

CULTURAL BRIDGES:
CULTIVATING CONVERSATIONS THROUGH
GARDEN DESIGN

by

M'Lis Bartlett and Jenna Jones

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FACULTY ADVISORS:

Assistant Professor Beth Diamond, Chair
Lecturer Andrea Urbiel Goldner

abstract.

Landscape architects have a social responsibility to design spaces that improve local ecology and engage community members through participatory design methods. Cultural Bridges: Cultivating Conversations through Garden Design seeks to become a precedent for embracing cultural authenticity and ecological integration as inherent components of landscape design. Located in Oak Park, Michigan, Cultural Bridges is a proposal for reimagining a public garden in a culturally diverse neighborhood that focused on the Jewish and Islamic communities of the region.

Through historic, cultural and religious research on the art, gardens and plants, and the use of contemporary Jewish and Muslim perspectives on nature and religion, the Cultural Bridges design highlights the religious and landscape histories of Oak Park. Given the historic conflict of the Jewish and Muslim cultures, Cultural Bridges illuminates shared architectural, landscape, and ethnobotanical histories as well as shared philosophies on conservation and sustainability. These concepts are translated into the design layout through circulation patterns, gathering spaces, material choices and plant selection. Sustainable site practices including rainwater infiltration methods and the use of native plant species improve the local ecology while supporting the design intent. Significant cultural references from each community were identified and incorporated into a design that commemorates, educates, and inspires a healing process between these communities. A critical discussion of the design choices suggests that if the community is not open to healing the disparate relationship between Jews and Muslims, the Cultural Bridges designs will not succeed. A visitor who is open-hearted and willing to work toward a peaceful future together will find many opportunities help promote and cultivate this relationship through learning, discussing, and reflection.

acknowledgements.



*To everything there is a season,
a time for every purpose under the sun.
A time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
a time to kill and a time to heal ...
a time to weep and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn and a time to dance ...
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to lose and a time to seek;
a time to rend and a time to sew;
a time to keep silent and a time to speak;
a time to love and a time to hate;
a time for war and a time for peace.*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH

I.I / RESEARCH introduction.

THE CHALLENGE

In the richly diverse and sometimes contentious society of the 21st century, landscape architects find themselves being asked to design public spaces that serve multiple uses, a variety of people and reflect a diversity of histories. The complex issues of a multicultural community require that landscape architects, amongst other professionals, include in their agenda an effort towards social change, while simultaneously embracing a responsibility to design with ecological sensitivity reflective of the natural processes of the land on which the site is located (Wong 2007, ASLA 1999). There are contemporary examples of landscapes that address issues of multiculturalism through art and landscape, and others that highlight how ecological restoration can be aesthetically pleasing and appropriate in an urban space. Few examples successfully combine the two, and this is our interest and challenge. As designers, how do we achieve ecological merit while maintaining cultural sensitivity? When designing a shared public space and there are conflicting human stories to tell, can the new space provide universal opportunities for education and communication? Can we heal the land as we help support two communities challenged by invisibility and discrimination to find common ground for conversation?

In multicultural societies, there are bound to be overlapping and perhaps conflicting histories. In an effort to address these histories, landscape architects play a key role in deciding whose history to remember, celebrate, or memorialize. And yet, landscape architects rarely live in the community for which they are designing. Often they are not from the same ethnic or cultural background as their clients and therefore do not have a personal connection to the site. In order to design places that are culturally sensitive, relevant, and thought-provoking, modern designers must make an effort to include the hidden histories of the people of a site; the stories not easily found. It is important for designers to engage a diverse group of community members in this process - not just those who have already found a voice. The influence of public engagement in landscape design leads to culturally-significant spaces that are sustainable in terms of long term care and use. It is through this process that designers can provide opportunities for reflection, commemoration and learning.

While addressing issues of cultural relevance, landscape architects are also challenged to practice with ecological sensitivity. Current threats to global and local ecologies due to a history of human intervention and the subsequent impacts of global climate change can and must be addressed through modern design. Designing for a healthy ecological future requires innovative solutions that create self-sustaining landscapes that restore wildlife habitat to the land and help create environmental stewardship among people. Design that incorporates, highlights or exposes ecological processes must be carefully constructed to invite the interest of the community (Nassauer 1997). Ecological design that engages the community through cultural references that remind them of their connection to nature will certainly be more sustainable than those that confront them with an aesthetic with which they have no familiarity. A design that successfully combines these two principles; cultural relevance and ecological sensibility, will create landscapes that serve the larger society while providing ecological merit.

PROJECT HISTORY

In January of 2008, Professor Beth Diamond was approached by Jim Greenwood, a member of Temple Emanu-El in Oak Park, Michigan. The Temple is a Reform Jewish synagogue comprised primarily of Ashkenazi Jews, meaning of German descent. Greenwood was involved in the Temple's *Chavurah*, the garden committee, and had been working on a team exploring how to redesign the Temple's seven acre property. As a member of the city of Oak Park's Ethnic Advisory Committee, and with a concern about the rift between the Jewish and Muslim communities in the Detroit Metro area, Greenwood had taken a keen interest in a design that would reflect the diversity of the surrounding community. From a series of conversations between Diamond and Greenwood emerged the idea of creating a framework for a series of gardens spaces on the Temple grounds that would welcome and engage the diverse surrounding community.



1. Aerial view of the Temple Emanu-El

When we were asked to join this collaborative project, we were excited by the opportunity to work on a local design that integrated complex issues of religion and culture. After spending the previous semester involved in a design competition called Just Jerusalem, this project was especially inspiring to us. Just Jerusalem was an international competition exploring the “possibilities for a pluralist, just, and sustainable city shared by Palestinians and Israelis [...] to encourage new ways of thinking about the many difficult issues and hardships faced by Jerusalemites, regardless of their faith or ethnicity” (Just Jerusalem 2008). The city of Detroit, Michigan's largest city, is an area of extensive historical and contemporary conflict related to race and religion (Surgue 1996). Located in a suburb of Detroit, this new project in Oak Park provided an opportunity to apply and expand on studies for the Just Jerusalem competition in using cultural relevancy and ecologically sensitive design as a way to help heal disparate communities.



2. The Square of Tolerance
Dani Karavan See page 20 for design precedent research.

Both of us held a deep interest in how to design for diverse cultures, particularly those not traditionally considered part of mainstream society. We were struck by the possibility of using the new landscape as a way not only to highlight individual religious cultures, but as a way to find shared connections between diverse and conflicting communities. As we began exploring the project the complexity of the community and the design became more and more apparent. There were obvious challenges for creating a shared space between multiple religious and cultural groups, especially on a piece of land owned by only one of those groups, in this case a Jewish congregation. With enthusiasm, we embarked on what would be a year of fits and starts, of beginnings and dead ends, and all of which would become the fertile ground in which the final project – Cultural Bridges – would grow.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT at TEMPLE EMANU-EL



3. View of Temple Emanu-El from Ten Mile Road. For existing conditions, see page 76.

We knew from the beginning that in order to design this new space with integrity and relevance to the community, engaging them in the design process was essential. We found precedence for engaging community members in design and planning through design charettes or asking the public for programmatic input, but we created our own method of participatory design (Hester 2006, Crewe 2001). We wanted to use the community meetings as inspiration for cultural and religious references in our designs, but also as an opportunity for the community to interact, educate, and understand each other. We decided to hold a series of cultural sharing workshops. These were to be staged as collective events where community members would make art collages and tell stories about their faith and ethnic heritages to serve as inspiration for our designs.

After approaching Temple Emanu-El with our concept of engaging multiple cultures through the design of the Temple grounds, Greenwood, our liaison to the congregation, was met with both enthusiasm and resistance due to unresolved conflicts still present within Oak Park's Jewish community. Given the historic persecution of Jews and their ongoing fight for a right to a homeland, we understood that it might be difficult for some members of the Temple to wholeheartedly commit to sharing a space that currently offered a sense of privacy, peace, and security. As an alternative approach, we proposed a move away from the specific agenda of a multicultural space and offered the synagogue an opportunity to explore its own diverse community. We saw opportunities to strengthen the relationships within the Temple by exploring issues of gender and age as we continued to examine themes of ethnic diversity. Perhaps we could create a garden where Temple youth and seniors could grow food together, or a private space for women's reflection. Privately, we theorized that creating a garden reflective of the diverse Temple community might later open doors to a space celebrating a broader cultural and religious diversity.

The *Chavurah* committee was interested in this new idea and invited us to present our research and proposal at Temple Emanu-El in September 2008. Together with our project advisor, Beth Diamond, we gave an overview of our research on historic and contemporary Jewish garden design and traditions with plants. The presentation elicited mixed reactions. Many members of the congregation were excited and inspired by our work and ideas. Several members discussed the challenges of communicating with the nearby conservative and orthodox synagogues, and expressed an interest in reaching out to these community members through the garden design project. Unfortunately, there were also those who continued to be skeptical of our involvement in the design of the Temple's grounds. Soon afterwards, and six months into our efforts, we were to find out that this skepticism, as well as some internal conflicts unrelated to our project, would be enough to terminate the Temple Emanu-El project altogether.

REFRAMING CULTURAL BRIDGES

Despite the decision with Temple Emanu-El, the process of engaging the community in the design process had proved fruitful; interested Temple members had been very excited about reflecting Jewish culture through garden design, and we wanted to further explore using cultural references as a way to illicit public conversation about religion. Disappointed, but still inspired by our original vision, we began brainstorming new ways to apply the research and ideas we had accumulated on a new site. Throughout December 2008 and January 2009, we contacted a variety of cultural and religious organizations in Southeastern Michigan, but were again met with disappointing results. After speaking to countless groups, we found that people were interested and inspired by our project, but were unable to commit due to timing or organizational issues. Feeling a little discouraged, we pushed forward rethinking the original project at Temple Emanu-El. Although we knew we would not be able to continue without the Temple's support, we felt this site, the surrounding community, and our original vision for a multicultural design were significant and inspiring enough to pursue as a theoretical design. However, without the Temple's collaboration, reframing the physical location and content of the design was essential.

Moving forward, we made two key decisions that would guide the new approach to the project. These decisions were highly conscious and somewhat organic; emerging from the various iterations of the design discussions for Temple Emanu-El project and our pursuit of the project outside of the Temple. Although they are described as two separate decisions, they evolved together.

The first decision was to move away from the Temple Emanu-El property and explore Church Street as a linear corridor connecting a larger part of Oak Park, called the Cultural Corridor. Church Street begins roughly 1/10 of a mile northwest of the Temple in a largely Hasidic Jewish neighborhood. It moves south over Victoria Park, a freeway overpass park constructed in 1989 to allow observant Jews to cross interstate 696 to attend services on Ten Mile Road (Community Impact Assessment 2000). At the Church Street and Ten Mile intersection is Temple Emanu-El to the northwest, the Beth Jacob School girl's high school to the northeast, and the beginning of a mixed residential neighborhood to the south. Continuing through a largely residential area, Church Street passes several schools and parks, finally dead ending at Northend Avenue, roughly two miles south.



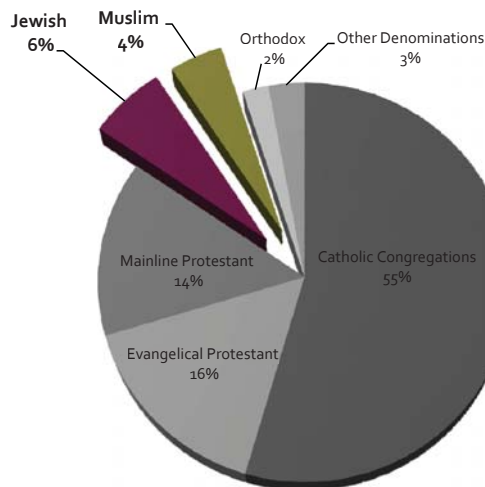
4. Cultural Bridges Cultural Corridor Map, see page 75.

The north end of the Cultural Corridor, the area we decided to focus on for our site design is located in the heart of the Jewish Campus of Oak Park. Since we had moved away from strictly working on Temple Emanu-El's grounds, we decided to concentrate on linking public spaces; Victoria Park, the Church Street streetscape, and the Ten Mile and Balfour Street corner entrances. We selected these locations based on their connection to the surrounding neighborhoods and potential to draw visitors into the site. We also noted places where there was an opportunity for ecological enhancement, including a rainwater retention area, raingardens, and native plantings. In this vision, Church Street serves as neighborhood corridor bridging and connecting multiple cultures of the community. The park and streetscape create a framework in which areas for ecological enhancement, organized play, walking corridors, and garden spaces are located. Through their layout, program, and plant palette these intimate garden spaces will reflect, celebrate, and commemorate the communities' religious and ethnic diversity. Together the framework plan and the garden designs will provide a place to cultivate conversation; a place for education, sharing and communication about the challenges and hopes these communities share. Located in Victoria Park, the garden designs are the first steps in achieving this goal, while the corner entrances at Balfour and Ten Mile and Church Street streetscape invite the community into this first celebratory space.



5. Cultural Bridges Framework Design, see page 83.

The second decision we made revolved around the selection of Jewish and Islamic groups as the cultural focus of our design. Drawing from and building upon our earlier studies for the Just Jerusalem competition, we wanted to explore how we might find human connections between



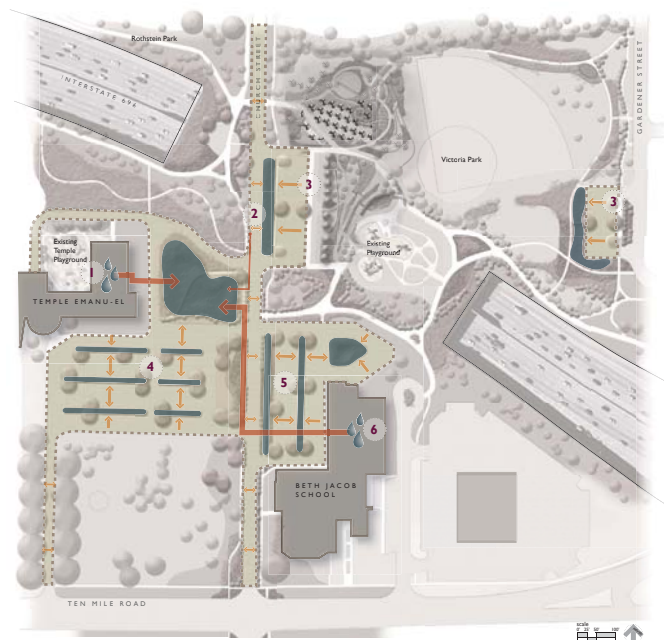
6. Percentage of Major Denominations in Detroit Metro, for more demographics, see page 70.

two cultures with historical and ongoing conflicts. We soon discovered that in addition to a long history of conflict between them, there were also significant issues of diversity within each community. The Oak Park Jewish Campus on which the site is located serves a wide range of Jewish denominations, from the conservative and traditional Hasidic to the Reconstructionist - a small, contemporary, and liberal movement in Judaism. While Oakland County - where Oak Park is located - has the largest Jewish community in Michigan, Jews only comprise of 6% of the religious followers in Detroit Metro (Association of Religion Data Archives 2000). Despite a large presence, Jews feel the effects of anti-Semitism, discrimination, and misunderstanding -- even within the local Jewish community (Refusing to be Enemies, 2007, Temple

Emanu-El 2008 Kamin, 2009). Likewise, the Muslim community in Detroit Metro is one of the largest in the state, but makes up only 4% of the area's religious adherents (Association of Religion Data Archives 2000). Similar to the Jewish community, membership in the Muslim community refers to either a cultural or a religious affiliation. Due to shifting religious and political movements within Islam, Muslim cultures and religions are becoming increasingly diverse throughout the world, and this trend is echoed locally in Metro Detroit. Like Jewish community members, Muslims also face discrimination on the basis of their religion, culture and racial heritage (Building Islam in Detroit 2008, Refusing to be Enemies, 2007).

It was these issues, histories, and demographics in Oak Park that were the basis for selecting the Jewish and Muslim communities specifically as the focus of our garden designs. Strengthening our decision was the location of a dominant Jewish community to the North end of the Church Street corridor – the location of the Jewish Campus – and an Islamic presence on the South end – the location of Masjid Oak Park, an Islamic research and community center. This connection creates a “bridge” that spans the diversity of the community and is anchored at two neighborhood cultural resource centers. We felt challenged and inspired by the idea of creating a safe place for conversation, rest, and play for these two communities so often pitted against each other on the issue of land and land ownership. Creating a contemporary shared space for Jews and Muslims would allow us to celebrate their overlapping histories and help begin a conversation about a peaceful future together.

In choosing the larger framework that encompasses the freeway overpass we found ample opportunity to improve the urban ecology of the neighborhood through “Green Technologies” and sustainable site practices. The Hasidic neighborhood to the north of the overpass recently instituted a tree planting program that increased the number of canopy trees in the neighborhood (Greenwood 2009). Building off of this program, our framework includes additional tree cover, the reduction of turf grass, and the inclusion of native plantings. We also noted opportunities to improve rainwater infiltration through a retention area east of the Temple, raingardens in the adjacent parking lots and permeable pavement on the streets. These enhancements would help increase wildlife habitat, creating an ecological bridge for migrating birds and mammals, and cleanse rainwater falling on the site. In addition to improving the ecological function of the site, we also wanted to apply these principals in a way that supported the cultural stories we wanted to tell. To uncover these cultural stories, we would search for parallels in Jewish and Muslim histories of art, nature and garden designs. Furthermore, we explored religious texts for plant references and shared philosophies. The combination of these research initiatives helped guide the plant palettes, programmatic elements, and designs.



7. Cultural Bridges Rainwater Infrastructure plan, see page 89.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In an effort to successfully combine the cultural and ecological identities of the diverse landscape of Oak Park, the Cultural Bridges design is guided by the principles outlined in this chapter:

- **To improve ecological health, function, and diversity.**
- **To reflect the rich cultural and religious character of the community.**
- **To educate the community about the diversity of Oak Park, highlighting Jewish and Muslim cultures.**
- **To provide a place for conversation, reflection, and peace.**

Landscape architects have addressed issues of multiculturalism, conflict, and healing in public plazas and botanical gardens by incorporating art and ethnobotany in their designs. Recent designs inspired by nature reflect a movement to expose, rather than hide ecological processes as way to teach and inspire others to make sustainable design decisions. There are a multitude of individuals and organizations that advocate for social and environmental justice; landscape architects join these efforts through the creation of public spaces that invite conversation, contemplation and learning. To effectively do so they must be willing to learn from the community to find authentic cultural references, incorporate ecological measures that are accessible to visitors and inspire them with a future-oriented way of thinking. It is our hope that through the designs and the design process used in Cultural Bridges we will create a precedent for landscape design to address cultural conflict by embracing cultural authenticity and ecological integration as inherent components of public landscapes that seek to commemorate, educate and inspire.



8. The Suzanne Delal Dance and Theater Center, *Shlomo Aronson*
See page 20 for design precedent research.



9. Alumot Jewish Community Garden, *Philadelphia, PA*
See page 34 for plants and cultural reference research.



10. Collage and Story Telling Workshop with University of Michigan Muslim Student Association
See page 44 for workshop descriptions.

1.2 COINCIDING RESEARCH CULTURES

I.2 / RESEARCH prologue.

Judaism and Islam have come to represent diverse groups of people and practices throughout the world that are both religious and secular in nature. This introduction provides a brief and abbreviated history of the origins, beliefs, and transformations of these two cultures as they have evolved throughout time. Not meant to be comprehensive, these brief histories provide the background necessary for understanding the conflict, parallels, and values they share today. It is in looking at these histories that we can begin to acquaint ourselves with the complex cultures that exist, as a means for understanding how they can begin to join together.

JUDAISM

The oldest of the three great monotheistic religions, Judaism began as the faith of the ancient Hebrews, arising around 1600 BCE (Britannica 2009; Roth 1954). Judaism centers around the belief that the people of Israel are God's chosen people who should "serve as a light for other nations" (Judaism). Judaism's sacred text is the Hebrew Bible, most importantly the Torah or five books of Moses. The Torah teaches that God made a covenant with Abraham and then renewed it with Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.

Jews have experienced a long history of persecution that was prompted by the destruction of the First Temple of Jerusalem in 586 BCE by the Babylonians and the subsequent exile of Jewish people. Later, an unsuccessful rebellion against the Romans led to the destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem, and consequently initiated the the Jewish Diaspora in 70 CE. During the Middle Ages, two major sectors of Judaism emerged; the Sephardic, based in Spain and reflective of the culture of Babylonian Jews, and the Ashkenazic, predominantly in France and Germany and linked with Jewish culture in Palestine and Rome. Hasidism, a conservative movement with a core belief in asceticism and mysticism, emerged in Eastern Europe in the 18th century at the time of the Jewish Enlightenment (Britannica 2009, Roth 1954). The Enlightenment, or Haskala, was an intellectual movement to acquaint Jews in central and Eastern Europe with European language and secular culture. Some of the most commonly practiced sects of Judaism today, Conservative and Reform Judaism arose in the 19th century in Germany in an effort to amend the strictness of Orthodox Judaism. The Conservative movement was established under the objective to "conserve essential elements of traditional Judaism," while modernizing many common religious practices. Similarly, Reform Judaism modifies many of the traditional beliefs and



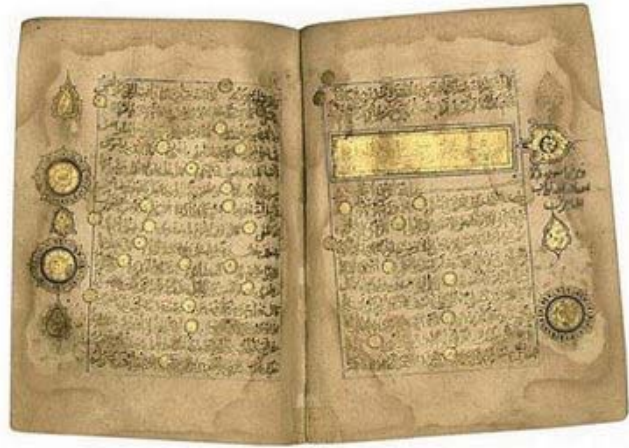
11. An ancient Torah
The Granger Collection, New York, NY

practices to adapt to the current social, political, and cultural climate of the modern world. Shortly after the arrival of Reform Judaism, Zionism, a movement whose main goal is to establish a Jewish national homeland in Palestine emerged in the late 19th century (Britannica 2009). Today, Judaism is practiced in many nations throughout the world, predominantly in Israel and the United States. In 2008, the estimated combined religious and cultural world Jewish population was 13.2 million (Jewish People Policy Planning Institute 2008).

ISLAM

The youngest of the three monotheistic religions, Islam, arose circa 7th century following the birth of the Prophet Muhammed in Arabia. The word Islam in Arabic means "surrender," representing the central belief that Muslims will "surrender to the will of Allāh," Allāh meaning God in Arabic (Britannica 2009). The will of Allāh is expressed through the Qur'an, Islam's sacred scripture, which Allāh revealed to Muhammed. As the last of a series of prophets, Muhammed taught a small group of followers, and his teachings spread rapidly throughout the Middle East, Africa, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, China, and the Malay Peninsula; made up of Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Thailand.

In response to widespread disagreement over religious and political leadership in Islam, two major branches emerged in the late 7th century: ; Sunnī and Shī'ite. Sunnī Islam, the majority branch of the two, is regarded as the mainstream and "traditional" branch of Islam (Britannica 2009). The Sunnī tradition teaches that Mohammed's successors – the first four caliphs – rightfully took his place as the leaders of Islam. Shī'ite Islam (or Shi'a) adversely believes that only the heirs of the fourth caliph, Ali, are the legitimate successors of Muhammed (History News Network 2006). Islam – both culturally and religiously – is practiced throughout much of the world, predominantly in North Africa and the Middle East, ; amounting to approximately 1.2 billion people worldwide (Britannica 2009). Current views on Islam globally have been colored by a series of "revivalist" movements in the Middle East that have often been controversially labeled as extremist and violent (Britannica 2009).



12. The earliest-known complete, dated Quran
London, England

I.2 / RESEARCH conflicts + parallels.

Jews and Muslims are inherently tied to their histories. Their religious, cultural, and political pasts have made them the rich, diverse cultures they are today. These cultures cannot be discussed without the context of their histories – both together and separately. Many of their overlapping traditions and beliefs – even those which have become a point of contention between them – can be utilized to establish a mutual understanding, appreciation, and respect for one another as a means of repairing the relationship that exists today. Acknowledging the historical and ongoing conflicts, this chapter will attempt to also describe a fragment of the diverse parallels between Islamic and Jewish beliefs, histories, and traditions. It is a narrative that abbreviates hundreds of years of culture, and undoubtedly only skims the surface of their histories. Through these abbreviated histories, it is our hope to establish a beginning point, or a common denominator from which to begin a healing process between two divergent groups in Southeastern Michigan. Through the examination of the history of conflict, shared religious traditions and beliefs, and analogous cultural customs related to art, nature, and the garden, the Cultural Bridges – a basis for a mutual understanding between Jewish and Islamic cultures – begins to grow.

A HISTORY OF CONFLICT

The Jewish-Muslim relationship of today has been shaped by a continuous physical, theological, and political overlap over the last 1,400 years. Interactions between Jewish and Muslim cultures began in the 7th century when Islam began spreading throughout the Arabian Peninsula, an area of historical Jewish presence (Abbas 2007). This interaction was preceded by a shared historical religious consciousness and competing claims to Jerusalem, which “converged to set the ground rules by which Jews and Muslim interacted,” instigating an initial “marriage of convenience” between the two (Goldberg 1994, Lassner 2000). This interaction prompted what we now know of as a long history of unrest throughout the Middle Eastern landscape.



13. “State of Israel is Born” article from the Palestine Post, 1948

The modern day Jewish-Muslim conflict began with the declaration of the State of Israel by the United Nations Partition Plan in 1948. While Jews were in agreement to the division of Palestine, Muslim Arabs were not, and many were consequently expelled from their homes (Goldberg 1994, Benevenisti 1995). In retaliation, many Arab countries adopted “discriminatory measures” against Jewish people, resulting in a large Jewish emigration to Israel from throughout the Middle East (Browne 1948). The creation of Israel and the subsequent regional conflict it has created remains a hotly debated topic throughout the world. Many historians point to the Western powers that created and supported Israel throughout the decades of war that followed as the source of the conflict. Other historians maintain the war began as a territorial conflict, which has degenerated in recent times to assume the character of a religious conflict. Regardless of the cause, it is undeniable that the creation of Israel has created a major rift in Jewish-Muslim relations worldwide (Lassner 2000, Holocaust 2009).

International contention between Jews and Muslims came to a head in metro Detroit in 2006. Editor and Publisher Journal reported that the Middle Eastern conflict brought on local debate when Lebanese Muslims and Christians began protesting Israeli attacks while local Jews defended them as a means of protecting Israel from terrorists. Heated debate over these issues throughout Metro Detroit and much of the United States continues today. However, some groups in southeastern Michigan have begun a healing process. A group of Arab and Jewish women in Ann Arbor began The Zeitouna Story in 1995, Zeitouna meaning "Olive Tree" in Arabic. The project is an effort to "inspire and support individuals and groups to become active and effective peacemakers through the learning and practice of dialogue" (Refusing to be Enemies 2007). The group has since established the nonprofit organization, "Refusing to be Enemies," to help reach out to organizations with similar missions to help create a national coalition of peace. This and other similar peace efforts help to set the groundwork for the Cultural Bridges project and the healing process in Oak Park.



14. Zeitouna public promotion

PARALLELS

In spite of historical and ongoing conflict between Judaism and Islam, the two cultures share numerous fundamental beliefs and traditions. The basic structure of both religions, monotheism, is the first and most uniform concept that connects Judaism and Islam. Both religions believe in the ordered nature of the world and are considered Abrahamic; sharing a spiritual tradition with Abraham (Grose 1994). Abraham is of special importance to the Islamic religion as he is the prophet chosen by God to deliver his message, known widely as the Father of the Prophets. Likewise, in Judaism, Abraham is referred to as "Abraham, our Father," and is seen as the first of the three



16. Muslim children collecting food for charity, or *Zakat*, Dearborn Heights, MI



15. Jewish Tzedakah (charity) box

patriarchs of the people of Israel. Judaism and Islam also share many philosophical traditions that teach to live life through God's ethical principles, such as a belief in redemption, seen through several traditions of charity (Grose 1994). For instance, in Islam Sharia (Islamic law) requires giving to charity, also known as *Zakat*, or "alms for the poor" (Adamec 2002; Grose 1994). Similarly, in Judaism a mitzvah, or an act of kindness, is an essential belief derived from the commandments of the Torah.

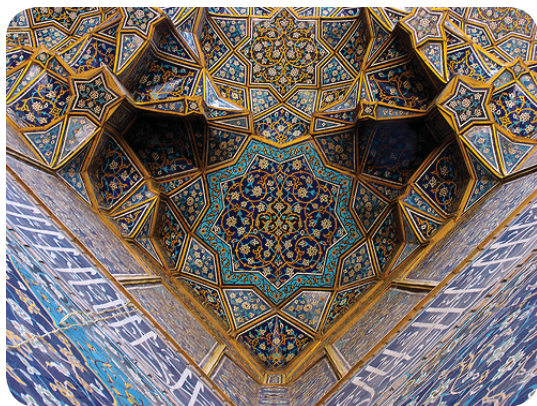
Artistic Expression

In addition to analogous religious and fundamental beliefs, Judaism and Islam also share a unique tradition regarding art, nature, and the garden. Both cultures share a physical representation of spirituality through culturally-derived artistic expression, which can be seen through traditional art forms such as painting, architecture, and calligraphy, but can also be seen through culturally significant representations of the garden.

