Native American Sculpture - Thornton Open Space

Overview

The City of Thornton seeks an artist or artist team to design, fabricate, and install one large-scale outdoor sculpture. This sculpture will honor Native American history, heritage, and continued presence in Colorado's Front Range, from time immemorial through the present day.

The sculpture must be original and created specifically for this project and location.

Applicant eligibility, sculpture requirements, and site details can be reviewed in the application. It is free to apply to this call for artists. Design proposals will not be accepted unless applicant is selected as a finalist for this project.

The budget for this permanent artwork is $100,000, inclusive of all costs and fees associated with design, engineering, fabrication, site preparation, installation, and related expenses for the sculpture and its foundation.

The application closes on Sunday, 01/10/2027 at 11:59 pm Mountain Standard Time (GMT-07:00).

General Information

Sculpture Design

Do not submit any design proposals, renderings, mockups, or related materials unless you are notified that you are a finalist for this project. Any proposal materials included with the Call for Entry submission will not be reviewed.

Up to three applicants will be selected as project finalists. Finalists will be compensated $1,000 for their design proposals.

Proposals must meet the project goals of honoring Native American history, heritage, and continued presence in the Colorado Front Range. Finalists should identify the sources of any Tribe-specific elements incorporated in the design and if applicable, related permissions. The sculpture should be completed in summer of 2028.

Diverse artistic expressions and styles are welcome.

Sculpture designs must be:

Unique

- The sculpture must be a unique design created specifically for this project and location.
- Sculptures that have been designed, completed, or displayed in whole or in part for purposes other than this specific project and location are not eligible.
- Reproductions, editioned pieces, off-the-shelf, readymade, and sculptures that are part of a series are not eligible.
- The sculpture design must not infringe upon any copyright, trademark, design, or intellectual property rights. Design cannot contain any company names, trademarks, or logos.
- This sculpture is honoring human culture and history. The design must be entirely created by a human artist or team of human artists. The use of generative AI is not allowed for this project.

Durable

- The sculpture must be designed to function and be appreciated without any electricity.
- All materials used in the sculpture and the base must be low-maintenance and should not require regular cleaning, polishing, tightening, or repairs.
- All materials used in the sculpture must be able to withstand:
    - Intense UV rays
    - Weather including hot and cold temperatures, freeze-thaw cycles, rain, snow, hail, and winds
    - Interactions with domestic, feral, and wild animals
    - Interactions with humans who may accidentally or intentionally engage with the sculpture and the base. Typical human interaction may include touching or rubbing various surfaces and attempting to move, remove, rearrange, or loosen different elements (pushing, pulling, twisting, wiggling, etc.). Sculpture should be resistant to vandalism.
- Materials may not include synthetic polymers including plastics, acrylics, resins, and products including 3D printed filaments. Exceptions include:

    - Polyurethane products used as masonry caulks, sealants, or membranes are permitted
    - Seals and other connections between different materials or components of the sculpture may be made of outdoor-rated polymers including EPDM, silicone, and other materials that will not degrade in UV sunlight, hot temperatures, or other outdoor conditions
- Design should avoid features that could encourage human, animal, or natural elements to damage the sculpture or surroundings.
    - Avoid features that unintentionally collect or retain water, snow, moisture, or debris
    - Avoid materials and shapes that unintentionally invite animals to nest, reside, or habitually perch in a location
- Avoid features that invite unwanted human interaction. This may include avoiding features that resemble steps, stairs, ladder rungs, climbing holds, railings, shelves, ledges, and bike or scooter parking stands.

Accessible

- Any participatory design features must be fully accessible for visitors of all physical abilities, including people who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices.
- The sculpture design should be viewable from the nearby path in normal daytime conditions. Major elements of the design should remain apparent during lower light conditions such as those experienced in morning, evening, and when the weather is overcast.

Sculpture Location

Overview

What is now the State of Colorado is the ancestral homeland, current home, and ongoing gathering place for Native Americans from approximately 51 different sovereign tribal nations, each with their own cultures, languages, and traditions.

