



# ON THE RIVERFRONT

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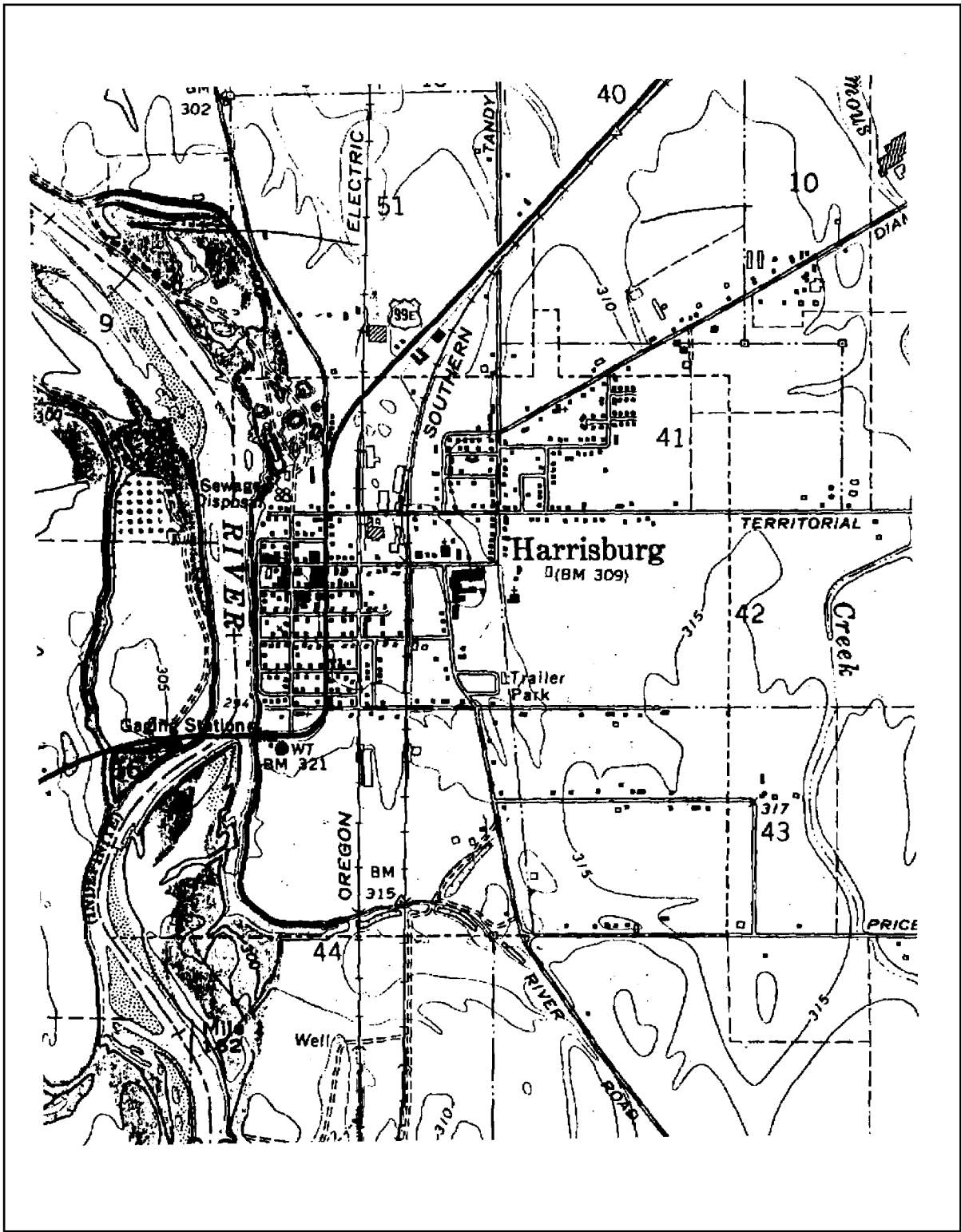
**H**arrisburg, a “little (riverfront) town on the Willamette River” between Eugene and Corvallis, is in the process of developing an economic revitalization plan for its civic core and a long range master park and open space plan to help assure the quality of its future. Its historic waterfront is seen as central to both efforts.

The town has hired a Resource Assistant for Rural Environments, Tilda Deas who is a graduate of the U. of O.’s planning program, to direct the process. Tilda with the support of the community has asked our class to propose “design strategies for Harrisburg’s riverfront north of the Gazebo” as a key element of the overlapping plans. She has arranged for the class to work with a Riverfront Task Force comprised of representatives of the Planning Commission, the

City Council, business community and the community at large. This client group will help communicate the town’s interests, hopes and desires for its riverfront, provide input into the design process, and review student work.

At the end of fall term, the class will present its proposals to the Task Force and display them at an open house hosted by the town.