In Jewish culture art is a reflection of the “Jewish experience” and is most commonly depicted by the idea of memory, or *zakhor* (Plate 2002). Religious studies historian S. Brent Plate explains that architecture, and specifically the Temple, has been at the heart of Jewish tradition with art throughout history. Over time, synagogues became a “conveniently transferable architectural idea for a people in exile” (Plate 2002). After the destruction of the First and Second Temples of Jerusalem in the 1st century, life outside of the “Promised Land” became the norm for Jewish culture (Plate 2002). In the aftermath of this burden, Synagogues became the place where “the memory of the other place and time came to be imbedded within the ritual practices of synagogue architecture” (Plate 2002). In time, Jewish art has become a reflection not only of religion, but also of the complicated history that has shaped today’s Jewish culture. Judaic historian Joseph Gutmann explains:

The history of Jewish art has been a manifestation of the historical processes that Jews have undergone. Because Jewish history, unlike that of other continuous entities, developed and evolved primarily within multiple societies, cultures, and civilizations, it bears the imprimatur of this long and diverse multicultural experience. A critical inquiry into all known artistic remains reveals no isolated, unique thread but, on the contrary, a many-colored thread interwoven into the fabric of Jewish involvement in the larger non-Jewish society.

Architecture is also an important part of Islamic traditions with art, most markedly demonstrated through the mosque which has importance to many sects of Islamic religions and cultures. Art in Islam is also widely seen through many other spiritual and secular objects, including houses,



18. Ceiling art at the Charbagh Theological School Isfahan, Iran



17. The Temple Mount Jerusalem, Israel

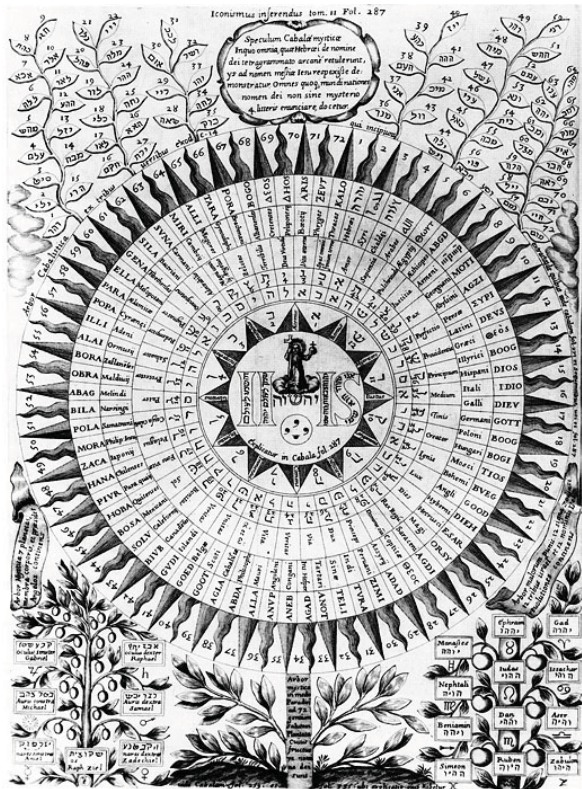
gardens, carpets, and paintings. These expressions of Islamic art are deeply rooted in Islamic history and can be found dating back to the origins of the religion. Generally, Islamic art exhibits two primary themes; rational abstraction and rhythm. Rational abstraction in Islamic art refers to expressing the “significance of timelessness” (Lehrman 1980). Rhythm is created through the repetition of elaborate, decorative patterns, and remains one of the most identifiable symbols of Islamic art (Lehrman 1980). These can be seen extensively in depictions of nature and calligraphy. Common depictions of nature include flowers, foliage, and gardens. Calligraphy is perhaps the most

important form of Islamic art, as it is the sole visual representation of Islamic spiritual teachings. Calligraphy is a method for translating the verbal language of religious texts into “highly visible images,” seen extensively throughout the Qu’ran text (Plate 2002). Iranian Islamic philosopher and scholar, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, explains:

Islamic calligraphy is the visual embodiment of the crystallization of the spiritual realities contained in the Islamic revelation. This calligraphy provides the external dress for the Word of God in the visible world but this art remains wedded to the world of the spirit, for according to the traditional Islamic saying, “Calligraphy is the geometry of the Spirit.” The letters, words, and verses of the Quran are not just elements of a written language but beings and personalities for which the calligraphic form is the physical and visual vessel.



19. Architectural Calligraphy, Taj Mahal Agra, India



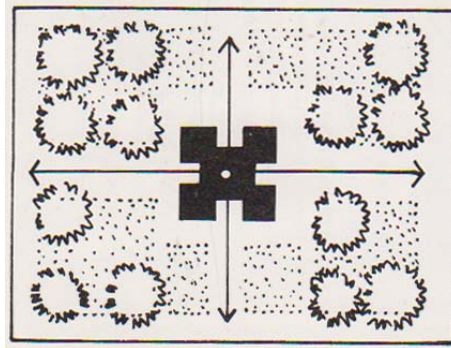
20. Kabbalah illustration
Oedipus Aegyptiacus

Similar to Islam’s strong ties to calligraphy, Kabbala teachings in Judaism give great spiritual meaning to the art of the written word. Kabbala, an esoteric belief in mysticism and divine revelation, teaches that each character in the Hebrew Bible has hidden meanings that are important to spiritual thinking. Gematria, or Hebrew numerology, is one method in Kabbala for interpreting the Torah’s hidden messages through calculating the numerical equivalence of letters which reveal a word from a separate alphabet (Britannica 2009). By going through this process, one can gain insight into the interrelationship between words and ideas.

The Garden

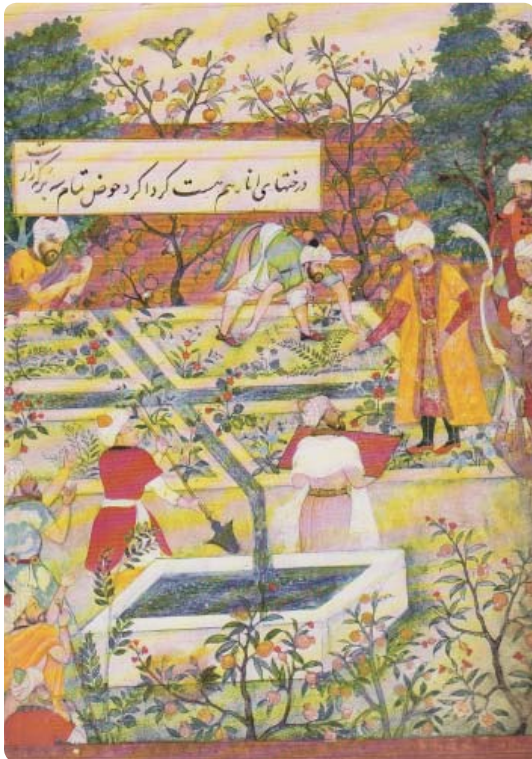
Artistic expression of spirituality in Jewish and Muslim culture is present in a number of capacities. Jewish culture's most prominent expression is through the imagery and physicality of the Synagogue, and Muslims to traditional paintings, pattern work, and calligraphy. One of their shared spiritual expressions is that of the chahar bagh garden. The chahar bagh is known as the paradise garden, and translates directly to mean "four parted garden."

The chahar bagh is divided into four quadrants by the presence of an axial watercourse, and is characterized by a central pavilion adorned with flowers and trees (Larson 2006). The chahar bagh garden is most notably found in the Middle East, Spain, and Europe, although many contemporary interpretations exist worldwide (Larson 2006; Rogers 2001).



21. Diagram of a chahar bagh garden

In Islamic tradition gardens are recognized as a representation of paradise on earth. This thought stems from Persian "pleasure gardens," which have spread throughout much of the world through Islamic practice (Brookes 1987; Larson 2006). These gardens are designed to evoke a sense of delight and create a space for retreat that symbolizes harmony through plants and rational organization. The paradise garden as an art form expresses the relationship between nature, life, and the soul in Islamic religious belief, creating a place for reflection and observation. Islamic garden historian Jonas Lehrman explains:



22. Ancient Muslim painting depicting the chahar bagh garden, *Unknown Artist*

An owner would rarely walk through his garden, but would prefer to sit on cushions and rugs. In his pavilion, he could sit and contemplate for hours. He would observe the trees and flowers, taste the fruit and savour the fragrance; and he would listen to the birdsong, the rustle of the leaves, and the splash of water, while enjoying the garden's shade and cool air in an atmosphere of perfect peace.

Islamic paradise gardens are typically enclosed spaces, often courtyards, reflecting the "inner life of the individual" (Lehrman 1980). The enclosed nature of the garden provides privacy, security, and protection from the arid climates in which paradise gardens originated, thereby creating a cool, shaded environment for fertile gardens to grow. The presence of water represents purity and is often oriented into four watercourses seen reaching the brim of the tank

as a symbol of the overflowing water in paradise. Other features such as terraces and canals are included to meet horticultural needs and provide pleasant sounds, and fruit trees and flowers are common to provide shade, fragrance, and color (Lehrman 1980; Rogers 2001).

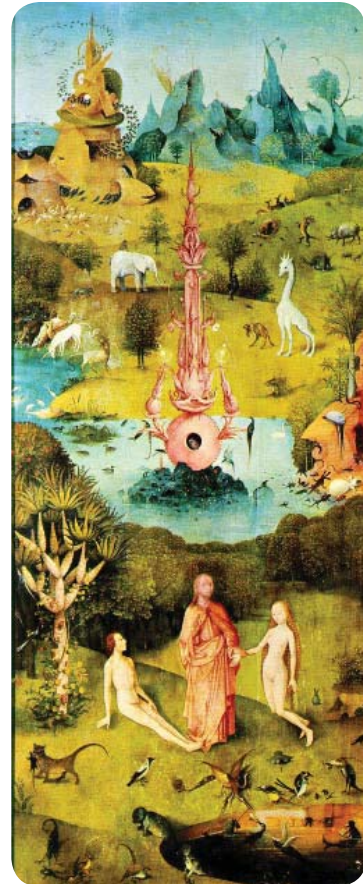
While Judaism has maintained a strong relationship to art throughout history, gardens have not been a significant part of Judaic culture. In fact, Judaism is said to have exhibited an “ambiguous attitude” toward nature and the environment throughout history (Alon-Mozes 2004). Through thousands of years of exile and persecution, Jewish culture has been left without a physical attachment to a geographic area. Since gardens often refer to place and land, this lack of physical attachment has attributed to an absence of recorded garden history. Israeli landscape architecture historian Tal Alon-Mozes explains;

It is true that while the national Jewish memory yearned for the pastoral, agricultural past of the biblical period, gardens were nonetheless missing from the Jewish heritage. Two thousand years of Diaspora distanced the Jews from contact with the land, as most of them were not allowed to own land and had consequently settled in small towns, earning their livings in commerce.

The beginning of the Zionist movement in the late 19th century prompted a transition in Jewish thinking toward adopting a “New Hebrew culture” which included a garden custom based on the Hebrew landscape (Alon-Mozes 2004). Subsequently, gardens and nature became a larger part of the Jewish tradition because they were seen as a representation of “healthy and reformed towns,” something Judaism sought to adopt after a history of exile (Alon-Mozes 2004). The garden became a representation of paradise on earth as depicted by the Garden of Eden, described through Genesis 2:8-10;

Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden away to the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. The Lord God made trees spring from the ground, all trees pleasant to look at and good for food; and in the middle of the garden he set the tree of life and the tree of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

The Garden of Eden is most notably represented through a four parted garden layout; the chahar bagh. The four axial water channels represent the four heads that watered the Garden of Eden, and the presence of water is considered to be a mirror of the soul and of God through its reflection of the four quarters (Larson 2006; Rogers 2001). The symbolism of Judaism’s artistic tradition as a “many-colored thread,” a reflection of a historic connection to a non-Jewish society, is seen through this modern-day establishment of a cultural garden tradition. This thread appears not only to be a representation of a geographic space, but of the Islamic culture that influenced it.



23. Biblical depiction of the Garden of Eden, *Unknown Artist*

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS

A Critical Look at Relevant Case Studies

The parallels and shared traditions between Jews and Muslims provide a solid foundation from which a theoretical merging of these two cultures may grow. Contemporary case studies of place-based, multi-cultural spiritual spaces, and local attempts at uniting disparate cultures to provide context and meaning to the design of a shared physical space helps catalyze this theoretical merging. The following case studies give a brief look at some of the existing models for cross-cultural design throughout the world and locally in Southeastern Michigan.

ISRAELI LANDSCAPES

One of Israel's prominent landscape architects, Shlomo Aronson, is admired worldwide for his place-based design philosophy. Aronson is an important inspiration for Cultural Bridges because of his reputation for basing design on social correctness, ecological sensitivity, and as a reflection of cultural context. Aronson's work is reflective of the cultural context of the place it exists within. Two of Aronson's recent Israeli works; the Suzanne Delal Dance and Theater Center and the Ben Gurion International Airport provide modern interpretations of the chahar bagh garden that juxtapose contemporary society with historic tradition, providing relevant precedence for the Cultural Bridges project.



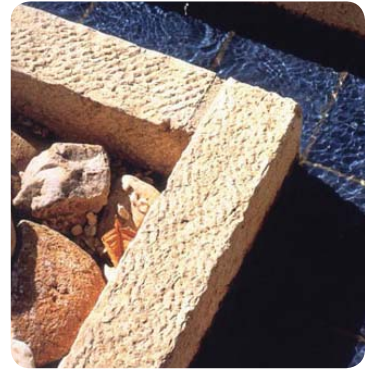
24. Suzanne Delal Dance and Theater Center plaza

SUZANNE DELAL DANCE AND THEATER CENTER

Tel Aviv, Israel, 1989

Shlomo Aronson

The Suzanne Delal Dance and Theater Center plaza is a component of a renovation project of two abandoned schools in Tel Aviv. The plaza serves as a revitalizing gathering space in a historic and neglected neighborhood. The design of the plaza drew from the agricultural context of Tel Aviv, incorporating grape fruit trees that evoke the historic orange groves of the landscape. Trees are arranged in a grid pattern surrounded by square stone water channels that represent the historic irrigation systems of the arid Israeli landscape. Brick patterns on the ground reinforce the axial layout of the plaza, creating a gathering space that reflects the context it sits within, while suggesting a relationship to an important cultural icon, the chahar bagh.



25. Water channel detail, Suzanne Delal Dance and Theater Center



26. Tree and channel detail at the Suzanne Delal Dance and Theater Center

BEN GURION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Lod, Israel, 2004

Shlomo Aronson

The Ben Gurion International Airport landscape is another of Aronson's works that draws on the chahar bagh form in a contemporary context. The design intent was to abstract the natural topography of the land with the historic man-made agricultural development, represented by hardscaped terraces and trees surrounded by water channels. Meanwhile, curvilinear metallic patterns on the ground-plane represent topographical patterns of the Israeli landscape. The design of the Ben Gurion International Airport landscape captures the iconic scenery of the Israeli coastal plains through the presence of pastoral wheat plantings and fruit trees that evoke the historic citrus groves of Lod. This design, like the Suzanne Delal Dance and Theater Center, also gives presence to the site's historic character while referencing the culturally significant chahar bagh garden form.



27. Prairie plantings at the Ben Gurion International Airport



28. The Ben Gurion International Airport plaza



29. Water channel at the Ben Gurion International Airport

ISRAELI LANDSCAPES ANALYSIS

While the overall grid-like appearance and presence of rectilinear water channels in the Suzanne Delal Dance and Theater Center plaza and the Ben Gurion International Airport landscape are suggestive of the chahar bagh garden, neither is an outright replication of the form. Both designs are tied to the history and context of the sites, while incorporating a culturally-significant garden form. The idea of tying this historic cultural symbol to the character and history of the site, part of Shlomo Aronson's celebrated design philosophy, is one of the most successful and inspiring components of these two case studies. This concept of juxtaposing the site's context with cultural iconography through landscape design is a vital lesson learned from these two case studies. These works by Aronson present a successful and meaningful method for giving place-based and culture-based significance to place, a concept from which the Cultural Bridges garden designs were inspired.

MULTI-CULTURAL SPACES

Social action initiatives throughout the world have helped establish a sensitivity and acceptance to diversity in all its capacities. Many of these efforts have been education-based attempts at cultivating racial, social, and religious tolerance, while few have been place-based. Three case studies here present place-based and design-based attempts at connecting disparate cultural and religious groups. The Square of Tolerance, designed by Israeli sculptor Dani Karavan, attempts to bring cultures together through a shared plaza space. Karavan is known for his place-based memorials and monuments reflecting landscape. Two Southeastern Michigan case studies present local precedence for shared cultural spaces: the Solonus Casey Center in Detroit, and Genesis of Ann Arbor.

SQUARE OF TOLERANCE

Paris, France, 1996

Dani Karavan

The Square of Tolerance, a plaza design, is located at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquarters in Paris, France. The work was dedicated to Yitzhak Rabin, an Israeli politician and general who was assassinated during construction of the Square of Tolerance in 1995 by an Israeli radical due to his involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. This gesture was meant to support the ongoing peace process in the Middle East.

The Square of Tolerance was designed to represent the unification of disparate cultural groups. At the center of the plaza is an artificial hill with an olive tree on it – a universal symbol of peace, and a plant with historic significance to many cultures worldwide. Surrounding the tree is a water channel with archeological artifacts representing the different cultures and faiths present in Israel and Palestine throughout history. The channel and artifacts can be seen easily from the offices that overlook the plaza. Across from the hill is a white wall, inscribed in four languages with the UNESCO charter, “just as war is born in the mind of man, so must the mind build a fortress of peace.”



30. The Square of Tolerance



31. Birds-eye, view of the Square of Tolerance



32. The Square of Tolerance wall and olive tree

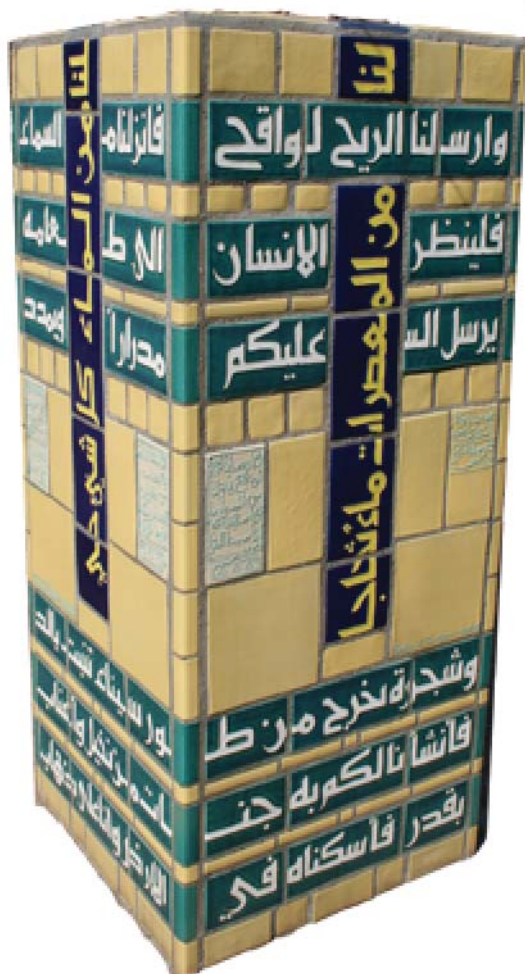
Local Precedence

CREATION GARDEN

Detroit, MI, 2002

The Solonus Casey Center was established as a memorial to Father Solanus Casey, a priest and social justice activist who dedicated 20 years of his life to the service of the people of Detroit. Although a Catholic sanctuary, the Solanus Casey Center was created as a place of pilgrimage, healing, reconciliation, and peace for people of all religious backgrounds. In the entrance to the Solonus Casey Center is a memorial to the seven hallmarks of God's generosity and unending care, called the Creation Garden. Seven artists from different cultural and religious backgrounds were commissioned to create a sculpture reflecting each of the hallmarks. The seven hallmarks are: Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Fire, Brother Wind, Sister Water, Sister Earth, and Sister Bodily Death, each reflecting the distinct style and interpretation of the artist.

The Sister Water sculpture was created by Arabic-Islamic art historian and artist Hasim Al-Tawil, who teaches at the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus. His piece, a rectangular pillar tiled with Islamic calligraphy, is adorned with verses from the Qu'ran where water is celebrated. One such verse called Al-Mumenoon (the Believers) says:



And We send down water from the sky according to (due) measure, and We cause it to soak in the soil; and We certainly are able to drain it off (with ease). With it We grow for you gardens of date-palms and vines: in them have ye abundant fruits: and of them ye eat (and have enjoyment),- Also a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil, and relish for those who use it for food.

The Creation Garden, although widely accessible to many people, seems to attract mostly Catholic visitors due to its location on the Solonus Casey Center campus. Nevertheless, the Creation Garden presents an important local attempt at creating a shared cultural and religious space in Detroit.

33. Sister Water sculpture, Solonus Casey



34. The Creation Garden



35. Sister Water Sculpture, Artist Hasim Al-Tawil with M'Lis

GENESIS OF ANN ARBOR

Ann Arbor, MI

Genesis of Ann Arbor represents the shared worship space between St. Clare's Episcopal Church and Temple Beth Emeth, a reform Jewish congregation. Genesis is the first book of the Bible used by Jews and Christians, a fitting name for an entity whose mission is to create "singular place in a plural world." St. Clare's began in 1953 when a small group of Episcopalians formed a parish community in Ann Arbor. They eventually built a small sanctuary and accumulated a small following. In 1966, a Reform Jewish community, Temple Beth Emeth, formed in Ann Arbor area, but needed a place to worship. In 1970, the two agreed to share a building, and Temple Beth Emeth began renting the sanctuary half of the week.

After 20 years of sharing the worship space, the congregation had grown significantly, and both identified a need for a larger space. The two wanted to continue to share a space, stating the relationship between them was a "vital expression of our personal and collective ministry." In the new sanctuary space today there are many movable components that help ease the transition between the distinctly different worship activities. One such component is a set of large, wooden doors hung behind the altar. On Fridays and Saturdays, these doors open to reveal two elaborately decorated scrolls of the Torah, while on Sundays the doors are closed to create a large brass cross. The doors can also be oriented so that they are blank, in an effort to remain non-denominational during the week.



36. Tile wall art, Genesis of Ann Arbor

MULTI-CULTURAL SPACES ANALYSIS

The preceding case studies; the Square of Tolerance, the Solanus Casey Center Creation Garden, and Genesis of Ann Arbor present three very different precedents for the Cultural Bridges garden designs. The Square of Tolerance has national importance as a symbol of unity and peace through a physical space in the backyard of an international peace organization. The Creation Garden provides a similar precedent for bringing local artists and visitors from different cultural groups together through artistic expression. Genesis of Ann Arbor represents a successful integration of two faiths in a shared space in Southeastern Michigan. Given the location of the Cultural Bridges project on public land in a Jewish community, the public nature of the Creation Garden and Genesis of Ann Arbor on private, religious space serves as important precedents for inviting and engaging the larger community.



37. Cross, front of cases, Genesis of Ann Arbor Sanctuary



38. Torah, inside of cases, Genesis of Ann Arbor Sanctuary



39. Front of building, Genesis of Ann Arbor

SUMMARY

These precedents for place-based, multi-cultural spaces, and local efforts to unite conflicting cultures in Southeastern Michigan lay the groundwork for the Cultural Bridges project in Oak Park, MI. The careful examination of the history of conflict, shared religious traditions, and interconnected ethics related to art, nature, and the garden provide inspiration for the content, program, and concept of the Cultural Bridges garden designs. Specifically, Shlomo Aronson's place-based designs using form, material, and ecology that draw on the site's history serve as important inspiration for studying local culture and ecology. Aronson's modern interpretations of historic garden traditions, such as the chahar bagh garden, influenced the Cultural Bridges gardens by evoking – not replicating – cultural traditions. Dani Karavan's Square of Tolerance provides important insight into promoting peace through design. Karavan's distinctive effort to engage many cultures through language and the universal symbolism of the olive tree is an important precedent for Cultural Bridges. Precedents in Southeastern Michigan – the Genesis of Ann Arbor and the Solonus Casey Center – help set the stage for new multi-faith spaces grounded by an existing interest in embracing multiculturalism. These principles and practices will contribute to an overall sustainable design for Cultural Bridges by creating a space that is valued and invested in by the community, reflecting the diversity of people and the land.



40. Cultural Bridges inspiration montage

1.3 PLANTS AS RESEARCH CULTURE

I.3 / RESEARCH

cultural relevance + ecological sustainability

The conceptual intent of Cultural Bridges is the integration of cultural relevance and ecological sustainability through garden design. Workshops and interviews with members of the Islamic and Jewish faith have provided contemporary philosophy on sustainability and nature; site analysis and landscape ecology theories have informed proposed sustainable site practices that can be applied to the site framework. Ethnobotanical studies of how Muslims and Jews reference plants in religious and vernacular texts have informed our plant palette.

LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY, RELIGIOUS ETHICS AND LOVE POEMS

In *Dreaming Gardens*, Kenneth Helphand describes how a garden can become a conversation between a people and that place, one that is grounded in a specific place and time (Helphand 2002). While this is true, the success of Cultural Bridges lies in whether it can speak to multiple human and ecological histories; Cultural Bridges needs to address multiple cultural and landscape histories. Due to a complicated socio-political history Jews and Muslims are often depicted as diametrically opposed with little shared history emphasized. In contrast to this what we found were overlapping garden design techniques, shared ancestral plant uses and similar approaches to caring for the world and its people. Our design challenge was how to highlight and combine these shared cultural histories with a Michigan landscape that had its own hidden history.

One design approach to integrating cultural relevance with principals of landscape ecology is to use plants which are reflective of the local community and that play a role in improving the ecological systems of the site and region (Nassauer 1997). Botanic gardens around the world are using plants with local cultural relevance as a way to educate visitors about plants, conservation and sustainability. These gardens are playing important roles in preserving cultural identity and biodiversity (Maunder 2008, Jones and Hoversten 2004). One example is the Queens Botanic Garden in Flushing, NY which has had success in visitor outreach by designing gardens, like the Circle Garden, that reflect the cultural diversity of the Korean immigrant community and showcase sustainable planting techniques like composting, raingardens and constructed wetlands (Maunder 2008, Jones and Hoversten 2004). While these gardens display anthropologically relevant plantings and sustainable practices, like bioswales, at one site, they don't combine them. Each still stands as a separate garden space. Cultural Bridges attempts to use culturally appropriate plantings that also play an ecological role in the landscape.



41. Queens Botanic Gardens Circle Garden



42. Queens Botanic Gardens Bioswale

To integrate these two concepts we explored Islamic and Jewish religious texts, children’s stories, and contemporary theological views on sustainability. Religious texts are woven with images of Middle Eastern landscapes, the gardens of paradise, agricultural fields and gardens of the home. Muslims and Jews have recorded many shared plant species in these writings – vegetables, flowers, herbs – but their recorded uses differ. Both cultures place a special significance on trees which provide food and lumber, but also stand as markers of sacred sites for prayer. Many of these Middle Eastern species come from plants families that are ecologically appropriate to the Michigan ecosystem. A shared ethic of environmental stewardship and a responsibility toward future generations, found in religious texts and contemporary essays, can be could be interpreted to suggest the use of sustainable site practices. The following sections highlight the cultural connections of Muslims and Jews to landscape and specific plants species.

Middle Eastern Landscape Influences on Plant Choices

Landscapes described in the Qu’ran and the Hebrew Bible are highly varied in climate and growing conditions, such as moisture and soil type. This Middle Eastern ecology includes three major vegetations zones: a moist Mediterranean area from which grapes and olives have evolved, a region of Irano-Turranian flora where succulents abound, and the Sahel domain where plants are represented by the acacia species (Musselman 2007). Whether the plants thrived in Mediterranean moisture or in the dry, saline-infused soil types found in these areas, it is certain that these plants would not grow easily in the clay-filled soils and changing climate of southeastern Michigan. The Warsaw Biblical Garden in Warsaw, Illinois uses plants from biblical texts to showcase plant species named in the Christian Bible that can be grown in northern Illinois climate (Warsaw Biblical Garden 2006). In a similar approach we have looked to religious textual references for inspiration, but are choosing plants native to the Michigan bio-region that might provide an ecological service such as increasing habitat, mitigating urban heat island effect or gathering particulate matter from the nearby highway. When native species are not appropriate for the garden designs, local, non-invasive cultivars will be used to create the Cultural Bridges planting palette.



43. Mediterranean Region



44. Irano-Turranian Region



45. Sahael / Desert Region

Garden Vegetables, Flowering Plants, Herbs and Spices

Given the agrarian nature of the early Middle Eastern cultures, it is not surprising that the plants most mentioned in the Qu'ran and the Hebrew Bible are those that provide food, including: fruiting trees, grains, herbs and spices (Westenholz 1998, Musselman 2007). (See Table 1 and Plant Table in Appendix) Many of these are called out by name, but neither the Qu'ran or Bible list many flowering plants by name. (Musselman 2007, Farooqi 2000).

