

STUDENT

URBAN DESIGN

COMPETITION

2007

PLANNING  
DESIGN  
FINANCE

## Competition Brief

### I. COMPETITION PROCESS

#### INTRODUCTION AND MISSION

The ULI Gerald D. Hines Student Urban Design Competition is part of the Institute's ongoing effort to raise interest among young people in creating better communities, improving development patterns, and increasing awareness of the need for multidisciplinary solutions to development and design challenges. The purpose of this competition is to generate creative solutions that are products of multidisciplinary teams.

This is an ideas competition; there is neither guarantee nor intent that any submitted scheme will be applied to the site.

Please refer to the competition Web site ([udcompetition.uli.org](http://udcompetition.uli.org)) for additional information and the mission statement.

#### THE JURY

In agreeing to serve as members of the competition jury, the jurors attest they have reviewed the competition program and agree to be bound by the rules, regulations, and guidelines as stated.

Please refer to the competition Web site for information about each juror.

#### QUESTIONS

All questions regarding the competition must be sent in writing to [udcompetition@uli.org](mailto:udcompetition@uli.org). Answers will be posted on the Web site throughout the 11 days of the competition. Please check the Update History to find out when the last changes were made.

Many answers to process-related questions can already be found on the Web site in the FAQ section.

ULI reserves the right to edit submitted questions before posting them to the Web site. The Institute also reserves the right not to answer all questions and not post redundant questions or remarks deemed to be inappropriate or irrelevant.

Once you have received these program documents, under no circumstances should there be any communication regarding the competition, other than in the manner stipulated here, with members of ULI staff, the nonprofit and public agencies involved, the landowners or employees of the landowners, consultants who are working or have worked on the project, or the competition jury.

No phone calls, please.

**ADVISERS**

The involvement of anyone outside of your registered student team is limited to advice and may not include production of what is submitted to the jury. This prohibition applies to faculty advisers, professional advisers, and other students.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Please refer to the competition Web site for this information.

**AWARDS AND PRIZES**

Please refer to the competition Web site for this information.

**SCHEDULE**

Please refer to the competition Web site for this information.

**II. SUBMISSIONS****EXAMINATION AND DISQUALIFICATION OF SUBMISSIONS**

ULI will examine the submissions to ascertain whether or not the finalists comply with all competition requirements. They will report to the jury any failures to comply with requirements, and will present to the jury any resulting disqualifications. The jury may review all such disqualifications to satisfy itself as to the accuracy of the advisers' decision.

**OWNERSHIP OF THE SUBMISSIONS AND COPYRIGHTS**

All submissions shall become the property of ULI, which reserves the right to exhibit and/or reproduce any of the design presentations. ULI retains the right to reproduce any and all parts of the presentations for the purpose of publication or video representation, and to exhibit the competition results. Upon delivery to the jury, the presentation itself will remain the property of ULI. In any public use of the submissions, due credit will be given to the author(s) of the design.

**ANONYMITY OF THE SUBMISSIONS**

No submission will be juried that bears a name, symbol, or mark which might reveal the identity of the author(s) of the entry to the jury nor shall any competitor directly or indirectly reveal the authorship of any design prior to and during the jury's review. The only identifying mark on any submitted material will be the agreed-upon four-digit code.

**RETURN OF SUBMISSIONS**

No provisions will be made by ULI to mail or ship any entry back to the competitors. It is strongly suggested that all competitors maintain a complete record of their submission.

