

Cozen Cities: October 5, 2022

Gig Economy & Technology

BALTIMORE — Northrop Grumman Opens New Baltimore-Area Phased Development, Integrated Testing Facility

Multinational aerospace and defense technology company Northrop Grumman has expanded its presence in the Baltimore area with its new, 55,000-square-foot Maryland Space Assembly and Test 2 facility.

CHICAGO — Does Chicago Have the Tech Workforce to Satisfy Google's Massive Appetite?

Google's recent acquisition of the Thompson Center — and looming employee grab — are both a boon and a potential beast for a local tech scene that has blossomed over the last two decades, spawning high-flying startups such as Grubhub, Groupon, Relativity and SpotHero. So far in 2022, more employers are attempting to hire software workers than any other job category besides nursing, according to the Computing Technology Industry Association.

LOS ANGELES — TSA Will Test Drone-Tracking Tech at LAX After Dozens of Sightings, Some Near-Misses

In response to an increase in drone sightings near Los Angeles International Airport, the Transit Security Administration is testing new technology to help counter the problem. There have been over 35 drone sightings this year near LAX, some within 1,000 feet of an aircraft.

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia Tech Salaries Growth Largest in Nation

According to a survey conducted by job-matching platform Hired.com, salaries in the tech sector grew nearly 12% in Philadelphia in 2022 — the largest such growth of any large city in the U.S. The growth is likely due to the increased prevalence of remote technology roles.

RICHMOND — DoorDash to Donate \$1 Million to Richmond to Address Food Insecurity

Last week, app-based food delivery company DoorDash announced that it will be donating \$1 million to Richmond as part of its Project DASH initiative to ameliorate food insecurity through partnerships with local food banks. Richmond is one of 18 cities throughout the U.S. that will be receiving funding.

Labor & Employment

BOSTON — MBTA's Largest Union is Suing for New Retirement Rules

The largest union for workers of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is suing over new rules to the retirement system, specifically a decision made to slash the pensions of workers who retire before age 65. Negotiations have been going on for four years over the pension agreement, and MBTA is currently in financial and operational crisis.

NEW YORK CITY — Those Incarcerated for Marijuana Offenses Vie for First New York Recreational Cannabis Licenses



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Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

New York's licensing applications for cannabis sales closed last week — and anyone who was incarcerated for marijuana offenses are first in line. With this approach, lawmakers aim to address past wrongs and attract applicants who have been affected by marijuana prohibition. However, many have concerns that the licensing process is difficult and eligible applicants have few places to turn to for support.

PHILADELPHIA — Workers at Philadelphia Museum of Art Go on Strike

Unionized workers at the Philadelphia Museum of Art began striking last week after two years of failed contract negotiations. Despite Museum officials' insistence that their wage increases and benefits package have been adequate, workers point to comparatively higher wages at comparable institutions.

Policy & Politics

BOSTON — City Council Has One Month to Develop New District Maps

Boston City Council must develop new district maps, and account for the huge population growth in the Seaport. District 2 has added approximately 18,000 residents since the last redistricting in 2012, and the Seaport was not classified as a neighborhood at the time.

CHICAGO — City Hall Shake-Up: Why Aldermen Are Retiring In Droves and How It Could Change Chicago Politics

15 current Alderpeople will not be returning to the Chicago City Council next year. With thirty percent of the council members elected four years ago either retiring, resigning or running for other offices, the council has not seen an exodus of this magnitude in decades.

DETROIT — Detroit Sues Census Bureau, Accuses Feds of Undercounting Minorities

The city of Detroit filed a federal lawsuit on Sept. 20 against the U.S. Census Bureau and Commerce Department, accusing officials of undercounting residents, particularly Black and Hispanic citizens.

LOS ANGELES — Bass, Caruso Clash on USC Ties, Ethics, Crime in L.A. Mayor Debate

U.S. Rep Karen Bass and real estate developer Rick Caruso bashed heads in the most recent debate for the campaign for mayor of Los Angeles. The debate entailed negative accusations and remarks from both candidates that signified an end to the duo's proclamations of mutual respect, having once sat side by side as dignitaries at a USC graduation.

NEW YORK CITY — City Redistricting Maps Rejected

The New York City Districting Commission voted 8-7 to reject a new set of proposed City Council maps. The Commission rejected a plan that would extend one of three Staten Island council districts into South Brooklyn. The Commission must reconvene to deliberate new district lines, since a final plan is due to the City Clerk by Dec. 7.

