

UberPool Party

A new way for friends to ride together

By Monica Moore

Research

Current State of the Art

Currently, there are several carpooling apps, but none of them let users select who they ride with. Instead, UberPool, Lyft Line, and Waze all pair riders based on convenient routing. Uber allows users to bring 1 friend, and carpools a maximum of 2 separate riders. UberPool sets a predetermined fare based on the route, which is usually 20% cheaper than UberX. Lyft Line can be as much as 60% cheaper than regular Lyft. Many frustrations stem from the current carpooling systems including confusion about how the system works, conflict between passengers, and time spent picking up other riders.

Alternatively to using UberPool, some users do pick up friends on Uber, although in an unofficial manner. Many users get around the lack of a pick-up feature by setting the destination to their friend's house, and then changing the destination once the friend is picked up. This requires explaining the situation to the driver and continuously updating the destination. There is also no way to split the fare based on individual distance travelled, so the riders must split the fare equally.

User Interviews

Several frequent Uber users were interviewed. Some key findings are as follows.

Most people, particularly women, do not like showing up at events alone. People commonly meet at a meeting point, then Uber together, which can be time consuming. This can also be a hassle since they need transportation to get to both the meeting point and the event.

Some users already use Uber to pick up at multiple locations by changing the destination when they reach a stop and explaining the situation to the driver. This can be a pain to explain, since the driver doesn't always understand. Users also said it's a hassle to keep changing the destination. One user also voiced the issue of their phone dying when they still need to change destinations.

"You just update the destination each time and tell the driver not to complete the trip. It's a cumbersome process right now." -Jon

Users main motivations to use this feature is to save costs and arrive with company. Users would also like to be able to drop off at multiple destinations on the way home from an event. People thought this feature would be particularly useful during surge pricing or when there aren't many Ubers around. People also thought that the price should be split based on the distance travelled, since some riders may live much closer to the destination than others.

"I would definitely use it for when there are surges and we are all going home from the club or something." -Amanda

Some users voiced concerns that the feature would only be helpful if all party members lived en route to the destination. They also said they would only use this feature if it costs less.

"It would have to work out pretty perfectly that we are both on the same side of the venue and not in opposite directions." -Sherry

Problem Statement

Based on the research done, a problem was defined.

Current carpool methods do not allow for streamlined pick-up of the user's acquaintances. The goal is to design a system where friends can Uber together from separate locations and split costs fairly.

Personas

Two personas were created, based on the stories of the users interviewed. (On next page.)



Age: 20

Gender: Female

Job: Student

Status: Living with friends in an apartment

Education: Some university

Income: \$15k/year

Fun, Sociable, Busy

Keira Mason

The University Student

"I'll be at your place by 8!"

Keira is a university student who likes to use Uber to go to bars on the weekend. Typically, her and her friends meet at someone's house and then Uber together. This can be time consuming, as it requires two trips. She wishes there was a faster method for occasions when she's pressed on time.

Goals

- 👍 To arrive at the bar with friends
- 👍 To save money in order to stick to her budget
- 👍 To save time and hassle while still arriving at the destination with her friends

Frustrations

- 👎 Having to travel to a friend's house and then travel to an event
- 👎 Having to rush to make it to her friend's house in time
- 👎 Waiting at a venue alone when meeting beforehand isn't possible



Age: 27

Gender: Male

Job: Financial Analyst

Status: Single, living in a 1 bdrm apartment downtown

Education: Bachelor degree

Income: \$70k/year

Organized, Social, Impatient

Jonathan Lau

The Young Professional

"I'm not getting out here. We're just picking someone up."

Jonathan often goes to various events with a group of friends. To cut costs, they usually take the same Uber. To achieve this, Jonathan updates the destination each time someone gets picked up and explains the situation to the driver. This is tedious, and also creates confusion with the driver. He wishes Uber had an easier process to do this.

Goals

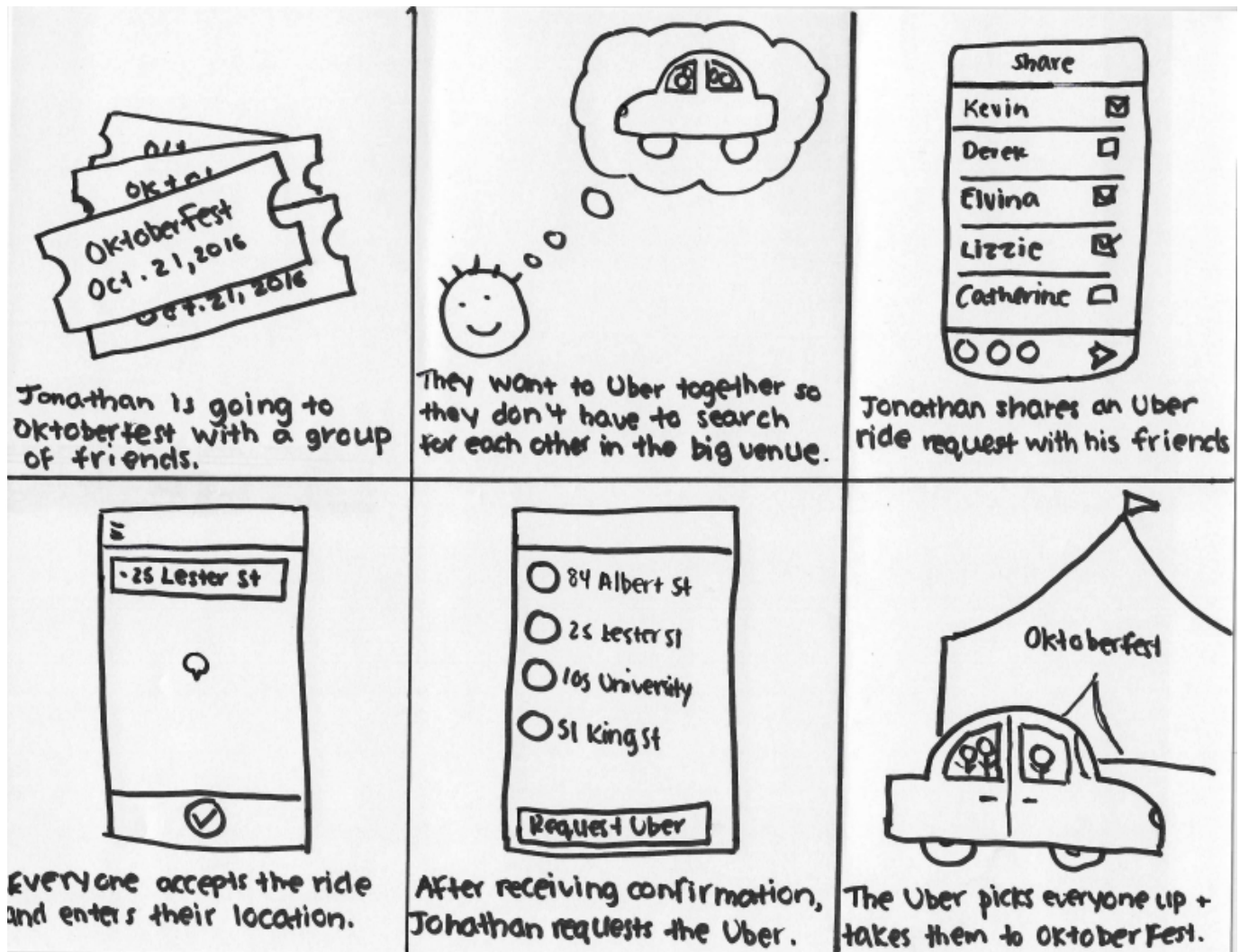
- 👍 To efficiently pick up his friends in one Uber
- 👍 To save money by carpooling
- 👍 To be able to fairly split the cost of the trip based on distance traveled

