Lodi Library Landscape Plan
The current Lodi Whittier Library is too small to accommodate the community’s needs. Under the leadership of the Library Board of Trustees, the community came together to raise funds, choose a site, and design a new building. The site is located just a block from the current library, near the historic downtown and along a major regional road. To the rear of the lot is a wooded area, lending both an immediately attractive backdrop and the potential for future expansion.
Client-Centered Process

Meeting with Library Board

We held an initial meeting with the Library Board to better understand what the client envisioned for the landscape. The key adjectives that helped describe what they hoped for included professional, local, communal, educational, native, and low-maintenance. In addition, the Board had key elements in mind that they wanted for us to include in our design.

Community Open Space

There was an emphasis on open space for the community to recreate. Kids could come and play after school, in a safe, supervised area. In the summer, the community could hold town events such as outdoor movie screenings, farmer’s markets, festivals, etc. The Board also wanted us to consider seating options, whether they are temporary seats or permanent seating structures.

Outdoor Classrooms

The board also expressed interest in outdoor classrooms. The library would use the outdoor space for already-existing educational programs, including painting, yoga, and native plant id. The space could also allow for the library to expand their offerings.

Space to use wifi

Currently, people park adjacent to the library to use the wifi in their cars. The Board planned to address this by creating a space where community members could actually sit and use wifi.

Community-sponsored plants

The board also hoped to engage community members by encouraging use of the garden that currently stands next to the site of the new library. This would also entail sponsoring plants and taking communal ownership of this public space.

Key Adjectives

Professional
Local
Communal
Educational
Native
Low-maintenance

Initial Site Visit

In addition to meeting with members of the Library Board, we were able to visit the site of the future library and observe the natural and constructed context, as well as collect soil samples and other technical information we would need to create our design.

The future site of the Lodi Library

Our team discussing design ideas with members of the board.
Design Process

Team Design Charette

In order to begin the design process, we met as a group to do a “design charette” where each team member quickly sketches their own design for the site, keeping in mind the parameters we had learned from the board at our meeting, as well as the overall context of the Town of Lodi and the library that we had learned about from visiting and from our research.

Our first priority was finding a physical location for each of the programmatic areas the board had indicated were necessary, from “Open Space” to “Outdoor Classrooms.” After we had each made designs, we pinned them up, discussed them, and collaborated in order to create some preliminary design strategies and ideas that we could bring back to the board to make sure we were on the right track.

Follow-up Design Workshop

Design Preferences

- Shade for summer events
- Movie projector set-up on patio
- Walnut benches in front
- Open, welcoming entrance
- Simplicity: few varieties
- Four Season Color

Design Constraints

- Potential parking lot expansion
- Potential solar panel installation to northwest of site
- Curb cut on north edge of site that needs to stay clear
- Very low maintenance

After making some initial designs and proposals, we met again with several board members to discuss our ideas and get initial feedback; from this second meeting we were able to gain valuable new insights and information which we could incorporate into our design.

After this second meeting, the production phase began, in which we finalized our plant selection and our designs and began the process of finding sources and gathering cost estimate information.
Adjacent to the existing woodland area in the back we propose adding a few native trees to increase shading on the parking lot; this could also be used for a Tree Identification Class.

Community Open Space

Connecting with the parking lot is the largest open area suitable for movie screenings, community gatherings that could utilize both parking lot and field, and a safer area for children to play away from the road.

Outdoor “Classrooms”

Near the proposed patio, a more garden-style planting allows for smaller spaces that could be used for classes, small gatherings, or private contemplation.

Formal Entrance

A slightly more formal, and open and welcoming planting in the front that blends in well with the historic character of the Village. An open appearance and some benches will provide a welcoming entrance where people can sit and use wifi.

