

CALL FOR SCULPTURES

Sunnyside, Houston

*Presented by the Sunnyside Redevelopment Authority,
in partnership with UP Art Studio*



The Sunnyside Redevelopment Authority, in partnership with UP Art Studio, invites sculptors and public artists to submit work for permanent placement in Sunnyside, the oldest African American community in southern Houston. We are seeking existing completed sculptures, or commissions of existing designs, that honor the legacy, spirit, and future of this neighborhood.

This is a community that built itself. Sunnyside was platted in 1912 and grew into what residents called the “Black Wall Street” of southern Houston: a complete, self-sustaining community where Black families built wealth, legacy, and dignity. Today, after more than \$1 billion in property-value growth across eight years and the largest park investment the neighborhood has seen in roughly 50 years, Sunnyside is not asking to be preserved as a museum. It is a neighborhood actively building its future, and we are looking for public art that speaks to both.

About Sunnyside

Founded in 1912 as Sunnyside Place, Sunnyside is the oldest African American community in southern Houston, built by and for families seeking independence, economic opportunity, and land they could call their own. That spirit of self-determination is visible throughout its history: residents established their own school, civic club, water district, and volunteer fire department. By the 1970s and 1980s, the neighborhood had earned two nicknames, “Black Wall Street” and “Baby River Oaks,” reflecting a thriving concentration of Black-owned businesses and professional life.

The guiding idea of Sunnyside’s current redevelopment is “Coming Home”: reclaiming ground that Black families cleared, built, named, and can claim again, in a neighborhood 10 to 15 minutes from the Texas Medical Center, Downtown, and Hobby, at roughly 60 percent of the county’s median home price. That is the emotional and economic foundation of this place, and any public art created here must speak to it.

What We Are Looking For

We are seeking sculpture that:

- **Reflects the legacy and self-determination of Sunnyside.** This community was built by people who decided their own ground was worth fighting for, and the art should honor that agency.
- **Speaks to the Black American experience and Sunnyside’s particular place in it.** Generic celebration of “community” or “growth” misses the point; the work should reflect the depth of this neighborhood’s heritage.
- **Engages the contemporary moment.** Sunnyside is not asking for preservation as a museum. It is a neighborhood actively building its future, and the art should honor both.
- **Is durable and maintainable.** This is a community with limited resources; any work should be designed for long life outdoors, with an expected lifespan of more than 20 years and reasonable upkeep.
- **May incorporate recycled or repurposed materials.** Artists are encouraged, but not required, to consider reclaimed materials or community artifacts as an element of the work, connecting the piece physically to Sunnyside’s history of building with what it has.
- **Thoughtfully uses the Sunnyside brand palette if color is incorporated:** Orange (#E08020), deep green (#009040), lime (#80C030), and yellow (#F0D020), the colors of the sunrise that named this place.

Five Pillars of the Sunnyside Story

As you consider a submission, think about how the work engages these five themes:

- **Legacy.** Sunnyside is the original Black Wall Street of southern Houston, with 114 years of history and counting. Consider family trees, generational knowledge, the transfer of land across generations, and the institutional strength of churches and civic organizations.
- **Momentum.** More than \$1 billion in value growth across eight years is not a promise; it is a receipt. Consider growth as a physical fact, transformation without erasure, and the visible evidence of change.
- **Livability.** Sunnyside now has a 100-acre park with a skyline view, along with new green space and walkability. Consider joy, recreation, the right to leisure and beauty, and the experience of moving through public space.
- **Truth.** Old narratives recycle outdated data; Sunnyside's reality tells a different story. Consider the power of refuting false narratives and of residents telling their own stories.
- **Opportunity.** Proximity to the Texas Medical Center at roughly 60 percent of the county's median home price means economic access, stability, and the possibility of building wealth. Consider aspiration grounded in material fact.

Eligibility

- Open to professional artists and artist teams. Artists based in the Houston area and artists with ties to Sunnyside and the Black American experience are especially encouraged to apply.
- Submissions must be an existing completed sculpture, or a commission based on an existing design. Given the timeline, wholly new concepts are outside the scope of this call.
- Work must be suitable for permanent outdoor installation in a public space, built to last more than 20 years.
- Work must be safe for the public, including children: no sharp edges, climbing hazards, or breakable components, and it must be able to be securely anchored.

Budget

Selected works will be acquired in a range of \$10,000 to \$40,000 per piece. One or more works may be selected within the available program budget. Final siting, structural engineering, and installation will be coordinated and handled by the program in partnership with the selected artist.

Timeline

The dates below are proposed and will be confirmed at release. The call will be held open for four weeks, with a two-week extension if needed.

Milestone	Date
Call opens	Monday, August 24, 2026
Submission deadline	Monday, September 21, 2026
Selection and notification	By mid- to late-October 2026
Completion and delivery	Within 90 days of initiation for the selected work

How to Submit

All submissions are made through the online form:

<https://form.jotform.com/262006819896064>

Please be ready to provide:

1. Your contact information.
2. Whether your submission is an existing completed piece or a commission of an existing design.
3. Title, medium, and year of the work being submitted.
4. Dimensions and approximate weight.
5. An artist statement connecting the work to Sunnyside's story.
6. For an existing completed piece: high-resolution images of the sculpture, 4 to 6, showing multiple angles including the front and back. Each image file should be not more than 10 MB.
7. For a commission of an existing design: sketches or renderings, 2 to 4, showing the proposed sculpture from various angles (same 10 MB per file limit), plus confirmation that you can complete and deliver the work within three months (90 days) of initiation.
8. A portfolio of your past work: a PDF of not more than 10 pages, or a link to your online portfolio (you will choose one on the form).
9. Your proposed price, and a brief description of expected maintenance needs, including any protective coatings and their reapplication schedule.

Selection Criteria

Submissions will be reviewed on alignment with Sunnyside's story and the five pillars; artistic quality; suitability for permanent public placement; durability and maintainability; and the ability to deliver within the stated timeline and budget.

Contact

Questions may be directed to Elia Quiles, UP Art Studio, at info@upartstudio.org or 713-614-1605.

Sunnyside is not waiting for permission to tell its own story. If your vision aligns with that mission, Sunnyside wants to hear from you.