PLANT TYPE	PLANT NAME
Fruiting Trees	Fig, olive, date palm, pomegranate, mulberry, walnut, almond
Fruits	Grapes, quince, apples, apricots, lemon, banana
Vegetables	Onion, cucumber, lentil, leeks, ,melon, bean
Herbs / Spices	Mint, sweet basil, rue, garlic, ginger, mustard, cumin dill, cumin, cinnamon
Grains	Wheat, barley, millet

46. Abridged List of Agricultural Plants Listed in Hebrew Bible and Qu'ran

In the Talmud, flowers are described for their smell, not their visual beauty (Virtual Jewish Library 2009). In the Hebrew Bible only two flowers are mentioned by name; the Lily of the Valley and the Rose of Sharon. When flowering landscapes are described in Jewish texts it is in the context of joy, love and celebration. For instance, the Song of Solomon is filled with comparisons that liken beauty to nature, gentleness to flowers, and the sweet taste of fruit to love:

I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys. As the Lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

For Muslims, this kind of sensuous imagery is more often found in vernacular writings, like those of the Sufi poet Rumi, whose love poems are infused with allegorical references to nature; "Every tree and plant in the meadow seemed to be dancing, those which average eyes would see as fixed and still." When discussing the plants of the Qu'ran, Farooqi lists only one flower; the rose, which grew throughout the Arabian Peninsula. He notes that the scent of roses is so often referred to in religious traditions because the Prophet was said to have "had a great liking for aromas" (Farooqi 2000).

While the names of these plants may be familiar, their species are often unknown or contested. For instance, the rose, the Lily of the valley and the Rose of Sharon depicted in the Song of Solomon are probably not the low growing lily-of-the-valley and cultivated rose we think of today. Roses of this period were wild and not strong in scent and so it is currently believed that these rose references may actually be describing a poppy (Musselman 2007). Another example of this is the cucumber mentioned in Bible and Qu'ran. It is unlikely that this is the domesticated cucumber of US culture, but is more likely akin to a melon (Musselman 2007, Farooqi 2000). Even so, we can draw on the abundant imagery of the flowers blooming in paradise, of spring in the Middle East and love allegory to create a plant palette appropriate to the Michigan climate.

Trees: Providing Sustenance + Marking Holy Sites

Trees hold a special symbolic significance in the writing of both Judaic and Islamic cultures. The Hebrew Bible and the Qu'ran are filled with descriptions of fruiting trees like the date, palm, olive fig, and pomegranate, while other fruiting trees like citrus, mulberry, walnut and almond are

described in parables and the Song of Solomon. Trees like the oak, cypress, carob, olive and fig are associated with strength, immortality and community longevity (Helphand 2002). While there is some discrepancy in assigning specific species to these trees, in general they refer to trees that have multiple uses for producing food, wood or flowers. Many have North American relatives with similar physical characteristics including spreading or upright form, the ability to bear fruit and to flower including representatives of the genera *Malus*, *Quercus*, *Prunus*, *Morus* and *Pinus*.

The Tree of Life, a symbol for immortality, appears in Islamic and Jewish art and literature appearing as early as the 2nd millennium BCE. While scholars disagree on the species allocated to the Tree of Life, proposing both the fig and pomegranate, it is generally agreed to be a fruiting one (Westenholz 1998). For Jews, the 7-9 branched menorah used in Chanukah celebrations and in Temples is a “stylized” Tree of Life (Westenholz 1998). In addition to the Tree of Life, references to the Tree of Temptation, the Forbidden Tree or the Tree of Evil appear in both cultures as a reference to the fall of mankind from God’s grace. It is supposed that the Tree of Evil might be the lemon, apricot or again the fig tree, but the most common suggestion for the tree is the apple (Farooqi 2000).

Again, the agrarian origins of these two cultures are revealed via rituals that involve trees (Westenholz 1998). In neither religion are trees themselves considered sacred, but act as markers for holy sites in the Middle East, or a primary symbol of a religious holiday. The tradition of saying a prayer by a tree is known to Muslim and Jews alike but while this is an ancient ritual for Muslims, for Jews it seems to have evolved in the last century (Dafni 2002). Common prayer practices for Muslims worshipping at trees include lighting candles in the crook of the tree branches, tying of strips of cloth or even plastic to tree branches, and hammering nails in to the bark of the tree. Muslim women in particular are known to pray for fertility at sacred trees leaving wide bands of cloth tied to the branches. In this case, the cloth strips are more than a gift; they are considered a channel connecting the worshipper to the worshipped (Dafni 2007). In Jewish religious ceremonies, trees are symbols of renewal, spring and the future. Tu B’Svat, the Jewish holiday of the New Year of the Trees, coincides with the flowering of wild almond trees across Israel. This holiday also has a connection to the concept of the Tree of Life as the day that “marks the refructification of the earthly Tree though the flow of the divine Tree” (Westenholz 1998). Contemporary Israeli Jews often commemorate Tu B’Svat by planting trees, similar to the US custom of Arbor Day plantings.



47. Lily of the Valley, Michigan



48. Rose of Sharon, Michigan



49. Flowering Almond Grove, Israel



50. Pomegranate Tree / Tree of Life

A Shared Ethic of Stewardship and Sustainability

Similar to the many shared plant species, cultural tenets and religious laws from both cultures are embedded with the concept that nature is sacred and requires human stewardship. Contemporary theologians and leaders from both religions are reinterpreting historic religious texts to address current issues of sustainability and environmental health (Martin Interview 2009, MSA Workshop 2009, Canefei Nesharim 2009, Al-Tawil Interview 2009). Descriptions of paradise, orchards, flowering plants, and flowing water often come with a mandate for care. For instance Rabbi Akiva Wolff, former director of the Center for Judaism and Environment, explains that the Midrash, an interpretation of Jewish law, has long espoused the careful use of the earth's resources:

When G-d created the first man he took him and showed him all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him, "See my works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are. And everything that I created, I created it for you. Be careful not to spoil or destroy my world – for if you do, there will be nobody after you to repair it.

Rabbi Nathan, Assistant Director of the University of Michigan Hillel, considers his efforts to compost and to ride his bike instead of a car a mitzvah – his responsibility toward the earth (Martin Interview 2009).

In the Qu'ran where paradise is described as a place where "trees will spread their shade [...] and fruits will hang in clusters" we find the admonishment:

It is He who produceth Gardens, with trellises and without, and dates and tillth with produce of all kinds, and olive and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety): Eat of their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered. But waste not by excess: for God loveth not the wasters.

In the Qu'ran Sura 15:19 we find, "And the earth We have spread out like a carpet; set thereon mountains firm and immobile; and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance." Contemporary Muslim environmentalists interpret this as a description of ecological balance for which mankind is responsible (Hope and Young 1994). At the Cultural Bridges workshop with the University of Michigan Muslim Students Association, students were also in agreement about this concept stating, "God had given humans great resources in nature and it was our responsibility to care for them (MSA Workshop 2009)." This interpretation was reflected at the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago Muslim first Action Day during which 450 American-Muslims from the the Chicago region lobbied for behalf of the Climate Action & Clean Energy Investment (Faith in Place 2009).

Caring for Future Generations

Another overlapping tenet of sustainability was that of caring for the community by caring for the land. The Hadith, which relates the reported teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, states; "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows a field and men and beasts and birds eat from it, all of it is charity on his part." In Islamic culture there is the requirement of *Zakat* which is a tithing for the needy and an effort to create a just society (Al-Tawil Interview 2009). A similar concept is found in Judaism, in the concept of *tzedakah*, meaning riotousness or fairness, is illustrated in Leviticus 19:1-32;

And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard: you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God.

These edicts and teachings are woven the idea that care for land is part of sustaining a community. These concepts of care can be translated through plants species and sustainable practices. For instance, plant species appropriate to the Michigan climate could be used to exemplify these concepts of paradise, *tzadakah* and *Zakat* by including fruiting trees like the apple, quince, or cherry, as well as grape vines and native grasses. Species in the *Malus*, *Prunus* and *Vitis* genera include cultivated heritage species that could provide local food for humans as well as natives that that provide habitat and food for wildlife into the winter months. Native grasses like sea oats or little blue stem could represent wheat or barley, which could also provide wildlife habitat and increase rainwater infiltration.



51. Quince



52. Wild Grape



53. Side Oats Gamma

Finding Common Ground through Resource Protection

As a way of teaching youth about environmental stewardship, Jewish and Muslim parables use tree imagery as to teach conservation and the concept of providing for future generations. The North American Federation of Temple Youth shares a parable from the Talmud which tells the story of the legendary Choni HaMa'aga.

As Choni walks along a road he finds a man planting a carob tree. Choni asked him: "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?" "Seventy years," replied the man. Choni then asked: "Are you so healthy a man that you expect to live that length of time and eat its fruit?" The man answered: "I found a fruitful world because my ancestors planted it for me. Likewise, I have planted for my children".

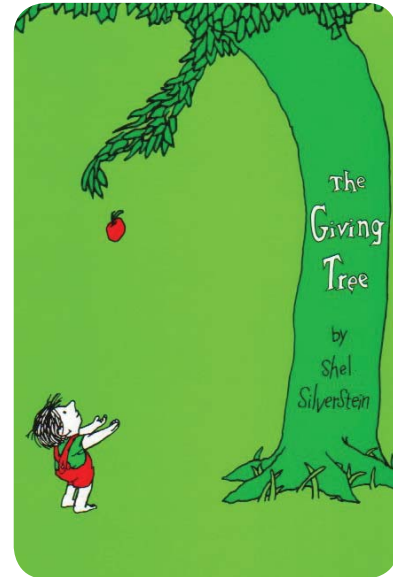
Contemporary children's writer Shel Silverstein describes man's relationship to nature in *The Giving Tree* as he tells the story of a tree that gives all it has – branches, fruit, wood, stump – for the boy she loves. Likewise, Arafat El Ashi, Former Director of the Muslim World League in Canada, states that in Islam, "It [is] incumbent on every Muslim to contribute his/her share in improving greenery, "Muslims should be active in growing more trees for the benefit of all people" (EarthIsland 2002).

In addition to parables and poetry, there are also biblical rules that protect trees as resources in times of war as illustrated by Deuteronomy 20:19-20:

When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. [...] Only trees that you know to not yield food may be destroyed.

The protection of trees during war time is found in the Hadith as well, as El Ashi explains; "Even during battle, Muslims are required to avoid cutting trees that are useful to people" (El Ashi 2002). In his studies of sacred trees in Palestine, Lissovsky noted that sacred trees often have shared history between cultures, particularly Jews and Muslims, as demonstrated by the Tomb of the Prophet Jonah which is sacred to Jews and Muslim alike. Additionally, Lissovsky describes that even when the site of a sacred tree does not have a shared religious figure, it is still respected by both cultures. For instance, there are "Arab villages of Sakhnin and Arraba where Jewish sacred tree sites are preserved by local inhabitants. Similarly, the 'Seven Oaks' a Muslim sacred grove in the Huleh Valley, has survived untouched in the midst of Jewish cultivated land" (Lissovsky 2000). Lissovsky refers to this phenomenon as a "cultural landscape reservation."

The protection of sacred space is particularly poignant given the ongoing struggles for homeland and land rights in Israel and Palestine, and offers insight into shared cultural and religious space that ultimately helps preserve the landscape. For the Cultural Bridges project, these stories provide another example of communal public place where Muslims and Jews have a common history and a mutual need for preservation of landscape and home.



54. *The Giving Tree*, Shel Silverstein



55. Alumot Jewish Community Garden, Philadelphia, PA



56. Muslim Women Planting Trees, Indonesia

Plants Provide a Common Language

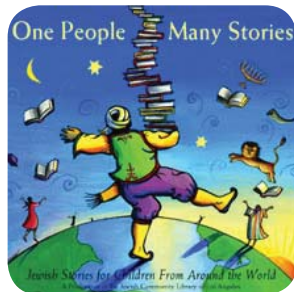
These communal religious spaces, shared cultural uses of plant species, mutual use of the tree as symbol of life and religious ceremonies, and shared ethic of environmental responsibility provide historic and contemporary precedence for the potential for a shared garden space for the Jews and Muslims of Oak Park. Drawing from these symbols and traditions, Cultural Bridges illustrates multiple layers of dialogue between the landscape and the community using it. In these designs plants provide a common language to describe the past, present and futures of local residents. Throughout the framework plant choices interpret traditional ethnobotanical uses of food plants, similar poetic references to flowers and fruiting trees and shared religious philosophies on charity and environmental stewardship. As seen through many garden memoirs, plants can speak to a person of their past or provide a sense of hope in the future. Through their use, color, smell and taste these plants may remind community members of family traditions creating a sense of comfort and home away from home.

In addition to representing Islamic and Jewish culture, chosen plant species help illuminate the history of the site itself and help restore its ecological health. The City of Oak Park was once an oak savannah with a lowland swamp. The lowland was drained for farming and eventual settlement became part of suburban Detroit. Native grasses planted in the framework remember the site's past as both an oak savannah ecosystem and Midwestern farmland. Hardy, drought tolerant native grasses replace turf, and fruiting trees provide sustenance and habitat for birds and small mammals, reflecting the tenet of stewardship and charity towards those beings in need of home and food. Additionally they provide an ecologically sound representation of the barley and grains commonly referenced throughout the Qu'ran and Hebrew Bible. Native and cultivated canopy and ornamental trees play multiple roles on the site. They improve site ecology by stabilizing soil, increasing water infiltration, and increasing bird and small mammal habitat. Furthermore these trees exemplify cultural uses: cedars represent building material and flowering crabapples symbolize orchards found in the Middle Eastern landscape and religious texts. North American members of the oak family represent the Middle Eastern oaks that often identify at a sacred site for prayer.

Ethnobotanical plant choices communicate both distinct and shared cultural references. Carefully placed native plantings and low impact design techniques can communicate what a future, more sustainable landscape might resemble. Using plants species that have shared cultural significance to these two groups is a small step toward recognizing a shared landscape history and perhaps a distinct, but common future.



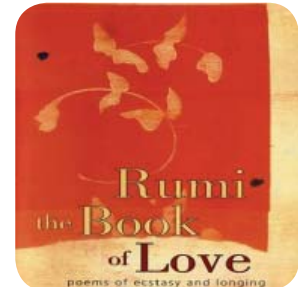
57. The Torah



58. Jewish Children's Stories



59. The Quran



60. Sufi Poetry

1.4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

RESEARCH

I.3 / RESEARCH participatory process

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The phrase participatory design has come to imply an array of community engagement methods. These methods fall on a spectrum that ranges from gathering information from a community to a process that is transformative in nature, engaging community members in the design process and empowering them to make decisions. Landscape architects must ensure the participatory method they choose is appropriate to the site scale, addresses marginalized groups, and considers how gathered information will be integrated into the design (Juarez and Brown 2008). One of our primary goals for Cultural Bridges was to use participatory design as an integral part of our creative design process. In order to find a participatory method that was relevant to the site and the project, we explored a variety of community engagement processes. Many of the examples we found were programmatic in nature -- activities where participants were asked to list the needs of their community or where participants were given an opportunity to design spaces using a preset group of programmatic elements (Hester 2006; Crewe 2001; Juarez and Brown 2008). However, this type of process would not be effective for our project. We were looking for a process that would allow us to represent the past, present, and future of both the Jewish and Muslim communities in Oak Park with sensitivity and authenticity. This process would provide inspiration for the designs, while not asking the participants to create the design. We were looking for a window into their cultures that could inform and give meaning to the Cultural Bridges gardens.



61. Collage and Story Telling Workshop with University of Michigan's Muslim Student Association

Given the sensitivity of the relationship between these communities and the intimate scale of our site, we needed to ask questions that moved beyond the program of the design. Therefore we looked to theories and processes of landscape design that incorporated social justice as part of the participatory process. In *The Power of Place*, Yale Professor of Architecture and Urban Studies, Dolores Hayden discusses how engaging the public in the design of an open green space like a park or garden, can give voice to histories that might otherwise be lost in a design not grounded in the local culture of place (Hayden 1996). University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources Assistant Professor Beth Diamond recommends the layering of multiple histories throughout a site in order to achieve a rich reflection of complicated, intertwined landscape histories (Diamond 2007-8). Drawing from these concepts, we decided to approach community participation in two ways. The first was through community workshops which would engage members of the Jewish and Muslim communities in a conversation about cultural identity and religious philosophies towards nature. We designed a template for a community workshop in which members of each community would meet together to share their religious and cultural identities through story telling and art making. The workshop goals were to engage community members in the design process of a new shared garden space by gathering symbols and images that were of importance to the community members to use as design inspiration, and to assist the community in their quest to learn more about each other as distinct religious groups that share a public space. During the workshops, participants would be asked to create a small art collage depicting a place that resonated with them spiritually and then to answer a series of questions about their religion's relationship to nature and sustainability. As a supplement to our research, these workshops were intended to give us contemporary perspectives on Muslim and Jewish life in the United States. When holding multiple workshops turned out to be unfeasible, we added a second approach and began personal interviews. As Juarez and Brown discuss, interviews are time consuming but can provide subtle and detailed information about a community that might not be shared through larger venues; interviews would allow us to have in-depth conversations with community members about their religious histories and their philosophies on sustainability.

THE PROCESS

By January of 2009 we were no longer working directly with Temple Emanu-El and had not found another Oak Park community group with which to collaborate. We had decided to focus our design on Victoria Park and the Church Street streetscape and while we had found individuals interested in the project, we had been unable to find a local group willing to commit to being involved. We knew that in order to gather the information we desired for our project we would need to engage members of the Jewish and Muslim communities outside of Oak Park. This decision changed our focus on community participation by Oak Park residents, to that of participation by religious adherents from Jewish and Muslim backgrounds as a case study in cultural participatory design. We decided to approach two University of Michigan student organizations, the Muslim Students Association (MSA) and Hillel, a Jewish student organization, to participate in workshops. Our initial outreach to both groups elicited invitations to share our project at an MSA Executive Board Meeting and at Hillel's Friday Shabbat meal following services.

About MSA + Hillel

MSA's mission is to “work for the betterment of the Muslim and Non-Muslim community on campus through community service, education and social activities,” which we felt was a perfect match to our project.

Hillel, which “serves as an umbrella organization for more than 45 student groups and programs, expressing a diverse spectrum of approaches to Jewish life combining religious, cultural and political, traditional and alternative”.

The MSA Executive Board meeting was attended by approximately 16 students. During the meeting we gave a brief overview of the project and answered questions regarding the workshops. Many wondered more about the specifics of the project, why we had chosen it and whether the Temple was interested in the Muslim perspective. Others asked questions more specifically about the workshops; did they need to have gardening knowledge to participate, and were Jewish students interested as well? Some also gave suggestions about people to contact, including Rabbi Nathan Martin, who was organizing the Alternative Spring Break (ASB) program for Jewish and Muslim students.

CULTURAL BRIDGES

Cultivating Conversations Through Garden Design



Help Inspire a Cross-Cultural Garden Design!

ABOUT:

Cultural Bridges is a park and garden design that will bridge a Muslim and Jewish neighborhood in Oak Park, Michigan.

Would you be willing to **share your perspectives** on Islamic culture, spirituality, and environmental stewardship to help inspire the design of the new site? If so, we hope you will join us for an upcoming workshop where Muslim and Jewish students will share their cultural backgrounds through art making and storytelling.

CONTACT:

If you are interested in collaborating on this project, or have further questions, please contact us!

M'Lis Bartlett: mlis@umich.edu, 734-474-2723

Jenna Jones: jjnsre@umich.edu, 612-799-3599

62. Workshop Invitation

Rabbi Nathan was already our contact at Hillel and had arranged for us to meet with the student leaders of Hillel's environmental and art committees during Shabbat. During our visit, we attended a Reform service with the theme of nature and renewal. As it turned out, our visit happened to coincide with T'Shvat, the Jewish Holiday that celebrates the New Year of the Trees and also occurs during the flowering season of almond trees in Israel (Wolff 2008). After services, Shabbat prayers were said, dinner was served, and we made a brief announcement to a room of over 200 talkative students and community members. Out of respect for the day of worship we were asked to keep our announcement short, but were welcomed to hand out flyers about the workshop and answer questions throughout the meal. During dinner we met with students leaders who were involved in the "Greening of Hillel" and answered some challenging questions about the basic

premise of our project. One student approached us saying that the Hasidic community was everywhere in Oak Park and there was no Muslim presence there. He also stated that the Jewish community in Oak Park would have no interest in such a project. We later confirmed our initial information about the religious diversity of the neighborhood through Oak Park's Ethnic Advisory Commission, which verified the presence of a small Muslim community. We found the student's comment that Oak Park Jews would be uninterested in the project to be unfounded, but we were sensitive to the fact that there were long standing political and personal conflicts that would make the idea of a shared space



63. University of Michigan Hillel building

difficult for some community members to embrace. For the most part, other Hillel members were enthusiastic and asked questions similar to those of the Muslim students; did they need to know how to garden to participate, and were the Muslim students interested in meeting together?

With expressed interest from both student groups, we began arranging a shared workshop. It was our goal to have the groups meet together to use the design process as a way for participants to share and educate others about their religious and spiritual connections to the environment. Unfortunately, due to academic calendars, social events, and religious holidays, we were unable to find a mutually agreeable date for a meeting. Given time constraints, we arranged our first workshop with the MSA students on March 9th, 2009.

Throughout the spring we worked with two contacts at Hillel to arrange a workshop with Jewish students, but in the end we could not get a commitment from them. While this was disappointing, we were able to conduct interviews with members of the Jewish community in Oak Park and on the University of Michigan campus. These interviews provided in-depth, free flowing conversations that gave us the opportunity to ask deeper and more specific questions than could have been accomplished in the short time frame of the workshops.

In addition to interviews with Jewish men and women, we also had the opportunity to interview a Muslim woman who could not make the workshop but wanted to participate in the project. In conjunction with the MSA workshop the interviews contributed significantly to cultural and religious themes that influenced the design of Cultural Bridges.

WORKSHOPS

The workshops were organized to use art making as a way to build safety for personal reflections and an exchange of philosophies. Knowing the long standing political differences between these groups, we did not want participants to enter into protracted argument about international politics that deterred from a sharing of personal experiences. We theorized that making collages would set participants at ease allowing for open sharing of ideas. We wanted to keep the focus on a personal sense of place, identity and one's relationship to the natural world. In the end we did not get to test this theory with a mixed group of participants. For the individual workshop this idea held true; the collage making created a light hearted mood of story telling. The following outline represents the original vision for the format, content, and timing for the workshops.



64. M'Lis Bartlett facilitating collage making

MSA WORKSHOP

Collage making:

The group will be asked ahead of time to bring with them photos, images, poems, or ideas that respond to one of two questions they receive. Participants will be provided with additional materials for collage making, and will be given 25 minutes to create a collage that responds to one of the following questions:

- *Depict a place that has spiritual meaning to you or resonates with being Muslim.*
- *Tell a story that describes your identity as Muslim.*

After the collages are complete, each participant will be asked to introduce themselves to the group using the artwork they have just created. This process not only provides us with design inspiration, but allows students to share their stories with one another and get to know members from another faith.

Story telling:

The group will be split up into two groups of mixed faiths. In these groups, each participant will be asked to answer each of the following questions:

- *How has your religion influenced your relationship with nature or your perspective on sustainable society?*
- *What is something that is difficult or challenging about being Muslim?*

Closing:

The group will gather together once again for a few closing comments. Facilitators will wrap up, and participants will be invited to attend the final presentation of the design in April. Participants will also be asked to fill out a brief evaluation of the workshop as a way to assess the usefulness of the workshop to the participant.

Throughout the meeting, we will photograph and audio record the sessions to capture the participatory process and the stories being told. The recordings will be transcribed for the designers to use during the design process, and the photographs will be utilized in the write up of the workshop. Information regarding the identification of the participants will be kept in a locked office only be accessible to the research team, and recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

Workshop Timeline:

- **Welcome/Introductions** 7:00-7:20 pm
Allow 10 minutes for settling in, 10 minutes for a brief introduction.
- **Collage making** 7:20-8:05 pm
Allow 25 minutes for collage making, 20 minutes for introductions/presentation of collages.
- **Story telling** 8:05-8:45 pm
Each participant will be given two minutes per question (for two questions), with 10 participants in each group, total time for questions will be 40 minutes.
- **Closing and evaluation** 10:45-9:00 pm

WORKSHOP NARRATIVE

On Monday, March 9th 2009, we held our first Cultural Bridges Workshop with the University of Michigan's Muslim Students Association (MSA). We arrived at the Michigan League, the location of the weekly MSA meeting, a little before 7:00 pm we set up our presentation and the collage making supplies. At 7:10 pm, with no one but us in the room, we were a little worried that the workshop wasn't going to happen. Then our first two participants, Al Alsaïdy and Asma Khan walked in. Alsaïdy went straight to the art table, saying with glee "It's like elementary school!" Khan looked around and immediately started texting her friends. When finished she explained that it was Prophet Mohammed's birthday and many students were fasting but would be coming soon. She also explained that they would need a break in the workshop to say evening prayers. By 7:20 pm, six students; four male and two female had joined the workshop.

We opened the workshop with an informal powerpoint presentation describing the historic connections between Jewish and Muslim garden design and showing plants found in religious texts of both communities. Participants were then asked to create their own collage depicting a place in which they felt spiritual or a place that resonated with their experience of being a Muslim. We showed collages we had made that depicted our own ethnic and cultural identities as an example to the students. We provided a pile of magazines, construction paper, cloth, dried flowers and other craft supplies to choose from; the old National Geographic magazines were the immediate supply of choice. One of the students discovered a table sized map of the Middle East and spread it out on the table, pointing to his family's homeland and there began some light hearted banter about who was "more Muslim," where one's family came from, and what it was like to learn the Qu'ran when your first language was not Arabic.



65. Collage by Jenna Jones depicting her family's German farming history.

Throughout this time, students left the room to perform ablution; washing hands, face and feet, before their evening prayer. When everyone was ready, two of the young men, Yamaan Saadeh and Omar Ashmawey organized the group for prayer. They cleared tables for the students to face east, with the male students standing several feet in front of the two female students as is the common custom (Islamic Center of Greater Toledo Tour 2008,). During the prayers we sat quietly to the side, listening to the melodic voice of the prayer leader, Omar Ashmawey. Upon the completion of the prayers, students returned to the table to finish their projects and conversations. Originally, we had allowed 40 minutes for the collage-making portion of the workshop, but as we watched the participants working and talking we felt it was important to give the students more time to create and talk. We allowed an additional 30 minutes and eliminated some of our follow-up questions. When they were finished with their collages, we asked each student to state their name, year in school, major, family ancestry, and to describe their collage.

COLLAGE MAKING + STORY TELLING

The students attending the workshop knew each other well. Several were close friends and all had worked with the Muslim Students Association throughout the academic year. Most of the students were first generation immigrants, and although from different countries, one could see that they had created a home away from home with each other through MSA. The atmosphere during the collage making session was lighthearted and fun. The pile of art supplies and magazines, especially the National Geographic magazines, inspired the students to chat about their childhoods.

Throughout the session, each of the participants spoke of how challenging it was to find symbols for Islam. Several expressed the concept that since Islam is “everything” and “everywhere” they could not distill their belief into one collage or one image. They described that pictures mosques or the Qu’ran were not sufficient to describe Islam, but several students used images of nature, sky, and water to express the universality of Islam. Many students also spoke about the stark differences of poverty and wealth in the United States compared to their home countries. The inequity of wealth and related issues of water access, a safe home, and religious freedom were among the expressed concerns.



66. MSA Workshop Participants Make Collages

NARRATIVES

The following section is an abbreviated narrative of each student's description of their collages and their responses to questions about spirituality and sustainability.



67. Yamaan Saadeh with his collage

YAMAAN SAADEH

Year: Senior

Major: "Pre Med, psychology, education and where ever else I go in life, I guess, ask me again in a year."

Family ancestry: Palestinian

Yamaan Saadeh, the co-chair of the Muslim Student Association opened the session, " I found this task very hard personally because it's asking you to limit your religion and what it means to you or like define or a find defining thing about it, and the thing about Islam, Islam for me applies to everything and anything extremely universal."

This was a common sentiment. Saadeh described how when making his collage he searched for "universal things." He focused his collage on the concept of universality addressing historic and contemporary society through his image choices. He chose a picture of Palestine to represent the historic origins of Islam, as a reference to prophets Abraham and Jesus and because it was his homeland. Next to the map of Palestine he placed images a waterfall and city buildings to represent that "Islam originated in desert, in tribal place, [it] but created society."

In what at first seemed like an unusual way to symbolize the universality of Islam, Saadeh pointed out the image of the video game called Star Strike circa 1982. This choice turned out to be small commentary on fleeting quality of contemporary technology compared to faith in Islam. Chuckling, he explained when he first saw the advertisement he thought it was a joke, because it was described as the "most advanced game, so realistic" yet it contained less than 28 bit graphic. What struck him was how quickly something can loose its relevance over a 20 year time span. He affirmed, " this [game} is not legit, in just 20 year [...]something can go out of legit – but Islam was like 6,000 years ago and nobody looks at as illegit."

Saadeh pointed to the crescent moon, which represented the Islamic calendar in particular the White Days. He explained that the White Days which were often in the middle of the month, were days when there is a full moon and that they were good days to fast. He closed by instructing his friends to "make sure to fast during this time."



