

Cozen Cities - April 10, 2024

Gig Economy & Technology

CHICAGO — Gov. JB Pritzker Announces Plan to Make Chicago Quantum Technology Capital

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker announced a plan to make Chicago a quantum technology capital at M-Hub, a business incubator on Chicago's Near West Side that plays home to prototype shops and laboratories.

DETROIT — Design, Construction Approved for UM Center for Innovation in Detroit

Construction will soon ramp up on a six-story University of Michigan (UM) building in the heart of Detroit, the first of three buildings planned for the \$250 million UM Center for Innovation in Detroit.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — City's Latest Traffic Signs Detect Drivers' Phone Use, Seatbelt Compliance

The D.C. Highway Safety Office deployed SmartSign technology to deter distracted driving and encourage motorists to put down their phones, wear seatbelts, and slow down.

Labor & Employment

BALTIMORE — Dock Workers Wait, City Leaders Promise Progress

Thousands of Baltimore dock workers face work delays after a cargo ship they loaded crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge, causing its collapse and jeopardizing \$2 million in daily wages, with uncertainty surrounding government assistance amid the cleanup efforts. Meanwhile, local nonprofits and sports franchises have donated to support impacted workers' families.

CHICAGO — Chicago Area One of Biggest Employment Losers Since Pandemic

Metropolitan areas in the Sun Belt have experienced robust job growth at the expense of the East and West Coasts, along with Chicago, over the last four years, highlighting a massive transformation in the U.S. labor market since the pandemic.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. Council Approves Wage Increase for City Bus Workers

The Los Angeles City Council agreed to increase wages for city bus drivers, mechanics, and utility workers.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. Council Member Aims to Help Harbor Area Workers at Closing 99 Cents Only Stores

After Commerce-based operators of 99 Cents Only Stores announced it will shutter all 371 of its locations, Los Angeles City Councilmember Tim McOsker took steps to aid impacted employees in the Harbor area.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than 10% of Jobs in D.C. Region in IT

The D.C. region leads in IT employment, with more than 376,000 workers and numerous job opportunities, although job growth is forecasted to be modest at 1.1% this year. Artificial intelligence is emerging as a significant driver of employment.



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Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen

Policy & Politics

BALTIMORE — Baltimore State's Attorney Endorses Against Mayor Scott

Baltimore State's Attorney Ivan Bates endorsed Sheila Dixon for mayor, citing differences with Mayor Brandon Scott over crime strategies, while Scott garnered support from Maryland senators and unions due to his leadership during crises.

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson Promotes Cristina Pacione-Zayas to Chief of Staff

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson promoted his first deputy chief of staff Cristina Pacione-Zayas to be his new chief of staff, replacing Rich Guidice, who retired at the end of March.

LOS ANGELES — L.A.'s Political Left Looks to Expand Power in City Hall

Candidates on the political left made crucial advances in the recent City Council primary elections, setting the stage for some hard-fought runoff campaigns and a potential expansion of their power by the end of the year.

PHILADELPHIA — City Council to Consider Trio of Housing Bills

The Philadelphia City Council introduced a trio of housing-related bills, including legislation that seeks to make the City's pandemic-era eviction diversion program — which mandates that landlords and tenants pursue mediation and rental aid before court proceedings — permanent.

RICHMOND — Who Is Running for Mayor, City Council

Six candidates are running to become Richmond's 81st mayor, representing diverse backgrounds and focusing on issues like affordable housing, public safety, education, and economic stability. All Richmond City Council seats are also up for election, though only Districts 3, 6, and 7 have more than one candidate running.

RICHMOND — Richmond Removed from "Eligible Casino Host" List

The dream of a Richmond casino has been dashed as Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin signed legislation removing the city from the list of eligible host cities and imposing a three-year cooldown period between failed casino referenda.

SEATTLE — City's Social Housing Developer Stagnant

Seattle's new social housing developer is making slow progress, despite having received voter approval more than a year ago.

Public Health & Safety

BOSTON — City Council Considers Reducing Metropolitan Speed Limits

Two pedestrian city deaths prompted Boston's City Council to contemplate reducing speed limits to as low as 15 miles per hour in some locations.

CHICAGO — CPD, Feds Meet to Discuss Chicago's Security Plans for DNC

In preparation to host the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in August, safety experts from across the country met with Chicago Police Department (CPD) leaders to walk through security plans for the United Center and McCormick Place.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. Pilot Program to Send Unarmed Civilians Instead of Cops to Help People in Crisis

In an effort to ease reliance on police officers for handling nonviolent mental health emergencies, Los Angeles officials launched the Unarmed Model of Crisis Response, a new pilot program that sends unarmed civilians with training to respond to such calls.

PHILADELPHIA — Mayor Parker Signs Public Safety, Quality-of-Life Bills into Law

Mayor Cherrille Parker signed several bills into law, including a curfew for select Kensington businesses, a license plate flipping device ban, and new casino-style skill games regulations.

SAN DIEGO — Mayor Gloria Announces Historic Plan to Create City's Largest Homeless Shelter

Mayor Todd Gloria unveiled a plan to establish the City's largest-ever long-term shelter for people experiencing homelessness with the capacity to get 1,000 people off the street and connected to services.

SAN DIEGO — San Diego Crime Fell Overall in 2023, Though Some Areas Spiked

Crimes across San Diego — including homicides, sexual assaults, and thefts — fell by nearly 3% in 2023, mirroring a continuing return to lower pre-pandemic crime levels locally and across the nation.

