



More of the Same for the New KCI Project

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For years, Kansas City Mayor Sly James asserted that revenue generated at the airport cannot be redirected to the city. [This is incorrect.](#) Airport funds have been redirected to the city to cover other bad economic development investments. But his strong insistence makes the recent news all the more puzzling.

According to [The Kansas City Star](#), part of the deal the city struck with Edgemoor, the winning bidder for construction of the new terminal, included diverting airport revenue to workforce training, gap-financing for developers, and support for a program to help the elderly with home renovation. The FAA rejected these expenditures. According to the *Star*:

The FAA also rejected the use of airport revenues for \$1.5 million in assistance to the Northland, including housing, economic development and mental health needs.

Why is this a surprise? Even if city hall doesn't have a command of the specifics about how airports operate, shouldn't it be aware of these prohibitions? Shouldn't Council members—especially the members who served on the Council's short-lived airport committee—have known this?

This is the second in a recent set of embarrassing revelations about the airport project. Recall that a few weeks ago we learned that the Aviation Department director didn't know enough

about [FAA regulations regarding environmental assessments](#) . And before that there was the years' long parade of [advisory groups and consultants](#) .

Building a new airport terminal is a big project, and unforeseen challenges and setbacks are no surprise. But what we've seen so far indicates a serious lack of competent leadership.

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- [KCI](#)

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