68. Badrul Farooqui with his collage

BADRUL FAROOQUI

Year: Sophomore

Major: Major Near Eastern Studies +
Mathematics

Family Ancestry: Bengali

Badrul Farooqui spoke next. Farooqui's collage spoke less directly to Islamic religious beliefs than to his childhood experience in Bangladesh and his observations of poverty in both countries. A picture of a cat on a front porch had reminded him of times when his friends would play tricks on neighbors after school. He describe the long hours spent at school and doing work at home. He and friends would "escape [at] dusk prayers, [to the] mosque around the corner [...] and do little kid things, [...] teenager things. He shared a particular memory of stealing and older woman's boots and setting them on fire, hence his addition of a flame to his collage.

He went on to describe two different cityscapes in his collage. One was an overhead shot of a very dense urban area to represent Bangladesh where he was born. He noted there were "not enough buildings, [or] high rises" in the image. The second photograph reminded him of the Detroit skyline where his family currently lives. Although not reflected in the chosen images, he wanted to point out that although Detroit is a modern city, there is still poverty and over development. He noted that this was "sad to see that because we're supposed to be a developed country but it looks just like Bangladesh."

Farooqui's final image was of a stalking leopard, a substitute for an image of a picture of a Bengal tiger. He concluded that the domestic cat on the front porch and the leopard reminded him of his background and how he is "still trying to develop". While he seemed rather embarrassed by this description, it was in fact an honest and appropriate description of someone grappling with the experience of immigration and traveling from a developing nation to a post-industrial city, finding drastic differences and surprising similarities between two homes.



69. Asma Khan with her collage

ASMA KHAN

Year: Senior

Major: Business

Family Ancestry: Pakistani

Asma Khan smoothly covered her entire board with images that illustrated her relationship to nature, urbanization and poverty. A strong theme of religious morality and justice was woven through her stories. Born in Pakistan, she juxtaposed a picture of Karachi, a city with an “incredibly dense population,” with the surrounding desert landscape where “it’s like barren land” to represent the confusion she felt as a child. She described when she was young “It seemed so simple [...] If someone is living in a place like this [city] and they are hurting, [why can’t] they move to a place like this [open space] and be happy?” On top of the images of the city and desert she placed a greater than sign (>) to stand for the “inequality” of the situation. She placed the Quran near the greater than sign to say the “application” of Islam would help address this poverty.

Like Saadeh, she struggled to choose a particular place where she felt connected to Islam, saying, “Islam was more a state of mind.” She chose instead to describe her immigration from Pakistan to the United States by showing a city encircled by a blue boarder to represent her own “border crossing.” Describing her immigration experience she expressed continual surprise at the inequality in the world, wondering how “some people can live royalty and other people have to suffer.” Khan again pointed to her image of the Qu’ran, saying how much of this inequality could be solved by following the teachings of the Qu’ran.

Khan’s collage was as layered as her descriptions. She made connections between poverty, justice, landscape, urban planning, and Islamic law. Now a business major, she first applied to the Taubman School of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan because she wanted to learn about the “layout of things” and how a little organizational effort could help heal urban problems like those in Karachi. As she closed her description she again connected her interest in social justice with her faith, saying her experience of living in two very different countries made her question many things, but she kept returning to the Qu’ran to see what teachings could be applied to present day problems.



SARA ABE

Year: Freshman

Major: Undeclared

Family Ancestry: Scottish, Swiss, Croatian, German

70. Sara Abe with her collage

Sara Abe's story was significantly different from the other participants in that Abe is a convert to Islam from Christianity. She is of European descent and was born in the United States. Half of her collage showed images from her childhood related to family and nature; the other half addressed her conversion. Shyly, she began with an image of some flowers and a vegetable garden in which the soil is a rich dark brown to represent her father's garden, "We have a garden. And he loves it. He makes us eat all his vegetables. It's not the greatest tasting stuff in the world." She went on to describe some images of Yemen where the earth was tan color and dry in texture. Abe is not a Yemenite; her conversion came about by being friends with a Yemenite family who shared their home, their culture and religion with her. While she struggled to articulate what exactly their culture meant to her, you could hear in her voice a longing and love as she said, "It's just like, it reminds me of cooking and TV and just warmth and just home. I don't really know how to say more than that."

Abe closed her collage description by pointing to a colored paper cut out of a mosque placed on top of an image of the night sky filled with stars. At this point, she did not explain the significance of this background imagery, but it came out in later conversations when Khan was teasing Abe about her love of night time walks. Apparently, Abe was perpetually calling Khan telling her to go outside and look at the moon and stars. In reference to the mosque she was quietly firm; "The mosque is the other place I really feel comfortable. Like, I go there a lot, a lot of times late at night because I'm busy all day. It's just home, you know." It seems that Abe has found the sense of home, of belonging that other students had both culturally and spiritually.



71. Omar Ashmawey with his collage

OMAR ASHMAWEY

Year: Senior

Major: Economics, Marketing concentration

Family Ancestry: Egyptian

"Islam cannot be put [...] into one space" Omar Ashmawey began as he held up his collage which popped off the board with pieces of wheat, plastic leaves and a green thread that wound its way through the images of people of Asian, African and European descent. Ashmawey explained that he wanted to show that "Islam was big enough for opposites," like the desert and the ocean, big enough for people all over the world to participate in. The green thread, he explained, was to show the connection of all humanity. He chose a green string to make that connection because "green seems to be like the Islamic color, I know it was the prophet's favorite color and it's on the flags of mostly Muslim countries." Ashmawey pointed out an image of a crowd of people saying that in his experience "most places that have a lot of Muslims are very crowded, [think of] the Hajj, [...] the biggest human gathering every year in one place at one time."

Protruding off the front of Ashmawey's collage was an image of man in a white, glaring, nondescript landscape – the image was cut in the shape of an hourglass. Ashmawey, who seemed wise beyond his years, mused that he felt he had only begun to understand the depth of Islam. For him the hourglass was a symbol of time slipping away:

I feel like I'm in one of these [hourglasses] because I am learning so much more about something that is so valuable, and you know that life is so limited [...] I'm only 21 but I already feel like I'm old and I haven't really done very much. Islam is sorta like my motivation. [...] I don't mind if people don't know my name after I'm gone, but you know, I want to make a difference, want to help people, and I feel like I am running out of time already. So it's good to have something [like Islam] to keep pushing you.

One of the only participants who did not show images of American culture, Ashmawey used three dimensional plastic plants and wheat in his collage to reference the rich green farmland of Egypt where he was raised. To close, he made sure to point out a strip of yellow in the upper corner to emphasize the heat in his home country, noting that "with the crowded [areas] comes the heat and the sun the Middle East is very hot!"



AL ALSAIDY
Junior, Major: Engineering
Family Ancestry: Iraqi

72. Al Alsaidy with his collage

An engineering student, Al Alsaidy built his collage from the ground up, creating an expansive landscape collage from layers of construction paper and magazine images. He started with a thin layer of brown construction paper for the earth, then green for “plant life [...] essential to surviving,” leaving the top two thirds of the board for sky to “represent a holistic view of life, which is a part of Islam.” Using just a small vertical strip of the board, Alsaidy collaged images of a man and woman, and some plant life over which rose an apartment building. The man and woman represented Alsaidy’s connection to his family and a place he felt spiritually connected. Dressed in traditional garb, both were gathering food. For Alsaidy, this represented living in a modern world, but still being “one with” the earth. Unlike the clothing worn by the couple, the apartments were very modern in style. Alsaidy noted how many people confuse Islam, with “third world countries where there is always farming.” He wished to show that agricultural and urban residents were “both using the land and living off it, [while] trying to be sustainable.”

Alsaidy pointed to the birds flying along the expansive horizon he had made from strips of construction paper. The birds “represent that we share the world with other creatures, obviously, and that they have as much importance as we do in the way it operates.” The crescent and the star symbolized the over arching presence of Islam. Returning to his theme of sustainability he pointed out the stream that ran through the entire collage, he said, “This is really important. It seems like it’s small and thin, but actually it supports [...] everything. So it’s very important in Islam.”

Adding some levity to these broader concepts, Alsaidy pointed out his addition of “a little Tasmanian Devil, ‘cause he is a creature too, I didn’t want to just have birds.” He sheepishly pointed to a red centipede in the upper corner of his collage saying, “I threw this guy in too; I didn’t know where to put him I named him Bob, he’s like the host of the collage, and he’s the tour guide.” This collage “tour guide” carried an important message about the land, plants, sky and water; “Islam teaches you how to live with harmony [...] you have to live with respect [for] the things you have.”

RELIGION + SUSTAINABILITY

After the students introduced their collages, we asked them to describe how their religion influenced their relationship with nature and environmental issues. Like the collage introduction, the theme of “Islam is everywhere and everything” pervaded this conversation. They all spoke with great reverence for the natural environment. Sometimes it was in a tone of awe for the expanse of nature, as Ashmawey stated:

Islam itself tells us look at the mountains look at the sky look at the land and you'll see God. For me I love doing this. I love to sit in my backyard sometimes and just look up at the stars and I can't help but think that there has to be something out there. I mean there has to be something out there right. It makes me feel insignificance but at the same time this is my short time right now so make something of it. Just looking out at nature and seeing how beautiful it is brings me closer to God.

Similarly, Alsaïdy mused, “I used to sit outside in the summer and listen and take in all the smells, all the little noises. Even the grass you're sitting on, all this stuff is happening and you're like wow this is marvelous.” Other times the reverence arose from the complexity of nature. Alsaïdy continued, “a blade of grass grows and we can dissect it and dissect its inner workings [it is] so much more amazing than any video game or computer we can create.” Khan, who described herself as “much less outdoorsy,” succinctly described the symmetry of nature and evolution as “[proving] the nature of God.”

When asked if there was a tenant of sustainability or an ethic of protecting the earth for future generations in Islam there was a resounding affirmative response. Khan described how the Haddith “stresses responsibility toward nature,” and that the Prophet “lived close to nature [and ate] things like fruits from the trees, honey, foods close to their pristine form.” She stated “animals and plants often need taking care of; they can't speak out so it makes you the one responsible for them.” In her closing comments Khan stressed the importance of water conservation stating, “[y]ou can't waste water; wasting water is like really, really bad.”

Ashmawey picked up this theme of the Prophet's respect for nature:

I remember hearing about the Prophet leading an entire army out into the desert and they found a female dog giving birth in the middle of the desert and he has about 10,000 people behind him- and he commands the direction of the army [to] move all around her. And you think, what's the big deal? But it's written strongly that you leave nature alone.

Alsaïdy spoke directly to the issues of sustainability and resources for future generations:

[E]verything that we got came from the ground and that, we got from God. It's our duty to give back. It's our responsibility to give back. We can't just say 'the almighty is going to supply us with more resources.' We get so much information from a book; why not give back to the trees that got destroyed because of it. They give us oxygen, it's pretty overwhelming actually.

As the conversation was coming to an end, Khan made a comment about how the Haddith and the Prophet's life “tell us how we should be.” A couple of the boys chuckled, “yeah, how we should be. We're not there yet.”

INTERVIEWS

Through community workshops, we were able to engage a group of students from different Muslim backgrounds. As a way to broaden these outreach efforts and build on the information we have gathered, we wanted to reach out to a more diverse group of people.

We approached a variety of individuals for personal interviews: some students, some Oak Park community members, and some leaders in the Jewish and Muslim communities. Through these interviews, we were able to engage in more in-depth conversations about culture, faith, and nature.

We took a set of questions to guide each interview, but decided that we would allow the conversation to flow naturally whenever possible. The questions typically included:

1. *Describe your ethnic heritage and upbringing.*
2. *Describe how your faith has changed or evolved over time.*
3. *Are there religious symbols or rituals that are important to you?*
4. *How does your faith influence your relationship to nature or your views on sustainability or stewardship?*
5. *Describe a place that resonates with your spirituality or faith.*
6. *How do you think your religion contributes to a sustainable future?*

Each description includes a brief background of the participant and an abbreviated narrative of the stories they told.

PROFILE

TASHWEEN ALI

Espresso Royale, Ann Arbor, Mi - 2/6/09

"Islam is my lifestyle."

Tashween is a University of Michigan sophomore currently in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and interested in pursuing a graduate degree in Architecture. She was born in Bangladesh and moved to Flint, MI as a child. She comes from a Sunni Muslim family, who practices Islam liberally according to Bengali culture.

During this interview, we engaged in a casual conversation with a Muslim student about her faith, upbringing, and contemporary views on Islamic culture. We contacted Ali because of her participation in Hillel's Alternative Spring Break trip (ASB), where Muslim and Jewish students travel to New Orleans together to help repair homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Ali was asked to speak freely about her experience as a liberal Muslim woman in the United States, her views on bridging conflicting cultures, and her relationship to sustainability through her faith.

INTERVIEW ABSTRACT (abridged)

Conflicting Cultures

We asked Ali to describe why the ASB trip was important to her, and why she was interested in our project. She answered by describing an interest in learning about the conflict between these two cultures from "the other side." Ali said it was important to her to take responsibility, and to work towards the possibility of peace as a young woman. Ali described one of the major principles in Islam, *ummah*, an Arabic word that translates as community or nation, and means that we are all brothers and sisters; one community with many tenants. Based on this principal, Ali felt it

was important to be involved in the ASB trip and our project, and actively work towards peaceful relationships between these two cultures.

Sustainability + Islam

Ali admitted not having specific ideas about how Islam influenced her own views on sustainability, but mentioned several instances where she felt Islam teaches respect for nature. Among these was the regulation for not wasting water, even when washing before prayer. This regulation is a Haraam – a forbidden action in Islamic law. Although Ali is a Sunni Muslim, she also recalled a tradition for Shi'ites, when during prayer, one touches your head to a stone on the ground, signifying a closeness to the earth. Ali also recalled through Halal, the Islamic laws designating food as permissible, there are several requirements for ethical treatment and respect for an animal when sacrificing it, also called dhabaha. Through these examples, Ali described Islam's respect for nature and its contribution to her viewpoints on sustainability.

Spirituality

When asked to describe a place that resonated with her faith and spirituality, Ali immediately thought of a swing set at a church in Ann Arbor. She said she felt like she grew up too fast and when she needs space, she goes to the swing set to swing as a reminder of her childhood. She found the church because of a peace pole on the grounds, with "Peace on Earth" written in German, English, Hebrew, and Arabic. This peace pole was an important sign for her, pertinent to her belief in resolving conflict between religions. Ali described the church as feeling welcoming and safe, even though it was a Christian Church and she is a Muslim woman. To Ali, this was a place where she was able to find "spiritual quietness;" a space for reflection, and a place that reminded her of her faith.

Contemporary Culture

As we continued to talk to Ali about her identity as a Muslim, she briefly described the distinction that many make in Islam as a culture versus a religion. For her, Islam is a lifestyle; it is her religion and her culture, and being Muslim is eternal. Ali briefly discussed the difficulty in any religion of having a range of beliefs in the conservative to liberal spectrum, and how the distinction is made in Islam. As a liberal Muslim, she sees conservative Muslims as judgmental rather than teachers. This conversation bridged into a discussion about the University of Michigan's Muslim Student Association (MSA). Ali described her like of the group for allowing students to lead prayers and take initiative in Islam, but also discussed her decision not to be heavily involved in MSA because of its social nature. To Ali, her religion was at home with her family. Ali described one of the values of Islam being on the parent-child relationship that teaches respecting your parents, as they are second only to God, a principle in which she strongly believes.

We also discussed the post 9/11 discrimination that has affected Muslims all over the United States. Ali described a hate for the fact that the words "terrorism" and "Muslim" seem to be synonymous. Ali has experienced this discrimination directly through her brother, who has been placed on the "no fly" list at airports, and has done nothing wrong. Ali conjectured that this was blatant discrimination based on their last name and nothing else.

REFLECTION

One of the most useful components of this interview was the combination of Ali's contemporary and traditional values. Ali was contemporary in appearance, the only Muslim woman we have spoken to who does not wear a hijab, and contemporary in her support for creating a peaceful relationship between Muslims and Jews. However, she was also quite traditional in her belief that family is first and her parents are second only to God.

PROFILES

MARSHA KAMIN + KAREN ROSENSTEIN

Modry Building, Oak Park, MI - 3/4/09

MARSHA KAMIN

"Be Jewish. Live Jewish. Work Jewish."

As the Executive Director of Jewish Apartments and Services (JAS), an organization dedicated to providing safe, affordable, and communal housing for community seniors, and an active board member in Congregation T'chayah, Marsha Kamin has taken on a public role as a Jewish leader in Oak Park. Raised in the Jewish conservative movement and one of Detroit's first Bat Mitzvahs, Kamin converted to Reconstructionism as a young adult. For Kamin, converting to Reconstructionism was a way to make Judaism relevant to today, and a new opportunity to mix her heritage with her religion.



73. Marsha Kamin (left), Karen Rosenstein (right)

KAREN ROSENSTEIN

"All Jewish, all the time"

As the Judaic Services Coordinator at JARC, a local nonprofit dedicated to enabling people with disabilities and providing support for their families, and an active board member in Congregation T'chayah, Karen Rosenstein has also dedicated much of her life to the Jewish community. Raised in a secular home with a Jewish family history on her mother's side, Rosenstein decided to embrace Judaism and went through conversation classes as an adult – although it wasn't required – in an effort to preserve the family tradition. For Rosenstein, her involvement in a Jewish organization and membership in a local synagogue has been a way to refrain from fragmenting her efforts in preserving Judaism in her own life.

In this joint interview, we had the opportunity to talk with two women who are active leaders in Oak Park's Jewish community through their involvement in Congregation T'chayah, a local Reconstructionist synagogue, and through their professional lives. With these women, we were able to ask questions about Judaism and nature, giving them each an opportunity to talk about their unique lives as Jewish women in Oak Park.

INTERVIEW ABSTRACT (abridged)

Women + Judaism

When we asked Kamin and Rosenstein to discuss symbols or rituals important to them as Jewish women, both had difficulty describing anything that was unique only to women. Both Kamin and Rosenstein explained that the home and food were things that resonated as female and referenced the traditional meals that the women in their families would make around holidays. Rosenstein explained that many of the rituals in Judaism, especially Passover, revolve around traditions in the home – making extravagant dinners as well as the cooking and cleaning that lead up to them. In her childhood, her mother – who came from a Jewish background – would make traditional Jewish meals, but would call them different names in front of her father to remain secular. Kamin added that many of the things that came to mind as unique to women revolved around smells and sounds, primarily in cooking food, but little resonated with a religious ritual or symbol. For Kamin, there

were modern traditions, such as life cycle events like the Bat Mitzvah, or women seders at Passover that were particular to Jewish women, but very few historic traditions that resonated with her. In general, the conversation revolved around the responsibility of women to light the candles at dinner time, a long-standing tradition in Judaism. Additionally, the Hamsa, an interfaith symbol to ward away the evil eye, was a modern day symbol that Rosenstein felt was important to women because it's common presence in Jewish homes.

Sustainability + Stewardship

During the discussion on the role Judaism plays in sustainability and stewardship, both Kamin and Rosenstein referenced Tikkun Olam – the idea of repairing the world by bringing people together. Both felt a strong connection between this ideal in Judaism and its relation to modern ideas about restoration and sustainability. Kamin mentioned the relationship between her work at JAS and the idea of Tikkun Olam. She explained that her agency works with many other groups on the Jewish campus to grow fruits and vegetables, make food together at holidays, and donate to those in need. Rosenstein built on this by explaining that Tikkun Olam is a core value in Judaism that comes from “you shall not destroy fruit trees” as a reverence for preserving the fruits of the earth because they are God’s creation. In war times, it was required that above all you preserve the fruit trees as a reference to this value. Rosenstein also explained that it is a foundational belief in Judaism that people must continue (not necessarily complete) the work of creation. This can be seen through the baking of challah; the grain for challah was created by God, but men and women used the grains to complete the bread. An important ritual Rosenstein also mentioned is Tu Bishvat, the New Year of the Trees, in its celebration of nature in Judaism. The symbolism of tree planting is widely seen in Jewish culture through this celebration and through Tzedakah boxes available for those who wish to donate to planting trees in Israel. Throughout this conversation, both Kamin and Rosenstein stressed the importance of all of these celebrations and philosophies in Judaism, and how stewardship and sustainability are inherent in these teachings.

Place + Spirituality

When asked to describe a place that resonates with faith and spirituality, Kamin and Rosenstein both mentioned the Jewish home. The home, Kamin said, is one of the few places that reminds her of her spirituality, but it has to be connected to the smells of Jewish cooking. Kamin told us a story about her daughter, who moved to a remote area in Germany, and was the only Jew for miles. In an effort to reconnect with her faith and culture, she decided to learn how to cook Jewish meals as a way to recreate the smells of Judaism. Rosenstein explained that food is so much a part of her Jewish experience, that it is one of the strongest connections she feels to her culture. Aside from the home, Rosenstein also described the experience of being in nature and walking through the wilderness as a reminder of her faith and God’s presence in her life. Kamin added that it is difficult for her to think of a place, because to her, spirituality is within and she can find it anywhere. She explained that through her work at JAS, it is hearing Yiddish in the hallways and smelling the cooking at holidays that are a reminder of spirituality to her.

REFLECTION

Through this interview, we were able to engage with two Jewish women invested in religion and culture, and who have become leaders in Oak Park by helping build community within it. One of the most relevant factors in this interview was the specific life choice both Kamin and Rosenstein made to connecting their home lives with their religious lives, and the path both took in getting there. It was interesting to hear from both women that Judaism for them is not a place, a ritual, or something that can be described tangibly, it is a state of mind and a way to live your life.

PROFILE

RABBI NATHAN MARTIN

Michigan Union, Ann Arbor, Mi - 3/25/09

A Green Mitzvah

Rabbi Nathan Martin, Rabbi Nathan Martin is the Assistant Director at the University of Michigan Hillel, a national organization that promotes, supports, and fosters Judaism as a part of campus life. Martin was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 2006 after spending several years as an environmental researcher on energy efficiency in Berkeley, CA. Martin comes from a Ukrainian and Polish ancestry, in a family that practiced Judaism culturally, not religiously, although he attended Orthodox school as a child. Martin “rekindled” his interest in Judaism after spending time in Israel in college, which later influenced his career change.



74. Rabbi Nathan Martin

We first made contact with Martin early on in our project, when looking for a Jewish connection on campus. In this conversation, we continued an ongoing dialogue with Martin about the importance of the environment in light of Judaism, and had to opportunity to learn more about his personal journey in becoming a Rabbi after working in the environmental field.

INTERVIEW ABSTRACT (ABRIDGED)

Judaism + Sustainability

During the discussion, we asked Martin how nature and sustainability became such an important part of his role in Judaism. He described his experiences in the environmental field as being something that he felt he needed to continue to be a part of his life as he became a Rabbi. Since then, he has worked to build the connection between Judaism and nature – something he sees as extremely important – through blessings and mitzvahs. For Martin, one of his personal mitzvahs to the earth is living a “green” lifestyle; one example being his dedication to biking rather than of driving as his main means of transportation. During the last few years, Martin has also created a blessing for composting which he shares with the Jewish community at Hillel:

Blessed is the Renewer who gives us life through Your produce, sustains us with Your creation, and engages us in the power of Your creative cycles.

Martin expressed that his deepest spiritual experiences personally have been outdoors, often in the wilderness, which has contributed to his continued dedication to sustainability. When asked if he could describe a specific place that resonated with his spirituality, Martin mentioned he could think of many places, but recalled one trip in particular where he felt closest to God. This trip was a nine-month hiking trip on the Pacific Crest Trail that he completed immediately before beginning Rabbinical school. On this trip, he recollected feeling “filled” and experiencing many “God-filled moments.”

Symbols + Rituals

When asked to describe symbols or rituals Martin felt were important to him, he said there were many that were important for different reasons. The most notable to him is Shabbat, where he feels like he can “turn off, unplug, and renew” every week. Additionally, Martin mentioned blessing practices as a general, daily spiritual practice; an opportunity for frequent connections to Judaism.

Martin also described learning – the textual study of Judaism – as an opportunity for him to activate his mind and spirit, bringing him closer to his religion.

Alternative Spring Break

As a part of his position at Hillel, Martin has established the Alternative Spring Break (ASB) program that brought us to our first interviewee, Tashween Ali. When we asked Martin to describe how he got involved in it, he explained that when he came to the University of Michigan campus, he brought with him the idea that he wanted to reach across different communities through his work, and was specifically interested in Jewish-Muslim relations. One of his first moves in this direction was in contacting MSA – the Muslim Students Association on campus. MSA reciprocated interest in such a collaboration, and he began planning the first ASB trip. Martin described the format of the ASB program more specifically; each year the program begins with seven weeks of group building – an opportunity for informal dialogue and learning – and then the group travels together to conduct service work helping rebuild homes in New Orleans. Martin explained that continued reflection on the project and a constant dialogue between the group has remained essential to the ASB program. The intended outcome of this event was to “sensitize” people to disadvantaged communities as a way to become allies for one another, and work together despite each student’s individual involvement in the conflict in the Middle East. Martin’s philosophy on this trip is to build connections between Jews and Muslims first, and make the conflict abroad secondary to their relationship in an effort to begin positive interactions between them on campus.

Judaism on Campus

We next asked Martin to reflect on the challenges associated with being a Jew in a non-Jewish community, specifically on campus. Martin began by noting the generally tolerant, supportive climate of the campus, but mentioned some ignorance or lack of understanding that was felt across Hillel’s community. Although careful to mention he has not experienced outright discrimination, Martin cited the scheduling of exams and assignments on Jewish holidays and sometimes an inflexibility in rescheduling them as a difficulty that has sometimes left Jewish students feeling ignored – rather than engaged in some aspects of campus life.

Reflection

Through this interview, we were able to expand on our previous conversations with Rabbi Nathan Martin, who has remained a valuable resource in our research. One of the most informative parts of this interview was learning more about Martin’s past experiences in an environmental field, and how it has influenced his continuing dedication to living “green” and teaching sustainability in Judaism through his position at Hillel. In light of our efforts to create a shared Jewish and Muslim space, Martin’s work with ASB was particularly inspiring given his efforts to build understanding and local connections through community work on behalf of others in need.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The workshop and interviews were designed to gather contemporary ideologies and stories from the Oak Park Jewish and Muslim communities which would inform the design of the shared space. We theorized that by using an artistic medium, like collage making, in combination with cultural sharing, we could create safety for a conversation that might build and strengthen personal connections between participants. When we were unable to work with Oak Park residents, we decided to adapt this process to work with University of Michigan student groups. We had hoped that this process would provide an opportunity

for sharing between the Jewish and Muslim student organizations similar to that which we had planned in the Oak Park neighborhood. Even though we were not able to coordinate a meeting with both groups, we noted from the MSA workshop evaluations that collage making process created a sense of safety that allowed an open sharing of personal stories. One student wrote, "I was worried I would feel uncomfortable, but I got here and it was perfect. Small and interesting and fun." Another student wrote that it was a "very creative manner to share ideas."

Another goal of the workshop was to find symbols that resonated with the community that could be translated into garden design concepts. While we heard the students talk about some symbols that were important to them, such as water, we were struck by their descriptions of more universal concepts of family, home, responsibility, and morality. Their reflections on place and spirituality were also connected to these themes. These were the most important takeaways from the workshop – creating spaces that reflected a sense of family, responsibility, and the home would be an important tie to Islamic culture. The individual interviews added another layer of inspiration for our designs. These interviews provided intimate snapshots of Jewish and Islamic home life, building off of the concepts we gathered from the workshop. Additionally, the interviews provided contemporary interpretations of cultural symbols and religious holidays including how Islamic and Jewish religious communities are addressing issues of sustainability. Rabbi Nathan in particular discussed the growing popularity of workshops and conferences that tie Judaism to environmental stewardship.

Since the workshop, we have seen various participants around campus. They always light up when we say hello and they ask how the project is going. Many have continued to offer suggestions for our project, including proposing that we explore the geometric gardens of the Turkish and Ottoman Empire. Ashmawey thought we would enjoy studying this style as they "had really simple gardens and everything was symmetrical and really focused on the plants and the land." It seems apparent now, that while we hoped the participants would build bridges between themselves, we inadvertently broadened our own community connections. While this workshop was not conducted in the Oak Park community as originally planned, and cannot replace that process, it acts as a precedent for future work in the community where we one might use a similar process in terms of community education and relationship building.

CULTURAL BRIDGES WORKSHOP
Cultivating conversations through garden design

Please circle the degree to which you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
1. I enjoyed participating in this research.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I enjoyed sharing my culture through collage making.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I enjoyed sharing my culture through conversation.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I'm interested in Jewish-Muslim collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

Good Luck
on your project!
Praying for its success 😊

75. Workshop evaluation form

II.1 CONTEXT

DESIGN

II.1 / CONTEXT location.



