

El Paso/Ciudad Juarez Binational Arts and Culture District

Design Competition

PRELUDE

“Once isolated and uninhabited, the border region has become one of the fastest growing and most dynamic areas of North America.” (Oscar Martinez: *History of U.S./Mexico Borderlands*.) The cities of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico are not only exploding rapidly, but they are extremely interdependent, with the flow of people and goods between the two making it one of the largest border crossing areas in the world. There are indeed the challenges of illegal crossings of both people and drugs. In addition, there are challenges when there is a country with a great deal of “have” contiguous with another country with a great deal of “have not.” However, in spite of this, the family relationships, friendships, business relationships and exchanges of art, culture and history which tie the two cities together economically, financially and socially create bonds which will never be broken.

Should there be a border between these two cities? Are we able to focus on strengths rather than liabilities? This design competition may answer these questions in a very positive way. Inequities are completely eliminated by the positive attributes of art, culture and history. At this table, there are no “have and have not.” There is only equality and strength that emanates from the fact that we create an even playing field when we are discussing art, culture and historical heritage.

How will you use this design competition to illustrate that by linking the hearts of these two cities, we can exhibit the best qualities of humankind and we can show that connection, even creative ones, are more stimulating, more important, and more lasting than separations?

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I. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Binational Arts and Culture District Design Competition is a project that will creatively link the largest international border metroplex in North America through urban planning, architecture, public art, and public spaces. This year's binational design competition will focus on ways to enhance an existing link that runs from Main Street in El Paso to the 16 de Septiembre in Juarez, Mexico, along El Paso Street connecting to Avenida Benito Juarez by way of the International Santa Fe Street Bridge. This axis lies within a greater thirty (30) block long, 7 blocks wide corridor that should be considered in the design to join the central downtown regions of both cities.

It will be the teams design challenge to detail urbanistically, architecturally, artistically, (through any and all means available to them) the built/creative essence that will link the binational cities of the metroplex into one nearly seamless happening – festival, fair, major binational event, as described by physical means and celebration. Describe and demonstrate how this could happen.

II. BACKGROUND

The New Mexico Creative Cities Leadership Project (CCLP), known as the Binational Art and Culture District Design Competition, is a collaborative effort between the City of El Paso and The Richard Florida Creativity Group. Internationally renowned Professor of Economics, Richard Florida, author of The Rise of the Creative Class, presented a lecture in December 2005, which inspired El Paso leadership not only to commit to an exploration of his theories in the El Paso region, but also to commit to the following objectives:

- Empower members of the community to act as creative Change Agents so that positive initiatives may be implemented to make El Paso more sensitive and receptive to the latent creativity of its population;
- Create cross-cultural development through use of public spaces in the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez Border Region;
- Foster economic development and prosperity for residents on both sides of the Texas-Mexico border by focusing on the region's assets, which include its binational culture, creative talent, and unique diversity;
- Increase awareness of the need for binational and multidisciplinary solutions to improve the quality of life and strengthen our border city communities;
- Encourage cooperation and teamwork to enhance and expand cultural opportunities in the border region.

At one point in their history, El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, were one city. The epicenter of the area was the heart of the present day's urban cores of both cities, where the Rio Grande River physically divides them. The two are economically and socially interdependent and are bound together by a unique culture, language, environment and history.

In the last year, both cities have created downtown redevelopment plans; however, the need to focus on binational urban planning by both El Paso and Ciudad Juarez together is critical to the successful future of this regional area. The Binational Arts and Culture District Design Competition strives to strengthen and energize the overall quality of life in the El Paso/Cd. Juarez region via cultural exchange, the creation of venues for artistic expression, and the promotion of arts, culture and history.

NOTE: For a comprehensive and insightful review and discussion of the history of this region, please refer to *History of the U.S./Mexico Borderlands* by Oscar Martinez, PhD., University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

(NOTE: ALL COMPETITION INFORMATION AND UPDATES ARE TO BE FOUND IN THE CCLP WEBSITE: WWW.NEWTEXICO.ORG.)

The proposed solution should be the product of multidisciplinary teams ideally composed of, but not limited to, the following members: design students from the United States and Mexico; architects and planners; landscape architects; visual and performing artists; cinematographers; marketing and communication specialists; organic urbanists; indigenous architects; and other members of appropriate vocations.

