



airbnb

Airbnb ECO:

**Encouraging sustainability through eco-friendly
stays and supporting local businesses**

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INDUSTRIAL DESIGN



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MARKETING

Challenge

Ryan Scott from Airbnb tasked our Spring ID 460 section with producing a solution with potential to **decrease the environmental footprint of Airbnb guests** and including all phases of research, design, testing, and prototype development respectively.

Research Goals

Research kicked off the process. Before jumping to solutions we needed to familiarize ourselves with the brand. We looked into what they currently had available to users, and how sustainability could be implemented into the guests experience. Another important aspect of research was understanding the market and what other companies were doing in the realm of sustainability.

Research Insights

Competitor Research

After looking at other hospitality services and digital apps, **Uber** stood out as having a particularly solid plan for reaching zero-emissions. Other competitors offered little to guide guests to sustainable stays, and only a few made attempts to educate their audience on sustainability principles.

Market Research

While guests care about sustainability, it's still "much less important to consumers than things like price, type of destination, convenience and amenities".

Sources: aytm Sustainable Travel Survey, "How the Airbnb Community Support Environmentally Friendly Travel Worldwide" article, STR survey, Skift Travel Habits Survey

Airbnb Research

Sustainable Travel Report from 2017 indicates that **hosts are already doing a good job making their listings greener.**

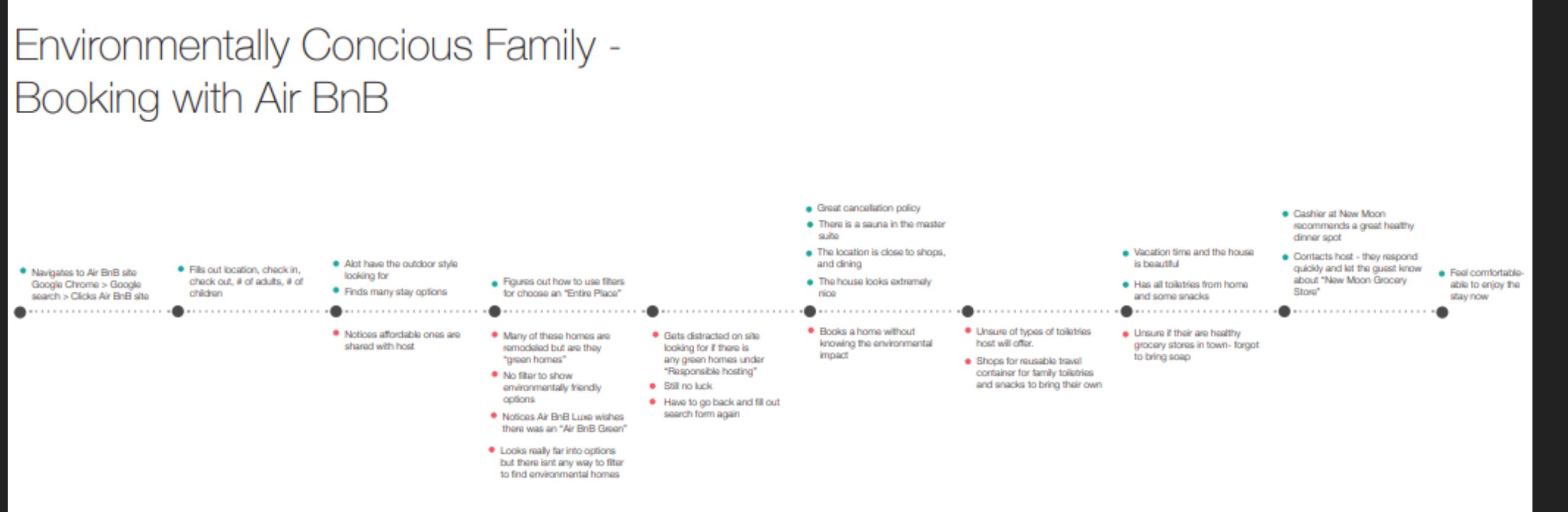
Interestingly enough, Airbnb also has a history of partnering with policymakers and NGO's.