76. Context Map

LOCATION

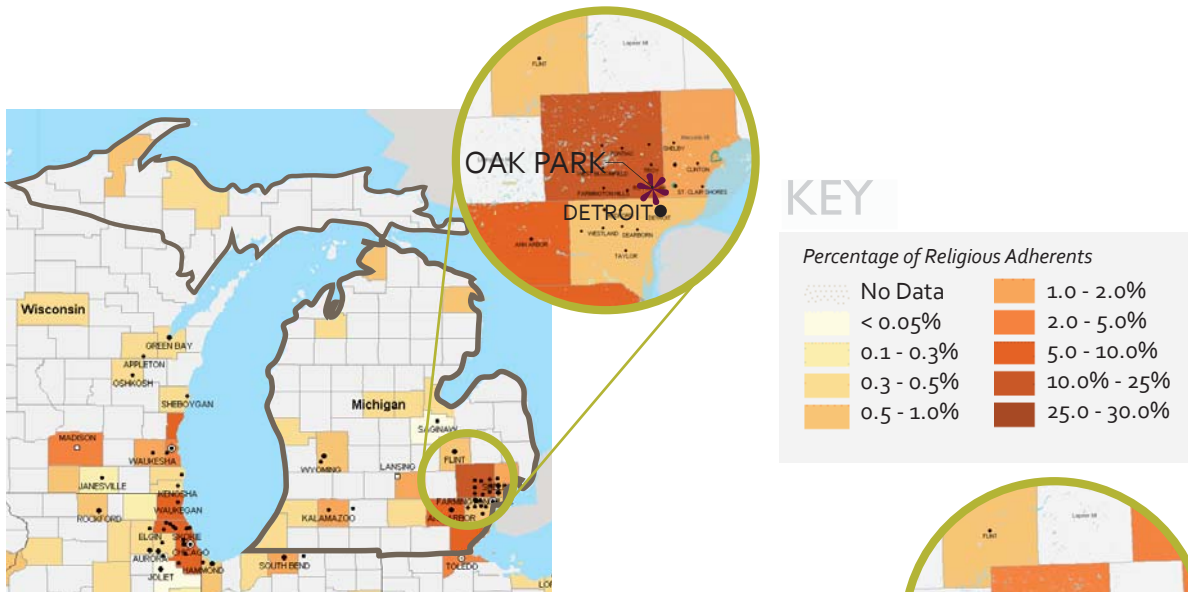
Cultural Bridges is situated in Oak Park, MI, one of Detroit's northwestern suburbs. Oak Park is home to nearly 30,000 residents of a large variety of races, religions, and ages (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). It is located in Oakland County, part of the Detroit Metropolitan Area. As a part of Michigan's "Automation Alley," Oakland County has historically been one of the largest employers for engineering and automotive occupations in the United States (Oakland County 2005).

II.1 / CONTEXT demographics.

JEWISH + MUSLIM POPULATIONS IN MICHIGAN

According to the *Association of Religion Data Archives*, the Detroit Metro area has the highest percentage of both Jewish and Muslim adherents in the state of Michigan. The diverse nature of this Metropolitan region, including Oak Park, provides the fertile socio-political ground from which Cultural Bridges will grow.

Although there is a larger percentage of Jews living in Oak Park than Muslims, the proximity of a strong Muslim presence in neighboring counties provides opportunity for outreach and collaboration within the greater Detroit Metro area.



77. Distribution of Jewish Adherents
Source: *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States, 2000.*

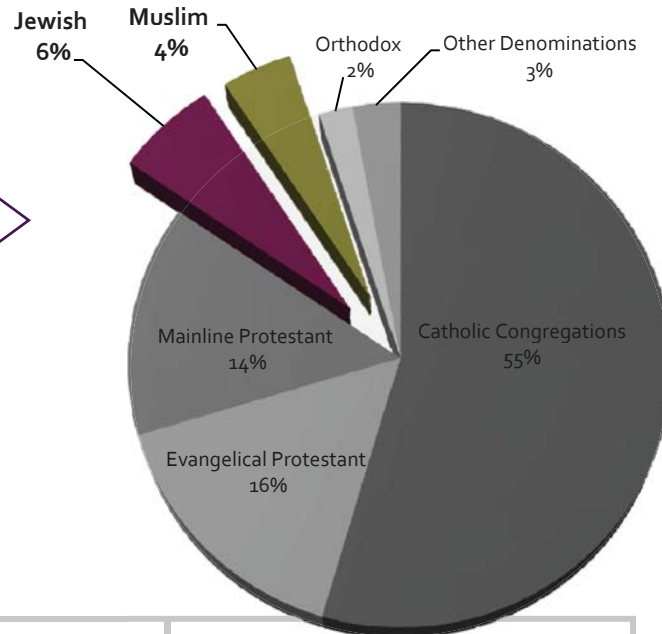


78. Distribution of Muslim Adherents

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN METRO DETROIT

The Detroit Metro area is home to significant Jewish and Muslim populations in relation to the rest of Michigan, but when compared to Christian populations, their presence is quite small. As minorities in the state of Michigan, Jews and Muslims still face religious prejudices from other cultures and from each other. Given the small size of their community, part of the discrimination they face is cultural invisibility. When designing for new public spaces, landscape architects have a responsibility to highlight the local culture in ways that help educate the greater community and provide common ground for community building.

According to the Association of Religious Data Archives, Jews comprise of 6% and Muslims 4% of the Detroit Metro religious adherents, compared to 87% Christian.



DENOMINATIONS (MAJOR RELIGIONS)	WAYNE COUNTY	OAKLAND COUNTY	TOTAL
<i>Population</i>	2,061,162	1,194,156	3,255,318
Catholic Congregations	451,069	302,201	753,270
Evangelical Protestant	132,729	85,211	217,940
Mainline Protestant	115,069	82,050	197,119
Jewish	8,400	77,200	85,600
Muslim	46,492	12,955	59,447
Orthodox	17,376	11,202	28,578
Other Denominations	22,810	17,010	39,820
Total Adherents	793,945	587,829	1,381,774

79. Percentage of Major Denominations in Detroit Metro.
 Source: *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States, 2000.*

Religious Diversity in Oak Park

The *Association of Religion Data Archives* and the *United States Census Data* do not publish religious demographics information at the city level. However, sources from the Oak Park Ethnic Advisory Commission confirm the diverse religious populations residing in Oak Park, with a strong Jewish, Christian, and Chaldean presence and smaller populations of Muslims and other minor denominations.

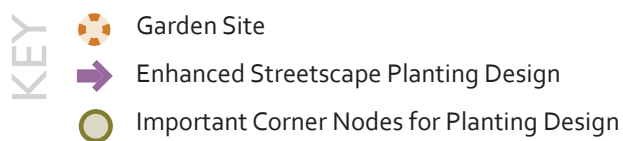
II.2 ANALYSIS

DESIGN

II.2 / ANALYSIS

cultural corridor.

The Cultural Corridor is a long-term vision for creating a network of gardens and designed open spaces that reflect the diversity of Oak Park. The Corridor connects the neighborhoods adjacent to Church Street, home to a variety of religious and cultural populations. Emerging from a network of enhanced street plantings, the Corridor identifies five primary locations in which new gardens will grow.



GARDEN SITES

Victoria Park

The northernmost part of the corridor, Victoria Park is a 4-acre freeway overpass park constructed in 1989 to allow observant Jews to cross Interstate 696 to attend services on Ten Mile Road. The park includes a T-ball field, playground, and large expanses of turf grass. Due to its position in a largely Jewish neighborhood, this is a prime location for the first gardens promoting the celebration of Jewish and Muslim cultures.

Pepper Elementary School

The school hosts Kindergarten through 5th grade children and is located just a blocks south of from Victoria Park. The property contains a small playground and an expansive area of turf grass, an ideal location for children's gardens that focus on food production, community culture, and hands-on education. Due to the open nature of the property, this site also provides an opportunity for community garden plots within the Corridor.

Shepherd Park

Shepherd Park is a 57-acre public park containing a large wooded area with picnic tables, grills, a large children's play area, athletic courts, and an outdoor pool. Historically, it was home to Oak Park's International Ethnic Festival, a celebration of the community's ethnic diversity that was first held in 1984 and continued for a few years thereafter. Restoring this use and reinstating the International Ethnic Festival, Shepherd Park will become a central gathering node along the Cultural Corridor.

Oak Park High School

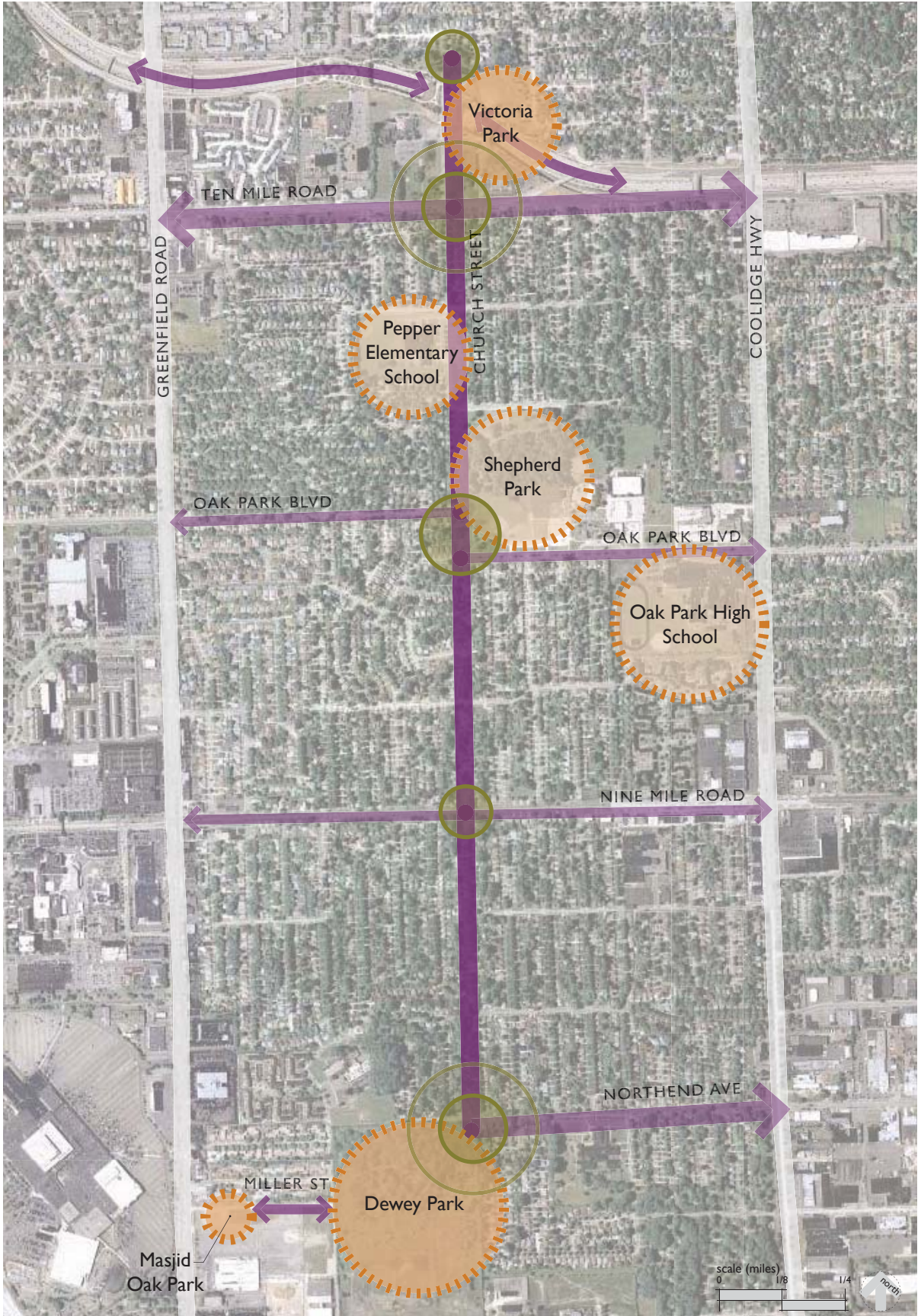
The high school, which serves 10th through 12th grade students in Oak Park, contains a series of athletic fields that take up the majority of the small site. With limited space available, this property provides an opportunity for a small-scale garden that targets young adults. Programmatically, the high school gives an opportunity for education programs that connect the environment to local culture. A strong connection to the remainder of the Cultural Corridor is important to this site due to its location away from Church Street.

Dewey Park

Dewey Park, a 7-acre city park, contains a number of athletic fields, play equipment, and a large wooded area. Dewey Park is the southern-most anchor of the Cultural Corridor, providing opportunity for a series of gardens that reflect other religious and cultural groups residing in Oak Park.








Masjid Oak Park

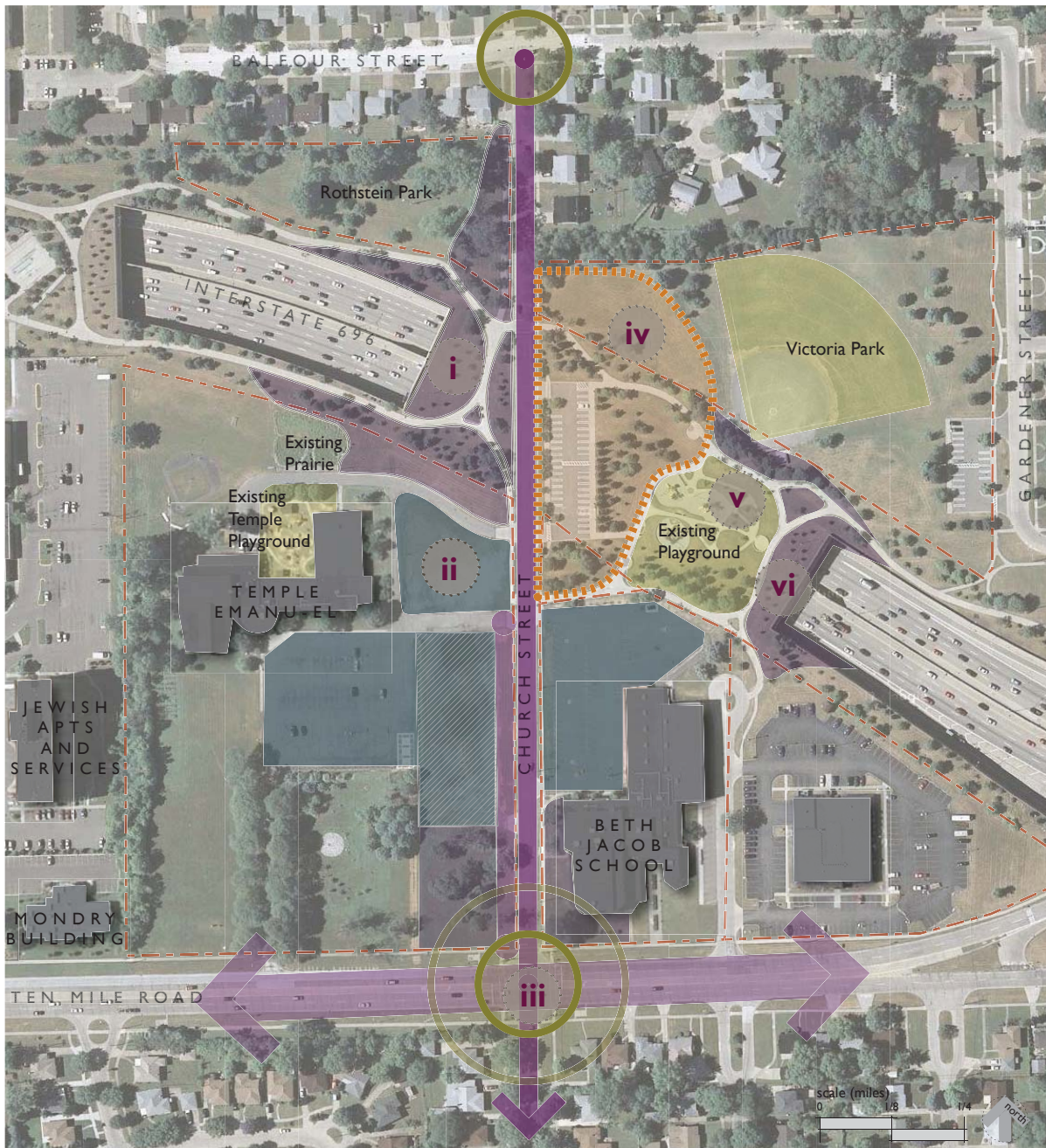
Masjid Oak Park is a basement *musalla*, or Muslim sanctuary, that serves Detroit city's northern suburbs. The Masjid is an important connection to the small Muslim community in Oak Park and the surrounding area, providing opportunity for a small garden on the site as well as a strong connection to the proposed gardens at Dewey Park that reaches out to Oak Park's Muslim community.



80. Cultural Corridor Map

II.2 / ANALYSIS site analysis.

- KEY**
-  Garden Site
 -  Existing Recreation
 -  Adjacent Property Boundaries
 -  Enhanced Streetscape Planting
 -  Areas for Planting Enhancement
 -  Important Corner Nodes for Planting Design
 -  Potential Stormwater Treatment Site



81. Site Analysis Map

analysis.

The area encompassing Victoria Park and Church Street between Balfour Street and Ten Mile Road is an important intersection of community members of all ages, religions, and ethnic groups. Built as the bridge between a Jewish neighborhood and a Jewish campus, the site is an important thoroughway for the local Jewish community. The also site serves as a walking path and passive recreation space for community members of all cultures and ages. Given its extensive use by the public, it holds many opportunities for ecological enhancement by sustainable site practices and culturally influenced design that will improve the experience and stewardship of the park.

The following analysis describes the existing conditions of the site and adjacent properties as well as the opportunities for enhancement for six central regions.

i Rothestein Park + Freeway Overpass (west side)

EXISTING

Flat turf area with wide, tree lined paths. Small ornamental trees line northern path. The freeway noise is apparent but not overwhelming. A wall blocks the views to I-696 below.



82. View north to Hasidic community



83. View of cherry tree lined path

PROPOSED

The West overpass has potential for additional street plantings to improve the walking experience and enhance the gardens on the East side of Church Street. New plantings should include ground and middle plane plants and should maintain year-round interest. Dense plantings could help buffer freeway noise. The freeway wall provides opportunity for mural or art installations. There is an opportunity to connect to and build off of the Temple's prairie here.

ii Proposed Rainwater Treatment Area

EXISTING

Large, flat expanse of turf grass and loose soil exist adjacent to the Temple Emanu-El and Church Street. The plot is surrounded by walking paths and a parking lot entrance.



84. View southwest toward Temple



85. View south down Church Street

PROPOSED

There is potential for rainwater treatment for Temple Emanu-El and the surrounding parking area. Water from adjacent land and roof runoff from the building could be directed to this area to serve as a wetland detention pond or wet prairie.

iii Ten Mile + Church Street

EXISTING

The northwest corner of the intersection is the front yard of the Temple. The site is a large, flat turf area with scattered canopy trees. This corner connects to the Temple's labyrinth garden to the northwest. The northeast corner of the intersection belongs to the Beth Jacob School. The site has a few trees, and has little space between the sidewalk and the building. The southern side of the intersection begins a residential neighborhood where the boulevard narrows and is lined with canopy trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*). The street life becomes more private and quiet.



86. Church + Ten Mile Entrance



87. View West looking toward Ten Mile

PROPOSED

Potential for rainwater treatment for Temple Emanu-El, Beth Jacob School, and the adjacent parking areas. Water from adjacent land and roof runoff from the buildings could be directed to this area to serve as a detention pond or wet prairie.

iv Garden Design Site

EXISTING

Turf grass and tree plantings buffer Church Street and the parking lot from Victoria Park. A variety of trees exist including ornamental, coniferous, and canopy trees. Plantings open up onto a field bordered by trees and a T-ball field to the East. The T-ball field slopes up 3-7 feet on all sides, creating a large depression and natural lookout from this site.



88. View West toward T-ball field



89. View East toward playground

PROPOSED

This site is the area of focus for the garden designs. Each garden will address issues of multiculturalism and ecological enhancement through physical design, program, and plant choice. Divided by a walkway, gardens will be linked in theme but address different audiences.



90. View North toward Hasidic community



91. View northeast toward parking lot and playground

v Playground + T-ball Field

EXISTING

Victoria Park's playground is sunken into the ground roughly one foot from the sidewalk grade. The equipment is designed for elementary school children, but youth of all ages play and hang out on it. The T-ball field serves elementary school students, and has its own parking area southeast of the field at Gardener Street.



92. Playground East of Church Street



93. T-ball field East of Church Street

PROPOSED

The connection between these two areas and the new garden designs is key and should be addressed through transitional plantings and connecting pathways. These recreational areas could retain their existing uses while treating rainwater and minimizing landscape maintenance by installing alternative lawn options such as Purple Love Grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*) or Buffalo Grass (*Bouteloua dactyloides*).

vi Freeway Overpass (east side)

EXISTING

The overpass is a flat turf area with scattered trees and very wide paths. The northern path leads to the adjacent residential neighborhood, but there is no path lining the southern side of overpass. The central path connects the Beth Jacob School to Victoria Park. The freeway wall blocks the overpass from views to I-696. Freeway noise is apparent but not overwhelming.



94. View to the Northeast with freeway wall



95. Walking paths, looking South

PROPOSED

Enhance the walking paths as they move from the Beth Jacob School and residential neighborhood into public park land. This site has a potential to mark the entrance to Victoria Park as paths lead to and from the overpass. New plantings should include ground and middle plane plants and should maintain year-round interest. Dense plantings could help buffer freeway noise. The freeway wall provides opportunity for mural or art installations. There is potential for raingardens, ornamental plantings, or swaths of native grasses that connect Beth Jacob School to the park.

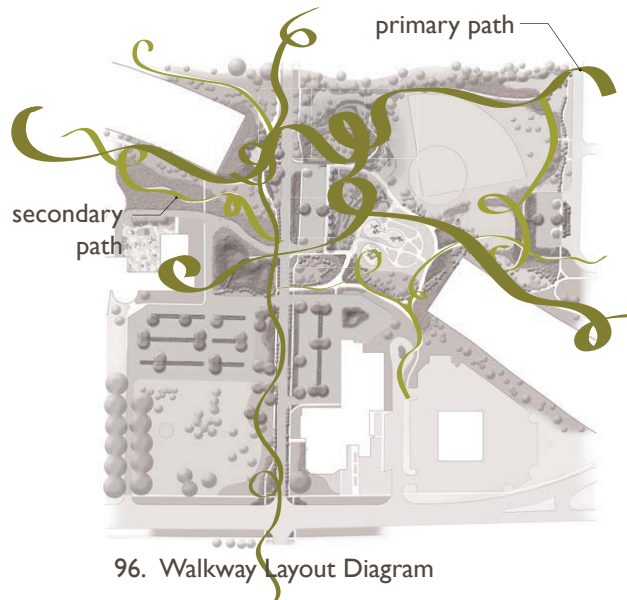
II.3 DESIGN

DESIGN

II.3 / DESIGN framework.

The Cultural Bridges Framework serves as the first phase of design for the Cultural Corridor. The Framework, which is tailored to the surrounding community through studies in local culture, religion, and ecology provides the groundwork for achieving Cultural Bridges.

The design of the Framework was inspired by the imagery of the grapevine, a plant with religious and ecological significance to both Jewish and Islamic cultures. Building upon existing walkways and recreational activities, new patterns of pedestrian movement are created from winding paths evocative of the curling tentacles of the grapevine plant. Two main paths, one sprouting from the northeast corner of the site and the other from the Temple Emanu-El, create a primary path to guide the visitor across the site and down the Cultural Corridor. Secondary paths wind in and out of the primary pathway, providing access to a number of design elements and amenities on site.



96. Walkway Layout Diagram

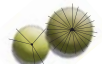








The Framework plants are organized in bold swaths that lead the visitor through the site, enhancing the visitor experience. Planting types were selected based on cultural and religious significance in Islamic and Jewish traditions, as well as ecological and aesthetic value. A diversity of sizes, textures, and colors, provide year-long interest. Additionally, planting types are layered, creating a gradient of height beginning from pedestrian walkways upward. Perennials – the lowest growing plant group – are supported by a backdrop of prairie plants, ornamental trees, and canopy trees. Through layering, each planting group enhances the others through cultural, ecological, and aesthetic relevance.

Most important to the layering of plants and plant types was the ability to bring an expansive, mostly flat site to a comfortable, human scale. In addition to the garden sites, small gathering spaces such as the picnic pavilion and open lawn areas surrounded by planting provide places to gather, observe, and reflect. Larger gathering spaces such as the preserved T-ball field and playground provide opportunity for recreation and play.

The Framework design provides a solid foundation of cultural relevance, ecological restoration, beauty and social connectedness in which the gardens will grow. This first design within the Cultural Corridor sets a precedent for the remaining garden sites for achieving outstanding aesthetic, ecological and cultural value.

II.3 / DESIGN framework plan.

FRAMEWORK KEY

-  Canopy Trees
-  Ornamental Trees
-  Existing Trees
-  Bioretention Areas:
Wetland, Raingardens
-  Prairie Plantings
-  Perennial Plantings
-  Understory Plantings
-  Turf Grass
-  Permeable Paving

CHARACTER IMAGES

A **Picnic Pavilion**
97. Picnic pavilion with pergola, seatwalls, and ornamental plantings.
Helena, MT



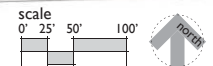
B **Mural Wall**
98. Children learning to paint on a public mural wall.
Providence, RI



C **Wetland Boardwalk**
99. Wood boardwalk through a rainwater wetland.
Sydney, Australia



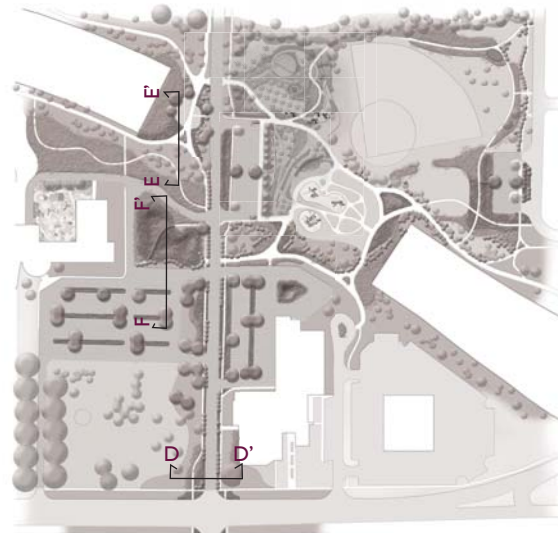
100. Framework Plan



II.3 / DESIGN

framework sections.

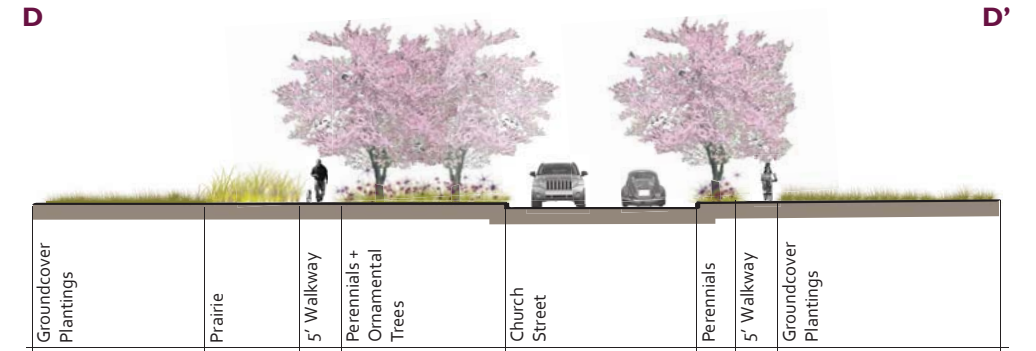
SECTION KEY



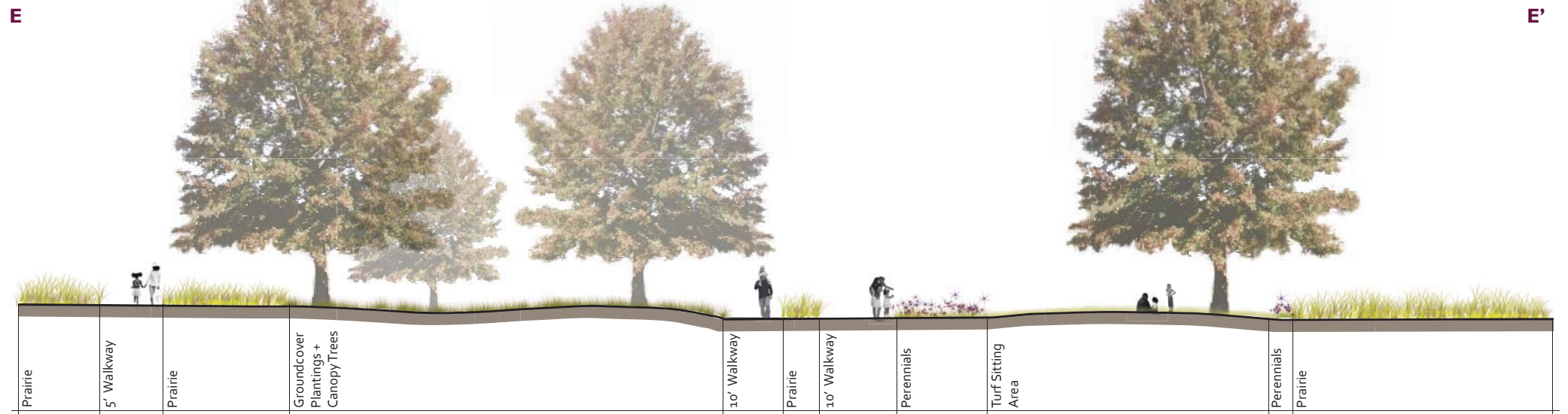
101. Framework Section Key

D Entrance Planting Section

This section describes the relationship between the proposed streetscape plantings to the visitor - both on foot and from a vehicle. The plantings provide a human-scale to the large intersection, while providing a diverse plant palette that envelops the visitor. Permeable pavement on the street helps slow traffic and provide a beautiful driving surface while cleansing and treating rainwater.