Frustrations

- 👎 Having to enter in new addresses at each stop
- 👎 Explaining his route to a confused Uber driver
- 👎 Having to communicate arrival time with each friend

Storyboard

Next, a storyboard was drawn, outlining the most common use case for this pick-up feature.



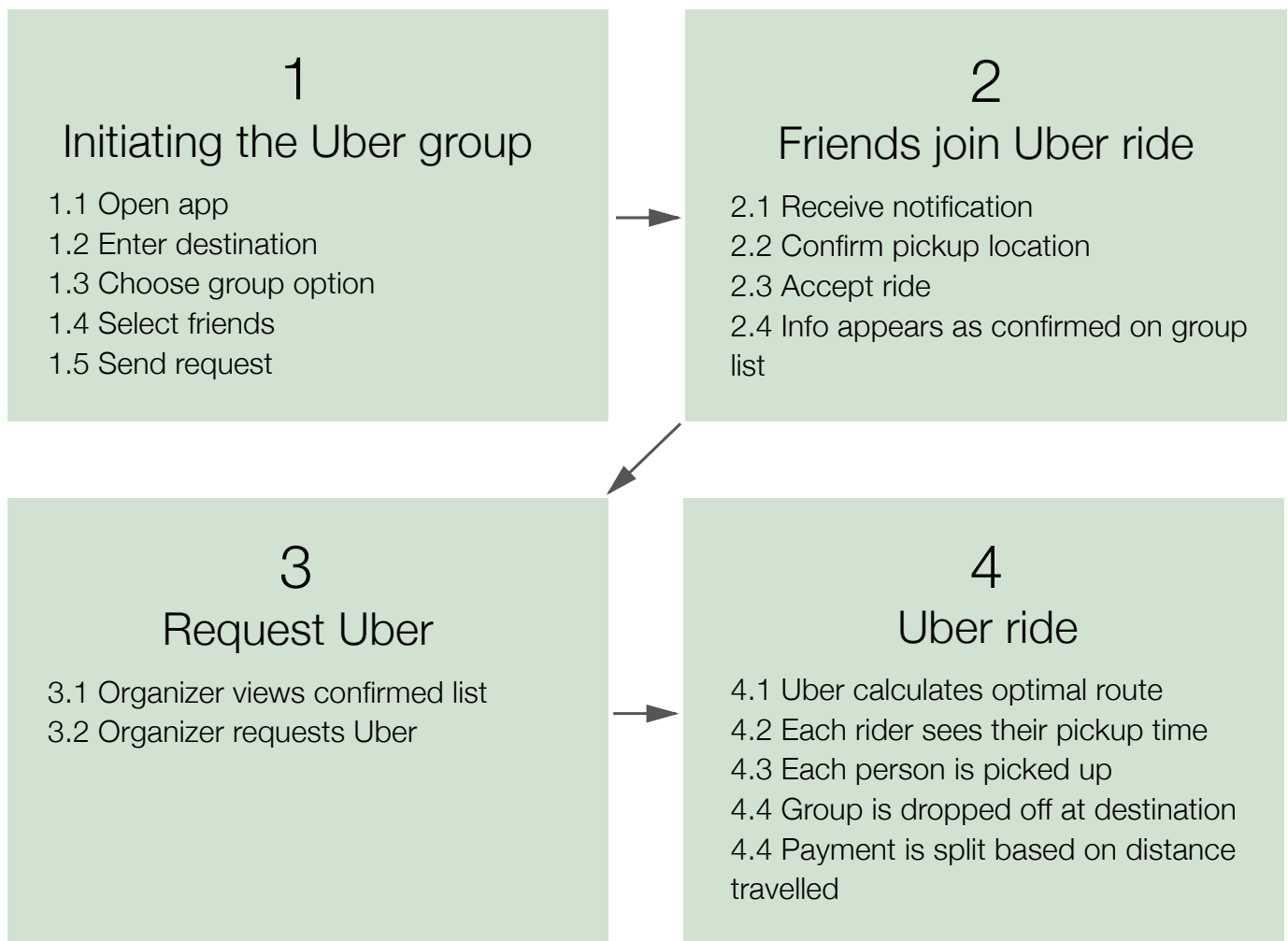
User Requirements

The key user requirements are:

- Must be able to invite multiple contacts
- Invitees must have to confirm pick-up before location is shared
- Must be able to still request Uber if one invitee declines or doesn't respond
- Invitees must be aware of route and other passengers
- Uber must take most efficient route
- Passengers must be aware of pick-up time at their location
- Passengers must be aware of stop order
- Fare must be split fairly based on distance each passenger travelled
- System must work with various types of Ubers (ie UberX, UberXL, UberSELECT, etc)

