

DESIGN & DOCUMENTATION – Course Project Installment #2

EXPLANATION OF HIGHER-LEVEL CURRENT BLUEPRINT / JUSTIFICATIONS OF REDESIGN:

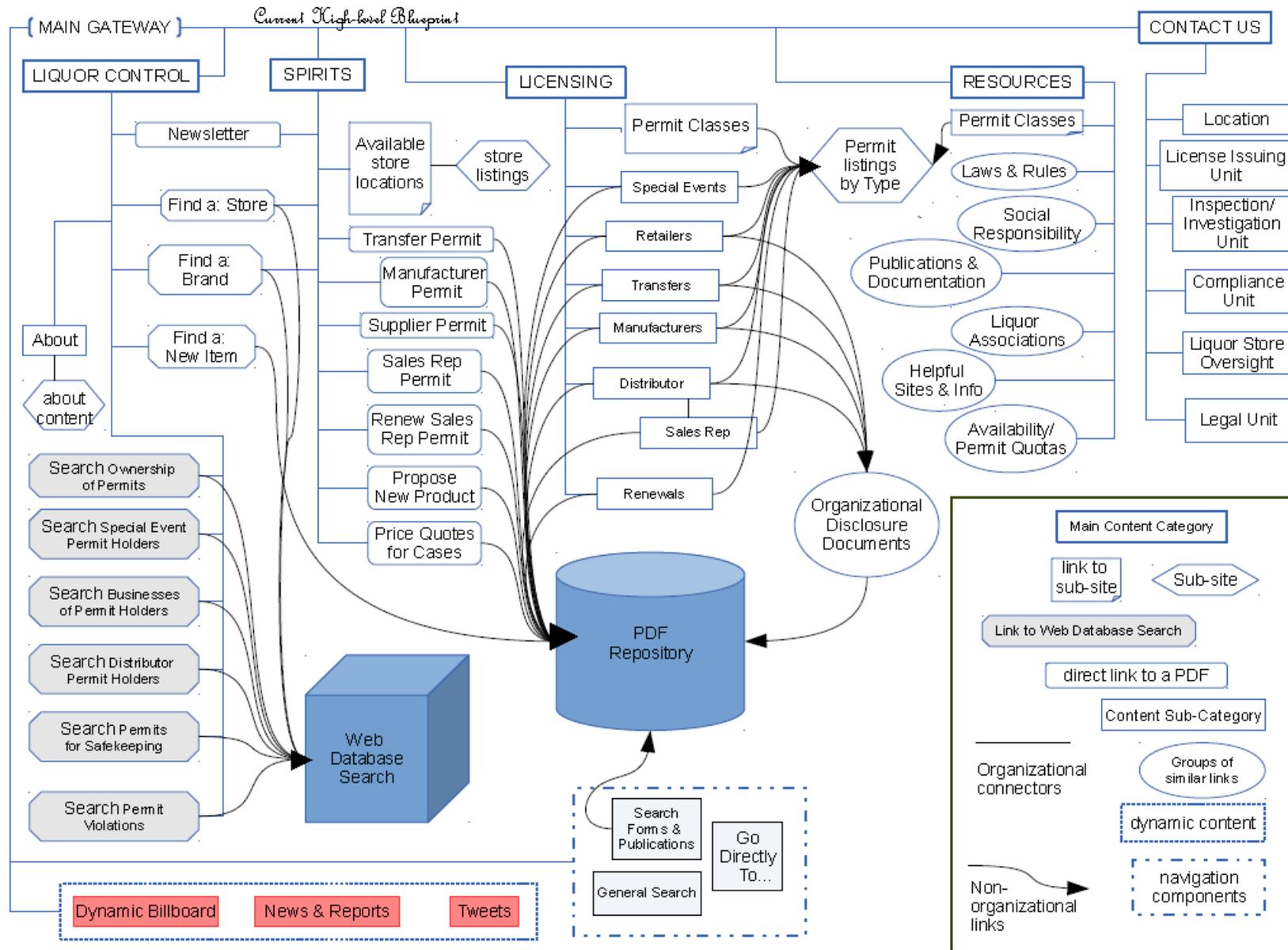
This high-level blueprint depicts the basic organization of the Ohio Department of Liquor Control's (DOLC) website. Currently, the major categories presented in the global navigation bar overlap in content. Although it is a tenet of good IA design to provide users with multiple navigation pathways, repetitious content clutters the screen and confuses users. When parts of a web site are overly repetitive, users cannot utilize hyperlinks and content as "landmarks." Moreover, many of the menu links are to PDFs; at this high-level, users are looking for guidance and orientation rather than a PDF. Even if a PDF contains the information the user is looking for, users often do not read PDFs; they will print them and look at them later.¹ The current web page also features clusters of hyperlinks that loosely relate to an industry issue. For example, see the Resources drop-down menu. I included only the heading for the industry issue cluster in my diagram. Otherwise, the Resources section would reflect lists of links (with no hierarchy), many of which are gateways to external sites.

