

# **Comprehensive Project Letters to Students**

**Vol No. 2 - Nov. 1997**

**from Jerry**

LA 490 Comp Prep  
Nov. 97  
Jerome Diethelm

## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: A. Z.

Title: Drake Park: The Riverfront Parks Connection

Comments:

A: What beautiful paper and binding, handsome sketches and maps. Your writing is direct and clear and when I finished the report I did know what needed to be done and what you were going to do. Some suggestions though for the report structure as a model for your thinking:

You start out with a description of Bend and don't mention Drake Park until the second paragraph. Since this is only descriptive, I still don't know what your project is involved with until you get to the Satre/Geddes plan discussion. If you will lead with a summary paragraph of what your report is about and what you intend to do, what some call a synopsis and I've been calling a 5¢ version, the descriptive material will fit quite naturally in behind.

The first section could also use a subtitle (as you do later on) giving its point of view such as, "Bend's Drake Park," or ... If this were the title, you might start out, Drake Park has long been Bend's central park and special jewel..." as though the park were the subject rather than Bend, and then talk about the park's changing circumstances due to a rapidly growing Bend, OR. Titles for subsections also allow you to make a simple table of contents which is another kind of summary for the reader up front.

The emphasis on connection sounds just right, connection along the river park system, connections across the river to differing park facilities, across the dam, connections between park and town, town and river, new connections within Drake park as well as the improvement of paths and walks. I would add the park, river entrance experience into Bend from the west as well. You also mention park planting in your general evaluation along with the state of the river wall. I expected to see both of these mentioned in your statement about a master plan study.

In my view, however, it's not a study. I think you are proposing an update of Drake Park's Master Plan (for the fee of \$350,000) which includes a vegetation and tree proposal, circulation enhancements, including better connections to town, to west bank parks, the larger river park system, improvements to river walls, to the nearby dam and power house, and the introduction of environmental education into Bend's central park. Having already studied about the place and reviewed the Satre plan, it is time to be more intentional, a bit more **directive** in your writing. This is what needs to be done; it includes; and this is what I'm proposing to do.

All in all, an excellent start and very fine project.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** B. N.

**Title:** River District Redevelopment

Comments:

B:

This is a handsome report, well written and illustrated. It sets the present scene, i.e. the vision and the present state of the conceptual development plan, uses the report's diagrams well to illustrate the text, and summarizes the existing goals for the district. I enjoyed reading this story. Then, of course, I wondered what you were going to do, what you saw as your work. You don't say a word about it. How is this possible half way through the quarter? I wonder if you somehow believe you can do everything? Kelley Flanigan did the basin and a conceptual plan for Tanner Creek last year. And even if you have broader hopes, you will have to evaluate where things stand in the various parts of the district. If you see yourself adding to the waterfront and relating it to nearby housing, you'll need more material about housing and need to evaluate the present state and potential of the waterfront. I'd write more, but you haven't given me anything to evaluate other than the present state of the river district conceptual plan. What needs doing? You don't need to redo this, merely add your project to this contextual frontispiece? As soon as possible.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** C. L.

**Title:** An enhancement proposal for the Eugene Masonic Cemetery

Comments:

C:

It was a real pleasure to read your report and to enjoy how your understanding of this project has been enhanced through your work and associations over the past 18 months. Real projects need time to mature in people's minds. Good design will reflect this. Yes, it's an enhancement proposal, but I kept thinking that it sounded more like a conservation, development and management guide for Eugene's Masonic Cemetery. Too wordy, though, even if it does seem to generalize about the range of kinds of work you describe. Perhaps your title is best?

I like your choice of point of view and that you clearly have one. The Rural Cemetery Movement is a story that needs telling, that you tell well, and that needs to be brought up to date (which you do). The association with this movement, the enfolding of the Masonic Cemetery into this story, and the unique and special identity this can provide for the place is the conceptual heart of your work. This guiding idea can and should be allowed to color everything. As we discussed, this kind of well-articulated vision is what will put the cemetery into the Pantheon of great contemporary places.

Yes, I think you need planting plans and vegetation management plans, but I think you need to do more education about the plants and plant ecology of the place in order to continue to underpin the rural cemetery concept. People need to know more about the grasses and their life cycles, learn to spot and appreciate the wild flowers and be able to read the cultural additions to the mix if your work is going to be able to resist a recurring pressure to collapse toward stereotypes. An educated view of the vegetative dimensions of the vision of the rural cemetery and all its attendant beauty is fundamental to the mind work of this project. People need to learn enough about this to be able to take pride in it and tell their friends. I think your association of plant cycles with human death and dying is brilliant, but you will have to watch out for the attitude that decay isn't cheerful enough or is too reminiscent of death which, as a culture, we try not to think about.

You could add a few more specifics to the good general 5c paragraph you begin with. Probably just by bringing your proposals up to the overview conversationally you could be both general and specific right up front. A short table of contents is another way to give the reader an overview of what the report's about. Your section titles lend themselves easily to this and also provide a good structure to the further development of your thoughts in each area. The graphic material is excellent and except for the cemetery plot plan which is hard to orient supports your narrative well. I'd title the photos for those not as familiar with the site as we've become. You list many areas to be developed. Some programmatic materials about each will be needed. I hope you'll share this with your board. Wonderful work.

Thanks, Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: C. R. O.

Title: Jefferson County Landscape Preservation Plan

Comments:

C:

Let me be as direct as possible. This is still a preparation for a preparation. There is only a page and a half of general commentary about the Preservation Plan and that doesn't tell me enough at this mid-point in our project preparation process. I know that you see *it* associated with the county GMP and anticipate that *it* could be a major shaping factor toward sustainable growth and the preservation of local identity from more than a cultural perspective. You state this as a theoretical question, which may be an appropriate setting for your master's project, but in this demo/example/test piece it needs to be your working point of view. The project is going to be done on this assumption. It can and will need to be evaluated later from a broader perspective. Let that be some of your master's work. It is OK to assume a necessary relationship between preservation and ecological planning and design and intend to show the effects on growth management from this point of view. You don't tell me how you are going to go about any of this or give me confidence that you have come to grips with the scoping questions I have been raising. Look for example at your table of contents. It's all definitions until IV. I want to see an outline of V.1.