Workflow

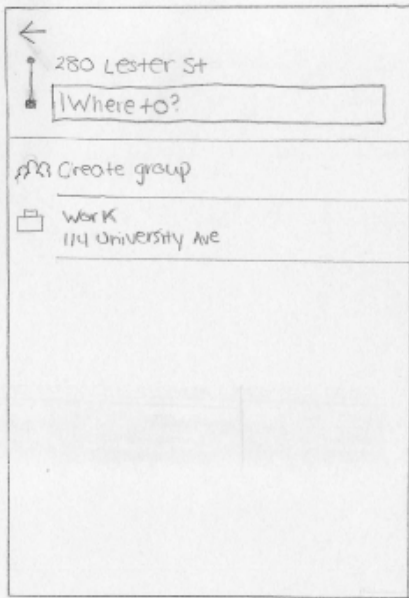
Various workflows were considered before arriving at the final workflow shown below. One was to require the trip organizer to enter all the stops before requesting the Uber. However, the user may not know everyone's addresses so would have to gather them all beforehand. This also creates a safety issue if another user does not want to be picked up, and also makes splitting payment fairly more difficult. Instead, a system was designed where the trip organizer invites their contacts, and the invitees must confirm their address before being added to the group. I also considered allowing users to choose the order of the route, but this adds extra steps. Users want the most efficient and cost effective route, so Uber should calculate this route for them.



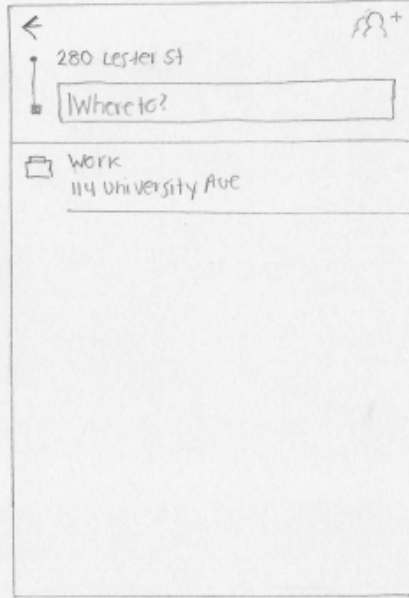
Sketches

Several sketched low fidelity prototypes of the system's interface were then drawn, as shown on the following pages.

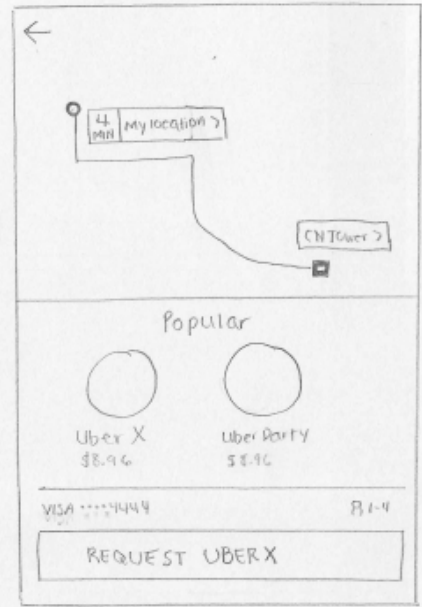
Choosing Group Option #1



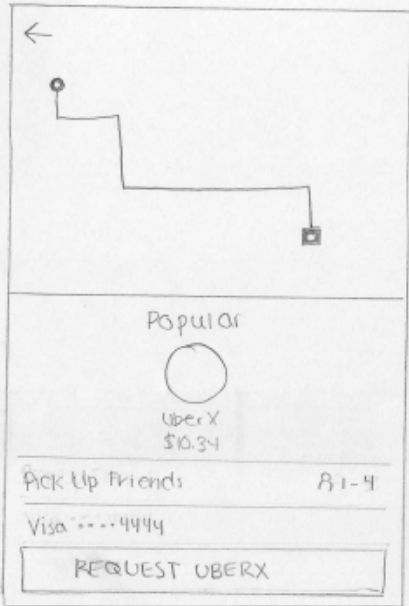
Create group button under destination



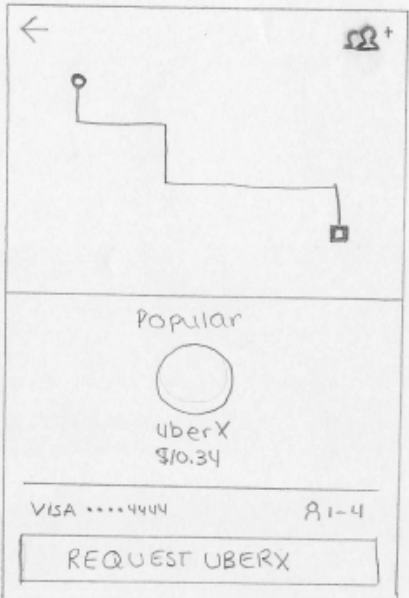
Action button to create group in top right corner



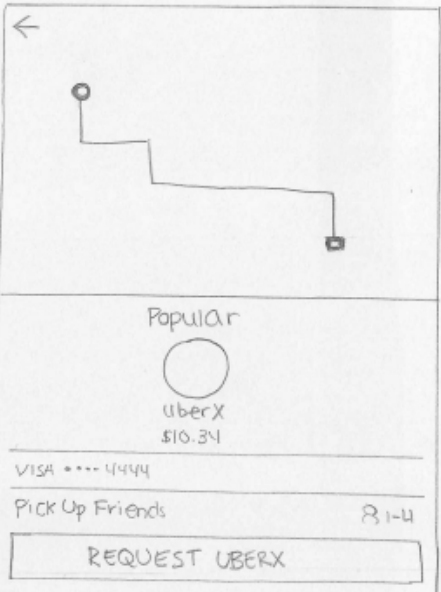
Uber party option along side other types of Ubers