Harrisburg, OR

Source: USGS SW/4 15' Quadrangle

# Class Process

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## 1. Place Acquaintance and Knowledge

Getting to know the place is our first step, and that will mean getting to know some of the people of Harrisburg, the riverfront site, some of the larger contexts for the project, and also some of its smaller inhabitants. As Mole said to the Rat in *The Wind in the Willows*, “And you really live by the river? What a jolly life.”

A “place” is always more than a physical and legal site and needs to be understood as a product of environmental experience.

Places, in this conception, are an interaction of natural processes, natural human interests and human use.

From this point of view it will be no surprise to discover the Harrisburg riverfront alive in local memories, stories, hopes and dreams. At the same time, this riverine landscape is a tangible expression of its recent settlement history. We’ll try to learn as much as we can about this special place, and will want to work appreciatively and respectfully with this understanding.

The river at Harrisburg is, of course, also an expression of its own history. While it is true that the last 150 years of white settlement history have made many significant modifications in river structure and process, especially in the last half of this century, it will be important to construct a broader historical conception of Willamette River geomorphology, hydrology and ecology in order to be able to evaluate its present condition.

## 2. Place Evaluation

A second step is to apply our knowledge of the place, in the broader, inclusive sense of the term, and assess the current state of the site in terms of:

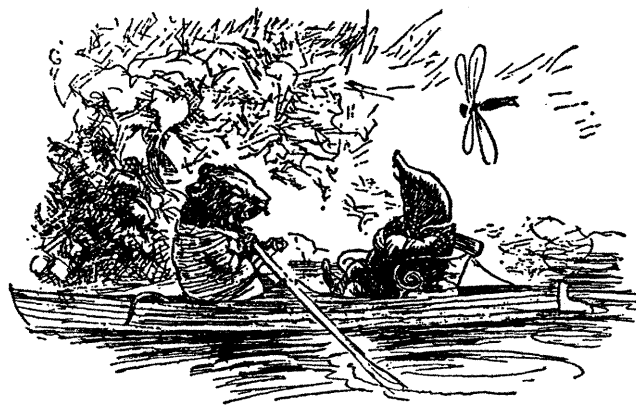
1. its ability to support town interests; and
2. simultaneously promote the health and integrity of its riparian ecosystem.

Our initial brief calls for “walking, biking, and interpretive trails along the riverfront” in a riverfront park setting. We’ll expect this program to grow as we learn more about the place.

“I beg your pardon,” said the Mole, pulling himself together with an effort. “You must think me very rude; but all this is so new to me. So—this—is—a—River!”

“*The River*,” corrected the Rat.

“And you really live by the river? What a jolly life!”



from *The Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Grahame

# Class Process cont.

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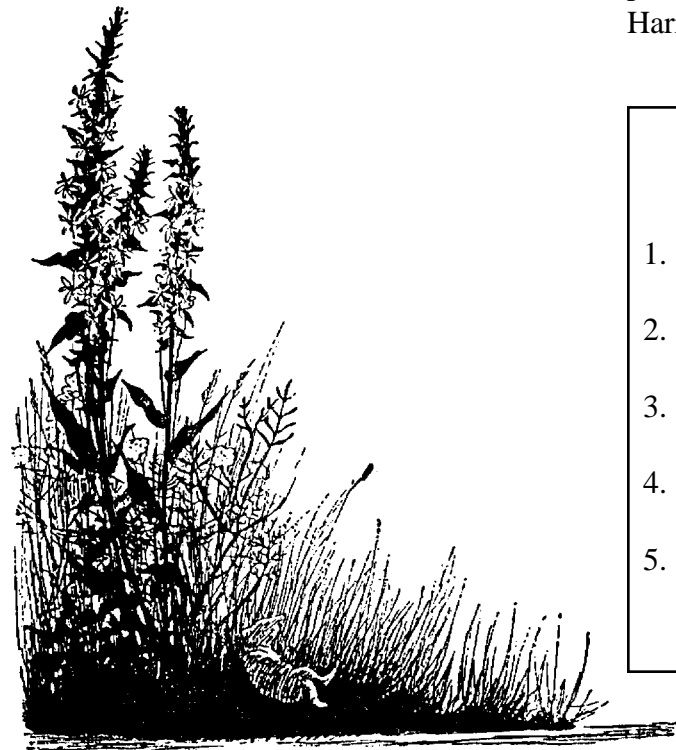
## 3. Place Proposals

The next step is to explore and discuss many possibilities, and from these to select and illustrate those that appear most promising to share with the Task Force.

We'll try to reach agreement with our client about the general use and configuration of the site by mid-term if possible, and then as a class collaborate in producing a common general plan and model.

Class members will then be asked to further refine, develop and illustrate site ideas which add detail and specificity to the general plan. The objective here is to provide a rich set of possibilities for the people of Harrisburg to be able to consider and choose from as a part of a longer range, incremental process of park and open space development.

Each class member will be responsible for



her/his own set of more detailed suggestions for refining an aspect of the general plan. This is intended as an opportunity for individuals to pursue some personal interest in the project in greater depth.

At this stage, students are asked to emphasize the use of illustrative media such as before and after sketches, perspectives, and axons in order to help everyone better visualize and rehearse what their proposals would be like.

