2010 ULI Amanda Burden Urban Open Space Award

Celebrating and promoting vibrant urban open spaces that enrich and revitalize communities
About the ULI Amanda Burden Urban Open Space Award

The ULI Amanda Burden Urban Open Space Award celebrates and promotes the creation of transformative public open spaces. By offering a $10,000 cash prize to the individual or organization most responsible for the creation of the most successful of these spaces, this award seeks to raise their visibility and significance. In the program’s inaugural year, ULI received more than 80 entries from across North America, far surpassing expectations. The finalist projects, presented here, demonstrate the amazing social and economic benefits that spring from creating public centers of activity, respite, and social interaction. These spaces not only become a source of civic pride, but also a catalyst for private investment.

The ULI Amanda Burden Urban Open Space Award was made possible by a gracious $100,000 donation from Ms. Burden, an amount that will sustain the program for its first two years. The ULI Foundation has begun fundraising efforts to create an endowment to sustain the award program for subsequent years.

Winners are chosen by an awards jury selected to achieve regional balance and represent the many facets of development and design expertise, including architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning and design, and the public sector.

To become a finalist and winner, a space must:

- be an inviting, sociable place, providing a range of amenities, including abundant and comfortable seating, sun and shade, and trees and plantings;
- be used intensively as a vibrant magnet for a broad spectrum of public use and enjoyment;
- be a lively gathering space, providing an array of reasons to visit;
- serve as a public destination throughout the year;
- have transformed adjacent neighborhoods and communities for the better;
- represent a sound investment of public funds, if public funding is involved;
- have catalyzed private investment and improved the economic well-being of the surrounding area; and
- be worthy of emulation.

About Amanda Burden

Amanda M. Burden is the commissioner of the New York City Department of City Planning and founder of the ULI Amanda Burden Urban Open Space Award. In 2009, she was named winner of the ULI J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development, the Institute’s highest honor for an individual.

“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.”
Campus Martius Park

Detroit, Michigan

Project Sponsor: Detroit 300 Conservancy

Open only five years, CAMPUS MARTIUS PARK has become the heart of downtown Detroit’s development story and its signature public space. Surrounded by offices, residential space, and restaurants, it is a magnet for everyday visitors and high-profile events.

The goals of the park were to revitalize the center of downtown—to be the city’s gathering place, a catalyst for economic development, a beautiful signature square, and a positive image for Detroit locally and internationally, year round.

Located on Detroit’s main street, Woodward Avenue, the park has transformed the center of downtown from a recently desolate area to a beautiful oasis for everyday gathering.
Once a bleak intersection, Campus Martius Park now anchors one square mile downtown and the two-square-block commercial center, with over 6.5 million square feet of mixed-use space fronting it.

Though occupying only 2.5 acres, Campus Martius Park continues to transform its immediate neighborhood. Among the park’s features are lawns, fountains, waterwalls, a popular ice rink in the winter, monuments, gardens, a café, and seating for more than 3,000 people on walls, benches, steps, and movable chairs. Unique retractable stages are moved into position for small and large events.

The park is designed to maximize diversity and use, with over 250 activity days and several high-profile events such as the Super Bowl XL Festival and the Today show.

**A Transformative Effect**

Campus Marius Park has exceeded all expectations. It is the most active year-round space in downtown Detroit, providing an outstanding environment for the more than 2 million annual visitors. Over $700 million of new development has occurred within a two-block radius of the park.

Compuware Corporation, a business software and services firm, built a $400 million, 16-story headquarters fronting on the park and became a significant Campus Martius financial backer. “The park played a major role in our move to Detroit,” says Peter Karmanos, Jr., Compuware founder and CEO.

Quicken Loans, an online mortgage company, is moving 1,700 employees into the Compuware building from its headquarters in suburban Livonia, and an additional 500 Quicken employees will move later this year to a nearby building.

And GalaxE.Solutions, a New Jersey–based information technology firm, announced in April it would spend $4.2 million to rehab part of a building on the park’s northwest corner and create 500 jobs over the next four years. Tim Bryan, GalaxE.Solutions chairman and CEO, explained: “GalaxE.Solutions selected 1001 Woodward Avenue as our Detroit IT development facility because it was perfectly situated next door to Compuware, and soon, Quicken Loans. By locating next to beautiful Campus Martius,
we have brought together all the ingredients for a Detroit IT hub to compete with international cities. The park is outstanding and offers the kind of recreation and relaxation that urban professionals prize. It will be a key element in attracting new employees to the downtown. We are thrilled to be here in Detroit right next to Campus Martius.”

Campus Martius received national recognition in April when it was chosen as the first-ever recipient of the ULI Amanda Burden Urban Open Space Award. Presenting the award, Burden, commissioner of the New York City Department of City Planning, said, “Campus Martius exemplifies the social and economic transformative effect of great public centers of activity, respite, and social interaction.”

Dennis Archer, the former Detroit mayor who started planning for the park, says, “Winning the award made years of work worthwhile. For us to come out number one—that’s huge,” Archer says. “I really wanted something that would capture people’s imagination. And we got it.”

A Place Designed for People by People

The park is a legacy gift from the Detroit 300 Conservancy, a private, nonprofit organization created from Detroit’s 300th birthday celebration in 2001. The Conservancy raised $20 million in private funding to design and construct the park and is responsible for management, fundraising, and programming, with an annual budget of $1.25 million.

To develop a vision for the park, Bob Gregory, president of the Campus Martius Conservancy, drew on extensive consultations with a wide variety of local people rather than professional planners. The Conservancy selected Rundell Ernstberger Associates, a small Indiana-based firm, to design the park. “We had every rock star in the design world bidding on this,” says Gregory. “Nobody had ever heard of them, but they showed the most flexibility by taking all these disparate elements and putting their own stamp on it.” The design evolved as the firm discussed it with people, according to Deane Rundell, a firm founder.