102. Entrance Planting Section



103. Diversity of Planting Section

scale 1" = 40' (TYP)
0' 10' 20' 40'

E Diversity of Planting Section

This section depicts a variety of plantings throughout the site. The visitor can walk through an expansive prairie, enjoy the shade of a native groundcover planting with canopy trees, smell the blossoms of perennial beds, or have a picnic in a turf grass seating area.

F Bioretention Section

This section shows the proposed bioretention wetland and parking lot raingardens. The extensive Temple parking lot is reduced and softened by permeable pavement and native plantings that help cool, clean, and infiltrate rainwater while providing a beautiful setting for the visitor.



104. Bioretention Section

II.3 / DESIGN

sustainable site practices.

Every landscape holds the potential to improve and regenerate the natural processes and benefits of a healthy ecosystem. Sustainable site practices are methods for designing and implementing ecologically sound design. Organizations such as the *Sustainable Sites Initiative* have helped identify techniques for preventing many of the damaging environmental implications of traditional development, including;

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through healthy soil and plants.
- Decreasing the urban heat island effect by using plants that shade and increase evapotranspiration.
- Controlling invasive species through native and adaptive plant establishment.
- Eliminating water waste from unsustainable landscapes that require irrigation.
- Contributing to healthy freshwater sources by reducing overland flow.
- Reducing yard waste by retaining and recycling materials on site.
- Decreasing energy consumption by establishing vegetation around buildings to reduce energy usage.

Sustainable site practices also contribute to improved health and well-being for people exposed to nature. Research shows that daily encounters with nature can restore concentration, reduce stress, anxiety, and aggression, and improve social connectedness (Sustainable Sites Initiative). Modern Islamic and Jewish theologians advocate steps toward sustainability by referencing teachings in the Haddith and the Torah that recommend care of the environment for future generations.

rainwater management

Rainwater management remains at the forefront of sustainable design initiatives and is reflected in the Framework design. Rainwater that runs over impervious surfaces such as rooftops, streets, parking lots, and areas of expansive turf grass pick up pollutants such as sediment, metals, and excess nutrients. This process causes the temperature of the water to warm and distributes pollutants into nearby water sources. The Cultural Bridges Framework identifies a number of strategies for reducing this volume and improving the quality of rainwater by retrofitting sustainable practices on site and on adjacent properties. These strategies are designed to absorb rainwater and reduce overland flow and the subsequent negative impacts on water quality to the watershed.

Green technologies such as green roofs and green walls are recommended on new construction and retrofits (where appropriate) throughout the city of Oak Park as regional best management practices. Rainbarrels, a technique for rainwater harvesting is also recommended on large or small-scale properties, including private residences to recycle rainwater. Both of these practices are recommended throughout the Cultural Bridges corridor as well as the surrounding region.

Three sustainable site strategies; **permeable pavement**, **rainwater bioretention**, and **natural landscaping** are described in detail in the following pages. These strategies were the environmental backbone of the Framework design, providing an ecologically-sound, beautiful foundation for the Cultural Bridges garden designs.







105.Park Pavilion with Green Roof
Seattle, WA

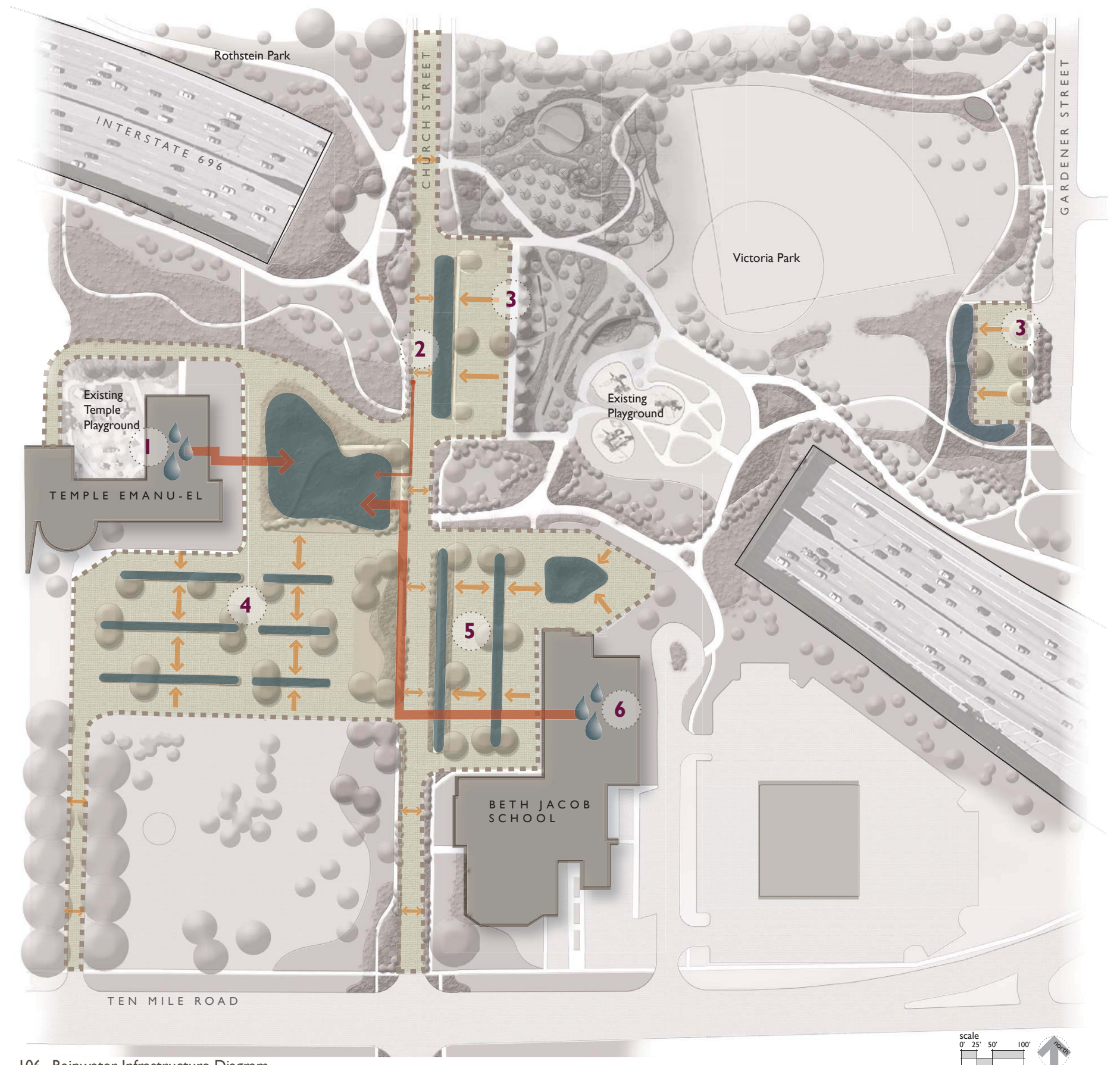
II.3 / DESIGN

rainwater infrastructure.

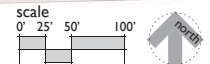
RAINWATER KEY

-  Permeable Pavement Boundaries: Porous concrete or permeable pavers
-  Bioretention Areas: Wetland, Raingardens
-  Path of overland flow into retention areas.
-  Path of rainwater through piping.

- 1 Temple Emanu-El Roof Runoff**
Rainwater falling on the Temple Emanu-El roof is piped across the service drive into the wetland where it is cleaned and filtered.
- 2 Church Street**
Permeable paving on Church Street between Balfour Street and Ten Mile Road allows rainwater to infiltrate below the road surface, reducing runoff into local sewer systems. Excess rainwater is piped into the wetland.
- 3 Victoria Park Parking Lots**
Permeable paving in the parking lots absorb the majority of rainwater falling on the surface. Excess water is directed into raingardens on the West side of both parking lots, where it is cleaned and infiltrated with native grasses and wildflowers.
- 4 Temple Emanu-El Parking Lot**
Rainwater is infiltrated via permeable paving in the parking area. Excess water is directed into parking median raingardens, where it is cleaned and infiltrated into the ground.
- 5 Beth Jacob School Parking Lot**
Rainwater is infiltrated via permeable paving, and directed into median raingardens. Excess water from the raingardens and overland flow from the School's adjacent landscape is directed into a large raingarden located at the northeast corner of the property.
- 6 Beth Jacob School Roof Runoff**
Rainwater falling on the School's roof is captured and piped into the nearby wetland for cleansing and infiltration.



106. Rainwater Infrastructure Diagram



sustainable site practices.

PERMEABLE PAVING

Permeable paving allows infiltration of water underground to an aggregate base, reducing runoff volume and improving water quality. Paving bricks have gaps between them filled with gravel or rock chips where water is infiltrated. Runoff is temporarily stored in a base below the surface and slowly infiltrated and released into storm sewers. Porous concrete and asphalt contain larger than typical aggregates with wide pore spaces that allow water to percolate below the ground to an aggregate base similar to paving bricks.

BENEFITS

- Reduces rainwater runoff volumes.
- Reduces rainwater runoff rates.
- Filters sediments, hydrocarbons, nutrients, and other urban pollutants from runoff and reduces runoff temperatures.
- Reduces the need for salt or other deicing methods in the winter and eliminates the subsequent impacts to water quality.
- Reduces rainwater ponding on walking, driving, or parking surfaces, which in turn reduces skidding, hydroplaning, and ice buildup.



107. Interlocking Permeable Pavers
Unilock



109. Pervious Concrete
AG Peltz Company



108. Permeable Pavement Street
Unilock

NATIVE LANDSCAPING

Establishment of native vegetation in landscaped areas contribute to rainwater best management practices. The deep root systems of Michigan native plants can reach 3 to 10 feet below the surface to help filter, cleanse, and absorb rainwater, reducing overland flow.

BENEFITS

- Reduces runoff volumes
- Increases ability of landscape to remove nutrients, heavy metals, sediment, and other pollutants, especially when used with other sustainable site practices.
- Stabilizes and increases organic content of soils.
- Reduces maintenance needs, such as irrigation and fertilizer.
- Provides wildlife habitat for birds, butterflies, and insects.



110. Formal Prairie Plantings
Waterloo, Ontario



112. Native Plant Garden
Chicago, IL



111. Restored native prairie
Dowagiac, MI

BIORETENTION

Raingardens and wetlands serve as vegetated rainwater bioretention features that retain, cool, cleanse, and infiltrate rainwater before being discharged to sewer systems. Bioretention areas occur in parking lot islands and areas adjacent to buildings to capture excess rainwater runoff from pavement and turf areas during large storm events. These bioretention areas allow some rainwater to infiltrate, while allowing some to pond and be absorbed and evaporated into the atmosphere by native vegetation.

BENEFITS

- Reduces impervious surface runoff volumes and runoff rates.
- Reduces sediments and metals, nutrients, and other pollutants from runoff.
- Provides habitat for birds, butterflies, and other insects.
- Provides a beautiful setting against parking lots and buildings.



I 13. Rainwater Wetland
Minneapolis, MN



I 14. Parking Lot Bioretention
Chicago, IL



I 15. Planted Raingarden
Louisville, KY

II.3 / DESIGN signature plants.



116. RIVERBANK GRAPE /
Vitis riparia

And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God.

-Leviticus 19:10

If a Muslim plants a tree or sows a field and men and beasts and birds eat from it, all of it is charity on his part.

-Haddith

FRAMEWORK PLANTING

The requirement of social justice through charity and tithing, Jewish *Tzedakah* and Islamic *Zakat*, are expounded upon via mandates to leave fruit on the vine for the poor and needy. Islamic and Jewish parables and descriptions of paradise include lush imagery of fruiting vines and trees. The grape has a special, but distinctly different significance in religious writings of both cultures. For Jews, grapes and the wine they produce is part of celebratory ceremonies and used weekly to welcome Shabbat. Muslims, who are forbidden to drink alcohol, use the bounty of a grape harvest to describe how God loves the faithful and hardworking.

Drawing heavily from these stories and religious references, the design of the Framework was inspired by the imagery of the winding grapevine. Riverbank Grape, a species native to the local region, is placed throughout the Framework and garden sites acting as a cultural symbol of celebration, wisdom and charity. Building off of the Riverbank Grape, the Framework design specifies five planting types throughout the site; perennial, prairie, bioretention, ornamental trees and canopy trees.

Each planting type found in the Framework, and eventually throughout nearby neighborhood parks and gardens, is comprised of a set of signature plants. Together the planting types and signature species symbolize Islamic and Jewish philosophies on sustainability and represent plants used by each culture for food, construction and sacred rituals. Planting types and chosen species also provide ecological function by creating new habitat for wildlife, enriching and stabilizing the soil, and slowing and cleansing rainwater falling on the site.

Note: See page 125 for a complete plant list.

BIORETENTION



*Out beyond wrong-doing and right-doing,
there is a field,
I'll meet you there.*

-Rumi

A rainwater cleansing wetland and raingardens in parking lots adjacent to the Framework beautify the expansive pavement while serving important ecological functions.

Cultural Significance:

Grasses and perennials planted in the bioretention areas are reminiscent of the culturally-iconic Middle Eastern prairie landscapes. Throughout the Framework they also represent contemporary Islamic and Jewish sentiments regarding sustainability. With agrarian roots, both cultures have reference to caring for one's fields, the environment, and wildlife.

Ecological Significance:

Bioretention areas help convey, retain, cool, and cleanse rainwater runoff from the surrounding land. Deep root systems help stabilize soils and infiltrate and cool water.

signature bioretention species



117.MEDIAN RAINGARDEN /
Washington D.C.



118.BIG BLUESTEM /
Andropogon gerardii



119.BLACK-EYED SUSAN /
Rudbeckia hirta



120.EARLY MEADOW-RUE /
Thalictrum dioicum



121.MICHIGAN LILY /
Lilium michiganense



122.NODDING WILD RYE /
Elymus canadensis

PRAIRIE



Six years you may sow your field and six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in the field. But in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land, a Sabbath of the Lord: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.

- 25:3-4 Leviticus

Prairie plantings weave throughout the Framework, guiding the visitor across the design. The prairie remains attractive year-round with bright flowering perennials in the spring and summer, attractive fall color, and persistent form that provides winter interest.

Cultural Significance:

The prairie ecosystem is an iconic part of the Mediterranean region of the Middle Eastern landscape, the Fertile Crescent, where Judaism and Islam originate. Extensive references to care, harvest and storing of wheat and barley crops appear in the religious texts of both cultures.

Ecological Significance:

Prairies are a historic part Michigan's pre-European settlement landscape. They provide nesting places for birds and small mammal and pollen for insects and butterflies. With deep and thick root systems, prairie plants slow overland water flow, increase infiltration, and decrease soil erosion.

signature perennials



123.PRAIRIE RESTORATION /
Urbana, IL



124.NORTHERN SEA OATS /
Chasmanthium latifolium



125.PURPLE
CONEFLOWER /
Echinacea purpurea



126.SIDE-OATS GRAMA /
Bouteloua curtipendula



127.SWITCHGRASS /
Panicum virgatum



128.TALL BLAZING STAR /
Liatris aspera

PERENNIALS



For now the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The blossoms have appeared in the land.

-Song of Songs 2:11

Lining the Church Street entrance, perennial plantings welcome visitors into the gardens. Large swaths of perennials lead to and surround gathering areas enhancing the walking experience. Flowering perennials supply a pop of color in the spring and summer, retaining form and texture throughout the year.

Cultural Significance:

Signature perennial plants include those that reference food sources and aromatic flowers. Both religions describe flowering and fruiting plants through prayers of thanksgiving for God's generosity and power.

Ecological Significance:

Native and adapted perennials provide vegetative cover and food for wildlife. In particular, pink and purple toned flower petals attract pollinators, including honey bees and butterflies. Pollination is key to the production of fruits, vegetables, and flowers.

signature perennials



129.PERENNIAL GARDEN /
Berkeley, CA



130.CANADIAN WILD GINGER /
Asarum canadense



131.CLIMBING ROSE /
Rosa setigera



132.FLOWERING ONION /
Allium aflatanense

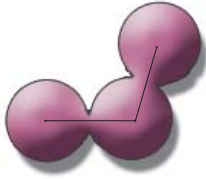


133.GARDEN COSMOS /
Cosmos bipinnatus



134.WOODLAND CROCUS /
Crocus tommasinianus

ORNAMENTAL TREES



And the Lord God formed man (Adam) from the dust of the earth (adamah). The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed the man whom He had formed in the garden. And from the ground the Lord God caused trees to grow that were pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden.

Genesis 2:7-9

Ornamental trees line the Church Street drive and walkways giving the large open space a comfortable human scale. Flowering Dogwood, Louisa Crabapple, and Redbud trees enhance the ground-plane and canopy plantings complimenting each other in form, color, and texture. Rounded low branching tree forms, with aromatic and showy flowers create an attractive display throughout the season.

Cultural Significance:

Flowering, fruiting and ornamental trees mark the change of seasons - spring bloom and fall - harvest, during which religious holidays like the Jewish Tu B'Shvat are celebrated. Islamic mystics, like Rumi, write of how trees pray to the Lord in joy. The apple tree stands as the symbol of the Tree of Life for many religions.

Ecological Significance:

Flowering trees provide shelter and food for birds, insects and butterflies. Trees that hold their fruit, like the Louisa Crabapple, offer late season food for migrating birds and those that winter locally.

signature ornamental trees



135.FLOWERINGDOGWOOD/
Cornus florida

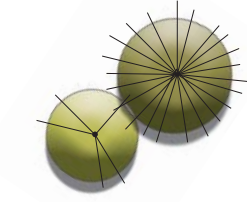


136.LOUISA CRABAPPLE /
Malus louisa



137.REDBUD /
Cercis canadensis

CANOPY TREES



Seest thou not how Allah sets forth a parable? - A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens, of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition.

Surah 014.024

Canopy trees are sprinkled throughout the Framework design to provide shade and a seasonal backdrop for the ground-plane and ornamental tree plantings. Black Cherry, Northern Red Oak and Eastern Red Cedar offer vibrant fall colors, persistent winter forms, and textured bark patterns to retain year round interest. Where canopy trees exist without formal understory plantings, native groundcovers such as Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) and turf alternatives such as Purple Love Grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*) or Buffalo Grass (*Bouteloua dactyloides*) are proposed.

Cultural Significance:

Upright and spreading canopy trees symbolize multiple religious references to how one should strive to be righteous, honest and ethical. Cedar and hardwoods like Black Cherry and Northern Red Oak represent the timber used in construction. Members of the Oak family commonly identify sacred sites of prayer throughout the Middle Eastern landscape.

Ecological Significance:

Providing shady relief to garden visitors, canopy trees reduce the urban heat island effect, minimize street noise and collect particulate matter on their leaves. Mammals find homes in the crooks of tree branches, eating fruit and nuts throughout the year.

signature canopy trees



138.BLACK CHERRY /
Prunus serotina

139.NORTHERN RED OAK /
Quercus rubra

140.EASTERN RED CEDAR /
Juniperus virginiana

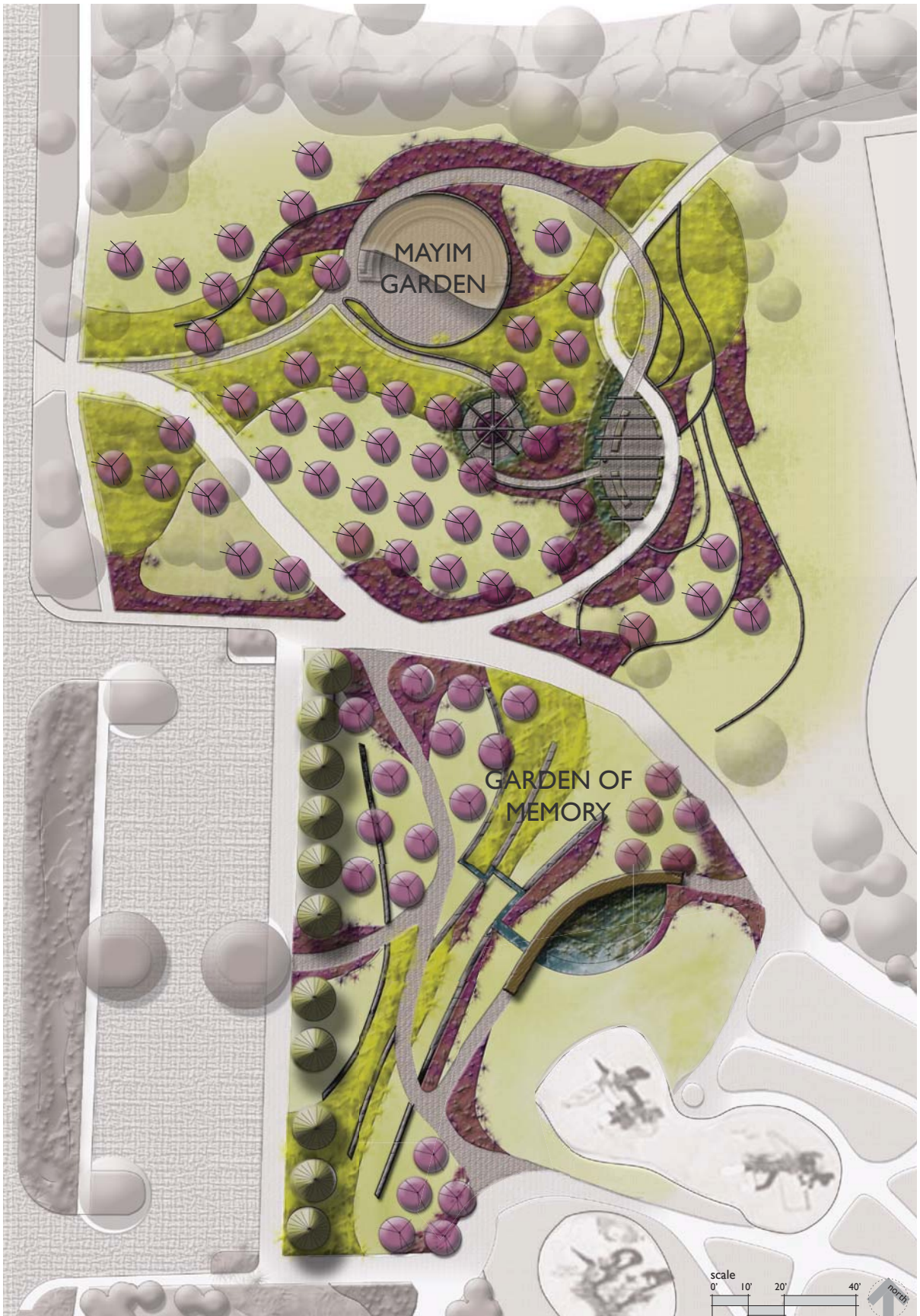
II.3 / DESIGN garden designs.

OVERVIEW

The garden designs, the Mayim Garden and the Garden of Memory translate the Cultural Bridges research and analysis into a detailed garden space. The gardens each draw inspiration from a unique set of cultural references that reflect the Oak Park community, targeting the Jewish and Muslim populations, but welcoming people from all cultures and religions. The gardens expand upon the circulation and connectivity of the Framework, utilizing the cultural plant palette and sustainable design principles, but providing new, more detailed references to Jewish and Muslim history, traditions with art, and plants.

Although described as separate gardens, the Mayim and Memory gardens connect in spacial layout and program. An orchard sprawls between the two and reaches outward, inviting the visitor in. Stone terraces frame the walkway that dissects the gardens, acting as a ubiquitous design element and wayfinding point for the visitor. Each garden provides universal spaces for gathering, education, and social-connectedness for all ages. Referencing the life-giving properties of water, the Mayim Garden guides visitors through a series of destination points which create a hierarchy of spaces for individual enjoyment as well as educational gatherings and community conversations. The Garden of Memory focuses on individual contemplation and smaller family gatherings, referencing the memory of loss and conflict at the water wall but including the idea of hope for connection at the bridged wetland.

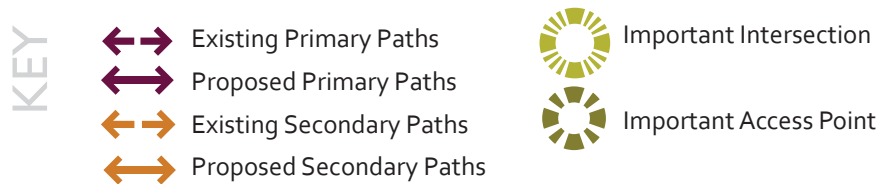
The following section includes an overview of relevant circulation patterns within and between the gardens and the surrounding areas, as well as a detailed description of the design intent and layout.



141. Garden Designs

II.3 / DESIGN garden circulation.

The gardens were designed to connect to and enhance existing circulation patterns. The gardens delineate primary and secondary paths that guide the visitor through the site. In general, primary pathways are the quickest routes to connect to surrounding walks and amenities. Secondary paths are a slower pattern of movement within the network of primary paths that lead to programmatic or design elements.



GARDEN SITES



This intersection is at the nexus of the Mayim and Garden of Memory gardens as well a major circulation route across the Cultural Bridges Framework. The importance of the intersection is delineated via formal perennial plantings surrounding it. Primary and secondary paths within the gardens meet up with existing paths strengthening the ease of movement throughout the site and creating new pathways that respond to existing desire lines.



This node connects to the regional path leading to another freeway overpass to the west. It is also a primary connection to the Temple Emanu-El grounds.



This access node connects to the proposed Framework pathway leading to the residential neighborhood to the northeast. Neighborhood residents were observed walking across this site in this location, creating desire lines. The addition of this connection creates a more direct route from the east to the west side of the site while directing the visitor through the Mayim Garden.



This access point leads to the eastern bound regional pathway extending to an additional freeway overpass park to the southeast. This connection is strengthened by access to and from the Garden of Memory garden design.



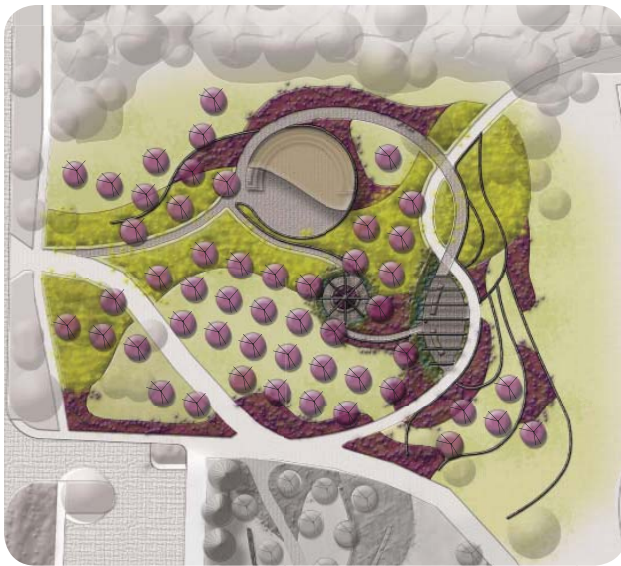
This point is the primary access point leading to both the Garden of Memory and Mayim for students at the Beth Jacob School.



142. Garden Circulation Map

II.3 / DESIGN mayim garden.

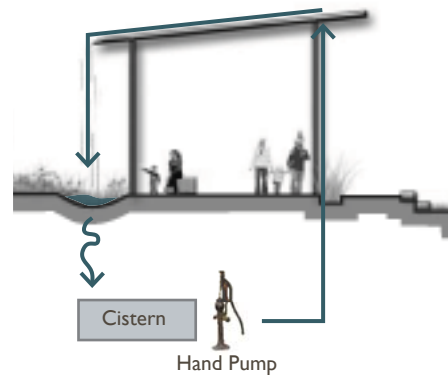
The word *Mayim*, meaning “water” in Hebrew, is said to have many similarities to the word *Chayim*, which is Hebrew for “life.” The connection between water and life is realized through this socially-oriented garden design that focuses in human-human and human-environment interactions. The Mayim Garden provides a public space for education, reflection, and gathering. Each component of the design is tied to the relationship between water and life, and makes reference to important cultural symbols and traditions of the Jewish and Muslim cultures.



I43. Mayim Garden Plan, see pages 107-109.

Building off of the Framework plan, the Mayim Garden pathways weave in and out of one another, reflective of the imagery of the grape vine. A primary path leads the visitor behind the T-ball field toward Church Street and the Garden of Memory design. This path is constructed of permeable paver bricks that provide a formal atmosphere. A secondary path weaves in and out of the primary path, guiding the visitor through a variety of plantings and to three main destinations within the garden. The secondary path builds off of Jewish and Muslim traditions with art, pattern, and calligraphy through a tiled pavement. The pavement design – left undefined – provides an opportunity to engage local artists in Cultural Brides through the pavement pattern design.

The first destination is the Trellis Runnel Patio. The patio is the first of two water features which promotes interaction with recycled rainwater. The trellis acts as a shade structure and foundation for climbing plants, such as the grape vine, but also as a gutter system for rainwater. Each runnel directs the rainwater that falls on it downward into the raingarden to the west of the patio. Water is cleaned by plants and infiltrated into the ground where it is stored in an underground cistern. A manual water pump on the patio allows the visitor to propel the water up a support beam and out onto the gutter system once again, creating a unique and exciting overhead water feature. The gutters on the Trellis Runnel Patio all channel water to the west, but angle upward to the east, the traditional direction for both Muslim and Jewish prayer. An open patio space facing the east allows prayers and ceremonies to be performed here. The location of the runnel downspouts to the west



I44. Runnel system diagram, see page 109.

