



Tourism Website

Clear Creek County

Clear Creek County is the gateway to the Colorado mountains from Denver. Many travelers don't even make a pit stop on their way to better-known mountain regions. We refreshed the Clear Creek County Tourism Board's website to showcase the many things visitors can do when they visit—inspiring travelers to come and play.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES

- User Experience Designer
 - High-level research
 - Interaction Design
 - Content Strategy

PROJECT GOALS

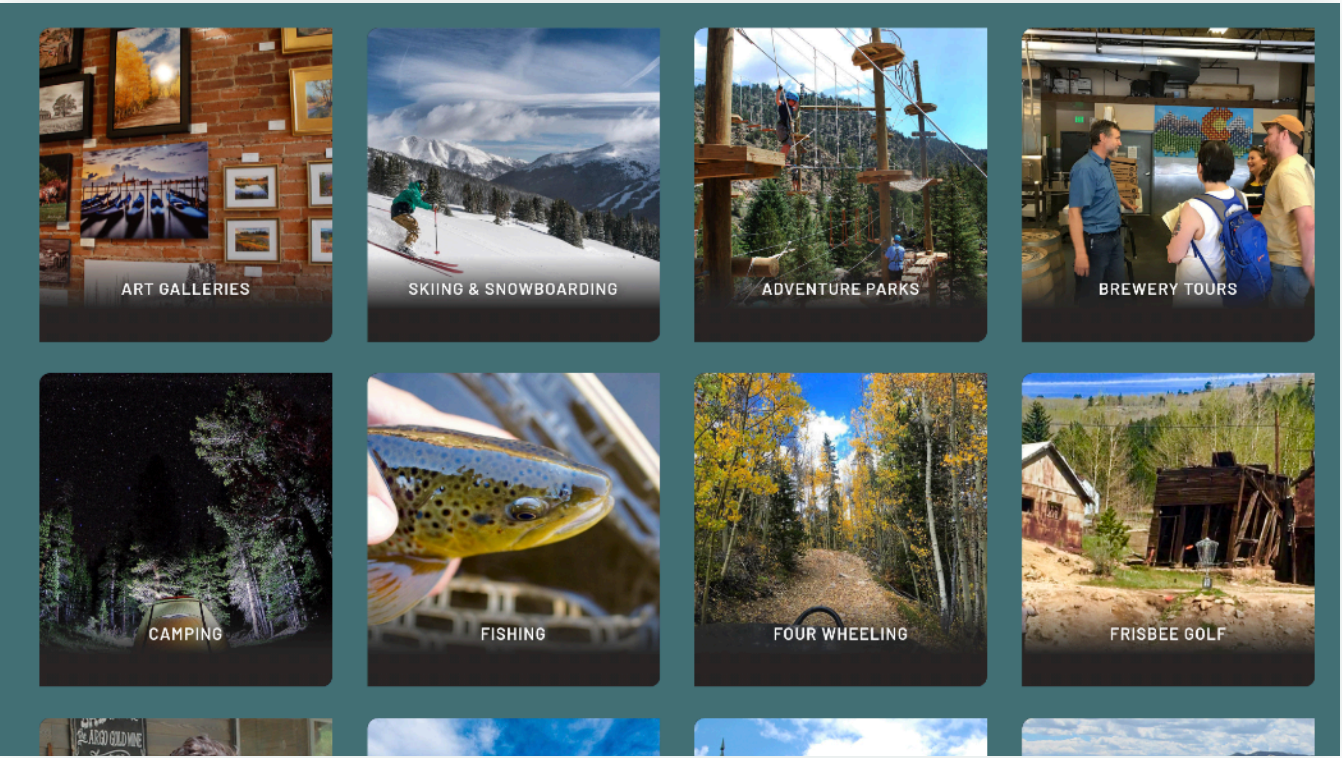
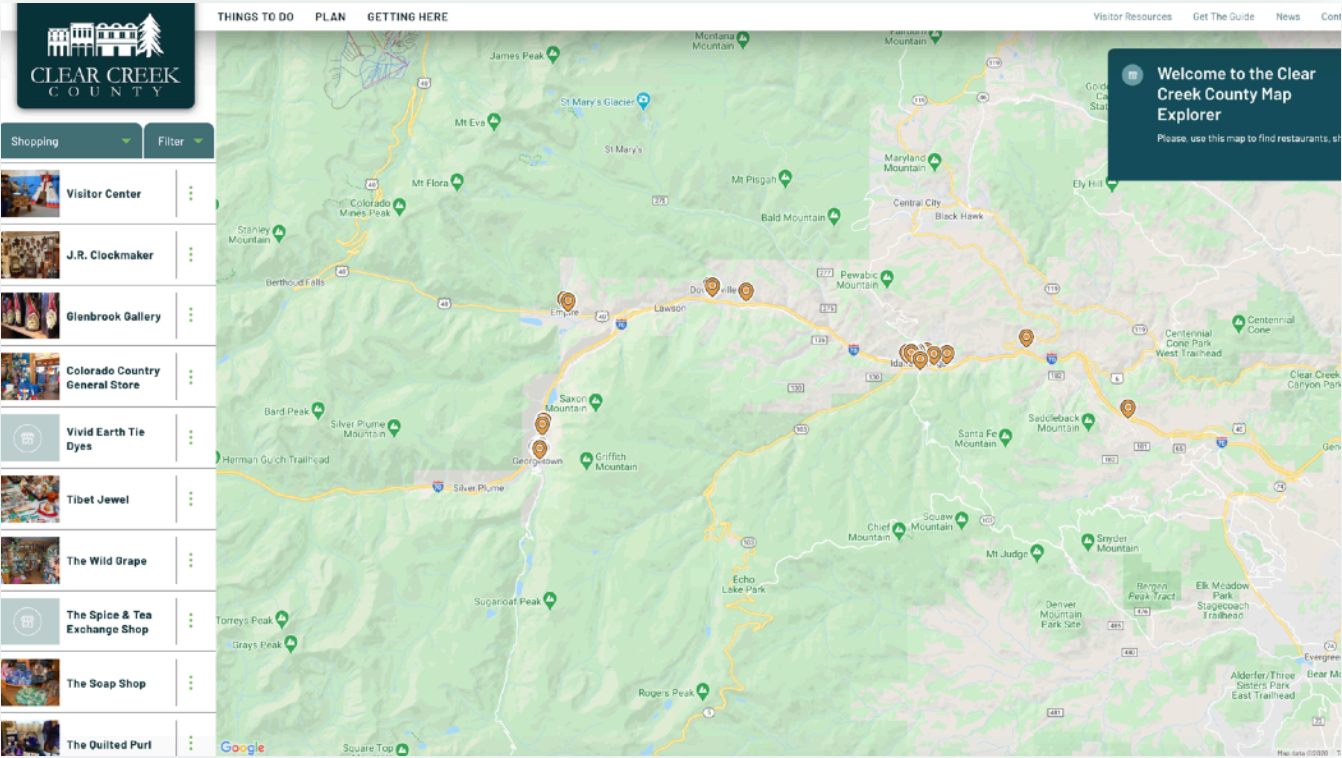
- Modernize tools
- Refer traffic to business websites
- Increase time on site

TIMELINE & TEAM

- 4 months (extended due to COVID)
- UX Designer, UI Designer, In-House Developer, SEO Writer, and contract WP Development team

PROJECT LINKS

- [View live website](#)



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OUTCOME

The client is very happy with the final product, and visually and functionally it stands out from other competitor sites.

While the site officially went live on September 23, 2020, initial analytics are already showing shifting user behaviors. We've seen:

- A decrease in bounce rate
- Increase in time on site
- Good adoption of the tools

Hopefully, the agency be able to continue to testing and optimizing the tools and website moving forward.



The refreshed website has **multiple trip planning tools** to help users start their adventures faster.

Since launch on 9/23, we've already seen a **20% decrease in bounce**, and a **36 second increase overall in time-on-site**.

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USERS & AUDIENCE >

While tourism in Colorado is a giant industry, Clear Creek County tends to be a passthrough market. After reviewing their current site analytics and overall project goals, we created new personas for this project. The personas feature local Denver residents and travelers, who are looking for a quick weekend getaway from the city, while avoiding all of the traffic on I70.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

I interviewed the tourism director and the board president to understand their needs, requirements, hopes, and concerns for the project.



Alyssa (35) The Adventure Planner

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age 35
- HHI 90k
- Two children, ages 9 & 6
- Married
- Alyssa is a teacher

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Will research before making a final decision
- Alyssa plans most family activities
- Likes to plan fun day trip activities for her nuclear family, but especially when extended family visits town

KEY MESSAGES

- Outdoor activity is a core part of her lifestyle
- Enjoys adding variety & excitement to the things she does
- Tries to do as many activities as a family as possible
- Family values include healthy living, and a respect for nature

“My family loves going to the mountains, but we hate getting stuck in traffic”

We picked a local persona instead of an out-of-state traveler. Front Range residents are more likely to take a day trip and explore Clear Creek County, while out-of-state visitors are less likely to stop on the way to their final destination deeper in the mountains. Defining this persona helped us create specific short-term (2-4 weeks lead time) trip planning tools.

Original Website



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COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS >

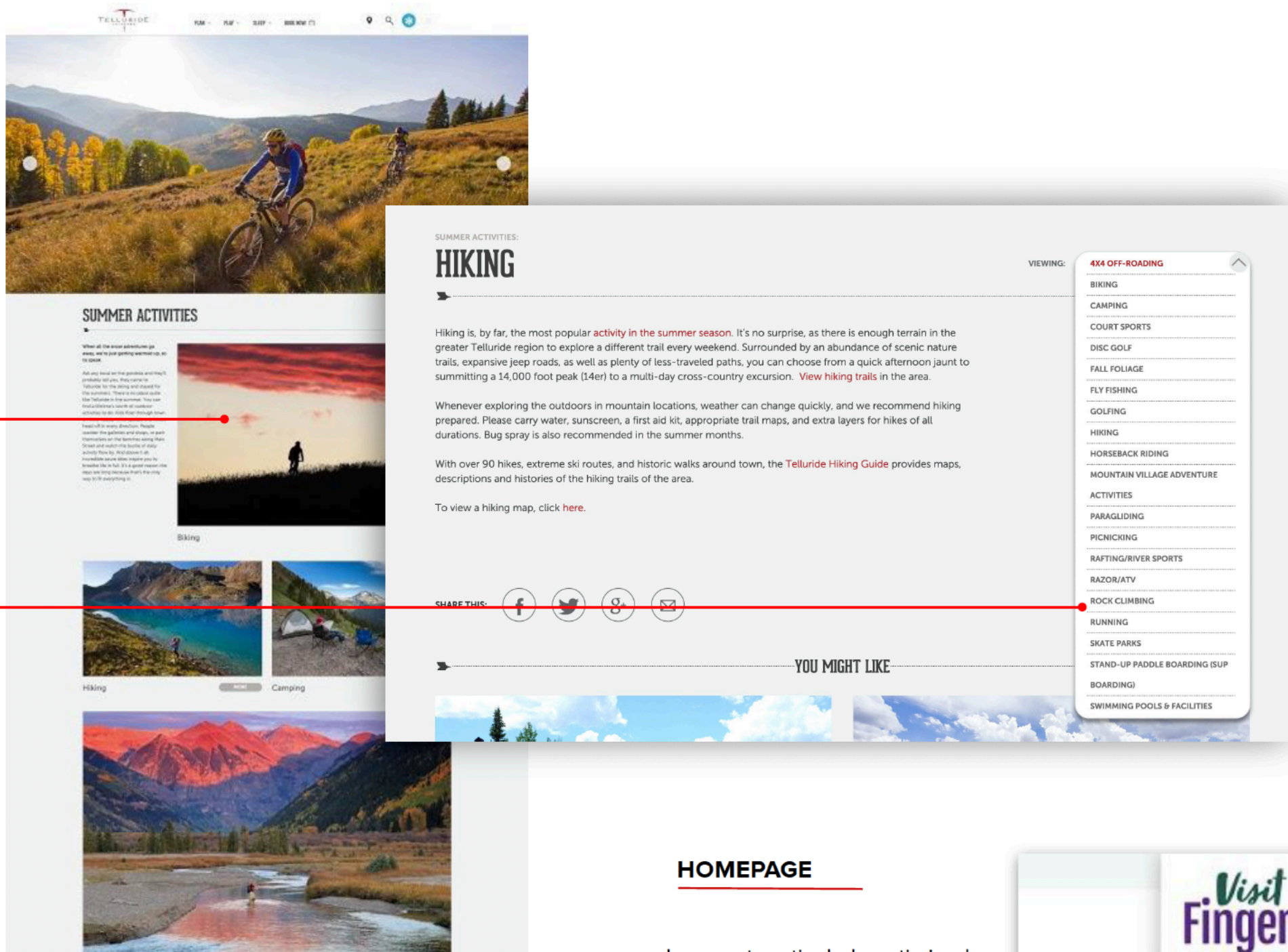
I completed a comprehensive competitive analysis of top competitors, other state DMO sites, and aspirational tourism sites to document what planning tools, IA structures, and content included on other DMO sites.