NEW YORK CITY — Construction Begins on NYC's New Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers

Construction officially began last week on the first Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center in the Bronx's Orchard Beach. These centers were announced by Mayor Adams to support the hundreds of asylum seekers entering NYC. The centers will offer shelter, food, medical care, case work services, and settlement options for the new arrivals.

PHILADELPHIA — Number of Languages Supported in Elections to Triple

Election officials in Philadelphia announced last week that they will add six languages — Russian, Vietnamese, Khmer, Arabic, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese — to its list of supported languages.

This means that election materials such as voting guides, polling place signage, and ballot questions will now be translated into these languages in addition to English, Spanish, and Chinese.

RICHMOND — City Council Rejects Ranked-Choice Voting Proposal

Richmond City Council has rejected a proposal to introduce ranked-choice voting for council elections in 2024, citing concerns about adequate implementation and the city's history of voter suppression.

SEATTLE — Mayor Announces First Steps Towards Seattle Green New Deal

Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell signed into law \$6.5 million in environmental investments last week. The programming includes creating "climate resilience hubs" to support residents during weather events and ensuring that homes, libraries, and city-owned buildings transition off fossil fuels.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — What Bills Will D.C. City Council Be Prioritizing This Term?

D.C. City Council is officially back in session, and this term, will be prioritizing bills that address issues such as migration, biker and pedestrian safety, paid leave and worker protections, and transportation.

Public Health & Safety

DETROIT — Detroit City Officials, Police Reach New Contract Deal With Pay Raises

Two of Detroit's three police unions have reached tentative agreements with the city that would give cops an immediate \$10,000 annual raise, with 4% annual increases each year for the next four years. Police Chief James White called the tentative agreement "historic" and said the extra money will help fill 300 vacant positions.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. County Ends Mask Order on Public Transit, in Airports

On Friday, Sept. 23, Los Angeles County ended its local health order requiring masking while aboard public transit or inside transportation hubs, such as airports. L.A. County health officials had previously cited the heightened risks of coronavirus spread and exposure for transit workers, but with a notable decline in reported cases and hospitalizations in recent weeks, health officials said the time has come to relax the order.

PHILADELPHIA — Mayor Kenney Signs Executive Order Banning Guns From City's Recreation Centers

Last week, Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney signed an executive order banning firearms and other deadly weapons from the city's recreation centers, regardless of whether an individual is otherwise legally permitted to carry a gun. The order is expected to face legal challenges at the state level.

SAN DIEGO — City of San Diego Secures \$3.65 Million Grant for Gang, Gun Violence Prevention Program

San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria announced on Sept. 13 that the City of San Diego was awarded a \$3.65 million California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant to implement the Peacemaker Project, a program that aims to interrupt cycles of violence among youth.

Real Estate Development

BALTIMORE — City Council Considering Abundant Housing Act

Baltimore City Council is considering a new building regulation that would ban single-family zoning policies. The Abundant Housing Act would allow for the construction of more multi-unit housing, thus reducing cost, housing scarcity, and segregation in existing Baltimore neighborhoods, according to proponents of the legislation.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. to Reopen Section 8 Housing Waiting List for First Time in Five Years. Here's What You Need to Know

The city of Los Angeles is reopening the waiting list for its Section 8 housing vouchers program for the first time in five years. On Oct. 17, Los Angelenos have two weeks to submit an online application for a chance to be added to the waiting list. Last time the Section 8 waiting list was open, it received 188,000 applications for just 20,000 vouchers.

RICHMOND — City Council Approves New \$2.4 Billion Development for Richmond Flying Squirrels

Richmond City Council has ratified plans for a \$2.4 billion redevelopment project to replace the Diamond baseball stadium. The redevelopment project, which is expected to be completed by spring 2025, will ensure that the Richmond Flying Squirrels are able to comply with Major League Baseball facility standards.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — District Breaks Ground on Barry Farm Redevelopment Project

Last week, construction crews broke ground on the Barry Farm redevelopment project. The city has allocated \$43 million in order to revitalize the historically significant Southwest D.C. neighborhood.

Taxes & Spending

CHICAGO — Lightfoot Cancels Pre-Election Property Tax Increase

Mayor Lightfoot announced she no longer plans to ask the City Council to approve a \$42.7 million property tax increase, as she prepares to kick off her 2023 budget push early next week. Lightfoot had previously announced plans for a 2.5% raise — half of what an automatic escalator would have allowed — as part of her 2023 budget plan, but decided otherwise after mayoral allies urged her to cancel the tax hike and avoid a likely budget defeat.