Sources: "Airbnb: Helping travel grow greener" report (2017), "How the Airbnb Community Support Environmentally Friendly Travel Worldwide" article

User Journeys

This portion of the research helped us re-expand and think of many different types of users. We discovered more pain points that we had previously overlooked. After branching off to complete this part of the research we reconverged and had some overlapping takeaways. This helped us reassess our previous ideas, and better understand how to move forward.

Environmentally Concious Family - Booking with Air BnB



User Journey 1 & 2



In depth walk through of the amenities and experience – from booking to enjoying the stay, we identified possible pain points.

Sustainability Advocate

Airbnb User Journey - Mobile App

MOOD					
	Calm	Confusion	Mild Annoyance	Frustration	Desperation
EXPERIENCE	Customer opens the Airbnb app, selects "Where are you going?" and enters in the relevant location, time, and guest list.	Starts browsing list of available places to stay - none of the info present on the base screen indicate whether or not a host is sustainable.	Clicks into a few of the listings out of desperation, but doesn't find any further information on the sustainability practices of each stay.	With no mention of sustainability in-app, the customer turns to Google. They then discover a bunch of other problems with the tourism industry.	Distracted with the state of the travel industry, the customer puts off booking a stay until they can do more research and verify that the destination they wanted to visit was a responsible place to visit.
THOUGHTS	Pleasantly surprised at the "I'm flexible" option under "When will you be there?". Animations are nice and the overall experience is smooth so far.	Somewhat annoyed that there's no mention for sustainability. Some hosts have it listed out under the bio that they write for the place themselves, but the customer can't believe there's no way to filter listings for sustainable options.	This customer knew going in the impact of travelling to certain locations as well as the ethical issues surrounding the travel industry as a whole, but are now discovering new facts about rental locations and is feeling more jaded than ever.		
RECOMMENDATIONS	Possibly provide avenues to browse for sustainable trips or information on sustainability on the home page.	Sustainability options within the filters or some way of listing economic impact.	If hosts have sustainable practices implemented (energy saving lightbulbs, eco-friendly amenities, etc.) then there should be a way to advertise that on the listing for the place.	It might be a good idea to offer some information in-app on ways to sustainable, but this isn't very high priority. Users will end up doing their own research if they want to anyway.	Possibly pushing travel to new locations that aren't oversaturated with tourists - issues of over-tourism pushing out local communities might bother certain customers. Some way to indicate which trips won't contribute to overtourism could be a good bonus.

User Journey 3 & 4

Doing user journeys from different perspectives taught us that the problem statement and overall airbnb experience is very different depending on the user's goals and values.

