The three use cases in this document bring to life the Customer Interaction Points that hold the most potential in the Beyond the Bag Challenge. We look forward to seeing design solutions that lead with empathy for the cases and their user personas.

There are countless ways to get goods home. To account for the wide range of possible solutions, we challenge our participants to design around three use cases common in retail environments today. Although specific, these use cases represent a broad range of core retail and customer needs (such as portability, simplicity, hygiene etc). We encourage you to consider the ‘user personas’ presented with each use case to inspire empathy and equity in the design of your solutions.
The in-store moment where a retail transaction is completed and a customer transitions from shopping to taking their purchased goods to final destination. Yet changes to this process are rapidly emerging, including automated self-checkout and in-store tracking technology that is changing where and how a transaction takes place. Retailers seeking to implement new ways of interacting with customers at the point of sale are seeking to leverage the existing physical kiosk space, account for the time constraints associated with the check-out process, and ensure they continue to have the ability to seamlessly serve a continuous flow of shoppers.

How might new solutions optimize effort for customers, cashiers, and retailers, create value, and reduce environmental harm? How do new, automated capabilities at shelves, carts, and checkout open opportunities for efficiency and sustainability in transferring products?
Jen
Retail Associate, Maine

On their drive home from work, customers often stop at the grocery store where I work to pick up ingredients for dinner. They try to remember to bring their own bags stored in their car trunk, but when they forget, they pay a small fee to purchase a thick plastic bag at the register. They often do this for heavy and cold items such as milk which form condensation and rip paper bags. It’s important to me that I serve a line of customers quickly, and sometimes the time it takes customers to decide between bags, or for me to retrieve their selection from under the register and open it up, cuts into my efficiency. I’m glad the bags are at least light, and don’t hurt my back after a long day.
Kaitlyn

High school student, Savannah

I walk everywhere—school, my part time job, home, and to run errands. I often meet friends and classmates along the way. Today I stopped at the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions and some personal items and then saw several of my chemistry classmates. I was very glad the pharmacy’s plastic bags were white instead of clear so they couldn’t see my purchase.
I stopped at the new store near my office today to pick up a birthday present for my daughter. I like that everything is automated so I don’t have to wait in line, which saves me time. I scanned the app on my phone as I entered. As I shop, the shelves are aware of what I pick up, and when I’m ready to leave I just walk out through the same turnstiles and am automatically charged, including for the type of bag I grab on my way out.
IN-STORE PICK UP

The moment where a customer picks up, gathers or receives previously purchased or selected goods at a designated location without having to shop within the physical retail establishment. An increasing number of consumers are buying online and then picking up in-store—whether at a dedicated kiosk, curb-side in their vehicles, or via storage lockers. As the options to return unwanted goods to stores becomes more prevalent, it provides new opportunities to design reusable bags and systems.

How might we design bag or bag alternatives into these new physical spaces within and beyond the store where customers are returning to? What opportunities might be afforded with this lead time between requesting products and beginning to transport them? How might the digital experience suggest or incentivize a transaction free of plastic bags?
Maya
Curbside pickup customer service, Austin

I work at a big box store that has recently started providing curbside pickup. People order purchases on their phones, we let them know when their orders are ready, they let us know in the app when they’re on their way. Customers park in a designated spot, and then I carry it out to their car in plastic bags. Sometimes if the item is small I just hand the bagged item through the window, when they’ve purchased a lot of things I help them load their trunk. It’s been very busy lately, because it’s hard to predict when there will be a surge of people wanting curbside pickup. Sometimes if there are a lot of orders to take out at once, I’ll load them into a large cart and go car to car.
I’ve worked for this retail chain for over 30 years on the floor. I love chatting with customers, and it’s been interesting to watch things change over time. I recently started working at a smaller, local store for the same retailer on a busy street in Manhattan. Because the store is in such a small space, customers mostly come by to pick-up orders, try things on, or to return items they purchased online. I like it because it focuses my time on talking with and helping people. Often, they already know exactly what they want and how they want it by the time they get here, because the website and app give them all the options ahead of time.
Shirronda

Chief Financial Officer, Minneapolis

My life is designed around efficiency because I believe time is my most valuable resource. If I need new personal care items or tech accessories, I’ll place an order on my phone while I’m lying in bed at night, and then stop by the store on my way home after work. It’s usually pretty late at night, so I like to pick up my pre-ordered items from the designated locker in the front of the store and throw them in my purse.
LOCAL DELIVERY FROM RETAILER

The moment where a customer receives a previously purchased or selected goods at their selected final destination through a service provided by the retailer or a third-party offering. The emerging appetite for localized community delivery services creates new opportunities for bag and bag alternatives as new stakeholders are involved, new needs arise, and the responsibilities of retailers, customers, and delivery couriers are redefined. An increasing number of retailers are converting excess space in their stores into micro-fulfillment centers. While some retailers have their own delivery systems, a large number of 3rd-party gig services are also acting as a bridge, creating challenges in consistency and control for single-use plastic bag alternatives.

How might the different modes of transit—gig couriers, delivery fleets, autonomous vehicles, and beyond—create new efficient and sustainable possibilities that were previously unavailable to the consumer when transporting goods from point-of-sale to destination? What circular opportunities might be created as goods move from place to place within a community, or in the reuse, return and disposal of a bag or bag alternative?
Colby

Gig worker, Kansas City

I collect and drop off orders as a freelancer for a gig delivery service. Usually I drive my own car, but if it’s nice out I’ll take my bike and put things in my backpack or saddlebags. I end up picking up purchases from parking lots of all kinds of retailers around the city. I’ve noticed a lot of the orders come in different kinds of plastic bags, and sometimes there are just a few things but each is in its own plastic bag. When I return items for customers, the bags are usually a mix from the customers collection.
Rosa
Retiree, Arizona

I can’t go out in the heat anymore, so my granddaughter taught me to order things on my computer for delivery to my door. They usually ring my doorbell and I’ll meet them at the door to thank them, and then carry the bags in myself. Once I’ve put items away in my cupboards and closets, I used to throw away the packaging but lately my granddaughter has been reminding me to sort for recycling and reuse.
I work on the store’s delivery team. The front of house team selects the items and brings them to the back for us in paper bags, we then load them into larger plastic bins and use a hand cart dolly to move them to the truck where we lift and load them. We use the store’s app to give customers real-time location updates as we go along the route towards them, and once we arrive, we reverse the process as we move things from the truck to people’s doors.
THANK YOU FOR BEING A LEADER IN YOUR COMMUNITY BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE BEYOND THE BAG CHALLENGE. TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A LASTING IMPACT ON THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC.