Senior ID Access Card Report

Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

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Client Description

About our Client
The Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation serves both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland. The Department is responsible for providing recreation and planning services for bi-county communities. They are held in high regard for their variety of services, including recreational facilities, programs, and services for residents and visitors.

The Department's services are available to a wide range of participants, from infants to seniors. Services include facilities and programs such as art and nature programs, hiker/biker/equestrian trails, summer camps, teen and senior activities, trips, and more.

The Department provides specific and unique amenities to senior patrons who are 60 years and older. The Department aims to "[recognize] the diverse aging populations, challenge ageism, celebrate the wisdom and experience of age, and provide opportunities to engage in meaningful activities, which enhance one's personal well-being through the seven dimensions of wellness: social, emotional, physical, environmental, intellectual, vocational and spiritual" (M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County, pgparks.com).

The county's goal to enhance the senior experience in the community includes the ability for senior residents of the Prince George's and Montgomery Counties to apply for a free membership card—the Senior ID Access Card, which allows access to senior facilities and activities affiliated with the Department of Parks and Recreation of Prince George's County. Some of the most popular activities in the senior club include traveling and the Club 300 walking club.

Background
The Department of Parks and Recreation is interested in gaining insight on the demographics of seniors and their use of the Senior ID access card, including who is using it, why, when, and what they use the card for. Only some of the senior members who participate in Department activities have Senior ID access cards.

According to an interview conducted with Butler, a department leader, members aged 80 and older tend to have the most difficulty using the online interface and are the most likely to struggle with getting information from the Department. Additionally, she mentioned that most participants are women and that many members will only use their Senior ID access card for certain activities.

About the Card
According to the Department's website, the Senior ID access card allows free access to 44 community centers, six senior activity facilities, fitness rooms, nutritional programs, and weekly newsletters that highlight upcoming programs and events. The card is offered at no-cost and new members are only required to show identification and proof of residency.

Butler also mentioned that before the pandemic, registration occurred in-person at a Department of Parks and Recreation facility. When the pandemic hit, new members were required to register online with a username and password and were defaulted to non-resident status on the Department's website. Users were required to scan or upload documents on the site to be approved for the Senior ID access card. As a result, card use has declined, and no new participants are signing up for Senior ID access cards.

Study Focus

Goal
The goal of our research is to find ways to improve card usage by senior members, what will keep seniors engaged in the Department's virtual environment, and what enables and motivates seniors to sign-up for the card and participate in programs.

Research Method
We conducted preliminary research by talking to our client point of contact, Lynn Butler, to learn more about the challenges and problems the Department was trying to overcome to increase the number of Senior ID access card sign-ups.

We also reviewed the program documents and resources provided by Butler. After conducting interviews, the team conducted additional research on the Department's website to learn more about the Club 300 walking program, as well as the registration process for activities.

Our primary research method was contextual interviews. Due to COVID-19, the interviews were conducted virtually. Two interviews took place via Zoom and one took place on the phone. If it had been safe, we would have used contextual inquiry to observe users and understand their behavior and activities in their own environment.

Target Users
Our research question was, how can the Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Department increase the number of Senior ID access card holders? To answer this research question, we wanted target users to be a mix of non-card holders and card holders to get a full understanding of experiences.

They should also be residents of either Prince George's County or Montgomery County because the program is offered to senior residents in both counties. And target users should be at least 60 years old to ensure they would be eligible for the Senior ID.

From the client, we understood that Senior ID access card holders mostly identified as women. However, our client expressed an interest in encouraging more men to sign-up for the program so our target users included women card holders and men non-card holders.

Participant Recruitment

We worked with Lynn Butler, and our class mentor, Eli, to identify possible interview candidates. Butler provided Eli with a list of seniors who expressed interest in participating in the study. Eli split the participants among the four project teams; we received a list of seven possible users. We emailed them to determine their interest. We heard back from three and scheduled three interviews.

