

Frank Ottomanelli to host celebration for Hunters Point South Park Urban Land Institutes 2025 Award for excellence

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, July 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ten developments from across North America have been selected as winners of the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) 2025 ULI Americas Awards for Excellence including Hunter's Point South Park designed by famed architect Tom Balsley.

The main attraction besides the state-of-the-art design of the park, is the stunning views of New York City where residents and visitors can dine at F. Ottomanelli By The Water while watching the East River and sunsets over Manhattan.



Hunter's Point South Park (Photo Credit: James Edstrom)

ULI began the Awards for Excellence program in 1979 to recognize superior development efforts in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. Winning projects represent the highest standards of achievement in the land use profession and encompass a wide range of land uses, sizes, investments, and geographic locations. The awards are open to projects and programs in the ULI Americas region that are substantially complete, financially viable, and in stable operation. The program evaluates submissions on overall excellence, including achievements in marketplace acceptance, design, planning, technology, amenities, economic impact, management, community engagement, innovation, and sustainability, among others.

This year, 94 projects and programs from across the Americas region were submitted for the competition. From this impressive field, the 15-member jury composed of development, finance, planning, urban design, architecture, and landscape architecture experts selected 18 finalists.

Behind every urban park is a philosophy for how public space should serve its city, and since its completion in 2018, Hunter's Point South Park has been widely recognized as a precedent-

setting model integrating flood resilience, ecological design, and community-oriented planning, a front yard to over 5,000 new housing units in Queens. The park's proximity to Gantry Plaza State Park has remade the borough's East River shoreline into a remarkable urban open space befitting this rapidly growing borough.

The park features a multi-use green large enough to host community events of any scale, from soccer practices to summertime festivals. In stormier months, the green doubles as flood mitigation infrastructure as a massive stormwater detention basin. The core of the park is surrounded by diverse amenities: a water taxi dock, a pier, and a bustling café. Families of all sizes can find facilities from the play grove to the dog run or a walk through the heritage rail garden that references the site's former industrial use.

Hunter's Point South was much like the rest of New York City's original coastline: swampy marshland. As the city modernized, the site became home to a landfill, a concrete plant, a newspaper printing facility, and a railroad site. The site was selected as a part of the vision for Queens West, a large mixed-use development for the borough's industrial waterfront. By 2008, Thomas Balsley Associates (now SWA/Balsley), who led the 1993 Queens West Vision Plan, undertook the park's design alongside architects Weiss/Manfredi and engineering firm ARUP.

The first of two design phases began in 2009. Phase 1 included 5.5 acres of parkland and a \$25M investment by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC). Despite the impact of Hurricane Sandy, the park opened to the public in 2013, along with new schools, a library, and thousands of affordable housing units. Phase 2, which consisted of a similar scale of



Hunter's Point South Park (Photo Credit: Jaclyn Blair)



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parkland and investment, was completed in 2018. Today, half of HPS is managed and maintained by the NYC Department of Park and supported by the Hunters Point Park Conservancy.

Tom Balsley, Principal Designer and Landscape Architect of Hunters Point South Park had the following comment: "What began as our Vision Plan for Queens West in 1993 led to global design awards for Gantry Plaza State Park and now MOMA and the ULI Americas Award for Excellence for Hunter's Point South Park. A few weeks ago, I was joined by Rob Basch and our local officials to present the park, its stories, and community impacts in person to the impressed ULI jurors! As the designer, these awards are important, but nothing satisfies me more than to visit the park to see how it has touched so many lives."

Rob Basch, President of the Board of Hunters Point Parks Conservancy stated:
"We are honored that ULI has recognized Hunters Point South Park. Our park is hugely important to our community. It is a space where communities can come together, enjoy celebrations and cultural activities and also have space for relaxation. Community engagement is one of the important missions used to evaluate this award and Hunters Point South Park certainly meets this goal."

Jessica Sechrist, Executive Director of Hunters Point Parks Conservancy stated:
"Our community knows how important Hunter's Point South Park is to the neighborhood, so we're honored to see it recognized at this level. We're extremely proud to support a space that can serve as a model for resilient waterfront design while also serving the needs of a rapidly growing neighborhood."

Among the invited guests to celebrate the award are; Carolyn Maloney (Former Congresswoman), Donovan Richards (Queens Borough President), Ebony Young (Deputy Queens Borough President), Julie Won (District 26 Councilmember), Claire Valdez (District 37 Assembly Member), Nydia Velasquez (District 7 Congresswoman), Kristen Gonzalez (District 59 Senator), Len Greco (Senior Vice President, NYC EDC), Mark Focht (Deputy Commissioner NYC Parks), Kevin Parris (HPD Director of Queens and Staten Island Planning), Marion Weiss (Co-founder Weiss Manfredi), Michael Manfredi (Co-founder Weiss Manfredi), Vincent Lee (Engineering Principal at ARUP), Jim Welsh (Former SWA Designer), Jacob Glazer (Former SWA Designer), Dale Schafer (Former SWA Designer), Shigeo Kawasaki (Former SWA Designer), Tom Balsley (Principal Designer and Landscape Architect of Hunters Point South Park), Adrian Benepe (former NYC Parks Commissioner), Nancy Prince (retired Chief of Landscape Architecture), Jacqueline Langsam (Queens Parks Commissioner), Iris Rodriguez Rosa (Parks Commissioner), Eric Boorstyn (Deputy Commissioner, Capital Projects), Nicholas Magilton (Director of Landscape Architecture Design Resources), Rob Basch (President Hunters Point Parks Conservancy), James Edstrom (President Hunters Point Civic Association), and Captain Hameed Armani (NYPD 108th Precinct).

About Frank Ottomanelli:

Frank Ottomanelli is the owner of the beautiful concession F. Ottomanelli By The Water located in Hunters Point South Park. Frank Ottomanelli's family has owned the oldest butcher shops in

New York City for over 120 years with his current location at 60-15 Woodside Ave, Woodside, NY 11377 as well as the famed Cafe in Hunters Point South Park located right inside the park right on the water at 52-10 Center Blvd.

During their 120 years in business, the S. Ottomanelli name has become synonymous with the best dry-aged steaks, pork, poultry, and wild game meats money can buy. Frank Ottomanelli continues that tradition today, cherry picking the best meats from the best dealers in the business and delivering it anywhere in the New York City area and Hamptons.

"Today, I am dealing with some of the same vendors that my father dealt with in the 1940s," says Ottomanelli. "We have been doing this for so long that we have relationships going back four or five generations and that means that we get to select the best quality to offer our customers." The old school approach to business is even carried through into the digital age through their website Ottomanelli.com.

F. Ottomanelli By The Water has something no other business can say, everything is made right in the butcher shop. Never frozen and never any preservatives. This approach is what has made F. Ottomanelli By The Water a huge must visit location to the millions of visitors that visit the park every year.

About Hunters Point Parks Conservancy:

The Hunters Point Parks Conservancy (HPPC) is a community-based non-profit organization whose mission is to enrich the quality of life in Hunters Point, Long Island City by preserving and enhancing its parks, green spaces, and waterfront in partnership with the community. Formed in 1998 as Friends of Gantry Plaza State Park, the organization expanded its mission and scope in 2013 with the opening of Hunter's Point South Park and has been operating as HPPC since. In 2024, HPPC-run volunteer groups removed 1,485 bags of weeds from Hunter's Point South Park.

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