Project Background
The Washington County Regional Medical Center is seeking to improve the approach to their main entrances by improving the landscape design in the applicable areas. A major sub project of the entire project is the creation of a memorial/honorarium garden/brick area for former life-long staff members.

Meeting with the Clients
During the initial visit a representative from Archway Partnership along with selected members of the Facilities Improvement Committee were able to provide some insight into what challenges should be considered in a landscape design for the hospital. These include:

- Location and design of the existing rose garden
- "Neglected looking" designated smoking areas
- Inefficient and ineffective signage
- Inadequately defined hospital entrances
- Dated building façade
- Lack of covered pick up and drop off area for patients
- Poor circulation in the parking lot
- Improving the ECF garden and outdoor space
- Unsightly trash collectors
- Unused open spaces
- Limited outdoor seating opportunities

Site Analysis

**Entrances**
- Main vehicular access point into the hospital compound is non-descript
- Entryway lacks definition and adequate signage to sufficiently
- Driveway is narrow with unmarked lanes
- Lack of overhead covering for patient drop-off/pick-up

**Hospital Image**
- Building façade and color palette appears somewhat ‘dated’
- Dark, unattractive tint on the windows
- Minimal landscape treatment

**Circulation**
- Existing arrangement of the parking lot is convoluted
- Mixture of angled and 90 degree parking spaces
- Inconsistent direction in traffic flows lends

**Wayfinding and Signage**
- Hospital’s signage lacks uniformity and visual appeal
- Mixture of dated lettering, a stark color palette, and an oversimplified appearance (resembles a store sign)
- The most important signs seem inconspicuous against building façade

**Outdoor Seating Areas**
- Limited opportunities for outdoor seating

**Designated Smoking Areas**
- The present spaces designated for smoking are unattractive
- Detract from the general look and feel of the landscape
- Signage leading to and within these designated areas should also be clear and easy to read

**Waste Disposal**
- Current garbage disposal bins are mismatched and poorly screened
- Bins should be standardized with appropriate signage
- Waste disposal center located to the back of the hospital needs appropriate screening from public view

**Missed Opportunities**
- Numerous spaces within the hospital landscape appear to be leftover areas

**Memorial Garden**
- The existing rose garden is small, “neglected-looking,” and positioned in an isolated location that seems disconnected from the rest of the landscape

**ECF Backyard and Garden**
- Current layout does not utilize the entire space leaving oddly shaped, left-over space that is occupied only by lawn and some utilities
- A redesign of this area can increase
- Few seating opportunities, low visual interest

**Project Scope**
Based on the meeting with hospital staff as well as suggestions from the charrette report, the following items were identified as specific sub-projects that are to be addressed in a comprehensive landscape plan.

- Parking Lots and Circulation
- Entrances
- Signage and Wayfinding
- Streetscaping
- Covered patient pick-up and drop-off
- Memorial Garden
- Employee Garden
- Extended Care Facility Garden
- Designated Smoking Areas
- Building façade improvements
- Waste Disposal and Utilities Area
Concept

“To create a more engaging and therapeutic landscape that offers greater opportunities for patients and visitors to actively interact with the outdoor environment”. The landscape as a healing environment incorporates elements such as gardens with ornamental plants and raised beds, water features, patios, courtyards, paved walking paths, and seating opportunities. A major focus of the master plan is to balance the amount of hardscape area with adequate tree cover to help maintain more enjoyable temperatures in the outdoor environment.

Proposed Layout

The new layout aims to improve traffic flows within the compound through:

- Clear definition of main roads and reduction of intersections with the parking lots’ internal circulation
- Realignment of parking spaces to 90° angle reducing confusion as to traffic direction parking spaces
- Use of traffic circles to regulate vehicular circulation at crucial intersections creating opportunities for wayfinding signage to be positioned for maximum efficiency
- Parking to the rear of the building (near the ECF) combined into a single lot to improve traffic control
- 30 additional parking spaces are also proposed in a new lot just across the street
- Relocation of the Hazardous Waste Disposal Unit and mobile Conference Room nearer to the Waste Disposal area. Repositioning these units to the edge of the site is part of a strategic plan to eventually eliminate these temporary structures
- Along the roadway leading to the Wellness Center a 10 ft. landscape buffer is proposed to accommodate the street trees for shade

Proposed Master Plan and Site Layout
The existing memorial garden is an isolated collection of rose bushes that is simply lost in the landscape. Due to the lack of plant variety the garden appears unkempt when roses are not in bloom. The proposed design creates a more substantial space that is divided into three major areas; the rose garden and two open lawns of differing sizes for large events. The existing trees canopy is supplemented by deciduous shade trees that provide visual interest in the fall and spring and a large, naturalized water feature is added between the open lawns to help to sustain cooler temperatures in the space.