- Pick up friends button above payment methods
- after destination is selected

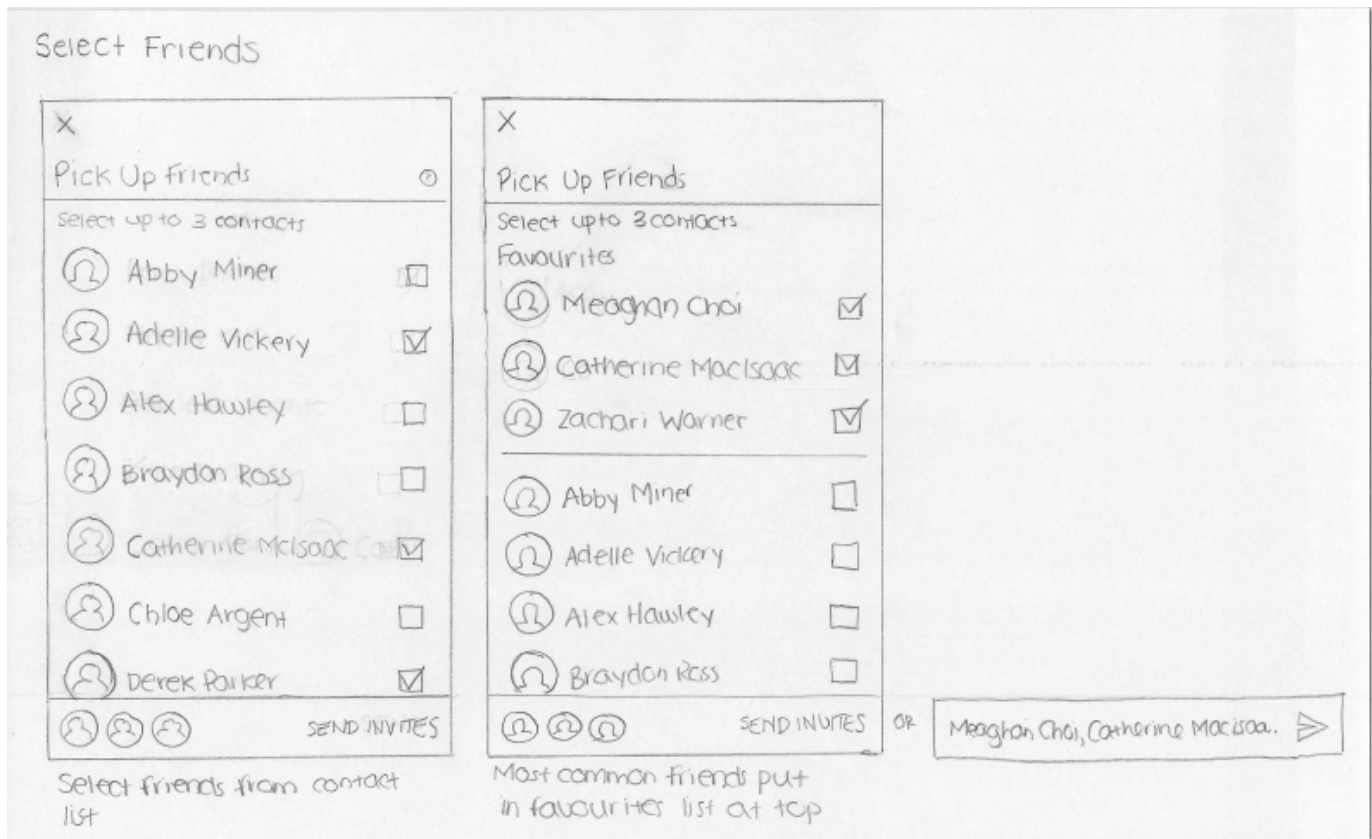


- add friends icon in top right corner

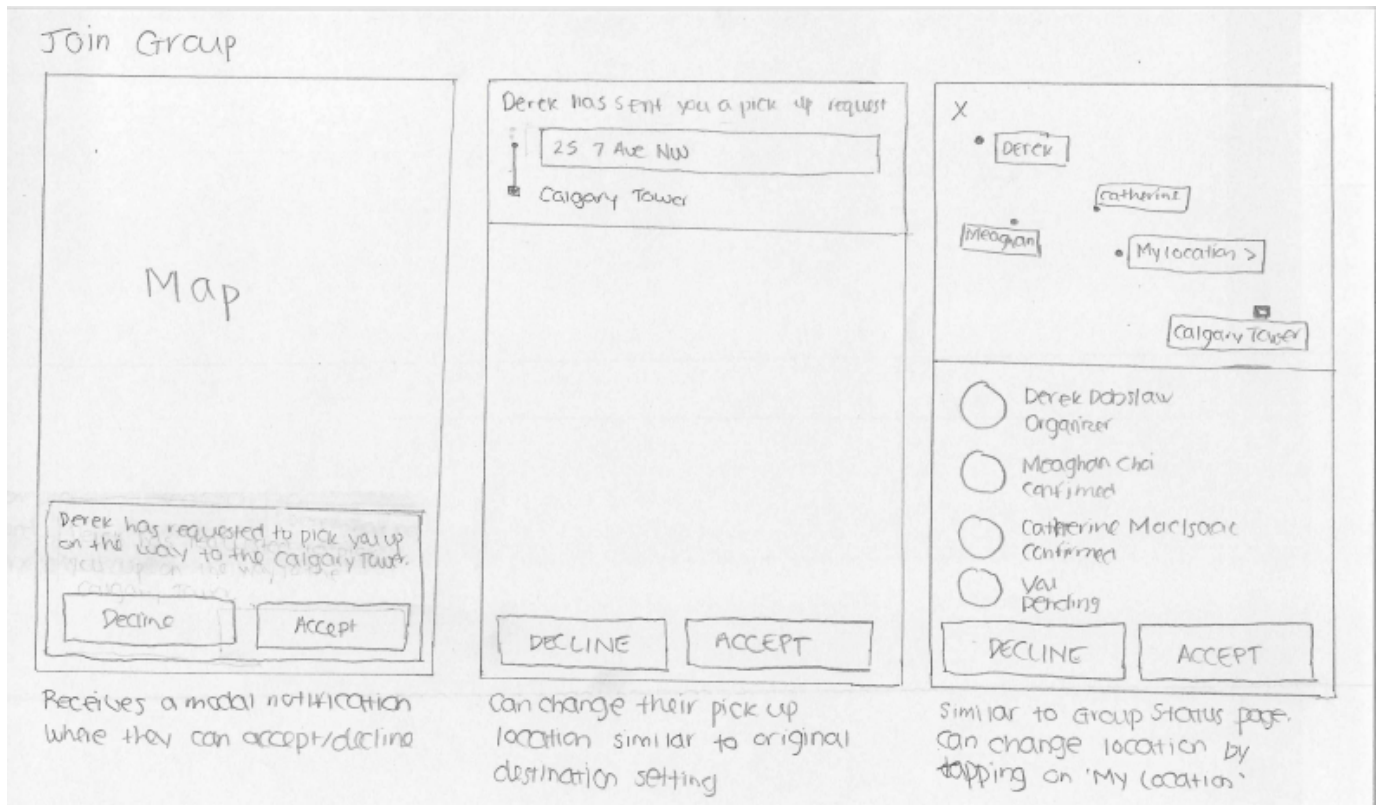


- pick up friends icon below payment method

Sketches of creating an UberPool Party

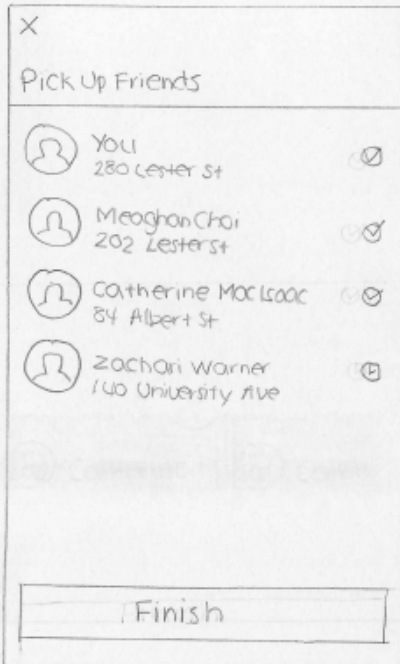


Sketches of inviting friends to pick up

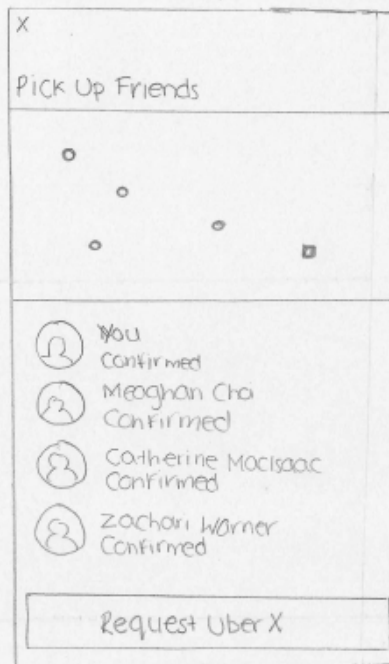


Sketches of accepting a group invitation

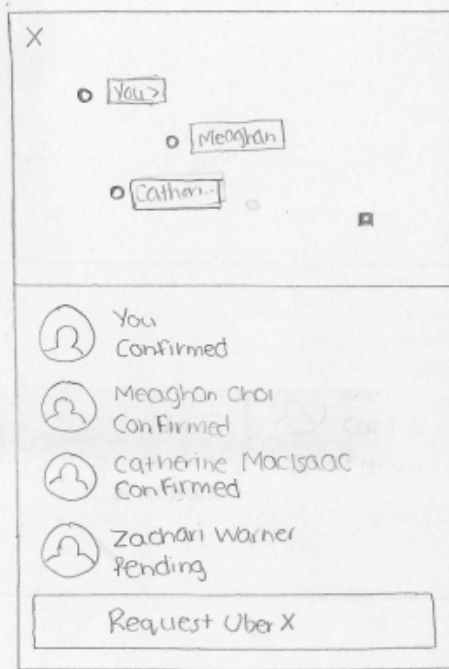
Group Status List #1



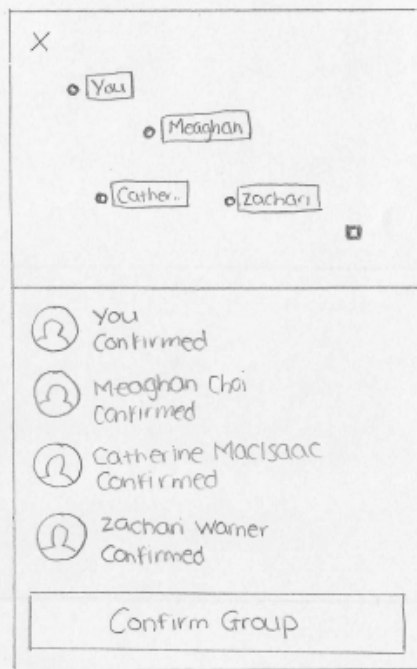