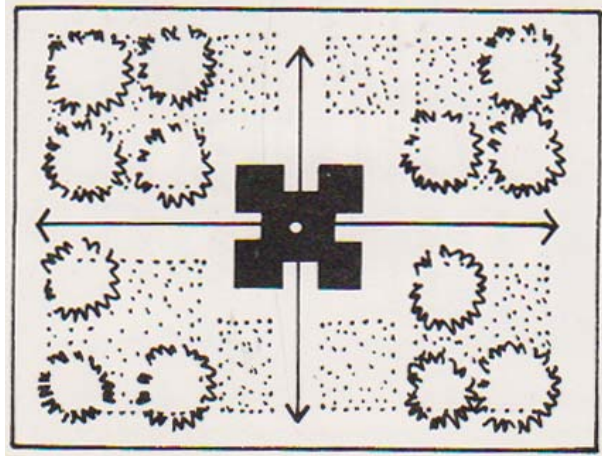
provides a clear, uninhibited view to the east for such events. Benches are also provided on the patio for viewing in either direction, and helping to delineate space on the large patio.

The second destination in the Mayim Garden is the smallest of the three, called the Trellis Runnel Gazebo. The gazebo is similar to the patio in that it provides a runnel pump system that allows the visitor to pump water down a series of gutters on the trellis above, however, the gutters in the gazebo direct water in 8 directions; the four cardinal directions and the 45 degree angles between each of them. The presence of gutters in these 8 directions encloses the gazebo while the water is running down the channels, encompassing the visitor. Attached to the end of each gutter is a rainchain. The rainchain creates pleasant sounds while water is falling from it, and has an enjoyable aesthetic year-round. The rainchains direct water into a raingarden that surround the gazebo.

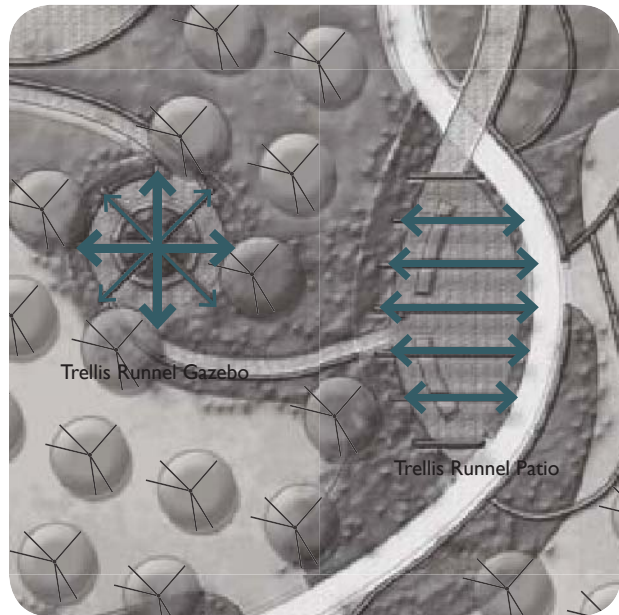
At the center of the gazebo is a circular seatwall and planter. The planter is filled with seasonal perennials, with a special emphasis on strong-scented herbs such as rue, saffron, or salt herbs that evoke Jewish and Muslim religious textual references to plants, as well as provide a sense of security and comfort from familiar smells. At the center of the planter is the support beam where water is propelled to the top of the trellis. Pathways leading to the Trellis Runnel Gazebo are an intimate three feet wide to provide a more secluded gathering space. The combination of the intimate scale, comforting smells, and pleasant sounds encompasses the visitor, creating a unique gathering space for reflection.

The presence of water in the Mayim Garden is evocative of the traditional chahar bagh garden, where water courses are oriented in an axial nature. The gutters in the patio and gazebo build upon this orientation, catering the direction to the use and presence each space seeks to achieve. The interactive nature of these water channels helps to promote healthy relationships with the environment through direct contact with water and plants.

The third destination in the Mayim design is the covered amphitheater. The amphitheater is a paved stage and seating area that provides a space for public events, education, and gathering. The amphitheater is covered by a rippling fabric canopy that evokes the behavior of water and directs views to the adjacent prairie plantings, orchard, and the water runnel features.



145. Diagram of a chahar bagh garden



146. Layout of runnel systems








This amphitheater space is ideal for large groups such as school children, discussion groups promoting multiculturalism, such as Zeitouna, or outdoor services and ceremonies.

Throughout much of the design, most notably on the western side of the garden is a series of stone terraces. The terraces are evocative of traditional agricultural practice which used terraces to irrigate dry environments. This imagery reflects the historical agriculture of the Detroit Metro area and of the Middle East, where both Judaism and Islam originated. The terraces are enhanced by prairie and perennial plantings that direct views and movement through the space toward the T-ball field, while providing a stabilized slope that is ideal for play, relaxation, or observation.

Planting beds throughout the Mayim Garden are represented through planting groupings based off the Framework's signature plants. Perennial plantings frame entrances and gathering spaces, creating and inviting entrance. A large swath of prairie plants extend diagonally through the site, creating vistas that reflect the native plantings of the region. A field of orchard trees is planted throughout the garden on a diagonal, which evokes Midwestern agricultural practice and represents the shared Jewish and Muslim traditions of providing for the needy. Underneath the orchard and throughout much of the outer parts of the design is a native turf grass that allows people to access it, but also provides the important benefits related to water and ecology of a native plant.


II.3 / DESIGN mayim garden plan.


KEY


-  Crabapple Orchard
-  Native Turf Grass
-  Raingardens
-  Primary Pathway:
Permeable brick pavers
-  Prairie Plantings
-  Secondary Pathway:
Tiled pavement (see
character image d)
-  Perennial Plantings


CHARACTER IMAGES

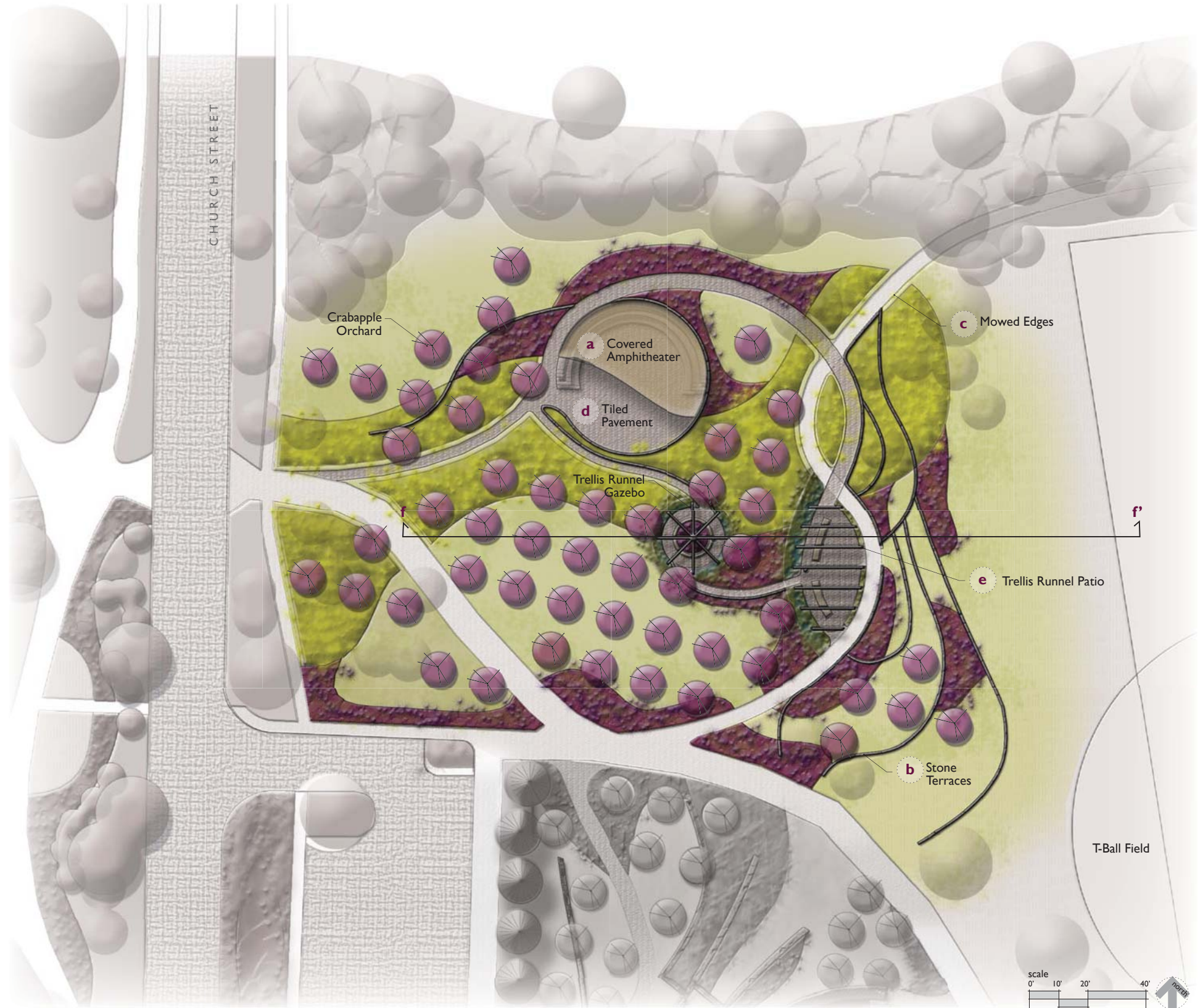
- a** **Covered Amphitheater**
147. A covered amphitheater provides space for lectures, public celebrations, and general gathering.
Austin, TX


- b** **Stone Terraces**
148. Stone terraces create seatwalls for relaxation and recreation viewing.
Louisville, KY


- c** **Mowed Edges**
149. Two foot mowed borders around prairie plantings create a sense of care and order.
Gray Summit, MO


- d** **Tiled Pavement**
150. Tiled pavement inspired by Jewish and Muslim traditions with art and calligraphy denote this space as a destination.
Lisbon, Portugal

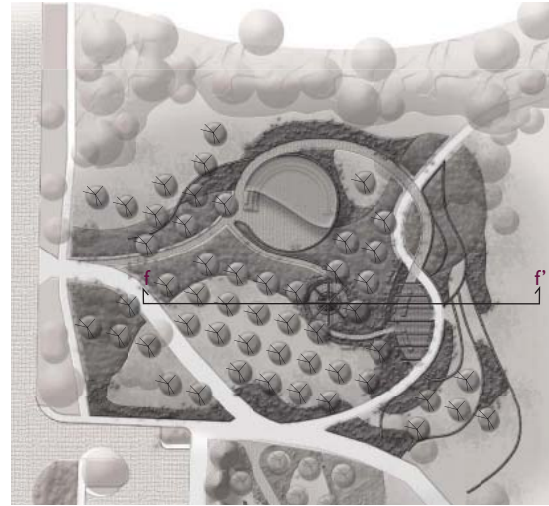




151. Mayim Garden Plan

II.3 / DESIGN mayim garden details.

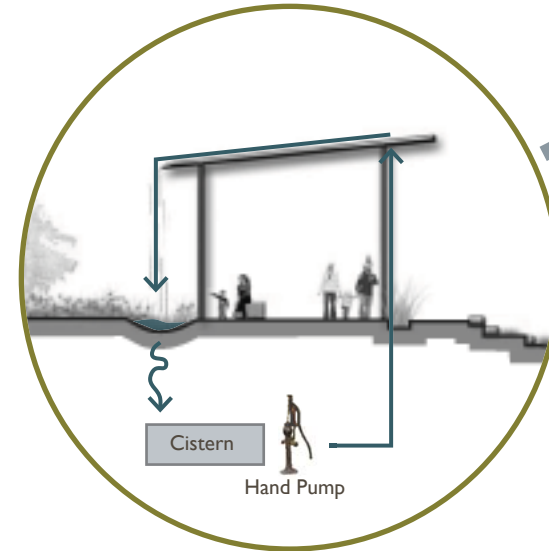
DETAIL KEY



152. Mayim Detail Key

e Trellis Runnel System

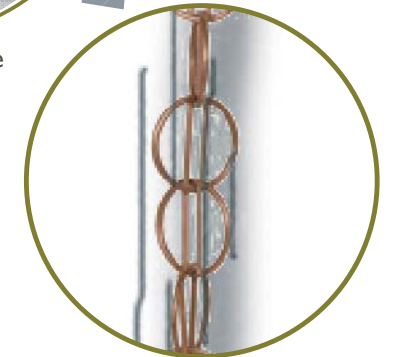
The trellis runnel systems proposed on the gazebo and patio operate independently during rain events. Runnels - or gutters are oriented in an east to west direction on the patio and radiating from a central point in eight directions on the gazebo. During rain events, water falling on these gutters is channeled downward into a raingarden. The water is infiltrated and stored in an underground cistern. A hand pump is located near both trellis structures. When the pump is operated, water is propelled up a support beam and back down the runnels, spilling off the edge into the raingardens. The Trellis Runnel Gazebo has rainchains attached to the end of each of the gutters which create a pleasing aesthetic and pleasant sounds when water runs down them.



153. Runnel system diagram



154. Interactive water pump



155. Rainchain provides aesthetic value and pleasant sounds.

f Mayim Garden Section

This section describes the relationship between the walkways, orchard, trellis runnels, terraces, and the surrounding context. A hierarchy of walking and gathering spaces provide an opportunity for multiple human-human and human-environment interactions to occur. The Crabapple Orchard provides a relaxing, informal space for gathering, while the Trellis Runnel Gazebo and Patio provide more formal gathering, with interactive water elements that encourage positive interplay with the environment. Stone terraces and an open field leading up to the existing T-ball field provide unprogrammed space for observation or recreation.



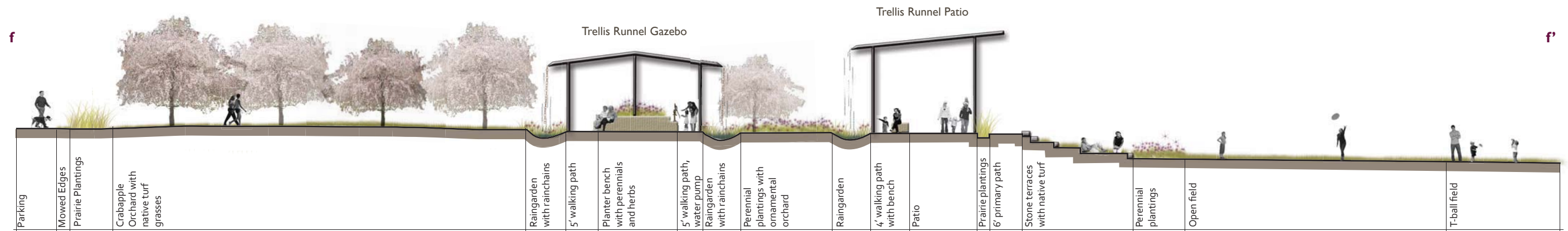
156. Planter Seatwall Montana



157. Planted trellis Salcedo Village, Philippines



158. Runnel downspout into raingarden Portland, OR



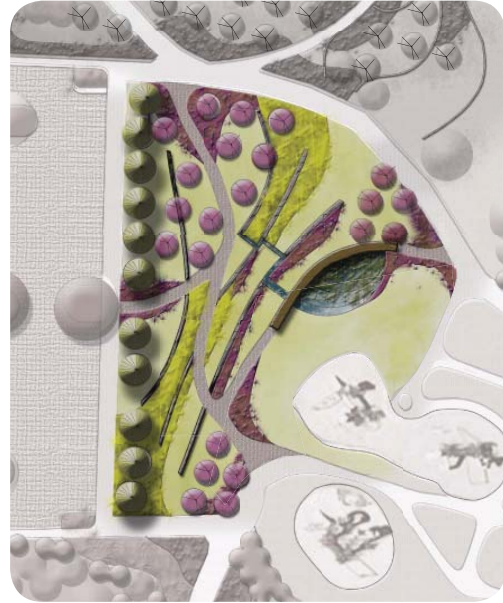
159. Mayim Garden Section

scale 1" = 20'
0' 5' 10' 20'

II.3 / DESIGN garden of memory.

Throughout the interviews and research for Cultural Bridges we found both heartbreaking memories of struggle and loss, but we also found inspiring stories of collaboration and hope. Garden of Memory is a testament to histories and future of the Jewish and Muslim communities of Oak Park.

Garden of Memory provides a quiet entryway into Cultural Bridges framework. Bounded on the west by a parking lot and streetscape its western edge utilizes existing evergreen trees as a sound and sight barrier between the garden and parking spaces. Visitors entering from the parking lot are immersed in a cool grove of evergreens and the Crabapple Orchard. For both religious cultures the tall cedars are symbols of the strength and goodness of mankind; the Orchard a symbol of charity providing food for birds and small mammals throughout the year. This Orchard is a cool respite from the heat of the street.



160. Garden of Memory Plan, see pages 113-115.

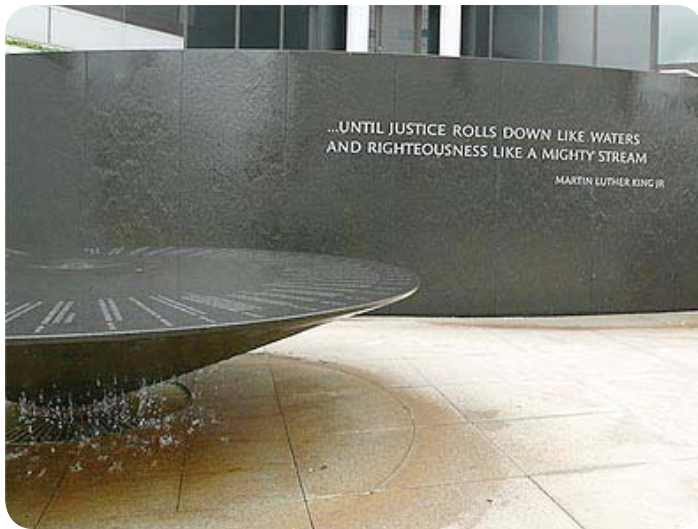


161. Engraved memorial wall
Winnipeg, Canada



162. Wailing Wall, Jerusalem, Israel

Walking through the Orchard, up a short staircase to the first terrace one meets the primary path that connects the Garden of Memory to the Mayim Garden. At the top of the path the key feature of the site is found, the Weeping Memory Wall. This 2.5' wall of rounded stone is a water feature that cuts through the site, west to east, down to the play area. Water starts at the top of the wall and slowly trickles over the stones into a water course that leads down to a wetland. The Weeping Memory Wall pays homage to the Western or Wailing Wall in Old Jerusalem. The Western Wall has deep religious significance for Jews and Muslims. Muslims believe it is the site where the Prophet Muhammad was transported to heaven and for Jews it is a remnant of the Holy Temple.



163. Civil Rights Memorial by Maya Lin
Montgomery, Al

Drawing on memorial precedents, like Maya Lin's civil rights memorial in Montgomery, Alabama the top of the Memory Wall is engraved with a quote. Rumi, a Muslim sufi poet writes of the joy of nature and human connection. The engraving reads, "Out beyond the ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing there is a field, I will meet you there." This is a hope and a wish at the site in the garden where one can not cross the wall; the terrace above is covered in prairie grasses that make sitting uncomfortable.

Following the wall east, water falls into a small channel and zig-zags back and forth across the uneven terraces. The terraces now include perennials and on which turf grass for visitors may wander close to the water channel, yet plantings and uneven terrain make it difficult to cross. At the bottom of the hill the water falls into a small wetland area. This area circulates water from the Weeping Wall and collects new rainwater. Here the water is bridged by a rough cut cedar bridge. Simple in its design it connects the broken garden landscape and broken community. The bridge path plays a second role in connecting the framework to the play area. Beyond the wetland a clover mix turf grass connects to the play spaces. The terraces provide parents a place to sit and watch their children explore the wetland or play on in the playground equipment.

Finally the plants throughout the Garden of Memory recall Jewish and Muslim cultural references to religious philosophies on sustainability. The prairie planting and wetland garden provide a variety of habitats for butterflies and birds. Local school groups and nature centers can utilize the site for environmental and cultural education programming.



164. Tree planting by local school children at Muslim Cemetery
Hainault Forest, Scotland

II.3 / DESIGN garden of memory.

KEY

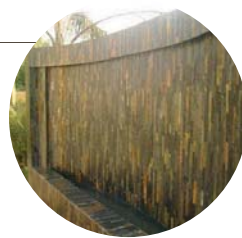
-  Crabapple Orchard
-  Native Turf Grass
-  Coniferous Trees
-  Primary Pathway: Paving stone
-  Raingardens
-  Boardwalk / Bridge: Rough cut cedar
-  Prairie Plantings
-  Perennial Plantings

CHARACTER IMAGES

g **Wetland Bridge**
165. Simple wooden bridge crosses wetland and healing the broken weeping wall
Hamilton Township, NJ

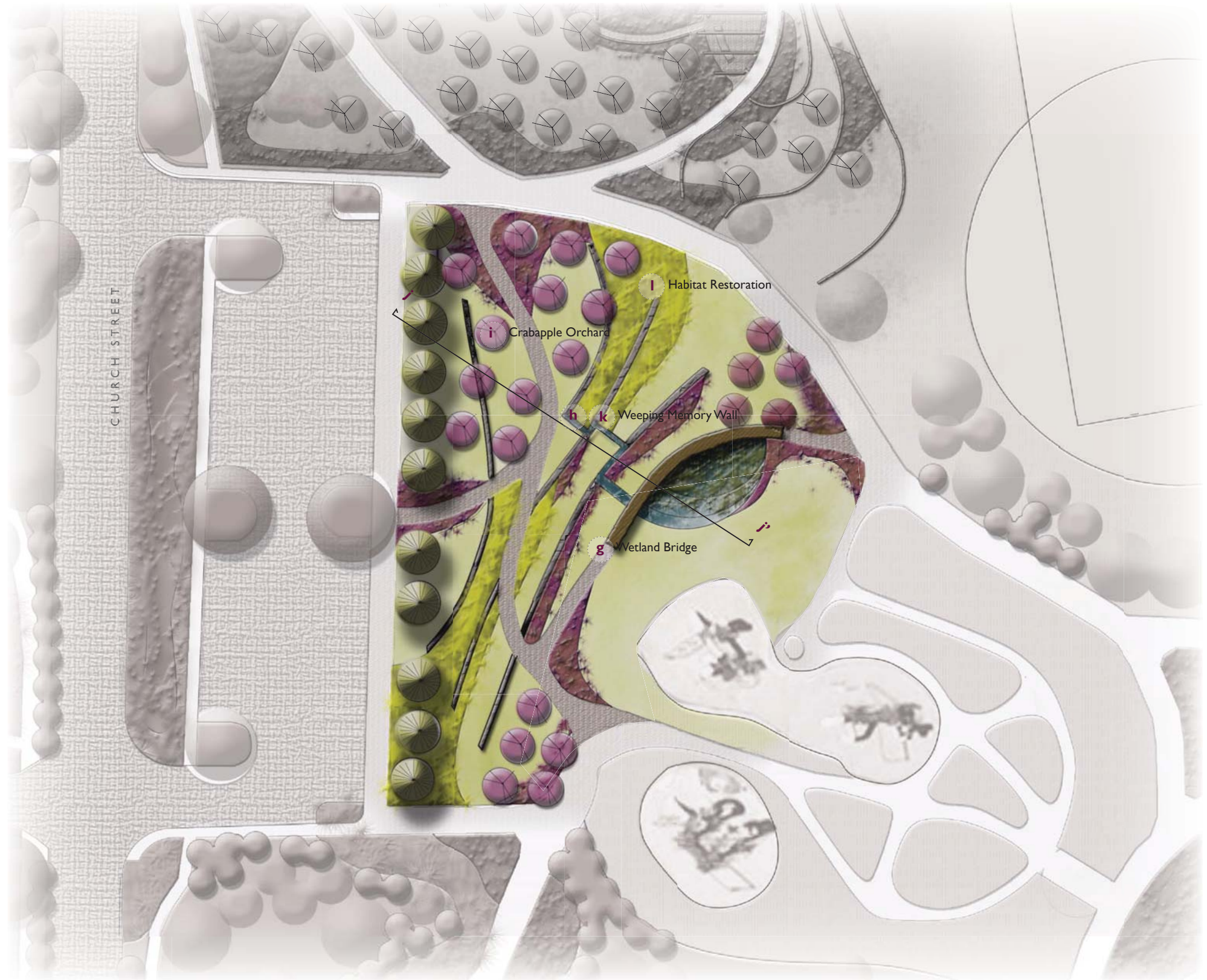


h **Weeping Memory Wall**
166. Water falling quietly over stone wall creates a contemplative sound
Johannesburg, South Africa

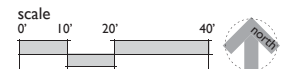


See detail k.

i **Crabapple Orchard**
167. Crabapple orchard shelters walkway, provides year round aesthetic interest, food and shelter for migrating birds
Brooklyn, NY

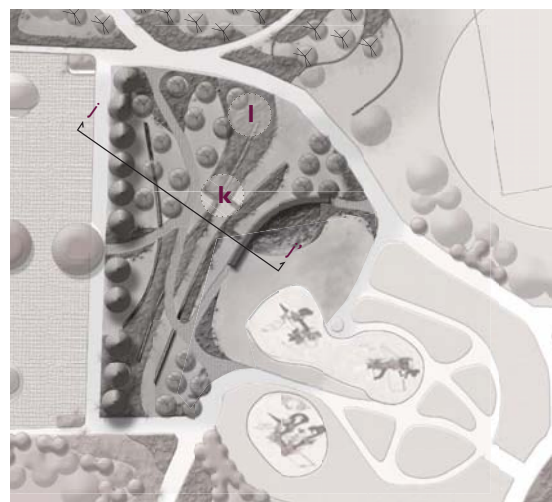


168. Garden of Memory Plan

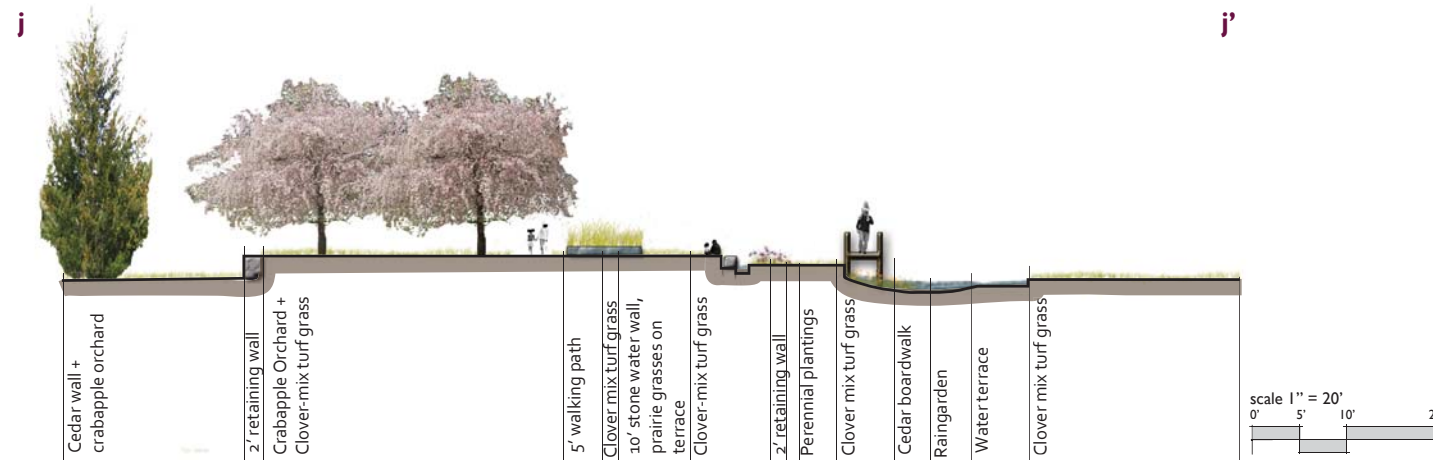


II.3 / DESIGN garden of memory details.

DETAIL KEY



169. Garden of Memory Key



170. Terraced Orchard Section

j Terraced Orchard Section

Shallow terraces recall the agricultural methods of Middle Eastern Jews and Muslim farmers and the conflict between these two cultures. On the west side of the Memory Garden is a Crabapple Orchard and cedar wind break that buffer visitors from the parking lot and streetscape. The east facing terraces include prairie, perennial and clover turf grass plantings. Clover grass mix requires little water and is comfortable for family picnics. The slight rise of each terrace provides an view of wetland, children's play area and the eastern framework.

k Weeping Memory Wall

The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem is a highly disputed piece of land that holds deep spiritual meaning for Jews and Muslims alike. The Weeping Memory Wall zig-zags down an uneven terraced landscape and seeping water over its edges as it moves towards the wetland. At its highest point the top edge is engraved with a quote by the Sufi poet, Rumi, "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there." The wall is tall enough that it is not easily crossed, and the top terrace is covered with prairie plantings that make it inaccessible. As the wall moves down the hill side the terraces are planted with grass that allow access to the water course. Eventually, at the bottom of the hill terraces merge and become a shared body of water bridged by a cedar post boardwalk.



171. Montage: engraved stone walls, terraced garden planting and water channel are featured in the Weeping Memory Wall



172. Montage: bird watching and butterfly catching can be enjoyed in restored prairie and wetland habitats

l Habitat Restoration - Community Education

At the bottom terrace is a small wetland where water from the Weeping Memory Wall is recirculated and rainwater is captured. The small wetland is bridged by a boardwalk depicting the possibility of communication across cultures. The wetland provides habitat for butterflies and birds as well as opportunities for environmental education programs for local school children. Birdwatchers will find the board walk and grassy turf a great place for watching migrating birds that utilize the framework plantings for food and rest.