### III. THE COMPETITION PROBLEM

#### PLANNING, DESIGN, AND DEVELOPMENT ALONG EAST FIRST STREET LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

First Street in Los Angeles is a major east-west commercial and commuter corridor connecting downtown Los Angeles to Boyle Heights. In the past decade, it has become a linear locus for redevelopment as multiple completed and planned initiatives—Walt Disney Concert Hall, Grand Avenue Project, Los Angeles River Revitalization, the Gold Line Eastside Extension—have attracted new public and private investments along First Street. Much of the redevelopment on First Street, completed and under way, has occurred west of Alameda Street, which divides First Street into western and eastern segments. Among the new investments have been Caltrans' Los Angeles headquarters building and the Japanese-American National Museum on West First; and on East First, the 303-unit Savoy condominium block and the 470-unit, 29-acre Pueblo del Sol HOPE VI (mixed income) housing project. Undergoing construction is a new public high school at the northeast corner of First Street and Mission Road.

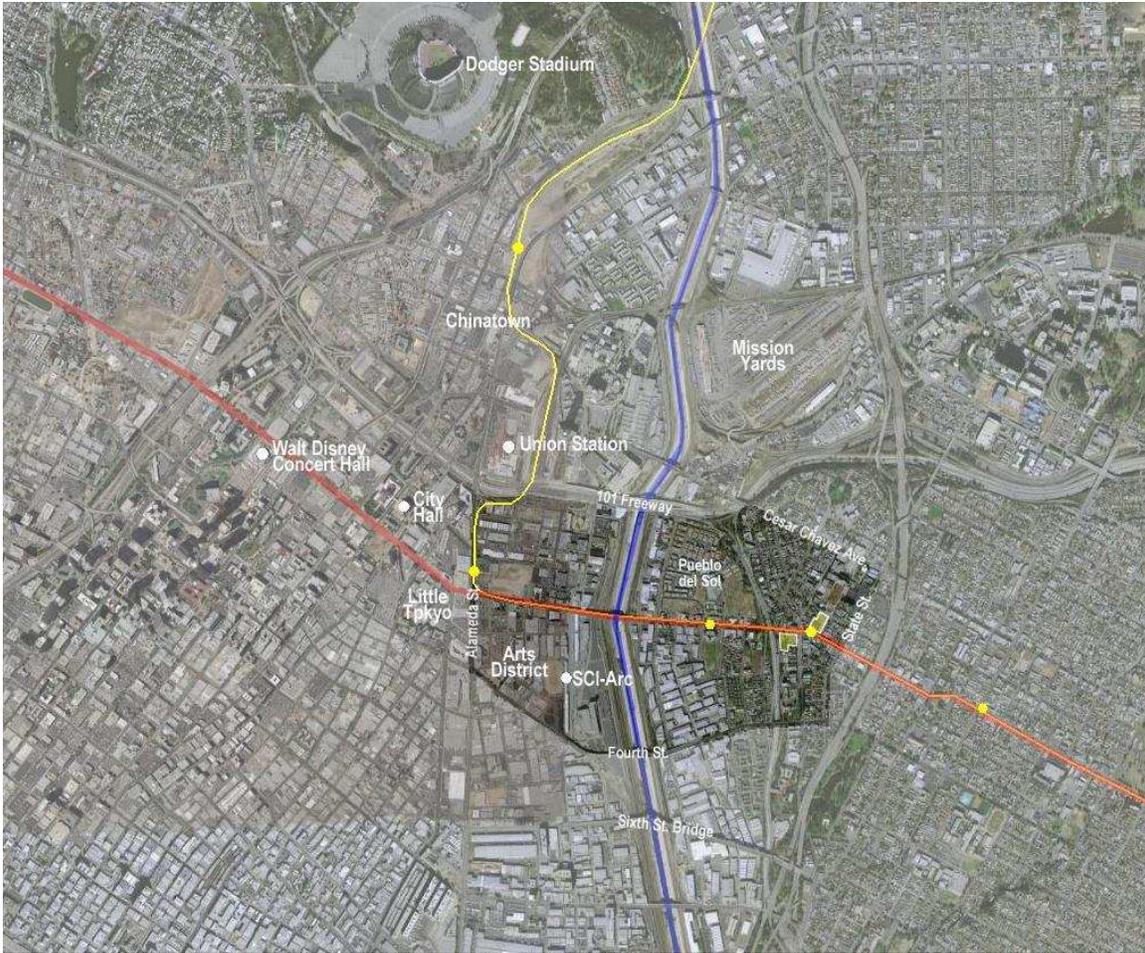
Your role in this competition is to act as the fictional, newly-established, quasi-public redevelopment agency for East First Street, whose jurisdiction is the rationalization of land uses and future investment on land fronting on and along, and affected by, the Gold Line Eastside Extension from Alameda to Mariachi Plaza. Modeled on the ability to create a Joint Powers Authority—the enabling mechanism for other major urban initiatives such as the Grand Avenue Project—this agency is empowered to establish land uses, propose public investments, and act as a master developer for projects that are authorized by the city.