I mentioned in the previous assignment that the major use of the DOLC's website is for accessing application information and for subsequent management of a license. Therefore, my redesigned blueprint re-categorizes content into four main content headings: About DOLC, Licensees, Consumers, and Resources. Because the Licensees category has distinct subcategories (Retailers, Distributors, etc.) and because a great deal of application information is common across the categories, I elected to create a Licensees "module." In this module, a navigation side-panel will help users select their applicant category while still retaining quick access to information about the shared requirements for applications and license maintenance. Moreover, if a change to the application process needs to be posted, a module-type web page will provide a better "notice board" environment. For the homepage, I expanded the dynamic content to include the rotating categories of Available Licenses and New Liquor Brands. These two types of information are best presented on the homepage because an applicant or consumer may only be interested in the site insofar as they can find out more information about an available license or liquor brands that are new to Ohio's liquor stores. Finally, I streamlined the content aimed at consumers. Consumers do use the DOLC's website for specific uses like finding a liquor store, investigating where a certain brand may be purchased and apprising themselves of new liquor items. Consumers rarely use the site for much else, although there is a contingency interested in license violators. Thus, the Consumers section has been kept sparse so that consumers can more easily access the information in which they are interested.

EXPLANATION OF LOWER-LEVEL CURRENT BLUEPRINT / JUSTIFICATIONS OF REDESIGN:

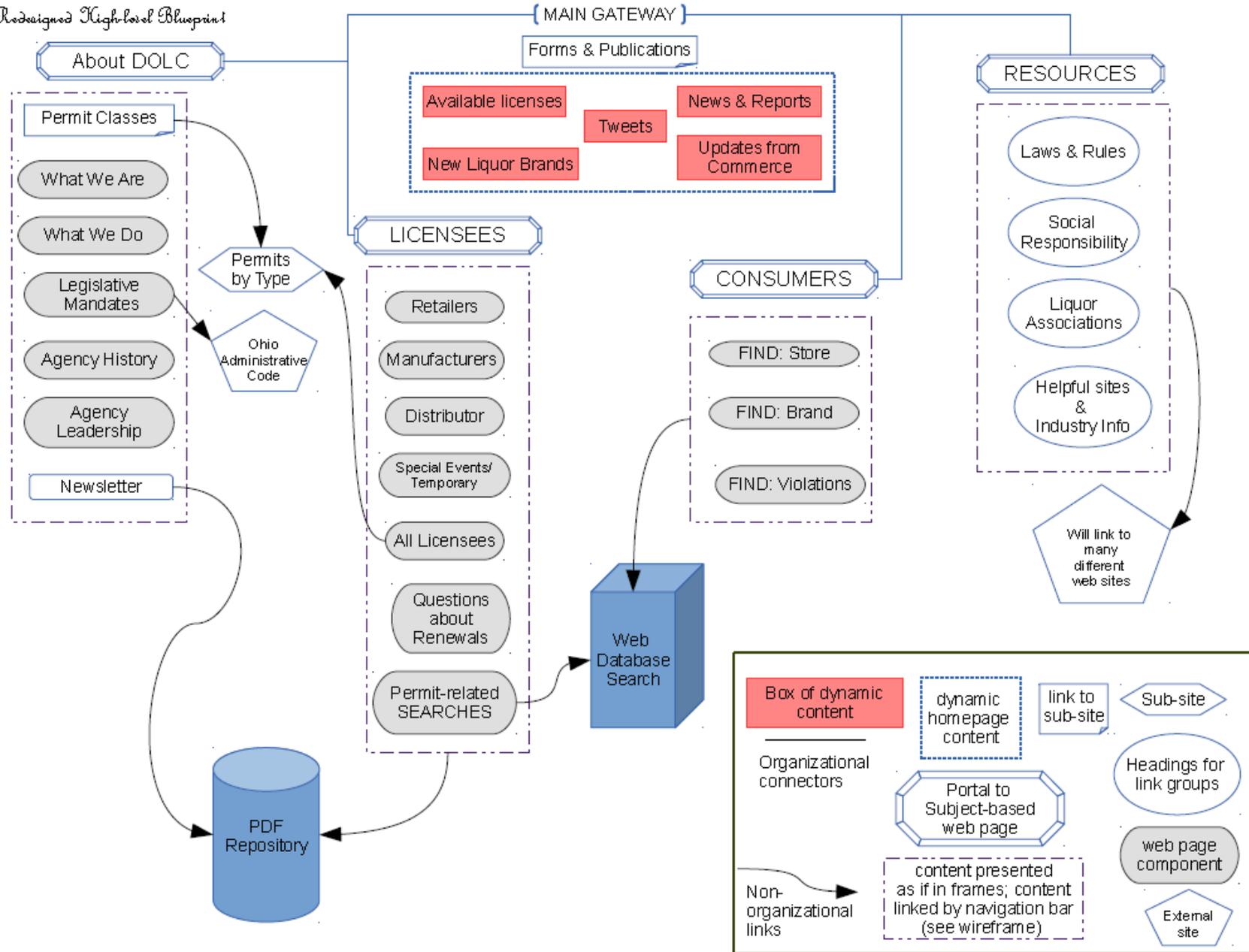
This diagram portrays a multi-step task. Let's suppose that on a Sunday, I would like to purchase a new liquor brand from a store with no violations. First, I start at the Main Gateway. I choose "Liquor Control" and then click the hyperlink "Find a New Liquor Brand" which then takes me to a PDF of newly procured liquor brands by the DOLC. I choose a brand, but now I need to find a store that carries it. I back out of the PDF and return directly to the Main Gateway. Again I choose "Liquor Control" and then I click on "Find a Brand" which takes me to a page in the Web Database Search (WDS) module. Here, I type in the brand and choose the appropriate delimiters (for instance, I limit the search to the Ohio county in which I live). The search yields many stores and even provides a

