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Royals stadium plan raises concerns over city funding

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Kansas City officials are considering a plan to support a new Royals stadium in Crown Center by issuing \$510 million in bonds that would be paid off with new tax revenue.

The ballpark funding plan shows the city is on the hook for the bonds while the Royals would not help cover the debt. If the tax revenue tied to the stadium project falls short, the city

could need to cover the cost from other sources — potentially taking money away from other city priorities.

Sound familiar?

Famously in local lore, financial projections for a similar funding plan at the Power & Light District did not pan out, and the city has kicked in money from the general fund to pay off bonds — \$15.3 million in the last budget for the KC Live! entertainment district, according to city documents — which has sparked fears that the same could happen with the Royals

plan.

City Council member Johnathan Duncan of the 6th District has called the Royals plan “Power & Light on steroids.”

While the Power & Light project didn’t go as projected, city officials say they have been conservative in their financial models for the Crown Center stadium and will work to ensure the same thing doesn’t happen again.

And, of course, the city’s investment in the Power & Light District transformed a blighted section of downtown into a



THE KANSAS CITY ROYALS

A rendering depicts a new Royals stadium at Crown Center.

full-fledged neighborhood and reflects ongoing downtown resurgence, with several major projects on the way, including new high-rises.

Councilman Kevin O’Neill, who represents the 1st District at Large, touted that project when he explained his support for the city’s plan to help fund a new Royals stadium.

He suggested the ongoing cost to the city’s general fund for the Power & Light project was worth it because it revamped the city’s downtown area and increased property values in the area by millions, which leads to higher tax revenue.

SEE ROYALS STADIUM, 4A



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New food offerings for the Kansas City Chiefs’ 2026 season are displayed during a media preview at Arrowhead Stadium on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2026, in Kansas City.

Arrowhead Stadium unveils new concessions menu

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Chiefs fans are going to have their hands and stomachs full when they get a taste of what’s found at concession stands in-

side Arrowhead Stadium this season.

The team, along with representatives from hospitality and food service partners Aramark and Levy Restaurants, revealed what new foods are coming to the menu at the stadium on

Wednesday. It’s always a fun challenge for Aramark Executive Chef Erin Wishon, who has held that title for eight years, to come up with new ideas and stay on top of what’s trending in the food world.

“I’m blessed because I get to

do healthier food for the team, and I get to do crazy food for the stadium,” Wishon said. “So it’s kind of win-win, but it’s hard coming up with new items all the time.”

Collaborating with fellow chefs on the team and taking feedback from fans is how Wishon finds inspiration for what to bring each season. No items are repeats from years prior, such as the Uncrustable Crunch, End-zone Express appetizer box or

SEE MENU, 10A

Chiefs’ move to Kansas could mean work for area contractors

BY SOFI ZEMAN
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Local contractors and construction workers in Wyandotte and Johnson counties may get opportunities to help build the entertainment districts surrounding the Kansas City Chiefs’ incoming stadium and headquarters, the team’s president told The Star.

The team has worked closely with local officials, including KCK Mayor Christal Watson, and plans to follow their lead on how to move forward with that, Mark Donovan, the team’s president, said during the annual Chiefs’ kickoff luncheon on Tuesday.

“I mean, the opportunity is huge,” Donovan said. “And given today’s construction space, given the amount of projects that are going to be going on in the same time frame in the region, I think there’s going to be great opportunities for everybody.”

Following team, local and state officials’ announcement last December that the Chiefs would be crossing state lines into Kansas, residents and community organizers in Wyandotte County have continually asked how that move is going to benefit them, particularly in neighborhoods east of Interstate 635.

SEE CHIEFS’ MOVE, 5B

Major KC employer named in NBA salary investigation

BY TAYLOR O’CONNOR
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One of Kansas City’s most prominent large employers has been named in an investigation into the Los Angeles Clippers for violating income rules and regulations in the NBA.

The NBA alleges in an investigation that Lockton Companies — the world’s largest independent brokerage firm currently based in the Country Club Plaza — provided LA Clip-

pers player Kawhi Leonard with additional income through private endorsement deals, violating the NBA’s rules around salaries.

The league’s rules state that teams are not permitted to make introductions between players and third-party businesses, like Lockton, to help generate “off-court” income for a player, according to the investigation report.

The investigation alleges Leonard entered into multi-year, multimillion-dollar en-

dorsement agreements with Lockton alongside Aspiration Partners, Boingo Wireless and Dacktronics in 2020. None of the agreements was publicly announced, “defeating the foundational purpose of an endorsement agreement,” according to the report.

“Each agreement was signed by a company that had never before (and has never since) signed an endorsement agreement of remotely the same financial magnitude as the one it entered into with Mr. Leo-

nard,” according to the report.

Combined, the companies paid a total of \$18 million to Leonard in August 2021, according to the report. The investigation didn’t specify how much Lockton paid to enter into the agreement.

The report also alleges that Lockton and the other companies paid for expenses on behalf of Leonard and his representatives that were not authorized by the league’s rules.

“The highly unusual nature of these three endorsements

with Mr. Leonard caused investigators to question why each company entered into them,” the report stated.

“The investigative record supplies the answer: because the Clippers initiated, facilitated, and induced these companies to enter into agreements with Mr. Leonard through the prospect of lucrative business arrangements with the Clippers.”

SEE NBA PROBE, 2A



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