I still think that you can accomplish an important part of what you're trying to do, which I would probably call Toward a Framework Landscape Preservation Process for Jefferson County. It will require that you be willing to do a demo test on a critical piece of the county, one where there is already some semblance of a cultural resource inventory. If there is no such thing, you could easily spend a term just doing an inventory. Even if a cultural inventory exists, your goal is to add an ecological dimension to this. Is that feasible given the information that exists. What information does exist anyway? You don't say. My worry now is that you think that you will somehow be able to figure this all out in studio and I know it won't work. What can I say and how can I get you to seriously face the need to scope this work, do a key part that proves the whole, demonstrate some of the interconnected relationships between preservation, growth management and ecological planning? I'd suggest changing the title of your project as a start. Shift your time and attention to this now before it gets lost in the end of term frenzy.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: C. L. R.

Title: Restoring The Springfield Millpond: The first step in redefining the Springfield Millrace

Comments:

C:

I think your choice of title is a good one in that it conveys your point of view about your subject area and sets it in two important contexts, one of which is the larger millrace waterway system and the other its social redescription - the changing role of the millrace in the life of Springfield. As you point out so well, it really will be called upon to serve other interests and purposes than Elias Briggs intended, such as fish migration, wildlife habitat, environmental education and urban recreation. Water qualities other than the ability to float logs and generate power have become important overlays to these older memories.

This is a very good and useful report. You describe the setting, a brief history, the present condition and provide a very clear context map. I imagine you making a slide series of these with different thematic emphases to use in your final presentation. You then provide an excellent discussion of the current situation, say what is at issue and provide a powerful cognitive map of issues. A tool such as this would have been very effective in the workshop you attended. It maps out the territory of things to be done. It also honestly set out your point of view which is complex but focused on the ecological health and restoration of the pond. Having worked in Springfield, I would give equal emphasis to restoration, recreation and millrace history. Yes, I agree, access will enhance millrace awareness. A redescription that has multiple dimensions, including the honoring of the past, will be needed to widen awareness and use and especially the political support needed. As you mention the "Friends of the Millrace" alliance, I throw a dart into the political part of the fan. You are wisely covering a broad band of kinds of concern.

The long term view and map are good and are needed to show how the work on the pond fits. The goals are a good start. We'll be working on these some more in the next few weeks. You need to add a first paragraph which gives an overview, a synopsis, a 5¢ explanation of the project and what you intend to do to have accomplished everything I asked. I'm impressed. Keep it up and this will turn into an excellent comp experience for you.

Good luck with all this.

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** C. S.

**Title:** Fort Mason Renovation and Improvements

Comments:

C:

This is a terrific project and you are doing an excellent job setting it up from a mid-term perspective. The writing is clear and useful. The maps and images are informative. You have included a good summary at the beginning, discussed problems that need renovation and improvement (your title and point of view) and made some general statements about what needs doing. I am impressed.

Here are some suggestions for further renovation and improvement.

Summary: add some more specific reference at the end which names key areas of work (entrance, promenade, plazas, great lawn etc.) and says, at least conceptually, what you'll do. This will add some immediate tangibility to the work, define renovation, and help focus awareness in your audience about key places as you given them some background.

History: Fine. Start to think about what you will need when you tell people this story, an abbreviated history, at your final presentation. Gather slides, images maps together purposefully for this event. I know you are already doing this.

Evaluation: Your summary of the problems is good but should be expanded and made more visual. (Deep Parts) Use each area as a subtopic and examine each more thoroughly. Zoom into your plan diagrams and evaluate each part. Force yourself to expand your comments about what needs doing. Where you are saying you will (someday) address a topic, start to outline what that "addressing" will require. Perhaps you can use your goal array to get this started. Get more use out of the axon of the fort. Both is and your first map can be used to show the areas you're working on, what and where they are and can ground some of the evaluation you're providing for you client (Park Service or whoever that might me).

Missing for me in this version of the project was your earlier discussion of the connections of Ft. Mason, the linear systems from trolley extension to the path system, which tie this unique place into the surrounding city. I know, I know, there is only so much time for these things. I bring it up because it seemed like an important part of your work. You have places of passage and places of gathering to deal with.

Another key issue you don't deal with is the appropriate look and feel of the renovations - whether they should reflect the old army atmosphere, such as the old guarded entrance as a part of the history, or start looking more like a national park - how to keep the "Fortness" if there is such a thing in the "improvements." Maybe, gasp, there is a role for the asphalt! Anyway, I think you'll want to make such matters a part of the content of your work more explicitly. I'd also like to hear you begin to deal with such concepts as "plaza" and "promenade" more explicitly. What is a plaza in San Francisco anyway?

Keep up the good work.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: D. E.

Title: Sunset Transfer Station

Comments:

D:

I enjoyed reading your introduction and fully expected you to end with a pointed statement about your project that went something like this: This project then intends to show how a pedestrian, conservation and transit oriented development can be established on the 250 acres that surround the Sunset Transfer Station. (Is the title the station or should it be about the new "world" that includes the station?) The proposed plan will include a pedestrian oriented housing area for 43,000 people (well, maybe a few less) all located within a ten minute walk of the station, a conservation plan for wetland and woodland areas, a recreational plan that serves both the Sunset area and surrounding neighborhoods and ....

**What will it include? Time to spell this out.** You will need a section on the **housing** and should be gathering some precedents of the kind that relate to your TOD interest. Portland has followed many of Peter Calthorp's ideas (Do you have his book?) and a few years ago hired the Calthorp office to translate pedestrian pocket ideas into local policy and guidelines. Metro has guidelines for transit oriented development. You are suffering badly from a case of missing numbers. Housing for how many? at what density? You need to know how many people the site is expected to house and needs to support in order to make the kind of urban contribution you're talking about. You need to face the fact that the importance of conservation and increased density are in direct conflict in this project. It's what makes it such an interesting design challenge and very difficult problem. I love your "David's World," but I'm afraid it won't be able to come true or no one will take you seriously unless you face the demands on this site with a sharper pencil. Use existing housing proposals that have some of the qualities you are looking for a template to take the measure of this place. How much room do they take up? What kinds of configurations does the site suggest? force you into? What kind of population will they support?