In its exercise of these mandates, the agency has established the following first actions:

1. **Land Use Planning** along the 1.12-mile stretch of First Street that fronts the surface portion of the Gold Line extension, from Alameda Street across the Los Angeles River to the blocks facing Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights.
2. **Urban Design** for new First Street Bridge connections to the Los Angeles River and a riverside recreational/environmental amenity from the 101 Freeway to the Sixth Street Bridge.
3. **Redevelopment Proposal** for the two blocks facing Mariachi Plaza that are currently being used as staging areas during construction of the Gold Line subway stop below Mariachi Plaza.

For the purpose of this competition, the East First Street study area is defined as the two cross-axial areas centered on East First Street and the Los Angeles River. The East First Street axis includes the areas north and south of East First Street from Alameda Street to State Street east of Mariachi Plaza; its northern and southern boundaries extend as far north and south as your analysis requires, but no farther than the 101 Freeway/Cesar E. Chavez Avenue to the north and Fourth Street to the south. The Los Angeles River axis includes the areas east and west of the Los Angeles River from Santa Fe Avenue to the west and Mission Road to the east.

For those using mapping software, the coordinates of the First Street-Los Angeles River intersection is approximately 34°02'53"N (34.0481°) and 118°13'48"W (-118.23°).



*This satellite photograph of downtown Los Angeles shows the maximum extent of the East First Street study area in bold relief, First Street in red, the Los Angeles River in blue, and the Mariachi Plaza redevelopment areas in yellow polygons. The Gold Line Eastside Extension and stops are shown in gold; the segment shown north of Union Station has been in service since 2003.*

ULI has selected this problem because its solutions require clear interdisciplinary coordination and because the environmental, political, financial, demographic, cultural, quality of life, and design issues it presents are universally relevant to urban design and redevelopment at all scales.

**Urban Connections: East First Street**

As its name indicates, First Street predates the establishment of Los Angeles as a municipality in the 1850s. Civic activity at the city, state, and federal levels are centered north of First Street, as are Union Station, Chinatown, and the historic remnants of the original settlement. South of First Street are the centers of commercial activity: the financial district at the far western end, Little Tokyo, and the newly-minted Arts District.

Currently, the Gold light rail line from Pasadena terminates at Union Station. In 2006, construction began on an eight-station, six-mile extension into East Los Angeles, following a route that emerges from Union Station above grade, declining to grade on Alameda, turning east on the median strip of First Street, and crossing the Los Angeles River on the First Street bridge. Just below the north-south 101 Freeway overpass, where the incline to Boyle Heights

starts, the rail line will enter a 1.8-mile subterranean portion that serves Mariachi Plaza and one other underground stop before re-emerging at grade east of Boyle Heights.

### **Open Space: the Los Angeles River**

The first permanent non-native settlers of Los Angeles were Spanish missionaries, who in their customary fashion, located a mission on a river with an adequate water supply for farming and human habitation. The settlement, begun in the late 1700s, was on high ground west of what is now the Los Angeles River, above a broad floodplain that was used initially for agriculture, then for railroads. Despite its location on the ocean, its popular identity with the Southern California beach lifestyle, and the global importance of its seaport (the third-busiest in the world), the establishment and development of Los Angeles until modern times was dependent on the river. In that sense, Los Angeles is more akin to San Antonio than to San Francisco.