This helped us identify some major DOs to get our site up to industry standard. But also some things we definitely wanted to avoid.

TELLURIDE ACTIVITY FILTERING

Very visual activity filtering on gridded image structure with clickable images.

Informational pages for each activity also has navigation to view other activities and continue exploring.



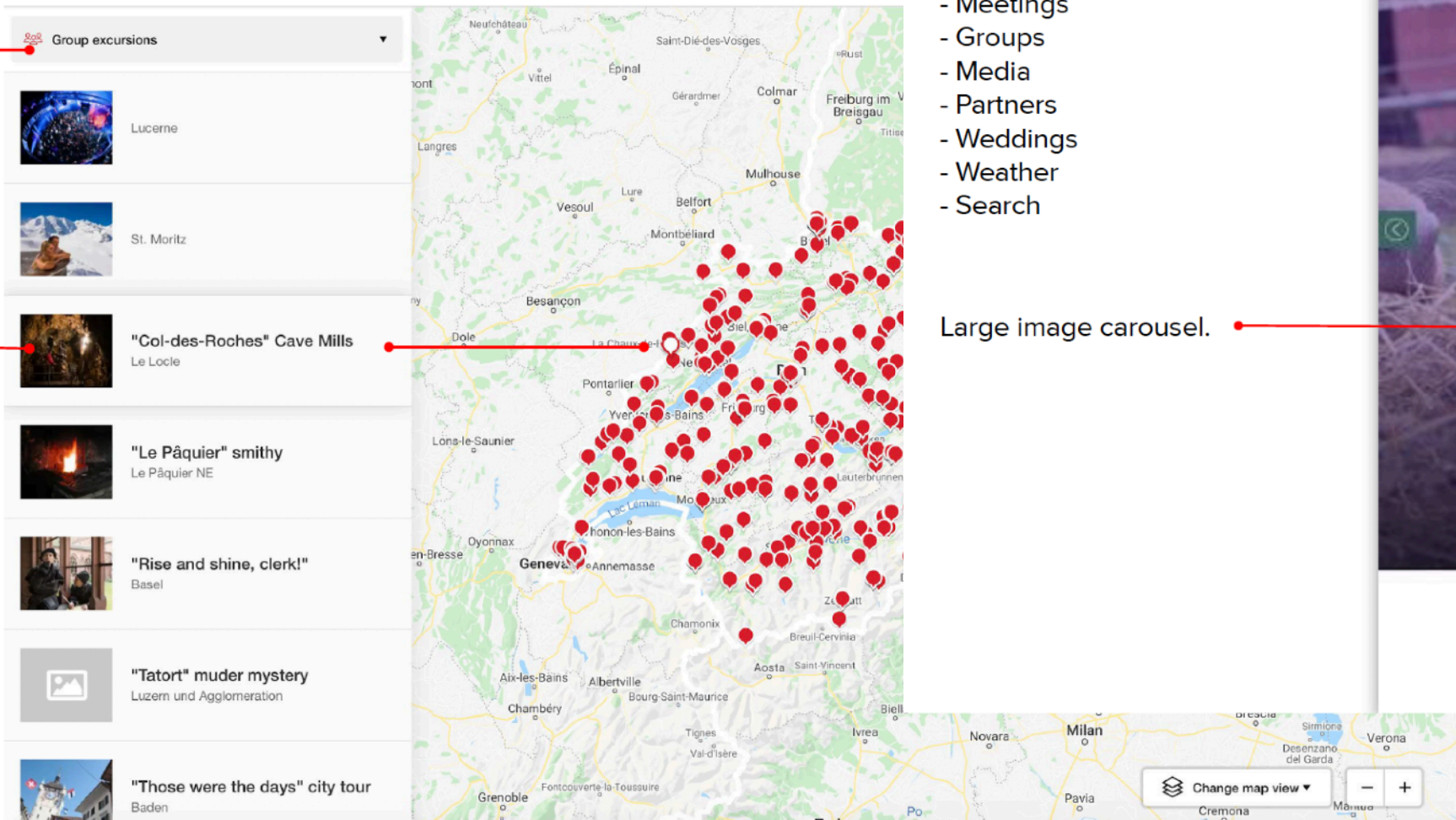
A simple but comprehensive approach to see what tools and approaches are working on other competitor sites.

SWITZERLAND MAPS

Filtering system for excursions, dining, shopping, accommodations, and various cities in the region.

On hover, pin reflects location.

Side panel expands with information:

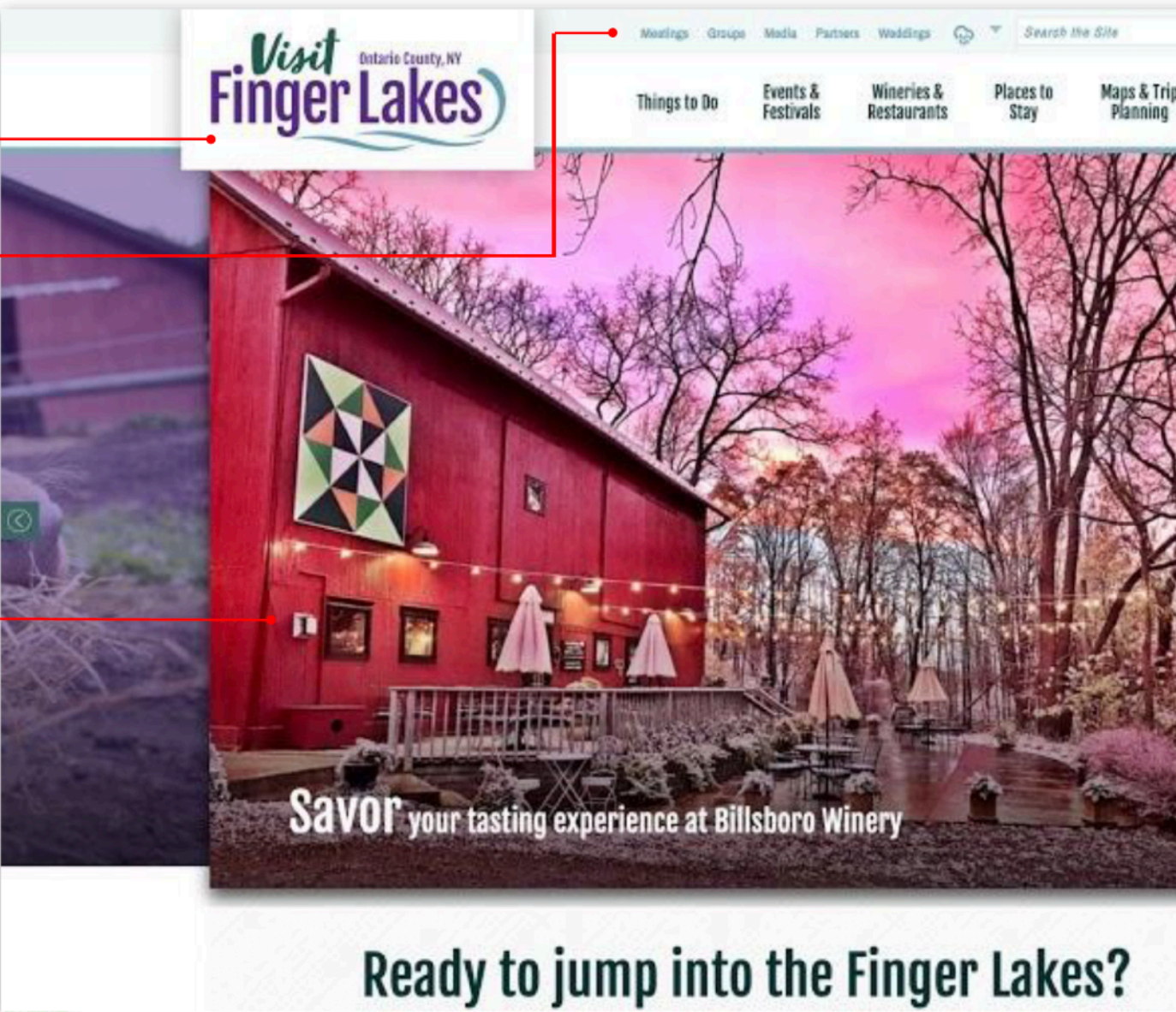


HOMEPAGE

Logo not particularly optimized for website.

- Utility navigation items:
- Meetings
 - Groups
 - Media
 - Partners
 - Weddings
 - Weather
 - Search

Large image carousel.