You will need to develop a **conservation proposal for a wetland and woodlot** and relate it to a **recreation plan** and nearby housing. How will people around? You will need a **multi-level circulation plan**. How does anyone get across the street to the shopping center? All these areas and systems need more development this term. Do you know Randall Arendt's *Conservation Subdivision* book. Lower density than you are talking about, but with some useful materials about conservation areas. How will this area relate to the larger area park and open space plans? What role will it play as a part in the larger system? I think you've done a good job of telling me about the quality of place you envision here, and I know you know why it's important. It's time to second stage this and develop the materials that will allow you to do a realistic schematic of parts and systems that have greater tangibility. How many people will live nearby anyway?

Thanks,

Jerry



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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: D. H.

Title: Growth and the Graciousness of Green Structure in McMinnville, Oregon

### Comments:

D: You are a designer Daniel. You have figural urges and are aware that they are a part of human nature. Some are just more aware of their existence, seek to guide and modify them, want to hone and share them, and admit the farther than human reaches of these energies as they are rippled out into the world than others. You are aware of the formative side of that energy, a practitioner. *How* should I...? Should the *how* be in *the form of a letter*? What kind of an experience should the teaching be folded into? What kind of a meal? The teacher is the teacher's best audience, no? It is in your nature as a maker to be a designer, which is only another word for the poietic which is mistranslated in our time as making verbal poems. You recognize creative process because you have seen that image in the mirror many times and now have learned to see it everywhere you look. It is a wonderful gift.

You notice that I disregarded greeninfrastructure. It really is an ear clink, and I think the greenway notion needs to be brought up to date with a larger social dimension than its early 20th century predecessors intended. That I think is your point of view and why I changed the name of your project without your permission. Earlier greenway and blueway planning certainly respected and admired nature, acknowledged the practicality of building on higher ground etc. even without the kind of contemporary ecological awareness that heightens the importance of such planning today. And there were important social values without doubt piloting or copiloting such efforts, just not the kind of expanded set that you have identified, are constructing, and need to make a dominant part of the criteria you use to help identify 200 additional acres in McMinnville. Of course it's not one *or* the other today either, but what if one had a distinct point of view, really believed that the public structure could be more gracious socially and ecologically. I wonder what kind of site selection criteria that would translate into. Oh, I can imagine the ecological approach and I wouldn't minimize it for a moment. You are in the middle of it in your studio right now. But what if one assumed that as an obvious and necessary first cut for overall human graciousness and then moved quickly to the social level and concentrated on inclusion (instead of segregation), equity (on many fronts) and distributive justice? What if one saw the under utilization of the creek as an opportunity to work on this agenda? What if it didn't necessarily solve all the park and open space problems, but had as its central objective the setting of a more socially gracious direction?

It is the conception of the graciousness of green structure which now needs to be better conceived and translated into criteria for site selection, conservation and development, renovation, improvement - for social transformation.

Part of that graciousness could be the memory of McMinnville's origins and the environmental traces of that memory. Another part is the expanded conception of constituency and what that might mean tangibly and physically and geographically and programmatically. Set up in this way the central park and the creek is a perfect demonstration site for a set of these key interests, the part that proves the whole, so to speak. If you build your conceptual filter a bit more carefully you won't have to find out and know everything about McMinnville and will be able to make a significant contribution to their park and open space planning efforts.

I'm glad you are enjoying the PiE. I cooked it up especially for people like you, maybe just for you. It is a real pleasure to see it gaining some broader acceptance as a stimulus for thinking in our unfolding hypertextual world. For many years it has just been another of Jerry's oddities among many of my colleagues. (Rob hasn't noticed but site analysis doesn't exist in the PiE world vocabulary. Shhh! Instead it's intimacy:people and place.) Emic is possible with enough sympathy and empathy, but not if one is unaware of their outsidersness. Yes, of course I've been in Sendak's kitchen. Only recently I heard the monster's chanting: Goodness graciousness Daniel, build your concept, build your concept, build your concept, and recognize that you have one and it is you, recognize that you have one and it is you, use it, use it! for God's sake, use it!

Thanks, Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** D.S.

**Title:** Oakridge Mountain Bike Center

Comments:

D:

This is a good project and your plans for it are “chained together” in a way which makes sense. I know what your point of view is: a center for mountain bikers that has better information is needed in the Oakridge area, the heart of some of Oregon’s best mountain biking. This project will include a plan for the center itself on Highway 58 near the old ranger station and a proposed trail information system that will consist of a summary map and a sample of the kind of trail brochures that bikers need. I asked everyone to put a summary paragraph like this up front because it helps you see things whole, tells the reader what you’re doing, and should also serve as a good outline for your report.

From this it’s easy to see what you’ve got and what you haven’t. You’ve got a good idea and the experience needed to put together the big map and you have some ideas about what should go in the brochure and why. I’d expand on the brochure conception, and think through the components you’re including and why. I’m not suggesting you’re not doing this. I just expect that it will be an important element in your work and would like to see it develop as much as possible. Have other places done this? Are there other precedents to draw from?

The part that is still just a name and a tiny plan diagram is the center. What is it? How big? What are its parts? Can you make me a diagram to scale of what it consists of? How will it relate to the site? Show me a site evaluation? Have you done any cognitive mapping as required in issues in places? If so, why not include them? Should it be visible from the road? What do people do here anyway along with picking up maps? What are the issues associated with making a center anyway? This is the name of your project and at this point there is no program for this center of your project, so to speak. See if you can list and diagram everything you’d want a designer (like you) to include here, assuming you had the money to get this done. Zoom in to this site so that bikers can zoom in, enjoy, and then zoom out.

Regarding the report in general, I’d talk about your project first and then about its Oakridge setting. Regarding the title on the cover, it says biking in Oakridge if you are visually literate and read pictures and words as whole sentences. People like me can do it, but generally I wouldn’t count on it. I hope this doesn’t sound too critical. I’m just trying to help you get your mind around what a report to a client might look like. I’m confident this will turn out very well and everyone will end up knowing too much about your favorite trails. Keep up the good work.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** J. H.

