



# Downtown Connections: Houston Texas

## FINALIST STAGE BRIEF

# Hines

Hines is a privately owned, international real estate firm that has provided the highest level of quality, service, and value to its clients and investors for more than 50 years.

With a presence in more than 100 cities around the globe and investor relationships with many of the world's largest financial institutions, Hines has the breadth of experience, the network of expertise, and the financial strength to assume complex and challenging investment, development, and management projects. The company has offices in 18 countries, with regional offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston (U.S. headquarters), London (European headquarters), New York, and San Francisco, as well as 58 other U.S. cities. The Hines portfolio of projects underway, completed, acquired, and managed for third parties consists of more than 1,145 properties including skyscrapers, corporate headquarters, mixed-use centers, industrial parks, medical facilities, and master-planned resort and residential communities. Currently, the firm controls assets valued at approximately \$23.4 billion.

Since its inception in 1957, Hines has created projects of the highest quality, aesthetic relevance and enduring value for its investor partners, clients, and local communities. Working with such notable architects as Cesar Pelli, Frank Gehry, I.M. Pei, and Philip Johnson, Hines has redefined the way developers interact with and treat architecture, promoting a balance between function, beauty, and sustainability and reshaping skylines around the world.



ULI, the Urban Land Institute, is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members.

Founded in 1936, the Institute now has members in 95 countries worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates an open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

Members say ULI provides information they can trust and is a place where leaders come to grow professionally and personally through sharing, mentoring, and problem solving. With pride, ULI members commit to the best in land use policy and practice.

## **The Finalist Stage**

The four finalist teams will have the opportunity to revise their original schemes and complete additional work related to the development site as defined in the competition stage brief. The challenge and the process and required format for the final presentation are outlined below.

### **The Finalist Challenge**

The competition jury chose the four finalist teams for their overall excellence in:

- Understanding and analyzing the site and its relationship to downtown Houston;
- Formulating innovative and feasible design and development frameworks;
- Successfully addressing the site's Buffalo Bayou frontage;
- Displaying the potential to advance their proposals to a more comprehensive and realistic level; and
- Graphically communicating their proposals.

To capitalize on these positive qualities, the four teams will complete additional work related to the development site.

### **The Problem**

The final stage of the competition builds on the analysis that informed your urban planning, design, and development schemes for the first stage of competition, while allowing the opportunity to reflect and expound upon your ideas. You are permitted to create up to four new boards, and there are four essential elements to focus on in this stage:

1. Strengthen the phasing plan for your development, ensuring that (1) the relationship between the phasing scheme and real estate market dynamics makes sense; (2) phase one is the catalyst for the entire development, is scaled appropriately, and is feasible in the current economy; (3) any proposed open space is included and clearly delineated; and (4) a sense of place is created and reinforced through each phase.
2. Develop a detailed parking plan for your site keeping in mind that parking requirements may be reduced over time, including (1) the relationship between phasing scheme and parking requirements; (2) careful consideration of shared parking; (3) location of and access to parking spaces; and (4) parking financing and ownership.
3. Examination of your site's bayou frontage, including (1) access; (2) relationship to the Buffalo Bayou Master Plan; (3) relationship to the built environment both on and off your development site; and (4) the placemaking opportunities related to the bayou.
4. Strengthen the Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) housing component of your plan, to include (1) renderings and (2) specific locations for units and required community spaces.

As in the previous competition stage, keep in mind that your general goal is to present the jury with a transformative plan for the Post Office site that is cohesive, nuanced, and clear. All teams should reread the original competition stage brief and keep in mind that presentation, both graphical and oral, plays an equally important role. Be prepared to answer questions in depth about your plans, design decisions, financials, and especially the four elements listed above.

### **Specific Improvements to Competition Stage Proposals**

After submitting your competition stage proposal, your team has probably pondered potential improvements to its entry. Each team has received a financial feedback worksheet and a land use, design, and development plan feedback worksheet. You have all produced strong submissions; your feedback worksheets and finalist-specific jury comments will offer some insight as to what you might alter. You can also view the other finalist teams' competition stage submissions online as well as the winners from previous years.

In addition to the jury's comments regarding your specific proposal, the jury has deemed the following items important to this stage of the competition. These are not requirements, but rather a list to help frame your thought processes around your entry.