Sustainability Novice

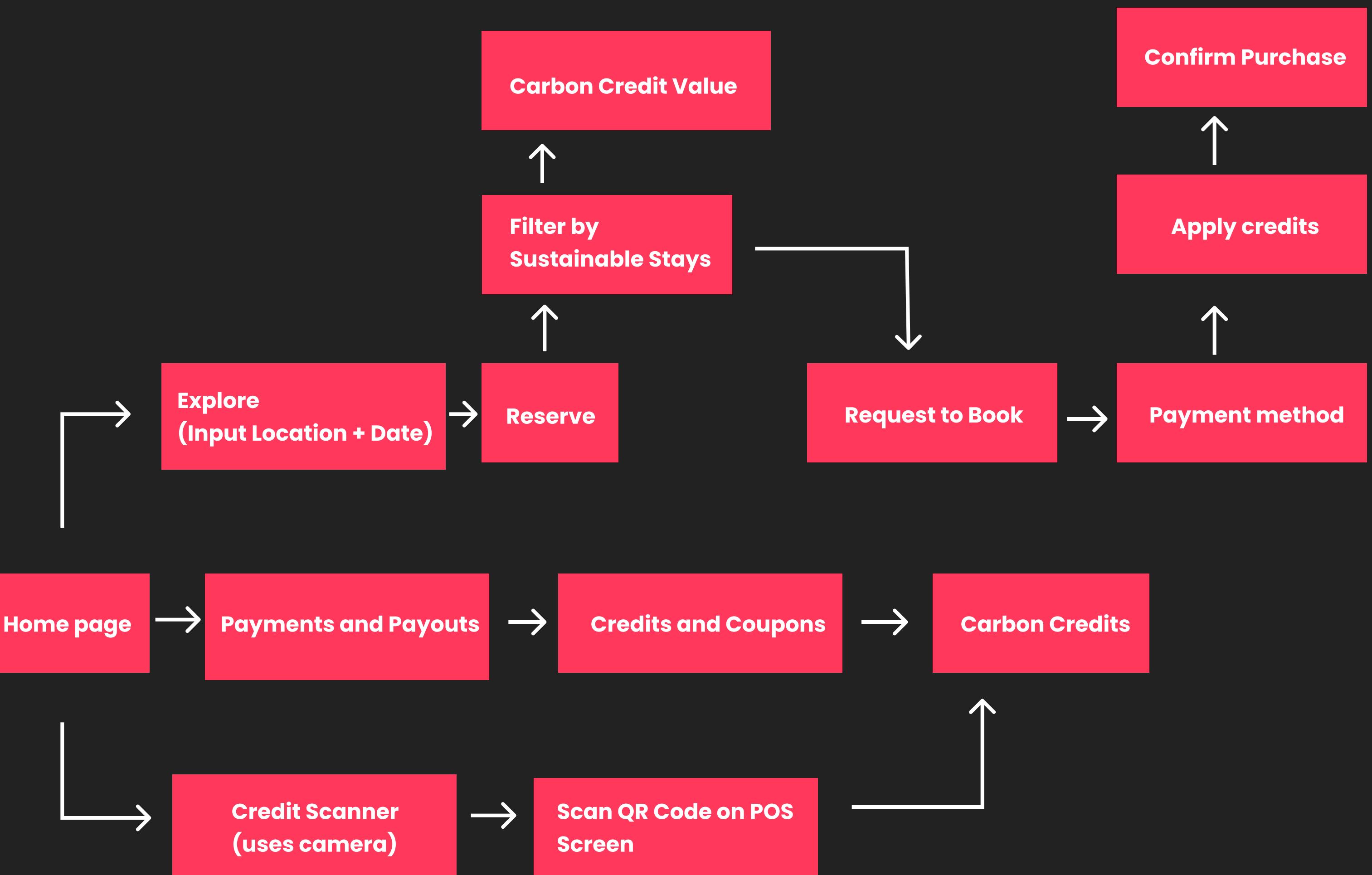
Airbnb User Journey - Mobile App

MOOD					
	Calm	Interested	Excited	Pensive	Fulfilled
EXPERIENCE	Customer opens the Airbnb app, selects "Where are you going?" and enters in the relevant location, time, and guest list.	Starts browsing list of available places to stay - lovely pictures and clear information hierarchy makes it easy to browse. No mention of sustainability, but the user doesn't care much about that.	Uses the filters to find "Entire place" - doesn't consider the environmental impact of renting an entire place vs a shared space.	Customer goes on the trip and has a great time as intended. The amenities are exactly as described and the superhosts are super hosts.	Wraps up the trip, enjoys their stay. While cleaning up, they wonder a little bit about the trash and recycling policies. They also couldn't find the compost so they dump wasted food in the trash.
THOUGHTS	The search process initially is super easy to use. It's very painless and accommodating for other edge cases.	Airbnb listings are super clear and are already extremely streamlined. There's no mention of sustainability, but as a regular user with no interest in sustainability, that doesn't bother me at all.	Fairly thorough filtering system, robust enough with all the things I want, and just enough so that I don't feel overwhelmed.	Sustainability is a part of travel whether users acknowledge it or not - even outside of Airbnb, everything the user does has some amount of environmental impact. From travel to energy consumption habits, how can we make the user conscious about their decisions?	
RECOMMENDATIONS					

