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Public Officials Pressured to Spend Billions on Sports Venues.

Professional sports teams are on the move and they're leaning on state and local officials to help them. Subsidies exceeding $1 billion per deal are on the table.

In Brief:

New stadiums and arenas are in the works in places including Kansas City, Philadelphia and Northern Virginia.

Elected officials are put in the position of mediating deals, with pressure not to lose marquee assets despite the cost to the public.

It's an open question whether there are real economic upsides to keeping a team that's already established in town.

This April, voters in Jackson County, Mo., will decide whether to extend a sales tax that has helped Kansas City's two biggest sports teams, the Chiefs and the Royals, build and maintain their stadiums.

Actually, it's not exactly an extension of the existing tax, which generates about $50 million a year for the sports complex shared by the teams. The Royals, currently playing in Kauffman Stadium, a stone's throw from the Chiefs' Arrowhead Stadium, want to build a new venue downtown. The tax revenue can only be spent at the existing location. So the Royals approached Jackson County officials and asked for a new deal. They wanted a proposal put on the April ballot, which would maintain the three-eighths-cent tax, but allow the revenue to be spent at a new stadium.

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