DETROIT — City of Detroit Reports Revised Revenue Estimates for Fiscal Years 2023-2027

On September 12, the City of Detroit held its regular biannual Revenue Estimating Conference to receive an update to the Detroit Economic Outlook for 2021-2027 and approve revised economic and revenue forecasts for the remainder of fiscal year 2023 and for fiscal year 2024 through fiscal year 2027. State law requires the City to hold independent revenue conferences in September and February each fiscal year to set the total amount available to be budgeted for the next four years.

SAN DIEGO — Mayor Gloria Releases Annual Grant Report Showing a 62% Funding Increase Over Prior Fiscal Year

Mayor Todd Gloria released the City's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 citywide grants report, showing that the City was awarded a total of 59 grant awards with a combined total value of \$259.46 million — a 62% increase over FY 2021. The federal, state, regional and private grants fund a wide variety of City priorities and activities such as projects to enhance water reliability, economic development, emergency response preparedness, homeless services, road and bridge repair, and public safety.

SEATTLE — Property Tax Levy Proposed for Mental Health Care Funding

Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, along with King County Executive Dow Constantine and Sheriff Patti Cole-Tindall, proposed a property tax levy to fund mental and behavioral health in the region. The levy could raise \$1.25 billion over a decade, with profits benefiting five regional crisis-care centers and services for the county's mental health care system. The tax proposal will be on the ballot in April 2023 and, if approved, will go into effect in 2024.

Transportation & Mobility

BOSTON — MBTA Projects a Grim Budget for FY24

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority has begun creating its budget for the next fiscal year, and it is already anticipating gaps of over \$200 million. Though the agency has been struggling since 2020, it has remained afloat due to federal pandemic relief dollars, which will not be available next year. Leaders of the agency report that they are reluctant to reduce service or increase fares.

CHICAGO — Chicago Area Transit Systems Reach Pre-Pandemic Milestone with Combined 1 Million Weekday Riders

The Chicago area's regional transit systems, including the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace, are breaking pandemic-era ridership records by consistently surpassing 1 million weekday riders — a figure not reached since March 2020. While each system doesn't have the number of riders it had pre-pandemic, each has shown a steady rise in ridership as people return to in-person work and school.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. Metro's K Line Light Rail to Open in October

On September 22, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) announced the opening of the K Line to the public starting Oct 7. The line will connect the Crenshaw Corridor and Inglewood residents to low-cost rail transit that hasn't served the community since the 1950s. In celebration, METRO is offering free rides on the entire Bus and Rail System on the opening weekend.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. Promises to Add Thousands of Bus Shelters

The Los Angeles City Council approved an advertising contract that would add thousands of bus shelters to the city over the next decade. The council voted to give a ten year contract to Tranzito-Vector to advertise on hundreds of bus shelters if the city agrees to install and maintain 3,000 such structures, which provide comfort and shade for travelers.

PHILADELPHIA — Parking Authority Implements "Ticketing Blitz" to Clear Bus Lanes

The Philadelphia Parking Authority has begun cracking down on drivers who illegally double park in designated bus lanes on certain streets by doling out tickets between \$51 and \$101. The goal is to help improve on-time status for bus routes that navigate through Center City.

SAN DIEGO — Lawmakers Announce \$150 Million Grant for New Otay Mesa East Port of Entry

Local and state lawmakers announced a federal grant of \$150 million allocated to building a third port of entry in San Diego. The new port at Otay Mesa East will improve commerce and reduce wait times for the entire city. The grant to Caltrans and SANDAG will provide funding for a four-lane toll roll directly to the port, with Customs and Border Protection and California Highway Patrol facilities along the road.

SEATTLE — Mayor Harrell Plans to Move Parking Enforcement from Dept. of Transportation to Seattle Police Department

Mayor Harrell's first proposed budget includes a \$20 million increase for the Seattle Police Department - primarily because the proposal includes shifting parking enforcement back to the Police Department. The Seattle Dept. of Transportation has handled parking enforcement since 2020, after public calls to reform the police department.

WASHINGTON D.C. — District Traffic Cameras Could Soon Issue Points in Addition to Fees

A new bill proposed by Councilmember Christina Henderson would, if passed, grant D.C.'s notorious traffic cameras authority to issue points to drivers' licenses in addition to fines. Currently, drivers with between 10 and 11 points may have their licenses suspended for 90 days, while drivers with more than 12 may have their licenses revoked entirely.
