

# 2013 ULI Urban Open Space Award

Celebrating and promoting  
vibrant urban open spaces  
that enrich and revitalize communities







# About the ULI Urban Open Space Award

URBAN OPEN SPACE IS INCREASINGLY THE EMBODIMENT of our common urban fabric. In a world where over 75 percent of the population is projected to live in cities by 2050, the economic well-being and the sustainable models of thriving communities worldwide will largely pivot on the interaction of these spaces with the communities they serve.

In 2009, the Urban Land Institute established the ULI Urban Open Space Award to celebrate and promote urban open spaces that enrich and revitalize surrounding communities. The award was created and funded initially with a gift from Amanda Burden, commissioner of the New York City Department of City Planning, who used the \$100,000 prize she received as the 2009 laureate of the ULI J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development to create the award.

“It has been my life’s work to celebrate the essence of city life and to create great public open spaces,” Burden says. “All successful planning comes down to the granular approach of how a building meets the street, how a street feels, how you feel walking in the city and coming to public spaces that are inviting and well used. Public space is why you stay in the city.”

In 2011, the Kresge Foundation, the MetLife Foundation, and the ULI Foundation joined forces to sponsor the award, continuing the effort to celebrate and promote the development of vibrant and catalytic open spaces. A \$10,000 cash prize is awarded to the individual or organization most responsible for creation of the winning space, which is chosen by a jury of professionals.

To be eligible for the award, a project must

- ▶ be located in an urbanized area of North America;
- ▶ have been open to the public at least one year and no more than 15 years;
- ▶ be predominantly outdoors and inviting to the public;
- ▶ be a lively gathering place, providing abundant and varied seating, sun and shade, and trees and plantings, with attractions and features that offer many different ways for visitors to enjoy the space;
- ▶ be used intensively on a daily basis and act as a destination for a broad spectrum of users throughout the year;
- ▶ have a positive economic impact on its surroundings;
- ▶ promote physical, social, and economic health of the larger community; and
- ▶ provide lessons, strategies, and techniques that can be used or adapted in other communities.

**“You can measure the health of a city by the vitality and energy of its streets and public open spaces.”**

—WILLIAM H. WHYTE



The 2013 winning and finalist projects, presented here, demonstrate the remarkable vitality and economic benefit that spring from creating spaces of beauty, activity, and respite that become integral parts of the city fabric and sources of civic pride. These projects are far more than amenities: they are models of savvy urban and economic development.

# The Parks and Waterfront at Southeast False Creek

**Vancouver, British Columbia**

**Sponsor and designer: PWL Partnership Landscape Architects Inc.**

**Project owner: City of Vancouver**

LOCATED ON A PREVIOUSLY INDUSTRIALIZED 32-hectare (79-acre) waterfront site in Vancouver, the Parks and Waterfront at Southeast False Creek articulate the public realm for Vancouver's premier sustainable neighborhood. Through the introduction of restored natural environments into a highly urban community, the project exemplifies a new green infrastructure-based approach to creation of the public realm. The open spaces—composed of Hinge Park, Habitat Island, a 650-meter-long (2,132 feet) continuous



PWL PARTNERSHIP LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS INC.



waterfront park, and neighborhood streets—provide multiple and varied recreational opportunities while acting as kidneys for the neighborhood, cleansing stormwater runoff before it reaches the ocean.

Often, the most storied districts in seaside towns are their waterfronts. During its former industrial life, the Vancouver waterfront teemed with thousands of workers, as well as ship and rail traffic converging to exchange goods. In the 1950s, 5 percent of Vancouver's workforce, about 7,400 people, worked in industries on False Creek. The transition from abandoned industrial site to vibrant sustainable community relied heavily on the successful reenvisioning of the waterfront.

The site rescues, repurposes, and reimagines elements of this industrial past to compose a new identity. In situ artifacts throughout the waterfront evoke the experience of work and present the activities that took place there in a new light. Margot Long, principal at PWL Partnership Landscape Architects, explains that the city asked for innovation, as well as a more animated development where people could get to the water wherever and whenever they wanted. As a result, the waterfront park became the defining element to engage a thriving community proud of its history.

The space is structured as one continuous park rather than a place punctuated by parks. Instead of having several parks developed individually, then turned over to the city, Vancouver took a different approach, directly overseeing development of the parks in accordance with a vision for environmental restoration and civic place making. The city's plan for the waterfront required that a portion of shoreline be filled without reducing the amount of shoreline or associated habitat area. The need to create habitat for wildlife led to the proposal to build a small island off the Southeast False Creek shore.