**Title:** Riveroaks Park

Comments:

J.

This is a good start. In spite of some garbled syntax here and there, you've given me a good idea of what the park issues are and your (and the neighborhood's) goals for the development of the park. You've told me that they need an overall park development plan, or master plan, and that it will include a planting plan, a maintenance plan and program, a large open space (for\_\_\_\_) that includes an open, inviting recreational lawn, additional picnicking facilities, a children's play structure, new walkways, perhaps some garden parcels, facilities for some local sports (which?), that you need to repair flood damage and stabilize the riverbank.

You've told me that the desired character of the park is that of a neighborhood garden with perhaps more native plants than the surrounding homes, that it should be subtle but strong (how will you do this?), that it is a window from the street on the Willamette River, that it needs to maintain the character of a small, local neighborhood park. Potential erosions of park character from increased use plus the usual social issues and public/private conflicts are important project issues.

Your goals are good. Now try to make them all more specific. Add numbers and amounts as a beginning program. How much area for picnics? How many settings? How many people? This will help you reach a useful schematic stage by the end of term. Will you be doing a lighting proposal for the park?

Why no information or evaluation of the existing park site? Where are your cognitive maps which were supposed to be done earlier in the term and could be very useful here to show the existing areas, park assets, and problems places of the park that need you help? Where are the current paths and the connections that need to be added? What's the present state of the vegetation that you'll be improving? Zoom in here and do a good specific site evaluation related to the program you've outlined. Look up the difference between flora and fauna. If I had to venture a prediction at this point, I'd predict that you will do a very good job on this. Help to make my envisioning come true. Get to work.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: J. H.

Title: Little Applegate Watershed: Road Analysis Project: Bringing the Little Applegate Watershed Road Network into the 21st Century

Comments:

↓:

OK, let me see if I get it. It's a road analysis of a map that doesn't yet exist based on a plan that will be done later that will become a digitized information tool for forest managers. Here's my version of your title: A Road Evaluation Process and Information System for the Little Applegate Watershed. I think it's an idea with a lot of potential, could be very helpful as a forest management tool and makes sense setting up in digital form. I enjoyed reading about your background and experience, but I think it takes up too much room in a report that needs to be dedicated to the further organization of your work.

I don't know from reading your report what the road related issues are in other than the most general sense. You should be able to expand on your issues in places exercise at this point. I know there are those related to changing land use and growing recreational need, road maintenance, ecological awareness and forest integrity. What else? and what more about each of them? Why are they issues? Discuss them. Say what you think needs to be done, could be done, should be done and why. A thorough job of understanding issues will be necessary for goal structure generation and for building an evaluation process. It an evaluation we are talking about not a site analysis. You are expected to make some recommendations. I know you need an overall map, but I don't see that as your first goal and I hope you don't see making that map as taking up your studio time. I also know you need ultimately to relate the area's network system to its adopted forest plan, but I don't agree that you have to wait for Dean and Bart.

I'd suggest you take one of the plans your class generated and take a key subarea that you think representative of the issues you'll face. Use this as a test case for building issues into goals into evaluative process into forest management and maintenance information. Get feedback from the other players in the process about the usefulness and clarity of your model of the recommended process and its products. I expect you to do this intellectual work and mock up as a part of this term's prep. If you do you will find that you will have built a good beginning tool that can be applied more widely as the other materials become available. Perhaps comp studio could still be a demo in some detail on a key part of the final forest plan that would get them excited enough to pay you to finish. Now wouldn't that be a nice reward at the end of the trail.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** J. J.

**Title:** The Conservation of Degraded Pasture Into a Sustainable Ecoforestry Plantation: Veluna Acres, Santa Marta, Costa Rica

Comments:

J:

This was very interesting to read. You write well and clearly. The work of REC sounds important, admirable. I am also glad to see you settle into somewhere in the world and into the world of a project.

The project however remains underdeveloped at this point. I know that you are going to develop a master plan for Veluna Acres (nice name) that deals with the location and phasing of tree planting, that you will site a sawmill complex (what will that include? how big? how do they work?), deal with transportation issues (what's the process here, anyway?) including road and path siting, river influences and.... These are all topic areas and all need more about them. You need to zoom in from Costa Rica scale and evaluate this site from the point of view of the work that needs to be done there.

At present this is a geographer's report about Costa Rica more than it is a landscape architect's report about a place, its potential, its problems, the work you'll need to do, and what you intend to produce. I'm not saying that you don't need to discuss the general place or the general issues you'll be dealing with locally, just that you should probably flip things around a bit and use this material to back up your discussion of the plan you'll be making.

How about some more attention to what the concept of a "sustainable ecoforestry plantation" means and how that idea might be "set into work" on your site.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: J. K.

Title: YOU ARE HERE: Presence and Collective Expression in Naples, Florida

Comments:

J: As I said when we met, this “making” is very beautiful. It also reveals and better describes some of the content you are intending to explore consciously and evocatively, articulates some of these conceptions in terms of their meaning from alternate and often conflicting points of view, and is experimenting with the how of their expression as it can be revealed in print media. Of these the most obvious are bounded, stacked and undesignated order (to some degree since the collection is still a narrative of the whole) with sidedness, transparency and overlap, front and backness, propinquity, and combined image, text and color (flamingo) as collective presentational symbols (Langer). It seems to me you have proved to yourself the value of continued processing of your material and concerns and can see why I keep pushing for your final project to be the fourth or ninth or...iteration of this rather than the first. I think it has the potential to be a good project or an absolutely great project; you decide.

Let me raise two issues that stand out. The first I started to explore with you has to do with the how of the project in the sand. To quote my favorite author, “To me the how hold the what in its arms and lifts it into our attention. Occasionally the how balances on one finger with the sheer weightlessness of grace.” I think your print version has this quality, but I can’t help but wonder if some of the devices it allows can be easily translated into the media appropriate to the beach environment. I wonder if the wonderful overlap and interference patterns of overlays can be as effective in time as they are in space. I wonder about materials. I think about being able to slide under them or look through them or see the sun cast shadows through them... So, in a more summary fashion, I see parallel development needed between the conceptual content and the how of its expression in the setting as a major task for the artist at this point.