II.4 / DESIGN conclusion.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Cultural Bridges design seeks to be a precedent for embracing cultural authenticity and ecological integration as inherent components of landscape design. Through the research, designs, and design process, we have identified components of the Jewish and Muslim communities in Southeastern Michigan that commemorate, educate, and inspire a healing process between these two conflicting cultures. The Cultural Bridges project acts as a first phase recommendation for a reimagined community in Metro Detroit that celebrates the unique cultural, religious, and ecological diversity of the area.

Four principles guided the designs and the design process for the Cultural Bridges project. Each of these principles played an important role in the decision-making process, and led the concepts and theories behind the final product. Below, a description and analysis of each principle reveals the manner in which it contributed to the project:

- **To improve ecological health, function, and diversity.**
- **To reflect the rich cultural and religious character of the community.**
- **To educate the community about the diversity of Oak Park, highlighting Jewish and Muslim cultures.**
- **To provide a place for conversation, reflection, and peace.**

To improve ecological health, function, and diversity.

In order to help heal the over-developed and neglected landscape of Oak Park, a number of sustainable site practices were implemented to create an overall healthy landscape – healthy ecosystem, healthy water, and healthy people. Sustainable site practices proposed in the Cultural Bridges Framework, gardens, and the surrounding region demonstrate how design can improve the ecological health of a public space. Overland water flow was minimized by using native grasses and perennials to help build deep root systems to take up large amounts of water, increasing infiltration. Permeable pavement replaced traditional asphalt and concrete, and leftover rainwater runoff was captured from rooftops, parking lots and streets and filtered in bioretention areas, such as raingardens and a wetland. Native or adapted canopy and ornamental trees were used to create a human-scale walking and driving environment, while minimizing traffic noise, contributing



I73. Framework Bioretention Section, see page 85.

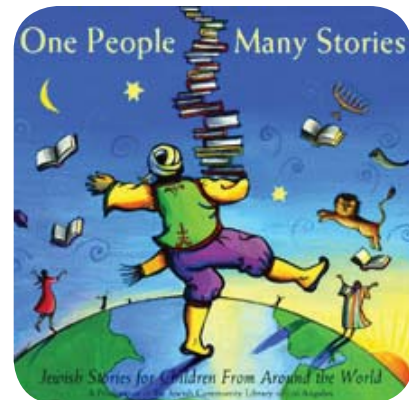
significant human health benefits. Proposed native plantings require minimal maintenance and irrigation and contribute greatly to the biodiversity of the area by providing food and habitat for birds, butterflies and small mammals. Finally, symbolizing the natural and agricultural history of the area, these plants showcase how a resident might use native plants in an aesthetically pleasing way. Each of these strategies work together to create a functioning ecosystem that augments the regional ecosystem and the well-being of community members.

Although we have built a strong ecological framework for the design, it is weakened by a lack of educational programming. While visitors may enjoy the year round colors and textures of native plants, they may not understand their ecological value. Similarly, permeable pavement, raingardens, and wetlands are all ecologically significant components of the Cultural Bridges design that do add aesthetic value, but they are very different than traditional design, and therefore may not be fully understood by the visitor. Educational signage on the site, and one day throughout the Cultural Corridor would improve the impact of the design. Aesthetic value combined with an understanding of the function of native planting and sustainable practices, the Cultural Bridges design could influence a new ecologically, sustainably-minded aesthetic within the traditional residential landscape of the surrounding area.

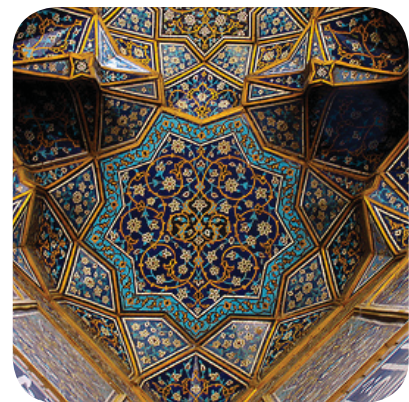
To reflect the rich cultural and religious character of the community.

As designers who were neither local community members nor from Jewish or Muslim backgrounds, we needed to draw upon an array of sources in order to reflect the cultural and religious character of the community. To that end, we utilized the participatory design techniques of workshops with student groups on the University of Michigan campus, and interviews with local stakeholders in throughout Southeastern Michigan. Through historical and contemporary research, we gained knowledge of the complicated historical relationship between Jews and Muslims as well as shared traditions with art, nature, and the garden. We explored religious traditions with plants as well as ethics related to sustainability and caring for the earth to give cultural meaning to the designs. Lastly, we drew from precedents by international designers, local artists and religious groups who have attempted to design place-based, multicultural spaces that address issues of cultural tolerance, peace, and memory. By drawing from these research initiatives, we were able to extract authentic cultural references that were used to inspire and give meaning to the designs. This can be seen most notably through the imagery of the grape vine, the presence of culturally meaningful plants such as flowering trees and prairie grasses, and the use of water, terracing, and orchards that reference the historical landscape.

Despite a diverse range of research initiatives, there are also significant shortcomings in our design process that weakened the project and its ability to engage the community. Based on our review of current community



174. Jewish Children's Stories



175. Ceiling art at the Charbagh Theological School, Isfahan, Iran

design practices, we proposed that engaging Oak Park community members in the design process through cultural sharing workshops could allow us to gather information that was not readily available in literature. We were looking for personal stories and cultural reflections that might be incorporated into our designs as a way to reflect the local culture of the neighborhood and engage community members in ongoing conversations about culture and religion. When we were unable to hold workshops with the Temple Emanu-El or Oak Park community members, we had to reassess our method of collecting contemporary perspectives from these religious communities. As an alternative, we approached members of the Jewish and Muslim student communities on the University of Michigan's campus as a way to test our theory on participatory design as an opportunity for cultural sharing and education. However, the lack of a combined Jewish and Muslim workshop was a loss for our design development. Since this workshop did not occur, we were unable to test the premise that the sharing of cultural stories between religion groups might contribute to opening lines of communication about cultural diversity. In the end, while this select group of University students did provide us with insightful stories and views, we do not want to suggest that they were an equivalent substitute for true community representation.

As proposed by Juarez and Brown, we also decided to use interviews as a way to supplement the workshops. The one on one interviews we conducted gave us direct contact with Jewish Oak Park residents as well as with members of the University of Michigan Jewish community, who we could not reach through workshops. Through these conversations with Oak Park community members, students from Hillel, and a workshop with MSA, we were able to gather cultural inspiration for the Cultural Bridges design. Perhaps the larger issue, however, is that the majority of the information we gathered reflected the unique community of the University of Michigan – not of Oak Park. Given that we were unable to work with Oak Park community members, we could not test the supposition that community engagement would support long term sustainability on this site.

Despite the lack of engagement of the Oak Park community, we learned a great deal through our participatory process. The process of art-making in a group gave people a sense of comfort in sharing their personal stories. The group atmosphere of the workshop also allowed people to bounce ideas off one another, and helped build a sense of community between them. However, given the time constraints of a workshop, there simply was not enough time to ask follow up questions or have in-depth conversations about religion and sustainability. The interviews, however, did provide ample opportunity to cater each conversation to the person who was being interviewed, and discussions were therefore significantly more in-depth than the workshops. Given these lessons learned, for any further development of Cultural Bridges, or any other projects that utilize culturally-based participatory design, we would recommend combining these two methods. That is, holding a cultural sharing workshop with a group, and then conducting one on one interviews as a follow up session to gain detailed, relevant cultural inspiration.



176. Cultural Corridor Map, see page 75.

Even though we were unable to work with Oak Park residents, we were able to test the premise that community participation, in this case by members of the greater Jewish and Muslim communities, could inform and inspire landscape design. Both the cultural sharing workshop and the interviews highlighted participants' memories and connections to the idea of home and community. These concepts were woven into the Framework and garden designs through the creation of a network of spaces that allow for rest, intimate conversation, meetings and recreation. The use of specific plant species mentioned in the religious writings was an attempt to connect the community to the landscape through recognizable symbols of their past and present culture. The plant colors, shapes and smells were chosen to be evocative of home and help to create a sense of comfort for those who recognized them. These cultural connections could have been enhanced by signage that illuminated these references. In particular, specific textual references might have increased the learning experience for visitors. In attempting to reflect the diversity of the community, one of the significant challenges we faced was the site's location on a Jewish Campus. Inspired by the Temple Emanu-El's Garden *Chavurah* committee's interest in reaching out to the nearby Muslim community, we think of this garden as a first phase in a community wide celebration of diversity, where many other cultures will be highlighted throughout the Cultural Corridor. Although we have some concern that the Islamic community is smaller than the Jewish community, we made a large effort to represent both voices equally throughout the project.

Throughout the research process, we found it challenging to find non-racist or reactionary information on contemporary Islamic culture. It should be noted that we encountered anti-Semitic writings as well as anti-Muslim writings, but access to academic and less biased information on Jewish culture was more widely available than for Muslim culture. One of the issues we wanted to explore as designers were directly connected to this issue –how does one design with authenticity and sensitivity for communities they are not a part of? As described above, we gathered a variety of historic and contemporary information on culture, religion, and values, which informed our design decisions. Even with extensive research, there are shortcomings in our understanding of the historic conflict, and the anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim sentiments these cultures face which have prevented these communities from working together in the past. We hope that the design process and the design outcome provide an opportunity to help combat some of this misinformation and perhaps open new lines of communication in the Oak Park community.

To educate the community about the diversity of Oak Park, highlighting Jewish and Muslim cultures.

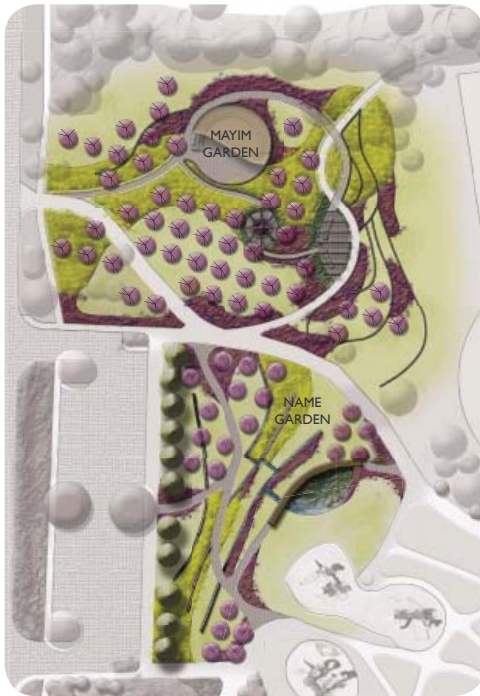
The Cultural Bridges participatory process was designed to provide an opportunity for community education regarding local diversity which would be reflected through the final design. When we engaged participants outside the city of Oak Park, we also had to rethink our idea of community education approaching it in the broadest sense. In the alternative approach we took, the MSA and Hillel groups became part of the larger community education process. This workshop contributed to the concept of community education in two ways. First, it gave participants an overview of Islam's history with gardens, plants and contemporary examples of shared multicultural spaces with which they may not have been familiar. Second, by sharing their personal histories, participants learned more about their own religion's perspective on nature and sustainability. Evaluations of the workshop and



177. Workshop with University of Michigan Muslim Students Association

the follow up contact with these students implied that story telling experience helped strengthen friendships as the participants learned more about their friends' backgrounds and faith. A shared workshop would have provided us a chance to share a historic perspective and perhaps more importantly allow participants to share personal stories across religions. Through gathering spaces designed within Cultural Bridges, we hope to mitigate this weakness by providing physical places for lectures, discussion groups, or informal conversation revolving around multiculturalism.

To provide a place for conversation, reflection, and peace.



178. Garden Designs: Mayim Garden and the Garden of Memory, see page 100.

Through precedent research into multicultural shared spaces and conversations with Jewish and Muslim men and women in Southeastern Michigan, we were able to extract shared ideas about how to create reflective, peaceful spaces. The two most prominent values were universalism and comfort. Designing a space that has a sense of comfort means creating a place that people can relate to, where they have a sense of personal security. Many of the people we interviewed spoke of the home as one of the strongest symbols of cultural comfort, and the senses – smells, sights, and feelings – they associate with it. We translated this idea of home by creating a place that is evocative of the cultural roots of the Jewish and Muslim community, and the historical landscape of the region. By recreating historic prairies and agricultural systems, the visitor is reminded of the history of the land. Incorporating plants, symbols, and forms that evoke Jewish and Muslim traditions – such as the grapevine, orchard, and water in the garden – created a space that feels molded from the community. The second value we drew from was the idea of universalism. Dani Karavan's Square of Tolerance showed us the power of simplicity and universalism – if you can find a component of the

space that can easily relate to a number of people, you are more likely to engage them in the design. For Karavan, the universal component is the olive tree and the quote. For Cultural Bridges, we took a more ecological approach. Even though we wanted to celebrate Jewish and Muslim culture specifically, we wanted the designs to appeal to a larger group of people. By incorporating native Midwestern landscape iconography – something local residents of both cultures and religions could relate to - we created an environment that appeals to a larger population. Within this celebration of native landscape, we also drew heavily from the imagery of the grape vine, a plant with significant cultural and religious affiliations for Jewish and Muslim cultures. The relationship between Jews and Muslims can only improve with interaction, and to facilitate it, we have proposed a diverse range of gathering spaces that could promote conversation and learning.

By creating a space that feels safe and relatable to many people, we hope to have created a common ground for Jewish and Muslim community members to congregate. We have established a large variety of spaces, some formal and some informal. It is our hope that each person who visits Cultural Bridges will be able to find a space within the gardens or the Framework which they can relate to. For example, someone looking for quiet reflection may sit beneath the orchard or visit the Weeping Memory Wall or the Trellis Runnel Gazebo. A visitor who is looking for camaraderie or a space for conversation might visit the amphitheater or the Trellis Runnel Patio.

SUMMARY

Landscape architects have a social responsibility to design spaces that provide users a chance to engage each other and explore the landscape. They should address community issues and ecological concerns throughout the design process. Doing so will connect users to the new space and each other, thereby supporting sustainability of the community and its public space. If this project were to come to fruition it would require addressing some of the shortcomings described above. In particular for this project and for others that address communities where there are conflicting histories or interests that need to be reflected in a public space, one must include community participation as a part of the design process. Authentically reflecting a culture requires exploration of historic and contemporary cultural icons. It may be possible to reflect a cultural group through research, but including a current voice adds a necessary contemporary perspective that may touch local users in a way that historic representation alone may not. Community participation can be handled in many ways, but if that is a designer's goal, one must find a way to represent the many voices of a community through the design process and in the final design. Where the Cultural Bridges designs fall short is in representing the actual voices of Oak Park Community members.

Through historic, cultural and religious research on the art, gardens and plants related to these communities, and the use of contemporary perspectives on nature and religion, the Cultural Bridges design highlights the religious and landscape histories of Oak Park. Although we have already identified some weakness in the design, ultimately, the success or the failure of the project relies heavily upon the users. We have provided spaces for social interaction, shared symbols to link the community, a framework for participatory design to take place, and opportunities for education to help promote a peaceful future for Jews and Muslims in Oak Park. But, if the user is not open to healing the disparate relationship between the Jews and Muslims, the Cultural Bridges designs may not achieve their goal. A visitor who is open and willing to work toward a peaceful future together will find many opportunities help promote and cultivate this relationship through learning, discussing, and reflection.

III

APPENDIX

plant database.

The plant palette used throughout Cultural Bridges was inspired by Islamic and Jewish religious and vernacular texts. Native or adapted plants were used to represent the specific plant described in each quote, and were selected for their aesthetic and ecological properties. The Cultural Bridges plant database highlights the textual reference for each plant type or species, as well as the appropriate conditions and ecological value for each. The plant database describes plants used in the Cultural Bridges design (seen in gray) as well as additional recommended species (seen in white) fitting the cultural, ecological, and aesthetic criterion.

TYPE	CULTURAL REFERENCE*	RELIGIOUS SOURCE*	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	TYPE	HT x WIDTH	FORM	LIGHT**	PERSISTENCE	HYDROLOGICAL TRAITS	FOLIAGE COLOR	FALL COLOR	FLOWERS	WILDLIFE
ORNAMENTAL TREES														
Apple	"And We said: O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the garden and eat from it a plenteous (food) wherever you wish and do not approach this tree, for then you will be of the unjust." "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver"	Sura II V.35 Proverbs 25:11	Louisa Flowering Crabapple	<i>Malus louisa</i>	Tree	10-15' x 10-15'	Weeping	FS	Deciduous	Normal to moist soil	Medium glossy green	Yellow, orange	Pink, Spring-Summer	Attracts birds
Flowering Trees	"...During the day I help with the gardening. He is both a tender of flowers and flowering trees..."	Rumi	Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Tree	15-25' x 15-26'	Vase	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Moist, well drained soil	Medium green	Yellow	Pink, Spring	Attracts birds, bees, + butterflies
			Flowering Dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	Tree	15-20' x 15-20'	Rounded	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Moist to dry soil	Medium green	Purple, red	White + pink, Spring	Attracts birds, butterflies
CANOPY TREES														
Cedar	"But they turned away (from God) and We sent them the flood (released) from the Dams, and We converted their two Garden (rows) into gardens producing bitter fruit and tamarisks and some few (stunted) Lote trees." "The righteous shall flourish like like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shal floursih in the courts of our god."	Sura V:16 Psalm 92:12-13	Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Tree	25-40' x 12-15'	Pyramidal	FS	Evergreen	Dry to moist soil	Medium to dark green		Inconspicuous	Attracts bees, butterflies, birds
			White Cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Tree	25-40' x 10-15'	Pyramidal	PSh-FS	Evergreen	Dry to wet soil	Medium yellow-green		Yellow, Spring	Cover plant for small mammals and nesting site for birds
Cherry	Seest thou not how Allah sets forth a parable? - A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens,- of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition.	Sura V:14:24	Black Cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Tree	60-90' x 35-50'	Oval	FS-FSh	Deciduous	Moist to dry soil	Medium green	Yellow + orange	White, Spring	Attracts birds, butterflies + small mammals
Cypress	"The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir, and the cypress together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary; and will glorify the place at my feet".	Isaiah 60:13	Bald Cypress	<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	Tree	50-75' x 25-35'	Pyramidal	PSh-FS	Deciduous	Wet to dry soil	Yellow-green	Copper and yellow	Brown, Spring	Cover plant for small mammals and nesting site for birds
Oak	"And it will be against all the cedars of Lebanon that are lofty and lifted up, against all the oaks of Bashan"	Isaiah 2: 13	Northern Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Tree	40' x 40'	Rounded	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Moist to dry soil	Medium green	Red	Yellow, Green + Brown, Spring	Attracts hummingbirds, birds + mammals
			White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	Tree	50-75' x 50-80'	Pyramidal + rounded	PSh-FS	Deciduous	Moist to dry soil	Medium to dark green	Red	Brown, Spring	Food plant for small mammals

TYPE	CULTURAL REFERENCE*	RELIGIOUS SOURCE*	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	TYPE	HT x WIDTH	FORM	LIGHT**	PERSISTENCE	HYDROLOGICAL TRAITS	FOLIAGE COLOR	FALL COLOR	FLOWERS	WILDLIFE
SHRUBS														
Cedar	"I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together."	Isa 41:19 (RSV) Isa 60:13; Eccl 24:13, 50:10	Common Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Shrub		Spreading	FS	Evergreen	Dry soil	Medium green		Yellow, Spring	Attracts birds
			Kosteri Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana 'Kosteri'</i>	Shrub	3-5' x 15-25'	Spreading	PSh-FS	Evergreen	Dry to moist soil	Medium green		Inconspicuous	Attracts bees, butterflies, birds
Rose	"When the sky is rent assunder, and it becomes rose red like ointment." "I am the rose of Sharon the lily of the valley."	Sura LV (Rahman-Most Gracious)V:37 Song of Solomon	Climbing Rose	<i>Rosa setigera</i>	Shrub	6' x 15'	Spreading	FS-FSh	Deciduous	Moist - dry soil	Dark Green	Red, purple	White + Pink, Spring	Attracts birds
			Prairie Rose	<i>Rosa arkansana</i>	Shrub	12-18" x 12-18"	Sprawling	FS	Deciduous	Moist to dry soil	Medium green		Pink, Spring-Summer	Attracts birds, butterflies
			Prickly Rose	<i>Rosa acicularis</i>	Shrub	6-10' x 4-6'	Upright + spreading	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Wet to dry soil	Medium-dark green		White + pink, Spring-summer	Attracts birds
			Smooth Rose	<i>Rosa blanda</i>	Shrub	4-6' x 4-6'	Upright + sprawling	FS	Deciduous	Dry soil	Medium-dark green		White + pink, Summer	Attracts birds
PERENNIALS														
Fruiting Plants - Tzedakah	"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare. You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the Lord am your God."	Leviticus 19:10	Virginia Strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	Perennial	6-12" x 12-15"	Spreading	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Dry soil	Medium-dark green		White, Spring-summer	Attracts bees, butterflies, birds
Garlic	"...we cannot bear with one food, therefore pray lord on our behalf to bring forth for us out of what the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." "We remember the fish we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic."	Sura Chapter: 16 , Verse: 11 Numbers 11:15	Common Garlic	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Perennial	12-18" x 6-9"	Upright	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Moist - well-drained soil	Medium green		Pink + White, Summer	Attracts butterflies
Ginger	"The shall be served on silver dishes, and beakers as large as goblets; silver goblets which they themselves shall measure; and cups brim-full with ginger flavored waters from a fountain called Salsibil."	Sura 76:15-18 Dawood Ber. 36b; Yoma 81b	Canadian Wild Ginger	<i>Asarum canadense</i>	Perennial	4-6" x 18-24"	Spreading	FSh-PS	Deciduous	Moist - well-drained soil	Medium glossy green		Purple, Spring	Attracts butterflies
Grapevine	"Verily for the Righteous there will be a fulfilment of (the heart's) desires; Gardens enclosed, and grapevines; Companions of equal age; And a cup full (to the brim)." "The fig trees are forming young fruit, and the fragrant grapevines are blossoming. Rise up, my darling. Come away with me my fair one"	Quran 78:31-34 Song of Solomon	Riverbank Grape	<i>Vitis riparia</i>	Vine	x 40'	Climbing	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Moist to dry soil	Light to medium green		White, yellow, green, + brown, Spring	Attracts insects, birds, + mammals
Herbs	"That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter hergs, and bread made without yeast."	Exodus 12:8	Creeping Thyme	<i>Thymus praecox</i>	Perennial	6-8" x 8-12"	Rounded	FS-PSh	Evergreen	Moist - well-drained soil	Light blue-green		Pink, Spring	Attracts butterflies

TYPE	CULTURAL REFERENCE*	RELIGIOUS SOURCE*	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	TYPE	HT x WIDTH	FORM	LIGHT**	PERSISTENCE	HYDROLOGICAL TRAITS	FOLIAGE COLOR	FALL COLOR	FLOWERS	WILDLIFE
PERENNIALS CONT.														
Lily	Seawater begs the pearl to break its shell. And the lily, how passionately it needs some wild darling! At night, I open the window and ask the moon to come and press its face against mine. Breathe into me. Close the language-door and open the love window. The moon won't use the door, only the window. "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."	Rumi <i>Seawater</i> Song of Solomon	Michigan Lily	<i>Lilium michiganense</i>	Perennial	24-48" x 12-24"	Upright	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Medium to wet soil	Medium - dark green		Orange, Summer	Attracts hummingbirds
Onion	"...we cannot bear with one food, therefore pray lord on our behalf to bring forth for us out of what the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." "We remember the fish we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic."	Sura Chapter: 16 , Verse: 11 Numbers 11:15	Flowering Onion	<i>Allium aflatunense</i>	Perennial	20-30" x 12"	Upright	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Mesic to dry soil	Medium green		Lilac, late Spring, Summer	
			Prairie Onion	<i>Allium stellatum</i>	Perennial	12-18" x 6-12"	Upright	PSh	Deciduous	Moist soil	Medium yellow-green		White, pink + purple, Summer-fall	Attracts butterflies
Rue	"In the Koran, probably a basil. The rue, and the sorrel with spreading leave, and the wild savory, the coriander of the mountains, and the parsely of the marshes, and the rockedt of the desert, are free from tithes."	Mishnah Chapt IX	Common Rue	<i>Ruta graveolens</i>	Perennial	18-24" x 15-18"	Upright	FS	Evergreen	Well-drained soil	Medium green		Yellow, Summer	Attracts birds
			Early Meadow-Rue	<i>Thalictrum dioicum</i>	Perennial	12-36" x 18-24"	Upright + sprawling	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Moist soil	Light medium green		White + green, Spring	Attracts bees, butterflies + birds
Saffron	"The scent of the saffron of union produces (happy) laughter; the smell of the onion of absence (produces) tears." "Your thighs shelter a paradise of pomegranates with rare spices --henna with nard, nard with saffron, fragrant calamus and cinnamon with all the trees of rankincense, myrrh, and aloes, and every other lovely spice."	Rumi Song of Solomon	Fall Blooming Crocus	<i>Crocus speciosus</i>	Perennial	6" x 3-9"	Upright	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Dry to medium soil	Blue-green		Blue-violet, lavender, Fall	
			Woodland Crocus	<i>Crocus tommasinianus</i>	Perennial	3-6" x 3-6"	Upright	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Moist, well-drained soil	Medium green		Lavender, late Winter + Spring	
Salt Herbs	"Haggard from want and hunger, they roamed the parched land in desolate wastelands at night. In the brush they gathered salt herbs, and their food was the root of the broom tree."	Job 30:3-4	Swamp Hibiscus	<i>Hibiscus palustris</i>	Shrub	5-7'	Sprawling + rounded	FS-PSh	Deciduous	Moist, well-drained	Medium-dark green		Pink, red, Summer-fall	Attracts bees and hummingbirds

TYPE	CULTURAL REFERENCE*	RELIGIOUS SOURCE*	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	TYPE	HT x WIDTH	FORM	LIGHT**	PERSISTENCE	HYDROLOGICAL TRAITS	FOLIAGE COLOR	FALL COLOR	FLOWERS	WILDLIFE
PERENNIALS CONT.														
Wildflowers	"Quarnic reference to brevity of life refers to quickly flowering, showy plants - for instance. Present them the example of life of this world so like the water We send down from the skies that mingles with the earth to nourish its vegetation, which then on the morrow turns to stubble and is blown away by the wind." Song of Songs 2:11 -13 For now the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The blossoms have appeared in the land. The time of the singing has come; the song of the turtledove is heard in our land. The green figs form on the fig tree, the blossoming vines give off fragrance.	Sura 18:45 Ali Song of Songs 2:11 -13	Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Perennial	18-36" x 24-30"	Upright	FS	Deciduous	Moist to dry soil	Medium green		Yellow, Summer + fall	Attracts birds + butterflies
			Garden Cosmos	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	Annual	24-48" x 18-24"	Upright + spreading	FS	Deciduous	Moist - well-drained soil	Blue-green, medium glossy green		Pink, red, + white,	Attracts bees, butterflies, birds
			Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Perennial	24-48" x 18-24"	Upright	FS	Deciduous	Wet to dry soil	Bright medium green		Pink + purple, Summer + fall	Attracts hummingbirds + butterflies
			Tall Blazing Star	<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Perennial	4-6' x 11-2'	Upright	FS	Deciduous	Moist to dry soil	Bright green		Pink + purple, Late summer - early fall	Attracts hummingbirds + butterflies
Flowering Natives	For now the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The blossoms have appeared in the land.	Song of Songs 2:11 -12	Wild Geranium	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Perennial	12-18" x 18-24"	Rounded + spreading	PSh-FSh	Semi-evergreen	Moist soil	Medium green		White, pink + purple, Spring-summer	Attracts birds + mammals
GRASSES														
Prairie	"Out beyond wrong-doing and right-doing, there is a field, I'll meet you there." "Give diligent ear to my words, attend carefully to what I say. Does he who plows all the time, breaking up and furrowing his land? When he has smoothed its surface, does he not rather broadcast black cumin and scatter cumin, or set wheat in row; barely in a strip, and emmer in a patch?"	Rumi Isaiah 28 23-25	Big Bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Grass	6-8' x 2-3'	Upright and clumping	FS	Evergreen	Moist, well-drained	Medium to blue-green	Purple, tan	Red + purple, Summer-fall	Provides shelter for birds, attracts butterflies
			Nodding Wild Rye	<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Grass	2-3' x 2-3'	Upright and clumping	FS	Evergreen	Moist, well-drained	Medium-light green	Purple, tan	Yellow, Green + Brown, Spring	Nesting plant for birds and small mammals
			Northern Sea Oats	<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	Grass	24-36" x 24-36"	Upright and clumping	FS-PSh	Evergreen	Moist to dry soil	Medium green	Bronze-green	Green, Summer-fall	Attracts birds, small mammals
			Side-Oats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Grass	2-3' x 2'	Upright and clumping	FS-PS	Evergreen	Moist to dry soil	Medium green	Purple, red	Red, orange, and yellow, Summer-fall	Nesting plant for mammals, attracts birds and butterflies
			Switchgrass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Grass	3-4' x 3-4'	Upright	FS-Psh	Evergreen	Moist to dry soil	Blue-green and silvery	Burgundy	Brown + green, Fall	Attracts birds + butterflies

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