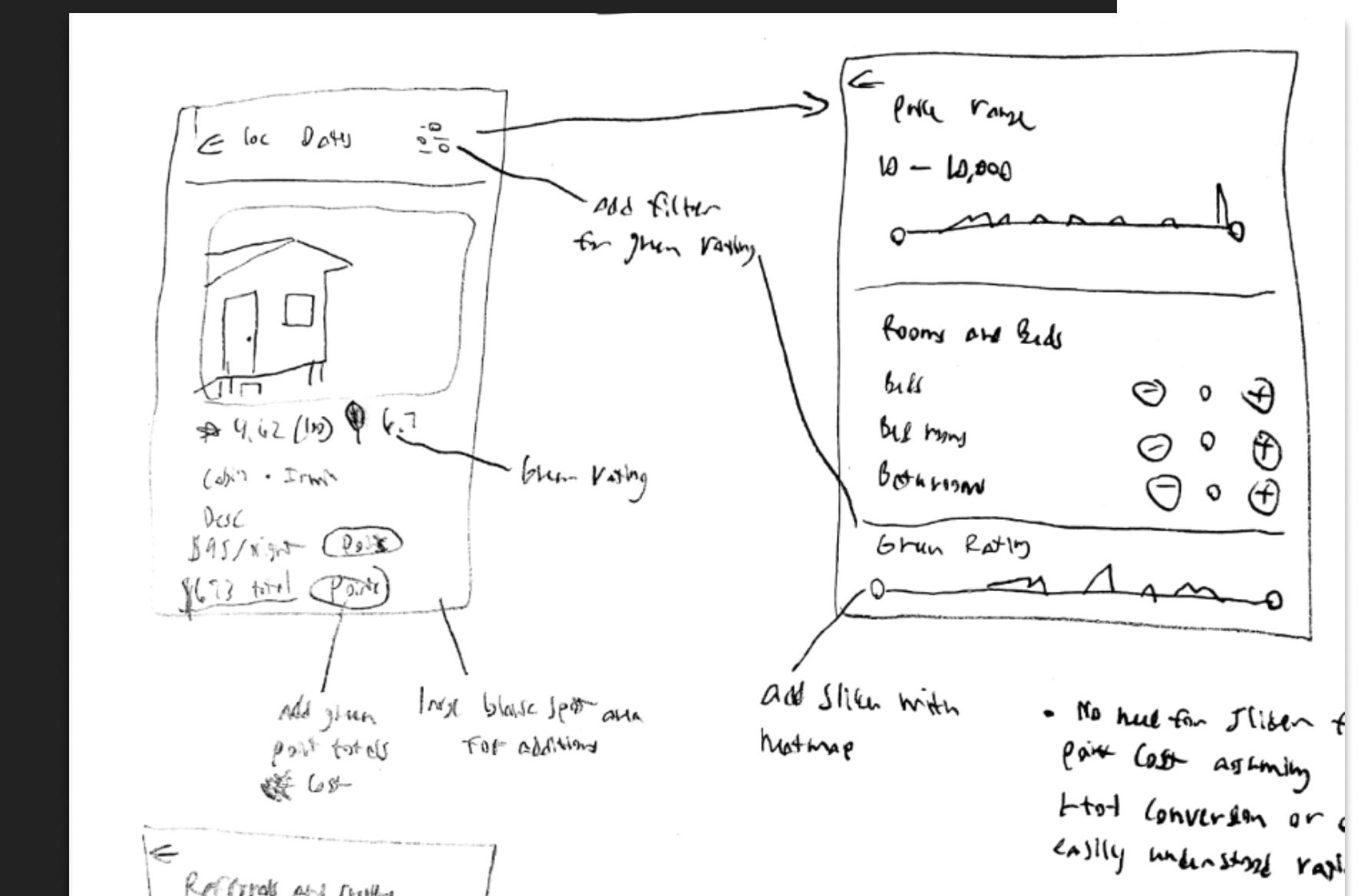
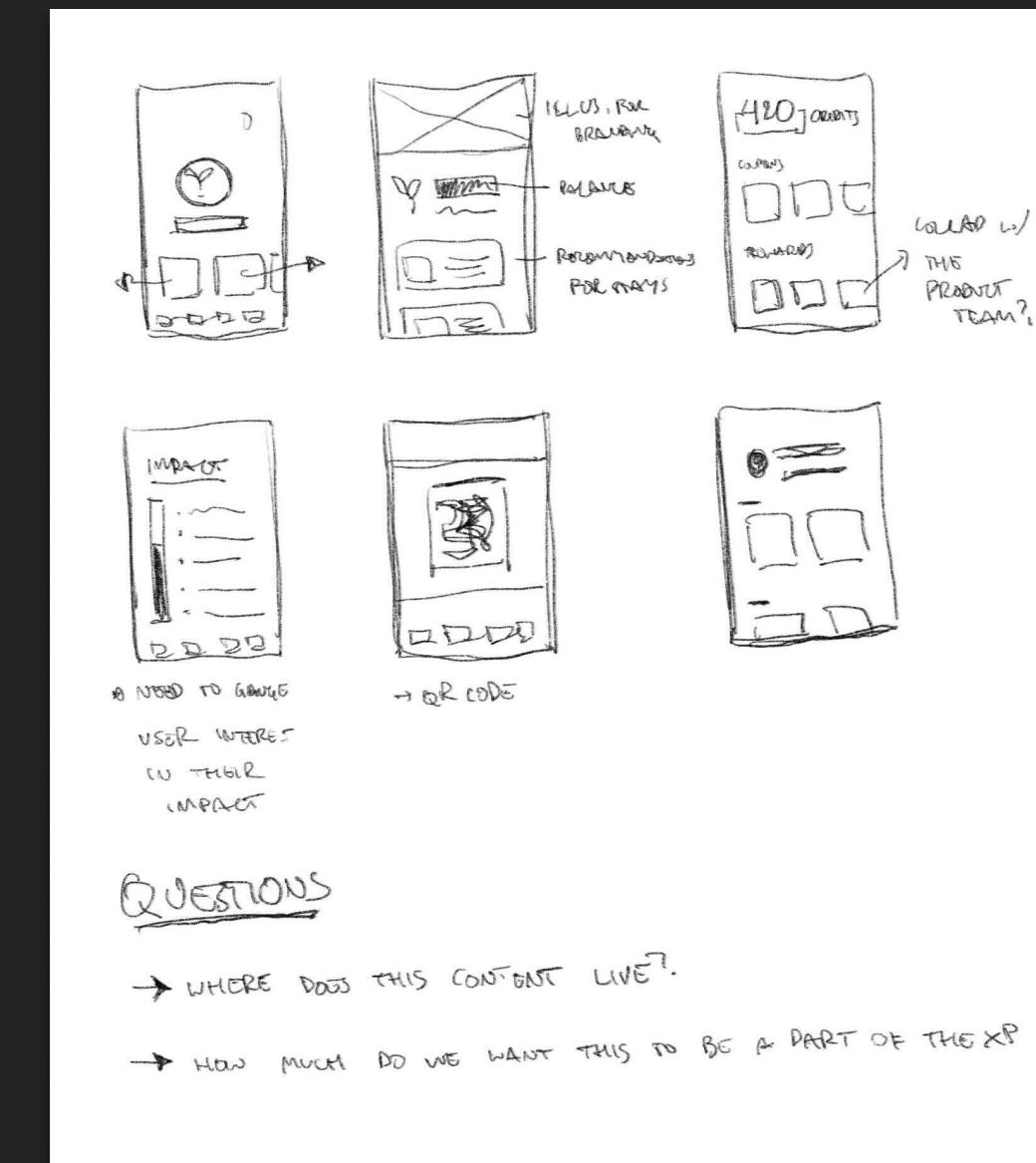