A second issue for me is the stated but absent relationship of your work to the existing plots. I have no idea at this point what they are or how they relate to one another or to your additions. I can guess, but I think it will help if you characterize this material and say *how* it relates to some of the concepts you encounter, discover, uncover, avoid, deconstruct, reflect, expand, critique... through your art. Have you ever seen the old movie, “The Beach A River of Sand? It does a good job of explaining the longshore current, summer and winter beaches, wave angle etc. and if nothing else is a great metaphor. IMC probably still has it. Environmental programs have worn it out I’m sure.

I especially like your point of view: YOU ARE HERE, and especially that you so clearly have one. I would probably say, HOW YOU ARE HERE, to place more emphasis on the many ways, the points of view, the complexity of awareness of being *in* environment, and the need for a wider band of media to enable a richness of expression that allows a wider meaning. Ursula K. LeGuin says she needs to write in many modes because “reality is such a slippery fish.” Thanks, Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: J. M.

Title: North Macadam District: Establishing a Riverfront Community

Comments:

J:

North Macadam District is the name of a place. **Your project is the Riverfront Community**, so why not turn the title around to reflect the focus of your work? Your project is not a study of the site, even though an evaluation of the area is of course required. Your purpose, your focus is the point of view of your "study" - I prefer evaluation - which is this term's work, not studio. I've made notes throughout your report and some suggestions. They boil down to your needing to say more directly what your project is and more about it, to the need to go beyond description to a better evaluation of the area for the community you're intending to design, to the need to state what you think key issues are, set some goals and build a program specific enough about land uses, activities and areas that will allow you to make a beginning schematic proposal this term. You don't say much at all about the waterfront which is fairly important to a riverfront community. I don't understand how you can have no plan diagrams or other graphic material at this stage of the work. Where are the cognitive maps we did? Why haven't you developed them further? Work on this now before the term runs out.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** J. N.

**Title:** Oakshade Crest

Comments:

J: You need something integrative up front. Try saying something like this as a set up and synopsis (repeat after me): "I will be working with Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services to develop a plan for 50 economical single family homes on a \_\_\_\_\_ acre piece of property known as Oakshade Crest (formerly the Thomson Estates), located on the western edge of Corvallis' city limits about five miles from downtown and just a few blocks north of highway 20. The plan will integrate three main goals: the first is to create a high quality affordable housing community for families and individuals who are at or below 80% of median income; the second is to design a conservation-based cluster plan that is in full accord with this beautiful oak hills and savanna setting; the third is to recall the spirit and the philosophy of Betty Lynd Thomson, the former OSU dance teacher who lived on the site for \_\_\_\_\_ years, in all aspects of the work. The CNHS would like Ms. Thompson's three elements of modern dance, 'a sense of design, space and movement consciousness, and creative thinking,' to inspire the proposal. I will be providing an overall site plan, a conservation plan, a detailed design for the streets and public spaces, a planting plan, a model and a series of photographs and sketches for the project."

Note that you've included something on each of these aspects of your work, but not linked them together other than binding them one after the other in your report. You've mentioned some of the issues about this project, including neighborhood acceptance of a medium density project, but you don't develop them much, so I can't say I really know what they suggest needs doing or what you intend to do about them.

You need to write a more complete program for the housing portion of this work. Do an evaluation of the site from the point of view of finding good places and patterns for living there. Your evaluation so far is one of preserving its wonderful oak-related qualities, now can you assess it for good housing locations, possible internal circulation, public spaces, off-site connections etc. Cut out your 50 houses and make some tentative arrangements. Investigate access and internal road structure. Cut out Lancaster Bridge or some more appropriate example, shrink it to scale and put it on your site as a way of measuring what the site can take and how big things are. I'm asking you to do a schematic for the final write up and you won't be able to unless you get more aggressive about trying out some housing on the site.

In your final write up say what your project is and then use the synopsis as a "table of contents" for discussing each aspect of your work. You will find it will be much closer to possible to make a useful schedule if you have a clearer idea of the elements you will be making for the housing authority. I was pleased you had included a prototypical house plan and named some of the outdoor project components. Now take the elements of your work that are still just names and make each more complete programmatically. Some numbers and sizes wouldn't hurt (too much). Your maps are really beautiful. Your sense of the place is admirable. Take some of this wonderful energy and work on the housing part of the project more directly.

Thanks, Jerry



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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** J. R.

**Title:** Live Earth Farm: An Integrative Approach to Farming and Living

Comments:

J:

Live Earth Farm is a great title, capturing well what I have been enjoying hearing you describe. This is a wonderful report, full of your passion for plants and for the possibility of a "living farm," and a nice elaboration on the main themes you have been developing. Your Diagram of the Farm is an elegant descendent of the earlier cognitive map you did for Issues in Places. I hope you'll make a color xerox of this and share it with Tom, Constance and David. It is very close to the kind of schematic proposal I'm asking you to do this term which can be a next evolutionary enlargement of what you already have. Don't fret about the color prints: just scan the slides so that they include enough color information to print at 200 dpi at the final size you want. My Nikon scanner is set up for this and the one in the department office should be too.

Your 5¢ project description is excellent. I think I'd add a sentence which describes what you specifically intend to give the Brozs, i.e. the names of the elements of the plan you expect to give them. Make up a title that captures each part of your work, such as "an integrated orchard planting plan," and "a strategy for biodiversity" for the farm. Later in your professional life you'll learn to estimate what each of these efforts will require and attach hours and fees to them as well as associate such efforts to specific products. This is a good time to start.

The order of the divisions of the report PLACE, CONNECTIONS, GOALS, DIAGRAM OF THE FARM, FARMING & LIVING, EROSION CONTROL AND THE ROLE OF WATER, BIODIVERSITY, EDUCATION isn't obvious to me even if the importance of the material is. Education and connections seem to belong together. The various issues you discuss, diversity, erosion, education, political and economic support etc. are all more systemic in nature. Issues grow out of values (interests, concerns, passions...) and usually lead up to goals through which you generalize about their intended resolution. Farming and Living is specifically about their home place and might be one, certainly an important one, of a number of specific places you'll consider. The diagram of the farm does a nice job of providing a summary of your ideas and locating them geographically. The report needs a concluding paragraph or two. Perhaps you could use your diagram as an integrative summary device for your integrative Live Earth Farm proposal??