Thornton is located about 10 miles north of Denver and is almost 40 square miles. The area that is now Thornton is the traditional territory of the Apache, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, Navajo, Pueblo, Shoshone, and Southern Ute Tribes and Nations. Incorporated in 1956, Thornton has experienced rapid growth in recent years and is currently Colorado's fifth largest city. The expanding residential and commercial developments are balanced by 140 miles of trails and over 2,500 acres of park land.

The sculpture will be located in Thornton's Aylor Open Space, which is currently being restored to native prairie grasses and plants. Aylor Open Space has views of the Rocky Mountains, city skylines, and the eastern plains. Trails and seating will welcome visitors, and this sculpture will be a prominent feature in the area.

Additional Open Space amenities will include nature trails and a "birds' nest fort" playground area constructed of natural tree branches, wood, and stone features.

Paved and gravel trails will connect the open space to other neighborhoods and regional trail systems. Aylor Open Space construction will be complete in late 2027. The sculpture will ideally be installed in summer 2028.

Sculpture Site Details

Pathways will allow people to walk 360° around the sculpture. A boulder seating wall will provide a place to rest while viewing the art from the east and northeast.

A semi-circle of tinted concrete will be adjacent to the sculpture site. The concrete color will be "palomino" (Davis Colors #5447). The color can be viewed on Davis Colors website at: https://www.daviscolors.com/product/davis-colors-palomino-concrete-sample-tile/

The sculpture site is accessed by crossing a 10' wide pedestrian bridge and by traveling across concrete and gravel trails. The bridge weight limit is approximately 10,000 lbs; the concrete trail weight limit is approximately 20,000 lbs. Additional engineering details may be provided to finalist artists upon request.

The approximate sculpture site is noted on site plans as "future city art installation". The artist and their engineers may choose to create a sculpture base or footprint that is a

different shape and size than the rectangle indicated in the above plan. All designs must meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements including maintaining a minimum 36” path width surrounding the sculpture and avoiding potential hazards such as features that protrude into the path.

The sculpture site does not have electrical or water access, and the artist and their contractors should plan accordingly.

The artist is responsible for engineering, permitting, fabrication, and installation of the sculpture foundation and sculpture. Any subcontractors hired by the artist must be properly licensed and insured, and all work must be properly permitted.

Additional location details are available at: www.ThorntonCo.gov/Public-Art.

PDF files may be viewed with appropriate software of your choice or by using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader

The City of Thornton has a commitment to providing timely response to reports of inaccessible material or requests for a reasonable accommodation or modification. Individuals requesting accommodation or effective alternate access should contact PublicArt@ThorntonCo.gov or (303) 538-7393 to request assistance.

Features Near the Sculpture Site: Anythink Nature Library

Immediately adjacent to the Aylor Open Space is the Anythink Nature Library. The library buildings and landscaping will be visible from the sculpture location.

The library’s outdoor amenities include a community garden, seating, and native plants. Landscaping on library grounds may include common hackberry, rocky mountain juniper, spring snow crabapple, Colorado spruce, chokecherry, maple, sedum, stonecrop, spruce, pine, yew, agave, spinystar, cholla, prickly pear, soapweed, and other trees, shrubs, succulents, grasses, and perennials.

The Anythink Nature Library and its landscaping are not owned, operated, or managed by the City of Thornton.

Learn more about the library at: https://www.anythinklibraries.org/anythink-nature-library/

Application Process

The artist application opens on Call for Entry on 11/18/2026.

The application closes on Sunday, 01/10/2027 at 11:59 pm Mountain Standard Time (GMT-07:00).

All submissions must be received through "Call for Entry".

The City of Thornton has a commitment to providing timely response to requests for reasonable accommodations or modifications. Materials that are emailed, mailed, or delivered through other methods without receiving prior approval cannot be accepted.

Questions may be submitted via emails addressed to PublicArt@ThorntonCo.gov or by calling (303) 538-7393 through Thursday, 12/31/2026. All questions and responses from City staff will be posted on Call for Entry and on www.ThorntonCo.gov/Public-Art by Monday, 01/04/2027 at 6:00 pm Mountain Standard Time (GMT-07:00).

