

**CITY OF NORMAN  
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT**



**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
RFQ No. 2526-51**

**FOR**

**DESIGN SERVICES**

**FOR THE**

**SOONER THEATRE IMPROVEMENTS  
MASTER PLAN**

**101 East Main St. Norman, OK 73079**

**PUBLIC NOTICE  
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
R.F.Q. No. 2526-51**

The City of Norman, Oklahoma, through the Parks and Recreation Department, is soliciting proposals for:

**Design Services  
For Sooner Theatre Improvements Master Plan**

These design services will be for the design of a master plan for a renovation and expansion project at The Sooner Theatre, located at 101 East Main Street, Norman, Oklahoma.

Any correspondence, questions, or requests for copies of the Request for Qualifications should be directed to James Briggs, Park Development Manager, Norman Parks and Recreation Department, 225 North Webster Avenue, Norman, OK 73069; Phone: (405) 366-5480; and via e-mail at [james.briggs@normanok.gov](mailto:james.briggs@normanok.gov)

Proposals submitted in response to this RFQ will be received in the office of the Parks and Recreation Department, located at the Norman Development Center, 225 North Webster Avenue, Norman, OK 73069, until **4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2026**. Responses received after this time and date will not be accepted. Responses are solicited in accordance with the terms, conditions, and instructions set forth in this RFQ.

The City of Norman reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Requesting Entity Information**

The requesting entity is the City of Norman, Oklahoma, through the Parks and Recreation Department, with municipal offices at 225 North Webster Avenue, Norman, Oklahoma, 73069.

### **B. Project Overview and Objective**

The City of Norman (the “City”) is proposing to design several ADA-focused improvements to The Sooner Theatre (the “Theatre”), as well as an accessible addition to this historic building in downtown Norman, Oklahoma, along with cost estimates for the proposed work. The City will use the design to guide the creation of a program to improve the facility's accessibility for daily staff operations, performers using the space, and the general public attending performances and events at the Theatre.

The Theatre is a performing arts venue that has operated as a live theater space for the past several decades, since the City acquired the building in the 1980’s. Prior to that, it operated primarily as a movie house, starting not long after its construction in 1929. Designed by architect Harold Gimeno, the Theatre was also a vaudeville stage and has always had a stage with counterweighted line sets above it, which have provided performance opportunities since the original construction. However, there is very limited wing space, few restrooms, small, non-accessible dressing rooms below the stage, insufficient storage and set construction space, and other limitations to its use for live performances in its current state. The building is at the end of its block of downtown buildings, with the next, adjacent building occupied by a furniture store. These facts have limited the ability to gain any much-needed space for the theatre, which has been proposed for several years. It is now time to consider a more robust project that does not view the adjacent road or buildings as obstacles to growth, but rather as challenges to overcome.

Since the late 1990’s, the City has worked to upgrade much of the existing buildings to accommodate modern technology while also preserving the historical details of the space. Among other things, the Theatre’s electrical system was upgraded from the original technology, a complete fire suppression (sprinkler) system was added, and the HVAC system(s) have been replaced regularly, along with the building roof and miscellaneous plumbing, lighting, seating, finishes, and structural improvements over the decades. The space below the stage has been regularly renovated and maintained over the years for use as the dressing rooms for stage performances. Recently, all the above-stage rigging was completely rebuilt by JR Clancy from Nashville, TN. Also, the in-house fiber was upgraded by TransTel in 2022, and all stage curtains, legs, borders, and drapes were replaced with IFR materials from Rose Brand in Secaucus, New Jersey.

The total seating for the space is 535 patrons, including the balcony seating. There is a business office and two small restrooms on the main floor, adjacent to the lobby, and

additional offices on the mezzanine level, as well as a “Sweet Shop” concession stand by the lobby, renovated for ADA compliance in 2020. Some of the floor seating is accessible, but not available in all parts of the audience area (the house).

The space has limited performance windows each year, since all sets are built on the stage prior to each performance due to the lack of a scene shop or a second performance space, such as a small “Black Box” space at the Theatre.