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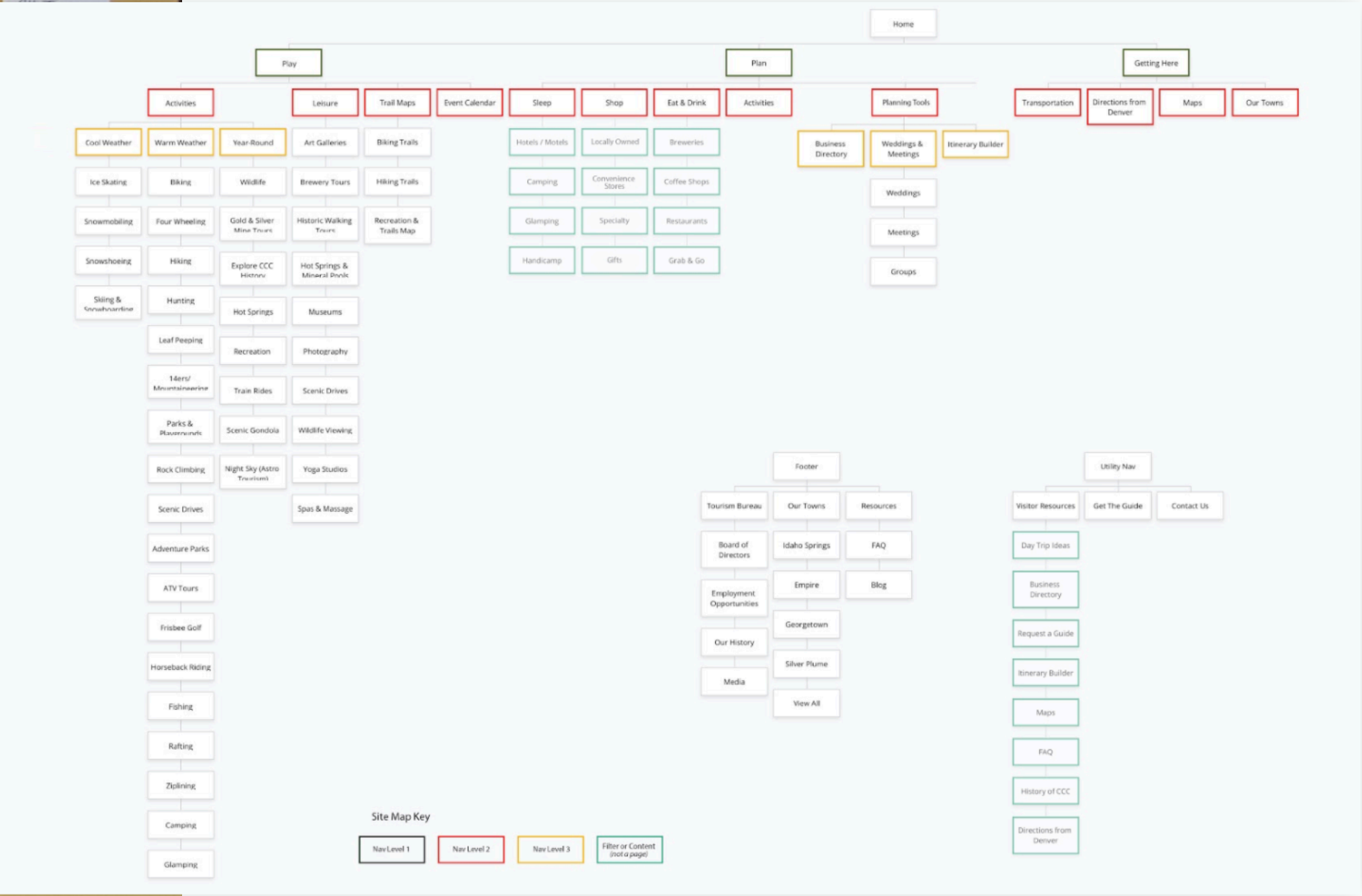
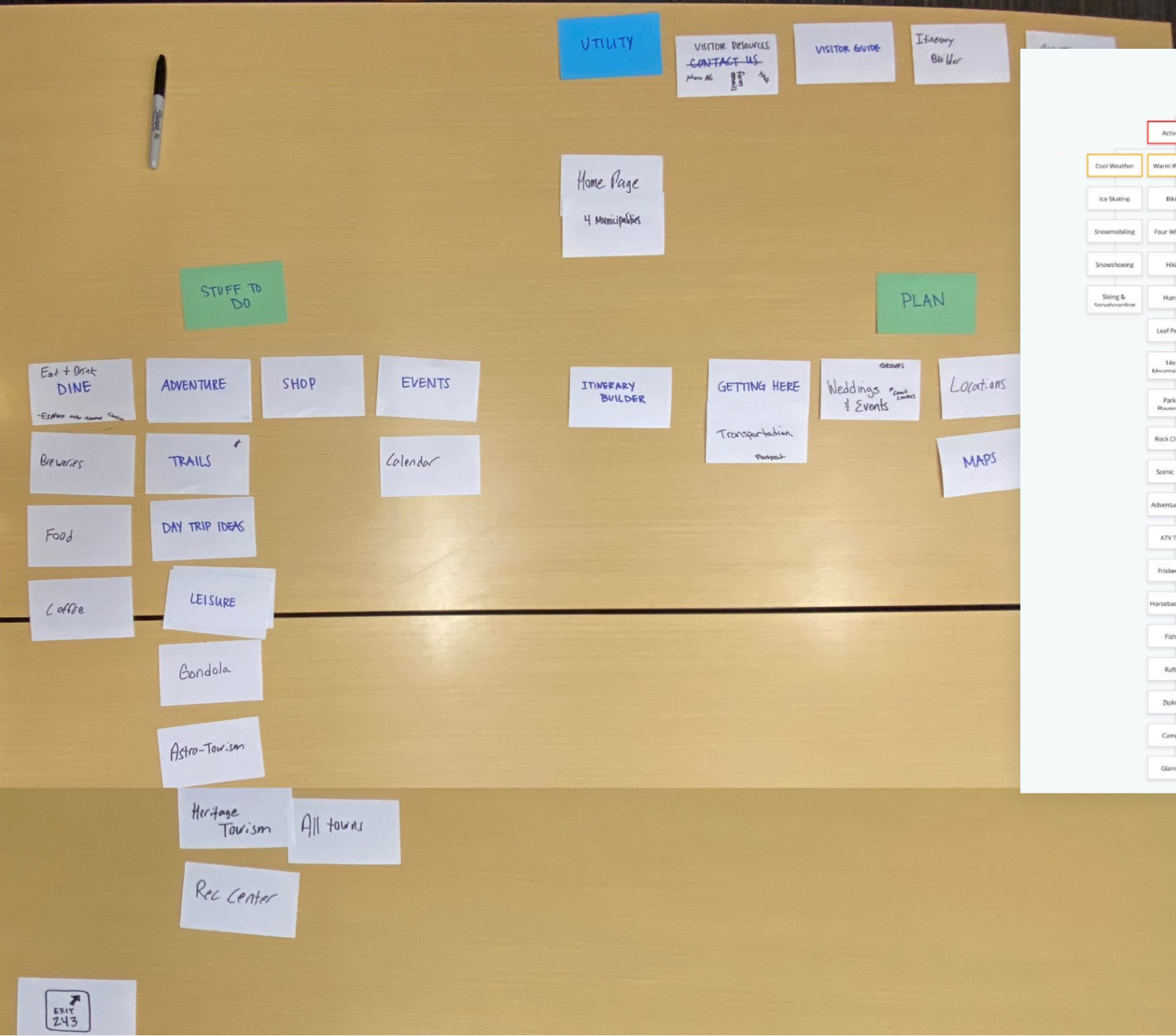
CONTENT STRATEGY >

I ran multiple card sorts (with end users and the clients) to identify potential website content groupings and organization.

We ultimately landed on a mega menu structure, creating categories like "Things to Do", "Plan" and "Getting Here". This ultimately gives the client the flexibility to add additional items as seasons shift and tourism/COVID related changes occur.

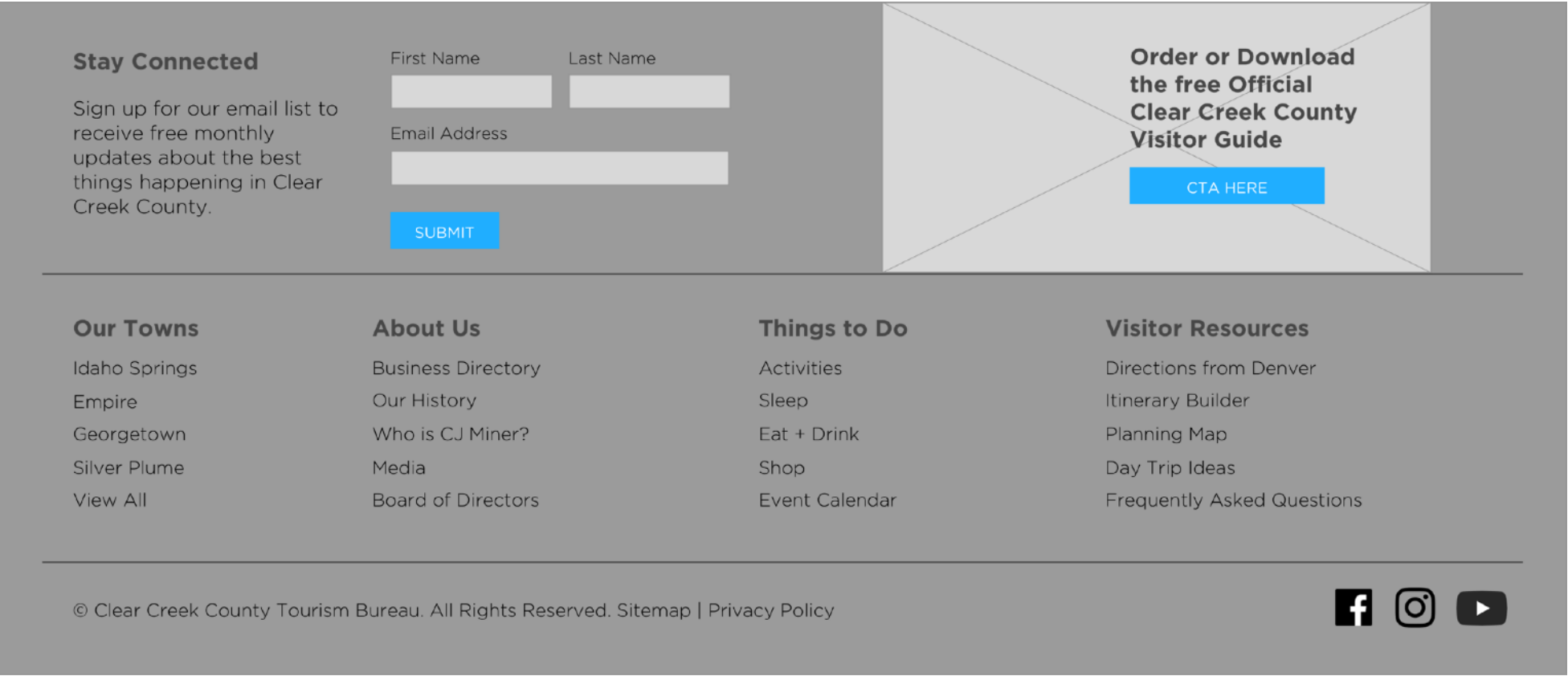
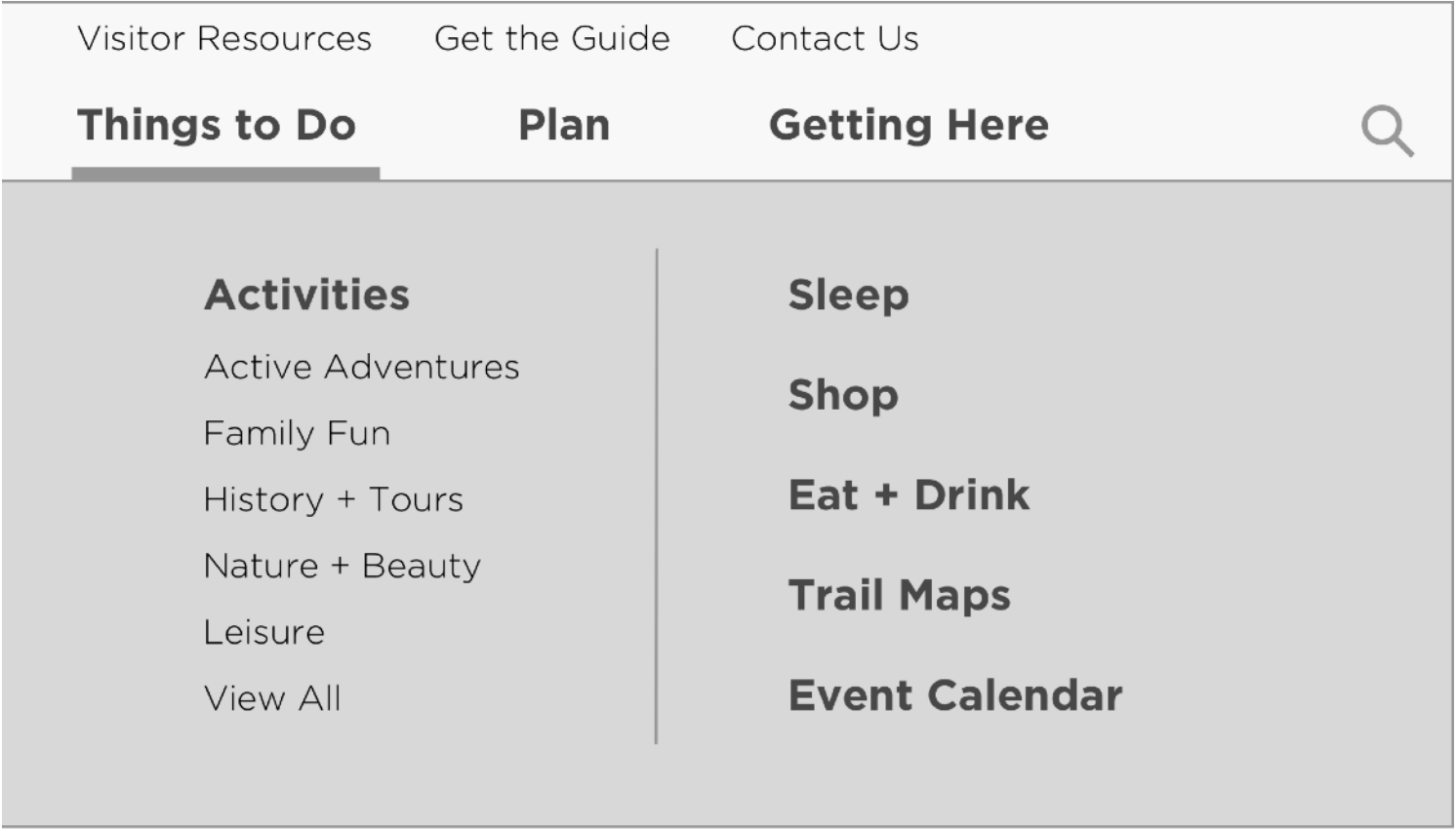
NAVIGATION MODEL >

