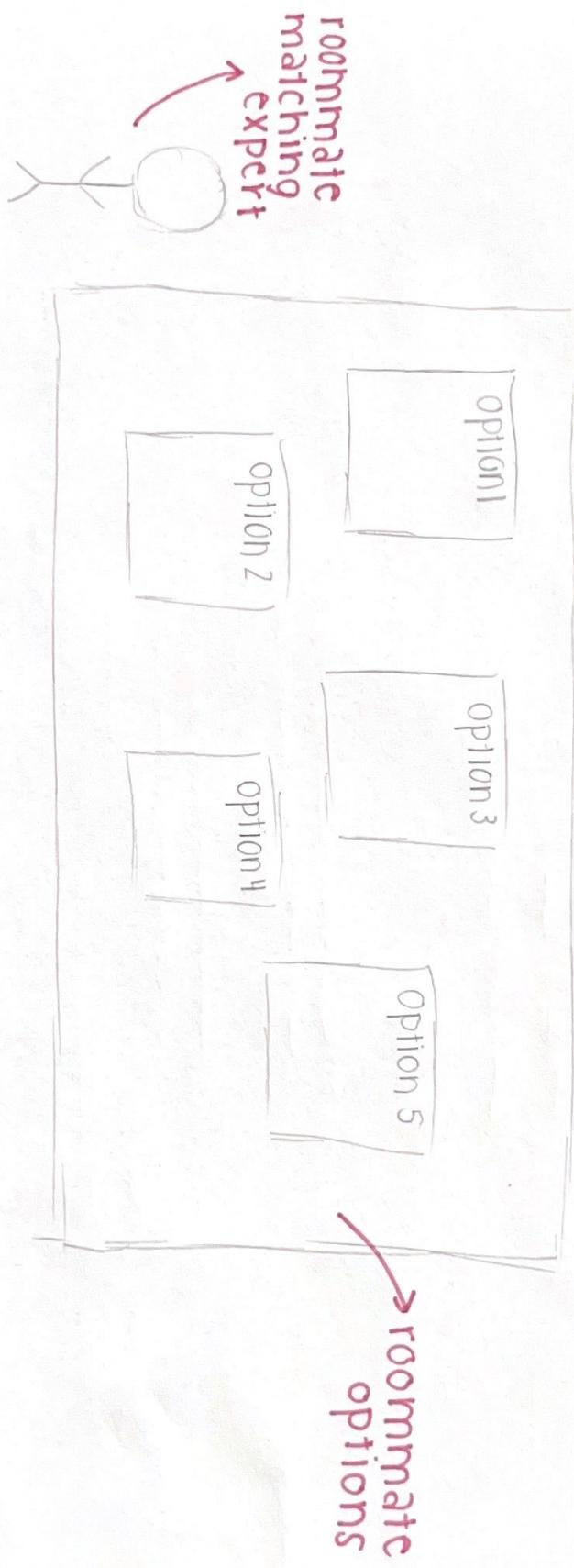
12



This implementation would allow users to post their profiles and have previous roommates comment the person as a roommate. This addresses the persona's goal of finding a reliable roommate in a new place. This is inspired by a restaurant review site but used to review roommates.

Roommate Agency

13



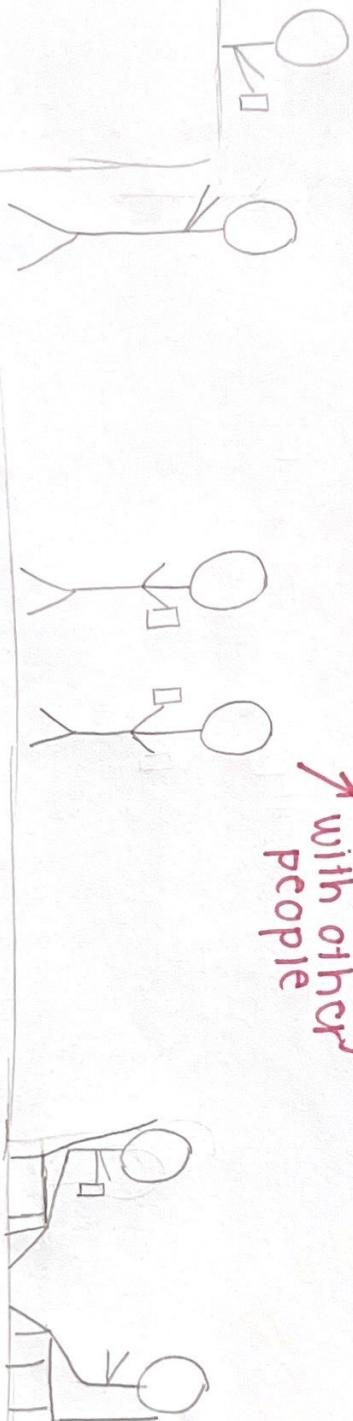
This solution is a roommate matching agency where you can be matched with a roommate based on criteria by a matching expert. This allows the user to find a roommate that will be a good fit in the right location. This is inspired by a travel agency but finding the best fit for a roommate.

Newcomer coffee shop

14

causal
schilling

↗ connecting
with other
people



This is a coffee shop for people who are new to the area to come meet up and find new friends and things to do.

The persona's goal of meeting new people in addition to finding a roommate is addressed by this concept. This is inspired by an online discussion board by in a real world setting.

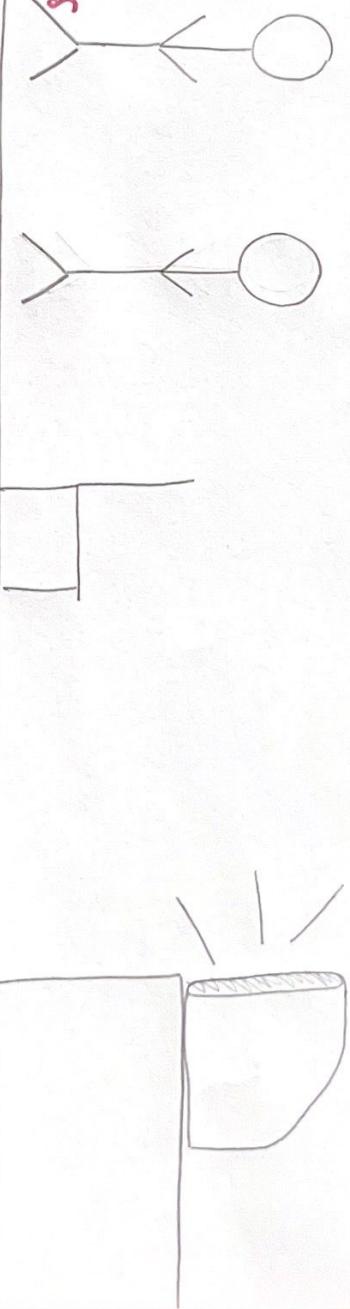
Roommate Subscription

15

live w/
person for
a limited time

MAY
X
X
X
X

decide
after 30 days
to remain roommates



This idea allows users to find a potential roommate and live with them for a month to determine if it is a good fit. At the end of the trial, the two people can either decide to live together or try another roommate. This gives the person a chance to try living w/ different people temporarily. This addresses the persona's goal of finding a comparable roommate + is inspired by free trials of any given product.