The Theatre is owned by the City and leased to The Sooner Theatre, Inc. to operate as a performing arts venue. They program the space with live theatre, musical acts, occasional film screenings, and assorted rental events year-round, with their primary focus on locally cast youth and adult musical theatre performances. These shows use traditional in-house-built physical sets, as well as modern projection techniques for set design. They have above-stage electrics and some side-of-house and balcony rail-mounted light instruments, but no mid-house lighting on trusses/motors, which limits the lighting design of shows. The sound and light boards are both mounted in the balcony, instead of at floor level or in a booth setting. The original orchestra pit at the front of the stage is currently closed off with a pit filler system and often covered with sets that project past the stage; however, it can be used by live musicians, if needed. There is very limited wing space for set pieces and actors on both sides of the stage, since the Theatre was originally built for motion pictures and vaudeville-style performances. However, the entire stage depth does have several line sets in a fly tower configuration, which allows sets sometimes to be flown in/out and includes a mid-stage traveler curtain that can be closed for set changes, along with a rear scrim line set and optional starfield curtain in the furthest upstage line set to add depth and variety. A movie screen is hung on one of the downstage line sets, and it is mostly used for rental events or an annual film festival. All dressing rooms are below the stage; however, temporary ground-level stations have been placed in the wings whenever a performer with limited mobility or other inability to use the stairs down to the dressing room has performed in the space.

As we approach the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of The Sooner Theatre, we believe it is now time to masterplan a program of accessibility improvements, along with a physical expansion of the Theatre to carry it into its next 100 years. Our goal is to bring the Theatre up to the standards of modern cultural facilities in the region and around the country. We intend to use this Sooner Theatre Masterplan as a major part of our next taxpayer-funded proposal for a group of “Quality of Life” projects in Norman. We want to enhance the accessibility, aesthetics, and overall experience of this cherished historic structure for the staff who work in it every day and for those who choose to perform in or attend a special event at the Theatre at any time of year. We want to evaluate all our current operations and systems to ensure we are getting the best use of the original Gimeno design, and then plan a way to expand beyond the original structure and add features that don’t fit in the current building.

The new design shall include a proposal to expand the square footage of the Theatre by expanding to the west, which would involve closing a city street and moving several utilities, among other site considerations; OR to the east, which would include purchase

of the adjacent building from the current owner (who occupies several buildings on the block as a furniture store); OR a combination of both directions. The rear of the building is the back of the stage, which opens onto a public alley with a restaurant and a private parking lot on the other side, so expansion in that direction is unlikely.

Whichever way the expansion occurs, we intend to add both public and performer spaces on the **Ground Floor Level**, including the following:

- Additional accessible restrooms for patrons.
- An accessible route to the Theatre stage.
- New accessible dressing room spaces, a Green Room, and restrooms for performers.
- A scene shop/workshop for tech staff.
- Additional wing space on one or both sides of the stage.
- A Black Box second performance space with modern production technology and movable bleacher-style seating.
- Expanded concession and/or bar counter space.
- Consider adding office space(s), a conference room, and a small music or rehearsal room in the new addition.

**Second-floor** rooms may be considered for the addition, since the Black Box and scene shop will ideally be two stories in height and may be connected in a way that has usable second-story square footage in the connecting space between the two.

Depending on the direction of the expansion, the Masterplan could also include a redesign of the parking lot and street west of the Theatre (both of which the City also owns), along with all associated enhancements to outdoor pedestrian walkways, security lighting, parking access, and any necessary outdoor signage. Other possible considerations, based on the direction of the Theatre expansion, include redesigning any second-floor spaces gained if the adjacent two-story building is purchased. Elevator options will also be explored for any proposed addition, with the possibility of connecting to the second floor and balcony at the front end of the existing Theatre.

The project will also include proposed renovations to the existing Theatre lobby to improve accessibility and functionality of the business office, ticket counter, and other patron access points to all support facilities, such as the existing lobby restrooms and concessions, any other boutique/retail space, and house seating access. We also want to explore options for renovating the existing house, including the stage and the space below the stage, with features such as a trap door, a rotating stage deck segment, and/or stage tracks for moving set pieces. Other ideas to explore would be adding a mid-house lighting truss, relocation of the sound and light boards to ground level, remodel of the balcony seating once all production elements are relocated away from the front of the balcony, and other technology and production-related feature accessibility and functionality upgrades to fit in the house without significantly altering the original architectural details of the interior.