¹ Nielsen, Jakob. 2001, June 10. "Avoid PDF for On-Screen Reading." *NN/g*. <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/avoid-pdf-for-on-screen-reading/>



Blueprint #1: Current High-level Blueprint

Redesigned High-level Blueprint



Blueprint #2: Redesigned High-level Blueprint

Google Maps link next to each search result. But my aim is to purchase this item on a Sunday. A special license is needed if a store intends to sell liquor on a Sunday. License types are not listed by the stores in the “Find a Brand” search results. Therefore, I must perform another search for stores with the D6 license (which allows Sunday sales). I will then have to cross-reference the results to verify that a store that sells the brand I seek on a Sunday. I back out of the search results—cutting and pasting my results in a file to save them—and end up at the Main Gateway, where I choose “Find a Store.” “Find a Store” takes me back to a page in the WDS module. Here I delimit my search by county and license type. I must then cross-reference the results to find a store that sells the brand I seek on Sundays. Finally, I find a liquor store that satisfies my requirements but I would like to support only stores that have *not* violated any of the terms of a liquor license. So, I return to the Main Gateway, again choose “Liquor Control” and click on “Search Permit Violations.” This link conveys me to the “Search Violations” page of the WDS module where I enter the permit name and number of the store I plan to patronize. I see that there are no violations. This task is portrayed in the current lower-level blue-print. The WDS is a limited application. It is evident that more queries should be written to produce results that tell consumers where they can purchase a specific item based on permit-type. A user-study for consumers could reveal how most consumers use the site, and a redesign of the WDS queries could be tailored to those uses. I have decided not to address the WDS in the redesign project at this time. (After all, every designer is constrained by the “valley of reality.”)²

The redesigned lower-level blueprint is thus limited by the WDS. In other words, until the database can be better designed, the website will reflect its limitations. Therefore, the DOLC’s site will not optimally serve consumers due to the task manual cross-referencing that a user must perform for a multi-step task like the above. At present, I have tried to limit the “clicking around” and forward/backward navigation needed to complete the task. To limit the navigational steps, I have designed a blueprint that reflects an interface with a “permanent” navigation panel on the left and the Web Database Searches will be performed in the middle of the page. In other words, rather than the user navigating into different pages for the WDS, by using the navigation panels, the different pages will seemingly come to the user. This eliminates the heavy use of the back button and allow the user to orient herself in the process.