Submission Requirements Include:

- *Artist Statement:* A brief description (up to 500 words) of your artistic practice. Include materials, styles, or visual elements that characterize the portfolio.
- *Digital portfolio:* 5 or more high-quality photos of completed sculptural artwork. Images must be at least 1,200 pixels on the longest edge and under 5 MB.
- *Resume/CV:* Include Tribal enrollment or affiliation if applicable, sculptural artwork, any previous public art experience, and any artistic accomplishments or awards.

Using Call for Entry:

The full application and submission requirements may be viewed on "Call for Entry" (sometimes referred to as "CaFÉ" or "Creative West").

Visit Call for Entry at www.callforentry.org

or Creative West at https://opportunities.wearecreativewest.org/

Either web address will bring you to the platform to view and apply for this call for artists.

Click on "find calls". You may use the search function to find this call for artists. The call is listed as "Native American Sculpture – Thornton Open Space".

You may also use the "filters" function to sort for this call for artists. Selecting the opportunity type ("Commissions") and state ("Colorado"), and status ("Open") will provide

search results that include this “Native American Sculpture – Thornton Open Space” call for artists.

Applicants must create a free account on Call for Entry (also known as “CaFÉ” or “Creative West”) to apply for this project.

Applications and photo uploads can be saved as drafts and completed over multiple days.

Visit the online help center to learn how to successfully use Call for Entry including how to create an account and upload materials: https://artist-help.callforentry.org/col/intro

Any decisions to extend the application deadline are made solely upon the discretion of City of Thornton staff. If the application deadline is extended, this will be noted on both the City of Thornton website and on this Call for Entry.

Deadline extensions cannot be granted to individual applicants for technical difficulties or local connectivity problems. Applicants are encouraged to create an account and upload required material prior to the due date.

The submission portal automatically closes on Sunday, 01/10/2027 at 11:59 pm Mountain Standard Time (GMT-07:00). Late submissions cannot be accepted.

Artist Selection Process

Round 1: Review Call for Entry Submissions

Submissions received through Call for Entry will be reviewed by the Public Art Review Panel. The Public Art Review Panel will evaluate applicant submissions and select up to three finalists.

The Public Art Review Panel are volunteers representing different community stakeholders. Review Panel members for this project will include Native community representatives, in addition to individuals who live or work near the project site and individuals with knowledge or experience relevant to this project.

The Review Panel will select up to three finalists based on materials submitted to Call for Entry. The Review Panel will consider artistic and practical qualities of submitted images, relevant experience, feasibility (may include applicant experience or plans to work with qualified collaborators), and regional and cultural relevance.

Finalists will be notified of their status via email within two business days of the Public Art Review Panel’s decision. All finalists will be asked to confirm their continued eligibility, interest, and ability to proceed with the project. Finalists claiming Tribal association will receive instructions for securely submitting documentation. Acceptable supporting

documentation includes a Tribal enrollment or citizenship record or a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB).

Each finalist (applicant; artist or artist team) will receive a stipend of $1,000. The finalists will have approximately 3 weeks to create a site-specific proposal for the project. Payment of a finalist stipend or receipt of the finalist proposals does not transfer ownership of the design or authorize its fabrication.

In the unlikely scenario that the Public Art Review Panel is unable to select finalists, the project would be temporarily paused and seeking direction from City of Thornton staff and any appropriate boards and councils. All applicants will be notified via email if said direction includes any changes to the project or includes reopening the call for artists.

Round 2: Review Finalists' Sculpture Proposals

Finalists present their proposals over Zoom.

A copy of the finalists' proposals must be received by PublicArt@ThorntonCo.gov at least 2 full business days prior to the proposal review. Printed copies of the proposal materials will be made available to the Public Art Review Panel during each finalist's presentation.

Finalists will present their proposals over Zoom. All proposal materials must be communicated through the Zoom presentation; the City of Thornton cannot receive or display any physical proposal elements such as raw materials or maquettes.

Applicants wishing to test their Zoom connection, including sound, video, lighting, and screen sharing may schedule a time at least 2 business days prior to the proposal review. At that time, City staff can provide feedback on the quality of the Zoom connection. City staff cannot provide feedback on the content or quality of the proposal.

The City of Thornton has a commitment to providing timely response to requests for reasonable accommodations or modifications. Finalists requesting accommodation or effective alternate access should contact PublicArt@ThorntonCo.gov or (303) 538-7393 to request assistance.

