



The evolution of Oklahoma City since the arrival of the Thunder in 2008 is nothing short of amazing. Our city has been transformed; we are a city worth paying attention to.

A new arena will keep the Thunder in Oklahoma City for another generation, and beyond 2050—but it's not just about basketball. A new arena will secure Oklahoma City's status as a destination for premier concerts, national sporting events, and more—all things that drive economic growth and quality of life in our city and without raising taxes.

Factsheet

- The normal lifespan of an arena is 30 years. By NBA standards Oklahoma City's arena is soon to be one of the oldest. Compared to all the other NBA arenas, ours is the smallest by square footage.
- There are 18 metro areas with a larger population than central Oklahoma that do NOT have an NBA team, many of which aspire to have one. In fact, there are multiple cities either building, planning to build, or already have a high-quality arena hoping to get an NBA franchise, notably Las Vegas, Seattle, and Kansas City.
- A new arena is necessary to secure a long-term home for the Oklahoma City Thunder. The original 15-year lease between the team and the city to use the Paycom Center has expired, and the team is staying in OKC on a temporary three-year lease.
- Concerts and other events often bypass Oklahoma City, choosing Tulsa due to our inability to meet the needs of premier events.
- It is important for the arena to be downtown so we can take advantage of the synergy with the new convention center, Scissortail Park, and the more than 20 hotels that have opened in the area since the Thunder came to OKC.
- When building the last three downtown arenas in our city's past (Municipal Auditorium, The Myriad, and Paycom Center) it took between nine and ten years from voter approval to opening. While we hope to open a new arena sooner than that, it will certainly take a number of years for it to open, meaning the Paycom Center still has years of use left.

FAQs

What does an arena mean to our economy?

It has been estimated that Thunder games alone add more than \$600 million a year to our local economy and are responsible for 3,000 jobs. In addition, concerts, family shows, monster trucks and the other national sporting events at the arena add tens of millions a year to our economy, and often bring visitors from outside the city who contribute to our local economy.

I hear this does not raise taxes, how is that possible?

This proposal does not start generating tax revenue until AFTER the current sales tax, known officially as Ordinance 26,255 and commonly known as MAPS 4, expires. This proposal extends collection of that one-cent sales tax for 72 months. Because of this, the tax rate will not increase.

How will we pay for a new arena?

The new arena will be primarily funded through the extension of an existing one-cent sales tax. One benefit of this approach is that roughly 30% of this tax will be paid by those who live outside of Oklahoma City but shop, stay, and attend events here. For the first time in city history, a portion of the funding will come from a contribution of 50 million dollars from the Thunder ownership group. Additionally, funding will be provided from MAPS 4 funds that were originally approved to be spent on the current arena but will instead be shifted to the new arena.

How much is a new arena going to cost?

The 72-month tax is forecast to collect \$974 million. By ordinance, these funds must be used in conjunction with constructing and maintaining the new arena.

The Paycom Center isn't that old, is it?

Voters approved what is now known as Paycom Center 30 years ago in 1993 and designed for a different time. This is the normal lifespan for an arena. Our city's first multi-purpose arena opened in 1937. Twenty-five years later, voters approved building the Myriad that became the Cox Center. Then 26 years after the Myriad opened, voters approved what is now Paycom Center. It is simply time to do that again. By NBA standards, our arena is soon to be one of the oldest.

What is wrong with the current arena? / Why do we need a new arena?

Our current arena is okay for what it is, but it is just not competitive in today's world, let alone for the next generation. Of all the arenas in the NBA, our arena is the smallest by square footage and cannot be expanded further. Thinking about concerts and other shows, it is simply unable to meet the needs of premiere events, so they bypass OKC, often choosing even Tulsa over our city because of our arena's lack of modern capabilities.

Additionally, a new arena is necessary to secure a long-term home for the Oklahoma City Thunder. The original 15-year lease between the team and the city to use the current arena has expired and the team is staying in OKC on a temporary three-year lease. Without a new arena and within the competitive environment of the NBA, the ability for the team to be financially sustainable in the league's third smallest market is difficult. The team is much less likely to sign a long-term lease unless a new arena is in the plans.

Where will the new arena be?

Much like every major city investment in projects, an exact location will not be determined until voters decide whether or not to move forward. It would be unwise to spend the resources to determine the best location until we have approval. The ordinance does specify that the arena will be in the downtown core. It is important for the arena to be downtown so we can take advantage of the synergy with the new convention center, Scissortail Park, and the more than 20 hotels that have been opened in the area since the Thunder came to OKC.

When will the new arena open?

When building the last three downtown arenas in our city's past (Municipal Auditorium, The Myriad, and Paycom Center) it took between nine and ten years from voter approval to opening. While we hope to open a new arena sooner than that, even as early as the 29-30 season, the Paycom Center still has years of use left.