The interviewees—three women who live in Prince George's County—met most of our target criteria. All three were 60 years or older and had been card holders for more than one year (see the demographic table below).

user's age and gender	comfort with technology	time user has had an access card	feelings about the "Senior" label	favorite programs
U1: 76, female	somewhat comfortable	a few years**	negative	Club 300, line dancing, chair aerobics
U2: 65+, female	comfortable	3 years	positive	Club 300, chair aerobics, photography club, field trips, billiards, book club
U3: 65+, female	comfortable	more than 10 years	positive	Club 300, outdoor activities, field trips
*65+ indicates exact age was not shared with interviewer ** exact amount was not specified				

Interview Structure

Three user interviews were conducted between November 3 and 6, 2020. Two of our interviews were conducted using Zoom and were recorded. The third was conducted via phone. It was not recorded, but a note taker was present for the call. We used a semi-structured interview approach to guide the conversation based on the following questions.

1. How long have you been a card holder?

2. Tell us about the process/(what you remember if it's been a while) when you first signed up for the card.
   - Did you sign-up in-person?
   - Did you sign-up online?

- If you signed up in-person or online, did you do so with the help of anyone else, partner, caregiver, children or grandchildren? (driving or technology use)

3. If you had the choice to sign-up online or in-person, what would you prefer?

4. When did you first learn about the Senior ID access card?
   - Who did you learn about the card from?
   - What interested you about the card?
   - What made you decide to sign-up?

5. Do you think many people are familiar with the Senior ID access card program?

6. How does being a Senior ID access card holder make you feel? (Follow up about positive or negative emotions.)

7. Do you think the Senior ID access card holder offers something for all seniors, from age 60 to 100 plus years old?

8. What do you use the card to do?
   - What activities do you regularly participate in?
   - Who do you go with when you use the card?

9. What do you like about being a Senior ID access card holder?

10. Is there anything the card does not provide that you wish it did?

11. What types of technology do you have access to (smartphone, laptop, desktop, tablet, none)?

12. What technology are you most comfortable using (smartphone, desktop, tablet, none)?
    - What would make you feel more comfortable when using technology?

13. Have you used the Parks and Recreation Department's website? Why or why not?
    - To sign-up?
    - To register for programs?
    - To look up events?
    - If you used the website, did you do so with the help of anyone else, partner, caregiver, children or grandchildren?

14. Have you participated in any virtual activities since the start of the pandemic? If yes, what was your experience like?
    - If you attended virtual activities, did you do so with the help of anyone else, partner, caregiver, children or grandchildren?

15. How do you get to the facilities/programs? (public transportation, personal transportation, etc.)

16. Will you go to the facilities and senior centers when they reopen?

Analysis

Interpretation Session
Within 72 hours of each interview, we conducted an interpretation session. This timeframe allowed us to meet with fresh data to ensure we wouldn't forget anything said in the interviews. We conducted one meeting for all three interpretation sessions since we had three interviewees on back-to-back days. The whole session took around two hours. During that time, each lead interviewer went through the questions and described the responses in detail. Other team members asked clarifying questions.

One team member was responsible for taking notes. The notetaker recorded the key issues and quotes that the team felt would be important to consider later. Each participant was given a code name (user 1, user 2, and user 3). We used a Google Sheets to record our notes and it share them with team members.

Affinity Diagram
An affinity diagram helps organize information into groups based on internal relationships. After we captured important notes in the interpretation session, we started to organize them. Two team members transferred the information to yellow notes on our Miro board. At the bottom of each yellow note, we recorded the participants' unique user code and number note (ex. U3-12). This helped us identify which note came from which participant.

After all the information was transferred to yellow notes, we held another meeting to start grouping them. We each took a moment to read through them and then when we felt we had a grasp of the notes, one of our team members picked a note and read it aloud. If one member remembered other data related to it, then we grouped them together. We continued this process until we had consensus on a few general categories. Most of the groups consisted of 10 yellow notes. Yellow notes were grouped under blue notes to describe a particular group of ideas. This process continued for all categories.

This process of grouping like ideas continued through two more levels—pink notes and green notes. We reviewed section by section until we had a consensus of the green notes.

Experience Models
<u>Personas</u>
After the general discussion about our participants in our interpretation session, we had to decide on methods to present our research. We decided that user personas would be the best design tool to help us identify with our users. User personas are fictitious representatives of our target audience. This method helped us implement our development process.

We defined each persona by age, location, favorite programs, and device usage. We also included a quote that grasps their identity, frustrations, goals, interests, pandemic impacts, and their comfort level

returning to the Parks and Recreation programs upon reopening. These elements create a full picture of the types of users and their issues.