As I read each section, I tried to make a list of the pieces of work each required. You make one too and we'll compare notes. I've been really impressed with the way you've conceived and constructed this project Jackie. It can't be this much fun if it's educational, can it?

Thanks,

Jerry

## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: K.B.

Title: The Garden of Garden's Home Demonstration Center: Oregon Garden Project

Comments:

K:

This is an interesting and challenging project and you've made a good start. The map, table of contents and project proposal do a good job of preparing the table for the feast of gardens to come. The point of view of your project is clear: within the Oregon Garden is the Home Demonstration Garden of Gardens. The Oregon Garden as a garden of gardens has within it a thematic garden which itself is a garden of gardens for Northwest home gardeners! I think it is important at this stage to identify the "home" gardens that you will include. You almost do that by saying that it *may* include formal, Japanese, sensory/handicapped, childrens', water, cottage vegetable etc. I'd urge you to be more decisive about this list, more intentional, so that you can go to the next stage of gathering good background material on each of these thematic gardens and take your understanding beyond titles and a few characteristics to a small program of ideas, images, precedents, elements, key relationships, qualities, etc. for each one. You should try to end this term with a schematic of schematics, a conceptual scheme that zooms into each of its parts in a preliminary way. Don't worry if they're not perfect. There will be time to revise and rethink everything several times. There are precedents for such places too. Every May in London the Chelsea Garden Show, for example, draws people from all over to an event which has the same purpose as your Home Garden Center. Places like the famous Kew Gardens are also gardens of gardens, and there are many other examples.

Let me point out several issues you're not dealing with that will be important. One, is that you haven't pointed out what you think some of the issues are. I can think of several you'll be trying to resolve. Another is the relation of your garden to those surrounding you and to the general circulation of the whole. Why don't you use the site maps you include to diagram and discuss your garden's relation to the whole and some of the design problems and opportunities that provides. What kinds of boundedness or separation do you think will be necessary or appropriate? Will the surrounding gardens relate in any special way to what you're doing? Could they?

Another issue is the internal organization of your gallery of gardens, how they relate to one another, how you get from one to another. In your "experience" you suggest they might be connected and one might discover the doorway into the next. In the front overall plan diagram it shows a central way with nodes or rooms along the way. Or it could be both. Why don't you explore some preliminary organizational ideas that you can use in the schematic to come? What kinds of sequences would make sense? You need to blow up the overall diagram and get closer to your project's place. You need to evaluate it's internal potentials and problems from your point of view, see if there are clues and or concerns related to the setting that can guide you or that must be overcome. You're still too far away from the actualities of the site. I don't know yet if it's a flat site or a hilly site or what it's next to .....? You use diagrams and sketches well in your report. This project will thrive on such things since its purpose is to demonstrate. Remember to spell check and proof your writing so such things don't detract from your good work. Thanks, Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** K. P.

**Title:** Skinner's Butte Park and Public Garden

**Comments:**

**K:**

Yes, we are in agreement that Skinner's Butte is not living up to its potential, and no, I'm not going to add to your list of teachers that have made you an expert on the subject. Your project combines two powerful dimensions, your love of plants and gardens, and this neglected landmark that is lost between identities. The hybrid you propose is I think a genuinely good idea, one that could excite a city that is about to begin another round of thinking about its park and open space system. I think we should take your advice and begin talking about this as a park, public garden and open space system.

Let me try and point you in the direction of strengthening the concept. First, you say that each place can contribute something to the larger set of parks and gardens, but you don't identify the set which includes the Rhododendron Garden, the Owens Rose Garden, the Arboretum... You identify the other buttes as landmarks, but you don't add in the South Hills... You don't mention the other major parks or the roles they play as a setting for this one. By setting your work within its larger family, you help to make your point, show the existing differentiation, critique what is missing or possible, project what is desirable. This isn't a tome of a thesis, just a bolstered point of view. You can do some of this in simple plan diagram form and add a little explanation and evaluation.

The second thing I'd do is to follow your intuition and conceive of Skinner Butte and its adjoining riverfront park as a native park and garden, that is, draw a conceptual line around the whole area which indicates an overall and primary point of view. Then I circle the area of Skinner Butte Park as a recreational park within this larger zone which has its special social role to play. Seen this way, the whole butte at one level is your native plant garden, including the riverfront, with the existing park as a kind of social exception which has some of the plants and qualities of the whole, but is also trying to satisfy other park and recreational priorities.

The identity of the butte today is not that of a native plant community garden, because this point of view is not strong enough publicly. Your appreciation, which began in plants class, of the overall plant community structure of the butte is the parent to your children at a smaller scale. The native plant public garden you propose is then the intensification of this idea in a part of the butte. Its special qualities and great beauty at the top of the butte gives everyone a wonderful reason to visit, look out, recall some of the area's history, understand this plant community island, this Galapagos of vegetation which is our heritage and home.

You say you'll read a little history about the area someday which will help to inform your work. Do it now. Your diagrams are underdeveloped and too crude to be very useful. There's no simple plan diagram of the area, showing the related parts or influences. This landmark has other internal landmarks associated with it. Where is Skinner's cabin? The basalt outcrop? The reservoir? Yapoah? The Shelton-McMurphy house? The railroad? The bikepath? The existing trail system? What parts of the native vegetation are in good shape and need protection? What areas need some longer range attention to keep them a part of the native community framework? Do some of this evaluation now?

What more can you say about the public garden now? Will it be ten little plants or twenty acres? Where? What will you try and include? Are there any precedent projects you admire that can help inspire this work? How many people will it be sized for, 10 or 10,000? Will it be associated with the existing overlook or do you intend to leave that area alone? What are the key areas at the top now and how do they relate, should they relate? Are there particular plants and associations you'll feature? Will it be a bounded garden or an intensification or both or....? Its OK to have some ideas now. What do I have to say to get you to do some of this work?