When Union Pacific's transcontinental rail system opened Los Angeles to overland commerce, the river valley's agricultural uses gave way to transportation and related industrial uses. The river, because of its very flat topography, flooded whenever the occasional storm saturated the region, each time changing its course and destroying everything built within the floodplain. In order to channelize the river and as part of a flood-mitigation program, it was lined in concrete, starting in 1938, along its entire 52-mile length to the ocean.

Today, a new attitude about the river and its environmental and recreational attributes prevail. A number of studies and proposals have been produced, all recommending that the cities and the county invest in developing the river as a recreational and environmental amenity. The proposal with the greatest traction is one that has recently been put forward by the City Council's Ad Hoc Task Force on the Los Angeles River Master Plan, which proposes flood control measures and stormwater management alternatives while enhancing aesthetic and recreational values.

### **Neighborhood Context: Boyle Heights and Mariachi Plaza**

East of the Los Angeles River, the river valley floodplain is narrower than the downtown, western side, rising quickly to the high ground of Boyle Heights. Along the east side of the river are the tracks of the Santa Fe Railroad, now virtually unused, with spurs feeding the warehouses and light industrial district that occupy the eastern flatlands of the river valley. East of this industrial zone are residential neighborhoods cut off from each other by the north-south, elevated 101 and 5 freeways. A major neighborhood-commercial corridor through Boyle Heights is Boyle Avenue, intersecting First Street at Mariachi Plaza.

Mariachi Plaza, so-called because it has long been the place where mariachi musicians congregated impromptu to audition for paying gigs, is the spiritual heart of the Latino community prevalent in Boyle Heights. That prevalence hasn't always been so, and remnants of the Black, Jewish, and Asian communities maintain an ethnically-diverse, working-class residential character.

The competition submission should reflect four specific levels of decision-making:

- (a) **Planning Context and Analysis:** Teams should analyze the overall context of the surroundings at regional, city, and neighborhood scales. As part of this analysis, teams may wish to offer overall recommendations for planning, design, and development of this larger area (the "metropolitan area") to support your preferred scenario for the East First Street study area.
- (b) **Land Use Planning:** Teams must propose a land use plan for the East First Street study area that fronts East First Street. Connections to the neighborhoods and districts north and south of the parcels fronting East First Street—Little Tokyo, Arts District, the Mission Road light industrial district, Pueblo del Sol, Pico Gardens, and Boyle Street residential neighborhoods—contribute to the vitality of First Street, thus the land use plan should support these connections where relevant. Teams should introduce open and green

spaces; recommend a desired mix of senior, affordable, workforce, SRO, and market-rate housing, leased and for-sale; and identify those areas that are in Community Redevelopment Agency, California Enterprise, and Federal Empowerment zones. The following landmarks must be retained: Nishi Hongwanji temple (northeast corner of First and Vignes), TELACU Pico Aliso (a 74-unit senior assisted living facility on the south side of First, between Utah and Clarence), 1781-1785 East First Street (northwest corner of First and Boyle). Also to be retained as designed (but not yet built); the Gold Line stop on Alameda and the two on First; and the new public high school on the north side of First Street between Mission Road and Utah.