Journey Maps

To accompany the personas, we developed two journey maps to show our users' feelings and experiences with the card. The two journeys both begin with registration and end with participating in a class. They differ in registering for a Senior ID access card and a new class, and in setting up for a class or choosing which class to attend. The persona gives us a look at who the users are, but the journey maps allow us to find the gaps which may serve as opportunities for further development.

The journey maps include a scenario for our personas and their expectations for their experience. The maps include three columns: "register," "set up," and "attend class." Through the columns the journey line shifts with positive and negative experiences. Each column has a description and quote about their experience with the line matching their feelings. The journey maps also list where we think opportunities may appear for each persona.

Issues and Hot Ideas

After we completed our Affinity Diagram, we needed to create an issues list that consists of the observations about the practice, what is broken, what is surprising, and what might be an opportunity (Holtzblatt 259). Our first attempt relied on the wrong method. As we reviewed the Affinity Diagram, we wrote issues down as "user needs," a practice that should be avoided, according to Holtzblatt. This skewed our first attempt at the issues/hot list because we had the mindset of problem-solution.

In a meeting with Dr. Kules, we each picked two ideas to demo sketch, but we quickly learned we had approached the concept incorrectly. Following his suggestions, our team applied a new perspective on the issues/hot list. In our second attempt, we looked for things to consider when creating a design but did not list user needs or problems. This allowed us to consider a wider perspective and audience on this second attempt.

We also reviewed our hot list with a new perspective—ideas to feed creativity rather than solutions. We listed ideas and created accompanying drawings to jog our memories when reviewing later. We then listed pros and cons for each idea to help us focus and determine which ideas we wanted to create low-fidelity product concepts for. We examined our ideas through the eyes of the personas. We asked if Abby or Susan would benefit from these ideas.

Issues
- Hearing about ID card via word of mouth
- Assuming people know about the ID card
- Users prefer not to have their picture on the ID card
- Users blame themselves when they have issues with the website
- Users prefer in-person sign-up over online
- Lack of interest in online activities (due to COVID-19)
- Value of "the book"?
- Users want professionals to teach programs

- Users want advanced classes
- Users feel they are perceived as being in senior day care
- Users involved in other local senior centers, competing activities or interests
- Users have their own schedules outside of ID card programs
- If friends aren't going, user isn't going, curious about participant list
- Users want to know who else is going to participate, deciding factor in some cases
- Users are independent, but they still need support, instead of getting support, they give up
- Seniors use ID card for social activities, where they build their community
- Emphasize ability to lead own class/club cultural nights, potlucks, switch up offerings
- Use Youtube for live events, live music
- FaceTime or Google Duo - Android or Apple

Hot Ideas
Help
- Improve website SEO
- Help bot on website
- Improve visibility of "how do I" section

Website
- Move the Club 300 leader board to be featured on the page with more instructions
- Make senior section more visible
- Scheduled call desk center to sign-up for dedicated support, sign-up on the website, to see availability, for help with any problems
- Move location of news and calendar on website

Other
- Offer social distanced and safe exercises classes
- Mailer/mail brochure based on age
- Partner with other Parks and Recreation centers; target people turning 65
- Sign-up kiosk for events (or card?)
- Volunteers
- Facebook events: seniors say they are going to events online, see their friends going
- Get professionals to teach classes
- Guest lecturers on specific topics
- Based on information forms, determine interests (especially for online/COVID environment)
- Have a physical bucket list for seniors, cool idea suggestion box
- Market research of competing senior centers, what makes them successful
- Collaborate with other senior centers, more resources, broader reach
- More mixers, for all seniors, not just card holder
- SNACKS
- Retirement home trainings

Top board:

Senior Access Card Program Ambassadors
Gamification - Points for your Activity and for sharing the program! Badges and Rewards (Examples: Sign-up Early, other program specific incentives, partnering with local businesses?, gift cards)

Positives:
- connections to community
- motivation
- already a win-win, makes it better

Negatives:
- Good UX for gamification might be challenging
- Where are the badges stored?
- Responsibility for incentives/ community partnerships

A user seeing their friends activity with the program as a motivator for themselves.

Technology mentorship/partnership. Connecting Seniors who are less comfortable with technology with seniors who are more comfortable. "Experts" help new card holders

Card holder welcome? - Program on-boarding to help with the learning curve. Welcoming Committee!!!