With local ownership, the Thunder won't leave, will they?

The best way to guarantee the Thunder stays in OKC for the next generation is by committing to build a new arena. Doing so will trigger a new lease agreement that will keep the Thunder in OKC for 25 years after the new arena opens.

Oklahoma City is very fortunate to be an NBA city. There are 18 metro areas with greater population than central Oklahoma that do NOT have an NBA team, many of which aspire to have one. In fact, there are multiple cities either building or already with a high-quality arena hoping to get an NBA franchise, notably Las Vegas, Seattle, and Kansas City.

It is important we remember how the Thunder came to OKC: A group of Oklahomans bought an existing franchise that was for sale, in part, because the city of Seattle and state of Washington rejected calls from their local owner to invest in modernizing their arena. We should remember, there is no guarantee that the Thunder will be owned by Oklahomans forever.

Why don't the owners pay for it?

In a market the size of Oklahoma City (third-smallest in the NBA), there is no model for anything but an arena that is mostly publicly-funded, and never before has there been private funding for OKC's downtown arena.

Comparing markets and teams and levels of private vs. public funding is not a valid exercise since every city and every team have their own unique circumstances.

The fact is the Thunder has committed to contribute \$50 million to arena construction and more importantly has committed to sign a lease to play 25 years in that arena. That is of significant value for our community and something you cannot attach a dollar figure to. It is their most important contribution and commitment to the citizens of OKC.

It's also important to note that, like the current arena, a new arena would be owned by the City and the team would remain a tenant. So, the owners' investment doesn't get them any ownership in the building.

Why did we just put new seats and a scoreboard into Paycom Center if we are building a new arena?

When building the last three downtown arenas in our city's past (Municipal Auditorium, The Myriad, and Paycom Center) it took between nine and ten years from voter approval to opening. While we hope to open a new arena sooner than that, it will certainly take a number of years for it to open, meaning the Paycom Center still has years of use left. The existing seats and scoreboard had reached the end of their useful life. In fact, those operating the arena were continuously worried if the old scoreboard would continue to function properly.

But I don't care about basketball. What do I get out of this?

A new arena is about much more than just basketball. Our arena hosts dozens of other events every year from concerts to family shows, national sporting events, civic gatherings like graduations, and more. A new arena will help Oklahoma City compete for more elite concerts and other noteworthy events.

Perhaps more important, however, is the economic benefit we enjoy because having an NBA team improves the reputation of our community nationally and internationally. It is difficult to quantify what this means, but during the time OKC has been an NBA city, our community has experienced unprecedented growth with the city's population growing from around 570,000 to close to 700,000 today. According to the Federal Reserve (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/NGMP36420>) the Total Gross Domestic Production for our region was \$53.6 billion in 2007, the year before the Thunder arrived. The latest numbers (2021) available show OKC's economic output at \$86.7 billion, a 62% increase. In comparison, Tulsa's growth has only been 44% during that same time. The result of being an NBA city speaks for itself.

Who can vote?

Those registered to vote in the City of Oklahoma City are eligible to vote. This includes City of Oklahoma City residents in Canadian, Cleveland, Oklahoma, and even Pottawatomie Counties. It is important to remember that many OKC residents might have a mailing address for a neighboring community, like Edmond, Yukon, Piedmont, Moore, or others. An easy way to tell if you would be eligible to vote is if your trash service is provided by the City of Oklahoma City.

How can I register to vote?

Recently, the state of Oklahoma added the ability to complete voter registration online at [Register To Vote Online](#). Another alternative is to download the voter registration form [HERE](#) and mail in that request. If you are not registered, do so today as the last day to register to vote for an election in 2023 is November 17.

When do I vote?

The election will be December 12, 2023. You can vote at your normal polling location on that day from 7am to 7pm. You can find your polling location [HERE](#).

Why don't we invest in streets, schools, public safety, or other needs like helping the homeless population instead?

One of the great things about our community is that we have continued to invest in ourselves. In just the last few years, we have embarked on an almost \$800 million-dollar street improvement package that is the largest in our city's history. Just last year, voters in the Oklahoma City Public School district supported a billion-dollar investment into our schools, and in 2017, we added an additional permanent ¼ cent sales tax to fund 120 more police officers and address our public safety needs. In addition, MAPS 4 is putting hundreds of millions into human needs like affordable housing, addressing homelessness, helping victims of domestic violence, and helping divert and rehabilitate those caught-up in our criminal justice

system. These projects are all in the works and we will continue to see improvements for years to come.

One reason we are able to make these investments is because of our booming economy related to our original MAPS investment in quality-of-life issues like what is now the Paycom Arena. We expect a new arena to continue this trend by adding dollars to our economy that in turn allows us to collect revenue to address these and other issues.

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