We created a navigation model to run a mini-user test on the best navigation configuration.



Site Map

There were over 1,000 pages of content to restructure to ensure that the site was easily navigated and digestible.



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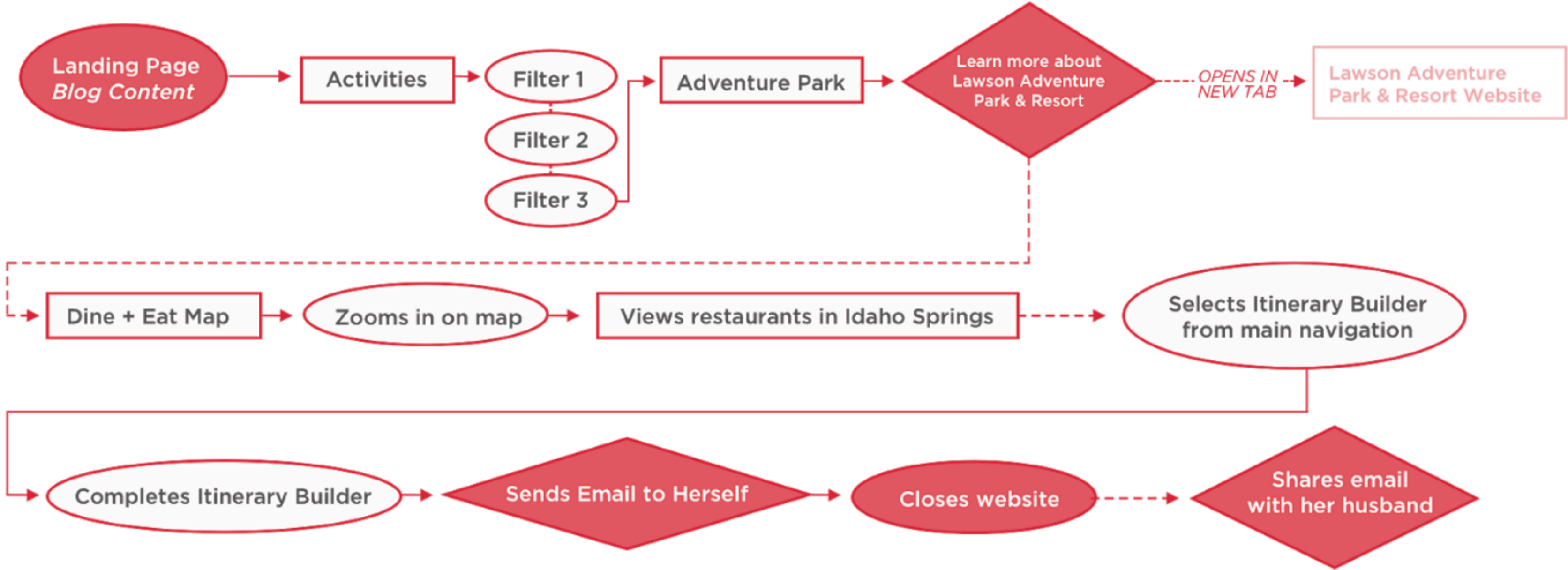
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CLICK PATH >

To ensure we knew how users would interact with our website, we created click paths for our persona. This helped us identify important features and tools to include on the website.



Alyssa (35) The Adventure Planner



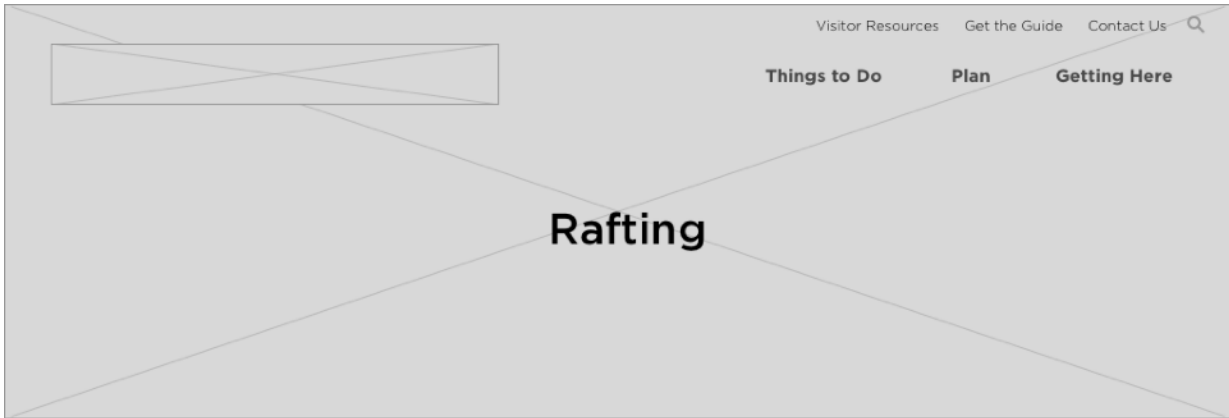
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WIREFRAMING / PAGE TEMPLATES >

We were scoped to create 7 different page templates. Working closely with our development team, we were able to create a very flexible page builder. It allows for different variations and modules to be used across the site. This keeps the design consistent, but allows for content flexibility.

[View Prototype >](#)

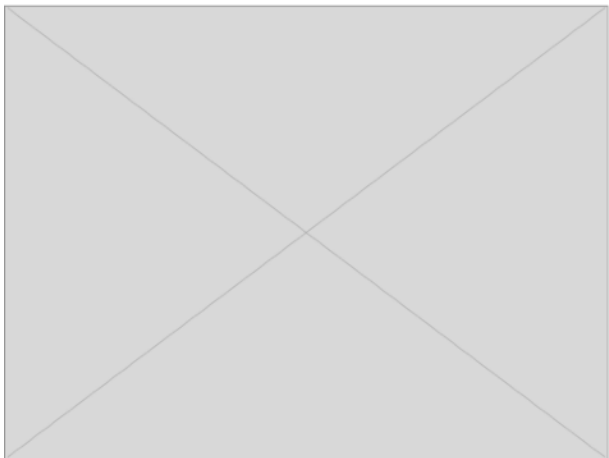
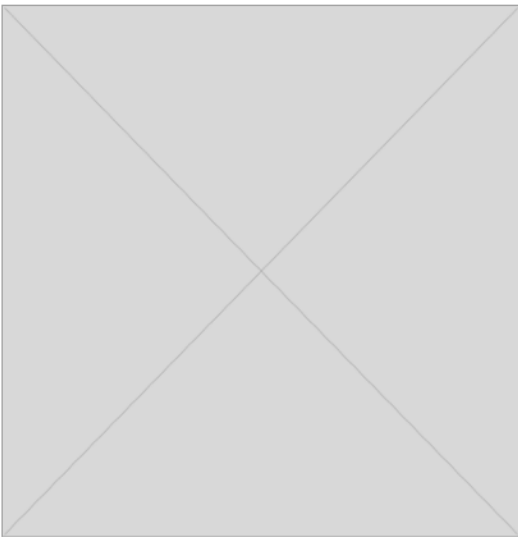


ACTIVITIES > WARM WEATHER > HIKING

Headline About Rafting Goes Here

Content about rafting. With 53 14,000 foot peaks, as well as a few thousand lower peaks, Colorado is one of the best camping and hiking destinations in the United States. During your Colorado vacation to camp, ski or fish remember to bring the hiking boots. With many hiking trails to explore start slow and enjoy the great Colorado mountains.

On a Colorado hiking trip, you can experience trails with elevations that range from as low as 3,337 feet, to as high as 14, 433 feet.