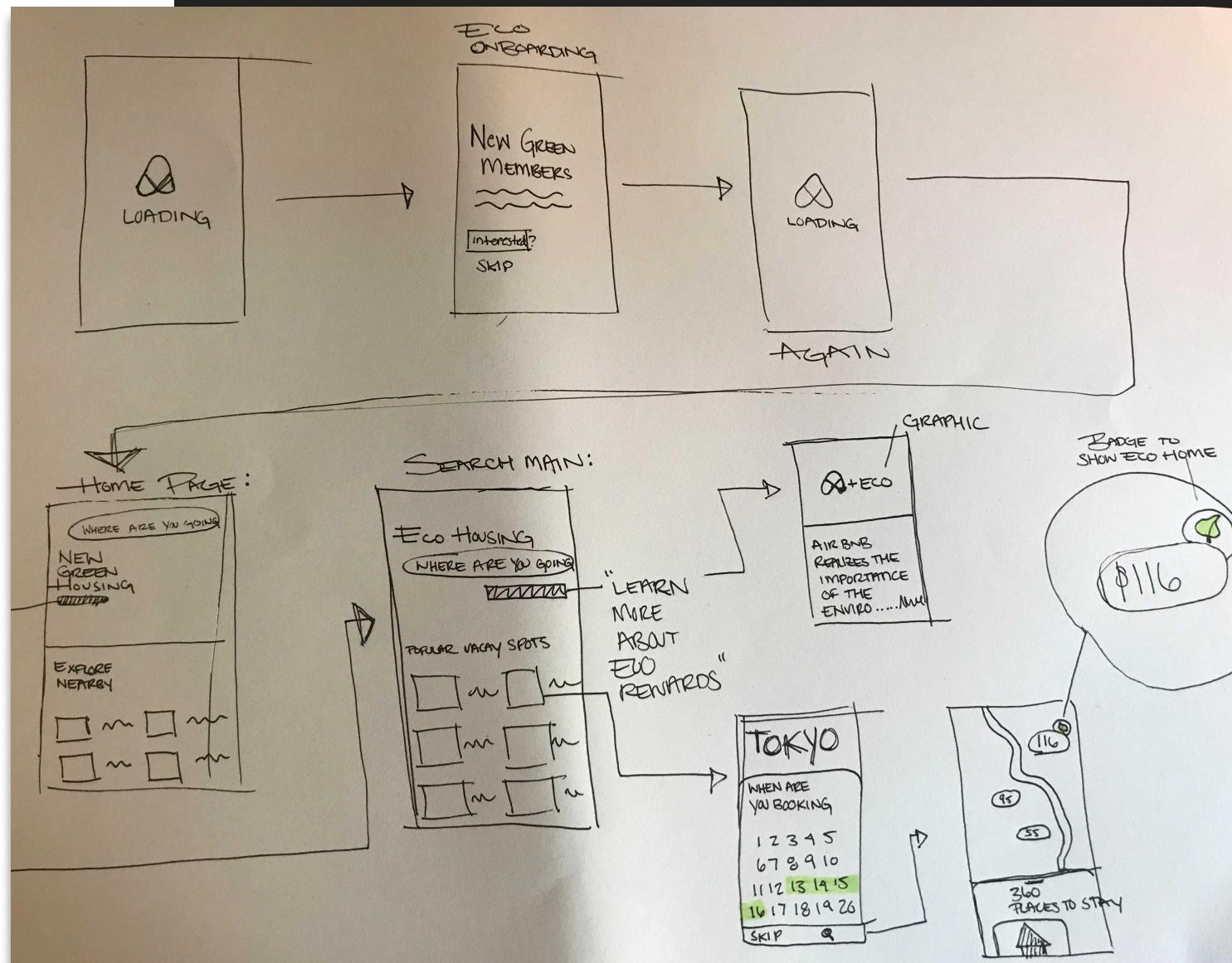
The users journeys helped us gain a familiarity of the Airbnb process and gave us a list of assumptions to validate through research.

