

Cozen Cities - August 10, 2023

Gig Economy & Technology

CHICAGO — Google Plans to Open in Thompson Center by 2026; Will Tech Giant Help Revitalize the Loop?

The tech giant hasn't revealed its plans for the Helmut Jahn-designed building, where it plans to open an office by 2026, but that hasn't stopped speculation that the project may give downtown Chicago a much-needed jolt.

NEW YORK — City Sets Forth New Drone Usage Rules

The city has issued new rules setting forth a permitting process for the take-off and landing of drones. NYPD will be issuing the permits.

RICHMOND — Richmond to Consider Updating Short-Term Rental Regulations

The city planning commission will be considering updates to Richmond's current short-term rental regulations for the first time in three years with the goal of making renters feel safer and cutting out illegitimate homes.

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia Keeps Pace With Other Metro Markets' Tech Talent

According to real estate services firm CBRE's annual report, Philadelphia has kept pace with other large North American tech markets, ranking 22nd of the 75 cities evaluated.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — D.C. Region Leads in Number of Women in Tech Sector Jobs

The D.C. region ranks number one in terms of gender diversity in the rapidly growing tech sector, according to CBRE's annual tech talent report.

Labor & Employment

CHICAGO — Labor Unions Promise Not to Strike During Next Year's Democratic National Convention in Chicago

The deal means that the Democratic National Committee will use union labor when available and that the unions won't strike during the four-day convention scheduled for next August.

DETROIT — UAW Seeks Washington Backing to Pressure Detroit Three Automakers In Labor Talks

United Auto Workers (UAW) President Shawn Fain has won the support of Washington, which is essential to the union's strategy of nailing down new labor deals with the Detroit Three automakers.

LOS ANGELES — Police Investigating City Hall Audio Leak Search Home of Two Labor Federation Staffers

Los Angeles police officers recently searched the Eagle Rock home of two people, who have worked at the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, as part of their investigation into a secret audio recording that dramatically upended City Hall politics last year.

NEW YORK — Mayor Adams Launches Center for Workplace Accessibility, Inclusion

New York Mayor Eric Adams will be launching a Center for Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion



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Related Practice Areas

focused on the structural challenges that many people with disabilities face in the workforce.

SAN DIEGO — Demand for Skilled Workers Continues to Rise in San Diego County

According to an Associated Builders and Contractors analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' data, there were 366,000 job openings in San Diego's construction industry in May 2023.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Downtown D.C. Business Owners Hope for Federal Workers to Return to Offices

Businesses in downtown D.C. are hoping that rumors President Joe Biden is pushing his cabinet members to bring federal workers back into the office are true, as most business is generated by office workers.

Policy & Politics

BALTIMORE — Baltimore City Council to Consider Ban on Outdoor Gas Regulators

Following a June class-action lawsuit against BGE for its installation of allegedly "obtrusive and unsafe" outdoor gas regulators, Baltimore City Councilman Eric Costello has introduced legislation that would ban the installation of such regulators from single-family homes, or any building that has five or fewer residential units.

BALTIMORE — Mayor Scott Defends Nominee for Fire Chief in Wake of Expunged Criminal Charges

Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott's office has stated that fire chief nominee James Wallace's recently expunged 30-year-old criminal charges for possession of 50 pipe bombs — which the mayor referred to as "fireworks" — should not disqualify him from the office.

CHICAGO — 25 Chicago Park District Employees Could Face Firing in COVID-19 Relief Fraud Probe

The Chicago Park District's inspector general has recommended firing 25 employees caught in an investigation of loans they got from the federal Paycheck Protection Program.

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia City Council Investigates Creation of an Independent School Building Authority

Philadelphia City Council's Committee on Education held a hearing last week to investigate the creation of an "independent school building authority" to address the school district's crumbling infrastructure.

PHILADELPHIA — WFP Candidates File to Run for Key City Council, Commissioner Positions

This fall candidates from Philadelphia's progressive Working Families Party (WFP) are running for City Council and Commissioner positions with the goal of removing Republicans from those offices.

RICHMOND — Local Nonprofit Leaders Respond to Richmond City Council's Plan to Tackle Homelessness

While Richmond City Council has articulated a plan to address the city's homelessness crisis, some local nonprofit leaders believe it is "misleading and wildly inaccurate" due to the lack of available resources to enact its own recommendations.

RICHMOND — Richmond Electoral Board Reverses Decision to Close Two Early-Voting Locations

Richmond's Republican-controlled Electoral Board voted last week to reverse its June decision to close the city's Hickory Hill and City Hall early voting locations for its upcoming election due to budget constraints.

SAN DIEGO — City of San Diego to Begin Enforcing Unsafe Camping Ordinance This Weekend

The City of San Diego's Unsafe Camping Ordinance will go into effect on Sunday, July 30th. The

new ordinance was passed by the city council last month and aims to clear the streets of encampments.

SAN DIEGO — Ballot Measure Revived to Strip Elected San Diego City Attorney of Civil Work, Legal Advisory Role

Critics who say legal advice from San Diego's city attorney is sometimes tainted by politics are proposing a November 2024 ballot measure that would split the job into two parts — one person for criminal cases and another for civil matters.