The primary commodities here are ideas, dreams and artistic adventures. There are no guarantees, neither explicit nor implicit, that any submitted scheme will be applied now or in the future. **All submissions become the property of New Texico, El Paso Creative City Leadership Project (CCLP) team, and members of the CCLP may not apply.**

IV. COMPETITION PROCESS

Students at schools of Architecture and Urban Design, cinematographers, visual and performing artists, and others may form multidisciplinary teams, but must conform to all guidelines. Team membership, should be binational (i.e. design students from the U.S. and Mexico.) **Points will be given for the creation of binational, multidisciplinary teams.**

Application stage involves mailing back a four digit code which indicates your interest in participating; putting the team together; and sending your application to New Texico with names of members and advisors, if any. Upon receipt of this information we will be able to answer your questions online.

Competition stage involves the team working together to respond to the design challenge. All schemes being submitted to New Texico must be postmarked by Monday, May 14, 2007. In the final submission, the team must include a short statement of 500 words or less, explaining how the team creatively met the objectives of the design project. Please include **four** copies in pdf disc format. Refer to the Section VII Presentation Requirements. The jury will select three finalists. The finalists will be announced by Monday, June 11, 2007. Please refer to Section VII.

Final stage is the refined presentation of the projects of the three finalists. The three finalists will have additional time to expand and detail their original schemes. On July 20, 2007, the winning team will be announced and will be invited to El Paso/Cd. Juarez to present its program.

V. COMPETITION TIMELINE AND DELIVERY OF SUBMISSIONS

Application and guideline disbursement: Thursday, February 1st, 2007.

All submissions of final projects must be accompanied by a \$50.00 dollar check or money order, payable to City of El Paso, with reference to Binational Design Competition in the check Memo field, postmarked by Monday, May 14, 2007 and mailed to:

**El Paso Museum of Art
Binational Design Competition
1 Arts Festival Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901**

Three finalist teams will be announced Monday, June 11, 2007.

These teams will then be given three weeks to refine their work for resubmission by Monday, July 2, 2007. The final overall winning team will be announced Friday, July 20, 2007.

VI. ADVISORS

The involvement of anyone outside of your registered multidisciplinary team is limited to advice and may not include production assistance of what is submitted to the jury. This prohibition applies to faculty advisors, and licensed professionals.

VII. PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Presentation rules have been developed to ensure that the jury will have sufficient information to evaluate effectively and compare individual solutions for the competition phase. 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.

Team membership should be binational, if possible, and multidisciplinary.

The actual products may include any or all of the following:

- Urban design schemes
- Architectural renderings and models
- Community and neighborhood participation programs
- Cultural/artistic activities to draw binational participation and foster cultural exchange ie. EXHIBITIONS, FAIRS, FIESTAS, COMPETITIONS!!!

In addition, the following may be incorporated into the planning context

- Land/Building use
- Circulation (pedestrian, vehicular, transit, etc.)
- General concepts for open space, landscape, and public space
- Architectural concepts describing an arts and culture area
- Annotated drawings similar to a project schematic design
- Plans, elevations, sections and other renderings, emphasizing public space aspects

Consideration should be given to:

- Environment and sustainability
- Social, cultural and economic concerns
- Border security (the fear and perceived fear of crossing the border)

** The presentation shall consist of no more than twenty (20) slides in pdf disc format, with at least one depicting a total connection between El Paso/Juarez.

Maps, plans and drawings may be at any scale. Indicate scale used.

YOU MUST INCLUDE FOUR (4) COPIES OF YOUR DISC FORMAT FOR THE JUDGES. NO NAMES PLEASE ONLY YOUR FOUR DIGIT CODE IDENTIFICATION.

In the final submission, the team must include a short statement of 500 words or less explaining how the team creatively met the objective of the design project.

If you include written material, make it succinct and use bullet points where possible.

VIII. AWARDS

The awards are as follows:

Honor Award \$7,500.00

Merit Awards \$2,500.00

Merit Awards \$2,500.00

IX. QUESTIONS

All questions regarding the competition must be sent in writing to newtexico.org. Answers will be posted on the Web site throughout the duration of the competition. Please check the Updates to be kept abreast of the changes. Many answers to relevant questions may already be posted on website.

New Texico reserves the right to edit submitted questions before posting them on the Web site and 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 New Texico that have worked on the project on the competition jury.

No phone calls, please.