Thanks, Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** K.Y.

**Title:** A Conservation Community at Mt. Baldy

Comments:

K:

I titled this for you, even if temporarily, naming it with my understanding of your point of view. I take that to be the possibility of building a planned unit development or planned community which is sensitive to it's South Hills landscape and the need to combine stewardship of the land with the building of good places to live. You see this from more than the local perspective and set the work at a community level in the values and policies of the South Hills Study. I put your name on your report too. Your maps are helpful. I'd try to include more of the surrounds at 100 scale so that "edge" relations are clearer in terms of the landscape and where others live, connect to etc.

As I read what you've written about the trails, I look to see if I can find them on any of your maps. ??? Oh, yes, Ridgeline Trail Access by EWEB and Spring Blvd., good, but maybe more of the system at 400. Yes, I think these are important connections. The conservation material, your observations, questions and overall approach to the site are admirable.

Here's what I'd try to add at this point. There is no housing programmatic material. I don't know how many people will live here, the number of homes or how big they are.

I think you are suffering from a lack of numbers. What's allowed? Can you fit what's allowed with your conservation plan? Who are the people you are planning for?

You need a synoptic paragraph up front. It's also time to try to answer some of your questions. Say what you think the issues are rather than asking what they are, discuss them and then relate this discussion to your goals. Instead of asking how will the place be connected, say that it needs to be connected to..., and...

You write about the site from the conservation point of view. Why not look at it and evaluate it for housing, for homes, for good places to live. It appears that the terrace area will be important to the siting of the homes and that they will have some relation to the pond and the oak areas. Evaluate these areas using some cutout homes and roads to scale. How close? What kind of pattern? What kind of internal circulation is possible? might make sense? Imagine yourself making a tentative schematic site plan in the next two weeks and try to do a few quick ones now without having to be perfect. Write your final report as though it was your client that was your audience and you were defining the project, discussing, and evaluating the site, setting out the work to be done, and providing a preliminary version of what you think it will look like schematically (+and your fee of course).

In the spirit of trying to move you along, I give you permission to build here. At least on paper. More, more...

Thanks, Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** L. A.

**Title:** Valley View Vineyard

Comments:

L:

This is obviously a report issued by your branch office, an experiential binding.

When I finished reading it, I knew where and who and what quite clearly and was ready for a more detailed evaluation with close up diagrams and maps than you provided. You should write a paragraph under each of the topics in your issues and opportunities and do an evaluation of what's there now, whether it will need to be replaced, and at this stage what you plan to do etc. You don't say what the criteria might be for a remodeled outdoor group space, or what the current circulation situation is, what's not working and what needs to be done. Saying you need to address it someday just shifts this term's work over to studio time and will rob you of needed design development opportunities. Because the project seems modest in scale it can lull you into thinking there isn't a lot to do. Each of the pieces as you look at them closer is a world.

You also don't mention staging, as we discussed in my office, or the relation of this work to the capital improvement plan you are helping to do as a part of the business plan for the winery. Why not at least say you'll be doing some very conceptual cost estimating and budgeting and intend to use some of your business background.

I don't think your "project is the redesign of Valley View Vineyard." I think you'll be providing your client with a landscape development plan for the vineyard which helps it meet some of its evolving goals such as expanded production, development of the visitor experience, historic preservation, education and an overall look and feel that is in keeping with its Applegate Valley setting and landscape.

This is very much on the right track, but it is too thin for mid-term. Get to work on it.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** L.H.

**Title:** The River District

Comments:

L:

I think your title still gives you away. You have a big area and you don't really know what your work here will be, at least I can't understand it from what you've written. I admire the energy and effort that went into the report. It's very helpful to have an outline, although this one looks to me to be more of the outline for a study than a project.

It's not clear to me at the beginning whether you are referring to the existing development plan or that you intend to do one. It's also not clear how you will deal with a scale of development smaller than district scale. I appreciated your very good list of issues in the district. This is the first attempt at evaluation and appraisal I've seen from any of you who are taking this area for your comp work. Yes, there are not enough trees and the roads don't go where they need to etc. This is your best material, something to build on. Can you now discuss these issues a bit more and then **say what needs to be done about them?** And what **you** intend to do. I can't figure it out. Will you be making a conceptual plan for public open space, including roads, walks, waterways, parks, trees and.... for the River District?

And then, where and how will you focus your work? Part of the problem here for me is understanding your writing. You shift tenses and your sentences leave me trying to understand what you mean. Use a spelling checker and have someone read your writing over before you hand it in. I think you will do a good job with this if you can combine a conceptual development proposal of the district, something that extends, not merely repeats, the present report, with a smaller demonstration in a **part** of the area. It's this part that is invisible to me at this stage and needs your attention and some programmatic material.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

Name: M. M.

Title: from black & white to color: transforming the river district

Comments:

M: Happy Birthday! Yes, there has been a qualitative growth in your appreciation for the area and yes, the slides do reveal some of these qualities, and yes, something needs to be done about the empty feeling of the public sector. I also agree that there has not been enough change in the growth of your project. My question is "when will you work quickly to delineate actual locations of recreation pockets?" What will you use as criteria? How will you know one when you see one? This is this term's work, not studio where I expect you to further and elaborate on such first thoughts and distributions.

Let me compliment you on your writing. It's clear, well organized, effective. You show a good understanding of the principal planning context for your work, i.e. the River District Recreation Open Space Needs Assessment. The outline of the five types is a good place to start. Why not try to elaborate on these and use them as a temporary filter for your maps and growing knowledge of the district. You could begin by assessing whether any of these exists in any form at this point, where there might be such potential, and if they need to be created out of whole cloth, what a beginning set of criteria might be. I would expect to go further, however, and at least begin to speculate about expanding their typology. My guess is that a richer set of open space types will add up to a more diverse public life, more kinds of places to do more kinds of things,

You are also still flying over this place, at least in your writing. The images are down on the ground but disassociated from any sense, to this reader, of where they are. The generic streets has to become street, this street, Pearl St., which has a name and a character and plays a role in the present district and has a potential to change its role and make its own contribution to the district's public open space. Why are you so reluctant to make a more explicit critique of the present circumstance or begin to identify what it's potential might be? Why are you reluctant to make a diagram of what blocks and what streets you are working with and to begin to differentiate or characterize the different identities, characters, roles, problems and potentials of the players?