- awareness that a friend is involved
- self-sustaining way of someone being engaged (happens naturally)

- privacy concerns
- do they have an account?

- introduction to new pal
- once connections made, self sustaining
- sense of community and sense of belonging
- less likely to be confused
- sense of usefulness for expert

- compatibility
- commitment
- scheduling
- sign up rates are unpredictable
- virtual connection might be challenging
- match people who have the same devices

- ensures new members get the info they need

- a lot of effort and coordination and planning, etc
- what's the budget

Bottom board:

Step-by-step "Welcome Course" about how to use everything for the program (brochure, signing-up, website, etc.) - A formal introduction to the program

Online introduction/orientation vs. in-person introduction/orientation

Scenario: Someone joins the program -> "Like our page on facebook!" -> Committee member friends them on facebook and messages them to follow through with facebook engagement.

- Possible during COVID - Makes things less confusing
- Seniors FB, don't need another platform
- Social interaction, see in advance who is going to things
- another reminder about what is happening, in addition to newsletter

- Virtual course might be challenging
- Reinforce day care feeling
- need to collect data about senior engagement on FB

Simplify the sign-up experience (Especially online). Too many steps, the sign-up process is kind of complicated - Sometimes includes going to a completely different site. "One step sign up".

All features of Club 300 are centered and accessible to all members.
Easier way to engage with the online parts -> automatic update with steps and miles. Easy pedometer/fitness tracker integration.

Fitness Variety! Having something for everyone, different set-ups, equipment, etc.

- one platform, one stop shop
- increase number of event attendees
- Help with overall connectivity to other community centers

- preference to sign up in person
- effort to combine sign-up's in one place/organized
- Will people sign up and not go?

- Motivation to participate when they enter their miles/see improvement
- Less technology interface if automated
- increase social interaction

- Requires a lot of technical knowledge of team managing website
- Users will need to relearn how site works
- Costly!
- The user would need different technology
- Own monitoring system
- Privacy concerns

- New users and more excitement from current users, or attendees at in person classes
- Parks and Rec sells equipment

- users don't want to buy new equipment
- Need staff to teach new classes
- Replace a favorite class

We ultimately decided on three concepts that would not only benefit Abby and Susan but would contribute to the goal of attracting new users for the Senior ID access card. See more about these in the Product Concepts section below.

Core Findings

Affinity Diagram
Portfolio pages 12-17
Our first finding was that participants are very active in Parks and Recreation programs. The users had built structure and routines into their schedules around the card's perks. Field trips allowed seniors to experience local places with a fresh perspective and physical activity was a main component of having the card.

Our second finding was about technology. Users blamed themselves for website issues and occasionally reached out to family and friends for help. The users mentioned a slight learning curve for the online platforms but were ultimately comfortable adapting to the new way of connecting with the community. The users preferred to sign-up for events in-person rather than with the website.

Users heard about the card mostly through word of mouth from friends. There was a strong sense of pride of participating in the community through the planned events and being a card holder.

We learned that users are not dependent on these programs for their routine. Some users have other responsibilities and are a part of similar programs in surrounding areas. The label "senior" did hold negative connotations for one of our three users.

Overall, the participants are pleased with the program variety, although they requested more formal instructors for the clubs. The users emphasized the sense of community through the friends they've met and kept through this program. The participants miss their friends during the pandemic but are trying to stay optimistic about seeing them soon in person.

Personas

Portfolio pages 8 and 10

We chose to create two personas based on the two types of users we encountered during interviewing. Active Abby, an independent, proud, and engaged user reflects our cardholders who have only nice things to say about the program. Abby reflects users who are involved in a variety of activities, choose to attend events independently, and still find ways to connect with the community during this pandemic.

Safe Susan is the second persona and represents users who aren't confident using technology and enjoy attending programs with friends. Susan is overly cautious during the pandemic but if she is interested in a certain activity, she will find a way to get involved. She also represents users who have held their ID cards for a long time and are familiar with the Department's offerings.

Journey Maps

Portfolio pages 9 and 11

We chose to represent our personas' experiences through journey maps because we wanted to show the whole process of our persona engaging with the ID card. Research suggests building journey maps when the whole engagement matters for your design (Holtzblatt 230). In this case, we wanted to see the registration process, activity sign-ups, and attending activities. We created two journey maps to match our personas' experiences.

