

September 18, 2018

The doctor prescribed convenience

UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital

Other than becoming annoyed when they're full or too far from the door, we don't tend to think much about driveways and parking lots. But they play a huge role in our car-centered lives. And when the access drives and parking lots are intended to serve hospital patrons, many of whom have mobility challenges, they become the first critical link in a chain of healthcare amenities.

When UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital in Dubuque, IA wanted a major expansion, they engaged InVision Architects, who included WHKS on their team to provide survey, site planning and civil engineering for the parking lots, drop-off locations and other critical site access issues.



Our aging population makes convenient and safe hospital access a critical design component. With this in mind, the engineers set out to create a 'friendly' parking lot, which included a traffic circulation system that is intuitive and comfortable, parking spaces that are a little wider than normal, and as much protection from Dubuque winters as possible.

Extensive design effort that optimized convenient access, safety, and effects on local traffic produced a design that provides all three. In addition to the wider parking spaces, the parking and access roads include a turn-around to avoid having to drive through an existing parking ramp, a drop-off area with heated pavement and a covered roof to prevent the accumulation of ice and snow.



Along with convenient and safe access to the new hospital wing, the driveways had to serve the adjacent medical office building and its parking ramp. Making the job more challenging was the presence of dozens of old underground utility pipes and wires. While the location of some were known ahead of time, most were simply "down there somewhere!" Careful utility locating and even more careful digging - often by hand - ensured the pipes and cables remained intact and the vital links they provide remained in service.

Today, when patients arrive at Finley Hospital by car, the only thing they have to think about is a full and speedy recovery.