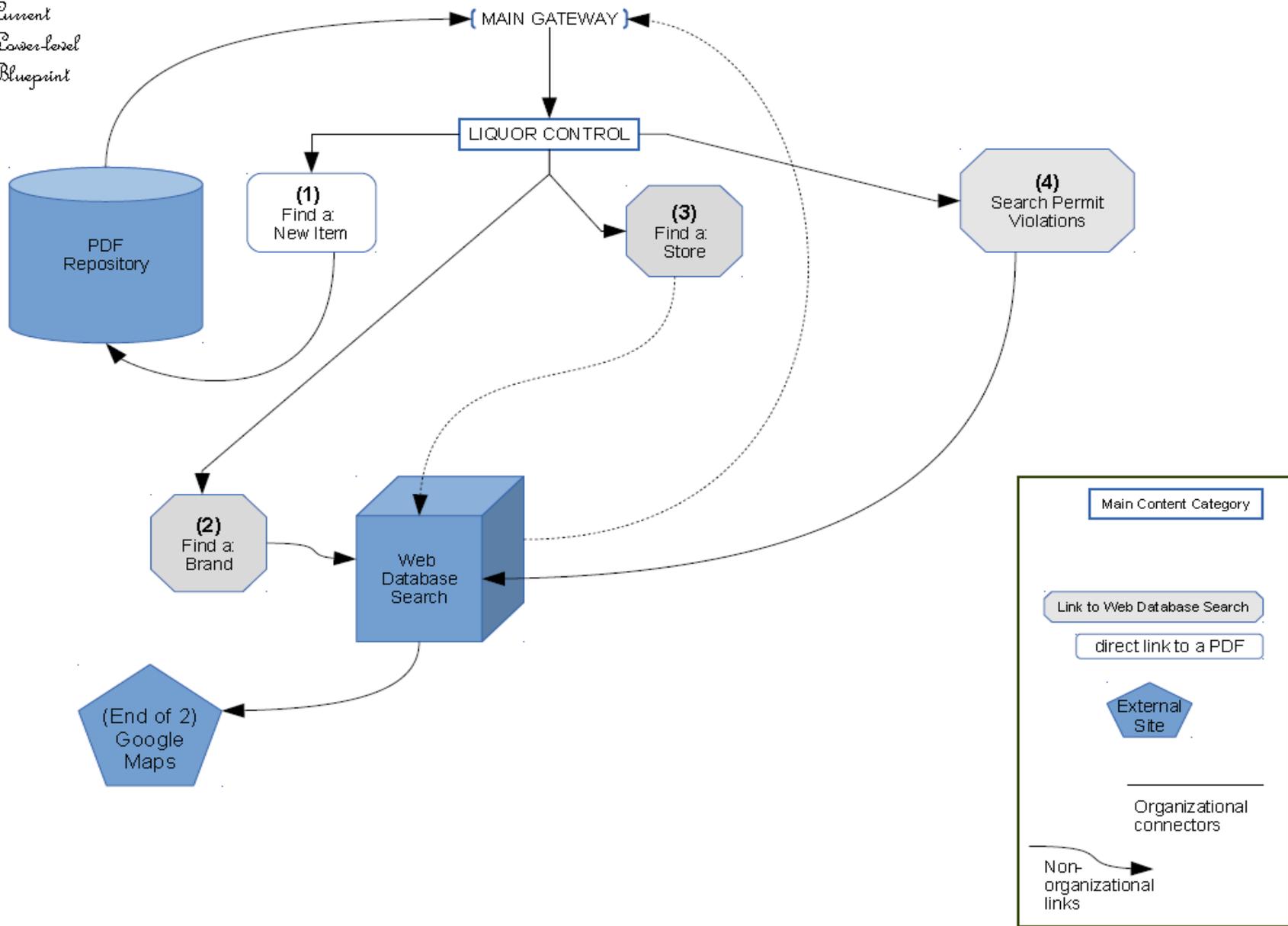
EXPLANATION OF HOMEPAGE WIREFRAME / JUSTIFICATION FOR REDESIGN:

The major problem with the current interface is the drop-down menu of the global navigation bar. Not only is the scroll function within the drop-down menu ridiculously over-sensitive, the current design over-utilizes the drop-down menu. The menu is currently used as a content page³ rather than as an initial guide for performing tasks in the site, which is the function of a menu. Moreover, there are too many needless features on the current homepage. These features prevent the entire homepage from being visible at once; the user must scroll down to access homepage content. In the redesigned wireframe, the homepage has been simplified, but still retains dynamic content so as to keep a sleek, modern effect. More importantly, the entire homepage fits onto the screen at once so the user perceives—perhaps unwittingly—an immediate orienting effect.

