



Project Story: Bishop's Hill Community Enhancement Bus Shelter Project

Laura FitzGerald

For the past 15 years there has been a bus shelter at the base of Cowan Rd in the Bishop's Hill neighbourhood of Bowen Island. It serves as a welcome shelter from the west coast soggy elements and a rest stop for highschool students waiting for the bus as well as transit riders. The shelter was constructed by members of the neighbourhood and is structurally very sound. However, over the years it had been graffitied, namely some grim sad faces that were not a very welcoming environment within the shelter.

On behalf of the neighbourhood, Laura FitzGerald applied for a Neighbourhood Small Grant for a hopeful bus shelter facelift. The proposal was to create a mural using community efforts to sand, prime and create a mural that would be in keeping with the shelter's natural environment.

The neighbourhood was thrilled to receive the Neighbourhood Small Grant through the Bowen Island Community Foundation and went about planning for the bus shelter facelift. In the planning stages a Survey Monkey was distributed amongst the neighbourhood with three potential designs for the bus shelter mural – Maud Lewis Inspired Wildflowers (folk-y and colourful), Maud Lewis Inspired 'Birds on a Branch', and thirdly a forest and sunrise landscape. The most popular design was the forest and sunrise landscape and Laura went about drafting a mural design.



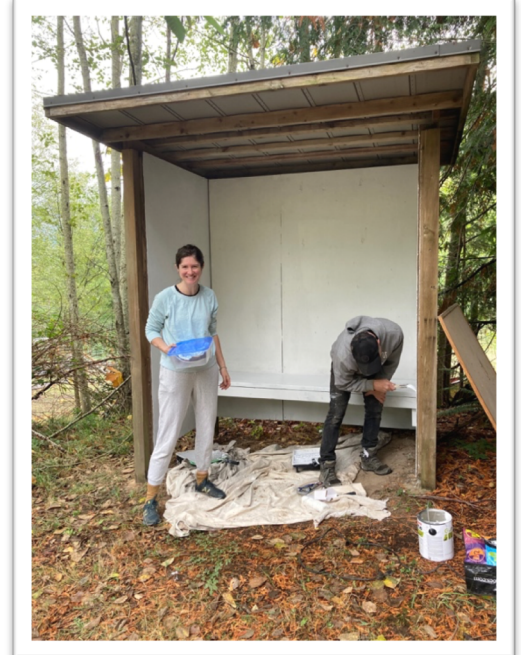
The original bus shelter at Bishop's Hill





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Over two weekends in mid-October 2023, Bishop’s Hill community members gathered to sand, resurface, prime and paint the mural. A challenge initially was finding a power source for a sanding belt which was very kindly loaned by Bob Lewis, a Bishop’s Hill neighbour. Utilizing four extension cords the group was able to use a power source at Bernard and Xiomara O’Brien’s house to start the process of preparing the bus shelter interior for the mural. Sam Knowles was a huge help in caulking and resurfacing the bus shelter interior and Bob Lewis and John Dumbrille were instrumental in sanding and priming the bus shelter. The grant money covered the cost of priming and painting supplies, stencils for the mural, and addition of a fairy house. The grant money also funded a celebratory lunch post completion of the bus shelter mural which was attended by 12 people. Sam Knowles made a delicious veggie chili, a Snug Café classic, and Ellen MacIntosh and Kindy Riley made delicious cornmeal biscuits and focaccia bread. Kay Hubball made two fantastic batches of oat bars (which nostalgically were also a treat which Kay made 15 years ago for the building of the bus shelter), to keep participants fueled.



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There was great satisfaction in coming together as a community to enhance the bus shelter and for generations to come provide a welcoming environment within the bus shelter. Deeper neighbourly connections were forged and plans for further additions of a deer silhouette and some Bowen wildflowers are underway for Spring when the weather warms.

Big thanks and gratitude to the Vancouver Foundation, the Bowen Island Community Foundation and Neighbourhood Small Grant program for making this possible.



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