Heading 2

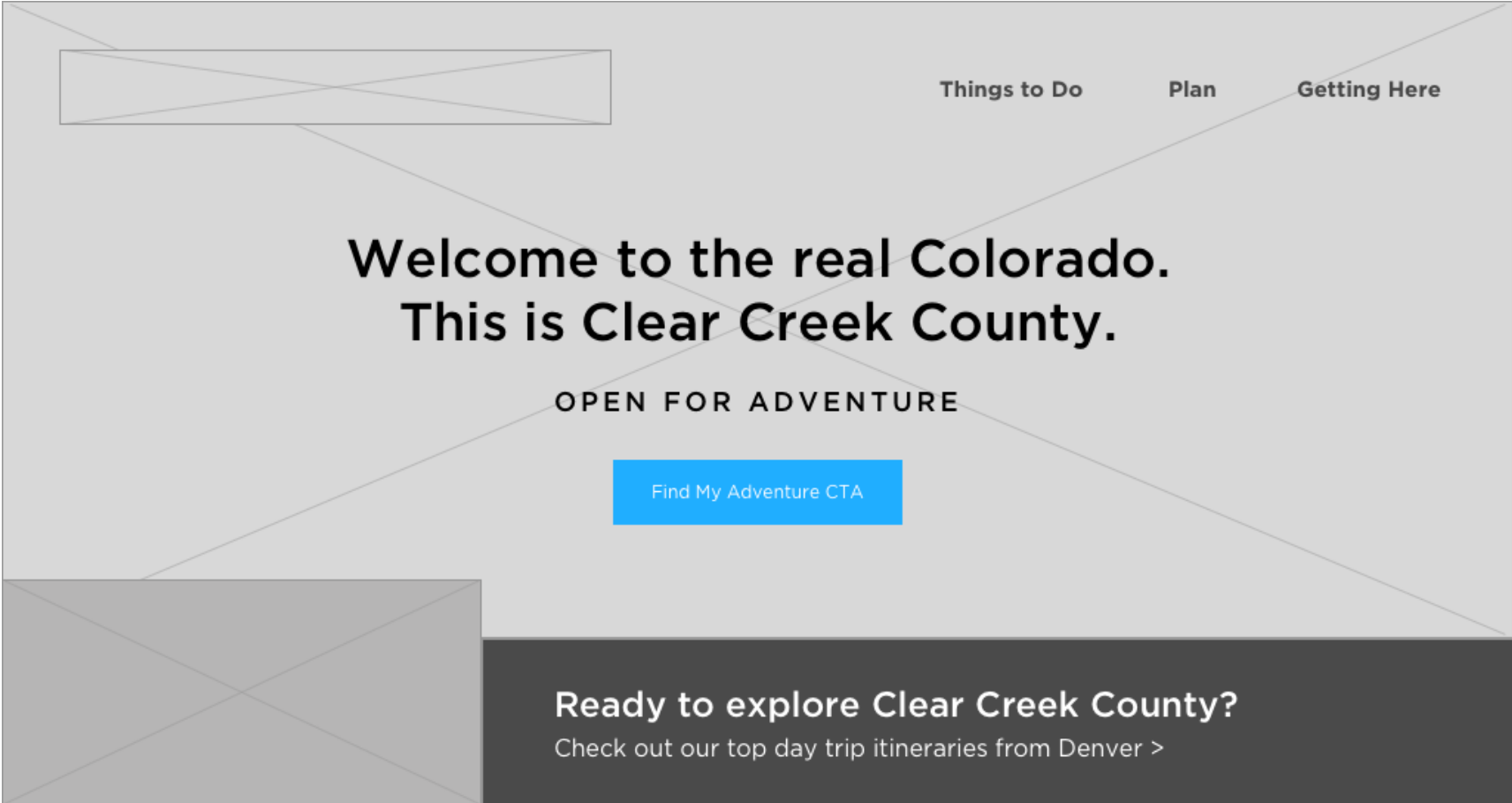
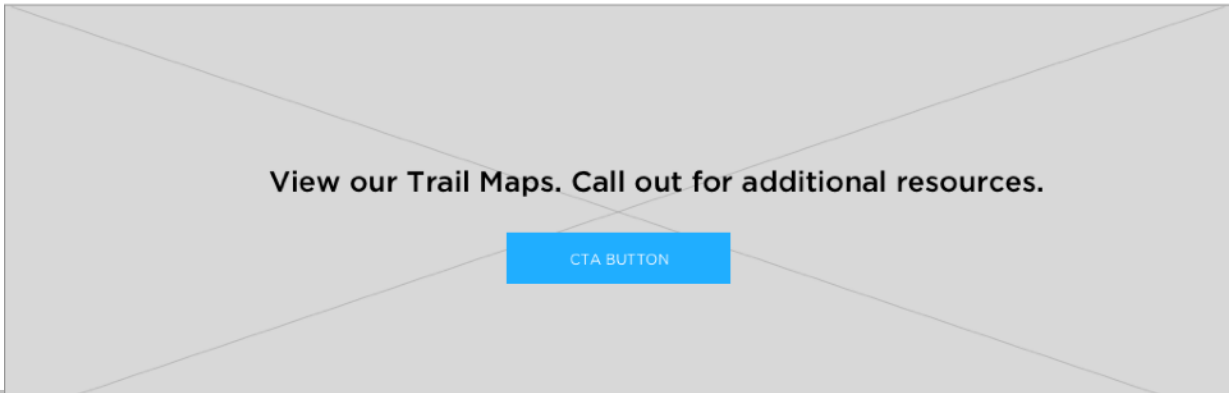
Rafting content. Once you have acclimated to the altitude, you will definitely want to visit the Colorado hiking trails in Clear Creek County. Luckily for the modern day hiker, the gold seekers of the 1800s formed mountain trails as they hiked.

CTA BUTTON

Plan your rafting trip to Clear Creek County

We have a number of companies that can help you plan your rafting adventure.

HIKING COMPANY Address Line 1 City, CO 80000 Visit Website	INFO BLOCK ONE Address Line 1 City, CO 80000 Visit Website	INFO BLOCK ONE Address Line 1 City, CO 80000 Visit Website
INFO BLOCK ONE Address Line 1 City, CO 80000 Visit Website	INFO BLOCK ONE Address Line 1 City, CO 80000 Visit Website	INFO BLOCK ONE Address Line 1 City, CO 80000 Visit Website



There's a place just over the horizon.
Some awesome inspiring brand line here.



 Full of Adventure Warm Weather Adventures Cold Weather Adventures Year-Round Adventures View All Activities	 There's Something for Everyone! World-Class Shopping Places to Eat + Drink Unique Lodging Explore the Map	 Rich in History Gold & Silver Mine Tours Ride the Train Visit Museums Our History	 Beautiful Scenery and Wildlife Outdoor Activities Best Spots for Photography Wildlife Watching Leisure Activities
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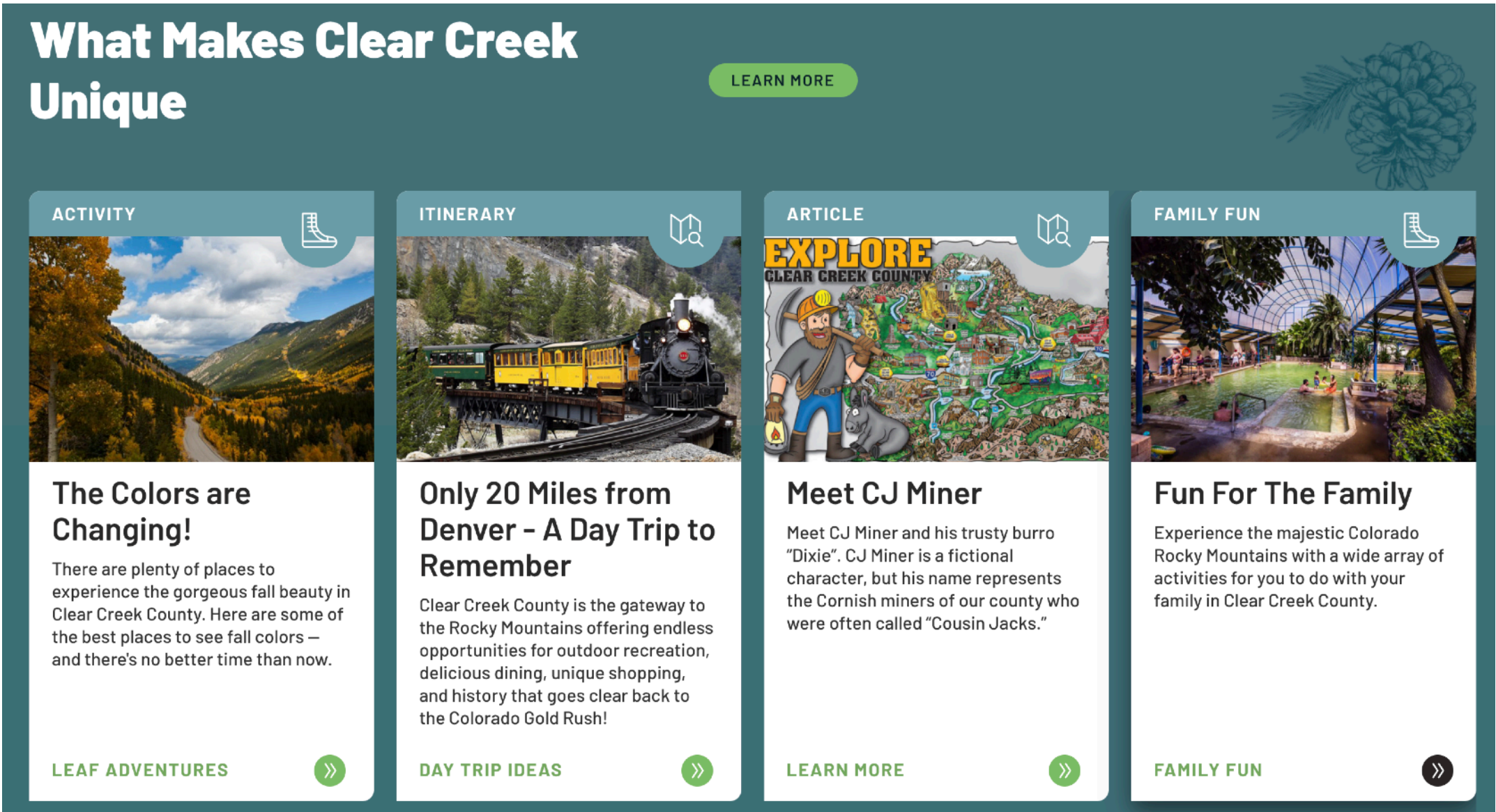
CUSTOMIZABLE MODULES >

The customizability of different modules around the site allows it to feel fresh, relevant, and highlight seasonal activities with minimal effort by the client.



The “tic-tacs” that are utilized around the site (navigation, hero areas, and footer of most pages) helps move the user through the site. It can be utilized to display urgent messages, targeted seasonal content, or related content that the user should explore.

News cards can also be updated to show relevant information, helping the user move through the site. In the days since launch, we’ve seen very high traffic on the autumn leaves page, which is attributed to this module on the home page.