1. The downtown district branding component builds a brand: this is a neighborhood, not a product. How do you create an enduring name and character that can become a brand, adding value to the real estate in the area? Distill and convey the proposed downtown district brand implied by your development proposal and how the development program and physical design manifest this brand.
2. Look at your team's financial score. No matter what your score, you should think about how you can improve your financials and be prepared to answer detailed questions about your financial proposal. For teams with a score below 3, that often means that you did not respond to one of the basic requirements, such as valuation, IRR, etc. Look at the comments in your feedback worksheet and make sure you address the jury's remarks.
3. Make sure that the massing and heights of your proposed development are clearly expressed and easily understood, and address building typologies.
4. Review your pro forma to ensure realistic market assumptions and product absorption rates.
5. Match images with the plan. Renderings and other illustrations should have a clear correlation to your site plan.

6. Identify the locations of market-rate housing, affordable housing, and SRO housing in your plan. Make sure the jury understands how many units of each will be developed and where.
7. Identify the locations and square footages of the open space in your plan, as well as potential programming for those spaces. Make sure the jury understands how your proposed open space connects to existing open space and places.
8. Product mix and target demographic profiles: How does your product mix and target demographic profiles compare to the current demographics downtown? How will your project attract target demographics to ensure product absorption? How does the phasing of each product within the project correlate with anticipated market absorption?
9. How does your development plan connect the site to its surrounding neighborhoods?
10. How does your proposal address the freeways that surround the site?
11. How does your proposal address internal vehicular circulation, through-traffic, and connections to the existing city grid?
12. Be prepared to answer specific questions about your development program, performance, structure, cost, and environmental impacts, etc., at the building, site, and district scales.
13. Use APA Activity-Based Classification graphic standards on land use maps.
14. There are no excuses for misspellings on presentation materials in the Finalist stage.

### **Summary of Financial Data**

For this stage of the competition, you may use your own pro forma summary sheet to tell your financial “story” – including highlighting the key financial assumptions that you have made and the financial results of your development decisions. You may also choose to continue to use the ULI-provided financial summary form. Teams may also choose to submit one additional 11"x17" sheet with financial information.

This summary is to be printed out at 11"×17" and 14 copies made available to the jury by 8am on competition day, April 6th. They need not be mounted on boards, and they may be incorporated in the PowerPoint slides that, at your option, may accompany your oral presentation.

## Presentation of Solution

Unlike the first stage, which was judged anonymously, the final stage takes place in person. Each team will make an oral presentation of its scheme to the jury and invited audience members. This presentation will consist of two parts: presentation of both the competition stage and the finalist stage boards, followed by jury questions and discussion. The team's presentation will be mounted on easels facing the audience. The jury will sit at a table in front of the team, and observers will sit behind the jury auditorium-style.

Teams are permitted to create up to four additional boards for the finalist stage. These will be displayed along with your six original boards from the competition stage. Please use the following guidelines for size, etc.:

- The original six boards are to be enlarged 75% to 100% from their original 11" x 17" size, and will be displayed on easels.
- The finalist stage boards should be displayed on four boards of 30" x 40". The scale of the drawings should be large enough to show character and detail appropriate to what is being presented.

Remember, your primary audience is the jury, and jury members must be able to read comfortably your text and drawings from their seated distance of 10 to 15 feet. Jurors will also have the opportunity to review your boards—old and new—before the official start of the competition on Friday. All boards from all teams will be in the jurors' meeting room for an hour so they can familiarize themselves with your concepts before your presentation.

Although we rely on boards displayed on a stage from which the students will present most of their information, we will allow PowerPoint images of the financials and selected details from the presentation boards. It is recommended that teams use the slides allotted for detail to address the specific tasks outlined in this brief. Teams will use a remote to control the PowerPoint presentation.

You are not required to use PowerPoint. If you choose to, you must abide by the following rules:

- Each team is limited to seven slides that must follow this general outline:
  - Slide 1. University name, team member names (including faculty and professional advisers), team number, and project title
  - Slide 2. Financials
  - Slide 3. Financials
  - Slide 4. Projection of a detailed area
  - Slide 5. More detail
  - Slide 6. More detail
  - Slide 7. More detail
- PowerPoint slides may not be animated.

- Slides 4 -7 that display details can only contain images already displayed on your primary boards. In other words, you are not permitted to create new images exclusively for the PowerPoint.

Each team will be asked to review their original scheme in a narrative format that covers their regional and local analyses, master plan and transformative vision for the site, financials, phased development plan, etc.

During the allotted 25 minutes, teams will be asked to “sell” their schemes to the jury using a combination of their boards and PowerPoint images, but without models or additional visuals.