The chosen design team will work with Parks and Recreation staff to establish priorities relative to the Theatre's components. A resident advisory committee will be involved at periodic milestones during the project. The selected firm is expected to provide cost estimates throughout the establishment of a project implementation budget.

The City is seeking a qualified firm to design the following improvements:

1. Prepare a Master Plan, detailed cost estimates, and conceptual design graphics, plans, and a general framework of specifications for all proposed building additions and renovations. Once funding is secured in future budgets for construction documents and bid package preparation, those items can be completed as a second-phase bid package with the architect chosen for this work.
2. Prepare cost estimates to ensure the master plan can be accomplished either at once or in phases, as required by the final construction budget. Include cost estimates for all permits from City and State agencies.

The selected design consultant may be hired for additional services at that point to coordinate design progress, construction documents, plan submittals, and construction observation, as appropriate, once the Master Plan phase is complete and design development begins. The City will approve the plans. City project managers or a contract project manager will administer construction in a later phase of the project.

Relocation of City utilities may be significant and must be considered while conceptualizing the final master plan. All city-owned and any other utilities (phone, fiber optic, gas, electric, oil pipeline, cable, etc.) must be verified during the conceptual design process and accounted for in the Master Plan in a way that they can be encapsulated in a packet prepared for bid by a general contractor upon completion of any future final design phase. The utilities currently used by the Theatre and surrounding businesses must remain in service throughout construction.

### **C. Project Funding**

The City of Norman will supply 100% of the construction and design cost. No Federal Funds are being used for this project.

## **II. PROJECT CRITERIA**

### **A. Detailed Criteria**

The design consultant will be required to visit the site to become familiar with the proposed improvements, the scope of work, and the area affected. A non-mandatory pre-proposal meeting will be held at The Sooner Theatre on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. Consultants may coordinate additional follow-up meetings on-site with staff as needed before the proposal's due date.

The scope of proposed work for the selected Design Firm is expected to include the following activities:

1. Kick off the Master Plan Conceptual phase with City Staff to gather background information and input for the master plan design. Plan committee input kickoff at the Theatre to lay the foundation of the masterplan for the Theater.
2. Meet with the citizen advisory committee and/or the general public at periodic milestones to maintain public information exchange (see proposed schedule). Also, meet virtually or in person with the project manager and Park staff as needed to clarify any questions regarding the Theatre's past, current, and proposed usage, and all building elements that will remain unchanged by the master plan, as they arise during the design process.
3. Perform a detailed survey of the existing Theatre and the possible expanded facility footprint to the west, locating all existing features in the considered project area, including all public rights-of-way and easements, utility locations (above and below ground), adjacent property lines and current land use for the project area, all fences, trees, driveways and parking facilities, and other pertinent physical and legally described features. Survey data must include alignment ties to corners and/or monuments. Also include the footprint of the building to the east of the Theatre, which is being considered for possible expansion.
4. Research all relevant soil information needed for the design of all areas of building expansion/addition.
5. Determine all necessary environmental clearances required. The Consultant is also responsible for determining all essential local, state, and federal permits necessary to complete the project. Such regulations and permitting processes need to be factored into project cost estimating.
6. Prepare and submit Master Plan conceptual design drawings; a written project analysis report that includes design requirements, phasing, project layout, etc.; all necessary calculations; a cost-effectiveness analysis of how best to accomplish the project's goals; and a detailed cost estimate. The final design analysis report shall receive written approval from the Project Manager. Once approved, the master plan, including implementation/phasing, will be used by the Parks and Recreation Department to submit all construction funding requests before proceeding to a second phase of design, through construction documents and final plans and specifications.
7. Additional Services may be requested in the future, upon approval to fund construction (T.B.D.). At that time, an amendment will be made to any design contract to take the conceptual Master Plan and proceed through Design Development and then Construction Documents to furnish all necessary plans, studies, applications, clearances, etc., for all planned building design elements. Coordination with utilities,

City, State, and Federal agencies requiring review/plan submission (if any), and meetings with City of Norman and any other related outside agencies affected by such a construction contract will be included in additional services as part of any amendment in future design services. Construction-phase observation may also be included in a future amendment for additional services (T.B.D.).