Today, Campus Martius Park is already widely recognized internationally as one of the best central squares and signature urban public spaces. Given its location in a city that is currently undergoing unprecedented economic and social change, it is worthy of special recognition and emulation.
Schenley Plaza
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Project Sponsor: Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

The restored Schenley Plaza was the product of ten years of planning and partnership to revitalize and reclaim a prized piece of historic Schenley Park that had been converted into a parking lot in 1949. The new open space—maintained by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and designed by Sasaki Associates—embodies the belief that parks are the most democratic of institutions, with its expansive lawn and gardens designed to appeal to a broad spectrum of ages, cultures, and income levels. The park has a central one-acre lawn, ever-changing ornamental gardens, and landscaping featuring plants and trees native to western Pennsylvania, as well as plentiful benches, year-round public programming, food kiosks, and a Victorian-style carousel as a family attraction.

The central open space has brought together Oakland residents, local workers, and university students, and is an ongoing success story: attendance grew 37 percent from 2008 to 2009, and the conservancy expects its millionth visitor in 2010. The economic impact on the community has also been significant: businesses in the area, once wary of the loss of parking, have reported that the plaza is drawing potential customers to Oakland. Plaza users also visit area cultural attractions, use public transit, and spread the word about their positive experiences.
Falls Park on the Reedy

Greenville, South Carolina

Project Sponsor: City of Greenville and Carolina Foothills Garden Club

The Reedy River Falls are known as the birthplace of Greenville, its waterfalls powering the early gristmills that brought industry and growth to the city. But by the mid-20th century, the Reedy River—which runs through downtown—and the surrounding area were in steep decline. In 2004, through the collaborative efforts of the city of Greenville, the Carolina Foothills Garden Club, and other stakeholders, the 26-acre Falls Park on the Reedy opened, turning a neglected and polluted asset into a vibrant public space.

The park is anchored by its most distinctive feature, the Liberty Bridge, a curving 335-foot pedestrian bridge spanning the falls below. The park intertwines the existing terrain—ledges and a steep hillside—with ten gardens, expansive lawns, and miles of winding trails. The park has also accelerated development along the Reedy River, sparking the West End Historic District revitalization and multiple mixed-use projects, such as the $65 million RiverPlace adjacent to the park. In addition, a new $29 million mixed-use baseball stadium, residential, office, restaurant, and retail development has come on line since the park’s opening.
Herald and Greeley Square Parks

New York, New York

Project Sponsor: 34th Street Partnership

Toward the latter part of the 20th century, New York City’s Herald and Greeley Square parks—two triangular open spaces that form a “bowtie” at Broadway and Sixth Avenue—had degenerated into desolate and even dangerous places for commuters and tourists. In 1998, the 34th Street Partnership began the $2.25 million transformation—using only private funds—of the parks from hardscaped concrete islands to green, inviting public spaces. Upon their reopening in summer 1999, Herald and Greeley Square parks had a dramatic effect: each was immediately regarded as an urban jewel, widely used and cherished by the neighborhood’s office workers, shoppers, and tourists.

The opposing parks—one named for Horace Greeley, publisher of the New York Tribune, and the other for its competitor, the Herald—each boast a café, a free restroom (no small amenity in New York City), seasonal horticulture, 150 movable chairs and 20 tables, a monument, and fountains. Enclosed by a low wrought-iron fence and buffered from the traffic by rows of hedges, the well-shaded urban squares provide protected public space in one of the busiest and most urbanized locales in the world. Property values have also been positively affected: in the blocks immediately surrounding the park, office rents rose from $30 per square foot in 1999 to $45 in 2009.
Olympic Sculpture Park

Seattle, Washington

Project Sponsor: Seattle Art Museum

Upon the opening of the Olympic Sculpture Park, the Seattle Times wrote: “It’s not often in the life of a city that its identity transforms. Not just the way a place looks or functions, but the way people perceive it, at home and abroad.” After a seven-year odyssey, the Olympic Sculpture Park accomplished just that—reawakening a city to its waterfront and creating an urban landscape for art, free and open to all.

The 8.5-acre property where the Olympic Sculpture Park now stands was once a contaminated fuel storage and transfer site for Unocal Oil, bisected by a four-lane road and active Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail lines. The design, by Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism, reestablishes the original topography of the site, which was an imposing bluff before it was leveled in the late 1800s. From a steel-and-glass pavilion at the top of the park, a Z-shaped path threads 2,200 feet through the parcel, rising above the highway and rail lines before descending to the restored beachfront at Elliott Bay. The park itself has become an economic catalyst for the surrounding Belltown neighborhood, spurring construction of dense residential complexes, with new stores and restaurants replacing parking lots and vacant land.
Bremen Street Park
Boston, Massachusetts
Project Sponsor: Brown, Richardson & Rowe, Landscape Architects and Planners

Bremen Street Park, which began as a simple planted buffer between Logan Airport and the East Boston neighborhood and ended up as a $20 million park, returns shared open space and recreational opportunities to a low-income neighborhood that has long gone without. Opened in 2007, the 18.5-acre linear park replaced the environmentally contaminated Park 'n' Fly Lot next to the airport. The open space extends nearly a half mile along Bremen Street, buffering the neighborhood from the massive airport and providing access to the newly built subway station.

Designed by Boston-based Brown, Richardson & Rowe, Landscape Architects and Planners, the open space is a sociable place that appeals to people of all ages, cultures, and incomes. Open lawns stretch throughout the site, and other features include an amphitheater, bocce courts, a 40-plot community garden, horseshoe pits, 56 benches, and nearly 400 deciduous and evergreen trees.
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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 more than 29,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of 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

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.

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