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KEY TOOLS

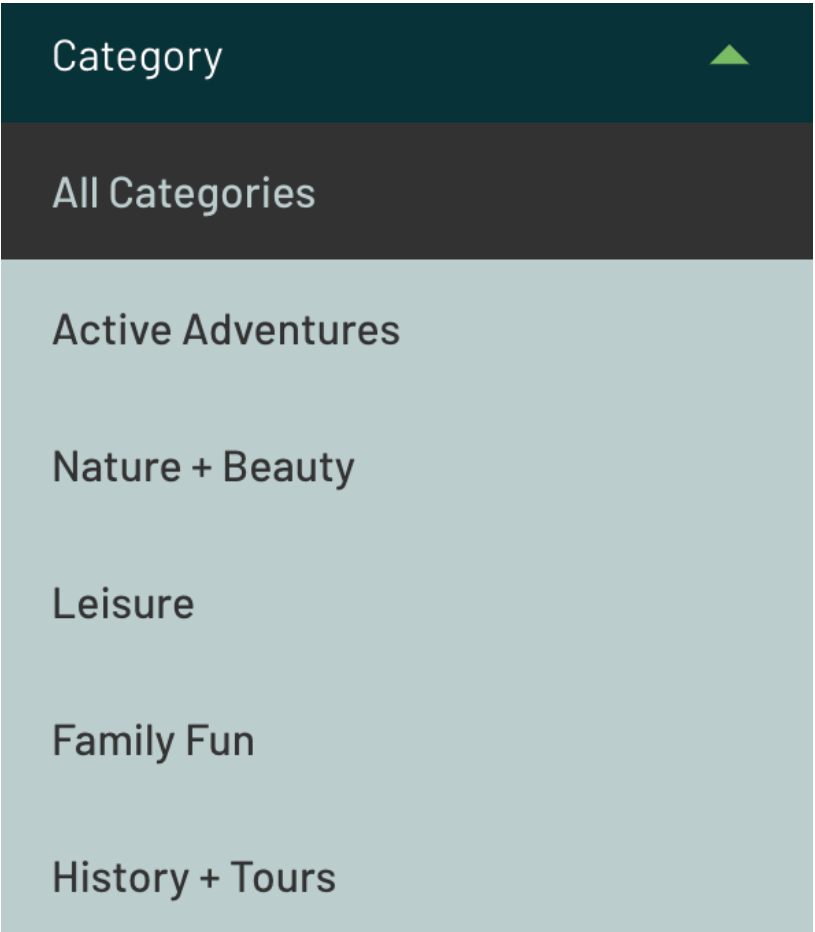
After our initial research, persona creation, and stakeholder interview, we identified the core functionality of our website — the trip planning tools.

We created three main tools:

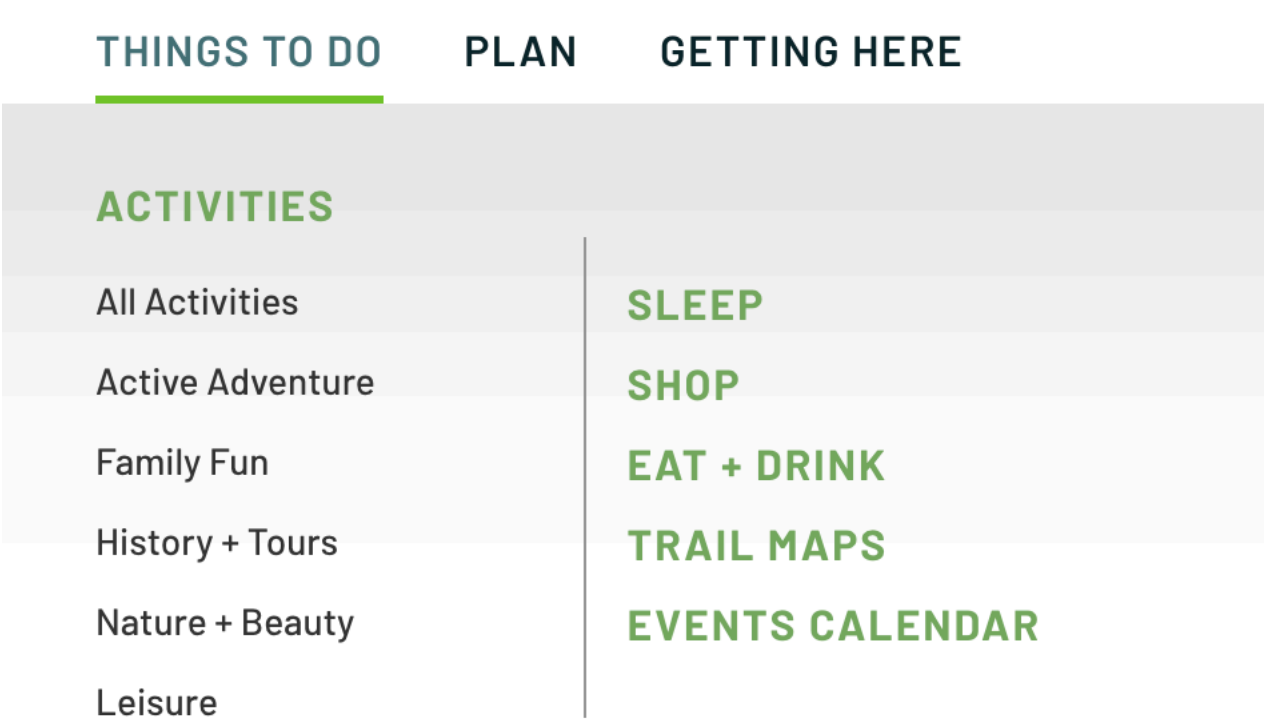
- 1. Outdoor Activity Finder
- 2. Map Explorer /Business Directory

THE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY FINDER >

This tool allowed us to showcase the huge variety of activities in Clear Creek County, while also allowing our users to filter and quickly find the types of activities they are interested in.



The activity database is easily filterable by category, season, popularity, or alphabetically to find the activity that is most relevant. Using these pre-sorted categories in the website navigation helps move users to relevant content faster.

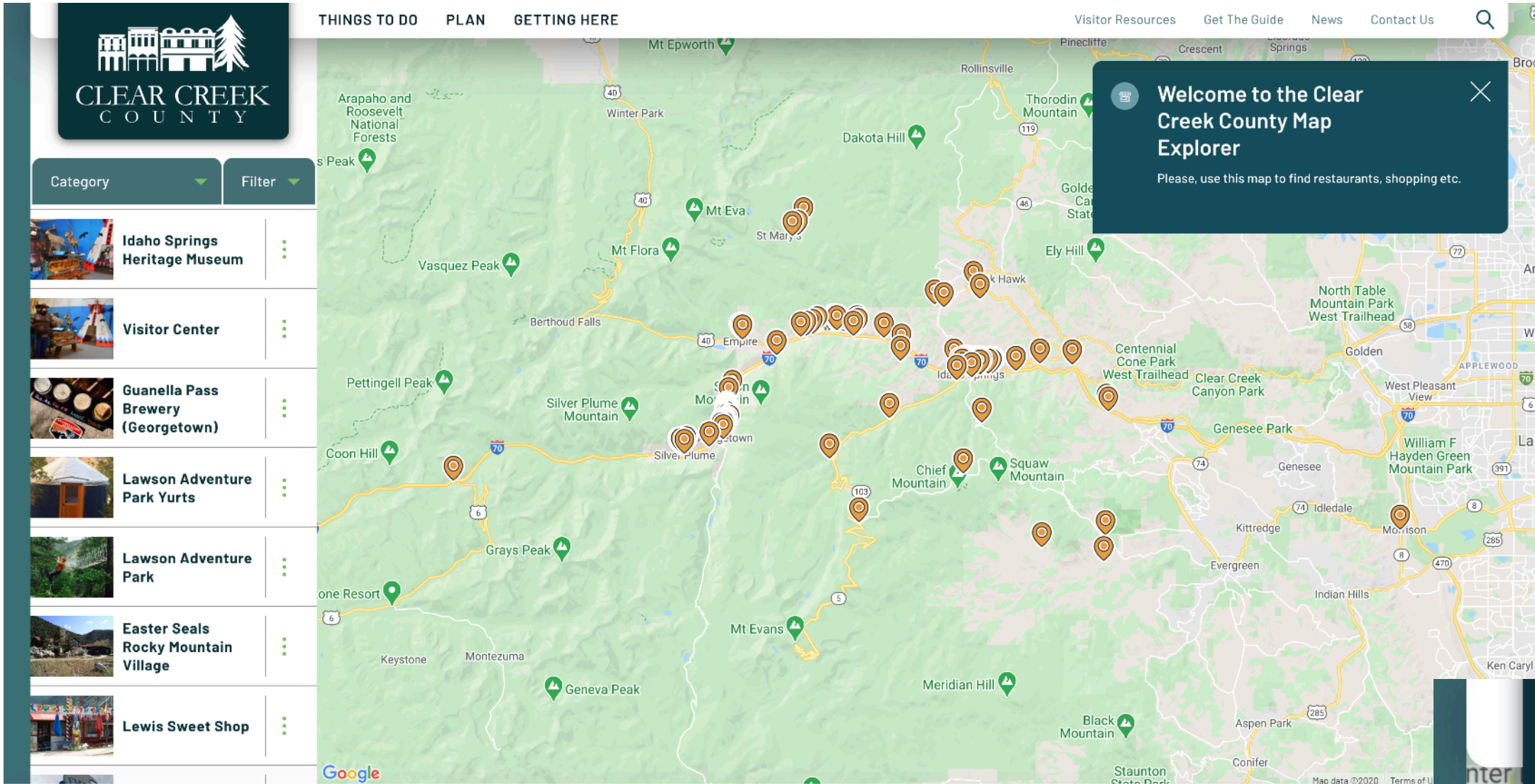


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THE MAP EXPLORER >

The core functionality of the site is a map where you can explore all of Clear Creek County's businesses. You can sort by business category and filter even more granularly. This is a win for the client as it's their responsibility to drive tourism business, and it's a win for the end users because they can easily explore dining, shopping, and lodging options while at home and on the go.



