

# Alert

September 21, 2022



## Cozen Cities: September 21, 2022

Throughout the country, large municipalities are laboratories of democracy. New and innovative policies introduced in one market are often exported to others, and ultimately replicated at the state and federal level. This newsletter highlights emerging local policy and regulatory discussions that impact industries, businesses, and organizations across the nation.

### Gig Economy & Technology

#### CHICAGO — Rideshare, Delivery Drivers Demand Higher Wages, Different Working Conditions; Join National Movement

At a news conference last month, Illinois rideshare drivers and delivery workers from Uber, Lyft, Grubhub and DoorDash announced that different local groups — which add up to 20,000 members — are joining in a national movement led by Justice for App Workers, demanding higher wages and different working conditions. The Chicago Tribune has [more](#).

#### NEW YORK CITY — First Link 5G Kiosk in NYC Unveiled

In July, Mayor Eric Adams and LinkNYC CEO Nick Colvin unveiled the first Link5G kiosk in New York City, located in Morris Heights. The 5G kiosk is the start of a new phase of LinkNYC, which provides free public Wi-Fi, free phone calls, access to government and social services, and public service messaging. There will be approximately 2,000 new Link5G kiosks throughout the five boroughs, bringing the total LinkNYC network to over 4,000 locations citywide.

#### SEATTLE — Seattle Public Library's Wi-Fi Hot Spot Program Charts Success

New reports suggest that the Seattle Public Library's Wi-Fi Hot Spot Program increased by almost 40% during the pandemic. The program was launched in 2015 to combat the citywide lack of affordable Internet access.

### Labor & Employment

#### BOSTON — Mayor Wu Unveils New Cabinet for Worker Empowerment

Mayor Michelle Wu announced a new Cabinet for Worker Empowerment, with the goals of advancing the well-being of all public and private sector workers throughout Boston and ensuring accountability for worker empowerment policy. The Cabinet for Worker Empowerment will also be helping to implement Boston's Green New Deal for Boston Public Schools.

#### CHICAGO — Companies Using Carrots, Not Sticks, To Get Workers Back as Hopes Fade for Post-Labor Day Return to Office

Most Chicago-area firms are adapting to COVID-19 the same way. Instead of giving employees hard deadlines to leave comfy home offices, most are enticing people back with new amenities and perks, including the option to continue to work from home for a portion of the week. The Chicago



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Tribune has [more](#).

#### **NEW YORK CITY — City of New York Files Lawsuit Against Starbucks for Wrongful Termination**

New York City filed a lawsuit against Starbucks, alleging the coffee chain wrongfully terminated an employee and union organizer. The NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) claims that Starbucks violated NYC's "just cause" protections when it fired barista and union organizer Austin Locke on July 5, less than a month after his Starbucks location voted to join a union.

#### **NEW YORK CITY — City of New York Reaches Settlement with Chipotle over Fair Workweek Violations**

New York City reached a settlement with Chipotle over violations of the City's Fair Workweek and Paid Safe and Sick Leave laws. Chipotle agreed to pay \$20 million to approximately 13,000 workers, as well as \$1 million in civil penalties. This settlement is the largest fair workweek settlement nationwide and the largest worker protection settlement in NYC history.

#### **SAN DIEGO — San Diego's Smaller Workforce**

In July, San Diego County's labor force — adults who either have a job or are actively looking for one — had 24,000 fewer people than in February 2020 before lockdowns started. Despite this, the region's unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the nation, and job growth has picked up in sectors hit hardest by lockdowns. The San Diego Union-Tribune has [more](#).

#### **SEATTLE — First Day of School Delayed Due to Teachers' Strike**

Seattle Public Schools delayed their first day of school due to a teachers' strike, primarily over issues of pay, staffing ratios, and mental health support.

#### **SEATTLE — Rise in Unions Is Coming From Seattle**

Washington state workers are forming unions at the highest rate in years, mostly due to Seattle Starbucks employees. Across Washington and the US, Starbucks employees filed the highest amount of cases for union representation in 2022 thus far.

#### **WASHINGTON D.C. — Newly Passed Housekeeping Bill, Other Business Regulations Could Impact At-Large Council Race**

In a move intended to protect residents and visitors, D.C. Council has passed a measure that mandates how frequently hotels must clean their rooms. Many local business owners view this as just the latest in a long string of needlessly burdensome regulations in the midst of their already arduous pandemic recoveries, which may impact the upcoming at-large race. Council is also said to be strongly considering a mandate on the frequency with which movie theaters screen films with captions.

#### **WASHINGTON D.C. — I-82 Opponents Petition D.C. Court of Appeals for Expedited Rehearing**

Opponents of Initiative 82 (I-82) — a measure that seeks to increase D.C.'s tipped minimum wage to match its standard minimum wage — have petitioned the D.C. Court of Appeals to rehear the case in a last-ditch attempt to block the measure from appearing on ballots in November. Opponents, most of whom are local business owners, believe the measure would be too costly and might discourage patrons from tipping at all.