Confirmed friends have checkmark icon, pending friends have clock icon



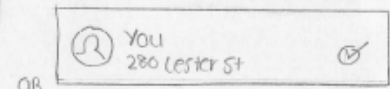
Includes map of friends' inputted locations



-goes directly to request uber



-goes to main route page then request uber



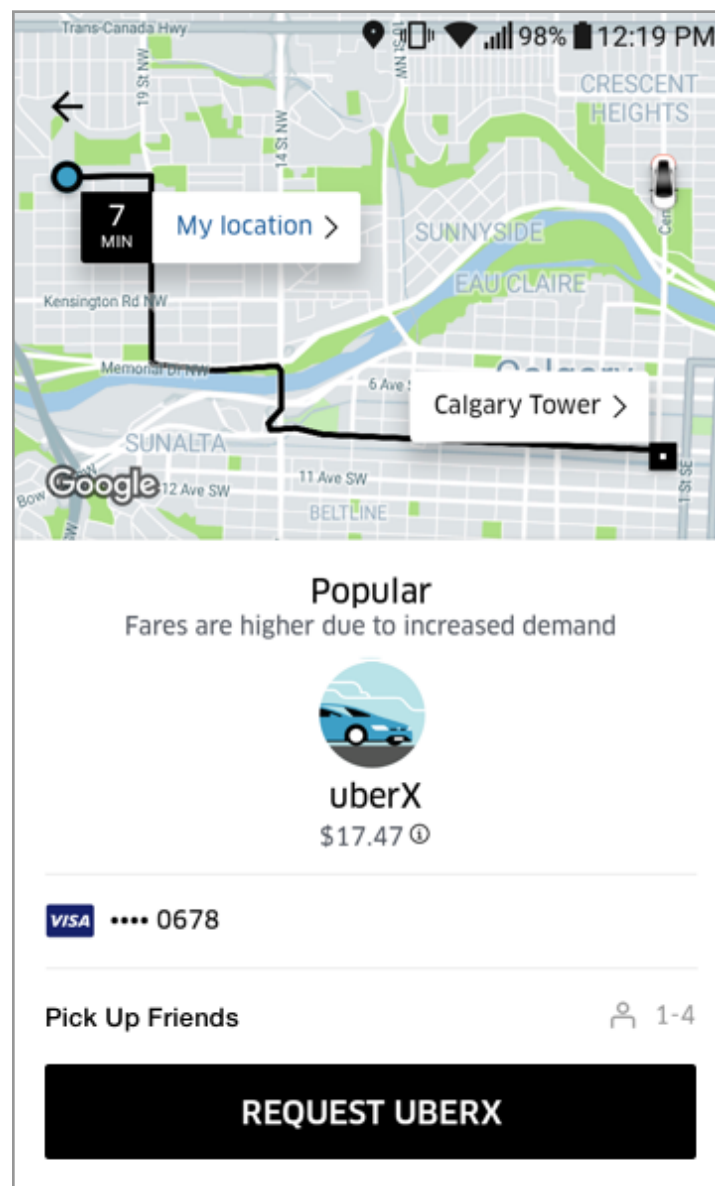
Sketches of the group list, displaying each member's status

Prototype

User walkthroughs were performed on the paper prototypes to determine which ones were the most usable. The prototypes were designed in order to maintain consistency with the current Uber app.