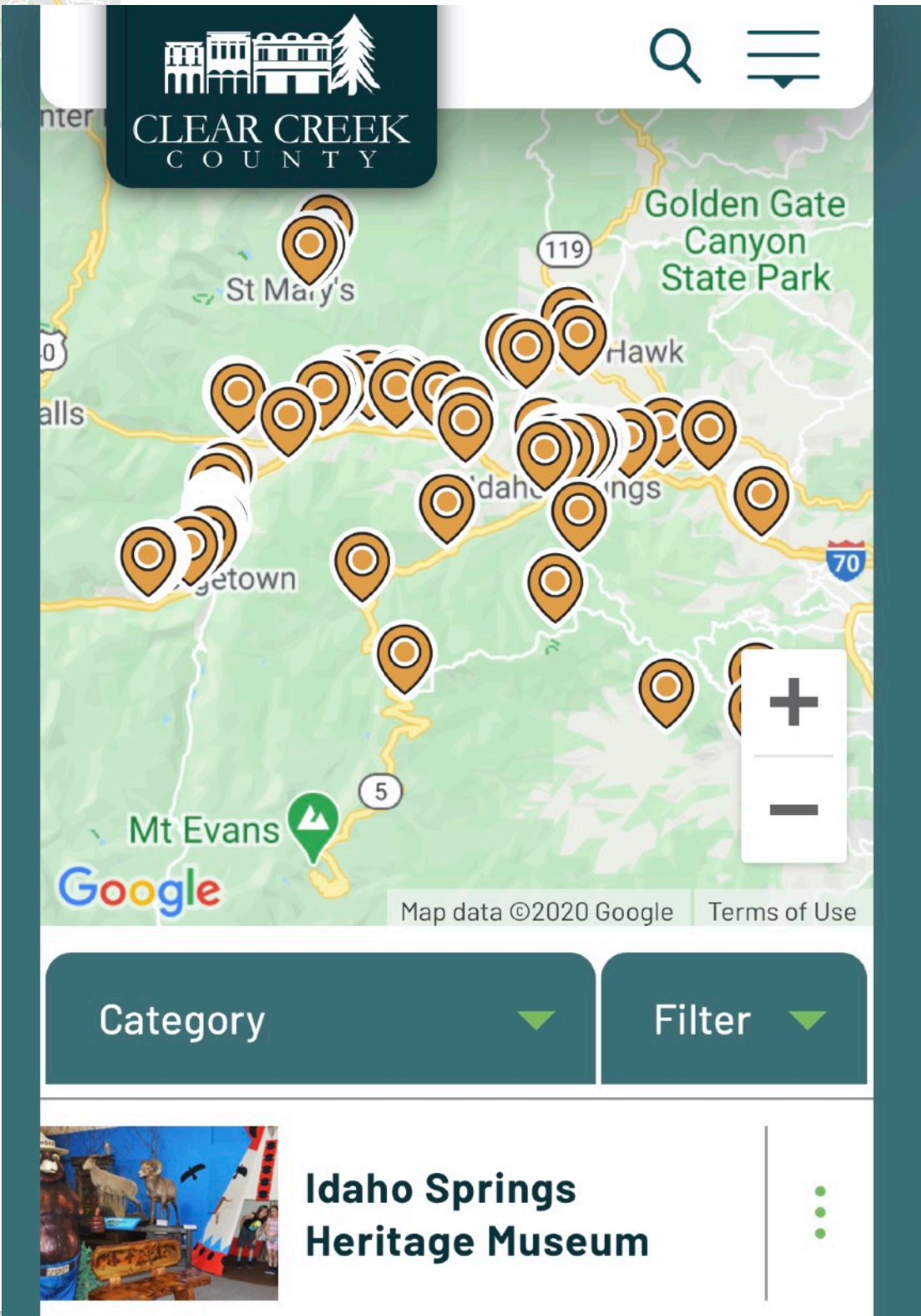
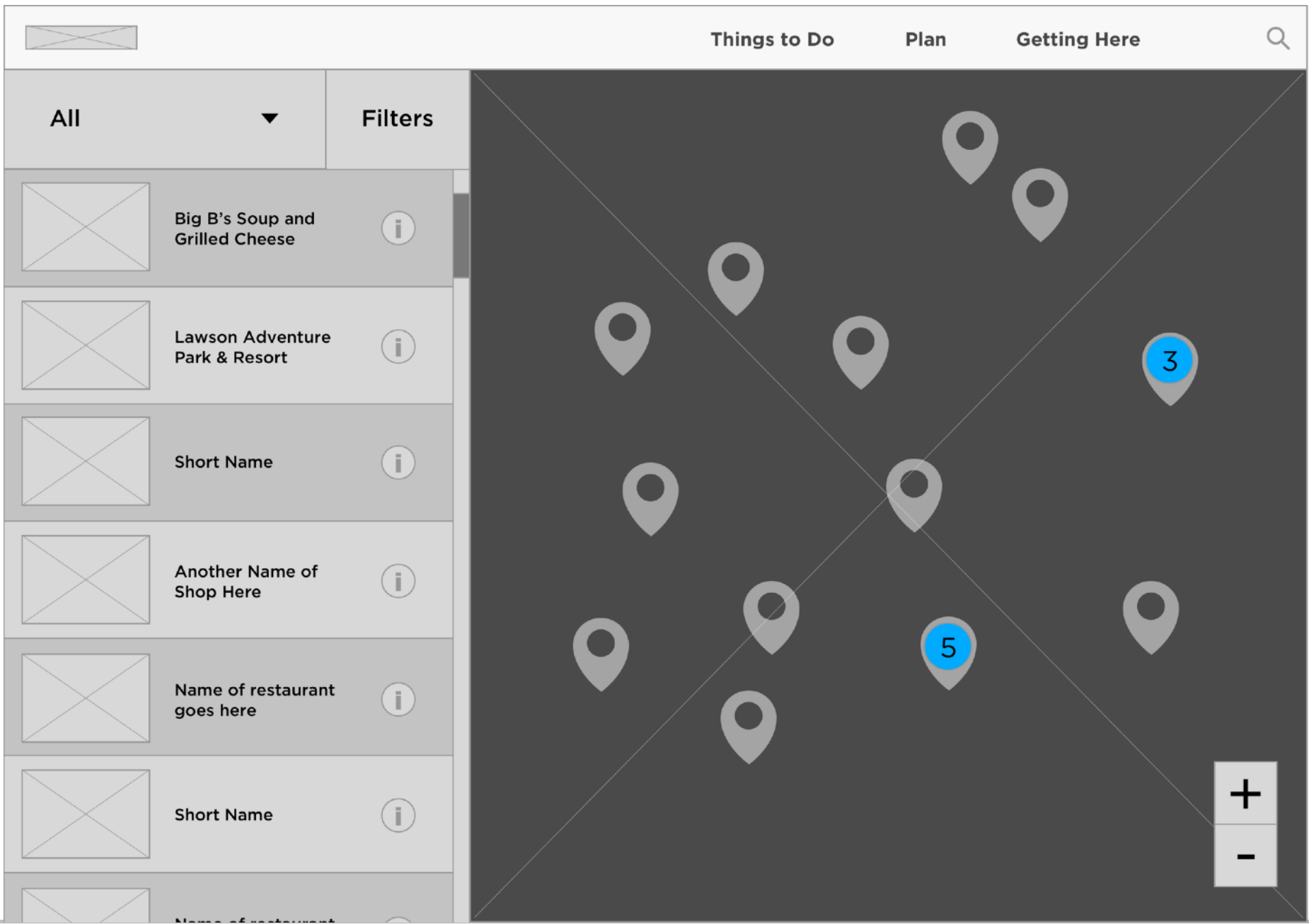
VIEW ALL RESTAURANTS



EXIT
228

Guanella Pass Brewery (Georgetown)

Since all of the attractions in the county are centered around I70 corridor, we added exit number to each business listing to help on-the-go explorers.



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CLIENT BACKEND INTERFACE ➤

The other major project was tackling the admin panel and interface. The old website was jumbled and extremely difficult to manage. Since we rebuilt the website from scratch, the development team was able to an admin interface that categorized and grouped relevant page types, making it easier for the client to update content across the website.

WP Engine

Dashboard

CCC

Pages

Businesses

Attractions

Restaurants

Lodging

Shopping

Towns

Activities

Blog Posts

Events

Itinerary Builder

SEO 1

General Settings

Collapse menu

Attractions

Add New

All (178) | Mine (15) | Published (0)

Brand Settings

Navigation Menus

Mega Menu Settings

Contact Forms

Form Entries

Form Settings

Media Library

Admin Users

Society

Annie's Gold Antiques & Collectibles

Argentine Center RR Grade

Argentine Pass (Leavenworth Creek Rd, McClellan Mountain Rd)

Title	Content	Categories (Itinerary Builder)	Categories (Business Directory)	Activities (Business Directory)	Kid Friendly?	Location	IB Priority	BD Priority	Phone Number	Website
Georgetown's Heritage Center	The Georgetown Schoo Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours	Explore CCC History	Yes	Georgetown	2	2	(303) 569-0289	http://www.georgetownheritagecenter.com	
Georgetown's Firefighting Museum	In many ways, the Alpin Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours	Explore CCC History	Yes	Georgetown	2	2	(303) 569-2840	http://www.historicgeorgetown.com	
Hamill House Museum	Originally constructed b Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours	Explore CCC History	Yes	Georgetown	2	2	(303) 569-2840	http://www.historicgeorgetown.com	
Hotel de Paris Museum	The Hotel De Paris Mus Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours	Explore CCC History	Yes	Georgetown	2	1	(303) 569-2311	http://www.hoteldeparismuseum.com	
Underhill Museum	Dr. James Underhill can Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours	Explore CCC History	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(303) 567-4709	http://historichidaho.com	
George Rowe Museum	Located in Silver Plume Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours Family Fun	Explore CCC History	Yes	Silver Plume	2	2	(303) 569-2562	https://www.facebook.com/georowemuseum/	
Idaho Springs Heritage Museum	The Heritage Visitor Cei Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours Family Fun	Explore CCC History	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(303) 567-4382	http://www.visitidaho.com	
Edgar Experimental Mine	Groups of 10 or more ai Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours	Gold & Silver Mine Tours	Yes	Idaho Springs	2		(303) 567-2911	http://inside.mines.edu	
Capital Prize Mine	The Capital Prize Gold l Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours Family Fun	Gold & Silver Mine Tours	Yes	Georgetown	1		(303) 569-2468	http://www.capitalprizemine.com	
Argo Mill and Tunnel	Your guided tour of the . Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours Family Fun	Gold & Silver Mine Tours	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(303) 567-2421	http://www.argomill.com	
Phoenix Gold Mine	Located two miles west Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours Family Fun	Gold & Silver Mine Tours	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(303) 567-0422	http://www.phoenixgoldmine.com	
Lebanon and Everett Mines	Enhance your train ride Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours Family Fun Train Rides	Gold & Silver Mine Tours	Yes	Georgetown	2	1	(888) 456-6777	http://www.georgetownheritagecenter.com	
Georgetown Loop Railroad	The Georgetown Loop l Mines, Museums & Train Rides	History + Tours Family Fun	Train Rides	Yes	Georgetown	2	1	(888) 456-6777	http://www.georgetownloop.com	
Easter Seals Frisbee Golf	This course is located a Outdoor Adventure	Leisure	Frisbee Golf	Yes	Empire	2	2	(303) 569-2333	http://www.easterseals.org	
A&A Stables	Learn to ride a horse an Outdoor Adventure	Active Adventures Family Fun	Horseback Riding	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(303) 567-4808	http://www.aastables.com	
Indian Hot Springs	The pure mineral water Outdoor Adventure	Leisure Family Fun	Hot Springs	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(303) 989-6666	http://www.indianhotsprings.com	
Lawson Adventure Park	Specializing in family-fr Outdoor Adventure	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting Ziplining Rock Climbin	Yes	Empire	2	1	(855) 372-7238	http://www.lawsonadventurepark.com	
Echo Mountain Resort	Echo mountain has grov Outdoor Adventure	Active Adventures Family Fun	Skiling & Snowboarding	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(970) 531-5038	http://www.echomountainresort.com	
Loveland Ski Area	Near to the hearts and l Outdoor Adventure	Active Adventures Family Fun	Skiling & Snowboarding	Yes	Georgetown	2	1	(303) 571-5580	http://www.skiloveland.com	
Our Gang Ice Racing Club	Our Gang 4 Wheelers is Outdoor Adventure	Active Adventures		Yes	Georgetown	2	2	(303) 331-2886	http://www.ourgangice.com	
Fishing		Outdoor Adventure		Yes		2				
Parks and Playgrounds		Outdoor Adventure		Yes		2				
Snowshoeing		Outdoor Adventure		Yes		2				
Wildlife viewing		Outdoor Adventure		Yes		2				
Mile Hi Rafting	Join Mile Hi Rafting at t! Outdoor Adventure Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(303) 567-0717	http://www.milehirafting.com	
Tall Grass Day Spa	So close to Denver, so f Outdoor Adventure Scenic Drives Shopping	Leisure		Yes	Idaho Springs	2	2	(303) 670-4444	http://www.tallgrassspa.com	
GeoTours Whitewater Raft Trips	Since 1981, Geo Tours Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting	Yes		2	1	(800) 660-7238	http://www.geotours.com	
Clear Creek Rafting Co.	Colorado rafting at its fr Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(303) 567-1000	http://www.clearcreekrafting.com	
Downstream Adventures	Downstream is dedicate Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(844) 291-4218	http://www.downstreamadventures.com	
KODI Rafting	Let the KODI Rafting fai Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(970) 668-1548	http://www.whitewateradventures.com	
Liquid Descent	Liquid Descent Rafting l Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(970) 372-2870	http://coloradorafting.com	
Raft Masters	Raft Masters has been l Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting	Yes	Idaho Springs	1	1	(719) 275-6645	http://www.raftmasters.com	
MAD Adventures	Clear Creek Colorado w Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Rafting ATV Tours	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(800) 451-4844	http://www.madadventures.com	
Colorado Adventure Center Rafting & Zipline Adventures	Raft.Zip.SkyTrek. Loca Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Ziplining Rafting	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(970) 945-6737	http://www.raftingcolorado.com	
Performance Tours Inc.	A short drive from Denv Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Ziplining Rafting	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(800) 328-7238	http://www.performance-tours.com	
Browns Canyon	Whether you're a family Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Ziplining Rafting ATV Tours Hk	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(719) 275-2890	http://www.raftingcolorado.com	
AVA Rafting & Colorado Zipline Tours	AVA is Colorado's prem Rafting & Ziplines	Active Adventures Family Fun	Ziplining Rafting Horseback R	Yes	Idaho Springs	2	1	(800) 370-0581	http://www.coloradorafting.com	

It's now easier to find for the client to edit different types content (business listings, news articles, activities, content pages) around the website and have them update in all places.

