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City of Austin Must Pay $90 Million to Acquire Disputed Airport Terminal.

- **Operator resisted city takeover bid for airport expansion plan**
- **Demand for flights has surged as city seeks to add terminals**

A Texas probate court ordered the City of Austin to pay $90 million — nine times more than it had once offered — to the operator of a privately-run airport terminal that municipal officials want to demolish as part of a planned expansion project.

Lonestar Airport Holdings, the operator, had resisted the city's effort to take over the South Terminal at Austin Bergstrom International Airport, accusing officials of engaging in "municipal thuggery" by attempting to end the New York company's 40-year lease 34 years early. The city initiated eminent domain proceedings in June, after Lonestar rejected a $10 million offer to buy their lease rights.

The $90 million price tag for the takeover was determined late Monday by three court-appointed special commissioners in Travis County probate court, which administers the area's eminent domain cases.

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By Madlin Mekelburg

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