

Sir Swante Palm Park Call for Art

Waterloo Greenway Conservancy is looking for artists and makers to create public art for Sir Swante Palm Park. If you make things with skill and care, this call is for you. You do not need a gallery or a degree. You need at least three finished works and a real connection to Texas. Experience in public art is a plus.

tl;dr:

What: Art for a park; two entry portals, one large wall, and seating.

Who: Artists and makers with ties to Texas. Austin artists and anyone with a connection to the park are especially welcome.

Dates to apply: October 2 – December 7, 2026

Free help with your application: in person and online.

About the park

Palm Park has been a gathering place in Austin since 1933. It sits beside the historic Palm School, and for generations, families of many nationalities made it their own, including Austin and Mexican American communities.

Among many community memories, Palm Park is remembered as the playground for Palm School, for its lending library and stage, as a hub for special events, and for its swimming pool, which is remembered fondly. Waterloo Greenway Conservancy is committed to a park design that is informed by history and lived experiences, engages residents and former users, and recognizes the importance of placekeeping and celebrating local culture.

To continue designing with the community, Waterloo Greenway Conservancy hosted conversations across 2023 and 2024; about 2,000 community members, surveys, comments, and pop-up visits shaped the plan. Neighbors asked for a place for families and children. They asked for art. They asked us to honor the many heritages that shaped this neighborhood, remember the pool, and recognize Palm School alumni.

This park belongs to the people who built it. Your artwork should reflect them and help carry their stories forward.

Why it matters beyond the park

Palm Park is one of the parks of Waterloo Greenway Conservancy, a 35-acre chain of parks and trails along Waller Creek, running from 15th Street to Lady Bird Lake. It connects East Austin and downtown. The art here will greet neighbors every day, and it will greet visitors from across the world. It should feel like it belongs to the families who made this park, and it should welcome everyone else.

What we are looking for

We are committed to a selection process that is equitable, inclusive, and open to a broad range of artistic voices and perspectives. The panel will consider artistic excellence alongside the diverse experiences, backgrounds, and ways of seeing that artists bring to their work. We are particularly interested in artists who can offer creative perspectives while honoring and building upon the legacy and rich history of Palm Park.

We are selecting artists for three kinds of work, each conceived as an integral part of the park's design. Selected artists will collaborate with the park's landscape architects, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, to create work that enhances the site and its character. We invite artists to view the art as part of the park itself, not something simply placed within it, and to explore how their work can contribute to a meaningful sense of place rooted in Sir Swante Palm Park's past and future.

At this stage, we are asking only for your portfolio of finished work, a statement about your practice and approach, and your Texas ties. You do not need to submit a project concept at the application stage.

What it is

Budget

Two entry portals: Archways that mark the park's two main entrances. They should welcome every visitor and serve as wayfinding by supporting individuals, groups, and families coming in and out safely.

\$80,000–\$100,000 per portal.
Two portals total.

One wall: A large artwork, 80 to 100 feet long, along the park's eastern edge. People will see it from far away more than up close. It can be a mural or built from other materials. The story it tells should come from neighbors.

\$100,000–\$120,000

Seating: They should be beautiful, comfortable, and durable. Children will climb on them, so they must be safe.

\$10,000–\$15,000 each

Note: Budgets are all-encompassing and cover artist fees, materials, and fabrication led by the artist, with support of WGC.

What every project has to do

- It has to be safe for children
- It has to stand up to Texas weather and daily use
- It has to be easy to clean and repair (Selected artists will work with the design team to develop a detailed maintenance plan)
- It has to follow the park's safety and accessibility guidelines

The park's designers will help you with the technical parts, such as heights, foundations, and codes.

Working with neighbors

Whoever is selected will share ideas with neighbors and listen before the design is final. Including at least one public open house conversation. You will not do this alone. The Waterloo Greenway Conservancy team will help.

Who can apply

You can apply if:

- You make art or objects for other people to see, use, or live with. That could mean painting, sculpture, murals, ceramics, tile, metalwork, woodwork, fiber, glass, lighting, design, among other long-term materials and mediums.
- You have at least 3 finished works. "Finished" means done and out in the world, whether shown, installed, sold, or used by real people. They can be large or small. They do not need to be public art. *If you have fewer finished works but other evidence of "finished" outcomes such as commissioned projects, community-based work, or process work documented through video, audio, or writing, please contact us to discuss.*
- You have deep ties to Texas.
- You apply on your own or with a team. For a team, any member's finished work counts.

Any of the following are considered ties to Texas: you were born or raised here, you live or work here now, you used to, your family is from here, you trained here, you have shown or made work here, or you are part of a Texas community, crew, or group. Tell us in your own words.

Austin, and the park

We especially welcome artists from Austin. We welcome you even more if you have a tie to Sir Swante Palm Park, Palm School, or the neighborhood around them. You might have gone to school there, grown up nearby, worked nearby, held a family party there, or played there as a kid. Use your knowledge of the neighborhood and its history as a proposal anchor.