8. Meet with City staff and/or City Council for project discussions, coordination, presentations, etc., as required and listed on the proposed schedule, below.
9. Provide four complete printed sets of all masterplan documents upon completing this process/project. Also, provide plans in digital format (file type T.B.D.).

**B. Required Schedule**

The services sought by the City shall meet or exceed the following schedule:

EVENT	DATE
Proposal Submission	May 29, 2026
Interviews (if necessary)	Week of June 8, 2026
Consultant Selection	June 12, 2026
Council Approval of Contract	July 14, 2026
Notice to Proceed	July 15, 2026
Project Kickoff	July 20, 2026
Meet with City Staff/Steering Comm.	July 27, 2026
Public Meeting of conceptual plan	August 24, 2026
Master Plan Review with Committee	August 31, 2026
Present Master Plan to Park Board	September 3, 2026
Complete Master Plan	September, 2026
Present Master Plan to City Council	October 6, 2026

**NOTE:** Additional Design Services beyond the Master Plan conceptual phase are not included in this Request for Qualifications. All additional services, up to construction-phase services, will be addressed in a separate contract before construction.

**C. Inquiries**

Questions should be directed to James Briggs, Park Development Manager, at (405) 366-

5480, james.briggs@normanok.gov. **No inquiries will be received after 4:00 p.m. on May 29, 2026.**

### III. R.F.Q. CRITERIA

#### A. General Requirements

Proposals will be accepted at the Parks and Recreation Department until **4:00 p.m. on May 29, 2026.** The office is located at 225 North Webster, Norman, OK 73069.

Proposals must be signed by a duly authorized official of the proposer. **Proposals must include Standard Form 254, "Architect-Engineer and Related Services Questionnaire," and Standard Form 255, "Architect-Engineer Related Services for Specific Project," or similar forms containing this standard information.** A minimum of six (6) copies of the proposal must be submitted. No reimbursement will be made for any costs incurred in preparing the proposal or any costs incurred before a formal notice of award. All proposals must state their validity for at least sixty (60) days from the date of receipt.

#### B. Prohibited Interest

No member, officer, or employee of the City of Norman, or member of its governing body during his or her tenure or one (1) year after that, shall have any interest, direct or indirect, in any resultant contract or the proceeds thereof.

#### C. Equal Employment Opportunities

In connection with this proposal, the consultant shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, place of birth, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, including marriage to a person of the same sex, being disabled, or disadvantaged person, or a Veteran, except where religion, sex or national origin is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the consultant.

In accordance with State law, the consultant must submit a certificate of non-discrimination with this proposal to be considered. Failure to submit this affidavit may render the proposal incomplete and thus eliminate the consultant from further consideration.

#### D. Insurance Requirements

The chosen Consultant for this project must obtain the following insurance, with the City of Norman listed as additional insured:

1. Worker's Compensation Insurance and Employer's Liability Insurance, as prescribed by State Statute, for all the consultant's employees and subcontractors working on the project, with the subcontractors to also provide the same.
2. Provide both Commercial General Liability Insurance and Automobile Liability Insurance for personal injury and property damage in limits prescribed by the Oklahoma Governmental Tort Claims Act (51 O.S. § 151 et seq.) and subsequent revisions thereto, as follows:
  - a. \$75,000 for loss of property arising out of a single act or occurrence.
  - b. \$250,000 per person for any other loss arising out of a single act or occurrence.
  - c. \$2,000,000 for any number of claims arising out of a single act or occurrence
3. Professional Liability (errors and omissions) Insurance Certificate providing a minimum policy limit of \$1,000,000.

The consultant will be bound by the insurance limits outlined in the awarded contract.

