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Transportation Meets Public Art In Downtown Lakewood

by Melissa Garrett

The new shelter, benches and planters in front of the INA and Bailey Building near the intersection of Warren and Detroit are not your typical bus stop. Completed in November and funded by a grant from the Greater Cleveland RTA and the Federal Transit Administration and designed by City staff, the new Transit Waiting Environment (TWE) provides a place for bus patrons to more comfortably wait for

their ride.

TWE's are bus stops that have been upgraded to improve the pedestrian and rider experience and are typically located in areas with higher ridership. They include elements such as shelters, seating, planters, bike racks, improved pavement and public art. For more information on TWE's visit the GCRTA website at www.riderta.com and click on Planning & Development; Transit Waiting Environments.



Local Artist Joe DeLuca during the installation



Pictured is Lakewood Artist Sheila Weil during the installation in November

"The bus stop has a "nature in the city" theme, said Artist Joseph DeLuca. "The four panels on the front of the bus stop show the same tree going through the seasons. The mosaic planters add to that idea with a Spring/Summer, Fall, and Winter planter. We are looking forward to springtime when they actually get planted--the project will then be complete."

In the spring of 2010, the City hosted a competition where artists were asked to propose enhancements to the stop. A jury of downtown business owners, designers and representatives from the arts community selected the winning entry. Lakewood artists Sheila Weil and Joseph DeLuca were selected to provide an array seasonally themed tree graphics and colored glass for the shelter panels as well as three tile mosaic planters. The grant fully funded the project and a great new amenity was added to the downtown at no cost to the City.

"We loved working with the city on this, said Artist Sheila Weil. "Everyone really came together to solve problems and make it work. Lakewood is a fantastic city that we are proud to live in. Having functional beauty spread throughout the city adds character and enriches everyone's lives. We want to make art that brightens people's day, and we hope that the bus stop project is one that will take people pause for a minute and smile. Fantastic job by everyone involved, and much thanks to RTA for providing the grant that made it happen"

Special thanks to the following members of the Art Completion Jury for their invaluable assistance with the project: Analia Dimit (Dimit Architects), Cindy Einhouse (Beck Center for the Arts), Ruth Koenigsmark(LIA), Aref Shafik (The Design Firm), David Stein (Plantation Home) and Danielle Willis (Greater Cleveland RTA).