Proposals should be thorough and complete, and show a good understanding of the sculpture location and goals.

Proposals must include:

- Images or renderings of the proposed sculpture design, including in relation to the physical space.
- Materials list and maintenance information.

- Anticipated lifespan of the sculpture.
- Estimated schedule. The schedule should include engineering, design, fabrication, and installation of the sculpture and foundation.
- Project partners. This list may include other artists, fabricators, or contractors.
- Project budget. The budget should show an understanding of all portions of the project including insurance, business expenses, raw materials, fabrication, contractors, engineering, transportation, and installation for the foundation and sculpture. Artists should plan to pay themselves and include this in the budgeted amounts. The budget should include a minimum contingency of $15,000.
- Project description, including how the sculpture will reflect the finalist's perspective and the continuing presence of Native peoples. The project description may include information about the artist, their inspiration, their process, and details about the proposed design. Any Tribe-specific interpretation should accurately identify the sources and permissions. Any proposed use of culturally restricted material must follow the relevant Nation's protocols; artists are not required to disclose sacred, restricted, or private cultural knowledge.

Following each presentation, the finalists will have an opportunity to answer questions from the review panel.

The Public Art Review Panel will consider each proposal's ability to meet the project goals, artistic quality, and project feasibility. The panel is reviewing proposals as presented by the finalists, and is not providing edits or changes to the design.

The Public Art Review Panel will identify the top proposal (the "award winner"). All finalists, including the award winner, will be notified of the decision the following business day.

Round 3: Board and City Council Approval

City staff will present the award winner's proposal to the Thornton Arts, Sciences, and Humanities Council (TASHCO) board and to City Council. Following TASHCO and City Council approval, the artist will be issued a contract with the City of Thornton.

The award winner will receive their first payment after submitting signed contract and associated paperwork. The first payment is a percentage of the project total, and is designed to offset some of the initial expenses (such as purchasing raw materials, hiring an engineer for the sculpture base, etc.). Subsequent payments are tied to specific project milestones.

The final payment will be made upon receipt of project documentation including materials and maintenance information, and sign-off on the foundation and sculpture by the artist's engineer, City of Thornton Buildings and Construction inspectors, and Public Art staff.

Eligibility

Applicants do not need prior experience in public art, but must have the capacity to meet the project requirements through collaboration and contracting with other professionals.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Reside in and be legally authorized to work in the contiguous United States (sometimes referred to as the lower 48 states and D.C.). Applicants residing in Alaska, Hawaii, offshore U.S. territories, and locations outside the United States are not eligible to apply.
- Have relevant knowledge of and relationship to the Colorado Front Range.
- Provide authentic representation of Native American history, cultures, and modern identity.
    - Applicants with documented Native American Tribal association are encouraged to apply. Tribal association(s) should be identified in application. If selected as a finalist, applicants will be asked to provide supporting documentation including Tribal enrollment or citizenship records or a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB).
    - Applicants that do not have documented Tribal association must provide information about how they will involve the Native American community, perspectives, and authentic Tribal contexts.
- Applicants must be in compliance with the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 (IACA). Learn about IACA at: https://www.doi.gov/iacb/act
- Current City of Thornton staff and members of Thornton boards and commissions are not eligible to apply. Applicants must disclose relationships with City of Thornton staff or board or commission members.
- Applicants may apply individually or as a team. If applying as a team, the lead artist and the role of Native artists must be identified in the application.

Rules and Terms to Apply

Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements.

Sculpture proposals must meet the project goals of honoring Native American history, and heritage, and continued presence in the Colorado Front Range. Finalists should identify the sources of any Tribe-specific elements incorporated in the design and if applicable, related permissions.

All submissions must be received through "Call for Entry". The City of Thornton has a commitment to providing timely response to requests for reasonable accommodations or modifications. Finalists requesting accommodation or effective alternate access should contact PublicArt@ThorntonCo.gov or (303) 538-7393 to request assistance. Materials that are emailed, mailed, or delivered through other methods without receiving prior approval cannot be accepted.

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Times posted in this call are all noted in Mountain Standard Time (GMT-07:00).