This innovative solution allowed the city to proceed with its plan, replaced lost shoreline area, and resulted in a net increase in the amount of space devoted to intertidal fish habitat and park area. Proof of success appeared in fall 2008, when herring returned to spawn—for the first time in many years—on a one-kilometer (0.6 mile) stretch of the once-toxic shoreline of Southeast False Creek. The island now includes vertical snags, native vegetation, and a natural shoreline, which continue to attract bald eagles, herons, and a variety of waterfowl.

The waterfront itself anchors the residential neighborhood of Southeast False Creek. Upon selection of Vancouver as host of the 2010 Winter Olympics, the development was turned over to serve as the Olympic Village; it was returned to the city after the event. The Olympic Games facilitated a short timeline for development of the park without requiring significant alterations to the original design or to the long-term vision for it as a pivotal community catalyst.

Stormwater treatment is integrated into the development. On the east side of the Olympic Village, East Park mixes an outdoor space for residents with bioswales—wide, shallow ditches, planted with greenery, that remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water. This landscape feature is fully visible and serves as a main feature in some of the children's play areas.

The waterfront, which is continuously used by cyclists and joggers, features separated bike and pedestrian routes that connect people to the water's edge. Hinge Park has a wetland where great blue herons and ducks can be seen, while children and families gather throughout the park's many open-ended playgrounds; Habitat Island is a great spot for bird-watching or a picnic; and the streets place pedestrians and cyclists on the top of the vehicular food chain.

People and environmental restoration are at the forefront of this foreshore development, which has demonstrated that innovative green infrastructure and dense population can work together to build and strengthen community ties and a sense of place.





# The Yards Park

**Washington, D.C.**

**Sponsor and developer: Forest City**

**Designer: M. Paul Friedberg & Partners**

**Project owner: District of Columbia**

THE YARDS PARK HIGHLIGHTS A REGENERATION EFFORT that brings local communities and visitors to the Anacostia River while providing a transformative and vibrant public space that generates social, economic, and ecological value under an innovative public/private funding model.

The Yards Park is part of the 500-acre (200 ha) Capitol Riverfront neighborhood. The new mixed-use community leverages \$2 billion of private investment for \$1 billion in public investment in order to develop one of the greenest and most active neighborhoods in the United States.

Located near a Metrorail station along 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of Anacostia River frontage close to the U.S. Capitol, the space is the result of a pioneering public/private partnership among the U.S. General



DAVID GALEN

© David Galen



FOREST CITY



FOREST CITY

Services Administration (GSA), the District of Columbia, and Forest City Washington. Yards Park is the centerpiece of The Yards, Forest City Washington's 42-acre (17 ha) riverfront redevelopment of the Navy Yard Annex as a mixed-use area with 2,800 rental apartments, offices, shops, and restaurants. From 1799 to 2010, the site was part of the Navy Yard annex, then became abandoned land with no public access. Forest City worked with the federal and local government to remediate the site and develop The Yards.

Yards Park seeks to bring Washingtonians to the long-neglected Anacostia riverfront, provide a transformative and vibrant public space, and generate social, economic, and ecological value. It offers an eclectic blend of human-scale experiences; active and passive spaces; custom furniture, shade structures, and plantings; and differentiated elements such as a sculptural bridge, public art, and circulation paths and water features. In addition to accommodating intense casual use, the space is intended to engage visitors and residents through an extensive schedule of special events.

On 5.7 acres (2.3 ha), Yards Park eschews monumental scale for a series of outdoor "rooms" organized around the central defining elements of water and topographic change. Its programming strategy includes both large-scale festivals and smaller gatherings. Yards Park serves as the cultural anchor to The Yards and the wider Capitol Riverfront area, reconnecting the city's grid to the water.

Yards Park also provides community and health benefits. Over 55 percent of total construction costs—or more than \$14 million—was spent with certified business enterprises (CBEs) in the District. In addition to the use of District contractors and the hiring of District residents, a voluntary

mentor/protégé initiative was implemented in which smaller businesses team up with more established ones to mutual benefit, allowing the protégé firms to develop additional capacity. After collaborating on Yards Park, mentor/protégé teams went on to win additional business together—work totaling \$2.8 million and growing.

