



CONTACT: Emma Fried-Cassorla
Communications Manager
Delaware River Waterfront Corp.
(215) 629-3218

efried-cassorla@delawareriverwaterfrontcorp.com

Michael Greenle
(202) 997-1827

michael.greenle@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

NEW COLUMBIA AVE. CONNECTOR PUBLIC ART RECEIVES FINAL APPROVALS

Innovative infrastructure project will improve connections between Fishtown and Penn Treaty Park as part of PennDOT's Girard Interchange Rebuild

PHILADELPHIA, PA (April 26, 2013) – An innovative infrastructure project with exciting public art commemorating the Lenni Lenape Native American Tribe is on its way to the Delaware River waterfront in Fishtown following final approvals by the board of directors of the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC). The board voted unanimously today to award a contract for the fabrication of art for the Columbia Avenue Connector project to Donald Lipski. The \$290,000 contract is made possible through funding provide by the William Penn Foundation. The project has also received a prestigious National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Art Works grant for \$60,000.

Earlier this month, the Art Commission provided final city approval of the public art portion of plan. The project is the result of an innovative partnership between DRWC, who led in coordinating the design and development of the project as part of its connector streets program, New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC) who partnered on community outreach, and PennDOT, which will fund and construct a portion of the project as part of the Girard Avenue Interchange rebuild.

“DRWC’s mission in implementing the Central Delaware Master Plan is based on creating strong connections between riverfront neighborhoods and the Delaware waterfront, and we expect the new landscaping and public art at Columbia Avenue to draw residents and visitors to the waterfront as a key link between Fishtown and Penn Treaty Park”, said Thomas Corcoran, President of the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation, adding “We’re proud of the innovative partnership that enabled us to fully leverage existing public investments by taking advantage of PennDOT’s ongoing infrastructure improvements while adding significant value to the waterfront with great public art”.

The project integrates sculptures and lighting by nationally-known artist Donald Lipski with a streetscaping design by landscape architect Bryan Haynes of Studio Bryan Hanes. In tribute to the legendary treaty between William Penn and the Lenni Lenape, Lipski’s public art plan includes five bronze turtles installed on Columbia Avenue east of I-95, which will support lightposts on the path to Penn Treaty Park, as well as a fiberglass wolf and a turkey, each placed atop light posts as sentries on the west side of the I-95 overpass at Columbia Avenue. The turtles, wolf and turkey evoke the symbols of the three Lenni Lenape clans. The streetscaping plan includes new street trees, rain gardens for stormwater management, and underpass lighting and custom formliner designs for Columbia Avenue from Girard Avenue to Delaware Avenue. Haynes is the designer of Sister Cities Park on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is also responsible for the to-be-implemented Penn Treaty Park master plan, which was developed for Friends of Penn Treaty Park. The Columbia Avenue Connector project also includes new lighting and formliners on the Marlborough and Shackamaxon Street underpasses, to be installed by PennDOT concurrently with Columbia Avenue’s underpass improvements.

The Columbia Avenue Connector project is the next in a series of physical improvements DRWC plans to implement on key streets along the Central Delaware riverfront. The Race Street Connector phase I was completed in 2011 and Race Street phase II is expected to be completed in 2013. Spring Garden's connector design is now in development.

Corcoran, in his President's report, also announced that this project was recognized by the NEA as an Arts Works grant finalist, highlighting the DRWC's focus on incorporating public art into its projects as it implements the Master Plan for the Central Delaware. NEA Acting Chairman Joan Shigekawa announced this week that DRWC is one of 817 nonprofit organizations nationwide to receive an NEA Art Works grant. DRWC is recommended for a \$60,000 grant to support the Columbia Avenue Connector.

Acting Chairman Shigekawa said, "The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support these exciting and diverse arts projects that will take place throughout the United States. Whether it is through a focus on education, engagement, or innovation, these projects all contribute to vibrant communities and memorable opportunities for the public to engage with the arts."

In August 2012, the NEA received 1,547 eligible applications for Art Works grants requesting more than \$80 million in funding. Art Works grants support the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and the strengthening of communities through the arts. The 817 recommended NEA grants total \$26.3 million and span 13 artistic disciplines and fields. Applications were reviewed by panels of outside experts convened by NEA staff and each project was judged on its artistic excellence and artistic merit.

Design Process Details

The underpass improvements, including lighting and custom formliner walls, are part of the GR-2 phase which began in Fall of 2012. The streetscape improvements east of I-95, as well as Donald Lipski's public art component, will be installed as part of the GR-3 phase of PennDOT's I-95 reconstruction project, which is scheduled to begin in early 2014. Streetscape improvements to Columbia between Girard Avenue and I-95 are designed and will be constructed by DRWC as funding becomes available.

About DRWC:

The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC) is a nonprofit corporation organized in January 2009, exclusively for the benefit of the City of Philadelphia and its citizens. DRWC acts as the steward of the Delaware River waterfront to provide a benefit to all of the citizens and visitors of the City.

The fundamental purpose of DRWC is to design, develop and manage the central Delaware River waterfront in Philadelphia between Oregon and Allegheny Avenues. DRWC intends to transform the central Delaware River waterfront into a vibrant destination location for recreational, cultural, and commercial activities for the residents and visitors of Philadelphia. DRWC will serve as a catalyst for high quality investment in public parks, trails, maritime, residential, retail, hotel and other improvements that create a vibrant amenity, extending Philadelphia to the river's edge.

DRWC is open, transparent and accountable in connection with its operations and activities with respect to the waterfront. Through the judicious use of financing, land acquisition and development capabilities, the Corporation will work cooperatively with city, state and federal agencies to ensure the realization of the City's vision for the central Delaware River. For more information, please visit www.delawareriverwaterfrontcorp.com.