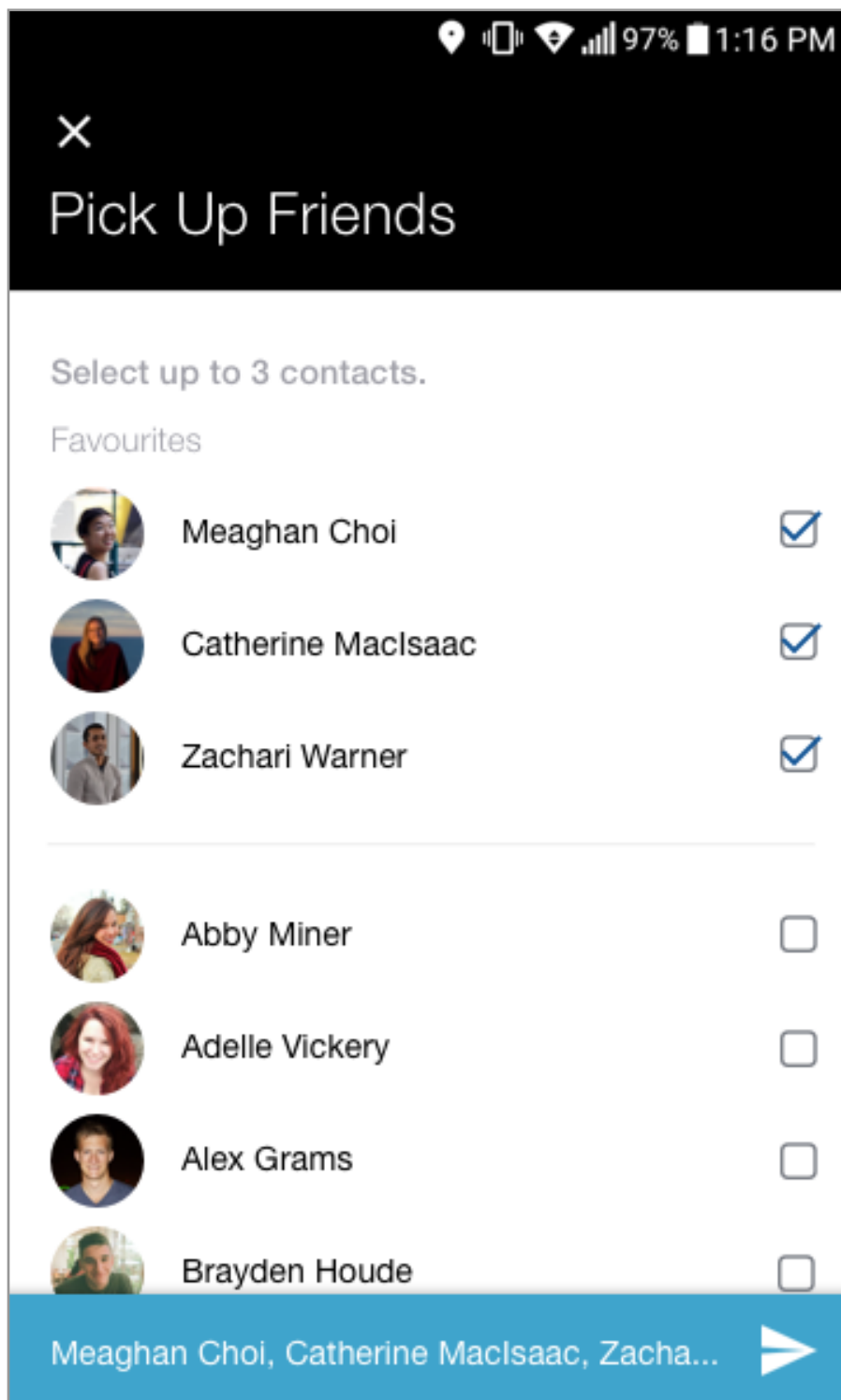
Initiating Pick Up Option

The user first selects a final destination, as is usually done. Then, on the request page, if the user wants to pick up friends, they can tap on the Pick Up Friends button underneath Payment Methods. This allows the user to choose from different types of Ubers and to choose their payment method before initiating the Pick Up process. This variation is chosen because it doesn't interfere with the basic Uber ordering process, which is most frequently used. It also allows the user to set the final location as they normally would, while keeping this option prominent.