Active Abby's journey reflects the positive and outgoing user in the Parks and Recreation community. She heard about the program through a friend and decided to sign-up. The registration process was simple, and she was excited to attend a variety of community events. Abby's main frustration is the lack of professional instructors leading some of her favorite activities. During the pandemic, she adapts to online courses, but really misses the family she's created with the Parks and Recreation community.

Safe Susan's journey reflects the cautious user who has expressed the importance of her friends being involved in her activities. She registers for an online course successfully, but has trouble creating space in her home to participate in the physical activity. She felt it was hard to ensure that she could see the instructor and her friends could see her. Even though Susan experiences some struggles with her environment, she commits to finding a way to participate in events she finds interesting.

Product Concepts

Utilize Facebook for Community Support and Recruitment
Portfolio page 4
In findings from the affinity diagram, we found that the seniors we interviewed value the sense of community they feel by being a Senior ID access cardholder. We also found that knowing a friend would be present at an event or class was a main motivator for our interviewees. However, since the pandemic, in-person activities have been canceled making it more difficult for seniors to connect with fellow cardholders. Utilizing Facebook's group and page features would be an easy way to implement a sustainable solution that allows seniors to quickly connect with each other remotely and to also help the spread awareness of the Senior ID card program.

Through Facebook's group feature, the program can help cardholders connect and support each other online. Our Safe Susan persona would benefit from being a member of this Facebook group since she isn't seeing her friends as often and is trying to be as safe as possible during the pandemic. A Senior ID card program page will also allow seniors to easily show interest in upcoming program events while also being able to see who of their friends are either interested in or going to an event.

Facebook's page feature could also help increase program sign-ups. A program Facebook page could reach more seniors in the Prince George's County area through the existing networks of current members. Current cardholders will be able to share events and the page with non-cardholding seniors in their personal networks who may be interested in the program. Our other persona, Active Abby, would love the ability to easily share the Senior ID access card program page with her non-cardholding friends since she is such an advocate for the program.

Redesign the Online Activity Sign-up Calendar
Portfolio page 5
Seniors would normally use the mailed activity booklets to sign-up for their activities all at once and in-person. Because of the pandemic, in-person sign-ups aren't possible, making the sign-up process more difficult for cardholders. We also found that the overall workflow signing-up is complicated. One user described the process as "studying for an exam," because of the effort needed to read the booklets and fit different events into their schedule.

The online sign-up process is complicated, requiring users to visit different sites to sign-up for events at different locations. Most of our interviewees were not confident using the site and technology for tasks like this. Since online sign-ups are now necessary, the process should be streamlined to make the transition from in-person to online sign-ups easier for seniors. We propose a redesign concept for the online activity sign-up calendar system.

The new system would display all events happening in the county's various community centers. The calendar's advanced search feature would allow users to see events in various topics while also showing

how those events fit into their current schedule. Users would see their season schedule in a personalized dynamic calendar view and would be able to easily edit their schedule as they wish.

Consolidating activity schedules in one place allows users like Safe Susan to study all of the available events and sign-up for them in one place. This update would also help Active Abby by making her sign-up process faster and easier. She might even discover a new activity or class that would have otherwise been hidden in the current complicated workflow.

Create a Senior ID Access Card Online Community
Portfolio page 6
For the final concept design, we propose developing an online community that would address the insights gathered from our contextual inquiry. This includes helping to remotely support the Senior ID access card community, online activity sign-ups and participation in online events, and supporting seniors in various activities and classes.

An online community would give seniors access to the program's online features in one place. It would include a space where seniors could interact with each other and complete online tasks for their group activities such as logging miles for the Club 300 leadership board. The platform would also have a section dedicated to online classes and activities for seniors. Users would be able to access class resources, recordings, and information about any equipment and skills needed. There would also be a dynamic calendar view for a user's activity schedule.

With the class feature, the program would be able to add an asynchronous orientation course about the ID card benefits, provide online tutorials, and provide technological support. With a direct communication channel between the staff and the users, seniors can request help more easily.

This online community would help both Active Abby and Safe Susan. Susan would be able to contact her friends in the program and get any technological help she may need. Abby would be able to view all of her activities and friends in one place, making her experience as a cardholder even better than it already is.