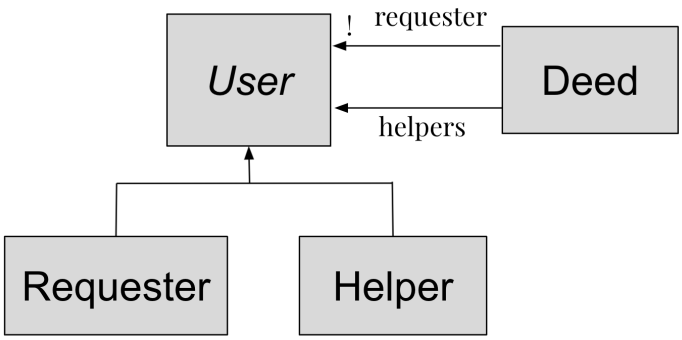
Conceptual Sketch

Concept: Deed

- **Purpose**: promote civic engagement in local communities through requests for help
- **State**:



- **Actions**:
  - Users can request help through the creation of a deed
    - User will be considered the "Requester" in the context of the Deed
  - User(s) can offer help on any specific deed
    - User(s) will be considered the "Helper" in the context of the Deed
  - Requester can mark the deed as completed
- **Operational Principle**:
  - After a requester creates a deed, then another user will be able to view the deed on the map and offer their help with the deed. Once the helper fulfills the deed, the requester can set the deed as completed.

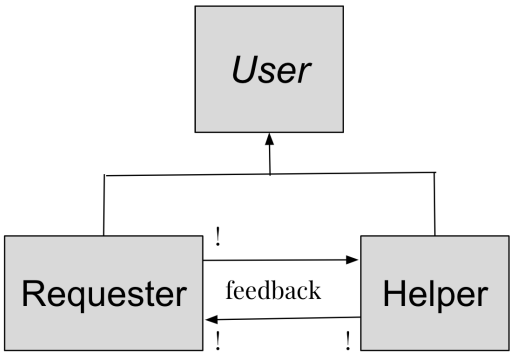
Concept: Kudos

- **Purpose**: credit given to a user for completing their deed
- **State**:

- **Actions**:
  - Add kudos to a user's current kudos
- **Operational Principle**:
  - When the user who requested the deed marks the deed as complete, then the helper user will gain the job's assigned kudos which adds onto their current count of kudos

Concept: Feedback

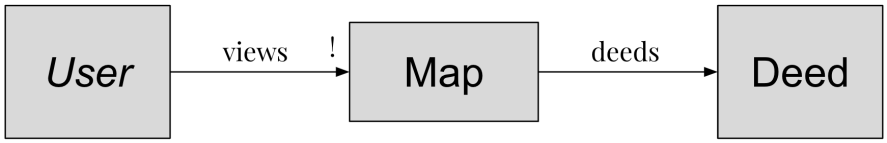
- **Purpose**: Provide positive or negative feedback to a requester or helper after deed completion
- **State**:



- **Actions**:
  - Users pick a smiley/neutral/frowny face
  - Users leave a comment/review
  - Users can view the feedback that other users have
- **Operational Principle**:
  - When a deed is complete, both the requester and helper can provide feedback to each other on their experience, which can then be viewed by other users

Concept: Map

- **Purpose**: Display a feed of deeds across a geographic map
- **State**:



- **Actions**:
  - Users can navigate the map (zoom in/out, drag, etc.)
  - Users click and view deed markers
    - Pop up of deed will appear with deed attributes (details like description, dates, times, decision)
- **Operational Principle**:
  - A user can interact with a map of the local area containing deeds open for assistance
  - User clicks on deed and is given information about deeds to determine if they want to help

Questions

1. What key purposes and social needs the project would serve and why do they matter?

One of the main responsibilities of a government is to encourage civic engagement and community service to better the city. However, no infrastructure exists for this sort of service to be exchanged between locals - people are often forced to work with and pay professionals from outside the local area to fix their problems which can easily be done by locals - these can vary from fixing a car tire to repairing a sink to cleaning a local beach.

This project solves the problem of encouraging local collaboration on problems that citizens of the city face on a regular basis. Generally, it encourages community building and saves citizens' time. All in all, it matters because it incentivizes citizens to do work for the community and make it a better place to live.

2. In what ways is the app more than just CRUD?

The project extends beyond CRUD in its interactive nature going beyond basic data storage. The web application will be dynamic as it allows for local community members to view the map of current outstanding Deeds and accept them as well as add to the Deeds on the map with their own requests for help. To facilitate this civic engagement on the app, we will be designing a user interface that is guided by usability principles and heuristics. Since it focuses on real-life collaboration, we need to ensure that our users are in a safe environment and are not put in danger upon completing a deed. The completion of Deeds will also translate to real-world incentives through the redemption of Kudos credits for rewards from local governments. It will also create a positive societal impact. Since we want local governments to provide these rewards, we need to make sure that users cannot abuse the system as these rewards will be paid for by taxpayers. Also, we will need local government involvement to be able to set up a verification system for both citizens and organizations. Furthermore, there are other design challenges detailed in question four that tackle more ethical and social implications we need to consider.

3. How does it involve at least one concept that is not already widely used?

The concept of Kudos would be unique to our web app as we can make many design decisions around it to encourage civic engagement. For example, we envision working with local governments to allow Kudos to be a credit that can be exchanged for social benefits such as a subway or bus ticket. Also, if users don't use public transportation they could receive gas or charge station credits. Another interesting design choice we could make is to require Kudos for users to request help on GoodDeeds. That would create a model where users are motivated to help before receiving help. Additionally, Kudos could be used as reputational currency meaning that users with large amounts of Kudos can have special perks. For instance, a certain amount of Kudos allows users to become Deed verifiers, offer more Kudos for the Deeds they request, and be able to request a Deed without using their Kudos. Local governments can also help with verification of legitimate volunteer or non-profit organizations that could be given large amounts of Kudos to be able to credit the volunteers/helpers that complete their Deeds.

4. What particular design areas are likely to be challenging and why?

Some design areas that we expect to be challenging is controlling spam. A user or an automated machine could simply create many fake deeds. One way we were thinking of controlling this is by implementing reCAPTCHA as it would help prevent that for automated machines and make it harder for users. We were also thinking of making a system where to create a deed one must give X amount of kudos. On one side, this is challenging as not every user has kudos to start with or the flexibility to participate in deeds. Also, it would create a barrier for organizations since they are the ones who make hundreds of volunteering opportunities for others and might not be able to build enough kudos to add these deeds in our website. On the other hand, by making kudos into a “currency” that can be used to get help, we would be able to control user’s spamming the platform with new deeds. Another challenging design issue that could happen is a user could create one account, post many deeds, make another account, and then participate in those. One way we were thinking of solving this is to make the user input a phone number upon creation which would make it more difficult for users to do this. We could also make users input an ID upon account creation like ZipCar does. This could also enable us to include background checks. Another way is posting pictures or verifying the helpers through taking pictures of an ID they have upon completion of a deed. Another design challenge we expect to face is giving feedback to both the requester and the helper. On one hand, we want to have a positive environment in our application and encourage users to help. On another, we would also like a mechanism for accountability. There could be cases where the requestor made deeds that are misleading or created a toxic environment during the process or a helper could show up and not do anything. In terms of accountability for attendance in multi-helper situations, like deeds for volunteer opportunities, we were thinking of an attendance system to keep track of who shows up and who doesn’t. Another design challenge is ensuring that user’s are safe during the process. We were thinking of integrating background checks and creating an option upon deed creation where users can state that it is required.