During the recent recession, development of the park became the engine that sustained growth and maintained momentum for the neighborhood. Adjacent properties have subsequently shown some of the fastest lease-up figures, with market rents substantially above pro forma and affordable units being quickly absorbed. The \$1.6 billion Yards development is the first public/private venture of its kind in the United States. It depends on Yards Park to transform perceptions of the area and achieve the





underwriting assumed in the competitive price proposal submitted to the U.S. government. At buildout, The Yards is set to generate \$83 million in new annual tax revenues for the District of Columbia, or a total public value creation of \$2 billion at a public cost of capital of \$1 billion.

Typically, a public amenity such as Yards Park would need to wait to be constructed until much later in the development cycle of a phased project like The Yards because the revenues funding debt service on infrastructure bonds would not materialize until the buildings were built. However, Forest City negotiated the waiving of a purchase option by GSA on the building housing the U.S. Department of Transportation. This purchase option waiver resulted in a creditworthy property-tax stream, implicitly backed by the federal government due to the triple-net nature of the office lease. This credit quality resulted in attractive debt terms, which in turn netted the District of Columbia the funds for Yards Park and an additional \$69 million for the District to fund infrastructure on both sides of the Anacostia.

The city now owns Yards Park on land conveyed to it by GSA and has funded the park with no pledge of the District's credit or spending from the general fund. Yards Park uses six revenue streams to fund operations, including a special assessment paid by Forest City, a portion of new restaurant sales tax revenues, naming rights and event proceeds, and other revenues. Revenues raised from events and sponsorship account for about 25 percent of the current operating budget. The operating funding strategy for Yards Park could be applied to other public assets in need of a funding strategy of their own.





ETIENNE FROSSARD

## Brooklyn Bridge Park

### New York, New York

**Sponsor and project owner: Brooklyn Bridge Park**  
**Designer: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Inc.**

BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK is an ambitious and visionary project to revitalize 1.3 miles (2.1 km) of Brooklyn waterfront with an array of open spaces that return the area to public use and create a sustainable and self-financed multiuse civic space.

Several goals guided development of the area, including returning the waterfront edge to Brooklyn, creating a multiuse civic space, and providing connections with adjacent neighborhoods. To accomplish these goals, more than 32 acres (13 ha) of park area have been created and structures have been

built, including Pier 5, the park's first active recreation pier, and Squibb Park Bridge, which provides a vital circulation link to the surrounding community and public transit.

The park receives no public funds for maintenance and operations. As part of an agreement between the city and the state that the park be financially self-sustaining, the project generates revenue through carefully placed development within its boundaries. For example, the park receives payments in lieu of taxes from One Brooklyn Bridge Park, a condominium located at Pier 6; a hotel and residential development to be built adjacent to Pier 1 will provide further support. Development projects such as these are a critical element of the park's maintenance plan and will guarantee stable financial footing for the park for generations to come.



JULIENNE SCHAEER

# Cumberland Park

## Nashville, Tennessee

**Cosponsor and project owner: Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation Department**

**Cosponsor and designer: Hargreaves Associates**

CUMBERLAND PARK AND THE NEIGHBORING redeveloped Bridge Building are the first constructed phases of a master plan intended to draw residents and visitors back to the river and downtown. The design is committed both to attracting new generations to the park and to sustainability through brownfield remediation, floodplain preservation, and interpretation of cultural and natural resources.

Located on the Cumberland River's east bank below the Shelby Street pedestrian bridge, the 6.5-acre (2.6 ha) Cumberland Park transforms land for years put to industrial and commercial use into a new family-focused adventure playground.

Cut materials generated during park construction were encapsulated in the park's main landforms to reduce off-site disposal costs while introducing new topography. Many of the above-grade industrial structures were retained and restored as interpretive elements, protecting unique cultural and historic features.

The park is sensitive to the site's relationship to the river and the impact of the 2010 floods that ravaged the Nashville area. The design team worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that creation of the park would preserve floodplain function without increasing flood elevations or decreasing floodwater storage.

Cumberland Park is the flagship of the New Riverfront Revitalization Plan, which was endorsed by community members to provide greater accessibility and more recreational opportunities.



HARGREAVES ASSOCIATES



HARGREAVES ASSOCIATES



SASAKI ASSOCIATES INC.