- (c) **Urban Design:** Teams must propose a master plan for the Los Angeles River greenway from the 101 Freeway south to the Sixth Street Bridge. The City Council's Los Angeles River Ad Hoc Task Force has commissioned a Revitalization Master Plan. The recently-issued plan has designed five demonstration areas, one of which is south of the Sixth Street Bridge. Your design will connect to the Task Force's plan, showing connections to it and the First Street Bridge. You may remove the four Santa Fe rail lines, and their spurs, on the east side of the river. Your plan may not remove any of the existing warehouses and light industrial buildings between Mission Road and the river, as a demonstration of an industrial sanctuary model for the riverfront. Teams should focus on environmental sustainability. The First Street, Fourth Street, and Sixth Street bridges are considered to have historical significance (from Los Angeles's City Beautiful movement) and may not be altered except to add pedestrian/bicycle connections to the river greenway.
- (d) **Development Proposal:** Teams must present a master plan and development proposal for the two MTA-owned parcels northeast (57,703 s.f.) and southwest (65,968 s.f.) of Mariachi Plaza that are currently being used for construction staging during the Mariachi Plaza subway construction and are identified by the city planning office as unimproved. You may not close and bridge streets and alleys, except you may close the portion of Pleasant Avenue between First Street and Boyle Avenue north of Mariachi Plaza. If adding adjacent parcels to your development package enhances the financial viability of your development, you may acquire adjacent parcels on a pro-rata basis. The development proposal is the only component of your presentation that requires a proforma financial statement.

The project will provide affordable housing in every phase of development in accordance with the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) requirement that 20% of all housing units must be affordable. A minimum of 10% of these units must be restricted to moderate-income households (not more than 80% of Area Median Income), and 10% to low-income households (not more than 50% of Area Median Income). The balance of the units may be made available at market rates. The income and rent restrictions will remain in effect for a minimum of 45 years for ownership units and 55 years for rental units.

The minimum scope of your development proposal includes the blocks shaded in yellow below. You may also acquire and include in your development proposal the parcels shaded in blue, or parts thereof as long as they are contiguous.



## Assumptions

### 1. Zoning

Along the East First Street study area, you may rezone all parcels, except those zoned Open Space (ZIMAS legend color: olive) and Public Facility (turquoise). All new construction proposed for rezoned parcels must respect their zoning requirements. Assume that setbacks for assembled parcels do not apply except at public rights of way.

### 2. Land Acquisition

All land acquisition costs are to be averaged at \$80 per square foot for improved and unimproved parcels. You need not incur additional transaction costs.

### 3. Rights of way

You must respect all rights of way except as allowed under "(d) Development Proposal" (above). Assume that easements may be relocated but not removed.

### 4. Utilities

You must retain all existing utilities, such as high-tension power lines and structures, along the Los Angeles riverway. Outside the riverway, only local distribution lines for power, gas, water, and communications may be moved; sewer and stormwater infrastructure may not be moved.

### 5. Infrastructure costs

You must account for all new infrastructure costs under public subsidy, but they need not be charged against project costs.

6. **Project costs**

The Development Proposal is the only component of your submission that requires a proforma accounting (for a ten-year period).

7. **Real property taxes**

Assume that annual city and county taxes remain stable at the current 1.088961% for residential and commercial real estate. There is no additional state property tax assessments. Under Proposition 13, revaluations are triggered upon completion of construction and changes of ownership, with a 2% cap on increases from year to year. For this competition, apply these constant rates to valuations based on acquisition costs plus cost of construction.

#### **IV. PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

The presentation rules have been developed to ensure that the jury will have sufficient information to effectively evaluate and compare individual solutions for the competition stage. This is particularly important because the jury will have to review and evaluate a large number of solutions in a relatively brief period. Disregarding presentation requirements and guidelines may place the competitors at a disadvantage. It must be emphasized that the presentation requirements are developed for the benefit of the competitors as well as the jurors.

The presentation shall consist of a series of **no more than six sheets**, each 11" x 17". As indicated in the following list, competitors have some discretion regarding the number of sheets used for each category. Maps, plans, and drawings may be at any scale; indicate scale used.