### **Suggested schedule**

- The team leader will introduce team members including faculty and professional advisers (advisers, if present, will be seated in the audience).
- Twenty-five minutes (strict presentation limit) to present the complete development proposal as submitted for both portions of the competition.
- Twenty minutes Q&A from jury. Be prepared to answer detailed questions about your design scheme, development plan, financial numbers, etc.

The oral presentation *must involve every member of the team*, either as one of the presenters or as a Q&A respondent. By the end of the team’s 45-minute presentation, each team member must have taken part in the presentation or have made at least one response during the Q&A period. Teams that do not follow this requirement will be disqualified.

Teams are required to participate in a rehearsal of their presentations to meet time limitations and basic levels of professionalism. On Thursday April 5, the day before the final presentation, the teams will be scheduled to present their scheme to a mock jury of local design and development professionals and ULI staff. A schedule for sequencing these rehearsals will be issued at a later date. Participation in the mock jury rehearsal is mandatory for all teams.

### **Site Visit- Friday, March 9**

ULI will pay travel expenses for one member of each finalist team to go to Houston on Friday, March 9, 2012 and tour the study area as well as receive an orientation and briefing by ULI staff and local experts. The tour will last several hours, during which time you may ask specific questions about the site and the finalist round of competition. Additional team members, including faculty and professional advisers are welcome to attend, but at their own expense.

### **Proposal Title and Summary- Friday, March 30**

Each team will provide a one-line title (for ease of reference) and a 150-word summary of its proposal (to be used in the program for the presentation). They must be e-mailed in final form to [udcompetition@uli.org](mailto:udcompetition@uli.org) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern, Friday, March 30, 2012. The statement must be in Microsoft Word format. If the word count is exceeded, ULI reserves the right to edit the summary. Failure to submit this summary by the established deadline will result in

ULI staff writing the summary and thus perhaps not representing your material in a way you'd like.

### **Final Presentation- Thursday, April 5 and Friday April 6**

ULI will pay travel expenses for all student members of each finalist team to go to Houston for the final presentation to the jury. All teams must be in Houston the afternoon of Thursday, April 5, and must participate in a dress rehearsal presentation in front of a mock jury made up of local experts. The event will be over approximately 3:30pm on April 6. Faculty and professional advisers are encouraged to attend, but must do so at their own expense. Payment for travel will be a combination of prepayment and reimbursement.

### **Submission Requirements and Format**

Due on Friday, March 30, transmitted by e-mail to [udcompetition@uli.org](mailto:udcompetition@uli.org):

1. 150-word summary, described above.

Due on Thursday April 5, at the time of the rehearsal before a mock jury:

2. Original competition submittal (six boards, not including the financial summary board) increased in size (75% to 100% increase over originally submitted 11"x17" size). They may be adjoined as one, two, or three boards, keeping in mind that you will be traveling to Houston with them.
3. Four boards at 30" x 40" each. As in the earlier competition phase, you may adjoin boards in any configuration, keeping in mind that they will be propped up loosely on easels and not affixed to a wall during the public presentation.
4. PowerPoint slides, as described above.

Due on Friday April 6, at the time of arrival at the final presentation venue:

5. 14 copies of 8½"x11" page(s) plus the 11"x17" 'Summary of Financial Data' document for the jury.
6. CD containing two PDF files (one each at press-quality and Web resolutions) of your final proposal, assembled in its final layout; your pro forma and the sheet of additional financial information if you choose to submit; and a PowerPoint file of your presentation aid, as earlier described.
  - If your team makes adjustments to your presentation boards in Houston, please be sure that you are able to create a CD of the material onsite.

*Students are advised to call the airline well before travel day to find out about restrictions for traveling with mounted boards. You can also mount them on site but are advised to make some arrangements beforehand, verifying that a local art store has foam core, etc.*

### **Order of Presentation**

The order in which the teams will present their schemes will be determined by drawing numbers at the start of the final presentation. While each team presents, the three teams

that are not presenting will not be in the room so they do not have an unfair advantage by being able to hear the jury questions in advance.

### **Questions**

Restrictions on teams' contact with jury members, landowners, community associations, and developers, nonprofit, and public agencies involved in the neighborhood, and on the participation of advisers on team presentations, as specified in the competition stage brief of January 18, 2012, apply to this finalist stage of the competition. Please e-mail any questions to: [udcompetition@uli.org](mailto:udcompetition@uli.org).