This kind of thing *has* been done before. Donald Appleyard's book *Streets* is a great resource. William Whyte's book on the *Social Life...* is a classic; Jon Gehl's book on the life of public spaces between buildings, I forget the exact title, is helpful. Why don't you gather up some existing theory and tools and then set off to forge your own?

Since I've had you in classes before and know what you can do, I have high expectations for your bringing the usual horsepower to your final undergraduate project in the department. This work needs your full intellectual attention and it needs it right now.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** S. B.

**Title:** Greenbank Community Farm: A Marriage of People and Place - Whidbey Island, Washington

Comments:

S:

You do a good job of setting up the situation and place of the farm and your role in the present process of its development.

Needing more attention at this time, however, is the smaller site scale materials, images, and programmatic information that will allow you to fulfill your good goals and objectives. Add this part now so that your "schematic" can be a nested affair of the places you are remodeling within the larger schematic of the farm as it sits within it Whidbey context.

After reading your "Fan" section, I think this is too class oriented and "plannerese" for a report/program that should be used to communicate with your client group. I'd hide the fan, put it away in your chest of drawers, rather than pasting it in, and try to just discuss the range of things that need consideration in order to 'cover all the bases'. You've used the fan model well, now keep it out of the front of your narrative.

I'd also avoid subtitles like "My Comprehensive Project" since it will sound too possessive to others - especially non-comp outsiders on Whidbey Island. Just name your contributions and discuss their role in the larger whole. Make this last part where you move in closer and closer to the places you'll remodel and transform as good as the first part of your report and you'll have it. Nice work.

Thanks,

Jerry



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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** S. P.

**Title:** Parks, Open Space and Natural Areas in the Veneta Region

Comments:

S:

This is an excellent mid-term report. It tells me what you are undertaking and where. It presents the present situation and the timeliness of your work. It evaluates the present condition as a basis for your proposal. It projects many key things that need to be done, all of which sound important and convincing. It has a clear point of view: Parks, Open Space and Natural Areas can be combined, become as one, be a whole, reinforce one another, satisfy a number of needs at once, from managing runoff to the need to protect and conserve the Veneta rural setting. Your maps and sketches are delightful. You are almost perfect. How could I find anything more to say? You know I can't resist urging you on.

Some suggestions: Your present title still sounds like a book to me, although it nicely associates the elements you want people to start seeing as a whole. Maybe it should be Combining Parks, Open Space and Natural Areas into a System for the Veneta Region or something similar that makes its point in the most condensed and up front way possible. You can do more with your sketches to support this point of view. They tend to be about one element, e.g. water runoff, when your point of view is that such things can add to our outdoor pleasure and delight, create important habitat etc. Your very handsome watercolor plan diagram of Veneta could have some companions that showed some of the conceptual linkages and overlaps you mention. Many of the problem areas and wonderful possibilities you conceive could be located in space. You don't have to know exactly where the linking bikepath goes to show one connecting, any more than you need specific details to propose the need in words. Since your point is that there is a direct and potential link between several tasks in progress, the update of the CP, the PR&OSP, the WINRS and the PFP, I think I'd plan to try to especially focus on areas of overlap as places to demonstrate your point of view - and thus the need for the integrative sketches and other ways of educational devices to build the broader concept of a integrative system in the public mind. I liked your use of a subtitle to say that you were setting up a network of green spaces and then your further explanation of this network in your introduction. I do think you can use this synoptic material a little more forcefully to make your point.

Precedents: You don't say much about them here. Planners and designers are licensed carriers, the "Typhoid Susans", of ideas into their communities. Veneta, like everywhere else, will want to know if anyone has ever done anything like this before, and whether it worked for them and what it was "really" like. Other projects, precedents, examples, successes, images...will bolster your case, add the public credibility you'll need, help articulate public hopes, build common understanding and common ground and allow you to achieve your aims.

Thanks,

Jerry

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## Mid-term Report - A Project Critique

**Name:** T. M.

**Title:** Evergreen Memorial Park

Comments:

I:

This is coming nicely. You are working on a development, enhancement and longer range expansion plan for the Macy brothers' Evergreen Memorial Park. This will consist of a plot plan for their newly acquired property, enhancements to the existing property that will make it more parklike for visitors, some improvements to the cemetery's entry experience and some longer range expansion planning that will include proposals for burial, planting, car and pedestrian circulation, and pond and wetland development. In addition you will be advising them about additional property acquisition, phasing and providing them with some preliminary cost estimates for the work. I've drawn this paragraph out of your work to show you how to put it altogether up front as a summary statement.

Having done this, you can then use your statement as an **outline** of the sections of your report and even list the sections in a table of contents that the reader can scan up front as a quick overview and shortcut if they are interested in the pond and wetland, for example, or are quite anxious to get to the cost breakdown or really are interested in the overall vision showing what things will be like someday after all the work is done. You are doing all these things but it runs together a bit and needs a little more structure.

In each section then I'd show and say what was there, what the problems and/or opportunities were and what I thought needed to be done. I'd also try to associate a product to this discussion such as: Cemetery Planting Plan. Each of these elements can then have its subparts, such as New Tree Planting, Replacements, Flowering Tree Schedule, Wetland Planting etc. You don't have to know everything about these elements right now to know you'll need something like this at the end.

I tried to figure out from your plan diagram which property they had and which they had acquired and had some trouble making the distinction. Maybe a simple diagram showing the land areas at the beginning would be helpful. I'd also accompany your evaluation and thoughts of each of the areas with some diagrammatic support so that it's easy to follow. One larger diagram that you perhaps color, showing the area or system your describing would be just fine. All this will be very helpful in talking with your client and for presenting the project at the end of comp studio. Since you have a well-defined project, there's no reason why you shouldn't move ahead with it and dig more deeply into all of the elements on your outline.

Keep up the good work

Thanks,