2 The full quote appears on page 296 of Morville: “If brainstorming takes you to the top of the mountain, blueprinting can bring you back down to the valley of reality.” In other words, the redesign of the WDS is outside of the scope of this project due to time constraints and knowledge constraints.

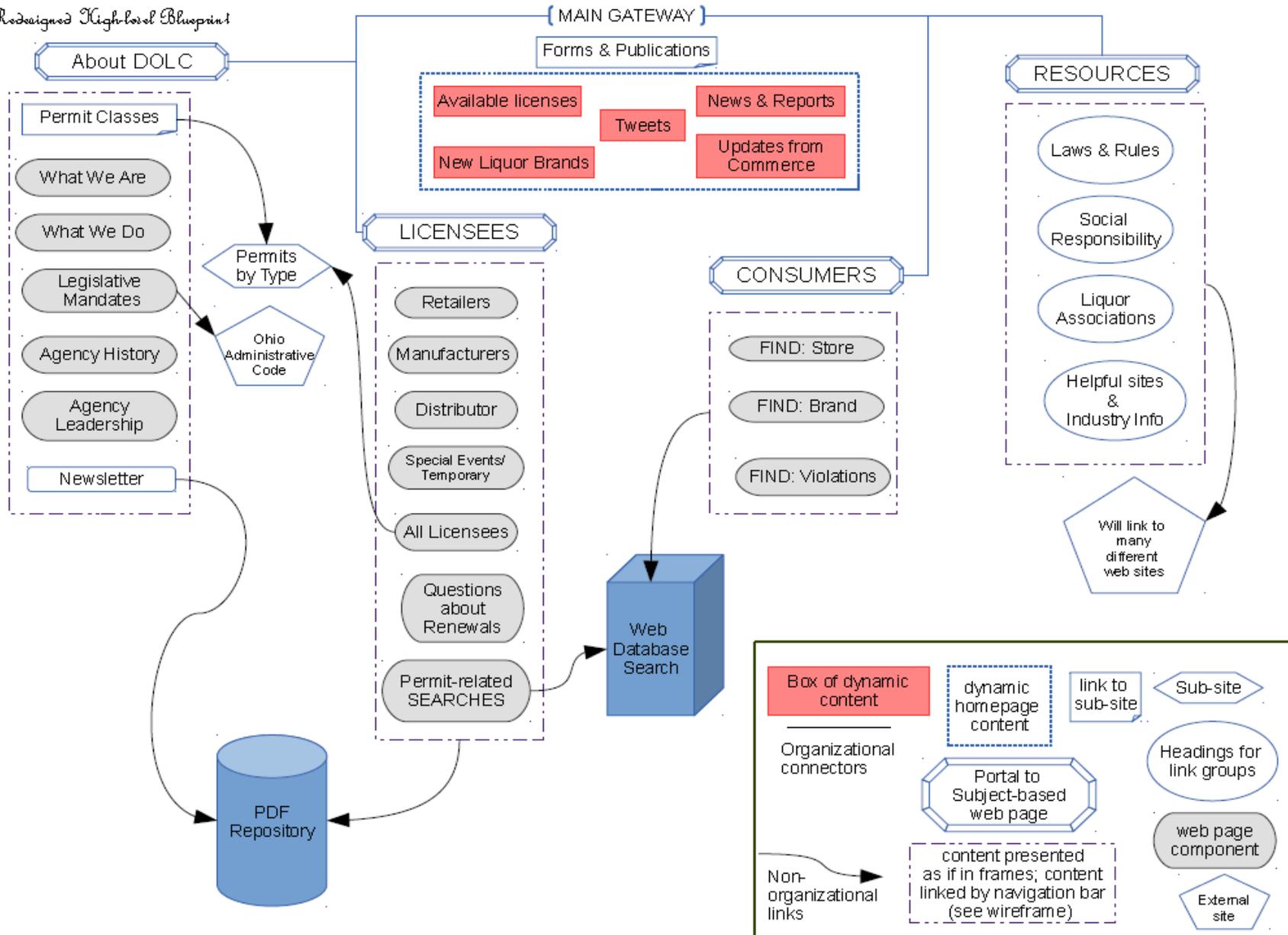
3 This is why the current Main page wireframe is a wireframe depicting the drop-down menu of the Licensing category. Rather than Licensing linking the user to another page that displays licensing content, all of the content is crammed into the content menu.

