

Parking at VA Pittsburgh

Research and content

Research

Approach

- Inventoried the existing parking content for the Pittsburgh region VAMCs and outpatient clinics
- Audited the existing parking content in sample regions around the country (Cleveland, Cincinnati, Kansas City, San Diego, Bronx)
- Audited the parking content of a handful of other Pittsburgh area medical facilities
- Spoke to Shelley and Louis for further information about additional points of clarity (University Drive valet, wheelchair provision)
- Reviewed general findings from in-person research for other insights

Findings

Observations

- The content was highly variable (see appendix table)
 - Within the Pittsburgh region
 - Info was mostly limited and simple
 - Variations were substantial and hard to bring together
 - Across the country
 - IA was not consistent
 - Focused on shuttles from lot to door
 - Emphasized directions to the facility over information about parking
 - Other hospitals in the region
 - Highly detailed pricing, validation, and building access information
 - Emphasized written directions over maps
- Some Pittsburgh parking information needed augmentation.
 - Valet at University Drive is more complex than suggested.
 - Wheelchairs are provided in most facilities but not mentioned.
- Existing research set a key parameter. Both staff and users already understood that parking information was important.

Takeaways

- **Structuring the basic information is straightforward for Pittsburgh.** However, it may require a little more leeway if we want it to work as a model for additional regions (so opt for higher character counts rather than lower).
- **Structuring the more complex information requires some freedom in the authoring experience** (like WYSIWYGs or fields with higher character counts). Alerts, building access, parking entrance around the corner, etc., are hard to define more narrowly than that. This requires some balance between providing more structure and not creating too many unnecessary fields.
- **The structure of inputs should be more granular than the structure of outputs.** Field labels and instructions are going to be really helpful in jogging people's memories about relevant parking information. But we don't have to worry as much about people not reading the content; everyone knows it's significant. And there's so much variability in the length of any paragraph.
- **Future work for other regions will require additional research.** Hours of operation for parking lots isn't relevant in Pittsburgh; all the lots are either public lots or attached to VAMCs that are 24 hours. In other regions this is not universally true.

Proposed structure

Approach

- Separated content info into universal and particular
- Light task flow analysis to determine the order in which information becomes relevant
- Prioritized order of inputs and outputs from those two factors
- Wrote content for four facilities to identify a structure—order, labels, default, and character limits—that would work across the region.

Structure for inputs

Field label	Instructions	Type	Char. limit	Selection options	Notes
Cost	For example: Free or Free with validation. Ask clinic staff to validate your ticket.	Text	80		<i>Default content:</i> Please call [facility name] for parking rates. <i>Displays with "Cost:" label.</i>
Parking entrance	If the parking entrance is not next to the primary facility entrance, type the parking entrance street name here. Use only the name of the street.	Text	50		If a street is here, the output displays within the sentence "The parking entrance is on [street name]." <i>No default.</i>
Accessing the building	Let people know where the lot is in relation to the building. Tell them about walkways, valet service, elevators, etc.	WYSIWYG	240		<i>Displays without a label. No default.</i>
Wheelchair availability	Select the most accurate description of availability at this facility.	Select (dropdown or radio button)	n/a		<i>No default. Displays with "Wheelchair availability:" label.</i>
Alert	Use this space to tell people about any temporary parking changes. For example, driveway closures or elevators out of service.	Text	240		Uses information alert style on output when present. <i>No default.</i>

Example content

H.J. Heinz

Cost: Free

Wheelchair availability: H.J. Heinz III Campus has wheelchairs upon arrival for patients who need them to access the building.

University Drive

Cost: Free

On the busiest days, we require the use of our free valet service. To account for this, please allow extra time before your appointment.

Wheelchair availability: Pittsburgh VA Medical Center-University Drive has wheelchairs available upon arrival for patients who need them to access the building.

Washington County

Cost: Free with validation. Ask clinic staff to validate your parking ticket.

The parking entrance is on Franklin Street.

The garage is adjacent to the building. To get to the clinic from the garage, use the skywalk located on the garage's 4th floor. The clinic is on the 2nd floor of the building.

Wheelchair availability: The Washington County outpatient clinic has wheelchairs available in the building.

Westmoreland County

Cost: Free

The clinic is in a separate building on the other side of the Westmoreland Mall from Route 30. You can drive around the mall and park directly in front of the clinic.

Wheelchair availability: The Westmoreland County outpatient clinic has wheelchairs available in the building.

Breakdown of content from source (see notes)

From University Drive

Cost: Free

Commented [1]: From _Cost_

On the busiest days, we require the use of our free valet service. To account for this, please allow extra time before your appointment.

Commented [2]: Because the _Accessing the building_ content is so variable, a user-facing label is as likely to distract as to help.

Commented [3]: From _Accessing the building_

Wheelchair availability: Pittsburgh VA Medical Center-University Drive has wheelchairs available upon arrival for patients who need them to access the building.

Commented [4]: From _Wheelchair availability_

From Washington County

Cost: Free with validation. Ask clinic staff to validate your parking ticket.

Commented [5]: From _Cost_

The parking entrance is on Franklin Street.

Commented [6]: Displays without a label, but is always short and on its own line and immediately following cost, the two most immediate things to know.

Commented [7]: From _Parking entrance_

The garage is adjacent to the building. To get to the clinic from the garage, use the skywalk located on the garage's 4th floor. The clinic is on the 2nd floor of the building.

Commented [8]: From _Accessing the building_

Wheelchair availability: The Washington County outpatient clinic has wheelchairs available in the building.

Commented [9]: From _Wheelchair availability_

Relevant information provided elsewhere

This will feed into Sprint 20 work on *Prepare for your Visit*. Just a couple notes.

Getting there

- Address/map/directions presented under *Address and phone numbers*
 - Make sure Google Maps links doesn't have a suite number
 - Make sure the display address does have a suite number
 - Check that the address image is accurate
 - Create a field for plus code to ensure accurate driving directions

Transport options

- Presented under *Prepare for your visit*

Future work

- Review against *Prepare for your visit* findings, especially related to campus maps.
- Test AX and UX usability.
- Implement.

Appendix: comparison table

Side-by-side comparison of information provided by different sorts of facilities

	Pittsburgh VA facilities	Other VA regions	Pitt region hospitals
Cost	Free	Free, but listings are inconsistent	Specifics
Proximity	The word “onsite”	Wide variation	Detailed information
Accessibility	Required valet at University Drive, unclear if this is accurate	Lot-to-door shuttles, shuttles between locations, inconsistent info about handicapped parking spaces	Lot-to-door shuttles, door drop-offs/pickups, available valet service
Hours	no	no	yes
Location and directions	Links to maps, map images, written descriptions for getting to the biggest facilities haven’t migrated from legacy site	Written descriptions for getting to the biggest facilities	Written descriptions
Lots themselves	none	If space is limited	Patrol
Validation	One relevant facility, a bit unclear	Registering vehicles for long inpatient stays	Clear and specific

Areas where Pittsburgh’s information may come up short of standards are highlighted.