I created several data models with prioritization, business listings, and correct categorization, so that the developers could import directly to the website. We had over 1,000 entries.

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CONTENT STRATEGY >

While creating the wireframes and templates, I worked with our SEO writer to create the structure and content hierarchy, voice and tone guidelines, and content style guide that helps ensure the content on the site is digestible for our users.

Questions	Answer	Solution
What is the least visited content?	old events, tag pages, category pages, about pages	
How much content is there?	You have 40k pages, most are just a single location, tags, or category or event pages. There is around 500 pages of actual relevant content	We need to remove these tags, category pages, and old event pages that are on the site, that have low traffic and low content quality
Is the content segmented by audience	No, it's filter by things todo, or by location by no specifically by audience.	we should provide more segmentation in the content by audience type if possible
Does content meet needs of the audience?	We need to research this one.	
Is content on brand?	The content is more descriptive in nature.	Need to write on brand, follow the mantra
Is the URL structure logical and match the content	It's logical, but we may want to change the nomenclature to more searched on keywords.	Do some keyword research to determine best search category names for nomenclature.
Are there good H1 titles	In general looks pretty good, follows this format "Silver Plume - Clear Creek County Colorado"	Keep this format, describe the page a little more "Silver Plume - Clear Creek County Colorado"
Does Meta Data follow best practices	There are some, but there are a lot of pages missing meta data,	We'll write the 1st level copy in for now to fill in
Does the site have schema?	No, we'll need to implement for structured content	We'll see how we can f round

The comprehensive content audit helped identify what needed to stay, what we should highlight, and what should be restructured.

Clear Creek County is Real Colorado.

We're Open for Adventure

<button>
Find Yours

<icon List>
COVID-19 Alerts and Information
<arrows>
<copy>

We care about your safety. Use our guide to see what's open.

<h2> Just Over the Horizon

There's a place to get away, just 20 miles west of Denver. A place to trade in the mountain air. To get a dose of Gold Rush history and the great outdoors. So cor little while, in Clear Creek County.

<icon List>
Things To Do
<arrows>

<icon Event>
Itinerary Builder
<arrows>

<icon Map>
Explore the Map
<arrows>

Along with the SEO writer, we create a content writing guidelines document to ensure content fit page templates and was optimized for web.

Please follow these content writing guidelines:

- Add content to tables built from these [templates](#). Templated pages include:
 - Home
 - Activity Overview
 - Activity Detail
 - Map
 - Business detail
 - News Landing
 - Events
 - Signature Events
 - Contact
 - Resources
 - Business Directory
- Suggest videos, images and icons
 - Add <alt text> and a corresponding Google Drive link to each image
 - Use your judgement to add proper icons from list to corresponding items
- Suggest and add internal/external links where applicable
- Use your judgment when writing for specific audiences
- Consider the most useful, on-target keywords
- Optimize headers/content with provided keywords (broad or exact match)
- Follow suggested character counts
- Understand that some template sections may require an information request
- Coordinate with content team to request and gather necessary information
- Build out and write sections that require this requested information
- Clear Creek County usage:
 - Mention Clear Creek County only once or twice in the content area
 - Use Clear Creek County multiple times in H2 headers
 - Write main towns as "Idaho Springs, Empire, Georgetown, and Silver Plume"
- Copy should be written following proper brand guidelines
 - Clear Creek County's voice and tone is:
 - Conversational and imaginative
 - Action-forward and imagery mindful
 - Adventurous, with a touch of nostalgic
- Use the mantra to get inspired
- Consider target audiences, including:
 - Locals
 - Tourists

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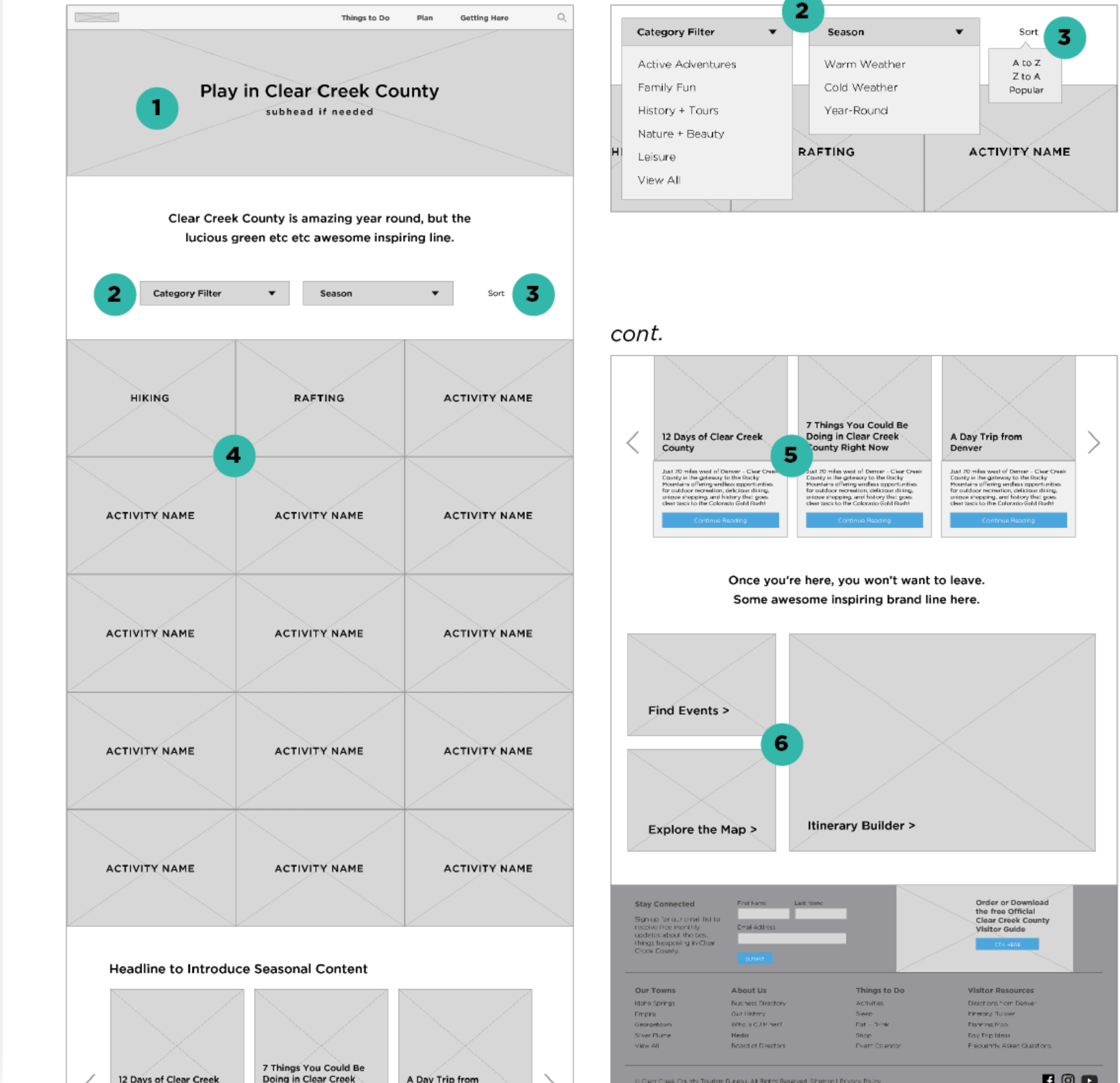
DEVELOPMENT HANDOFF >

Since we were working with a remote dev team, I created in-depth documentation and requirement documents to ensure handoff was clear and there were no surprises.

CLIENT HANDOFF >

Since we rebuilt the whole website, I also did a full training and documentation explaining the website, potential areas to optimize the site throughout in different seasons, and recommended areas for additional optimization moving forward.

WIREFRAME | ACTIVITIES



The client had trouble understanding the Wordpress interface on their jumbled old site, so I created a resource guide to help them get the most of their new website and the tools & features we built.

- 1 HEADER**
Headline, Subhead
- 2 FILTERING SYSTEM**
Filter activities by category or season. Activities could be tagged with multiple categories and seasons.
- 3 SORT**
Allows filtered cards to be sorted A to Z, Z to A, or return to default "Popular", which is the default heirarchy established by client.
- 4 ACTIVITY CARDS**
Filterable clickable cards for each of the different activities in CCC. These can be filtered with the filtering system.
- 5 EXPLORE CCC WIDGET**
A widget to showcase all CCC news, blogs, and landing page content across the site.
- 6 CONTEXTUAL NAV**
To feature 3 items and large imagery
- 7 NOTES FOR MOBILE**
Note filtering changes.

Activity

Activity Pages

To edit or create an activity (something that you DO), edit that in this section.

- You'll find pages like: Hiking, Museum Tours, Spas, Adventure Park, Rafting

Template Type: Free Form Building Blocks

Important Template notes: Ensure that you fill out the icon, category, priority, and season. Since this section will auto-sort by priority, use your Priority: 1 for results that you want to appear at the top of the page. You could swap this seasonally to feature different types of pages, or just put your highest ranking activity pages as the Priority: 1

Activity Information

Icon

Explore

Categories

☒ Active Adventures

☐ Family Fun

☐ History + Tours

☐ Leisure

☒ Nature + Beauty

☐ Train Rides

Priority

☐ 1

☒ 2

☐ 3

Season

☐ Cold Weather

☒ Warm Weather

Business Directory

Business Directory

When editing or creating a new Clear Creek County business, go to this section.

- You'll things like: [Lawson Adventure Park](#), [Tommy Knocker Brewery](#), [A&A Stables](#), [Argo](#)

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Clear Creek County

LESSONS

As my first lead UX project, I learned a lot. One of the biggest challenges throughout the project was the lack of a true Project Manager or any account ownership.

Without a PM, the scope of this project definitely increased throughout the process, especially in the development phase.

I learned a lot about managing client expectations and preparing documents for the development team to ensure the features are developed correctly the first time.

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