We'll establish a common presentation format in order to give coherence to our final display.

## 4. Final Review

In the week of December 2, Review Week in Landscape Architecture, the class will receive individual feedback by department faculty, and advice about the upcoming public presentation.

## 5. Public Presentation

Later that same week, time and place still to be determined, we'll display the term's work and present it at an open house to the people of Harrisburg.

### Class Requirements:

1. Regular attendance and participation in class events;
2. Shared responsibility for group and common work;
3. Individual proposals which enhance and develop the common general plan;
4. Participation in the final review and public presentation.
5. Required products: see weekly assignments and class schedule.

# Park Issues

For many of us, our conception of “**park**” comes from the wonderful legacy of places built in the late 1800s and the earlier part of this century in Europe and America. The designs of Frederick Law Olmsted and all the others we have so admired are increasing being called into question as appropriate examples for our own time. But times change; society’s needs, knowledge and concerns evolve, as do its institutions and conceptions. And so it should not seem surprising that we will be asking:

What is a park, anyway? today? in Harrisburg? in the 20th and 21st century?

Who (what public?) are they for? And how do we pay for them? their upkeep and maintenance? the social services that keep them open, clean, healthy and safe?

What relationship should they have with community activities? school, play, educational programs? community recreation, fitness, sports, relaxation, environmental awareness, enjoyment of nature, political gatherings, memorials? community gardens and food production? horticultural rehabilitation? public art?

Should people live in them? camp in them? should they have live in wardens, keepers, retirees as watchers, stewards, special service club overseers, organized friends?

Should they be heavily programmed, mostly passive or some combination? restricted at special times? fenced and locked as are some of the “key

parks” in downtown London?

And should they be filled with colorful exotic plants or mostly occupied by natives? And for how many people? today? And tomorrow?

And since no public open space can be expected to be all things to all people, what role should this place play in the larger collection of public places in Harrisburg?

And given many interests and desires, what are the town’s priorities?

## City puts off plan to close westside park

■ **Whiteaker area:** Officials postpone the closure so that a task force can weigh other options.

By **ERIC MORTENSON**  
The Register-Guard

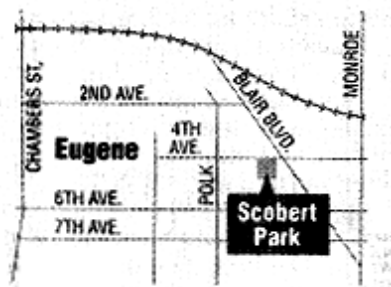
A half-dozen tents sprouted from the grass at Scobert Park in west Eugene Tuesday and two dozen people took up temporary residence as city officials, neighbors and bedraggled activists negotiated the park’s fate.

The city announced last week that it would close the park for three months beginning Monday because of neighbors’ complaints about drunks, drug users and people urinating in the park shrubbery.

But city officials agreed Monday night to delay the closure for a week to give an informal task force time to pursue other options. In the meantime, activists occupied the park overnight and hoisted a banner reading “Save Our Public Space.”

### Troubled park

The city may temporarily close one-acre Scobert Park because of crime and other problems.



TOM PENIX / The Register-Guard

People using the park Tuesday gave the issue a different spin, saying that closing parks is an ineffective way to combat crime.

## *FALL CLASS SCHEDULE*

Week No.	<b>M.</b>	<b>W.</b>	<b>F.</b>	
1.	30 <b>Sept.</b> <u>Proj. No.1:</u> <b>"Return to Home Place"</b>	2 <b>Oct.</b>	4	R&D #1
2.	7 <b>Oct.</b> <u>Proj. No.2</u> <b>"On The Riverfront"</b>	9	11	Info P&D
3.	14	16	18	<i>Site description/evaluation: <b>Timeline</b></i>
4.	21	23	25	R&D#2 <i>Site description/evaluation: <b>River Studies</b></i>
5.	28	30	1 <b>Nov.</b>	<i>Site concepts and proposals: <b>Program &amp; General Plan</b></i> <b>Task Force review</b>
6.	4	6	8	<b>MTR&amp;D</b> <i>Model and General Plan for Mid-term Review</i>
7.	11	13	15	<i>General Plan Development and Enhancement</i>
8.	18	20	22	<i>Site development ideas &amp; drawings</i>
9.	25	27	<b>Thanksgiving</b>	29 <i>Final Drawings</i>
10.	<b>Review Week: 2 Dec.FR&amp;D</b>	4	<b>FPres.</b>	6 Attend all reviews this week (especially your own!)

**EXAMS**                      9 - 13 Dec.

**NOTES:**

R&D #1 (& #2) = First (&second) review and discussion  
 MTR&D = Mid-term review and discussion (Design Faculty)  
 Info P&D = Presentation & Discussion of Site Reconnaissance  
 FR&D = Final Review (Design Faculty) Date to be determined.  
 FPres. = Final Presentation in Harris-