#### **E. Minimum Content of Proposal**

At a minimum, the proposal should contain the following elements:

1. Transmittal letter
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
4. Project Approach
5. Related experience
6. Completed 254 and 255 (or similar forms)
7. Anticipated schedule
8. Appendices (misc., exhibits, illustrations, etc.)
9. References
10. Proof of Insurance Requirements

### **IV. SELECTION PROCESS**

#### **A. Right to Reject**

The City of Norman retains the right to reject any or all proposals and to resolicit if deemed in the City of Norman's best interest.

#### **B. R.F.Q. Review Process**

The City of Norman will review responses to this R.F.Q. that meet the requirements enumerated and are received before the designated closing date. Firms without adequate proof of insurance, in minimum amounts set herein to protect the City's

interest, will not be evaluated.

Upon review of all qualified proposals, the selection committee will rank them. The three (3) to five (5) highest-ranking firms may be asked to make an oral presentation for further evaluation. The committee will then choose the highest-ranked firm.

The City will negotiate a contract for consulting design services based on a three-step process:

1. The highest-ranked firm will be contacted, and contract negotiations will begin.
2. The City will attempt to negotiate a contract at a fair and reasonable price.
3. If the City is unable, after good-faith efforts, to negotiate a satisfactory contract with the highest-ranked firm, the City shall formally end negotiations with that firm and begin negotiations with the second-highest-ranked firm.

**C. Keynotes**

The most important emphasis will be placed on the firm's expertise and the individuals assigned to the job. Illustrative and descriptive material describing the firm's previous work is recommended. At the firm's request, this material will be returned to them at their expense upon completion of the review process. The firm shall provide a list of previous related work experience with contact persons and phone numbers.

Key personnel (by name and position), relative experience and capabilities, and subcontractors will be evaluated closely. An architect will ideally lead the project team and include other professionals experienced with theater design, such as engineers, trade specialists, specialty consultants, project managers, and any other design professional deemed useful.

**D. Ranking Criteria**

	Possible Points
Experience of Key Personnel (Project Team) on similar projects	50
Technical Approach (include detailed project timeline)	30
References	10
Oklahoma-Based Design Firm	5
Compliance with R.F.P. criteria	5
Total	100 Points

## V. Affidavits

### A. CERTIFICATION OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In connection with the performance of work under this contract, the contractor agrees as follows:

- A. The contractor agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, place of birth, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, or marital status, including marriage to a person of the same sex. The Contractor shall take affirmative action to ensure that employees are treated without regard to their race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, place of birth, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, or marital status, including marriage to a person of the same sex. Such actions shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruiting or recruitment, advertising, lay-off, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. The Contractor and Subcontractor shall agree to post, in a conspicuous place available to employees and applicants for employment, notices setting forth the provisions of this section.
- B. In the event of the Contractor's noncompliance with this nondiscrimination clause, the contract may be canceled or terminated by the City Council. The Contractor may be declared by the City Council ineligible for further contracts with the said agency until the Contractor makes satisfactory proof of intent to comply.
- C. The Contractor agrees to include this nondiscrimination clause in any subcontracts connected with the performance of this agreement.

I have read the above-stated clause and agree to abide by its requirements.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Sworn to and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. NON-COLLUSION AFFIDAVIT**

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_ )

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ )

\_\_\_\_\_, of lawful age, being first duly sworn on oath says that (s)he is the agent authorized by the bidder to submit the attached bid. Affiant further states that the bidder has not been a party to any collusion among bidders in restraint of freedom of competition by agreement to bid at a fixed price or to refrain from bidding; or with any government official or employee as to quantity, quality, or price in the prospective contract, of any other terms of said prospective contract; or in any discussions between bidders and any government official concerning exchange of money or other thing of value for special consideration in the letting of a contract; that the bidder/contractor has not paid, given or donated or agreed to pay, give or donate to any officer or employee of the City of Norman (or other entity) any money or other thing of value, either directly or indirectly in the procuring of the award of a contract pursuant to this bid.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

My Commission Number: \_\_\_\_\_

VI. Location Map—Sooner Theatre (101 East Main Street//Norman, OK)