Low-growing ornamentals

A band of colorful but low-growing ornamental plants between the library and the parking lot will create 4-season interest in an area that will be, especially in winter, one of the main entrances to the library.
Plant Pallet

**Winter**
- Acer saccharum       Sugar Maple
- Cornus florida      Flowering Dogwood
- Cercis canadensis     Eastern Redbud
- Tilia americana     Basswood
- Catalpa speciosa     Indian Bean
- Thuja occidentalis     Eastern Arborvitae
- Carya ovata    Shagbark Hickory

**Spring**
- Salix purpurea     Blue Arctic Willow
- Cornus sanguinea     Redtwig Dogwood
- Viburnum lentago     Nannyberry Viburnum
- Juniperus procumbens     Creeping Juniper
- Hydrangea quercifolia     Oakleaf Hydrangea
- Quercus bicolor     Swamp White Oak
- Malus      Apple Tree

**Summer**
- Lodi Library Landscape Plan
- Cornell Design Connect
- Fall 2015
Western Facade

View from Parking Lot (Spring/Summer)

View from Parking Lot (Winter)
The new library will be situated near roads, sidewalks, and a parking lot. These paved areas will likely be maintained with salt during the winter months, and the salt will end up washing into planting beds. For this reason we chose salt tolerant plants to be planted in these areas. We also conducted soil tests to determine the pH of the areas around the site, as well as the fill. We found that the pH was very high on and around the site, which we expect to get worse during construction. For this reason, we chose plants that will thrive in high pH soils. Soil texture is also an important factor in plant selection. Soil texture is determined by the amount and combination of the different soil particles: sand, silt, and clay. Sand is the largest soil particle, followed by silt, and clay being the smallest. A balanced combination of these three soil particles makes healthy soil which will support many plants. On the library site we found mostly loams, which has ideal moisture retention, but also sufficient drainage.
Precedent Study: Dryden Southworth Library

The Dryden Southworth Library is also part of the Fingerlakes Library System, and in 2010 built a new addition onto their library. Their landscape plan was designed by Trowbridge, Wolfe, Michaels Landscape Architects, installed by Cayuga Landscape, and maintained by a local gardener. The garden requires less than 40 hours of maintenance per year, consisting mostly of spring mulching and pruning, and fall leaf and debris collection.

Plant List
- Juniperus Procumbens
- Rhus aromatica
- Cornus sericea
- Thuja occidentalis
- Rosa ssp.
- Malus ssp.
- Acer platanoides
- Andropogon ssp.
- Viburnum dilatatum
- Creeping Juniper
- Fragrant Sumac
- Redtwig Dogwood
- Eastern Arborvitae
- Hedge Rose
- Flowering Crabapple
- Norway Maple
- Ornamental Grasses
- Linden Viburnum

Programmatic Areas

Open Lawn Area
Open grassy area with symmetrical large trees.

Reading Garden
Benches surrounded by Arborvitaes and Redtwig Dogwoods.

Formal planted Entrance
Mulched beds of low-growing multi-season shrubs planted symmetrically on either side of the main entrance.

Parking Lot
Large evergreens and Maples are planted around the parking lot, providing shade and screening from the adjacent lot.
Installation and Maintenance

Soil Amendment Strategy

Scoop-and-Dump Composting

The construction of the new library is going to raise the pH of the existing soil, and will also compact the soil. These conditions will make it difficult for plants to survive. Recent research shows that adding compost with a “scoop and dump” approach is a sustainable solution to remediating compacted and high pH soil. Adding compost with a scoop-and-dump strategy is less expensive than importing soil from an outside source, and it is locally available.

In order for this method to be effective, areas proposed as mulched planted beds (i.e. not grass areas) need to have 30 percent of their total volume of compost incorporated into the top 18” of soil. We have calculated this volume in cubic yards and solicited a quote from a local compost producer.

References:
Schwartz, Bassuk, Bonhotal and Harrison... “Compost Use in Ameliorating Highly Compacted Soils.” Cornell University Horticulture

Installation

Scoop-and-Dump Amendment

Incorporate compost (30 percent by volume) into each proposed planting bed. Incorporate with shovels to a depth of 18”. Plant directly into the amended soil and cover with mulch.

Planting

All plants should be transplanted in late fall or early spring (while they are in dormancy).

Grass

For grass seed, we recommend a rye grass/blue grass/fescue blend. Grass can be seeded at the same time; due to the high pH of the soil, we recommend using 3-6 lbs per acre of Copper Sulfate to help it establish itself.

Maintenance

Spring Pruning and Edging

In early spring, before plants come out of dormancy, prune off any dead wood. The Redtwig Dogwood (Cornus sericea) and Arctic Blue Willow (Salix purpurea ‘nana’) should be cut back aggressively at least every two years, if not every spring.

At the time of pruning, a layer of mulch should also be added to beds.