SEATTLE — City, Largest Police Union Reach Provisional Agreement

Seattle's tentative agreement with its largest police union proposes a 23% raise for entry-level officers, with retroactive pay dating back to the expiration of the previous contract nearly three years ago.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — New Real-Time Crime Center Opens in Judiciary Square

D.C.'s new Real Time Crime Center accelerates crime investigations by providing instant access to surveillance footage and real-time updates on 911 calls and police locations.

Real Estate Development

BOSTON — Mayor Wu Introduces Legislation to Combat Potential Residential Tax Spikes

In an attempt to combat residential tax hikes, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu proposes shifting an allocation of the property tax levy on commercial and industrial owners.

BOSTON — New City Planning Department to Absorb BPDA Staff

Mayor Wu signed an ordinance creating a new city planning department to serve as Boston's "primary land use agency," aimed at overhauling the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) and making it more transparent.

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson to Greenlight Four Loop Office-to-Residential Conversions

Four projects that would utilize massive taxpayer subsidies to help turn outmoded office buildings on and near LaSalle Street into nearly 1,100 apartments are poised to move a key step closer to reality.

LOS ANGELES — A Year in, L.A. Mansion Tax Raises Fraction of Expectations

Los Angeles' mansion tax — a 4% tax on properties selling for \$5 million or more and 5.5% on properties above \$10 million — has raised just \$215 million since April 2023.

NEW YORK — Retail Vacancies Down to Pre-Pandemic Levels

New York City landlords report robust retail leasing activity during the first quarter of 2024.

PHILADELPHIA — CDR Committee Reviews Revised 76 Place Master Plan

The Civic Design Review (CDR) Committee held a day-long public meeting Tuesday to review the 76 Place master plan, which has been revised incorporating feedback from the Committee's last meeting in December.

RICHMOND — City Proposes Fresh Financing Strategy for Diamond District

Richmond and its Diamond District developer are considering shifting to city-issued revenue bonds for the \$2.4 billion project, aiming to secure lower interest rates and state funding before a sales tax incentive program expires.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Monumental to Remain in Capital One Arena Thanks to City Council Concessions

The D.C. City Council unanimously approved legislation authorizing \$515 million for Capital One Arena renovations, including several concessions to Monumental Sports. Some Council members raised concerns about additional concessions sought by team owner Ted Leonsis.

Taxes & Spending

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson's \$1.25B Borrowing Plan Back on Track for City Council Approval

Mayor Johnson's decision to borrow \$1.25 billion for affordable housing and economic development signals a fundamental shift in how such projects will be financed, weaning the City from its long-standing dependence on tax increment financing.

CHICAGO — City Migrant Website Obscures Details on How \$300M Was Spent

Concealed on the migrant website established by Mayor Johnson's administration are crucial details such as the profits garnered by companies and the specifics of lease agreements for developers and building owners whose properties are repurposed into migrant shelters.

PHILADELPHIA — City Council Begins Budget Hearings

The Philadelphia City Council began its first rounds of budget hearings, which have included discussions about the City's ongoing staffing shortage crisis, police response to youth gun violence, and proposed triage centers to address crime, drug use, and homelessness.

RICHMOND — Mayor Stoney Unveils \$2.9M Budget Proposal, City Council Begins Discussions

The Richmond City Council and Mayor Levar Stoney each unveiled their budget priorities, which include allocations toward improvements in city services, education and youth programs, homelessness and affordable housing, and more.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser's Budget Shaped by \$500M in Cuts, Focused Tax Increases

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser presented her \$21 billion budget proposal, which includes significant cuts and tax hikes to address a looming budget shortfall, prompting concerns and discussions among members of the D.C. City Council.

Transportation & Mobility

CHICAGO — O'Hare's Key Airlines Say City's Airport Revamp Budget "Lacks Credibility"

The City unveiled an expansion plan for O'Hare International Airport in 2018, vowing to transform the aging hub into a global showcase. Six years later, the project is behind schedule, projected to be billions over budget, and still stuck.

DETROIT — 10-Mile Autonomous Shuttle to Open This Summer

The City of Detroit is leading an effort to bring a pilot service starting this summer for a two-way, 10-mile autonomous vehicle shuttle route between Michigan Central and the city's east riverfront.

LOS ANGELES — Tunneling Completed on L.A. Metro D Line Extension

Tunneling for the extension of the D (Purple) Line is now complete. The underground subway will extend from Koreatown to West L.A. and open in phases from 2025 through 2027.

LOS ANGELES — L.A. Secures \$900M in Federal Funds to Improve Public Transit Ahead of 2028 Olympics

Metro and elected officials celebrated the allocation of nearly \$900 million in federal funding to the Los Angeles region in support of transportation and infrastructure projects ahead of the 2028 Summer Olympic Games.

SAN DIEGO — SANDAG Outlines Top Transportation Priorities in \$1.3B Draft Budget

The San Diego Association of Governments' (SANDAG) draft budget includes more than half a billion dollars for capital projects, such as expanding the network of rail lines and bikeways and designing the new Otay Mesa East Port of Entry.

NEW YORK — MTA Looking for Large-Scale Retail Tenant to Transform Grand Central Madison

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) envisions developing 25,000 square feet of retail space on the new concourse that connects the Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad, and New York City Subway.

SEATTLE — Mayor Harrell Outlines Extensive Infrastructure Package

Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell proposed allocating \$1.35 billion in property taxes to Seattle's Department of Transportation, aiming to repave roadways and pedestrian walkways, renew bridges, and expand the city's bike grid.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser Proposes Shutting Down D.C. Circulator

Longtime Circulator bus riders are expressing frustration and anger over possible service shutdown amid D.C.'s efforts to address a significant budget deficit.