#### **Political Trends**

#### **BOSTON — Incumbent Kevin Hayden Wins Suffolk County District Attorney Democratic Primary**

After a tumultuous Suffolk County District Attorney race, incumbent Kevin Hayden was victorious in the September 6 primary election. Since there is no Republican candidate for the primary election, Hayden will become the next District Attorney.

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#### **Related Practice Areas**

- Government Relations - Cozen  
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## **CHICAGO — Chicago Alderwoman Susan Sadlowski Garza Joins Growing Exodus from City Council**

More than 25% of City Council members have either left or announced their intended departure within the last year. Former Councilmembers have resigned for a variety of reasons, including retirements, criminal convictions, and potential mayoral challengers to current Mayor Lightfoot. NBC 5 Chicago has [more](#).

## **LOS ANGELES — LA Mayoral Election**

A new poll in Los Angeles' mayoral race shows Congresswoman Karen Bass leading real estate developer Rick Caruso. Both have focused their campaigns on homelessness. The Los Angeles Times has more mayoral election updates [here](#).

## **NEW YORK CITY — Incumbents Hold Onto Their Seats (Mostly)**

The second of New York's two primaries featured several high-profile races between incumbents and races where candidates are vying for open seats. Long-time Congress Members Jerry Nadler and Carolyn Maloney competed in the newly redrawn 12th district, where Nadler was victorious. In the redrawn 10th district encompassing lower Manhattan and brownstone Brooklyn, Trump impeachment lawyer Daniel Goldman was successful in his bid, beating a group of candidates who ran to his left. On the State Senate side, incumbents largely held on to their seats against high profile challengers from both the left and right.

## **PHILADELPHIA — Four Philadelphia City Councilmembers Resign to Launch Mayoral Campaigns**

Philadelphia City Council announced last week that it would be returning to chambers on September 22, marking the first in-person meetings since the beginning of the pandemic. The announcement comes amidst a rash of resignations from official and anticipated 2023 mayoral candidates.

## **SAN DIEGO — San Diego Mayor on Latest Efforts on Homelessness, Sports Arena Site, Care Court**

San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria praised the California Legislature for passing Governor Gavin Newsom's CARE Court plan, calling it "a game changer" in the treatment of the severely mentally ill. The mayor joined Midday Edition on Thursday to talk about local issues, including what he sees as the city's progress on homeless outreach. KPBS has [more](#).

## **SAN DIEGO — San Diego City Council Incumbents Move on to November Runoff Election**

The top-two vote getters in each of the four City Council races in this primary will proceed to a November runoff election. Election results from the city's June 7th primary can be found [here](#).

## **SEATTLE — Democracy Voucher Program Is Changing Political Donations**

Early data on Seattle's innovative "democracy voucher" program indicates that since the launch of the program, the donor pool has diversified. Seattle residents receive four \$25 vouchers to donate to any political candidate who participates in the program.

## **Real Estate Development**

### **BOSTON — "Great Beantown Move" 2022 Was Worse Than Previous Years**

The September 1 "Great Beantown Move", the day when 60 - 80% of Boston leases turn over, was much worse this year. Lack of inventory and soaring rents created a sense of panic over finding a September lease for many city residents.

### **DETROIT — Downtown Detroit Parks, Real Estate Projects to Benefit From DDP's New \$13.74 Million State Grant**

Parks in downtown Detroit will get a makeover as a result of \$13.74 million the Downtown Detroit Partnership was awarded Wednesday, Sept. 7. Read more from Crain's Detroit Business [here](#).

#### **NEW YORK CITY – Land Use Approval Process Takes Twice to Three Times as Long as Other Cities**

A new Citizens Budget Commission (CBC) report detailed that New York City's land use approval process took on average 2.5 years for applicants to obtain final approvals, two to three times longer than cities with similar requirements like Boston and Los Angeles. CBC argues that making necessary zoning changes "has become increasingly difficult" due to a lengthy and unpredictable process, making it more expensive to build and ultimately slowing down growth.

#### **NEW YORK CITY – Housing Market Finally Beginning to Cool Down**

The city's housing market is beginning to cool off after a year of aggressive price increases, according to a report from StreetEasy. The median asking price for homes fell by .08% in July after stagnating in June. However, the city's rental market remains in record-high territory, with new records for average and median rents across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens.

#### **RICHMOND – Richmond Property Values on the Rise**

Over the past year, property values in Richmond have increased on average by 13%, reflecting an increase in the number of people moving to Richmond from other east coast cities. In response, some Richmond City Councilmembers have expressed interest in exploring various tax solutions to help ameliorate the increased financial burden experienced by residents.

#### **SAN DIEGO – Downtown San Diego Homeless Population Hits Record High**

A monthly count of homeless people living without shelter in downtown San Diego reached a record high of 1,609 in August. It is the largest number in the 10 years the Downtown San Diego Partnership has been conducting the count. The San Diego Union-Tribune has [more](#).

