

Cozen Cities - July 26, 2023

Gig Economy & Technology

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson Launches Campaign to Close Chicago's Device Gap

Mayor Brandon Johnson, in partnership with World Business Chicago, announced the launch of a month-long campaign encouraging Chicago's business community and large organizations to donate computers and laptops no longer in use to be refurbished and given to families who need a device.

PHILADELPHIA — City Cracks Down on Unlicensed Short-Term Rentals Such as Certain Airbnb, VRBO Listings

Philadelphia's Department of Licenses & Inspections has begun enforcing rules first passed by City Council in 2021 that require short-term rentals to be licensed. The crackdown will potentially impact thousands of Airbnb and VRBO listings.

SAN DIEGO — As Artificial Intelligence Demand Booms, University of San Diego Launches AI Boot Camp

The University of San Diego has announced the launch of an artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning bootcamp in partnership with a national tech education provider.

Labor & Employment

BOSTON — Boston Police Department Commits to Hiring 30% Women Officers by 2030

The Boston Police Department has agreed to the "30x30" initiative, which attempts to increase the representation of women in the department to 30% by the year 2030.

CHICAGO — Mayor, Alderpeople Introduce Ordinance to End "Subminimum" Wage for Tipped Workers in Chicago

An effort to end the "subminimum" wage for tipped workers in Chicago was introduced to City Council with backing from Mayor Brandon Johnson and several alderpeople — although it was at least temporarily delayed by a parliamentary maneuver.

CHICAGO — As Asylum-Seekers Struggle While Waiting for Work Permits, Chicago Businesses Can't Fill Jobs

While many migrants work under the table, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, Illinois business owners say they have open jobs they can't fill. Business leaders, along with Governor J.B. Pritzker and other political leaders have urged the federal government to expedite the process.

CHICAGO — Workers Launch Union Effort at World's Largest Starbucks, Downtown Chicago's Michigan Avenue Roastery

Starbucks employees who work at the company's Reserve Roastery, a 35,000-square-foot store at 646 N. Michigan Avenue, filed for a union election with the National Labor Relations Board on Friday, July 14.

NEW YORK — New York City Likely to Hire Close to 18,000 Teachers to Meet State Mandated Lower Class Sizes



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New York City needs to hire about 18,000 teachers over the next five years to obey the state law mandating smaller class sizes within public schools, which is measured to cost the city between \$1.6 billion and \$1.9 billion annually.

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia Workers Across Sectors Join Picket Lines

Protests and pickets have been popping up with more frequency across Philadelphia in support of workers in various industries, including actors, postal workers, and Starbucks employees.

PHILADELPHIA — Number of New Business Applications Throughout Philadelphia Region Declines

Recent Census Bureau and IRS data shows a 16% decline in the number of new business applications in the Philadelphia region from 2021 to 2022 — compared to a 6.6% decline nationwide during the same period.

SAN DIEGO — San Diego Unified Misclassified Employees' Family, Medical Leave Requests, Federal Investigation Finds

A federal investigation found that San Diego Unified School District failed to recognize requests for family or medical leave that were protected by law, officials with the U.S. Department of Labor said Thursday.

Policy & Politics

BALTIMORE — City Council Opposes BGE Rate Hikes

Baltimore City Council adopted a resolution last week to oppose rate hikes for Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE), arguing that the utility's proposed multi-year rate plan is too costly, unnecessary, and harmful from an environmental perspective.

BALTIMORE — City Council Requests Report on Potential Establishment of Local Climate Resilience Authority

In what is being seen as a first step toward combating climate change at the local level, Baltimore City Council has requested that City officials submit a report on how Baltimore can establish a local climate resilience authority.