SEATTLE — City Council Primary Results

All three Seattle City Council incumbents will move on to the general election, but showed varying degrees of strength in their primaries.

Public Health & Safety

BALTIMORE — Mayor Scott's Squeegee Plan Shows Progress, More Work Ahead

Months after the launch of Mayor Scott's Squeegee Collaborative's plan, aimed at getting Baltimore youth off the street and into steadier and more viable jobs, City Administrator Faith Leach reports that though there has been "significant progress," there remains work to be done to further protect and support Baltimore's teens and young adults.

BALTIMORE — Local Church Hosts Successful Gun Buyback Event With Baltimore Police

City leaders and community members are hoping that the success of a recent gun buyback event signifies a turning point in the city's ongoing violence crisis.

BALTIMORE — Baltimore Officials Reject Opioid Settlement Dollars

Baltimore officials have made the controversial decision to turn down its allocation of Maryland's \$13.6 million in opioid settlement money — which it calls "woefully inadequate" in addressing the impact of the opioid crisis on the city — in favor of pursuing its own lawsuit against Johnson & Johnson and wholesalers AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson.

CHICAGO — Push to Reopen Public Mental Health Clinics in Chicago, Expand 911 Alternate Response Takes Center Stage at City Hall

A decade-long push to reopen public mental health clinics closed in 2011 and expand efforts to respond to 911 calls for help not with police officers but with social workers and counselors was center stage at City Hall Monday, as Mayor Brandon Johnson and his allies took the first step toward fulfilling a major campaign promise.

SAN DIEGO — San Diego City Council Approves Streetlight Surveillance Cameras

The question of streetlight cameras used by the police has pitted privacy rights advocates against those who see the cameras as a vital crime-fighting tool.

Real Estate Development

BOSTON — Fossil Fuels Banned From New Municipal Buildings

Mayor Michelle Wu signed an Executive Order banning new municipal buildings in Boston from using natural gas or heating oil.

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson's Allies Lay Groundwork for "Mansion Tax" Referendum to Aid Chicago's Unhoused People

On Thursday, July 27, Mayor Johnson's City Council allies held a three-hour hearing aimed at laying the groundwork as negotiations continue behind the scenes to determine how the referendum question to voters would be worded.

LOS ANGELES — Landlords Group Sues L.A. Over Rent Hike Freeze

A landlords association has filed another lawsuit against the city of Los Angeles over a COVID-19 pandemic-related rent hike freeze that's not scheduled to end until early next year.

SEATTLE — Property Tax for Veterans Program Approved

A new tax levy, which would fund housing and job programs for veterans and seniors, has been approved by voters. The levy will tax property at 10 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value in 2024 and is expected to cost the median homeowner about \$84 per year.

Taxes & Spending

BALTIMORE — Baltimore DOT Took Twenty Years to Recoup Millions in Federal Highway Dollars, Audit Shows

A recent audit has revealed that Baltimore's Department of Transportation took two decades to submit reimbursement paperwork for a 1998 road project funded by the federal government.

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson Asked Chicago Youth for Budget Feedback; Hundreds Showed Up

In a new move for Chicago's budget process, Mayor Johnson put out a call to the city's young people: He wanted to hear their priorities for spending.

RICHMOND — Mayor Stoney Calls for Additional State Funding to Combat Gun Violence

Mayor Levar Stoney is calling on state legislators and Republican Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin for \$30 million in funding to help address Richmond's ongoing gun violence crisis. Currently, the city is working with about \$2.5 million to crack down on violence.

SAN DIEGO — San Diego County Property Assessment Sets Records for 11th Straight Year

The assessed value for all taxable property in the county increased by 7.12% over last year, raising the total to \$727.48 billion, the San Diego County assessor announced Wednesday, August 2nd.

Transportation & Mobility

DETROIT — Detroit Area Leaders Need to Help Resolve "No-Show Bus Crisis," Report Says

Transit advocates are calling on the top leaders in the city of Detroit as well as Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties to get personally involved to resolve the region's "no-show bus crisis."

LOS ANGELES — L.A. Metro Introduces Fare Capping Tech

The new payment system will cap payments made by TAP card at \$5 a day or \$18 over seven days. This allows riders to access the fare cap without having to pay the upfront cost of a daily or weekly pass.

NEW YORK — TMRB Holds First Meeting

The Traffic Mobility Review Board (TMRB), tasked with setting prices for NYC's Congestion Pricing Program, held their first meeting. TMRB will be considering over 100 requests for potential exemptions and discounts.

RICHMOND — Richmond Connects Unveils Near-Term Action Plan to Make Transit More Equitable

Richmond Connects, an initiative to increase equity in transit access across the city, has unveiled its Near-Term Action Plan, which includes neighborhood-specific recommendations. The city will be inviting public comment until August 20.

RICHMOND — City to Relaunch RVA Bike Share With Help of New Software Partner

Richmond is set to relaunch its RVA Bike Share program, which was unexpectedly shuttered in

May due to the closure of Bewegen Technologies, which was responsible for the bike share system's tech. A Portuguese software company called We Go Share will help relaunch the program.
