

# Kansas City International's future rides on the city's voters

By **Wendy Morley** on November, 7 2017 | Airlines & Airports



For a year, the nearly US\$1 billion redevelopment plan to replace Kansas City International Airport's three terminals nearing 50 years old with a single modern terminal has been up in the air as citizen groups and government have been at odds. A vote coming today, November 7<sup>th</sup>, will determine the future course.

City leaders say there's no reason for opposition by the local electorate, because the entire project will be funded by a combination of user fees and the airlines using the airport. Opposition groups don't believe it, saying locals will end up paying through their taxes.

Whereas the local government and business groups argue that the reconstruction is necessary to support the city's growth, economy and security, citizen groups say these goals can be achieved at a much lower cost.

Currently, the airport is the 39<sup>th</sup> busiest airport in the US for enplanements, but does not offer the airport experience desired in a modern airport. The layout is congested, the gate lounges small, washroom offerings few, and the retail and food and beverage offerings are slim.

According to Jolie Justus, a member of the City Council and chairwoman of Kansas City's airport committee, this has resulted in a loss of business for the city as companies and convention organizers look for a more modern airport to support their potential clients and members. She says while the airport once worked well, it's not meeting current city needs let alone addressing future needs.

Kevin Burke, President and CEO of Airports Council International-North America, says a first-class airport attracts businesses and offers employment, and without one it is difficult for a city to compete.

Polls say the vote will be close.