CHICAGO — City Council Clears Decks Before Summer Recess

When the 50-member Council meets again in September, it will begin the possibly contentious process of tackling Mayor Brandon Johnson's first city budget.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. Politicians Join Picket Lines; City Attorney Wants Them to Stay Away

In recent weeks, lawyers with Los Angeles City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto's office have begun quietly advising the city's elected officials to refrain from getting involved in labor disputes, saying such activities could result in legal action against the city.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. on the Record: The Next Big Fight at City Hall

City negotiators have spent weeks bargaining with the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the union that represents police officers — which, like the hotel workers, has a contract that expired June 30.

NEW YORK — Edward Caban Named NYPD's First Latino Commissioner

Edward Caban, previously the First Deputy Commissioner of NYPD, now becomes the first Latino commissioner of the New York City Police Department, appointed by Mayor Eric Adams.

NEW YORK — NYC Council Overrides Veto in Order to Expand Rental Vouchers

The City Council voted 42-8 to override Mayor Eric Adams' recent veto of bills directed at expanding eligibility for city-issued rental vouchers.

SEATTLE — Councilmember Sawant Brings Forward A Bill On Rent Control In Seattle

Kshama Sawant, a three-term Seattle council member, proposed a bill for citywide residential rent control, intending to cap rent increases at the annual rate of inflation with no exception for building type or neighborhood.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Ranked-Choice Voting, Open Primaries May Be Coming to D.C.

Last week, the D.C. elections board voted to advance the Make All Votes Count Act of 2024, which would allow for ranked-choice voting and open primaries. The initiative faces an uphill battle against the D.C. Democratic Party, which opposed ranked-choice voting.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Elected Ward 7 ANC Transferred Out of D.C.

In November, Leonard Bishop was elected to represent his incarcerated peers as an advisory neighborhood commissioner (ANC) in a Ward 7 neighborhood that includes the D.C. jail. However, he was effectively stripped of his elected position last week when he was transferred to a prison outside of the District.

Public Health & Safety

BALTIMORE — City Council Schedules Second Hearing on Recent Mass Shooting

After an initial hearing last week to investigate the breakdown that led to the largest mass shooting in Baltimore's history, City Council has scheduled a second, more in-depth hearing for September 13.

BOSTON — Boston Medical Center Ends Policy That Allows Migrant Families to Shelter Overnight

Boston Medical Center is terminating its policy of letting homeless families to stay overnight at the hospital because of safety risks and disruptions to normal hospital operations and assigning them to alternative facilities.

CHICAGO — Three Finalists for Chicago Police Superintendent Named by Civilian-Led Commission; Next Move is Mayor Johnson's

Chicago's community-led public safety commission sent its three top picks for police superintendent late Thursday, July 13 to Mayor Brandon Johnson, who must now decide who will lead the long-troubled department as it works through high crime, endemic street violence, low morale and court-ordered reforms.

LOS ANGELES — In-N-Out Bans Employees From Wearing Masks

According to the memo, employees will no longer be allowed to wear face coverings come August 14, unless they have a medical note. Workers in California and Oregon will still be able to mask, if they choose, to protect themselves from COVID-19 and other illnesses.

RICHMOND — Newly Appointed Police Chief Gives Mid-Year Crime Report

According to a mid-year crime report, the City of Richmond is experiencing an uptick in vehicle thefts, and yet the city's acting Police Chief Rick Edwards will be promoted to the role full-time.

SAN DIEGO — Plan to Curb Gun Violence in San Diego County Stalls After Split Board of Supervisors Vote

In a split vote, San Diego County Board of Supervisors rejected recommendations intended to curb gun violence, including efforts to give away gun locks.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser Nominates New D.C. Police Chief

Mayor Muriel Bowser has nominated former U.S. Park Police Chief Pamela Smith as D.C.'s new chief of police. Smith, who has 25 years of experience in law enforcement, said she would

prioritize tackling gun violence, especially among youth.

Real Estate Development

BOSTON — Fenway Park Area Slated to Undergo Massive \$1.6 Billion Transformation After BPDA Approval

The Fenway neighborhood is seeking to turn into a cultural and economic hub through a \$1.6 billion Fenway Corners mixed-use development project, including residential units, retail shops, and more.