Who should not apply

People who work for Waterloo Greenway Conservancy or Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, people on the selection panel, and their close family members or business partners. Anyone who participates in the selection process in any capacity, including advisors or consultants, is also ineligible.

How to enter

All entries must be completed using the online form below. Please read these guidelines carefully before beginning your application. You may print these guidelines for future reference.

Application process:

1. The application has to be completed in one session; please have all your documents handy.
2. Once you have completed your application, it is no longer accessible and cannot be edited. Do not click the "Apply" button until your application is complete and you are fully satisfied with its contents.
3. **Applications not submitted by 11:59 pm on December 7, 2026 will not be accepted.**

Uploading your information

Below is detailed information on the required fields.

Required information

- Artist Name
- Phone Number
- Email
- Website (website, social media, or online portfolio)
- Address

- Texas ties — In 150 words, or a recording up to two minutes. Tell us where you are from, where you have lived or worked, and how Texas shows up in your work.
- CV — Acceptable formats: doc, docx, pdf, rtf, txt
- Additional documents (Proposal or other documentation, writing, etc.) — Acceptable formats: doc, docx, pdf, rtf, txt, jpg, tiff, png, mp3, mp4, mov, ppt, pptx, xls, xlsx

Artwork documentation

- You may upload up to 10 pieces, with a minimum of 3 pieces of documentation of relevant work.
This may include still images, video, or audio pieces.

Acceptable formats: jpg, tiff, gif, mp3, mp4, avi, mov, wav, doc, docx, txt, pdf

Image resolution should be large enough for the panel to view the work clearly on a computer.

Name image files accordingly: First Name_Last Name_Image # (e.g.: Jane_Solis_1.jpg)

For each image, provide the pictured artwork's title, dimensions, medium, and year.

- Demographic information

Two references

Names and contact details for people who know your work. A client, a neighbor, a collaborator, a teacher, or a community leader all count. No letters needed.

Optional

- How would you work with the community? In 100 words or a one-minute recording.
- Describe a project that you've completed successfully.

Accessibility

This Request for Qualifications can be accessed in this format and in Spanish [HERE](#). If you need the call in a different format, a larger print size, or another language, tell us, and we will provide it.

Criteria

A panel of arts professionals, community organizers, and neighbors will read every complete application. They will choose finalists for each project.

The panel will look at four things:

1. Your finished work: Skill, care, and creativity.
2. Your track record: Finishing what you start, on time and on budget, and working well with other people.
3. Your approach to working with the community.
4. How your work engages with the specific histories and community priorities of Palm Park and Palm School.

Second stage

Finalists will be required to submit a proposal on the selected project.

Finalists will receive a design fee to support their time and materials in developing a proposal. The amount will be shared when finalists are invited.

Selection process

The panel recommends artists for each project. Waterloo Greenway Conservancy's oversight board, the Waller Creek Local Government Corporation, approves the final choices.

Notification

Everyone who applies will hear back. We will also share the names of the chosen artists publicly. Final notification of the artist selections will be sent to all artists via email by January 2027.

Reproductions and publicity

By entering your work and providing images and other documentation, you agree that any images and other materials you provide may be reproduced and distributed via the websites and social media channels of WGC and the project's partners. You also agree that images of your work may be reproduced in the context of the project and its promotion by third parties such as journalists.

Questions?

We'll be facilitating two info sessions for the public, one in person, one online, throughout the duration of the open call. Dates and registration for info sessions will be announced at waterloogreenway.org/palm-park-art and via email to all who express interest.

We are happy to hear from you, but please read these guidelines carefully before contacting us with a question. You may direct questions to si@georginatrevino.com.

Know an artist? Tell them about this call.

Neighbors, teachers, business owners, faith leaders, and staff at community groups can share it. You can also send us a name at si@georginatrevino.com, and we will reach out to them.

About Waterloo Greenway Conservancy

Waterloo Greenway Conservancy is a 1.5-mile park system with the power to bring the entire Austin community together. Once complete, the 35 acres of connected green space—meandering from 15th St. along downtown's eastern edge to Lady Bird

Lake—will be home to a wild array of natural and cultural destinations. Amid epic gardens and rolling pathways, and a twinkling Waller Creek that links them, the environment, arts, health, and adventure will converge—and nourish authentic and uplifting experiences that reflect our city's diversity.

A significant public-private partnership between the City of Austin and us, the Waterloo Greenway Conservancy, this park of all parks is being planned, designed, and built in a series of geographic milestones. Meeting each one by our completion within the next 10 years is ambitious and requires support from the entire community. There's much work yet to be done, but we're well on our way: Symphony Square, Waterloo Park, Moody Amphitheater, and Lady Bird Lake to 4th St are now open! Construction at Sir Swante Palm Park is estimated to begin in 2027.