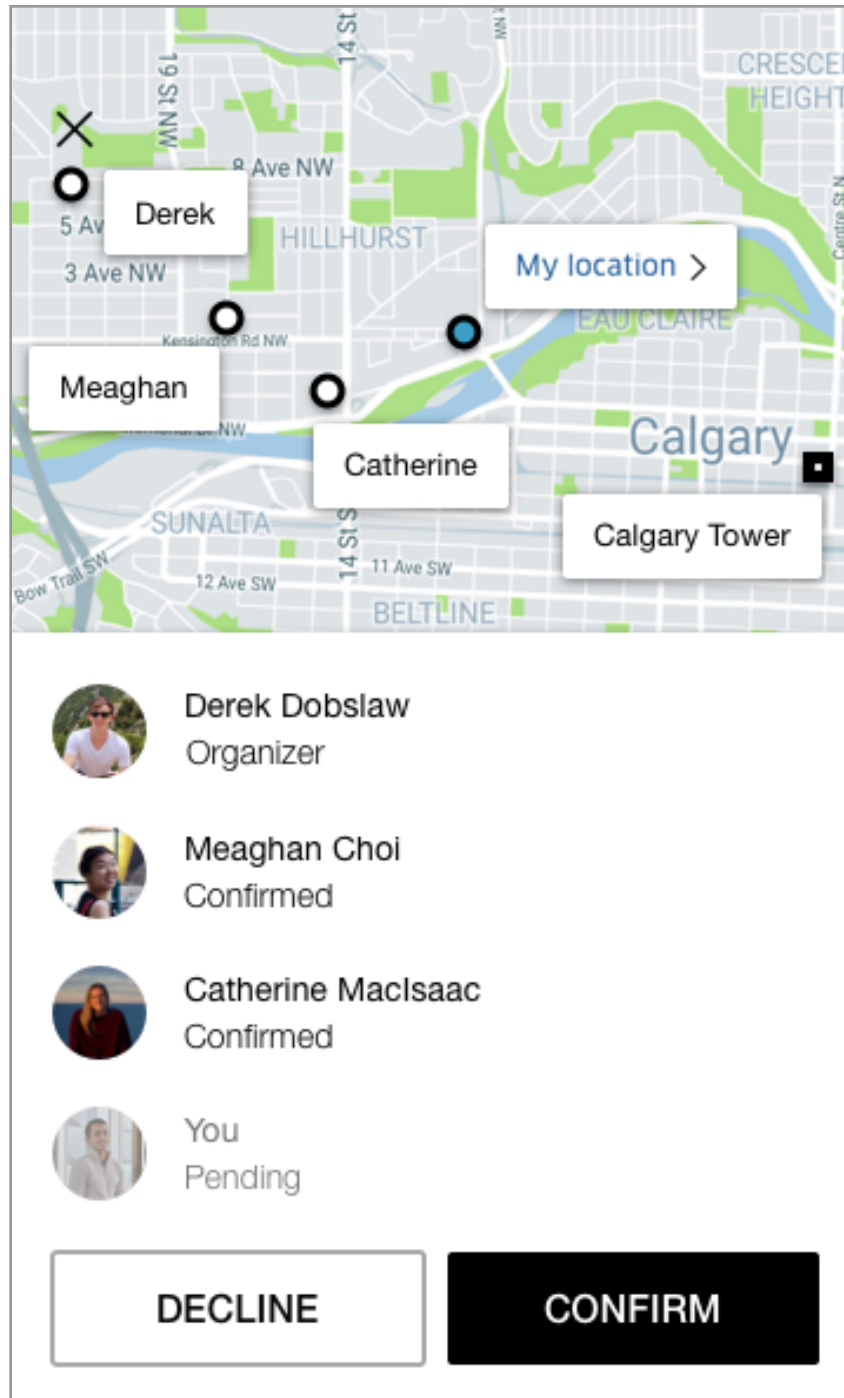
Inviting Friends

After tapping on Pick Up Friends, a contact list appears. The user can select as many friends as will fit in the Uber. Friends that are frequently picked up will populate the Favourites list at the top. As friends are selected, a blue bar appears at the bottom, populated with the names of the invitees. This allows the user to easily confirm who they've selected, thereby preventing error. The user then taps on the paper airplane icon to send the invites.



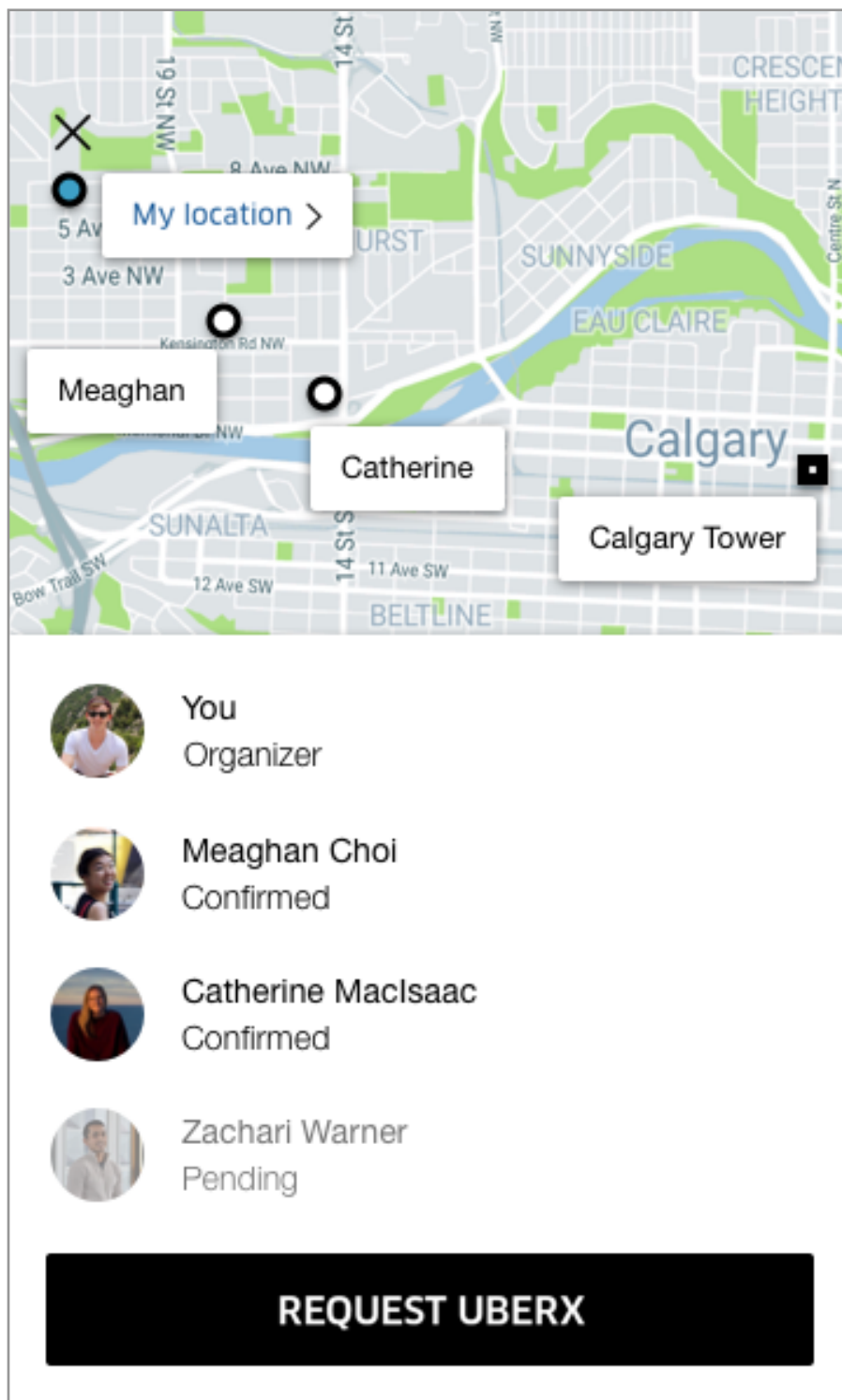
Accepting an Invite

Once the request is sent, the invitees will receive a notification about the request saying something like, “Derek Dobslaw has requested to pick you up on the way to the Calgary Tower”. Upon tapping the notification, the following screen opens. The user can then see the other users invited and their locations, and the final destination. They can also change their location if desired. The user then either confirms or declines the invite, which is relayed to the other group members. This version was chosen because it keeps the user fully aware of the situation, which increases their confidence in accepting the request.