**1. Planning Context and Analysis**

This should include an overall annotated plan and/or diagram drawn at a scale that describes overall patterns and concepts for regional issues the team considers relevant. These might include, for example:

- (a) Land use;
- (b) Circulation (pedestrian, vehicular, transit, etc.);
- (c) Open space;
- (d) Environmental and sustainability considerations;
- (e) Image and character of the area;
- (f) Social and economic concerns;
- (g) Community planning and infrastructure concepts; and
- (h) Private-sector development concepts.

**2. Land Use Planning**

The land use planning drawings must show:

- (a) Land and building uses;
- (b) Blocks and streets;
- (c) Location of transit line(s) and stops/terminal;
- (d) Other public infrastructure;
- (e) Connections to neighboring blocks; and
- (f) General concepts for landscape and open space.

Note: Use APA's Activity-Based Classification Standards for color coding.

**3. Urban Design**

The urban design for the Los Angeles River revitalization within the subject area must show:

- (a) Railroads, power lines, and similar infrastructure
- (b) River, greenways, and open spaces;
- (c) Paths, bikeways, pedestrian connections to bridges, and other means of access to the neighborhood;
- (d) At least one each of plans, elevations, sections, and relevant details; and
- (e) Environmental, sustainability, and aesthetic values.

#### **4. Development Proposal**

The initial phase of the proposed development should include annotated drawings similar to a project schematic design. They will include plans, elevations, sections, and other renderings, all emphasizing the public space aspects, connections, and interrelationships of the project.

#### **5. Development Schedule and Finances**

In addition to the requirements specified in Presentation Requirements #1-4 above, include—within the maximum of six sheets for your entire presentation—and account for the following information: the target markets for, and values of, property development; a demonstration of financial feasibility, showing acquisition, development, and construction costs. Specifically, provide:

- (a) A brief, easy-to-read-at-a-glance summary of the market information of downtown and Boyle Heights that helped you determine an optimal mix of uses and amount of developable space and residential units.
- (b) As a summary of the financial feasibility of the choices you have made, calculate the development's internal rate of return (IRR, leveraged) for its first ten years of development. Identify the assumptions (e.g., number of units, sales/rents, itemized costs, etc.) you have used in its calculation. The IRR will be expected to be a positive number, but the jury only will use it to verify that it supports your proposal, and will not use it as a comparison of one team proposal to another.

The maximum of six sheets should also incorporate statements describing site design and development concepts, public infrastructure within the site—including circulation and open space—investments, and market options and strategies.

Text—in the form of charts, graphs, matrices, spreadsheets, timelines, etc.—should analyze the costs for infrastructure, buildings, open space, and the value that they will create. Drawings—in the form of plans, sketches, and collages—should describe the architectural and other design concepts for the public and private realms.

When including written material, make it as succinct as possible, using bullet points where possible.

### **V. CRITERIA FOR JUDGING**

The jury will be instructed to use these criteria in selecting the finalists and honorable mentions. Remember, the primary goal is to demonstrate direct linkages among, and integration of, professional disciplines in planning, design, and economic feasibility. Specifically, the solutions should:

1. Integrate Planning and Design Decisions with Economic Feasibility
  - (a) Public investments in infrastructure, public facilities (schools, transit, etc.), and public programs should have clear value for private investors and their proposed development;
  - (b) Private investments and developments should have a clear value for the public planning goals that have been expressed for the study area;
  - (c) Planning and design concepts should support and reinforce public planning goals; and
  - (d) Leveraging of public investments to attract private investment.
2. Demonstrate awareness of design issues contributing to a workable, livable, sustainable configuration of development. Specific aspects of this includes:
  - (a) Sustainable development;
  - (b) Environmental responsibility;
  - (c) Pedestrian-friendly and walkable design;

- (d) Smart growth practices; and
  - (e) Development around transit.
3. Demonstrate attention to factors affecting the risks and feasibility of the project, including:
- (a) Development and construction costs;
  - (b) Future expenses and revenues from operations and land sales; and
  - (c) Effect of project phasing on risks and feasibility.
4. Additional Criteria
- While the jury may not ignore any of the above criteria, they may, if they wish, use additional criteria in making their final decisions.