CHICAGO — Lincoln Square Motel Set to Become Shelter as Part of New City Strategy to Reduce Homelessness

A plan to transform a Lincoln Square motel into a shelter for unhoused Chicagoans suffering from medical, mental health or substance abuse problems as part of an effort to make a pandemic-era program permanent advanced Monday, July 10.

PHILADELPHIA — Sixers to Pay for PIDC-Run Arena Impact Studies

Last week, the 76ers, Philadelphia's NBA team, announced that the franchise plans to pay at least \$650,000 for impact studies on a proposed \$1.3 billion downtown arena. The studies will be conducted by the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC).

PHILADELPHIA — Calder Gardens to Open as Soon as Late 2024

Construction of Calder Gardens, a new museum showcasing the art of Philadelphia artist Alexander Calder, is underway and slated to open between 21st and 22nd Streets on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia's cultural center, sometime in late 2024 or early 2025.

SAN DIEGO — City Gets \$10 Million State Grant for Affordable Housing at Palm Avenue Trolley Station

San Diego has secured a \$10 million state grant to accelerate construction of transit-oriented affordable housing at the Palm Avenue trolley station and other South Bay projects, it was announced Monday, July 17th.

SAN DIEGO — San Diego County Supervisors Approve Policy to Streamline Building Permit Process

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a policy Wednesday, July 19 that would let developers self-certify projects in open space between existing structures as a way to speed up housing construction.

SEATTLE — Plan to Protect Industrial Seattle Nears Vote After 16 Years of Trying

Seattle leaders are coming close to voting on protections for industrial land that is directed for preserving blue-collar work inside city limits.

SEATTLE — Poll Shows Seattle Residents Support \$970 Million Housing Levy

A majority of Seattle residents support a \$970 million property tax for affordable housing, which shows the critical need for more affordable homes in this city.

Taxes & Spending

DETROIT — 10 Years Later, Detroit Retirees Find Health Care, Bankruptcy Cuts Troubling

About 32,000 active and retired city workers saw retirement benefits reduced in some fashion as part of the bankruptcy's plan of adjustment to deal with \$18 billion in debt. Those who were already retired in 2013 — and the newly retired — face financial struggles today, even years after the bankruptcy.

Transportation & Mobility

CHICAGO — Chicago Unsafe for Cyclists, Report Shows: It "Reflects How We're All Feeling," Advocates Say

Chicago was ranked 161st out of 163 big cities for bikeability in 2023, according to a report by PeopleForBikes. The city also got low scores for its accessibility of bike lanes to other transit hubs, recreational amenities, connectivity to core services and getting to different neighborhoods.

LOS ANGELES — New Bus Priority Lane Under Construction in Los Angeles

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) recently began installation of a new bus priority lane on La Brea Avenue, running north from the future location of the future Wilshire/La Brea Station on the D Line (previously the Purple Line).

RICHMOND — GRTC to Expand Service Into Richmond Suburbs, Add “Micro-Transit” Service

The Central Virginia Transportation Authority has endorsed Greater Richmond Transit Company’s (GRTC) proposed bus route extension into surrounding Chesterfield, Goochland, and Henrico Counties and signaled future plans to pilot a micro-transit program.

SAN DIEGO — Passenger Trains to Resume Monday Between San Diego, Orange Counties

Amtrak and Metrolink passenger service will resume Monday between San Diego and Orange counties after the completion of a temporary barrier wall to protect the tracks from falling debris during repairs to a landslide in San Clemente.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Automated Cameras on Metrobuses to Issue Warnings to Vehicles That Illegally Occupy Bus Lanes

Beginning this week, Metrobuses equipped with cameras will begin issuing warnings to drivers who illegally use bus lanes. The warning period will end in early September, at which point violators will be issued \$200 fines.