User Flow

Discovering a natural user progression through the App. How could we create a smooth flow from opening the App to booking a sustainable stay. Also, what could be eliminated so there were fewer but more clear steps to better the users experience.

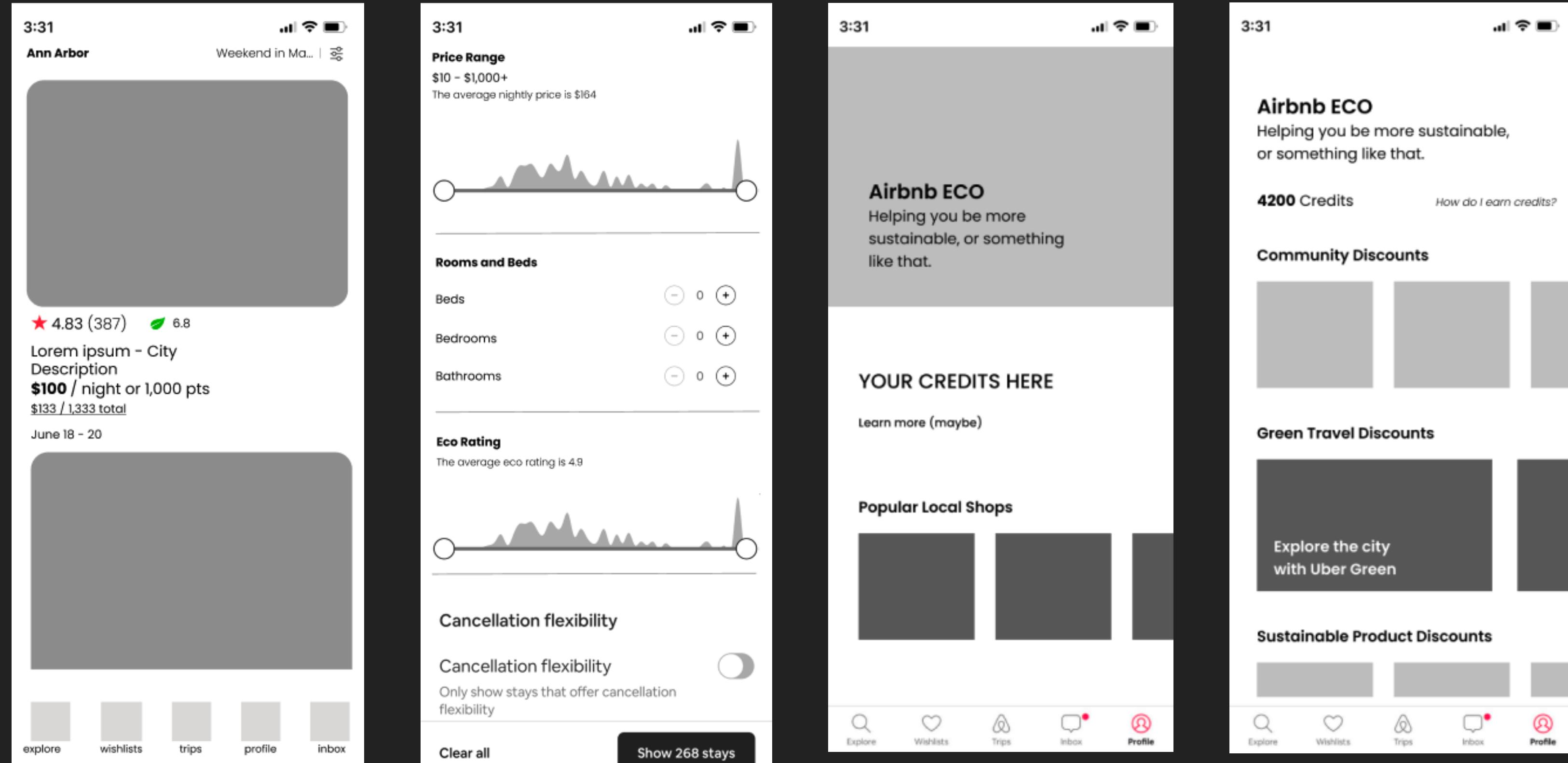


Sketches



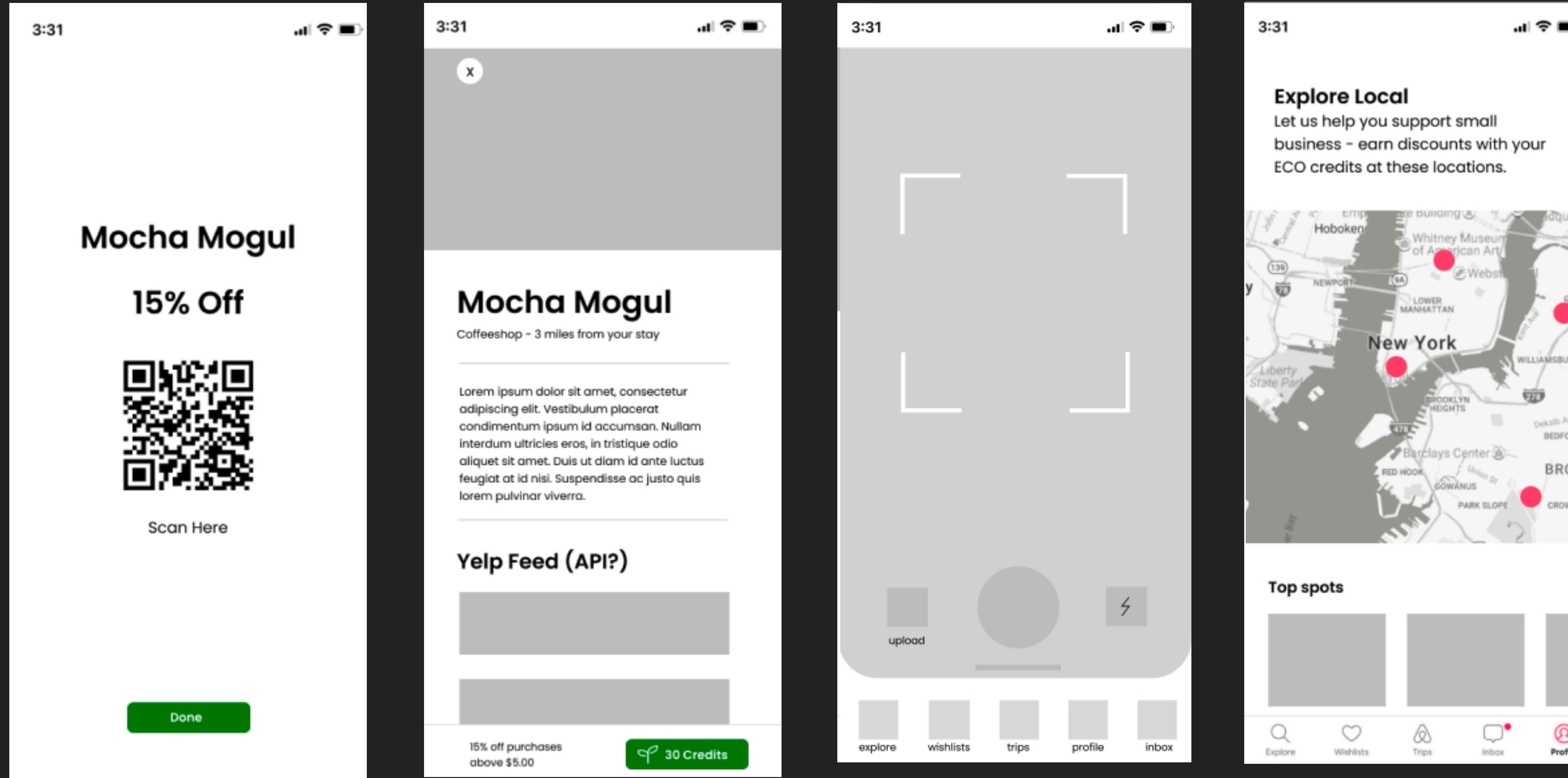
Exploring what Air Bnb app screens could look like including the Eco Credits. The placement of the leaf icon needed to be visible on many screens to help guide users, but unobtrusive to the current flow of the app.

Wireframes



Wireframes testing the use of the “eco” icon and placement of credits earned from booking an eco stay. These wireframes were built off the current apps information architecture.

Wireframes (cont.)



After deliberating how to make the eco credits rewards available to users when shopping locally, we decided on QR codes. These codes would be pulled up by the user through the app, creating a familiar and quick digital interaction for users who already use coupons in this manner.

User Testing

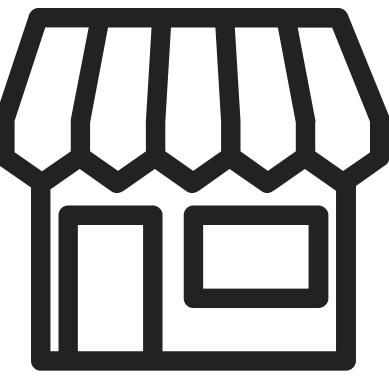
UI prototype testing with users revealed several issues:

- The small business aspect of the reward system was not entirely in line with users idea of Airbnb as a brand, in that it is a place to book stays or experiences and nothing more
- Users rarely interacted with the bottom navigation tabs
- Not all users read the initial description on what eco credits are
 - Informational tooltips would be helpful on multiple pages, such as search results

Results



Eco stays were successfully found when marked with a small icon on the main page.



Discounts earned through eco stays are successful when in a familiar QR code format.



Users were more successful when shown multiple touch points for eco credits.

Final Solution

Our final iteration retained both eco credits and small business reward integrations as the primary features. Users are able to earn the credits by booking participating stays and redeem those credits for the same. There are visual indicators of credit value on the search results, listing details, and booking pages, along with potential earnings as part of each listing. From the Airbnb Eco section users can view their current credit total as well as nearby participating businesses and additional information on the Airbnb Eco program.