

Paladin — Design Case Study

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Overview

Paladin is a mobile-first app that helps families stay in touch while someone is out driving across town or running errands. Safety is the core idea: everyone at home should know where a traveler is headed, roughly when they'll arrive, and that they got there.

The first phase covers three jobs:

- **Plan a trip.** Set a start, a destination, a travel mode, and who is coming along.
- **Follow a trip.** Track progress on a native map with a live arrival estimate.
- **Stay in touch.** Trade one-tap check-ins such as "All good" or "Heavy traffic," and raise an alert if something goes wrong.

A future phase will connect the Paladin alert to local police and 911. The current design already lets users choose those contacts, so the integration can slot in without changing the flow.

What should the login screen look like?

The login screen sets the tone: calm, warm and trustworthy, so a safety app feels reassuring rather than alarming. It holds only what a person needs to get in: the Paladin mark, one line on what the app does ("Know they got there."), two fields, and a single Sign in button.

The Paladin helmet is the heart of the brand. The original icon pairs a knight's helmet with a claymore sword. In the redesign the helmet is redrawn as warm line art, with its ridge, eye slits, grille and flowing plume, and it now appears through the whole app instead of only on the login screen. It greets users on sign-in, signs the check-in cards, celebrates arrival, and marks the Paladin alert.

Color. The palette moved from bright blue, navy and green to a warm, editorial set:

Role	Color	Used for
Ground	Stone and cream (#F3F0E8, #E9E4D9)	Screens and cards

Role	Color	Used for
Ink	Deep brown (#3A2A21)	Text, primary buttons
Safe	Olive green (#4F6B3A)	Arrived and "all good" states
Alert	Terracotta (#A8402A)	The Paladin alert only

Keeping terracotta for the alert alone means it never gets lost among other buttons.

Type. Young Serif, a soft serif, carries names, headings and every number, so timers and arrival times feel friendly rather than technical. Figtree handles body text and labels.

The octagonal overlay and triangular footer from the first version were removed. They added energy but crowded small screens and made text harder to read.

What does the user see after logging in?

After signing in, users land on one home screen that serves both reasons someone opens Paladin: they're heading out, or they're checking on family.

The first version split these into two separate choices on a menu screen. The redesign shows both at once, so the user never has to pick before seeing what matters:

- **Out right now.** A card at the top shows anyone currently traveling, such as "Sam & Brenna to the movies," with their arrival time. One tap opens their live trip.
- **Family.** A grid of cards gives each family member's name, where they are, and a status: "On the way" or "Arrived" with a check.
- **I'm heading out.** A large button at the bottom starts a new trip.

A strip of days across the top keeps the screen grounded in today. Everything fits in one view, without scrolling.

What if the user is traveling?

Planning a trip now takes two short steps instead of four. Smart defaults do most of the work: the start is already set to Home and departure to Now, so a typical errand needs only a destination.

1. **Where are you headed?** One screen holds the route (from and to), when you're leaving (Now or a set time), and when you'll be back home. There's also a One-way trip checkbox for trips with no return time.

- Tapping the destination opens a map with search, the distance and drive time, and saved places such as "Charlotte Cinema 12" or "School" for one-tap repeats.

2. **How and who.** Large tiles pick the travel mode (Driving, Riding, Walking or Transit). Below them, a checklist names who is coming along. A line confirms who will see the trip and be told on arrival.

The user taps Start trip, and the family can follow along from that moment.

What happens during the trip?

While a trip is underway, the traveler and the family each see a screen built for their side, and both can talk with a single tap.

For the traveler, the live trip screen shows three numbers: time left, time on the road, and the time they're due home. A row of quick updates ("All good," "Stopping for gas," "Running late") sends a note without typing. Two actions sit at the bottom: *I've arrived* and *Help*.

For the family, the trip opens on a map with the traveler's position and route, plus the same arrival and time-on-road numbers. Their latest message appears below. One tap calls them, sends a quick reply, or asks "All OK?"

Check-ins. When a family member asks "Hey Dad, all going OK?", the traveler sees the message large, on a card signed by the Paladin helmet. The replies are large buttons that are easy to hit, including "All good, see you soon," "Heavy traffic" and "Call me." Users can edit these preset messages in Settings.

The Paladin alert. In the first version, the emergency alert lived only in Settings. Now the Help button stays on screen for the whole trip. Holding it for three seconds sends an alert with the traveler's live location to the contacts they chose. The hold prevents accidental alerts while keeping help one gesture away.

What happens on arrival?

When the traveler taps I've arrived, Paladin confirms it and lets everyone following know right away. The confirmation screen celebrates with the helmet and a green check and says "You made it, Mike." It shows the arrival time, the trip length, and who was notified, such as "Barbara and Brenna were notified."

The return trip is built in. Because the user set a "back home by" time when planning, Paladin sends a reminder shortly before it to head home. A *Start trip home now* button begins the return right away. It replaces the original "Return Home" button, which only sent a notice, with a real trip the family can follow.

How does the user manage settings?

Four separate settings screens are now one, with safety at the top.

- **Paladin alert** comes first, in terracotta. Its own screen explains the hold-to-alert gesture and lists who gets alerted: Home, chosen relatives such as Uncle Sal & Aunt Marge, the Sheriff's Department, and an option to call 911. A *Send a test alert* button lets families practice without worry.
- **Family members** lists each person with one-tap call and message buttons, plus Add family member.
- **How we reach you** sets push notifications, text messages, and phone calls (for Paladin alerts only).

What changed from the first version?

The redesign cut the app from about 20 screens to 11 and moved safety to the front of every trip.

Area	First version	Redesign	Why
Visual style	Bright blue, navy and green; octagon and triangle patterns	Stone, cream and brown; soft serif type; helmet line art	Calmer, easier to read, more distinctly Paladin
After login	A choice between two flows	One home screen showing both	Less tapping, more at a glance
Trip setup	4 screens	2 screens with smart defaults	Faster for everyday errands
Emergency	Only in Settings	Hold-to-alert Help button on every trip	Help is always one gesture away
Check-ins	Small preset buttons	Large one-tap replies on a message card	Easy to use while on the move

Area	First version	Redesign	Why
Arrival	"Return Home" notice	Reminder + Start trip home	The return trip is tracked too
Settings	4 screens	1 screen, alert first	Safety settings are easy to find
Usability	Small text and buttons	44 px minimum tap targets, higher contrast	Readable and usable on a phone