Group Status Page

Confirmed users, as well as the organizer, can keep track of the status of the group on the group status page. Once a user confirms, their given location appears on the map. The organizer can request the Uber at any time since a situation may arise where an invitee does not respond. This occurrence should not render the ride void. If all riders have confirmed, however, any rider will be able to request the Uber.



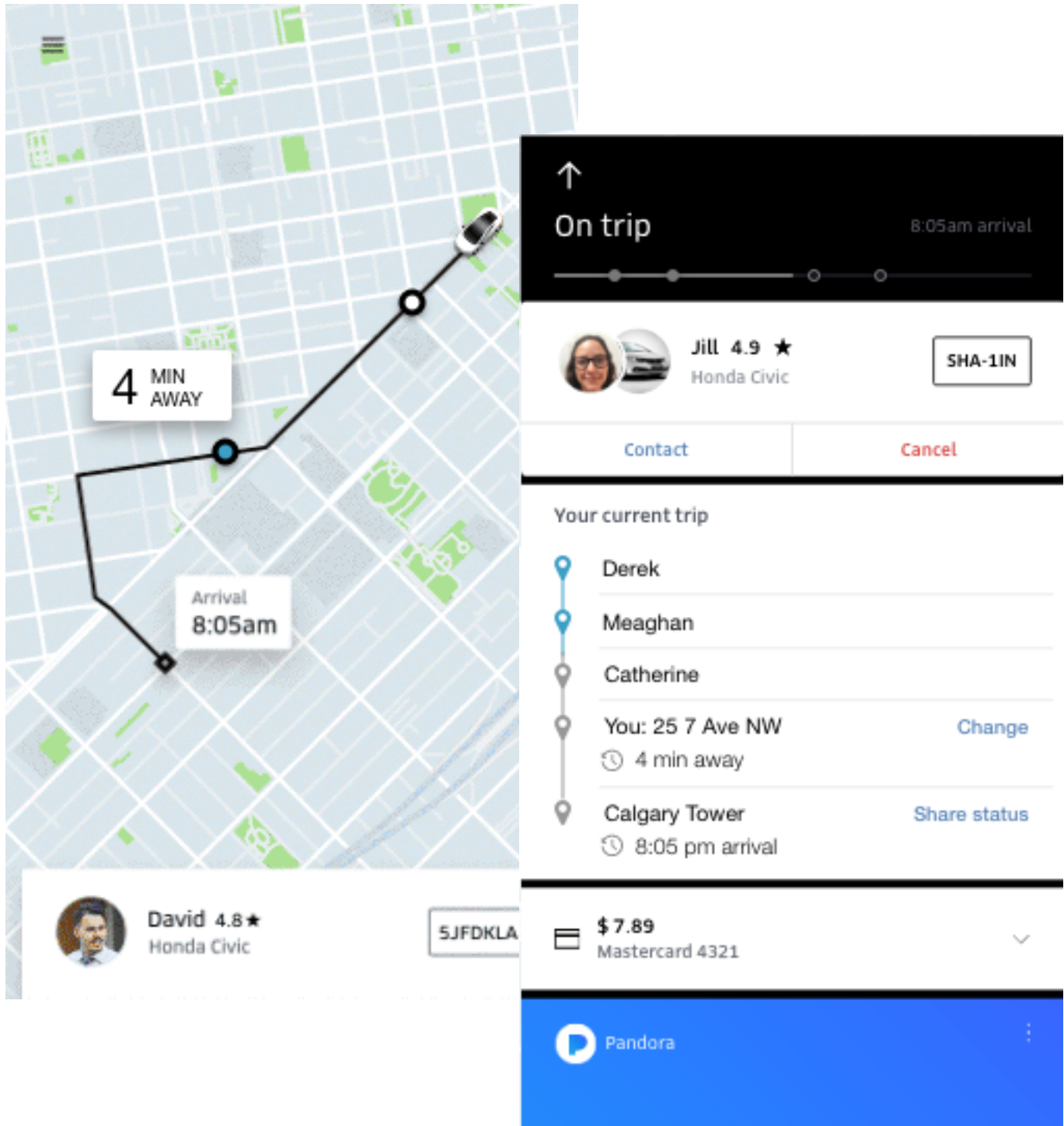
The screenshot displays a group status page. At the top is a map of Calgary, Alberta, showing the Bow River and surrounding neighborhoods like Sunnyside and Eau Claire. A blue dot on the map is labeled "My location >". Other locations marked on the map include "Meaghan", "Catherine", and "Calgary Tower". Below the map is a list of participants:

-  **You**
Organizer
-  **Meaghan Choi**
Confirmed
-  **Catherine MacIsaac**
Confirmed
-  **Zachari Warner**
Pending

At the bottom of the page is a large black button with the text **REQUEST UBERX** in white capital letters.

Trip Route

Once all the users have confirmed their addresses and the Uber has been requested, Uber calculates the optimal route. The optimal route is not calculated until the Uber is requested because it also takes into account Uber car proximity/availability. Once the Uber is on its way, each rider can see the Uber's progress and estimated arrival time at their location. They can also see the order of the stops combined with who has been picked up. This gives the user constant feedback about the ride.



Next Steps

The next step is to perform rigorous user testing. The prototype should be put in an interactive prototyping software such as InVision and be tested with Uber users. A think-aloud method should be used. Once problems are detected from user tests, further iterations of the prototype should be completed. A continuous cycle of establishing specifications, developing design solutions, building prototypes, and evaluation should be followed until minimal issues are discovered.