## **VI. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

All items described in the above list of presentation requirements must be included on a maximum of 6 sheets. Two copies of the sheets should be submitted. One set—which is intended to be shown to the jury—should be mounted on rigid, lightweight boards, preferably foam core. The other set should be loose so that it can be photocopied easily.

One consistent corner of every sheet must have the entrant's four-digit code, as chosen by the team in the application. The back of each board must indicate the relationship of the board to the entire assemblage of boards so that they may be displayed in the intended format.

A separate CD—with only the team's four-digit code to identify it—should also be submitted, containing the five or six sheets in PDF format at "Press Quality" resolution.

Graphic techniques are entirely at the discretion of the competitors. Scale drawings should include a graphic scale and a north arrow.

Supplemental diagrams or information not presented directly on the sheets will not be accepted as part of the presentation and will not be viewed by the jury.

### **CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSION**

1. Maximum of six sheets mounted on boards (copy 1);
2. Maximum of six sheets (same as item #1), unstapled, and loose (copy 2);
3. CD of the same sheets as item #1 in PDF format, press quality;

Remember: All items can contain only the self-defined four-digit code and no other identifying mark. This includes the electronic files, CD, CD envelope, and every sheet and item submitted.

### **PACKAGING AND DELIVERY OF SUBMISSIONS**

All submissions must be received as one package, addressed to:

Student Urban Design Competition  
Urban Land Institute  
1025 Thomas Jefferson St., N.W.  
Suite 500 West  
Washington, DC 20007  
202-624-7000

All submissions must be mailed to the above address with a postmark no later than Monday, February 5, 2007. Hand-delivered submissions must be received prior to 5:00 p.m., e.s.t., on February 5, 2007.

Submissions sent by U.S. Mail, express company, or by private courier service must be postmarked by the deadline stated in the previous paragraph. Competitors are advised to consider an express mail service that can guarantee delivery in one or two days. Only properly postmarked submissions, as described above, that are delivered to ULI before the jury meets will be eligible for consideration. No notification of receipt by ULI will be sent to competitors; therefore, it is recommended that materials be sent by registered mail, FedEx, UPS, or other means that allows the sender to track the status of the materials. Inquiries about deliveries should be addressed to your chosen delivery service. Neither ULI nor the jury bears any responsibility whatsoever for the safe and timely delivery of the submissions to ULI.

It is recommended that all materials be sent in one "Large" box (12.5"x18"x4") as provided by FedEx, DHL, USPS, and UPS. The return address/billing information will be the only part of the submission that contains identification of the submitting team. There cannot be any identifying mark INSIDE the mailing package except the 4-digit team code.

Note: Additional program rules and guidelines for the finalist stage of this competition shall be announced after the four finalists are selected.

## **VII. DOWNLOADING FROM ULI CONNECT**

By the time this competition brief is issued, team leaders will have received instructions for accessing all competition materials at ULI Connect, a Web-based file transfer and storage space. Upon initial login to ULI Connect, team leaders will be emailed a temporary password, which when entered in combination with the team leader's email address, will register the user. Upon registration, the team leader may assign him/herself a permanent password. Choose the "batch download documents" option to quickly transfer all competition materials to the team's server.

### **Documents, Data, and Images**

This list includes all the items available for download from ULI Connect and serves as a checklist for competitors to make sure they have received all the materials.

1. Competition Brief (this document as a PDF file)
2. Resources: PowerPoint files of relevant studies not available on the Web, related Web information with live links (PDF file), and a video (RM file)
3. GIS files at English scale, including a text file directory of all files
6. Maps and aerial images showing the competition site
7. Context photos

You may download competition materials for distribution only among team members, faculty adviser, and professional adviser. All competition materials are to be used for this competition only, and may not be used, copied, or distributed for any other purpose without written permission from ULI.