Current
Lower-level
Blueprint

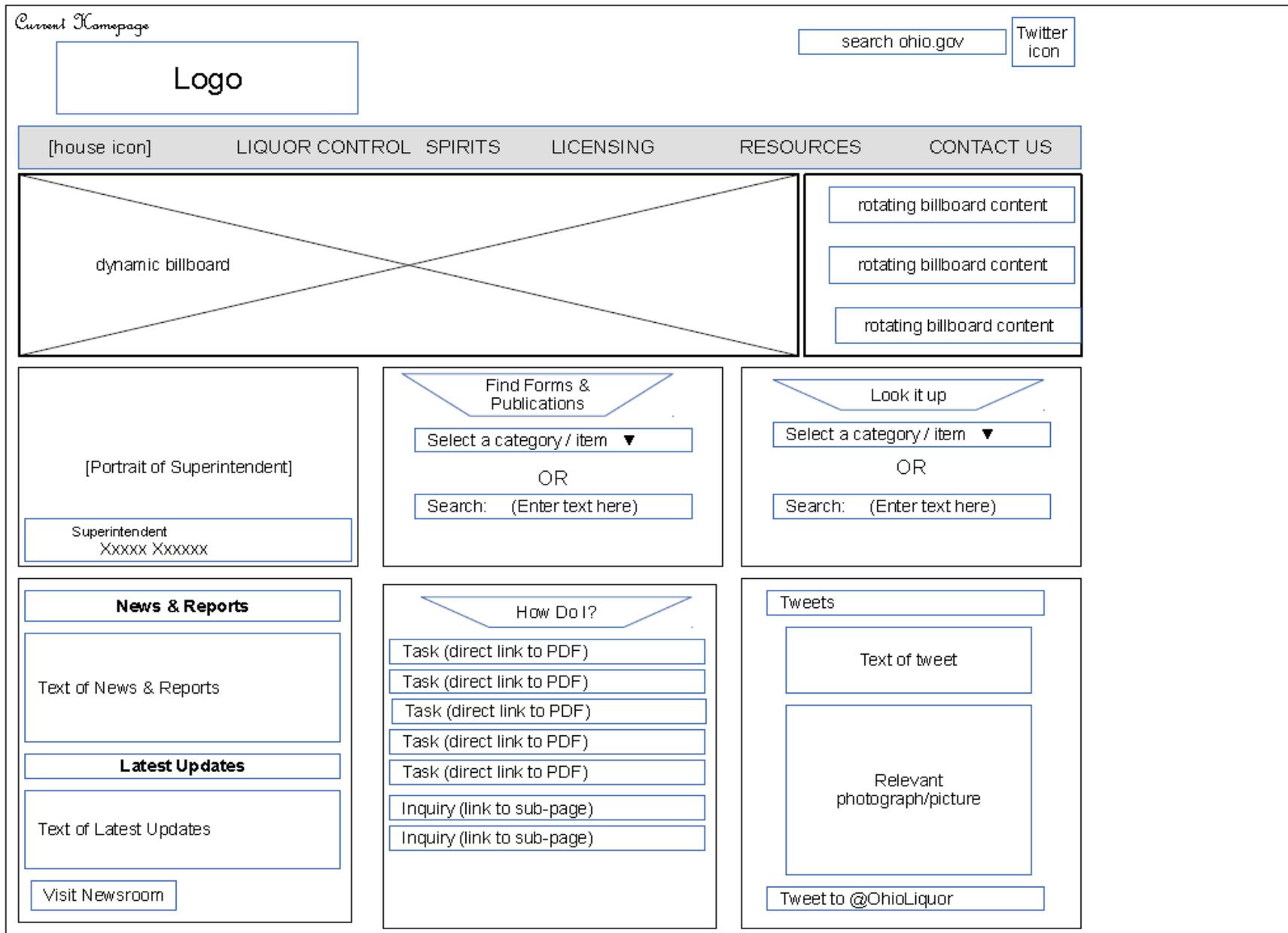


Blueprint #3: Current Lower-level Blueprint

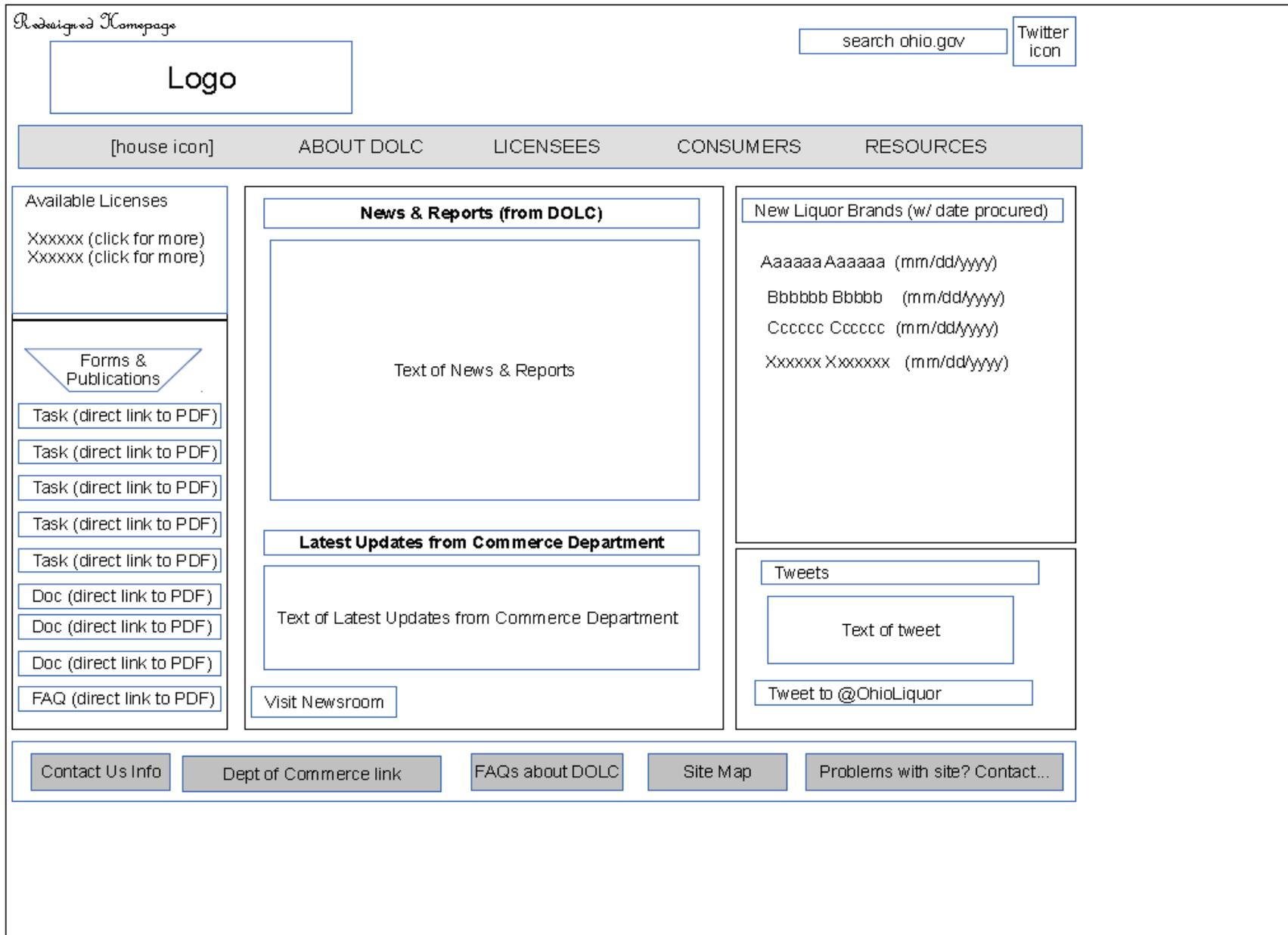
Redesigned High-level Blueprint



Blueprint #4: Redesigned Lower-level Blueprint



Wireframe #1: Current Homepage



Wireframe #2: Redesigned Homepage

EXPLANATION OF MAIN PAGE WIREFRAME / JUSTIFICATION FOR REDESIGN:

As mentioned above, the main pages of the site actually appear in the drop-down menu. The redesigned Licensees main page allows the user to access the licensing content by choosing the Licensees label in the global navigation bar of the homepage. The user is then conveyed to the Licensees content web page. Presenting the licensing content in a web page (as opposed to the drop-down menu) allows for the information to be more easily perused and evaluated before pursuing a hyperlink. It also allows for descriptors of hyperlinks, such as indicating whether hypertext links to a PDF or to web content. Finally, users who are unsure of their category can more easily survey the types of licenses available for each of the licensee categories.