# Wilmington Waterfront Park

## Wilmington, California

**Sponsor and designer: Sasaki Associates Inc.**

**Project owner: Port of Los Angeles**

WILMINGTON WATERFRONT PARK CREATES A NEW PUBLIC REALM that mediates the relationship between the residential neighborhood of Wilmington and the intensely active Port of Los Angeles. Mitigating the industrial impact of the port, it provides a safe and accessible space that celebrates the vibrant community culture within a previously underserved neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The nearly 30-acre (12 ha) site reclaims derelict, industrial brownfield land as new public open space and serves as a new recreational amenity while mitigating the threat of hazardous environmental waste, air and

noise pollution, and dangerous industrial traffic from neighborhood streets. It was designed as an element of the Container Terminal Project environmental impact report to provide public open space between port operations and adjacent residences. The report called for a new buffer area, designed after consensus was reached through a series of public planning workshops that began in 2004.

The park was constructed on vacant property adjacent to and owned by the port. It enables the continued productivity and success of the Port of Los Angeles—the largest container port in North America, generating over

\$400 million in annual revenue and 18,000 jobs—by mitigating industrial impacts, promoting higher property values, and improving the social and environmental quality of the adjacent Wilmington neighborhood.

Wilmington Waterfront Park provides an unprecedented model for urban communities looking to cultivate a strong industrial economy that fuels job creation while also promoting healthy, vibrant, and affordable communities.



SASAKI ASSOCIATES INC.

## Jury Members

**M. Leanne Lachman**

Jury Chair  
President, Lachman Associates  
New York, New York

**Glenn Aaronson**

Managing Partner, Aevitas Property Partners  
Chairman, Forum Turkey Fund  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

**William Bonstra, FAIA**

Partner, Bonstra Haresign Architects  
Washington, D.C.

**Michael Covarrubias**

Chairman and CEO, TMG Partners  
San Francisco, California

**David Dixon, FAIA**

Principal/Planning & Urban Design, Goody Clancy  
Boston, Massachusetts

**Dr. Sujata S. Govada, AICP**

Managing Director, UDP International  
Hong Kong, China

**Jason Hellendrung, ASLA**

Principal, Sasaki Associates  
Watertown, Massachusetts

**Mark Johnson, FASLA**

President, Civitas Inc.  
Denver, Colorado

**Jeff Kingsbury**

Managing Principal, Greenstreet Ltd.  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**Jeff Mayer**

Director of International Planning, Bassenian Lagoni  
Newport Beach, California

**Jacinta McCann, FAIA**

Executive Vice President, AECOM  
San Francisco, California

**Trini M. Rodriguez, RLA**

Principal, Parker Rodriguez Inc.  
Alexandria, Virginia

## About the Urban Land Institute

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- ▶ Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- ▶ Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- ▶ Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- ▶ Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- ▶ Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and
- ▶ Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has nearly 30,000 members in more than 90 countries, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

### **Patrick L. Phillips**

Chief Executive Officer  
Urban Land Institute

### **ULI Staff**

#### **Gayle Berens**

Senior Vice President  
Education and Advisory Group

#### **Daniel Lobo**

Manager, Awards

## About the Kresge Foundation

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3 billion private, national foundation headquartered in metropolitan Detroit, in the suburb community of Troy, that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grant making and investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services, community development, and its place-based efforts in Detroit. In 2012, the board of trustees approved 410 awards totaling \$130.5 million; \$150.3 million was paid out to grantees over the course of the year.

## About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was created in 1976 by MetLife to continue its longstanding tradition of contributions and community involvement. The foundation's goal is to empower people to lead healthy, productive lives and strengthen communities. Underlying the foundation's programs is a focus on education for people of all ages and a commitment to increasing access and opportunity. The foundation makes grants in health, education, civic affairs, and culture.

## About the ULI Foundation

The mission of the ULI Foundation is to serve as the philanthropic source for the Urban Land Institute. The Foundation's programs raise endowment funds, major gifts, and annual fund monies to support the key initiatives and priorities of the Institute. Philanthropic gifts from ULI members and other funding sources help ensure ULI's future and its mission of providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

### **ULI Foundation Staff**

#### **Patrick L. Phillips**

President

#### **David E. Howard**

Executive Vice President

#### **Corinne Abbot**

Senior Vice President, Foundation Relations

#### **Andrea Holthouser**

Vice President, Individual Giving

#### **Jessica Waymouth**

Vice President, Development

#### **Janet Fernandez**

Manager, Donor Relations



For more information on the award,  
visit [www.uli.org/OpenSpaceAward](http://www.uli.org/OpenSpaceAward)  
or e-mail: [awards@uli.org](mailto:awards@uli.org).



1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW  
Suite 500 West  
Washington, DC 20007  
[www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)



[foundation.uli.org](http://foundation.uli.org)