



## CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 8/25/2026

**REQUESTER:** Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation

**PRESENTER:** Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation

**ITEM TITLE:** CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF CONTRACT K-2627-36: BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AND BECK DESIGN, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$92,000 FOR THE SOONER THEATRE MASTER PLAN PROJECT.

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The Sooner Theatre is located at 101 East Main Street and is a part of the City of Norman's Park System as a Cultural Center. This beloved live performance venue opened its doors in 1929. Eventually, it came into the city's possession in the 1980s, after a group of citizens bought the building from the architect (Harold Gimeno) to save it from demolition. Soon after, it was gifted to the city and treated as a preservation project. After a round of initial restoration work, the Sooner Theatre was reopened as a performance space and has operated since the mid-1990s.

The Sooner Theatre has received many upgrades over the years to keep it "modern" in technical production, maximize limited space, maintain HVAC, electrical, telecom/internet services, and preserve historical furnishings, fixtures, above-stage rigging, and fire protection throughout the building. The list of major future improvements to the existing theatre and the idea of adding a second space attached to the west side of the building will include modern accessibility standards, such as an elevator, the proper number of restrooms, and accessible routes throughout both buildings, which are anticipated to end up as a multi-million dollar project.

The current configuration of the sound and light operation boards also needs to be relocated, which will improve production value and enable the balcony to be sold for more shows once those staff stations are moved off the balcony. Improvements to the lighting, stage, and wing space are also needed. The space works as-is, but is very limited in how many shows it can accommodate and how large each show can be in any season.

After decades of use to produce high-level live performances that draw thousands of people each month downtown for hours of entertainment, dining, and shopping as part of the overall experience of producing, rehearsing, and then presenting a live performance, the staff has

determined that it is time to plan for the next 100 years at Sooner Theatre, starting with this Master Planning design phase.

## **DISCUSSION:**

In May 2026, the Request for Qualifications (RFQ-2526-51) for Professional Design Services for the Sooner Theatre Improvements Master Plan was advertised in the Norman Transcript and on the City of Norman website. The RFQ was picked up by several Architecture firms throughout the state and region. Complete proposals were received from fifteen design teams.

The Review committee shortlisted five firms for interviews and subsequently recommended engaging the services of the team led by Beck Design of Oklahoma City for this project. The Beck team is comprised of Beck Design (Architects), along with Fisher Dachs (Theatre Consultants), Kirkegaard (Acoustical Engineers), Alvine Engineering (Mechanical & Electrical Engineering), Kimley-Horn (Civil Engineering), and Walter P. Moore (Structural Engineers), with Beck Design also handling the cost estimating for the project in-house, as they do for all of their theater projects.

The process we intend to use to develop the master plan will include utilizing a project steering committee, a public input process, and review by the Norman Board of Park Commissioners, Parks and Recreation Staff, and City Council. A vital part of the plan will be to obtain a current opinion of probable costs, funding sources, and a phasing plan to help craft the scope of any construction project(s) resulting from this study. After negotiating the project scope with Beck, we have settled on a broad-reaching conceptual planning process for the venue that will include a major building addition that keeps the current historic interior of the theatre in-tact with many modern tech upgrades, while also creating accessible restrooms, dressing rooms, stage access and access to new spaces such as a smaller “Black Box” theatre, scene shop with materials storage space and some additional office space and an elevator for access to the second floor of the original building and any new additional space.

The contract with Beck includes a schedule of input meetings, design work, and deliverables, which will give the city a clear vision for renovating the facility into this immensely popular cultural entertainment space.

A more detailed breakdown of each task, along with proposed dates for all meetings, workshops, public presentations, and document deliveries, is included in the attached contract documents (Attachment A to Contract K-2627-36). We have also included a proposed project schedule (Attachment B) and a Fee Schedule for the various disciplines involved in this conceptual phase (Attachment C). Additional Design work can be done in future phases once a construction budget and funding source are finalized.

Staff recommends awarding Contract Number K-2627-36 to Beck Design, in the total amount of \$92,000.00 for the Sooner Theatre Master Plan Project. The proposed funding will come from the proposed appropriation of the Room Tax Account Fund Balance.

**RECOMMENDATION NO.1:** It is recommended that the City Council appropriate funds in the amount of \$92,000 from the Parks and Recreation reserve in the Room Tax Fund Balance (23-29000) into the Sooner Theatre Master Plan Project (2379442; Project RT0092)

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 2:** It is recommended that the City Council approve Contract Number K-2627-36 to Beck Design, in the total amount of \$92,000.00 for the Sooner Theatre Master Plan Project. Funding is available from the Sooner Theatre Master Plan project account established for this project (account 2379442-46201; project RT0092--\$92,000).