Current Main page

Logo

search ohio.gov

Twitter icon

[house icon]
LIQUOR CONTROL SPIRITS
LICENSING
RESOURCES
CONTACT US

Welcome to the Division of Liquor Control Licensing Section

dynamic

Special Events

Retailer (New)

Transfers

Manufacturer

Distributor

Renewals

General

- Permit Classes
- Get a Fingerprint Background Check
- Submit A Financial Verification Sheet
- Submit a Summary of Tenancy
- Submit Personal History/ Background
- Submit A Hotel/Motel Affiliation Agreement
- Know When to Renew my Retail Liquor Permit

Retail Liquor Licensing Applications

- A License (Beer, Wine & Mixed Beverages C&D) (Package)
- A License (Beer, Wine & Mixed Beverages C&D)
- Have More Than Two Fixed Base Counties
- A Private Club License (D4)
- A Private Club License (D4 Package)
- Transport Alcoholic Beverages (F)
- Sell In An Enclosed Shopping Mall (OSH)
- Sell In A Resort Area (OT)
- Sell On Railroad Car, Aircraft And Diving Car Transportation (E)
- Buy Wholesale As A Druggist For Non-Beverage Purposes (I)
- A Druggist/Pharmacy For Medicinal Purposes (G)
- To Temporarily Close Business Operations
- Expand/Reduce Your Permits
- Cancel An Application Or Listed Liquor License

Organizational Disclosure

Submit A:

- LLC Membership Disclosure
- Partnership Disclosure
- Non-Profit Disclosure
- Officers/Shareholders Disclosure
- List Of Officers For A Private Club

Informational Banner

hyperlink for more on subject of informational banner

News & Reports

Text of News & Reports

Latest Updates

Text of Latest Updates

Visit Newsroom

How Do I?

Task (direct link to PDF)

Inquiry (link to sub-page)

Inquiry (link to sub-page)

Tweets

Text of tweet

Relevant photograph/picture

Tweet to @OhioLiquor

Wireframe #3: Current Main page

Redesigned Main page

Logo

search ohio.gov

Twitter icon

[house icon]
ABOUT DOLC
LICENSEES
CONSUMERS
RESOURCES

RETAILERS

MANUFACTURER

DISTRIBUTOR

SPECIAL EVENT/
TEMPORARY

ALL LICENSEES

Questions about
RENEWALS

Permit-Related
SEARCHES

About Retailer Licenses (TYPES and Descriptions -- click for PDF application)

A License (Beer, Wine & Mixed Beverages C&D) (Packet) – Blah, description, blah

Sell On Railroad Car, Aircraft And Dining Car Transportation(E) – Blah, description, blah

A License (Beer, Wine & Mixed Beverages C&D) – Blah, description, blah

Buy Wholesale As A Druggist For Non-Beverage Purposes(I) – Blah, description, blah

Have More Than Two Fixed Bars/Counters – Blah, description, blah

A Private Club License (D4) – Blah, description, blah

A Drugstore/Pharmacy For Medicinal Purposes(G) – Blah, description, blah

A Private Club License (D4 Packet) – Blah, description, blah

To Temporarily Close Business Operations – Blah, description, blah

Transport Alcoholic Beverages (H) – Blah, description, blah

Expand/Reduce Your Premises – Blah, description, blah

Sell In An Enclosed Shopping Mall (D5B) – Blah, description, blah

Cancel An Application Or Issued Liquor License – Blah, description, blah

Sell In a Resort Area (D7) – Blah, description, blah

Retailer
Application Process
Overview

(1) Submit Application

(2) Submit Application Packet, including Organizational Disclosure Forms

(3) In two months, blah blah blah

(4) Yadda-yadda yadda

(5) Etc.

Contact Us Info

Dept of Commerce link

FAQs about DOLC

Site Map

Problems with site? Contact...

Wireframe #4: Redesigned Main page