#### **SAN DIEGO – Mayor Gloria Recommends Midway Rising to Redevelop Sports Arena Property**

The state of California's Department of Housing and Community Development announced Tuesday that it supports San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria's decision to pick Midway Rising to remake the city's sports arena property in the Midway District. Read more about the project [here](#).

#### **SAN DIEGO – Real Estate Agents Say "No" Housing Recession in San Diego**

The housing market may have cooled but the San Diego Association of Realtors says sales are up 9% compared to last year in San Diego: "we are not in a housing recession rather the market is stabilizing." CBS 8 has [more](#).

### **Taxes & Spending**

#### **CHICAGO – 2023 Budget Forecast**

Last month, the City of Chicago released its 2023 Budget Forecast, which projects a \$127.9 million budget gap for fiscal year 2023. The city will raise property taxes by \$42.7 million – less than expected. Despite Chicago property taxes being tied to the consumer price index, Mayor Lightfoot said the city "will provide taxpayers with a much-needed break and lower the CPI to 2.5%, which is the five-year CPI average." To view a copy of the 2023 Budget Forecast, or download the Forecast Summary, visit: [chicago.gov/obm](http://chicago.gov/obm).

#### **LOS ANGELES – LA County Puts Cannabis Business Tax Measure on November Ballot**

Los Angeles County voters will be asked in November to consider a ballot measure that would impose business taxes on cannabis operations in unincorporated areas, once such businesses are permitted. ABC 7 has [more here](#).

## **NEW YORK CITY – State Financial Control Board Expecting Multitude of Fiscal Challenges in Coming Years**

In a meeting with Mayor Eric Adams, the State Financial Control Board sounded the alarm on several fiscal challenges New York City will be facing in the coming years. Some members of the Board cited declining tax revenue, increased pension obligations, and the end of federal stimulus dollars as they warned of trouble on the horizon, in addition to a potential national recession.

## **NEW YORK CITY – Mayor Eric Adams Embroiled in Budget Battle Over DOE**

Mayor Eric Adams finds himself in a budget battle after a Manhattan judge threw out the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) budget, allowing the City Council and Mayor to reconsider how to fund schools this year. The City appealed the decision and an appellate court blocked the ruling, allowing the current education budget to move forward as is, with the final ruling to be made in several weeks.

## **SEATTLE – Local Social Housing Initiative Collects Enough Signatures to Get on Ballot in 2023**

Initiative 135 qualified to appear on Seattle voters' ballots in early 2023. If approved, it would establish a public development authority, which would be tasked with creating permanently affordable housing protected from market forces.

## **Transportation & Mobility**

### **BOSTON – Half of Boston Residents Will Live Within Three Minutes of a Bike Route by 2024**

Half of Boston residents would live within 3 minutes of a bike route by 2024, under a new proposed plan from Mayor Michelle Wu. Wu stated that they will aim to add 9.4 miles of bike lanes in 2023, along with the addition of 100 new Bluebike stations.

### **CHICAGO – Red Line Extension (RLE) Redevelopment Project Area**

Last month, Chicago and CTA planning officials released a detailed \$3.6 billion funding plan for the long-stalled Red Line Extension. The extension would add 5.6 miles of rail and create four new stations past 95th Street. The proposed financing mechanism to raise \$950 million of the \$1.44 billion needed is a new transit tax increment financing (TIF) district that would funnel property taxes to the Far South Side.

### **DETROIT – \$7 Million Grant to Fund Four More Electric Buses for Detroit Transportation Department**

Detroit's transportation department will use part of its \$7 million grant to fund four more electric buses. The Detroit News has [more](#).

### **LOS ANGELES – Port of LA receives \$20 Million to Improve Truck Access**

A \$20 million federal grant will help improve a trucking bottleneck at the nation's busiest port, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said during a visit Wednesday. Transport Dive has [more](#).

### **NEW YORK CITY – Preliminary Plan for NYC Congestion Pricing Program Released**

The MTA released the preliminary plan for NYC's congestion pricing program, outlining several tolling scenarios for drivers entering Manhattan's Central Business District. The proposed toll rates range anywhere from \$9 to \$23 during peak periods and \$5 to \$12 during overnight hours. If approved, it would be the first in the nation.

### **RICHMOND – City Council Endorses Expansion of TOD Zoning**

Richmond City Council's Land Use, Housing & Transportation Standing Committee has endorsed a resolution that would extend the city's zoning to include Transit-Oriented Nodal District 1 (TOD-1) to encourage development toward the Southside.

## **SEATTLE – “Fare Ambassadors” Introduced to Give Lighter Penalties to Non-Paying Riders**

After suspending payment enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sound Transit will be utilizing “fare ambassadors” to educate and give lighter penalties to non-paying riders. Fare ambassadors will replace security guards in military uniforms, who checked fares prior to spring 2020, and all ambassadors will undergo anti-bias and de-escalation training.

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