A diversified plant palette ensures visual appeal year-round and many of the plants selected require little pruning to preserve an attractive habit; the total ‘manicured’ lawn area is also limited to the open fields thereby reducing monthly maintenance demands.

In the rose garden a boxwood hedge is used to enclose the rose bushes to provide a tidy appearance. Japanese boxwood is recommended because of its slow growing habit that is easy to prune and its drought-tolerance once established.
Employee Garden

The Employee Garden re-imagined is a cozy spot in the hospital landscape that offers a chance for workers to relax outdoors. The space is divided three levels (accessible by a series of ramps and stairs) to create niches that are able to facilitate a variety of uses and group sizes. The large open space under the pergola serves as an outdoor dining area with furniture suitable for groups of four or more persons while built-in seating next to raised planters offers more private conversation areas.

The large water feature combined with a variety of shade trees help to maintain cooler temperatures in the space during warm weather months. The cascading water also introduces the element of sound in the garden creating a soothing environment. The mixture of shade trees and the pergola create an overhead canopy that is more human-scale by layering plant heights to provide visual interest above the eye-line. The recommended hardscape palette for this space is natural stone combined with concrete planters to create a rich, textural experience for users of the space.

ECF Garden

As a long-term living environment the ECF has a special function for residents; it is not only a garden within the hospital landscape, it functions as a backyard…a home away from home. The space can also be used by patients’ families as well as members of staff seeking outdoor opportunities during the work day.

The proposed design unifies the ECF outdoor environment into a cohesive landscape by creating continuous flow of spaces and focal points connected by a stone pathway. Amenities in the garden include gazebos, seating areas and a series of water features and ornamental trees that provide visual interest for residents overlooking the garden from their private rooms.

The new landscaping arrangement also accommodates residents’ personal bird feeders in planted areas close to the building thereby eliminating the current pattern of feeders scattered about the open lawn. A hardscape courtyard with built-in seating and handicap-accessible ramp has been added to the rear entrance of the building; the patio serves as both a waiting area and the main entrance to the ECF garden.
**Façade Improvements**

The current view of the hospital façade from the main road is monotonous and unattractive. Adding appropriate scale vegetation and repositioning the flagpole help to better frame the view while adding some interest to the landscape. Façade improvements include upgrading the exterior window tints as well as establishing a uniform color palette. Repainting and widening the existing trim creates a more substantial architectural element on the building façade. Replacing the existing lettering with a more modern font type can also help to convey the impression of an updated façade.

**Landscaped Entrances**

Plantings at the main entrance form a backdrop for the new signage that will ensure its prominence in the landscape. Larger shrubs to the rear of the sign also help to screen the memorial garden from the busy main road. Colorful foliage provides year-round interest making the entryway more easily noticeable to motorists. At the secondary entrance vegetation and signage must low growing/ short due to height restrictions for objects in close proximity to the helipad. Plants in this location should also be able to withstand high winds (generated by helicopter blades) without breakage or becoming uprooted.

**Covered Patient Pick-up and Drop off**

The main entrance now features a large glass lobby with an internal waiting area that is easily accessible from the sidewalk. The overhead canopy at both the main and the ER entrance allow for convenient patient pick-up/ drop-off during inclement weather. The overhead plane also creates an opportunity for larger signage that is easily readable from a distance. The awning over the ER entrance extends over a dual-carriage passageway allowing two vehicles to off-load simultaneously.

**Designated Smoking Area**

In addition to major infrastructure and vegetation improvements there are numerous other amenities that can help to enhance the landscape environment. These include lighting, furniture, trash bins, etc. It is important to remember that when incorporating such amenities uniformity is crucial in order to achieve a cohesive landscape.

**Trash Bins**

Usually one of the biggest eyesores in the landscape; it is always recommended that receptacles blend in with the surroundings. Moreover it is crucial to select the appropriate trash bins for a particular area e.g. bins with ash trays in a non-designated smoking area send conflicting messages to potential users.

**Lighting**

Illumination of the landscape at night is not only useful for security purposes but also provides aesthetic appeal by highlighting certain aspects of the landscape. Solar powered lighting is recommended due to ease of installation (as they do not require additional wiring) and reduced energy costs.